

Nineteenth-Century Girls and Authorship:  
Adolescent Writing, Appropriation, and their  
Representation in Literature, c. 1860–1900.

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## Abstract

During the final decades of the nineteenth century girls' culture flourished. As recent scholarship has shown, this culture pivoted on an engagement with fiction and particularly the periodical press. Magazines such as the *Girl's Own Paper* and the *Monthly Packet* provided spaces where girls could benefit from being part of a larger network of contributors. The reciprocal reading and writing culture accessed through periodicals epitomised the experience of a creative and intellectual adolescence for many girls during the late-Victorian era. This thesis explores a discrete girls' culture that was also cultivated in diaries and circulated manuscript magazines during this period. As these writings were shared with family or peers respectively, they can be viewed as tools of socialisation or 'apprenticeships' in writing, as well as in girlhood. Yet girls' writings were also sites of resistance; in responding to the model literary and print culture in which they were immersed, girls cultivated an autonomous writing culture which hinged on strategies of adaptation and appropriation. Sociological theories of youth culture have demonstrated that young people actively contribute to cultural reproduction and change. When combined with theories of literary appropriation in this thesis, these insights shed light on the specific types of authorship which reflect girls' simultaneous participation in and exclusion from a dynamic literary and print culture.

This thesis analyses the development of girls' literary culture in the late-Victorian manuscript writings. Moreover it contextualises girls' appropriative writing culture in broader debates concerning late-Victorian literature and publishing, gender and Girls Studies. Through considering little- or never-before-studied girls' manuscripts and texts as integral to late-Victorian literary culture, this thesis makes a significant and original contribution to these flourishing research areas. It contributes to the lively debate in childhood studies which seeks to assign agency to children in the archive, as well as the ongoing feminist project to incorporate female writings into the study of literary history.

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## Introduction

In the late nineteenth century, girlhood became seen as a specific period of life, separate to adulthood and childhood. Recent studies by Sally Mitchell, Beth Rodgers and Kristine Moruzi have acknowledged that girls had their own specific culture during this time.<sup>1</sup> Girls had access to new freedoms; they rode bicycles, read magazines, and cultivated peer friendships. As well as this interest in Victorian ‘New Girl’ culture, there has been significant recent academic interest in children’s cultures, Girls Studies, and archival approaches to studying nineteenth-century history and literature. Whereas some girlhood studies have focused purely on fiction for girls, and archival enquiries have been applied broadly to the Victorian ‘child’ reader, these disparate studies are brought together in this thesis, which makes an important diversion from previous work. I apply a mixed theoretical approach to archival girls’ writings and published fiction depicting girl writers.

Studies on Victorian girls’ writings are few, and they usually focus on diaries of girls either in America, such as Suzanne Bunkers’ *Diaries of Girls and Women: A Midwestern American Sampler* (2001) or in France, Philippe Lejeune’s *Le moi des demoiselles: enquête sur le journal de jeune fille* (1993).<sup>2</sup> By instead adopting a fresh approach and focusing on British girls’ manuscript magazine culture as well as diaries, this thesis adds new perspectives to the field. This thesis looks specifically at girls’ writings and writing culture during the ‘New Girl’ era, and how these related to broader changes in print and literary culture, as well as developments in women’s rights and education. It utilises three different archival collections representing girls’ writings from

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<sup>1</sup> Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls’ Culture in England, 1880–1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Beth Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood and Literary Culture at the Fin de Siècle: Daughters of Today* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Kristine Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood in the Periodical Press, 1850–1915* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Suzanne Bunkers, *Diaries of Girls and Women: A Midwestern American Sampler* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001); Philippe Lejeune, *Le moi des demoiselles: enquête sur le journal de jeune fille* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1993).

the 1860s to the 1890s, namely the *Barnacle* written by the Gosling Society, the *Briarland Recorder* and other writings by the Jebb family, and the *Evergreen Chain*, a manuscript magazine circulated between girls. These case studies consist of girls' manuscript magazines, diaries, and other writings, which collectively illustrate middle-class girls' collaborative writing culture in Britain.

Although the contents of the writings vary, in my analysis I focus on two primary themes which can be identified across each of the case studies in different forms. Firstly, I contend that adolescent girls experienced a unique writing culture which manifested in peer collaboration. Secondly, I assert that this shared participatory culture drew upon strategies of adaptive and appropriative writing. Finally, I compare the archival examples of girls' literary culture to fictional representations of writing girls, in which this writing culture is modified to represent the plight of female artists in New Woman narratives of the late-Victorian era.

In order to acknowledge the diverse disciplinary approaches to the study of childhood cultures, girlhood, and nineteenth-century manuscripts and literature, this thesis draws upon a mixed and multi-disciplinary methodology. This methodology, detailed in the first chapter of this thesis, will elucidate the various theoretical approaches that have come to inform my analysis of this subject. I draw upon theories from sociology and education studies which comment on the relationships, intellectual development and peer culture of young people. I also utilise theories from contemporary adaptation studies, and scholarship on nineteenth-century print culture. These ostensibly disparate theories are in fact all interconnected and indeed essential for the study of Victorian girls' culture. The ways in which I bring these approaches together form part of the thesis' original insights.

This thesis examines how girls used different kinds of writing in order to engage with and respond to their dominant literary influences. It explores the degree to which

girl writers viewed themselves as simultaneously part of and excluded from an often androcentric print culture. Furthermore, it interrogates how girls were socialised through their writings, particularly in conjunction with peers. Each strand of my argument amounts to a reappraisal of girls' culture, in an attempt to situate it in a wider narrative of nineteenth-century history.

#### A note on defining 'girlhood'

This thesis contributes to the ongoing debate concerning the definition of girlhood in the nineteenth century. I view this thesis as primarily contributing to the field of Girls Studies, and as such it is germane to outline my understanding of 'girlhood.' In the first chapter I will explain various other key terms, in order to detail my methodological approach. In this thesis I will use the words 'girl' and 'adolescent' to refer to females who are at a stage of bodily and mental development which accompanies adolescence, up until marriage. I will avoid the use of the word 'child' unless in reference to other sources which use the word. 'Child' in this instance is at once overly-generic for my purpose and restrictive in its inference to only the very young. It is precisely my aim to engage with scholarship concerning the female transition from childhood to adulthood – which was often problematic in Victorian discourse – and to make a contribution to scholarly understandings of Victorian girlhood. I will explore some of the relevant definitions of girlhood in the next section.

'Adolescent' is a *fin-de-siècle* construct; Deborah Gorham in *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* acknowledges that the word was not used for the majority of the Victorian period, rather it was developing during the era.<sup>3</sup> The popularisation of the term

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<sup>3</sup>Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London: Routledge, 1982), p. 13. The influential text *Adolescence* was published at the *fin-de-siècle*, which suggests an increased interest in the lives of people on the brink of adulthood as the century rolled on. G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence, its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, 2 vols. (1994; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904).



is attributed to G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence* (1904) yet the term was circulating in discourse for and about girls at least in the 1880s, in publications such as Sarah Grand's novels and the *Girl's Own Paper*. As I examine girlhood of the latter part of the century, I will employ the word 'adolescence', but I avoid 'teenage' or 'teenager' which are rooted firmly in the twentieth century, as they would require analysis of the contemporary cultural associations with 'teenagers', which cannot be covered adequately in this thesis.

There were other ways of conceptualising female maturation during the nineteenth century. The word 'puberty' is perhaps more restrictive than 'adolescence' for the purposes of my study, as I consider not only biological changes but social and cultural ideas of transition in girl writers. Sally Shuttleworth has drawn attention to an 1880 distinction between puberty and adolescence set out by T. S. Clouston. For Clouston, puberty 'began around about 14, whilst adolescence stretched from 18 to 25', in line with the Roman definition of adolescence.<sup>4</sup> The social ritual of 'coming-out' was a marker of maturity that did not necessarily run parallel to puberty or adolescence. During the Regency period and into the Victorian era, upper-class girls 'came out' into society at 18, after which they were considered marriageable, although clearly this happened at different times, depending on the family in question.<sup>5</sup>

Language is a complicated site in studies of girlhood. It is the aim of my study to investigate Victorian girlhood experiences without being hampered by potentially pathologising or limiting terms. Carol Dyhouse's explanation of girlhood as being demarcated by a combination of class status, social norms, and biological markers, will be employed in this thesis. She writes that

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<sup>4</sup> Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> See R. S. Fleming, "'Coming Out" During the Early Victorian Era; about debutantes', *Kate Tattersall*, <http://www.katetattersall.com/coming-out-during-the-early-victorian-era-debutantes/> [accessed 01 January 2019]. For example, if we think back to the early nineteenth-century fictional Bennett sisters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, each girl is out in society despite their varying ages and experiences.

‘Girl’ was used widely in nineteenth-century Britain, and it was used across class boundaries, unlike ‘young lady’, which generally excluded the working class. Middle-class writers in the Edwardian era often described girlhood as coming to an end when a young woman first menstruated, or first put up her hair [...] Girlhood was definitely ended by marriage, although colloquially, familiarly (or rudely) women might still be described as ‘old girls.’<sup>6</sup>

Recent feminist writers have taken issue with ‘girl’, viewing it as an inherently sexist term. A 2017 handbook aimed at teenage readers titled *Confronting Sexism* suggests that ‘using the word “girl” when referring to an adult woman’ is a form of ‘benevolent sexism.’<sup>7</sup> Yet the 1990s designation ‘grrrl’ evoked a rebellious reclamation of the word, and there has since been a contemporary resurgence of interest in redefining girlhood, chiefly in the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of Girl Studies which has been pioneered by scholars such as Catherine Driscoll and Carol Dyhouse.<sup>8</sup> The term causes division today, and a consensus was not found during the Victorian era either.<sup>9</sup>

During the nineteenth century, then, girlhood was defined and constrained by various measures. In her 2016 monograph *Adolescent Girlhood and Literary Culture at the Fin de Siècle*, Beth Rodgers explores the debate around definitions of girlhood. Rodgers writes about girlhood as a ‘borderland’ and refers to an 1887 article from *Girl’s*

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<sup>6</sup> Carol Dyhouse, *Girl Trouble: Panic and Progress in the History of Young Women* (London: Zed Books, 2013), p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Laura Bella, *Confronting Sexism* (New York: Rosen, 2017), pp. 15–16.

<sup>8</sup> See Sara Marcus, *Girls to the Front: The True story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010); Catherine Driscoll, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981).

<sup>9</sup> Another feminist debate concerns the use of female names. I refer to girl writers by their surnames throughout the chapters, where possible. I am cognizant of the debate amongst feminist scholars which concerns how historically men have been recognised by their surnames, whereas women have only been referred to by their forenames. However many Victorian girl writers used pseudonyms, and in the case of chapter four which looks at the Jebb family archive, there are several girl writers who share the same surname. In these instances I will use pseudonyms and forenames for clarity. Susan Broomhall is one such scholar who refers to women authors by their surnames, to debunk the perception that ‘male writers are to be taken more seriously, and women are mere “dabblers” in literary discourse. See Susan Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2002), p. viii.

*Own Paper* which discussed ‘the period when childhood is just melting into womanhood.’<sup>10</sup> Rodgers acknowledges that even recent studies of childhood and adolescence – referring to works from 1992 and 2007 – have been circumscribed purely to boys’ adolescence, and Rodgers acknowledges a critical gap which is still in the process of being filled, even with the growing interest in girl studies.<sup>11</sup> The ambiguity in girlhood is extensive, and Rodgers concludes her study by suggesting that ‘what it means to be a modern girl is not always clear, but therein lies its power and energy.’<sup>12</sup> Like Mitchell, Rodgers’ stance on girlhood is a positive one, and she views the pleasures of the life stage as distinct from the attainments of adulthood. She suggests that ‘the girls’ school stories of the period represent girlhood as a time of fulfilment itself, not as a place on its way to another kind of “consummation.”’<sup>13</sup> She asserts that ‘there have, of course, always been girls, but what it *means* to be a girl is not always the same thing across time and circumstance [...] but the very problem of definition is something of a consensus itself in discussions today.’<sup>14</sup> This is a crucial perspective to consider in this thesis – it is largely unhelpful to enforce strict conditions onto the term ‘girlhood’, as it is inherently variable, and to do so would risk omitting valuable research into this subject.

Both Rodgers and Moruzi cite Anita Harris’ warning for considering age in relation to female adolescence.<sup>15</sup> Harris writes that

Any book that focuses on age- and gender-based categories as its subject of enquiry immediately runs into the problem of implying a natural, fixed state of being for that category. That is, the diversity and fluidity of its membership tends

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<sup>10</sup> Lily Watson, ‘On the Borderlands’, *Girl’s Own Paper* 9 (1887), 65.

<sup>11</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. Here Rodgers borrows the words of Helen King in *The Disease of Virgins: Green Sickness, Chlorosis, and the Problems of Puberty* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, pp. 4–5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15; Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*, p. 9.

to be flattened out by an assumption of shared basic characteristics.<sup>16</sup>

Yet Rodgers concedes that ‘biology cannot be ignored in any discussion of the defining characteristics of adolescent girlhood, but this must go alongside an understanding of girlhood as historically and socially contingent.’<sup>17</sup> The biological aspects of girlhood are broached by social historians and anthropologists, less so by literary critics.<sup>18</sup> My case studies represent teenage girls, but I also consider girl writers in the upper and lower limits of these ages.

In my own study I adopt Rodgers’ comprehension of girlhood, as a period which is not easily defined by age or experience, but which can be said to be terminated by the time a girl reaches marriageable age. This is important to the analysis of girls’ culture in this thesis, as I argue that it is dependent on the peer relations of adolescence, which are ultimately altered by matrimony. It is in light of this critical context that I will contribute my own interpretation of the ‘borderlands’ of Victorian girlhood, in relation to girls’ writing culture.

Clearly the day-to-day experiences of girlhood differ vastly between girls, and some practices of girlhood do exist into adulthood. The focus of this thesis is appropriative culture in manuscripts, and how this corresponds to a girls’ culture, which is broadly delineated by age and gender. Yet given the highly complicated categorisation of what a ‘girl’ is, I have not enforced strict rules on the ages of girlhood in my study. For example, the contributors writing for the manuscript magazine the *Barnacle*, were older teenagers or even in their early twenties, some of them in education away from home. In

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<sup>16</sup> Anita Harris, *Future Girl: Young Woman in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 191.

<sup>17</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> Although divergent texts, two such works which have informed this study are Louise Jackson's *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) and Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, eds, *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

contrast, Eglantyne Jebb, who was the chief writer of the manuscript magazine the *Briarland Recorder*, was much younger than the Goslings, and educated at home. Thus my case studies also represent the gradation of life stages which are contained within girlhood. The value of examining girls' culture through these different life stages within girlhood is that it provides insight into the nature of interaction, communication and peer support between writers at different ages.

Girls' cultural engagements with others who were younger or older exists in tension with ideas of girlhood as a limited, transitional state. This tension is brought into relief in chapter 6 of the thesis, which considers fictional representations of girlhood writing culture amongst characters who do not occupy a clearly delineated life stage. For example, in the novel *The Disturbing Element, or, Chronicles of the Bluebell Society* (1878) by Charlotte Yonge, the group of girl writers are of varying ages, varying levels of education and accomplishment, and some are even married at the end of the novel. The writer characters in the novels by Thomas Hardy, George Gissing, Miles Franklin and Charlotte Riddell have been considered in studies of the New Woman, but I suggest that analysing them using a Girls Studies framework proposes new questions about the status of girlhood. Furthermore, as several of these texts are *bildungsromane*, they offer an insight into the journey through the different stages of girlhood and into womanhood in a way that the genre of the manuscript magazine is unable to do.

### Outline of chapters

The first chapter details the methodology that I have used to approach the archival material and fiction under discussion in this thesis. It draws upon various fields of study, disciplines and theoretical stances. My research is a feminist archival study, which aims to give voice to previously marginalised Victorian figures. As such it draws on feminist literary scholarship, archival and life writing studies, Girls Studies, childhood studies, as well as literary adaptation theory. Due to the enquiry into girls' socialisation and peer

cultures, this chapter also puts forward sociological theories primarily from Pierre Bourdieu and William Corsaro on the social development of young people's cultures. These various theories coalesce and provide a foundation for analysing girls' peer written cultures.

The second chapter of the thesis provides contextual background of Victorian girls' writings which were published during the nineteenth century. It gives an overview of this publishing trend, and cites several short case studies of published girls' diaries, including those of Emily Shore, Emily Pepys and Marjory Fleming. It also considers the juvenilia of girls who went on to become notable authors, including George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë. This chapter has a dual function: it enables comparative textual analysis for the later case study chapters, and it also establishes a contrast between nineteenth-century published girls' writings which were often edited and framed by Victorian men of letters, and the writings in my case studies which are unpublished manuscripts. In this way, chapter two serves to reinforce my argument for the importance of re-appraising and further exploring girlhood cultures, and for prioritising girls' unabridged writing voices in this exploration.

Chapter three marks the first of three consecutive case study chapters. Starting with the earliest case study example, this chapter examines a girl-written manuscript magazine which was started in the 1860s and flourished into the 1870s. The *Barnacle* magazine was organised and edited by Victorian writer Charlotte Yonge, and written by a band of aspirational girl writers. Some scholarly studies of Yonge's life and works have provided overviews of the *Barnacle* and the biographies of the girl writers. Yet through the lens of my multi-disciplinary methodology, the collaborative and appropriative culture of these writings is elucidated more fully. Furthermore, this chapter establishes the development of girls' education and societal position during these transitional decades, which will be traced further in the consecutive case studies.

Chapter four turns to a second archival case study, the manuscript magazines and diaries of Eglantyne Jebb and her siblings which date from 1885 to 1891. My enquiry into girls' manuscript magazine culture is furthered in this chapter, as it considers the nature of peer writing collaboration within a family, as well as alternative forms of girlhood writing including diaries and short stories. Eglantyne's leading role in the production of the family magazine, as well as her ironic written critique of girlhood conduct, reflect the New Girl culture which was being established by the 1880s. Furthermore, Eglantyne's appropriative methods, particularly her allusion to a fictionalised manuscript magazine in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1869), buttress this thesis' claim that girls' written culture engaged creatively with contemporary literary culture.

Concluding the case studies portion of the thesis with an analysis of 1890s literary culture and gender norms, chapter five considers the final archival case study, the *Evergreen Chain*. This manuscript magazine was written and edited by teenage girls from around Britain between 1892 and 1899. The organisation of the magazine, particularly the categorisation of submissions by writers' age, defined a discrete transitional girls' writing culture. The chapter takes into consideration the *Evergreen Chain*'s unique status as a long-standing manuscript periodical which was entirely run by girls. Furthermore, I draw attention to girls' self-awareness in their appropriative writing pursuits. Pieces in the *Evergreen Chain* demonstrate an explicit engagement with ideas about the value of originality as well as imitative forms of writing. Simultaneously there is an increased participation in discussions about girls' work and education compared to the case studies from earlier decades. This final archival case study closes this tripartite analysis of girls' manuscript material.

Chapter six concludes the analysis of late-Victorian girls' writing culture by examining its representation in fiction. It analyses depictions of girls' autobiography and essay-writing societies in two novels by Juliana Ewing and Charlotte Yonge respectively.

It then briefly considers other *fin de siècle* novels by Thomas Hardy, Charlotte Riddell, George Gissing, George Paston and Miles Franklin. These latter novels depict girlhood writing as one detached from a supportive manuscript culture amongst other girl writers. They harness the girl writer to exemplify gender inequality, a theme which was explored at length in New Woman novels of the later nineteenth century. This latter group of five novels are categorised into two camps: those that focus on girls who are caught between youthful writing ambition and conventional womanly duties, and those that emphasise girls' struggle within, or on the margins of, a patriarchal publishing industry. Like chapter two which provides examples of published girls' writings which paint a skewed picture of girls' writing culture, this part of chapter six scales back once again to draw attention to wider misconceptions around nineteenth-century girlhood manifested in literary discourse. In these fictional examples girl characters are harnessed to promote the ideological agenda of the authors, but do not accurately typify the writing culture which has been uncovered in the archival case studies in this thesis. Ultimately this chapter consolidates the necessity of this thesis' enquiry into Victorian girls' writing culture.

I have selected the novels in chapter 6 for analysis as my interdisciplinary methodology can shed light on ideas and themes in them which have not been highlighted in previous scholarship. This final chapter, then, complements the case study chapters, by evidencing that girls' appropriative culture was indeed felt in fiction, albeit in a different manifestation to that seen in manuscripts. Reading these different types of texts together produces a complementary picture of girls' cultures and their representation across different genres. For this reason I chose to include a chapter solely on fiction instead of having an entirely archival-based thesis. Furthermore, writing by girls in periodicals and representations of girls' writings in periodicals could have made an interesting comparison to the other archival examples included in this thesis. Yet there has been much comprehensive research on writing by girls and representations of girls' writing in



periodicals from scholars such as Rodgers, Mitchell and Moruzi who I have already mentioned, as well as work on the New Woman in periodicals by Ann Heilmann, Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, Sally Ledger, Ann Ardis, Adrienne E. Gavin and Carolyn Oulton.<sup>19</sup> This work has inspired and informed my own research questions, but also inspired me to ask different questions about girls culture which does not exclusively focus on its prevalence in periodicals. My reappraisal of novels combined with new archival research offers an individualistic approach to this dynamic research topic.

In each of the case study chapters I quote the manuscripts at length, in order to provide a platform for the richness and diversity of these writings. Although each case study is unique and displays the heterogeneity of girls' authorial voices in the late-Victorian era, the themes of discrete adolescent peer collaboration, and appropriative technique, can be identified in each of them. I have selected my case studies for both their obscure status, and the value they bring to the vibrant contemporary research areas which I have outlined.

Girlhood is an experience universal to all women, but I do not claim in this thesis that my case studies are specific to all nineteenth-century girls. By exposing new archival materials I hope that this dissertation will provide an original contribution to ongoing and lively debates into girlhood culture, life writing, and literary history. The search for traces of childhood in archives is an ongoing complaint for scholars, and I could not consider all examples of Victorian girls' adaptive writings. Therefore, the following chapters focus on creating one conceptual approach for close reading texts of this kind. They synthesise

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<sup>19</sup> Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, and Mona Caird* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, eds, *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001); Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Ann Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990); Adrienne E. Gavin and Carolyn Oulton, eds, *Writing Women of the Fin de Siècle, Authors of Change* (London: Palgrave, 2012). I will discuss the New Woman at greater length in chapter 6 of this thesis.

a combination of theories, to create a new strategy of reading and further understanding girls' writing culture. The next chapter will focus on establishing a methodology of girls' appropriative writing culture.

## Chapter 1: A Methodology for Approaching Girls' Writing Culture

This thesis examines the self-made cultures of girls in the nineteenth century, by focusing on the writing practices of diaries and circulated manuscript magazines. This research is situated alongside contemporaneous fictional representations of girls' writing cultures in nineteenth-century fiction. Whereas recent studies on Victorian girlhood have stressed girls' autonomous consumption and engagement with published texts, especially novels and periodicals, this thesis will extend this argument to girls' writing. I argue that adolescent girls cultivated their own specific writing culture during the nineteenth century, which reflected changing understandings of femininity and adolescence, as well as developments in literary and print culture.

This study employs various theories in a bricolage to best suit the analysis of girls' juvenilia in the form of archival material which has never been studied before. The methodology of the thesis is situated in the burgeoning field of Girls Studies, which from its inception has employed theories from literary and cultural studies, as well as sociology, history, and archival studies.<sup>20</sup> The primary critical approaches in this thesis will be borrowed from all of these disciplines. In 2002 Catherine Driscoll acknowledged the necessity for a plurality of approaches in the study of girls:

A genealogy of feminine adolescence would trace the deployment or use of that idea in relation to concepts of childhood and womanhood as well as in relation to other discourses on the modern world. This necessitates analysis of a broad field of definitions and other representations of girls in popular culture, everyday life, the public sphere, and social or cultural theory, particularly at points where these fields intersect – such as discourses on puberty or girl deviance.<sup>21</sup>

Following the example set by Driscoll, the research in this thesis contributes to knowledge

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<sup>20</sup> Catherine Driscoll's *Girls*, for instance, incorporates various critical theories in her analysis of girls' culture. She starts by positing a Foucauldian 'genealogy' of girlhood; and variously cites Judith Butler, Stuart Hall, and other postmodern cultural theorists.

<sup>21</sup> Driscoll, *Girls*, p. 7.

in several disciplines. Girls Studies is currently a rich and vibrant subject. The journal *Girlhood Studies* began in 2008, so this field is metaphorically in its youth. The volume and variety of papers presented at the inaugural International Girls Studies Association conference in 2016 attested to the timeliness and significance of the research area.<sup>22</sup>

In the following chapters of this thesis the word ‘culture’ is used to describe the writing and reading practices of groups of girls and individual girls. Later in this chapter I will consider my definition and theoretical underpinnings of this word before applying it to my analyses of primary sources in later chapters. The original research in this thesis adds to the growing interest in youth culture and agency, a topic which is a source of debate for scholars of childhood from various disciplines, whether in sociology, history, or literature. Studies in recent years have argued that girls have a culture which is specific to their group.<sup>23</sup> In her trailblazing monograph, Driscoll argued that girls have had their own discrete culture, which is linked to the popular media that they are exposed to. Driscoll acknowledges this is no new phenomenon; indeed it has been the case since the nineteenth century; only the visibility of girls’ culture is increasing.

Recent monographs focusing on girlhood in the nineteenth century have focused on the visibility of girls’ culture as corresponding with the invention of adolescence at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> These specific texts have examined girls’ culture as one grounded in print culture. To Kim Reynolds, Kristine Moruzi, Beth Rodgers, and Sally Mitchell, girls’ culture is primarily textual.<sup>25</sup> These scholars have examined popular girls’

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<sup>22</sup> Driscoll, *Girls*, pp. 2–3.

<sup>23</sup> I refer to the work of Sally Mitchell and Beth Rodgers in particular, which will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> Scholars of adolescent girlhood point particularly to the publication of G. Stanley Hall’s *Adolescence* (1904).

<sup>25</sup> Kim Reynolds, *Girls Only? Gender and Popular Juvenile Fiction in Britain 1880–1910* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1990); Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*; Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood and Literary Culture*; Mitchell, *The New Girl*.

authors, girls' favourite magazines, and girls' engagements with such magazines through correspondence pages and competitions. Each scholar argues that this was specific to girls at a certain time in their lives, at this particular point in history. Yet it might also be significant to consider alternative definitions of culture, particularly in discussions of girlhood in the long nineteenth century.

As well as textual cultures, it is prudent to also pay attention to the material cultures of girls. Writing magazines as well as diaries and other forms of life writing was part of a broader culture of girlhood. The myriad references to the tools of creation, such as pens and paints; hobbies and educational activities of girls such as botany, sewing, and learning French, all attest that these writings were enmeshed in a textual and material girls' culture. The contextual detail of girls' lives and writing practice will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter of this thesis.

Here I will provide a brief reflection on my archival research methods, given the importance of archival research to girls' culture and manuscript culture, and the difficulties which are often presented during this process. Archival research is unique in that it can provide original and unexpected insights, enhancing a study which is based on published material by bringing it into conversation with historical discourses of collecting and the contemporary practices of archives.

Feminist archives in Britain flourished particularly during the era of the Women's Liberation Movement. June Hannam suggests that 'regional archives, including the Feminist Archive (North and South) and Women's Archive of Wales have [...] played a key part in rescuing sources and promoting the study of women's history.'<sup>26</sup> Some archives date back even further, such as the Women's Library, which

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<sup>26</sup> June Hannam, 'Women's history, feminist history', *Making History, the changing face of the profession in Britain* <[https://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/womens\\_history.html](https://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/womens_history.html)> [accessed 29 April 2019].

began its life in a converted pub [...] as The Library of the London Society for Women's Service in 1926. It had two aims: to preserve the history of the women's movement, and to provide a resource for newly enfranchised women to enter public life.<sup>27</sup>

Feminist archives and collections still play a significant role for researchers and publics alike today. Maryanne Dever suggests that 'archives retain a sustained gravitational pull on feminist researchers. We experience them as sites of promise and desire, even as we recognise they are also sites of power and privilege that have long been implicated in acts of violence and erasure.'<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the 'archival turn' taking place across the humanities more broadly, as well as increased digitisation efforts in collections mean that, in the words of Susan Howe, 'the nature of archival research is in flux.'<sup>29</sup> It is timely and important, in feminist archival research, to reflect on one's own intervention in the archive. A further complication is created when we add the category of childhood to feminist archival searches.<sup>30</sup>

I conducted my first archival research visit for this project at the Women's Library in London, where the papers of Eglantyne Jebb are held. During this first trip to the Women's Library I also looked at the diaries of Eliza Tabor (collection reference GB 106 7EZT) and Margaret Irene Corbett Ashby's diaries (GB 106 7/MCA) but as these papers did not speak to my overarching theme of girls' appropriative writing culture, these were ultimately not included in my thesis. Indeed I returned to the Women's Library once I

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<sup>27</sup> Gillian Murphy, 'The Women's Library', *The London School of Economics and Political Science*, <<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Library/Collections/Collection-highlights/The-Womens-Library>> [accessed 29 April 2019].

<sup>28</sup> Maryanne Dever, 'Archives and New Modes of Feminist Research', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 32.91–92 (2017), 1–4 (p. 1).

<sup>29</sup> Susan Howe, *Spontaneous Particulars: The Telepathy of Archives* (New York: Christine Burgin/New Directions, 2014), p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Karen Sánchez-Eppler discusses this in detail; I cite her argument in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

had narrowed my focus to this specific facet of girls' culture, and gained new insights into the Jebb material which I had accessed previously.

Since 2015 I have worked closely with the Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh. The manuscript magazine the *Evergreen Chain* is part of their vast collection, but many items within their main collection remain unaccessioned and there is no public catalogue. The *Evergreen Chain* was one such unaccessioned item; it was shown to me by one of the curators. This experience proves that there might be many examples of girls' writing culture, which the researcher might only encounter in a serendipitous way. The museum also holds manuscript magazines from the early nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, which I did not include in my study because I wanted to focus purely on the culture of late-Victorian girls. The special collections at the National Library of Scotland contain some writings by children, but these also did not adhere to the limitations of my study. I refer to the manuscripts of Marjory Fleming in my thesis (which are held at the National Library of Scotland) but only in brief with reference to Fleming's fame, as she too wrote much earlier in the century.

The final case study in my thesis, that of the *Barnacle*, was accessed differently again to the other two examples. I already knew about the *Barnacle*'s existence in Lady Margaret Hall College at the University of Oxford through conversations with the Charlotte Yonge scholar Clemence Schultze, as well as the few articles which are published on the manuscript magazine.<sup>31</sup> As these studies have provided valuable overviews of the manuscript magazine, in my own research I chose to conduct close analysis on passages which were significant to my argument, and provide a new perspective to the material. I am interested in developing new ways to organise and preserve archives related to feminist and childhood materials, and I reflect on potential

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<sup>31</sup> I discuss this scholarship in full in Chapter 3 which focuses on the *Barnacle*.

opportunities for development in the conclusion of this thesis.

### Approaches to childhood and Girls Studies

It is important to consider late-twentieth century research into children's history and culture in order to trace the current interest in girlhood, children's culture and agency. Two texts which sparked a renewed interest in the study of childhood and adolescence were Philippe Ariès' celebrated *Centuries of Childhood* (1960) which was followed by Norman Kiehl's *The Universal Experience of Adolescence* (1964).<sup>32</sup> Carol Dyhouse notes how the historiography of childhood only fully emerged in the 1970s, with texts such as John Gillis' *Youth and History* (1974) and John Springhall's *Youth, Empire and Society* (1977), which seldom paid attention to the lives of girls.<sup>33</sup> Scholars such as Dyhouse then filled this gap by studying girls. The interest in autobiography in social science studies such as John Burnett's *Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (1982) focused on recovering working class voices from history, and provided glimpses into the social history of late-Victorian girlhood.<sup>34</sup>

Gradually the interrogation of what constituted history worthy of study came to be applied to childhood, and nineteenth-century childhood specifically. In her study of childhood interiority, *Strange Dislocations* (1995), Carolyn Steedman cites Michel Foucault's theory from *The Order of Things* (1970) that European people living during the early nineteenth century felt themselves to be empty of history.<sup>35</sup> Borrowing Foucault's words, Steedman suggests that childhood 'came to be commonly used to

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<sup>32</sup> Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. by Robert Baldick (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973); Norman Kiehl, *The Universal Experience of Adolescence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

<sup>33</sup> Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p. 116.

<sup>34</sup> John Burnett, ed., *Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and the Family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Allen Lane, 1982).

<sup>35</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780–1930* (London: Virago, 1995), p. 12.



express the depths of historicity within individuals, the historicity that was linked to them, essentially.<sup>36</sup> Steedman argues that along with the modern concept of history came the concept of the history of the child, and of interiority. This attention to interiority is a forming component of identifying girls' culture and experiences. Prior to *Strange Dislocations* Steedman published *The Tidy House* in 1982, which was a study of the writing of primary school-age girls, their education and socialisation.<sup>37</sup> Dyhouse adopted a similar approach from the early 1980s onwards, in *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* published in 1981 and *Girl Trouble* which was published in 2013. Following these publications the study of girlhood has been explicitly driven by political and feminist motivations aiming to uncover the marginalised histories of girls.

Furthermore, the new awareness around studying minority histories combined with second wave feminism gave birth to a recovery project to trace women's literary history specifically. Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) was one of the first recovery projects of Victorian women's writing.<sup>38</sup> This study demonstrated the importance of considering recovered writers or texts alongside the canon, to avoid what Lillian S. Robinson describes as a kind of 'ghettoization' of new-found women writers.<sup>39</sup> Inspired by this cautionary message, this thesis considers print culture, late-Victorian literature and society more broadly in the analysis of girls' writings.

Holistic accounts of the socio-cultural position of girlhood began to be published in the 2000s, alongside an inauguration of 'Girls Studies' by Driscoll. Leading up to this,

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<sup>36</sup> Steedman, *Strange Dislocations*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *The Tidy House: Little Girls Writing* (London: Virago, 1982).

<sup>38</sup> Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977). I will expand upon this branch of feminist literary criticism later in this chapter.

<sup>39</sup> Lillian S. Robinson, "'Treason Our Text': Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon" in *The New Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Elaine Showalter (London: Virago, 1996), pp. 105–21.

Sally Mitchell's *The New Girl* (1995) consolidated an interest in the rich literary culture of late-Victorian girls, which has been followed by a new generation of critics who have recovered girlhood at the *fin de siècle*, such as Michelle Smith and Beth Rodgers, as well as Sarah Bilston and Kristine Moruzi, who look further back into mid-century women's popular fiction and periodicals, respectively.<sup>40</sup> It is in this recent trend in Girls Studies that I situate my analysis of girls' literary culture, which I will elaborate upon in the following section.

### Existing work on Victorian girls' literary culture

Mitchell's *The New Girl* is considered by many contemporary scholars of Victorian girlhood to be a trailblazing study.<sup>41</sup> Mitchell's research exposes the period of girlhood which materialised in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and explores how girls partook in a culture which presented a newfound realm of opportunities for them. In using the term 'New Girl' Mitchell acknowledges the links to other new identities which were defined in the late nineteenth century. In considering one of the bestselling New Woman writers of the period, Ann Heilmann suggests that Sarah Grand's novel *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) depicts 'New Girls about to become New Women.'<sup>42</sup> Beth Rodgers, however, defines how these two identities were not necessarily linked by progression, and were even at odds with one another.<sup>43</sup> New Girls had a discrete identity and culture of their own, which was primarily defined by their reading, and this thesis suggests, their writing culture. My interdisciplinary approach to girls' culture will be explored later in this chapter, and in chapter two I will explore the literary culture of girls in published

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<sup>40</sup> A full overview of these works will come later in this chapter.

<sup>41</sup> Beth Rodgers, Kristine Moruzi and Michelle Smith have all paid homage to Mitchell in their respective recent publications.

<sup>42</sup> Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, and Mona Caird* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 115.

diaries.

Even in studies of the longer history of childhood and children's literature, such as Adrienne E. Gavin's edited collection *The Child in British Literature* (2012), the *fin de siècle* and Edwardian eras are noted to be times of 'unprecedented social, cultural, and fictional concentration of interest in the child amounting to a cult of childhood.'<sup>44</sup> As a self-professed girl-centered study, Mitchell's *The New Girl* values girls as readers, and recognises that at this point in the nineteenth century girls were discerning and intelligent consumers of texts. Not only fiction, but an array of literature was marketed to girls at this time. Mitchell writes that she herself is 'not particularly interested in what authors were trying to do [...] – but in what girl readers were taking and using from their stories.'<sup>45</sup> She views the periodical press for girls as a vital component of this late Victorian phenomenon, and provides a detailed study of the *Girl's Own Paper* (1880–1956), encompassing its circulation and its contributors. Mitchell focuses on the writing of L. T. Meade and her editorship of the magazine *Atalanta* (1887–1898), during which time she secured articles from writers such as Amy Levy, E. Nesbit, Frances Hodgson Burnett, and H. Rider Haggard.<sup>46</sup> Such studies which consider girls' culture as a component of broader enquiries into nineteenth century literary and print culture validate the study of publications for young people, which have been largely neglected by scholars until recent decades.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Adrienne E. Gavin, *The Child in British Literature: Literary Constructions of Childhood, Medieval to Contemporary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 11. *Atalanta* was a successor to *Every Girl's Magazine* (1877–1888). It was an ambitious and advanced publication for girls and young women. See *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 26.

<sup>47</sup> As well as *The New Girl*, some other notable texts which have been influential in this area of research include Matthew Grenby, *The Child Reader, 1700–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Claudia Nelson, *Boys Will be Girls: The Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction, 1857–1917* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1991); Kim Reynolds, *Children's*

Mitchell argues that the term ‘girls’ is all-encompassing; that it does not denote class like ‘young lady’ does, and so the periodical press for girls ostensibly presents itself as an egalitarian community. Kate Flint’s work in *The Woman Reader* supports this; Flint highlights how public libraries held copies of *Atalanta*, and in theory the magazine was therefore available to ‘working and lower-middle-class girls.’<sup>48</sup> Yet as Terri Doughty has pointed out: ‘There are more articles on managing servants than on being a servant’, which Rodgers sees as indicative of the broader ideological difficulties attached to writing for girls, as they were not a homogenous group.<sup>49</sup> In this thesis my case studies all draw attention to the writing culture of middle-class girls. This is due to the fact that middle and upper-class girls’ writings generally survive for longer in archives. Yet Siân Pooley has acknowledged that working-class girls also had a vibrant engagement with the periodical press.<sup>50</sup>

Mitchell draws attention to the problematic attempts to compartmentalise girlhood in terms of age or class, but views this difficulty not as an obstacle, but an opportunity to shift critical attention to what the girls themselves experienced in terms of culture during their adolescence:

It is probably not possible to apprehend the shape of girls’ inner lives a century ago. Yet culture supplies images, narratives, situations, and cues that focus girls’ feelings and give them ways to name and dwell on the powerful emotions that sweep through their interior lives. Culture also lays down explicit and implicit rules about what girls are permitted to feel. The experiences and questions and sensations that may not be mentioned (and may perhaps therefore remain

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*Literature in the 1890s and 1990s* (Plymbridge: Northcote House & British Council, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 173.

<sup>49</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 37.

<sup>50</sup> Siân Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press in England 1876–1914’, *History Journal Workshop*, 80 (2015), 75–98.

unperceived) provide potent fuel for the workings of fantasy and imagination.<sup>51</sup>

This emphasis on the imaginative culture of Victorian girls presents an opportunity to do some recovery work on lost adolescent creative works. By paying particular attention to girls' engagements in magazine columns and magazine-established groups such as *Atalanta's* 'Scholarship and Reading Union' Mitchell evidences that girls would read and use texts in various ways. She details examples of Victorian girls who read children's books for 'emotional indulgence', as well as 'the concept of books as compensation – a source of desired experiences and feelings missing in daily life.'<sup>52</sup> Here Mitchell touches upon the rendering of girlhood by the girls themselves, in which their 'fantasy and imagination' was made manifest. There are many more memoirs and life writings describing what reading material was selected by girls themselves and what girls were instructed to read that need to be included in this discussion, and I reference these in chapter two.<sup>53</sup>

Books and magazines were tools for shaping the identity of the New Girl at the *fin de siècle*, and I suggest that life writing was too. As well as presenting opportunities for creation, the potential ramifications of their reading and writing held anxiety for girls. Mitchell highlights this anxiety as a prime site of witnessing girls' interior experiences:

By looking at the books girls chose to read – often secretly because they feared others would laugh – we can perhaps glimpse their interior world [...] In the face of such silencing, girls may well have had a powerful need for fiction's codes to express their unhappiness, tension, anxiety, and fear.<sup>54</sup>

When Mitchell suggests that girl readers 'feared that others would laugh', she makes an astute speculation which can actually be proven in the study of girls' life writing. As this

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<sup>51</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 139.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 139–40.

<sup>53</sup> The next chapter of this thesis will unpack this insight.

<sup>54</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, pp. 140–41.

thesis will show, in girls' life writing there is evidence of how girls wrote about their reading habits, what their responses were to reading, as well as the responses of others around them.

Girls' writings indicate how fiction held the potency to inform, comfort, inspire or distress girls. As Mitchell suggests, pubescent girls approached literature as a tonic to help enhance their situation, or to look for a way out of it, whether this was by the example that didactic literature provided, or the fantasy of fiction. Mitchell writes how 'Girls read about people somewhat older than themselves to anticipate as-yet-unknown experiences and discover information that they suspect no one is telling them.'<sup>55</sup> As will be explored in later chapters of this thesis, a covert desire for adult restricted knowledge is a recurring theme in Victorian girls' writing culture. Yet as well as looking ahead, girls' writings were predominantly wedded to their experience of temporary girlhood. Mitchell points to school stories which were written purely for and about schoolgirls, and did not anticipate themes such as adulthood and marriage, and suggests that education was a significant factor in the constructing of the New Girl, and of her awareness of the temporary nature of her experience. My analysis of girls' writing culture in the archival case studies in this thesis testifies to girls' acknowledgement and even celebration of their time-limited culture.

Beth Rodgers' *Adolescent Girlhood* cites recent work by fellow literary scholars Michelle Smith, Kristine Moruzi and Sarah Bilston, as well as by historians like Hilary Marland who provide diverse new perspectives on the topic, which have been respectively concerned with empire, charity, popular fiction, and health.<sup>56</sup> Consciously continuing the

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<sup>55</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 141.

<sup>56</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*; Michelle Smith, *Empire in British Girls' Literature and Culture: Imperial Girls* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*; Sarah Bilston, *The Awkward Age in Women's Popular Fiction, 1850–1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004); Hilary Marland, *Health and Girlhood in Britain, 1874–1920* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

line of enquiry carved out by Mitchell, Rodgers argues that the *fin de siècle* was a time of fruition for girlhood. She suggests that ‘modern girlhood [...] is consciously represented as a contemporary phenomenon, with the strong sense that current debates around women’s social, biological and political roles set “girls of today” apart from earlier representations.’<sup>57</sup> Exemplifying the ‘girl of today’ identity, Rodgers’ prime research interest lies with the periodical press, and the collaborative construction of girlhood between readers and writers in *Girl’s Realm*, *Atalanta*, and the *Girl’s Own Paper*. She focuses on the roles of ‘female heroines’ in many of these magazines, and points to a *Girl’s Realm* article on figures such as Queen Victoria, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Blackwell and Grace Darling that were promoted to the girl readers.<sup>58</sup> This research enriches my own study of girls’ reading autonomy in later chapters of this thesis, when considering girls’ self-selected literature and aspirational figures in their life writing records. Rodgers argues for close scrutiny of the writers for girls at the end of the nineteenth century, and ruminates on ‘the extent to which the characteristics and stereotypes that came to define the late nineteenth-century fictional girl (and perhaps also the actual girl) were determined intertextually by a variety of writers who were often in rather unexpected conversation with each other.’<sup>59</sup> Here Rodgers acknowledges the richness of the discourses which informed girls themselves, and not just girls’ guardians or publishers of girls’ literature. Moreover, I suggest that girls also played an active part of this ‘unexpected conversation’ within their own cultural field, through life writing and manuscript magazines.

Similarly, Moruzi’s studies into the periodical publishing trends of girls’ magazines from 1850–1915 recognise how girls ‘were involved in refining the models of

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<sup>57</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> Alice Jones, ‘Notable Girls of the Nineteenth Century’, *Girl’s Realm* 2 (1899), 271–79 (p. 271).

<sup>59</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 2.

femininity that were offered to them.’<sup>60</sup> She argues that although some depictions of girlhood in girls’ magazines fall

victim to a [...] nostalgia for the past, they nonetheless provide an alternative view of middle-class girls that attends much more closely to the specificities of their lives, thereby offering a less universalised and much more detailed perspective on girlhood between 1850 and 1915.<sup>61</sup>

She investigates six periodicals: the *Monthly Packet*, the *Girl of the Period Miscellany*, the *Girl’s Own Paper*, *Atalanta*, the *Young Woman*, and the *Girl’s Realm* to argue how each one mirrors the specific context for girls at the time of its publication. Moruzi’s methodology is informed by her analysis of marketing strategies and a quantifiable readership, but, in agreement with Rodgers and Mitchell, Moruzi argues that the trends in periodicals were ultimately girl-driven.

Rodgers pushes this idea further, and acknowledges the girl as a creator in this configuration of literary culture. She notes how ‘many of the girl readers who feature in this book made significant attempts to become “authors” themselves – as correspondents in girls’ magazines, as diarists, letter writers and as aspiring literary workers.’<sup>62</sup> These ‘significant attempts to become “authors”’ form a key foundation for my own research, and I contend that Rodgers’ argument for the benefits of literary culture to the identity of girls extends to literature and life writing which was produced throughout the century, but particularly from the 1860s onwards. Rodgers writes that ‘the new girls’ magazines of the 1880s and 1890s offered a [...] platform for the “girls of today” to articulate their views and contribute to ongoing debates about their lives.’<sup>63</sup> This platform was also presented to some extent in girls’ life writing. Life writing was another instrument of

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<sup>60</sup> Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



authorship for girls which was present throughout the nineteenth century.

Girls' print culture incorporated various forms; late-Victorian stories and conduct books were targeted at girls, and arguably all of them held an ideological bent. Michelle J. Smith in *Empire in British Girls' Literature and Culture* (2011) stresses the importance of empire in creating a culture in *fin de siècle* girls' stories. Citing Daphne M. Kutzer's research, Smith notes how British imperialism was in ascendancy during the Golden Age of children's literature, and this affected girlhood and gender politics in various, often contradictory ways.<sup>64</sup> The literary culture which proliferated with the imperial project at the *fin de siècle* enabled a distinctive new genre of books for boys, yet Smith contends that girls were involved at the heart of the imperial adventure, too, whether depicted in *Girl Guide* books, or as girl Crusoes in fiction. But, in the vein of Mitchell, Smith claims that this 'girls' culture is unique.'<sup>65</sup> Although not without ideological concerns, the depictions of girls in adventure and school stories which drew heavily on the context of empire, allowed for more action, adventure, and independence for girls than had previously been represented in fiction. Celebrating this breaking from the domestic realm, in one of the first overviews of girls' fiction and periodical reading from 1839 to 1975, Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig suggest that 'stories of school life and robust adventure in out-posts of empire were taking over from heart and home' in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>66</sup> Buttressing this perspective, Smith notes how the girl protagonist in these stories 'is both strong and independent, and these qualities enable her to be of benefit or use to the nation.'<sup>67</sup> This dual representation of girlhood can be seen in late-Victorian girls' self-

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<sup>64</sup> Daphne M. Kutzer, *Empire's Children: Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books* (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> Smith, *Empire in British Girls' Literature*, p. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're a Brick, Angela! The Girls' Story From 1839-1975* (London: Gollancz, 1976), p. 45.

<sup>67</sup> Smith, *Empire in British Girls' Literature*, p. 2.

generated writing culture too.

Drawing on Driscoll's suggestion that girlhood is 'articulated in relation to future role', Smith goes on to suggest that

Tasks such as mothering are presented in late Victorian girls' print culture as part of the work of preparing readers for one of the most important functions they will undertake as women. Yet girls are credited with the capacity for a broad range of action as girls, rather than only in respect to their future role [...] girls participate in dangerous and heroic activities, such as conducting rescues, foiling robberies, nursing on battlefields [...] In both fiction and non-fiction examples, girls who move beyond the domestic out of necessity or for the benefit of empire are not subject to critique but, conversely, are celebrated.<sup>68</sup>

Smith argues that the girl characters are valued for the future potential of their corporeal vitality, but also stresses that they were perceived as useful during their girlhood, too. Imperial girls' texts, Smith argues, invariably came 'with an inherent assumption of racial superiority.'<sup>69</sup> Thus the feminine virtues associated with 'civilised' moral fibre were presented to be as crucial as ever in many ways. Although there was a strand of active girlhood which was 'celebrated' for its imperial ethics in a time when gender was becoming more visibly fluid, there still remained a reliance on traditional gender ideals for girls at the end of the century. Echoing Smith's sentiments, Bilston writes:

For the girl, standing at the awkward age, offered reader and writer the possibility of remembering a time when self-interest and rebellion were culturally possible, because temporary and transitional; a brief period in which the world and its opportunities might legitimately be evaluated and questioned.<sup>70</sup>

This provokes pertinent questions for the temporariness of adolescent culture. In considering girls' life writings, it could be suggested that the accepted ostensible freedom

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<sup>68</sup> Smith, *Empire in British Girls' Literature*, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>70</sup> Bilston, *The Awkward Age*, p. 24.

to write and create what they please, especially content that is rebellious and subversive, is only possible because it is temporary. This supports many of the contemporary quotations in conduct and advice writing which suggest that girls should be aware of their fixed girl status; Eliza Lynn Linton's *The Girl of the Period* for instance refers both to the late-Victorian zeitgeist and the potential dangers of adolescence.<sup>71</sup>

It is notable too that it was often female conduct writers like Linton who stirred up anxiety about girlhood development while enshrouding it in mystery.<sup>72</sup> Bilston cites the conduct writer Marianne Farningham's equation of the 'mission of girlhood' with a vague 'mission of preparation.'<sup>73</sup> The idea of gendered division was buttressed by John Ruskin's comments in *Sesame and Lilies* on the nature of 'womanly mind and virtue [...] in power and office, with respect to man' about how the genders should be separated and conditioned for their best practices.<sup>74</sup> Ruskin's suggestion that a woman should know the same topics as her husband (languages and sciences) but never to the extent that he knows them epitomises the anxiety of limiting knowledge and understanding for girls, which can be seen in girls' writings.

Bilston notes how popular fiction writers of the nineteenth century drew on stock ideas and phrases in literary depictions of girls, demonstrating the ubiquity and uniformity of some notions of girlhood.<sup>75</sup> She highlights how authors of the time sometimes conflated the growing culture of girlhood with the shifting political position of women in society, pointing to a contributor of *St Paul's Magazine* who 'defended any apparent peculiarities in the modern young woman on the grounds that all social movements take

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<sup>71</sup> Eliza Lynn Linton, *The Girl of the Period, and Other Social Essays* (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883)

<sup>72</sup> I am referring to writers such as Eliza Lynn Linton and Marianne Farningham.

<sup>73</sup> Bilston, *The Awkward Age*, p. 65. See Marianne Farningham, *Girlhood* (London: James Clarke, 1869).

<sup>74</sup> John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (New York: Silver, Burdett, 1900), p. 74.

<sup>75</sup> Bilston, *The Awkward Age*, p. 4.

time to establish themselves.<sup>76</sup> The magazine contributor wrote: ‘it is idle to imagine that this transition period, during which women are emerging, as a class, from the kitchen and store-room into the study and library, will not be attended with a great amount of extravagance and absurdity.’<sup>77</sup> Transitioning young girls were central to debates around women’s changing place in society. The wealth of discourses surrounding the adolescent girl at the *fin de siècle* prevented a clear understanding of her culture until recent studies. I will explore the connection between cultural misapprehensions of girls’ self-generated writing culture and debates about women’s roles in chapter six, which explores a range of late-Victorian fiction.

Each of these critical reflections contribute to the idea of the late-Victorian girl as growing and changing, or conversely, remaining stationary, caught in adolescent culture. Bilston also discusses studying the development of girl characters in terms of the female *bildungsroman*, or what she terms the ‘apprenticeship to adulthood’, and acknowledges how this has been problematized by feminist critics.<sup>78</sup> In their introduction to *The Voyage In: Fictions of Development* (1983) the editors Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland argue that in depicting the narrative events that form this ‘apprenticeship’, the *bildungsroman* ‘may not represent the developmental goals of women.’<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, in the words of Judith Kegan Gardiner, the ‘apprenticeship to a social constraint or sudden awakening [...] do[es] not fit a linear model of steady progress.’<sup>80</sup> Given that both Bilston and the editors of *The Voyage In* focus on the

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<sup>76</sup> Bilston, *The Awkward Age*, p. 69. *Saint Paul’s: A Monthly Magazine* (1867–1874) was a shilling monthly edited by the novelist Anthony Trollope. The magazine featured serial fiction, articles, but no literary criticism. See *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 553.

<sup>77</sup> Edward Dicey, ‘The Women of the Day’, *St Paul’s Magazine*, 2 (1868), 303–14, (p. 312).

<sup>78</sup> Bilston, *The Awkward Age*, p. 70.

<sup>79</sup> Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, eds, *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983), pp. 10–11.

<sup>80</sup> Judith M. Bardwick and Judith Kegan Gardiner, ‘Mind Mother: Psychoanalysis and Feminism’ in Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn, eds, *Making a Difference* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 114–47 (p. 126).

ramifications of the *bildungsroman* trope for women readers and in women's fiction, it will be pertinent for me to consider its function in narratives written for girls and even by girls. It is significant to note the repeated use of the metaphor of 'apprenticeship' in these feminist critiques, and the implication of girls in fiction as 'apprentices' to womanhood and adult cultural and social life. I will specifically expand upon the notion of adolescent apprenticeships in my chapter on the manuscript magazine the *Barnacle*, edited by Charlotte Yonge. This term implies that girls' progress is under surveillance by those who are more accomplished; that girls enter upon this vocational journey unskilled and unprepared, and can only graduate through repeated observation of the desired conduct in practice, and repeated rehearsal of it.<sup>81</sup>

In order to make an original intervention in this thesis, I aim to construct a girlhood 'genealogy' in Driscoll's sense, by exploring nineteenth-century and contemporary conceptions of culture, as well as sociological theories of children's culture which supplement the already rich research conducted on late-Victorian girlhood identities and literature. The following section will evaluate the meaning of culture in the nineteenth century, before suggesting some more contemporary ideas about children's culture which can complement the existing work on Victorian girls' culture which I have just surveyed.

#### Victorian definitions of 'culture' with regards to art, literature and print

During the twentieth century 'culture' was assigned plural meanings by various literary theorists and philosophers, which will be discussed in this section shortly. Although these theories do well to buttress arguments for Victorian girls' sense of culture, contemporaneous definitions from the nineteenth century provide a contextualisation of

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The emphasis is mine.

<sup>81</sup> I elaborate on the link I perceive between repetition in girls' writing culture and the consolidation of femininity later in this chapter.

the shifting meaning of culture. Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) defined culture in terms of its striving for perfection or 'sweetness and light', and its distance from doing as one likes, acting out of self interest, and not for the greater good.<sup>82</sup> Arnold's interpretation of culture is often identified as elitist, as it aligns with early nineteenth-century definitions of culture which relate to a knowledge of Greek, Latin and fine art – the hallmarks of a gentleman's education. For Arnold, culture combined this commitment to 'the moral and social passion for doing good' with 'the sheer desire to see things as they are' which is precipitated by human curiosity and is 'natural and proper in an intelligent being.'<sup>83</sup> In some examples of girls' writings we can see this association of culture with exclusive education and moral grounding; this is particularly evident in diaries such as Emily Shore's from the early nineteenth century, which I analyse in chapter two. Yet Arnold's definition of culture did not relate to childhood, or even women necessarily; he suggested that culture belonged to 'great men' who had 'a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of the society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time.'<sup>84</sup> This was the '*social ideal*' of culture, which apparently democratised and '*humanised*' knowledge.<sup>85</sup> This thesis demonstrates that girl writers possessed the impulse to share knowledge, but their participation in this social ideal did not fit with Arnold's androcentric definition of culture.

Girls' awkward relationship to culture was felt in print culture specifically. During the final decades of the nineteenth century print culture was voluminous, and its

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<sup>82</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. by J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 69.

<sup>83</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 44. See also Peter Melville Logan, 'On Culture: Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy, 1869,' *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, (2002) <[http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps\\_articles=peter-logan-on-culture-matthew-arnolds-culture-and-anarchy-1869](http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=peter-logan-on-culture-matthew-arnolds-culture-and-anarchy-1869)> [accessed 27 May 2018]. Arnold's interpretation worked against the other significant definition of culture that emerged during the nineteenth century. Anthropologist Edward B. Taylor defined it as 'a whole way of life' in *Primitive Culture* (1871).

<sup>84</sup> Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 70.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71. Emphasis in original.

complexion was changing and developing in myriad ways. As well as children's literature, other genres appeared for the first time, such as the short story and the memoir. Journalism flourished, as new venues of publication allowed for more writing to be reproduced in print. Peter Keating observed that in 1875 the Newspaper Press Directory listed 643 quarterly, monthly and weekly magazines in circulation in Britain, and by 1903 that number had risen to 2,531.<sup>86</sup> The era of girls' culture that this thesis considers, between the 1860s and the turn of the century, was witness to extended debates concerning what was regarded as art and culture, what was the role of the writer, and hence how literature should function in society.

In the 1860s, the decade before the educational reforms began, popular fiction such as penny bloods and the modish sensation fiction genre were viewed as damaging to young readers. Girl readers were specifically blamed for this popular taste, James Eli Adams writes that 'critical invective of the 1860s was a harbinger of more direct attacks on mass culture' which 'was derided by association with blushing girls.'<sup>87</sup> In 1867, Margaret Oliphant inveighed against girls' access to novels full of 'unseemly references and exhibitions of forbidden knowledge', expressing shock at their depiction of 'young women, moved either by the wild foolhardiness of inexperience, or by ignorance of everything that is natural and becoming.'<sup>88</sup> In a discussion of 1860s romance novels, Bilston cites the protagonist Gertrude in Mrs Egerton's *The Countess's Cross* (1868) as 'a site of conflict' who distinguishes the 'insurgent natural impulses' prescribed by her mother. Bilson goes on to suggest that

Egerton's construction of this conflict relates Gertrude to many *fin de siècle* New Woman heroines: like Caird's Leonore or Hadria, like Grand's Evadne or Beth,

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<sup>86</sup> Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989), p. 34.

<sup>87</sup> James Eli Adams, *A History of Victorian Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), p. 294.

<sup>88</sup> Bilston, *The Awkward Age*, p. 67; Margaret Oliphant, 'Novels', *Blackwood's*, 102 (1867), 257–80, (p. 258).

Gertrude manages to veer from ‘the beaten track’, her ‘wild upward longing’ inexorably asserting itself in spite of her training.<sup>89</sup>

As Mitchell, Rodgers and others highlight, the various societal shifts and legislative procedures, such as the 1870 Education Act, ‘the reduced print costs and tax changes that caused a surge in periodical and print culture, and the increased acceptability of work for girls of all classes’ all contributed to this specific codifying of girlhood.<sup>90</sup> As well as the Education Act, the 1870s witnessed the continued mass readership of Yonge, Arnold’s essays on culture and Linton’s *Girl of the Period*, but also the fiction of Mrs Henry Wood and Rhoda Broughton whose heroines were bold and independent. In the realm of poetry, critics focused on issues of originality and fidelity, which will be examined at greater length later in this thesis.<sup>91</sup>

By the 1880s and 1890s the literary culture of Britain seemed unrecognisable to a few decades previous. New short fiction was increasingly published serially; the founding of the Society of Authors in 1884 secured economic interests of authors, as the increased number of publishing outlets complicated the relationship between writer and publisher. The publication of triple-decker Victorian novels, which Henry James in 1907 called ‘large, loose, baggy monsters’ had fallen completely out of favour.<sup>92</sup> With the inauguration of the New Woman genre, and movements such as aestheticism advocating ‘art for art’s sake’, questions about the purpose of literature, and the representation of the female experience in literary culture, reached a zenith. Even as male literary networks still dominated the position of high literary and print culture, the heterogeneity of printed

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<sup>89</sup> Bilston, *The Awkward Age*, p. 86.

<sup>90</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 24. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 was the first of several acts of parliament passed between 1870 and 1893 to create compulsory education in England and Wales for children between the ages of five and 13.

<sup>91</sup> James Eli Adams highlights this debate in relation to Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti specifically. See Adams, *A History of Victorian Literature*, p. 307.

<sup>92</sup> Henry James, *The Tragic Muse* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1921).



materials during this period evidenced that the creative territory for new writers had expanded as the readership had. In an essay of 1891 entitled ‘The Influence of Democracy on Literature’, poet and critic Edmund Gosse expressed his anxieties in response to ‘an increase of persons who, without ear, are admitted to the concert of literature.’<sup>93</sup> The notion that girl writers were one such group who were ‘without ear’ is explored in chapter two, which looks at girls’ writings which were published during the nineteenth century. Late-Victorian editors’ responses to children’s writings were prejudiced, but children’s literature, on the other hand, was a lucrative enterprise.

A children’s literary culture was found prior to a specific girls’ culture during the nineteenth century. The first Golden Age of children’s literature is generally regarded as beginning around 1865 with the publication of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, and lasted well into the twentieth century. As well as being the age of children’s novels, print culture for young people also flourished during this time. The *Girl’s Own Paper* was launched in 1880, and at its peak reached a readership numbering 250,000. As Mitchell highlighted, established authors started writing serially for children; Robert Louis Stevenson published *Treasure Island* in installments in *Young Folks* magazine. Young people were consumers of literature, and as such were viewed by publishers as a discrete market. Edward Salmon conducted qualitative studies to ascertain the reading patterns of children, and how they varied by gender and age. Yet even when children’s culture was eventually incorporated into broader literary conversation at the end of the nineteenth century, it was often diminished. For example, the oeuvre of Walter Scott was perceived as being relegated to the category of children’s literature by the end of the century, meaning that it fell from adult estimation and thus lost value when it was

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<sup>93</sup> Edmund Gosse, ‘The Influence of Democracy on Literature’, *Contemporary Review*, April (1891), 523–36.

claimed by young people.<sup>94</sup>

But if during the nineteenth century children came to be seen as consumers, they were not viewed as producers of a culture. Girls specifically, Driscoll claims, have had their own culture since at least the nineteenth century, but it has been diminished and sidelined even while popular media was obsessed with girlhood. She argues that historically ‘girls have been employed to represent conformity and the mainstream, reflecting by opposition the authentic Subject of culture, though central to the field of culture more generally.’<sup>95</sup> In Driscoll’s words, girls and culture have been historically viewed as ‘discretely too problematic’ and in fact girl culture is ostensibly ‘almost impossible.’<sup>96</sup> Yet I suggest that, through studying children’s literature in conjunction with life writing and manuscript magazines, locating the specific literary culture of Victorian girls becomes more realisable.

Girls’ practice of diary and magazine writing can be defined as a facet of this culture, which developed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Laurie Langbauer has made an excellent case for suggesting that the early nineteenth century witnessed a ‘juvenile tradition’ inspired by Romantic writers and artists.<sup>97</sup> Katharine Kittridge has identified ‘125 books of poetry that were published between 1770 and 1830 by authors under the age of twenty-one.’<sup>98</sup> But writing practices have not been fully included in previous discussions of children’s later literary culture, even though reading

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<sup>94</sup> It could be argued that Scott was especially ‘claimed’ by girls. In Edward Salmon’s 1884 survey of children’s literature, Scott was ranked third favourite with boys but second favourite with girls. Edward Salmon, *Juvenile Literature As It Is* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1888), pp. 27–31.

<sup>95</sup> Driscoll, *Girls*, p. 303.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>97</sup> Laurie Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition: Young Writers and Prolepsis, 1750–1853* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>98</sup> Katharine Kittridge, ‘Early Blossoms of Genius: Child Poets at the End of the Long 18th Century’, *The Looking Glass: New Perspectives on Children’s Literature*, 15.2 (2011)  
<<https://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/ojs/index.php/tlg/article/view/274/271>> [accessed 8 December 2018]

and writing were inseparable practices for late-Victorian girls. In other chapters of this thesis I will explore in greater depth the scholarly work on juvenilia, life writing and autobiography which bring an important perspective to my research on girls' manuscript and literary culture.

### Contemporary theories of culture and collectivity

Writing diaries and manuscript magazines was a common cultural activity for adolescent girls during the nineteenth century. Girls were a group who were politically and socially marginalised by their age and gender. Yet through writing, editing and reviewing practices girls found their own agency. To understand the gulf between girls' status in society and their own cultural power in writing or editing, diverse theories of culture must be considered. Although the idea of girls' culture has been explored by various scholars, I will synthesize the theories of culture which have been dominant in cultural studies as well as in sociological studies. This theoretical apparatus enhances the analysis of late-Victorian girlhood.

Raymond Williams suggests that culture has a 'historical shape', carved out by complex changes in individuals' understanding of the word.<sup>99</sup> Williams' 1958 essay 'Culture is Ordinary', typifies his interpretation of culture, which is situated in debate with both Marxist interpretations of culture as well as the conservative values of T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis. Williams specifically talks about working-class contributions to culture, and challenges the dichotomy between high and low culture:

Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact and discovery, writing

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<sup>99</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Michigan: Ann Arbor, 2011), p. 14.

themselves into the land. The growing society is there, yet it is also made and remade in every individual mind. The making of a mind is, first, the slow learning of shapes, purposes, and meanings, so that work, observation and communication are possible. Then, second, but equal in importance, is the testing of these in experience, the making of new observations, comparisons and meanings. [...] it is always both traditional and creative; it is the most ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings.<sup>100</sup>

Williams' definition of culture encapsulates the nature of the girls' culture that I argue is present in diaries and manuscript magazines. It is a unique culture, but one that is in pursuit of finding 'common meanings' within itself, whether that is in the reading of one's diary to the family, or sharing a short story with a group of girls through a circulated magazine. Girls' culture is a place in which to 'make' the 'individual mind', and consequently test out these 'new observations, comparisons and meanings' that Williams writes of, which are gleaned through cultural participation. Crucially – and this is where theories of literary adaptation and appropriation are an important point of intersection – girls' culture is 'always both traditional and creative', as it aspires to belong to an existing tradition, but it is inescapably on the margins of a tradition or canon, and can both consciously and unconsciously subvert the notion of a tradition. This will be a key aspect of my analysis throughout this thesis.

As girls' writings in my study were part of a manuscript, domestic culture, it might be even more helpful to view them in light of Williams' comment that culture is ordinary; the 'stuff' of the everyday.<sup>101</sup> Steven Mintz lists the everyday ways in which contemporary youth culture is increasingly understood:

in symbolic terms, including style, dress, demeanour, argot, attitudes, activities, entertainment forms, especially music, and certain behavioural and subcultural

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<sup>100</sup> Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 4.

<sup>101</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958).

styles, notably delinquency, radicalism, and bohemianism, each of which can be interpreted as a response to certain stresses or structural contradictions in young people's lives, and as forms of resistance to attempts to shape their leisure activities, consumption patterns, and standards and attitudes by adults and by marketers and commercial media.<sup>102</sup>

Mintz defines the diverse facets of youth culture, and complicates the binary between high and low culture. Indeed Jackie Marsh writes that 'the strict dichotomy between high and low culture which has been posited for many years can no longer be sustained' in discussions of childhood.<sup>103</sup> Williams' 'culture is ordinary' statement has formed the premise of democratic contemporary studies conducted by educationalists such as Marsh, whose research examines children's own cultural constructs in response to television, games, and other modes of children's play, communication, and technology. Marsh has found that 'children do not just adopt [...] narratives in an unreflective manner. They build on and develop [...] narratives in interesting, creative ways.'<sup>104</sup> Contemporary studies like Marsh's raise the crucial question of children's agency in participating in youth cultures. These studies demonstrate that young people are selective in what cultural products they choose to engage with. In the words of Karen Sánchez-Eppler, children are 'forces of socialisation' in this configuration of their own creative agency.<sup>105</sup> This thesis will demonstrate that this kind of selective engagement is true for Victorian girl writers, who chose which texts to appropriate in their manuscript efforts.

Moreover, this agency is especially seen in young people's engagements with

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<sup>102</sup> Steven Mintz, 'Children's Culture', in *Re-Staging Childhood Conference* (Utah State University, USA, 2009). See also Mike Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1985).

<sup>103</sup> Jackie Marsh, 'Early Childhood Literacy and Popular Culture' in *The SAGE Handbook of Early Childhood Literacy*, ed. by Joanna Larson and Jackie Marsh (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013), pp. 207–22, (p. 208).

<sup>104</sup> Jackie Marsh, *Childhood, Culture and Creativity: A Literature Review* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Creativity, Culture and Education, 2010), p. 32.

<sup>105</sup> Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States: The Child's Part in Nineteenth-century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. Xv.

texts. Anne Haas Dyson has written on children's 'textual toys', which can include songs, films and rhymes.<sup>106</sup> Dyson draws on Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of heteroglossia and hybridity to explain how children bring together school texts and popular reading, and thus create something new.<sup>107</sup> She writes that

With this semiotic stuff they write themselves into a new social community. They remix their borrowed words and images for new cultural productions [...] From this cultural studies stance, children can be seen as participants in a newly globalized commercial world. Given writing tools and social companions, they selectively copy, not from a teacher-provided message, but from the shared pleasures of commercial media and other readily accessible material.<sup>108</sup>

Dyson's idea that children 'selectively copy' from the 'shared pleasures of commercial media' applies to girl's writing culture of the later nineteenth century. Her suggestion that culture thrives when children have 'social companions' is also significant to the Victorian context I present in this thesis. As I consider single-authored girls' writings as well as group produced manuscripts, it is important to incorporate specific theories of peer cultures as well as individual cultural development in girls into this analysis.

William Corsaro identifies four peer cultures that societies engage in: preschool, preadolescent, adolescent, and adult. He defines peer culture 'as a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers.'<sup>109</sup> These are 'not preexisting structures that children encounter or confront', rather they 'are innovative and creative collective productions.'<sup>110</sup> Studies on adolescent

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<sup>106</sup> Anne Haas Dyson, *The Brothers and Sisters Learn to Write: Popular Literacies in Childhood and School Cultures* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003), p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. Bakhtin*, ed. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 254–422; *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

<sup>108</sup> Anne Haas Dyson, 'Writing Childhood Under Construction', *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 10:1 (2010), 7–31 (p. 13).

<sup>109</sup> William Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 1995), p. 21.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

cultures suggest that ‘peer-group relations become more influential as they are distanced from adult supervision.’<sup>111</sup> Although adolescence has its own defined peer culture, the experience of this can carry on into adulthood; Corsaro writes that ‘children’s experiences are not left behind with maturity or individual development [...] thus, individual development is embedded in the collective production of a series of peer cultures that in turn contribute to reproduction and change in the wider adult society or culture.’<sup>112</sup> When applied to literary culture specifically, Corsaro’s theories allow us to read the textual cultures of girls as self-generated, and characteristic of the individual peer group. This culture is not at odds with adulthood, but indeed informs cultural practices in later life, and can be passed down to others.<sup>113</sup> It is not a linear or straightforward pattern of inheritance, but can be considered as Driscoll suggests, as a kind of genealogy:

Genealogies do not look for causes or points of origin so much as map how things and ideas (such as girls, female adolescence, girlhood, girl culture) are possible within a given context. Instead of asking what or who produced feminine adolescence [...] a genealogy asks how knowledges and their objects work in particular situations.<sup>114</sup>

Even in discussions of adolescent girlhood, which is seemingly a specific moment in a female life, the mutable meanings of ‘culture’ and ‘girlhood’ require a broad interpretation. This further evidences the need for a pluralistic approach to girls’ culture. As Williams suggests, ‘the relation between literature and sociology is not a relation between, on the one hand, various individual works and on the other hand various empirical facts. The real relation is within a totality of consciousness.’<sup>115</sup> It is precisely

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<sup>111</sup> Margaret J. Finders, *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997), p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood* p. 29

<sup>113</sup> I will expand on this in relation to my case studies in the individual chapters of this dissertation.

<sup>114</sup> Driscoll, *Girls*, p. 4.

<sup>115</sup> Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialisms: Selected Essays* (London: Verso: 2005), p. 22.

the juvenile writer's 'totality of consciousness' that must be considered in an analysis of their culture. By focusing on one facet of this 'totality' – girls' appropriative writing style – this thesis can provide an entry into this vast and multi-disciplinary field.

### Bourdieu's habitus, field and cultural capital

The individual girl writer cannot be considered alone; her cultural development does not happen in a vacuum. Andrew Elfenbein suggests that we view writers who are influenced 'not as self-determining monads but agents within a system of production.'<sup>116</sup> French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theories of 'habitus', 'field', and 'forms of capital', specifically 'cultural capital' might be useful to this analysis of girls' cultural transmission. Bourdieu's theory of habitus encapsulates a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions that mediates an individual's actions and the external conditions of production.'<sup>117</sup> One's habitus is inculcated from childhood, and can last throughout an individual's lifetime. For Victorian girls, the habitus encapsulates the ideas and tastes which have been cultivated in collaboration with family members and peers. To account for the contexts in which agents act according to their habitus, Bourdieu posited the idea of the 'field.' To enter the cultural field is 'to play the game', and 'one must possess the habitus which predisposes one to enter that field, that game, and not another. One must also possess at least the minimum amount of knowledge, or skill, or "talent" to be accepted as a legitimate player.'<sup>118</sup> One can read the aspirational nature of girls' writings as being applicable to Bourdieu's theory of the field: girls accrue literary knowledge commensurate with their age, and display it for their like-minded peers.

In his exploration of *Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880–1914*, Peter

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<sup>116</sup> Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> Lois McNay, 'Gender, Habitus and The Field', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16.1 (1999), 95–117, p. 99. See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 53.

<sup>118</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 8.



McDonald also applies Bourdieu's theory of the field to provide an analysis of cultural circulation and literary networks at the turn of the twentieth century. Although McDonald focuses on Joseph Conrad, Arnold Bennett and Arthur Conan Doyle, all commercially successful and critically admired published writers, he highlights how Bourdieu's idea of the field 'cannot be reduced to business history' since economic information about a publishing organisation does not 'explain how the field comes to have its particular structure.'<sup>119</sup> Indeed Bourdieu's theory of an opposition in the field can allow for a broader view of cultural agents beyond 'high' art, and even in the form of girls' manuscripts. Bourdieu divides the field between the 'sub-field of restricted production' and the 'sub-field of large-scale production.'<sup>120</sup> McDonald suggests that the 'sub-field of large-scale production' measures value 'strictly in economic terms' whereas

The agents in the 'sub-field of restricted production' act according to the principles of legitimacy specific to the literary field. They measure value primarily, if not exclusively, in aesthetic terms; they concern themselves chiefly with the particular demands, traditions, and excellences of their craft; they respect only the opinion of peers or accredited connoisseurs and critics; and they deem legitimate only those rewards, like peer recognition, which affect one's status within the field itself. This is the relatively self-enclosed world of 'art for art's sake.'<sup>121</sup>

Although Bourdieu's theory of field refers to the internal dynamics of the French publishing industry, and McDonald applies it to male networks at the *fin de siècle*, the 'sub-field of restricted production' can also provide a definition of girls' manuscript networks. Diary and manuscript magazine forms both make particular demands of the writer; the diary has its own history and conventions, and manuscript magazines model

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<sup>119</sup> Peter McDonald, *Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 13.

<sup>120</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 15.

<sup>121</sup> McDonald, *Literary Culture and Publishing Practice*, p. 13.

their form and content on contemporary periodicals.

The importance of ‘peer recognition’ is perhaps the most crucial observation which secures girls’ writings as existing in Bourdieu’s sub-field. Girls’ diaries are written and often shared in the family home, and thus are materially part of that domestic configuration. Manuscript magazines are collaborative pursuits, written with friends, or siblings, and shared within that same group, and sometimes beyond it. Girls’ writing culture finds autonomy in ‘a specific realm of activity [...] defined by its ability to reject external determinants and obey only the specific logic of the field,’ in the words of Johnson.<sup>122</sup> Girls’ writings developed as a specific field or ‘self-enclosed world’ by being restricted to circulation between peers and family, and articulating the reading culture and emotional life of adolescence.

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is a kind of non-monetary power which manifests in status or prestige. Ascertaining cultural capital involves ‘the work of acquisition’ which is ‘work on oneself (self-improvement).’<sup>123</sup> The cultural capital form ‘*par excellence* is writing’; it is the ‘best’ ‘hereditary transmission of capital.’<sup>124</sup> Its values and ideas are reproduced generationally, via families. This methodology provides a fitting approach to analysing girls’ writings, which are fundamentally informed by literacies encouraged in the home, and within literal or figurative families. This is true of both diaries and magazines written by girls; the dialectical relationship between the girl writer and her text is an ongoing process of refining cultural capital, which revolves around literary texts. This kind of writing takes different forms: essays, criticism, re-writings, stories, and poetry.

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<sup>122</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 15.

<sup>123</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. by John Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 251–58.

<sup>124</sup> Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, p. 251.

This also raises the question of ‘delegation’ and ‘representation’, in terms of who in a group of girls becomes the spokesperson of cultural values.<sup>125</sup> I suggest this is a complicated relationship; although written by girls, diaries are informed by family expectations, and also literary influence. Similarly, although the magazines I consider in the case study chapters were written by girls, older arbiters also read them and commented on the submissions. Bourdieu has theorised the struggle for cultural capital as a competition between generations:

The ageing of authors, schools and works is far from being the product of a mechanical, chronological slide into the past; it results from the struggle between those who have made their mark [...] and who are fighting to persist, and those who cannot make their own mark without pushing into the past those who have an interest in stopping the clock, eternalizing the present state of things.<sup>126</sup>

This theory of cultural capital as being determined and even arrested by previous generations has currency in my analysis. In the manuscript magazine the *Barnacle*, for instance, we see the aspiring writers of a new generation contend with the editor Charlotte Yonge, who promoted an earlier model of female authorship and general moral conduct.

In 1990 Bourdieu acknowledged that there are ‘two different classes’ of ‘habitus’, which are divided by gender.<sup>127</sup> He wrote that ‘the masculine habitus is only constituted or achieved in relation to a reserve space in which serious competitive games are played between men’; alternatively, women have been the repositories of capital – they ‘play a determining role in the dialectic of pretension and distinction which is the motor of all cultural life.’<sup>128</sup> Bourdieu’s habitus and its embodiment lends itself to feminist readings.

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<sup>125</sup> Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, pp. 251–2.

<sup>126</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 60.

<sup>127</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, ‘La domination masculine’, *Actes de la recherches en sciences sociales*, 84 (1990), 2–31.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

When situated in relation to theories of gender and interiority, McNay suggests that the system of actions signals ‘the point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic and the sociological, the body is a dynamic, mutable frontier’ and therefore ‘the ascription of a feminine corporeal identity is never straightforward or complete.’<sup>129</sup> In their appropriation of literary and print cultures, Victorian girl writers were often operating in an androcentric field. Indeed, some of the more hagiographical writings explored in the case studies are dedicated to William Shakespeare, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Walter Scott, and Charles Dickens. The tussle between the girl-specific cultural capital of writing, and the male cultural canon which causes a Bloomian ‘anxiety of influence’, means that a self-conscious gender performativity is an inevitable feature in girls’ writings.<sup>130</sup> Girls explore expectations regarding femininity in various ways in their writings.

This can be seen in the example of Charlotte Brontë, who as a child was socially aware through her precocious textual engagements. She would read magazines such as *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, *Fraser’s*, and the *Leeds Intelligencer*, as well as the stock texts of an early-Victorian children’s library; *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Scott’s Tales of a Grandfather*, and the Bible. She would write her own magazines, stories and plays, based on these readings, and would engage in extensive writing correspondence with her cousin.<sup>131</sup> This ‘amassing’ of cultural capital can also be witnessed in the girl diarists and magazine writers in this thesis. Girls themselves cultivate and gather the social and cultural tools through the medium of writing. Bette London’s writings on the Brontë juvenilia speak of it as a peer culture which constantly aimed at refining itself: ‘in the

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<sup>129</sup> McNay, ‘Gender, Habitus and The Field’, p. 98.

<sup>130</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973). Bloom argues that poets have been hindered in their creativity due to their relationship to predecessors.

<sup>131</sup> For more on the Brontë juvenilia, see Judith E. Pike and Lucy Morrison, eds, *Charlotte Brontë from the Beginnings: New Essays from the Juvenilia to the Major Works* (London: Routledge, 2017).

type of interactive, serial publication Charlotte and Branwell practiced, individual manuscripts do not appear as self-contained units, rather they acquire meaning cumulatively (and in response to another's contributions), often requiring retrospective reshaping.<sup>132</sup> The Brontë children's juvenilia epitomises the collaborative peer culture of manuscript writing which characterises the examples in this thesis. But this thesis demonstrates that this culture was not uncommon, and indeed manifested in various shapes (from the Gosling society established by a woman writer, to girls' own organisation of writing practice).

Although this writing practice can be ongoing throughout an individual's youth, this capital is at its most potent within a specific peer culture stage, as outlined by Corsaro. Christine Alexander evokes the idea of a 'microcosm', a term which Bourdieu also uses, meaning a miniature encapsulation of broader society, and 'paracosm', a detailed imaginary world, in relation to the Brontë's juvenilia. In the minuscule manuscript magazines that Charlotte and Branwell wrote for their toy soldiers, the handwriting is so tiny that it seemed to deliberately evade adult reading; Alexander suggests it was a culture reserved for their eyes only. She also observes that 'microcosm' is a term which was used in the nineteenth century by Benjamin Disraeli, who referred to the public school as a microcosm.<sup>133</sup> 'Paracosm', on the other hand, is 'a more recently coined word that is increasingly being used in relation to long-term, full-scale imaginary worlds created by children.'<sup>134</sup> In this thesis I will use 'microcosm' and 'habitus' to refer to the environment that inspired girls' writing cultures, based on Alexander's assessment. She views

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<sup>132</sup> Bette London, *Writing Double: Women's Literary Partnerships* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 58.

<sup>133</sup> Christine Alexander, 'In Search of the Authorial Self: Branwell Brontë's Microcosmic World', *Journal of Juvenilia Studies*, 1 (2018), 3–19, p. 5.

<sup>134</sup> Alexander, 'In Search of the Authorial Self', p. 5. The word 'heterocosm' is also used in adaptation studies. Linda Hutcheon uses 'heterocosm' to define an "'other world" or cosmos, complete, of course, with the stuff of a story – settings, characters, events and situations.' See Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 14.

Charlotte and Branwell's collaboratively-authored fantasy world of Angria and Glasstown 'as representative of the larger adult world from which (as children) they were excluded. Such an approach touches on [...] such large ideas as representation, power, gender, and identity.'<sup>135</sup> Yet in their references to the adult world, Charlotte's juvenile efforts are critical, even humorous. Her fictional version of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was the *Young Man's Magazine*. Aware of her status as a female and an outsider of this literary tradition, Charlotte mocked the male publishing establishment.

Until she published *Jane Eyre* in 1847, Charlotte's writings had always used male narrators, and *Jane Eyre* was, of course, published under a male pseudonym. Thus we see that Charlotte's habitus was one informed by male writers, but this provided space for her to appropriate and subvert this culture, and ultimately form her own. London crystallises the agency inherent in the Brontë children's writing efforts. She suggests that the unreadable handwriting, lapses in form and spelling can all be viewed positively as 'indications of a style of authorship that refuses to be regulated. [...] From this perspective, we might read the juvenile collaboration not as a limiting condition but as an enabling vehicle for a form of writing that resolutely stands outside the mainstream.'<sup>136</sup> Examples in my case study chapters support this perspective of girls' lapses in writing as signalling subversion.

### Appropriation as a key component of Victorian girls' culture

One prominent feature of girls' writing cultures that I will analyse in this thesis is their engagement with and appropriation of literary and print culture.<sup>137</sup> Sociologists and

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<sup>135</sup> Alexander, 'In Search of the Authorial Self: Branwell Brontë's Microcosmic World', p. 5.

<sup>136</sup> London, *Writing Double*, p. 58.

<sup>137</sup> Literature and print culture are of course not the sole focus of children's appropriations. Sociological explanations of children's culture can be applied to play as well as writings. Kathryn Gleadle, in her study of children's play during the French revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, looks at the appropriation and constitution of culture through engaging with scripts of national identity. See Kathryn Gleadle, 'Playing

educationalists have long acknowledged that children's culture is one based on appropriation. Marsh's review of children's culture and creativity takes into consideration the texts and technologies which children engage with in the twenty-first century. Her consideration of children's appropriation of popular culture can aptly describe the practice of manuscript magazine writing that I will later examine in three examples, the *Barnacle*, the *Briarland Recorder* and the *Evergreen Chain*. Marsh writes:

As with all kinds of cultural products, children adopt and adapt texts and practices and resist some discourses whilst buying into others; these processes are different for individual children, depending upon their own backgrounds and interests, and can vary according to context.<sup>138</sup>

Marsh argues that even young children appropriate texts in reflective ways; they 'build on and develop these narratives in interesting, creative ways.'<sup>139</sup> She points to a study in which children 'drew from film narratives in the development of written stories and creatively extended them through the use of techniques such as parody and pastiche.'<sup>140</sup> Interpreting cultural appropriation and intertextuality as play, a similar analysis can be found: Helen Schwartzman suggests that children not only refine aspects of the adult world in play, but also use play as an 'arena for comment and criticism.'<sup>141</sup> Corsaro's theories of peer cultures set out in his *The Sociology of Childhood* are particularly useful for conceptualising girls' shared writing experiences. Kathryn Gleadle, in her historical studies on children's cultures, adopts Corsaro's theory of 'interpretive reproduction' which he offers instead of 'socialisation'. The word 'interpretive' gestures to children's

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at Soldiers: British Loyalty and Juvenile Identities during the Napoleonic Wars', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38.3 (2015), 335–46.

<sup>138</sup> Marsh, *Childhood, Culture and Creativity*, p. 15.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>141</sup> Helen Schwartzman, *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children's Play* (New York: Plenum, 1978), p. 126.

innovative and creative participation in society, and ‘reproduction’ to children’s cognizance of society and culture more broadly.<sup>142</sup> ‘Interpretive reproduction’ is more suggestive of children’s agency in appropriation, whereas ‘socialisation’ can imply a passive process, of something which is done to young people by adults. Through the lens of interpretive reproduction, Gleadle argues that we can see children’s ‘constitution and performance’ of identities; an ‘apprenticeship for what they assume[d] would be later participation’ in aspects of adult culture.<sup>143</sup>

Thus these techniques of appropriation, and of extending the life of a text, can be seen as a trans-historical practice of youth culture. As such the girls’ manuscript magazine or diary becomes a kind of Bakhtinian heteroglossia, in which myriad authorial voices work together, but also dissent.<sup>144</sup> J. Hillis Miller suggested that a literary text is ‘inhabited [...] by a long chain of parasitical presences, echoes, allusions, guests, ghosts of previous texts.’<sup>145</sup> The intertextual nature of girls’ adolescent writings will be explored fully in the individual case studies in this thesis, to demonstrate girls’ active participation in and contribution to Victorian literary culture.

#### Postmodern literary theories of adaptation

If textual engagements and appropriations can be found in many late-Victorian girls’ writings, these are inevitably part of a broader New Girls’ culture as outlined in this chapter. In poststructuralist philosophical schools of thought, particularly in France since the 1960s, textual adaptation and appropriation has been theorised. Although the focus of this thesis is not on postmodernist theories of culture, a gesture to the French theories of

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<sup>142</sup> Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood*.

<sup>143</sup> Gleadle, ‘Playing at Soldiers: British Loyalism and Juvenile Identities during the Napoleonic Wars’, p. 336.

<sup>144</sup> Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel’.

<sup>145</sup> J. Hillis Miller, ‘The Limits of Pluralism, III: The Critic as Host,’ *Critical Inquiry*, 3.3 (1977), 439–447 (p. 446).



intertextuality, and the subsequent responses to these theories, will assist in building a clearer picture of the appropriative cultures of Victorian writing girls. In 1968 Roland Barthes declared ‘The Death of the Author’ and a year later Michel Foucault asked ‘What Is An Author?’<sup>146</sup> In the same year Julia Kristeva coined the term ‘*intertextualité*’, insisting on the irreducible plurality of the individual author and literary tradition.<sup>147</sup> Jacques Derrida noted that the ‘desire to write is the desire to launch things that come back to you as much as possible’ and Roland Barthes declared that ‘the text is a tissue of quotations.’<sup>148</sup> Studies of appropriation acknowledge the plethora of synonyms which can each connote alternative perspectives on appropriation. It is important to note that appropriation does not equate to a direct copy or imitation, but appropriation in girls’ writings involves some kind of adaptation or even subversion.

In *Anxiety of Influence*, which I referred to in the previous section, Harold Bloom describes Shakespeare’s metaphorical ‘influence’ as a cause of great anxiety, primarily for subsequent generations of male authors. It is worth noting that Shakespearean allusions do occur in the case studies of girls’ writings in this thesis. In Bloom’s words, people all over the world ‘accept Shakespeare as the one indispensable author’ that he is not only ‘the Western canon; he is also the world canon.’<sup>149</sup> Julie Sanders agrees that in

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<sup>146</sup> Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ trans. Stephen Heath, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 1466–70; Michel Foucault, ‘What Is An Author?’ in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 101–21.

<sup>147</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Sémeiôtiké: Recherches pour une Sémanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1969). Gérard Genette extends on Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality in his *Palimpsests*. He views intertextuality as part of a larger whole he calls ‘transtextuality’, a sort of textual transcendence, which also includes paratext, metatext, architext, and hypertext. Genette highlights Michael Riffaterre’s claims that the intertext ‘is the perception, by the reader, of the relationship between a work and others that have either preceded or followed it.’ Riffaterre equates intertextuality with literariness itself, claiming it is ‘the mechanism specific to literary reading. It alone [...] produces significance.’ See Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985) p. 158; Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 146.

<sup>149</sup> Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, p. xv.

considering adaptation studies, Shakespeare has ‘been a particular focus, beneficiary even, of [...] proximations or datings.’<sup>150</sup> Adrian Poole has acknowledged the dominance of Shakespeare in Victorian artistic productions; the Pre-Raphaelites, Thomas Hardy, George Eliot and countless other writers derived narratives from Shakespeare.<sup>151</sup> In the Victorian girl writer’s canon, Walter Scott also occupies this status, as do Tennyson and Dickens later in the century. Bloom stresses that the anxiety of influence ‘comes out of a complex act of strong misreading, a creative interpretation of [...] “poetic misprison.” [...] The strong misreading comes first; there must be a profound act of reading that is a kind of falling in love with a literary work.’<sup>152</sup>

Girls’ immersion in literary texts and print culture can indeed be a source of emotion in their writings. Mitchell has written on girls’ feelings in relation to their reading cultures, saying that

culture supplies images, narratives, situations, and cues that focus girls’ feelings and give them ways to name and dwell on the powerful emotions that sweep through their interior lives. Culture also lays down explicit and implicit rules about what girls are permitted to feel.<sup>153</sup>

Mitchell stresses that these feelings are particularly linked to the experience of adolescence. Although this strong emotion attached to reading is certainly evident in the writings I study, I suggest that anxiety is usually associated with the tensions between what is considered original writing, and what is considered an appropriate method of adaptation. This will be analysed at length in the context of the case studies. More recently, Bloomian influence has been less popular than Kristevan intertextuality because

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<sup>150</sup> Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 23.

<sup>151</sup> Adrian Poole, *Shakespeare and the Victorians* (London: Thomson Learning/Arden Shakespeare, 2004).

<sup>152</sup> Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, p. 14.

<sup>153</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 139.

of the ‘perceived necessity of discarding the concept of the author whose isolated genius provides the source of literature’, according to Andrew Elfenbein.<sup>154</sup> He states that ‘intertextuality avoids the problematics of agency and canonicity associated with traditional source study and with Bloom’s [...] influence.’<sup>155</sup> In his study of Byron’s influence on Victorian writers, Elfenbein prefers to re-define Bloom’s influence in his analysis of nineteenth-century cultural responses to Byron. As my study begins with girls’ cultural responses to literature, and not a specific author, what might be better still suited to this study are the parameters of intertextuality, outlined by literary scholars in terms of adaptation or appropriation.

Julie Sanders draws on the work done by English and French postmodernist scholars alike in *Adaptation and Appropriation*. Although she acknowledges the wealth of synonyms associated with adaptation, she suggests that certain distinctions are ‘crucial’ to make, at least between ‘citation’, ‘adaptation’ and ‘appropriation’:

Citation [...] presumes a more deferential relationship; it is frequently self-authenticating, even reverential, in its reference to the canon of ‘authoritative’, culturally validated texts. [...] But citation is different again from adaptation, which constitutes a more sustained and deeper engagement usually with a single text or source, than the more glancing act of allusion or quotation, even citation, allows.<sup>156</sup>

These three distinctions form an accurate but manageable method of differentiating adaptive work. Sanders acknowledges that ‘adaptations and appropriations can vary in how explicitly they state their intertextual purpose.’<sup>157</sup> This is true of girls’ writings, as at times their appropriations are declared as such, and other times textual culture seems so

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<sup>154</sup> Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, p. 1.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>156</sup> Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, p. 6.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

enmeshed in their daily lives that literary citation is simply part of their vocabulary. Linda Hutcheon acknowledges that adaptation was a cultural phenomena during the nineteenth century: ‘The Victorians had a habit of adapting just about everything – and in just about every possible direction.’<sup>158</sup> It is significant to acknowledge that girls were part of this mass participation in literary adaptation and appropriation in the nineteenth century, but also highlight their motivations behind this engagement, which were namely associated with gender. The next section will unpack this idea.

### Victorian girls, literary adaptation and gender theory

In the configuration of the apprentice adolescent who repeatedly adapts literature within her discrete girlhood culture, there are striking parallels to queer theories that emerged in the 1990s. The language of affected progress mirrors Judith Butler’s theory on the necessity of repetition to consolidate gender construction. In the first chapter of *Gender Trouble* she writes that ‘Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.’<sup>159</sup> As Victorian conduct writers were concerned with the truthful, ‘natural’ self versus affectation, particularly with regards to ideal femininity, it seems fitting that this Butlerian theorisation of gender be applied to Victorian girls.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, Judith Kegan Gardiner’s idea that girls’ *bildungsroman* does not ‘fit a linear model of progress’ also prefigures Kathryn Bond Stockton’s *The Queer Child, Or Growing up Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (2009). These bodies of work seek to problematize the concept that there is a single route of heteronormative development for girls, and acknowledge that there are an infinite number of choices and

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<sup>158</sup> Hutcheon and O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, p. XIII.

<sup>159</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 25.

<sup>160</sup> Bilston suggests that ‘the discourse of naturalness and authenticity’ surrounded the girl in some 1860s novels, such as Rhoda Broughton’s *Cometh Up as a Flower* (1867), p. 89.

compromises that are made before womanhood is arrived at. Judith Butler's writings on girls in *Bodies that Matter* are particularly pertinent:

To the extent that the naming of the 'girl' is transitive, that is, initiates the process by which a certain 'girling' is compelled, the term or, rather, its symbolic power, governs the formation of a corporeally enacted femininity that never fully approximates the norm. This is a 'girl', however, who is compelled to 'cite' the norm in order to qualify and remain a viable subject. Femininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment.<sup>161</sup>

The idea of girlhood as 'citational' is significant, as much of this thesis is concerned with girls' negotiations of agency and compliance, originality and adaptation in their adolescent culture. Gender theory complements these studies of Victorian girlhood, and girl studies more broadly, and these theories will be employed in specific case studies throughout this thesis. This forms but one part of the varied contextual and theoretical underpinning that is required for approaching little-studied aspects of girlhood.

Adaptation studies have had to contend with purely masculinist readings of textual adaptation and its connection to a male canon. This tension has repercussions for analysing a corpus of girls' writings. T. S. Eliot's influential 1919 essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' for instance, encouraged a re-appraisal of the dwelling on 'aspects of *his* work in which *he* least resembles anyone else.'<sup>162</sup> Like Arnold's definition of culture, Eliot's conceptualisation of individual creativity and originality applies to male writers only. Another problem, according to Sanders, lies in the assumption of a stable literary canon containing texts which continue to be returned to over time.<sup>163</sup> In my case

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<sup>161</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) p. 232.

<sup>162</sup> T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1984). The emphasis is mine.

<sup>163</sup> Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, p. 160.

studies I draw attention to the published authors which girl writers draw upon multiple times, in order to analyse their adaptation and appropriation strategies. Although studies suggest we can see a girls' canon at the end of the nineteenth century, it would be inaccurate to suggest that every girl was inspired by the same canon.<sup>164</sup> Just as girls wrote in diverse forms and for different reasons, their cultural sources differed. The process and product of appropriation is unique for each case study. Girls' adaptation of masculine literary tradition also varies in its degrees of awareness and subversion. Yet as juvenilia cannot be considered to be canonical, girls' writings raise interesting questions about the suggestion that adaptations often 'offer themselves not as challenges to the canon but as canonic... as already canonised.'<sup>165</sup> This links back to my suggestion that girls' see their adaptive writings as both within a literary tradition, and also proudly on the outside of it. Girls' original writings are non-canonical, but their adaptive impulses often engaged with canonical literature.

Some adaptive techniques have been theorised as manifesting a feminist politics. Adrienne Rich wrote of 're-visionary' writing, suggesting that looking again at past works and past eras provides opportunities to write alternative histories which give voice to previously marginalised subjects.<sup>166</sup> A 'de-hierarching' impulse can also be seen in the formal strategies of adaptation, such as parody.<sup>167</sup> In one of the first studies of women's writing tradition, Elaine Showalter highlights John Stuart Mill's vision of women's writing as dependent on male literary tradition. Mill wrote that 'if women had lived in a different country from men and had never read any of their writings, they would have a literature of their own,' although, as Showalter highlights, women writers like Jane

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<sup>164</sup> See Reynolds, *Girls Only?* Reynolds has discussed both girls' and children's canons.

<sup>165</sup> Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*, p. 12.

<sup>166</sup> Adrienne Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision', *College English*, 34.1 (1972), 18–30. I will explore this theory in greater detail in the case study chapters.

<sup>167</sup> Hutcheon and O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, p. XIV.

Austen had already carved out a space as novelists in the nineteenth century.<sup>168</sup> Showalter posits that across times and cultures women's writing initially goes through a phase of 'imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition', before 'a phase of protest [...] and advocacy of minority rights' and finally 'a phase of self-discovery [...] a search for identity.'<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar suggest that in the history of Victorian women's writing we can read a 'strong action and inevitable reaction.'<sup>170</sup> I suggest that Victorian girls did have a literature of their own, and this was not incompatible with textual appropriation. As we have established, appropriation informs every text, and the Victorians were particularly prone to this practice.

Additionally, more contemporary theories of girls' roles in fandom and subcultures offer a useful framework for the analysis of girls' writings. In *Textual Poachers* Henry Jenkins identifies groups of 'enthusiasts of film and television' as 'largely white, largely female, largely middle-class.'<sup>171</sup> As these revealed identifiers of race, gender and class match those of the Victorian girl writers in my study of textual revision, it suggests that this grouping has its roots in nineteenth century practices of adaptive writing. Hutcheon cites the computer software company owner Brenda Laurel, who since the 1980s has focused on including girls in the gaming industry. Drawing on interviews conducted with 1,100 children and questionnaires completed by 10,000 children, Laurel notes that the majority of creators of fan fiction are female, and 'the desire to create and share narratives propels fans to come together. It turns out that girls

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<sup>168</sup> John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869).

<sup>169</sup> Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, p. 8.

<sup>170</sup> Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. Xiii.

<sup>171</sup> Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 1. Jenkins highlights that fans are not a homogenised group, but this description fits the general pattern of fans.

tend to prefer narrative play and are attracted to narrative complexity.’<sup>172</sup> Hutcheon supposes that the stories that girls prefer are those ‘that overlap somewhat with their own lives and their personal issues with parents and siblings and being accepted at school’, and Laurel suggests ‘it’s a good bet that this fascination with narrative construction continues into womanhood.’<sup>173</sup> These observations of girls’ collaborative creation, the engagement with narrative play, and its immersion in youth experience and adult transitions, mirror the writing culture of Victorian girls.

It is prudent to compare the culture of the manuscript magazines the *Barnacle* or the *Evergreen Chain* with subversive, do-it-yourself zine cultures of the present day. Alison Piepmeier sees a comparison between female writing cultures of the nineteenth century and zine-making in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She writes that ‘scrapbooking was a widespread practice in the nineteenth century, a way that girls and women could document their lives and the culture in which they lived.’<sup>174</sup> This provided a space to ‘comment on mainstream culture’, to give ‘critiques of public life’ and also ‘to construct community and solidarity.’<sup>175</sup> Regarding zine culture, Kate Douglas and Anna Poletti write: ‘Young women have engaged in life narrative practices in order to disrupt and renegotiate dominant discourses of girlhood, young women’s creativity and their agency.’<sup>176</sup> This disruption can also be witnessed in the textual adaptations of late-Victorian girl writers – in their subtle resistance in revising printed material.

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<sup>172</sup> Brenda Laurel, ‘New Players, New Games’, *Tauzero* (2005) <[http://www.tauzero.com/Brenda\\_Laurel/Recent\\_Talks/NewPlayersNewGames.html](http://www.tauzero.com/Brenda_Laurel/Recent_Talks/NewPlayersNewGames.html)> [accessed 13 July 2018].

<sup>173</sup> Hutcheon and O’Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, p. 115; Laurel, ‘New Players, New Games’, para 23.

<sup>174</sup> Alison Piepmeier, *Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), p. 30.

<sup>175</sup> Piepmeier, *Girl Zines*, p. 30.

<sup>176</sup> Kate Douglas and Anna Poletti, *Life Narratives and Youth Culture: Representation, Agency and Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 121.



Yet it is important to note that not all Victorian girls' writing showed signs of subversion or rebelliousness. A recent article has suggested that too often interests in women's and girls' histories emphasise girls' rebellious behaviour, which can be damaging, as 'this heroic version of history reflects a fundamentally masculine narrative of genius and exceptionalism that is the root cause of women's underrepresentation in history books in the first place.'<sup>177</sup> Although my analysis in this thesis supports the claim that there existed a discrete girls' culture in the nineteenth century, in which girls experienced some agency through cultural practices, I acknowledge that girls were still socially marginalised individuals, and not all challenged dominant models of femininity. The culture of appropriative writing was one in which girls could participate, but, as various sociological theories have shown, cultural capital had a specific route of transmission, even in girls' manuscript writings.

### Conclusion

In the published diaries, manuscript diaries, manuscript magazines and literary fiction that I examine in this thesis, we can see how the various critical insights into girls' culture and specifically appropriation can shed light on our understanding of these texts. The research questions that this thesis addresses are explored through various case studies and secondary sources. The following chapter, 'Contextualising Girls' Culture' presents crucial contextual evidence for the changing nature of girlhood, adolescence, and writing during the nineteenth century, through examining the literary market for published diaries as well as the process of editing girls' voices. It focuses on several diaries spanning across the century, including those of Emily Shore, Emily Pepys, and Emily Lutyens. It considers the command that girls had over the fiction that they read, as well as the

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<sup>177</sup>Joanna Scutts, 'Well-behaved Women Make History Too', *Slate* (2018)  
<<https://slate.com/culture/2018/06/rebel-girls-and-childrens-books-in-defense-of-well-behaved-women.html>> [accessed 8 December 2018]

gendered compromises that they had to accommodate. It establishes the argument that life writing was a space for girls to review and edit existing narratives.

## Chapter 2: Contextualising Girls' Culture: Girls' Writings and Gender in the Long Nineteenth Century

The previous chapter of this thesis established a methodology for analysing girls' writing culture in the nineteenth century. In this chapter I expand on the study of girls' writing practices in this culture, by looking at multiple case studies of diaries and other writings which have been published or made available digitally. I suggest that girls' culture centered on writing practice, and was engaged in a connection with published fiction and contemporary culture. Furthermore, girls' appropriation of fiction tacitly responded to competing ideas of masculine and feminine forms of writing.

I begin the chapter with an exploration of alternative androcentric and gynocentric histories of life writing. Evidence of the position of nineteenth-century male writers, combined with insights from feminist life-writing studies, provide a new approach for understanding girls' writing culture. The chapter will then consider three case studies of Marjorie Fleming, Emily Shore and Emily Pepys, whose diaries were published during the nineteenth century. These short case studies are used to exemplify the constructed nature of girls' writings, through girls' own habitus as well as their textual afterlives which were often shaped patriarchally. These contextual themes will then be explored further in my longer case study chapters. The chapter then turns to engagements with literary culture seen in girls' writings throughout the long nineteenth century. This analysis incorporates published diaries, some manuscript writings, as well as the juvenilia of commercially successful writers such as George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë. These various examples of British girls' writings from the nineteenth century have never been considered in tandem before, but this chapter will argue that they all contribute to a theory of girls' appropriative peer culture which is analysed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

The historical obscuring of the lives of children and girls in particular was detailed in the previous chapter. Despite this marginalisation, many girls' writings from the

nineteenth century are still in existence. Yet they are often difficult to locate; published writings are out of print and researchers often face barriers when trying to access manuscript writings in collections. These archives are often obscured by a lack of cataloguing, and a lack of online presence. Yet a recent turn in childhood studies has focused on liberating childhood experience from the archive, and the three case study chapters in this thesis contribute significantly to this burgeoning research priority. In order to make an intervention in this broader and recently restructured recovery project, I employ theories from feminist life writing scholarship and consider the history of life writing before relating these theories to Victorian girls' writing practices. I suggest that girls' writings throughout the nineteenth century engaged with gendered ideas of authorship. Girls would perform ideal femininity in their life writings, and simultaneously imitate and subvert the work of popular male authors. Girls' appropriative culture, then, was a symptom of this compromise. Yet the young girl was deployed as an emblem of ideal childhood by adult male writers who edited and published girls' diaries. These various considerations are important for thorough contextualisation and analysis of girls' manuscript cultures. Combined with the methodology chapter, this chapter informs my analysis of the case studies of girls' writings dating from the 1860s to the 1890s in the following three chapters.

#### Gendered histories of life writing

There is a significant body of literature which argues that women's life writing is fundamentally different to men's. In this thesis I argue that girls had a specific culture which was different still to women's. As so little critical attention has been paid to girls' writings, approaching them as a researcher can be fraught with difficulties. In her study of American girls' diaries, Karen Sánchez-Eppler acknowledges that 'there are as yet no archives of children's writing, and most documents penned by children are scattered, often unmarked, within collections of family or institutional papers. All of which is to say

that the questions of power that characterize children's social place vex the study of childhood as well.<sup>178</sup> Yet feminist theories which are invested in recovering female voices from the margins of history can usefully complement the theories of girls' culture which I outlined in the previous chapter. These ideas particularly deal with women's diaries, and I will discuss later how we can approach girls' other forms of writing, including manuscript magazines.

Sidonie Smith suggests that the 'poetics of autobiography, as well as the history of autobiography [...] remains by and large an androcentric enterprise.'<sup>179</sup> Indeed what are considered the 'great' and the earliest examples of life writing in the West, stemming from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, are majority male-authored.<sup>180</sup> The Christian diaries written by Samuel Pepys and James Boswell were produced from an impulse to gain closer proximity to God and repent for the sins of their lives, building a larger persona and more holy self. The cleansing and purgative qualities which are associated with diarising harken to St. Augustine's thirteen-book *Confessions*. Written in Latin between AD 397 and 400, Augustine's text, in which he reflects on and repents for his life's sins, is often cited as the first ever autobiographical work. But this redemptive function of life-writing has ostensibly been denied to women historically, or it has rather remained on the margins of recorded history. Feminist diary scholar Suzanne Bunkers has drawn attention to the inherent exclusion of women from the genre and practice of autobiographical tradition, and states that the central framework of the autobiography has been the hero's quest.<sup>181</sup> Other scholars have suggested that autobiography is synonymous

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<sup>178</sup> Sánchez-Eppler, *Dependent States*.

<sup>179</sup> Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 15.

<sup>180</sup> I am referring to *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (1825), James Boswell's biography *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), and confessional writing such as Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782).

<sup>181</sup> This is also reflected in fiction. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) is one such example of male-centered bildungsroman which was a popular improving text in the nineteenth century.

with masculine writing. Its status as ‘finished, polished, carefully constructed, providing a shaped image of existence seen from the teleological perspective of the end of a life’ in the words of Rebecca Hogan, is associated with masculinity.<sup>182</sup> The domestic detail of diaries, letters, and other forms of life writing were associated with the family home, which in the high Victorian era was the realm of the ‘angel in the house.’ In this chapter I suggest that girl writers engaged with both masculinised and feminised interpretations of life writing in their own writing, and in doing so developed a discrete girls’ culture.

### Women’s diaries in the nineteenth century

Peter Gay celebrates the nineteenth century as ‘the golden age of the diary,’ a period during which the diary became a widespread and democratising tool for people of various ages, genders and social backgrounds.<sup>183</sup> Clearly, despite the overwhelming visibility of men’s life writing, there were various types of autobiographical and diary writing in circulation during the nineteenth century. Late twentieth century feminist recovery projects drew attention to the specific features of women’s diaries from the nineteenth century. Hogan argues that the diary is a feminine form, suggesting that a ‘feminine aesthetic’ can be found in diaries.<sup>184</sup> Bunkers and Harriet Blodgett similarly offer a gynocentric reading of women’s life writing. Discussing diary writing as one of the practices of life writing, Blodgett notes that

Diary keeping has been practiced so extensively by women because it has been possible for them and gratifying to them. The diary, by its nature as a genre of personal record, by the opportunity it offers the diarist to record what is important to her, and by the daily time that it claims for itself, counters the patriarchal attack on female identity and self-worth. A diary is an act of

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<sup>182</sup> Rebecca Hogan, ‘Engendered autobiographies: The diary as a feminine form’, *Prose Studies*, 14.2 (1991), pp. 95–107, at p. 96. Hogan cites Peter Fothergill’s work as promoting this idea. See Robert A. Fothergill, *Private Chronicles: A Study of English Diaries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

<sup>183</sup> Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud*, vol. 1, *Education of the Senses* (New York, 1984), pp. 446–48.

<sup>184</sup> Hogan, ‘Engendered autobiographies’, p. 98.

language that, by speaking of one's self, sustains one's sense of being a self, with an autonomous and significant identity.<sup>185</sup>

This re-reading of diaries which involves omitting the ties to men's life writings – which have thus far directed the understanding of women's writing – is crucial in reading girls' diaries, too. Thus, in the words of Adrienne Shiffman, the female who “writes herself” both deconstructs and reconstructs womanhood: by publicizing herself – choosing to valorize certain details of her life by recording them in written form – she challenges the dominant cultural construction of femininity as passive or muted.<sup>186</sup>

Shiffman's suggestion can be augmented for the study of the girl and girlhood. Feminist scholars of nineteenth-century women's life writing primarily consider adult women, and my study adds a new dimension to this body of work as it appreciates the status of the diarist as a girl. I suggest that by the age of adolescence, diary writing is used for this deconstructing and reconstructing purpose. Girls might be well aware that they are supposed to be ‘passive’ and ‘muted’ – this is indeed the prime life stage where these feminine traits are domestically cultivated – but whether girls challenged the cultural acceptance of these traits is a point of contention which I explore throughout this thesis. As I suggested in the previous chapter, during adolescence Victorian girls constructed their own culture amongst peers, in which various performances of authorship were trialled.

### Establishing a theoretical approach to girls' life writings

The culture of teenage diary writing is associated with the invention of the teenager which was thought to only truly come into existence in the early twentieth century.<sup>187</sup> However

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<sup>185</sup> Harriet Blodgett, *Centuries of Female Days: English Women's Private Diaries* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>186</sup> Adrienne Shiffman, ‘Burn What They Should Not See’: The private Journal as Public Text in A. S. Byatt's *Possession*, *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 20.1 (2001), pp. 93–106 (p. 94).

<sup>187</sup> See Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (London: Pimlico, 2007).

the culture of adolescent self-representation in life writing existed long before this date. Now social media, with its attending associations of networking and indeed over-sharing has become a form of life writing.<sup>188</sup> Contemporary outlets for life writing, in the words of David McCooley, ‘are often the source of considerable cultural anxiety. Social media, mobile networks and smart devices mean that life writing is not only ubiquitous, but also instantaneous and trans-medial.’<sup>189</sup> To study the historic practice of this identity-forming style of writing is to add to broader contemporary debates on girls’ and youth culture.

Certain monographs focusing on the twenty-first-century adolescent culture have analysed girls’ writings specifically. Margaret J. Finders’ *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (1997) studied the school-based ‘literate underlife’ of adolescent girls in notes, graffiti, and other forms of literacies shared exclusively between twenty-first-century girls.<sup>190</sup> Yet studies of nineteenth-century girls’ life-writing are few: there are some valuable studies of French girls’ writings by Philippe Lejeune, and others in the new *European Journal of Life Writing*. Most monograph-length studies of girls’ historical diaries have been in an American context, for example Suzanne Bunkers’ *Diaries of Girls and Women: A Midwestern American Sampler*.<sup>191</sup> Only recently has there been interest in Victorian children’s manuscript magazine culture, which will be explored at length later in this thesis. Kathryn Gleadle is one such scholar to draw attention to girls’ circulated manuscript magazines as documents of girls’ socialisation and peer networks. Before assessing these archival documents I will give an overview of the existing research on Victorian girls’ diaries.

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<sup>188</sup> See Rachel Sykes, “‘Who Gets to Speak and Why?’ Oversharing in Contemporary North American Women’s Writing”, *Signs*, 43.1 (2017), 151–174.

<sup>189</sup> David McCooley, ‘The Limits of Life Writing’, *Life Writing*, 14.3 (2017), 277–280, p. 278.

<sup>190</sup> Margaret J. Finders, *Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997).

<sup>191</sup> Bunkers, *Diaries of Girls and Women*.



The motivations for life writing and thus the tone and content of life writing varied greatly between girl writers during the nineteenth century. In her studies on late-Victorian American girl diarists, Jane Hunter suggests that ‘The diary initiated a discourse about the self rather than establishing a definition of what the self was or ought to be.’<sup>192</sup> This is due to the fact that the diary was a flexible artifact, a ‘capacious hold-all [...] so elastic that it will embrace anything’ as Virginia Woolf described it.<sup>193</sup> Girls’ diaries were potentially read by family members, both parents and siblings alike. Other types of girls’ life writing were also shared, which I explore in detail in my archival case study chapters. Hunter has stressed the importance of family, and child peers in particular, for the production of girls’ life writing. Corsaro’s theories of adolescent peer culture which I outlined in the previous chapter also support the evidence that girls’ writings were frequently collaborative. Girls often wrote in collaboration, whether with an adult, siblings, or friends.

#### Including manuscript magazines in girls’ life writing studies

Many Victorian girls wrote manuscript magazines alongside diaries, and in this thesis I highlight manuscript magazines as a significant but neglected element of girls’ writing culture. Molly Hughes (1866–1956) whose memoirs of Victorian childhood were published in the early twentieth century, wrote about keeping manuscript magazines. An earlier girl writer, Eva Knatchbull-Hugessen (1861–1895), as Gleadle highlights, joined a manuscript magazine after seeing an advertisement for it in an 1878 volume of *Aunt Judy’s Magazine*.<sup>194</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen later went on to write for published magazines

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<sup>192</sup> Jane H. Hunter, ‘Inscribing the Self in the Heart of the Family: Diaries and Girlhood in Late-Victorian America,’ *American Quarterly*, 44.1 (1992), 51–81.

<sup>193</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Writer’s Diary* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1920), p. 13.

<sup>194</sup> Kathryn Gleadle, ‘Magazine culture, girlhood communities, and educational reform in late Victorian Britain,’ (unpublished paper, 2018), p. 1.

such as *Atalanta*.<sup>195</sup> Although girls' diaries were sometimes maintained as private documents, manuscript magazines were not.

These manuscripts, which were inspired by published magazines, showcased different types of writing, with various authorial voices. Although they had a distinct and different purpose to the diary form, manuscript magazines were still ultimately the products of girls' habitus. In the previous chapter I defined my use of Bourdieu's habitus in relation to girls' writing culture, which relates to the ideas generated through family discussions, and particularly the domestic reading material of girls. Girls made an explicit engagement with contemporary print culture. This engagement had its antecedents in the late eighteenth century; Margaret Beetham suggests that early ladies' magazines encouraged reader participation through correspondence columns.<sup>196</sup> Scholarship on girls' and women's diaries must be harnessed to analyse manuscript magazines, as so little research has been done on them. Indeed manuscript magazines were usually a component of girls' broader writing culture, which included diaries, letters, and the various written articles produced through middle- or upper-class home education and socialisation.

#### Between agency and control: gendered performance and authenticity in girls' writings

Middle-class girls were aware of potential audiences that they could perform for through their life writing and other daily activities. Heather Fitzsimmons Frey has drawn attention to the playful, gender-aware explorations that could be sought through at-home theatricals, and I suggest that diarising and other life writing also provided a space for girls' gendered fantasies to be enacted.<sup>197</sup> Girls would recreate the format of published

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<sup>195</sup> See Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*, pp. 126–27.

<sup>196</sup> Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800–1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 19–21.

<sup>197</sup> Heather Fitzsimmons Frey, 'Middle-class Victorian girls' at home theatricals and the future: New girls, new women and girls playing boys in the drawing room', in *International Girls Studies Association*

periodicals, and in doing so would adopt professional writing roles, and even experiment with gender identity.<sup>198</sup>

For adolescent girls as Victorian ladies in training, life writing was arguably an acceptable mode of controlled expression. Indeed life writing in many instances provided a space to circumvent such control. Carolyn Steedman suggests that ‘in the middle-class Victorian schoolroom that generated much [life] writing, the cultivation of a good hand and some practice in letter writing, the verbal cement of bourgeois relations, were rationales for the pedagogic device of child diary writing.’<sup>199</sup> Girl diarists might recount their morning which they spent drawing flora, but were encouraged to copy existing drawings; they might have played lawn tennis in the afternoon, but they were informed which type of dress they had to wear for the occasion.<sup>200</sup> In short, the act of diary writing was no less gendered and thus constrained than their other familiar activities which are recited in their diaries. The over-ascription of agency in children’s historical records has been addressed by Mona Gleeson, who argues that ‘uncritical adherence’ to the ‘agency movement’ in current studies of children’s histories is a ‘trap.’<sup>201</sup> This can take the form of an ‘imperative to focus upon youthful autonomy and resistance as the main interpretive goal in histories of children and youth.’<sup>202</sup> This thesis is cognizant of this trap and aims not to reduce girls’ writing culture down to a single rebellious transaction but rather aims to comprehend the multiple explanations for girls’ cultural participation, and the tension between agency and control that is played out on the platform of girls’ writings.

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*Conference* (University of East Anglia, UK, 2016).

<sup>198</sup> I discuss this in detail in my case study chapters.

<sup>199</sup> Steedman, *The Tidy House*, p. 69.

<sup>200</sup> I will analyse specific examples fully later in this chapter.

<sup>201</sup> Mona Gleeson, ‘Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education’, *History of Education*, 45.4 (2016), 446–459 (p. 447).

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 447.

Domestic life is a predominant theme in Victorian girls' diaries – they were written in the home and the events depicted that the middle-class girls were involved in either took place in the home or in the grounds of the house, as unlike their brothers, they were educated at home. Diarising in such confined proximities was inevitably a habit which was recognised by the family, and the question of privacy with regards to these diaries is complex. Lynn Z. Bloom suggests that the diary can generally be divided into two sub-genres: the 'truly private diary' and the 'public private diary.'<sup>203</sup> The 'truly private' diary, according to Bloom, is not written in a presentable way, and is difficult for researchers to read. This differs to the 'public private diary' which is written accessibly and legibly, even if the writer did not anticipate a future reader. Such a categorisation of girls' diaries is more problematic than this dichotomy might suggest. Even if the siblings and parents of the girls did not read the diaries in either a shared or invasive gesture, the girls still knew that they might be of interest to the family unit. Of course many of the girls knew that their diaries were not exclusively private to them; it was commonplace for girls to recite their more descriptive entries to their family, as it was considered to be a civilised and unifying domestic activity.<sup>204</sup>

The author Louisa May Alcott and her sisters were all instructed by their father to keep their journals regularly, so that he could keep a close watch on their expression and attitude, and seek to improve them.<sup>205</sup> As such, girls' diaries have often been caught in a double bind. Mary Pipher suggests:

Girls have long been trained to be feminine at considerable cost to their humanity.

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<sup>203</sup> Lynn Z. Bloom, "'I Write for Myself and Strangers': Private Diaries as Public Documents', in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, ed. by Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 23–37.

<sup>204</sup> See Cynthia A. Huff, 'Reading as Re-Vision: Approaches to Reading Manuscript Diaries', *Biography*, 23.3 (2000), 505–523, (p. 511).

<sup>205</sup> Louisa May Alcott, *Her Life Letters and Journals*, ed. by Ednah D. Cheney (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1889), p. 23.

They have long been evaluated on the basis of appearance and caught in myriad double binds: achieve, but not too much; be polite, but be yourself; be feminine and adult; be aware of our cultural heritage, but don't comment on the sexism. Another way to describe this feminine training is to call it false self-training. Girls are trained to be less than who they really are. They are trained to be what the culture wants of its young women, not what they themselves want to become.<sup>206</sup>

To read the life writing of Victorian girls as it was read at the time would be to position the girl primarily, and reductively, in relation to the other family members, as the daughter, granddaughter, niece and sister. In a similar sense, some women diarists served as chroniclers of familial events, or paid homage to the great man who they were married to, overshadowing their own role as independent thinkers.<sup>207</sup> Yet the truly private diary is structured in an entirely different way. Shiffman qualifies Bloom's theory that the truly private diary 'exhibits neither foreshadowing nor retrospection, and contains no superfluous information. This truly private diary, in fact, lacks sufficient detail to render it self-coherent and cannot stand alone.'<sup>208</sup> In accordance with Bloom's and Shiffman's logic, none of the diaries in this study can be considered 'truly private', due to their presentation of events.<sup>209</sup>

Yet it must be remembered that Bloom refers to women's diaries in this proposition, and it does not always apply to girls' writings. Tracing Bloom's argument, Shiffman suggests that 'any diarist who does not personally destroy her work must be aware of the existence of a possible audience, present or future, and will construct her

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<sup>206</sup> Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (New York: Penguin, 1994), p. 44.

<sup>207</sup> See Huff, 'Reading as Re-Vision.'

<sup>208</sup> Shiffman, 'Burn What They Should Not See', p. 94.

<sup>209</sup> One notable exception is the life writing of Anne Lister, who wrote in a code which only she and her lover could understand. Born in Yorkshire, Anne Lister (1791–1840) was a wealthy landowner. In her diaries she chronicled her daily life, including details of her lesbian relationships, using a code of her own invention.

text accordingly.<sup>210</sup> Indeed anxious notions of writerly propriety haunt the girls' entries, but they do not show exhibitionism or even a true grasp of what their life writing might come to mean in the future, so the fact that they have kept their diaries instead of destroying them does not automatically provide insight into the girls' personalities.<sup>211</sup> I favour Huff's consideration that 'the construction of a family ideology, the relationships of that ideology to the British empire, and our received notions about a unitary self' are all contexts in which to consider women's and girls' diaries.<sup>212</sup> This knowledge dictates that the ideologies of the Victorian home and family are crucial to my analysis.

Although certainly diaries were an exercise in acceptable femininity, it is possible to assert that girls had a degree of autonomy in the acts of imaginative play and life writing. Bunkers observes that feminist critics such as Elaine Showalter, Jane Marcus, and Alice Walker have explored the notion of women's 'private' writings as analogous to women's labour such as sewing, weaving, and gardening. Such creative activities are all considered delicate forms of skilled labour 'that function to preserve the fabric of women's experiences.'<sup>213</sup> Similarly, Steedman too asserts that 'writing is a means of growth available to all children, producing artefacts wrought by their own internal rules.'<sup>214</sup> However diary records of these activities do not provide a full insight into the true experience of the girls. This quest for authenticity in nineteenth-century life writing

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<sup>210</sup> Shiffman, 'Burn What They Should Not See', p. 95.

<sup>211</sup> If Victorian girls destroyed their diaries which they were ashamed of, then we will never know about it, unless this is mentioned in other life writings or biographical material. Diarist Emily Shore wrote about wanting to keep a separate journal to air her innermost thoughts and feelings, but as her diaries were edited long after her death but still in the nineteenth century, it is unclear whether this secret diary had been found or indeed if it was even made at all.

<sup>212</sup> Huff argues that diaries are always 'deeply contextualised, family-centered, multimedia discourses, and hence the "self" projected in these documents is multidimensional and not unified. In this sense, form and subjectivity work together.' See Huff, 'Reading as Re-Vision', p. 508.

<sup>213</sup> Suzanne L. Bunkers, 'What Do Women Really Mean? Thoughts on Women's Diaries and Lives,' in *The Intimate Critique: Autobiographical Literary Criticism*, ed. by Diane P. Freedman, Olivia Frey, and Frances Murphy Zauhar (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) pp. 216–217.

<sup>214</sup> Steedman, *The Tidy House*, p. 30.

is highly contentious, particularly due to the variation in the individuals who wrote the accounts; a ‘typical’ diary cannot be identified for each class, gender or time period, and indeed the diaries of girls that I study are idiosyncratic. The methodological approaches of other scholars who have conducted studies on life writing, autobiography, and memoir, enlighten these issues on authenticity and individuality. The performance of gender is complicated too, by the fact that girls can knowingly perform masculine and feminine styles in their life writing. As will be evidenced later in this section with specific examples, girl writers performed their feminine socialization in life writings, but they also engaged with a male literary canon and male practices of life writing. For example, Virginia Woolf cited reading the diary of Samuel Pepys in her adolescent diary, and in Juliana Ewing’s fictional autobiography *Six to Sixteen* (1876) which I will discuss in greater detail in the final chapter of this thesis, the girl writer models her autobiography on Pepys’ diary. Beatrix Potter (1866–1943), who wrote her diary in code from the age of fourteen onwards, also modelled her journal on Boswell and Pepys.<sup>215</sup>

It was not only traditional feminine or male authorial identities that girls trialled in their life writings. In the later nineteenth century, girls’ writings began to amass the qualities of changing identities in a changing social landscape. Hunter argues that the practice of diary writing ‘contributed to the development of the “enhanced sense of self,” which [is] central to claims of New Women for a public role.’<sup>216</sup> In the case studies of 1880s and 1890s diaries and manuscript magazines that I explore later in this thesis, identities of the New Woman and New Girl emerge. These identities can be seen to intersect with the models of writing and autobiography which were previously gendered

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<sup>215</sup> Beatrix Potter wrote this later in life in a letter to her cousin, Caroline Clark. See Cara Giaimo, ‘Beatrix Potter’s Greatest Work Was a Secret, Coded Journal She Kept as a Teen’, *Atlas Obscura*, (2017) <<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/beatrix-potter-secret-journal-code-leslie-linder>> [accessed 5 October 2018].

<sup>216</sup> Hunter, ‘Inscribing the Self in the Heart of the Family’, p. 51.

as either conventionally masculine or feminine.

### Textuality, class and experience in girls' diaries

Girls' writings varied greatly in the detail and nature of the depiction of experience. Scholars including Sally Mitchell have acknowledged the heterogeneity in girls' culture and responses to fiction at the end of the nineteenth century. Autobiography studies can enhance this Girls Studies research by providing a detailed database of life writings as documents of personal identity. In *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* David Vincent presents a study of a hundred and forty-two working class autobiographies during the period between 1790 and 1850, mostly those of adult male shoemakers, printers and factory workers.<sup>217</sup> Although his study differs to this thesis in terms of the age, gender and class of the diarists, his rationalising of reading historical diaries is a useful tool for approaching girls' writing. Vincent acknowledges the sheer variation in diaries which are written by a newly recognisable class of people. His research studies a large sample of diaries, yet Vincent stresses that the working-class diaries that he analyses are by no means representative or quantifiable, and that they should be studied individually 'as units of literature.'<sup>218</sup> Furthermore, the diarist's emotional experience which is sought for by the critic is perhaps the most elusive aspect in the life writing. Vincent laments:

Yet while it is clearly the case that the functions of the family cannot be understood without a detailed knowledge of its structure, the analysis of structure can itself do no more than sketch the shadowy outline of what actually happened inside the family. The most sophisticated computer programme can never tell us how much a man loved his wife, or to what extent parents grieved over the death of a child.<sup>219</sup>

As Vincent suggests, even with the most pioneering technology, it is not possible to

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<sup>217</sup> David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* (London: Europa Publications, 1981).

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.



ascertain the writer's inter-personal politics, their feelings towards daily minutiae, let alone their major life events. There are many similar problems associated with the quest for an emotional truth in adolescent girls' diaries.

The experiences that girls depict are documented in purely subjective terms. They can be non-linear; and they naturally omit some life events which they either did not comprehend, or did not deem to be interesting, or appropriate. Emily Pepys' diary, for example, causes particular frustration, as she only kept it for a six-month period, and her reason for ceasing is unknown. Emily Shore and Marjory Fleming died young, so their writings were limited too. Moreover, as Vincent highlights in his comment on the impossibility of communicating extents of love or grief, certain expressions are inarticulate for the girls. Philippe Lejeune has acknowledged the gaps in girls' diaries: 'A girl could keep a diary, without any interruption, between the ages of eight and seventeen, without mentioning at all the transformations brought about by puberty. The expression of feelings and emotions is usually extremely reserved.'<sup>220</sup> This is true of the diaries and manuscript magazines in my study. Due to the expectations of girls' conduct, as well as girls' adherence to a style of authorship, such intimate details about girls lived experience are omitted from writings.

The question of expression and social background in life writing studies has been explored by feminist scholars. Bunkers has acknowledged that many feminist studies of diaries have focused 'the bulk of their attention on the personal writings of white middle- and upper-class Euro-American women.'<sup>221</sup> The focus in this thesis is on the white British

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<sup>220</sup> Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), p. 132.

<sup>221</sup> Suzanne L. Bunkers, 'Review of *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* by Sidonie Smith; *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings* ed. by Shari Benstock; *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives* ed. by Personal Narratives Group; *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography* ed. by Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 17.4 (1992), 839–842, (p. 841).

middle-class girl, due to the availability of the primary material and my aim to expose the culture of British adolescent writing in the Victorian era. Restricted expression, I argue, is a ubiquitous issue in gendered contexts, and particularly in that of middle-class Victorian girls' experiences. Henry Jenkins, whose work was explored in the previous chapter, suggests that children's interactions in culture 'come from positions of unequal power' whatever their social background.<sup>222</sup>

Although many expressions in girls' diaries are problematic to analyse in terms of the public/private discrepancy that I have outlined above, I suggest that girls' references to literature are a palpable and analysable aspect of their writing culture. As girls were encouraged to read and thus have an extensive cultural knowledge, their writings about literature are a comparatively explicit and common feature of their life writing. I will discuss girls' engagement with literary culture at length later in this chapter. Firstly I will analyse the gendered constructions of girl writers in diaries which were edited and published, which will serve to contextualise girls' literary engagements in their writings.

#### The multiple constructions of Marjorie Fleming

Both the published editions of Fleming's life writing and her actual manuscripts are brimming with ideology relating to middle-class girls' expected trajectory of socialisation. Her published writings experienced an afterlife which prospered from fanciful adaptations of her real life and writing, and her manuscripts contain writing which was abridged, or even physically excised from the pages. As such, the differing incarnations of Fleming's life writing provide insights into her ideas, the contemporaneous censoring of them, and the multiple ways in which her story was shaped in the later decades and centuries, by a changing literary market, and changing perceptions

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<sup>222</sup> Henry Jenkins, ed., *The Children's Culture Reader* (New York: NYU Press, 1998), p. 1.

of girlhood.

Fleming's juvenile writings underwent an extended and curious afterlife throughout the nineteenth century, which continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She was born in Kirkcaldy in 1803 and died age 8 years-old from the measles. A few decades later, she came to be seen as the epitome of the charming, innocent, and tragic girl writer. Her edited copybooks and letters from 1810 were first published by H. B Farnie in 1858, but the Scottish writer Lachlan Macbean edited multiple editions of her writing at the *fin de siècle*, which included medical doctor John Brown's account of Marjory's life, entitled *A Story of Child-Life Fifty Years Ago*.<sup>223</sup> In 1894 a Mr. William Archer wrote in to *Pall Mall*, asking 'Do Marjorie's manuscripts still exist, I wonder? And might it not be possible to supplement them from Dr Brown's too brief and fragmentary extracts? I carry my worship so far that I should be grateful for a facsimile of a page of her handwriting.'<sup>224</sup> Her renown reached late-Victorian and early twentieth-century men of letters; Leslie Stephen contributed to her glowing entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain, and Charles Algernon Swinburne all wrote about her diary.<sup>225</sup> It is significant that these figures who framed Fleming's writings were all men of letters.

The enormity of Marjory's popularity in these edited works superseded an authentic portrayal of her writing and her life. Farnie dubbed her 'pet Marjorie', a name which became fixed, even though she was nicknamed 'Maidie' by her family, and her forename was spelled 'Marjory.' The literary interest in Fleming no doubt arose from her

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<sup>223</sup> H. B. Farnie, *Pet Marjorie [i.e. Marjorie Fleming] A Story of Child Life Fifty Years Ago* (Edinburgh: Cupar, 1858); Lachlan Macbean, ed., *The Story of Pet Marjorie: With Her Journals*, 2nd edn (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1905).

<sup>224</sup> Macbean, *The Story of Pet Marjorie*, p. iv.

<sup>225</sup> See Laurie Langbauer, 'Marjory Fleming and Child Authors: The Total Depravity of Inanimate Things', *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, 56 (2009) para 1–49, <<https://doi.org/10.7202/1001092ar>>

mythologised relationship with Walter Scott. The two were distantly related, but it is now accepted that there is no grounding for them purportedly having a special relationship, with Scott as ‘a near neighbour’, and ‘a frequent visitor to the house of her aunt’, as Macbean put it.<sup>226</sup> The embellishment of Fleming’s representation in publications reflect what Catherine Robson claimed in her provocative study *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman*. Robson argues that for mid-nineteenth century male writers, the girl child was a conduit for accessing an ‘ideal [...] lost childhood.’<sup>227</sup> Girlhood innocence and precocity was defined by male writers. Claudia Nelson suggests that this fear ‘hint[s] at adult culpability in not providing the middle-class child with an upbringing that shields him or her from the contradictions and difficulties of the world.’<sup>228</sup> Regardless of these writers’ motivations, this patriarchal construction of the girl writer erased much of the self-definition achieved by girls through their writing culture.

The manipulation of her physical image is evident, too, as in Macbean’s 1905 edition he notes how a particular likeness of Fleming had been omitted from publication, as ‘the earliest extant portrait is too unflattering.’<sup>229</sup> The interest in Fleming continued well into the twentieth century, and in 1945 the fiction and biography writer Oriel Malet consulted the manuscripts in order to inform her fictional biography of Marjory which was reissued in 2000. Malet’s novella imagines Fleming’s writing process, and sentimentally describes the imagined relationships between Fleming and her mother, and her cousin Isabella Keith.<sup>230</sup> Carolyn Steedman has commented on the heavy embellishment of Fleming’s life, which has been added to by most adult writers who have

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<sup>226</sup> Macbean, *The Story of Pet Marjorie*, p. 49.

<sup>227</sup> Catherine Robson, *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 179.

<sup>228</sup> Claudia Nelson, *Precocious Children and Childish Adults: Age Inversion in Victorian Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), p. 40.

<sup>229</sup> Macbean, *The Story of Pet Marjorie*, p. 8.

<sup>230</sup> Oriel Malet, *Marjory Fleming* (London: Persephone Books, 2000).

been in contact with her writing. According to Steedman,

The stuff of the domestic day is dull and many children's accounts of their own education and socialisation remain unread in the archives, for they fail to touch those veins of humour and tenderness that have made famous the *Journal* of Marjory Fleming, and Daisy Ashford's *the Young Visitors* (sic). What editors of such work have done is, as we have seen, to confuse their own appreciation of the text with the child's intention.<sup>231</sup>

Considering the rich textual editing history of Fleming's writing, accessing her manuscript entries in order to make contrasts with the published renditions of her life writing is a worthwhile exercise. From the manuscripts it is evident that her copybooks were used consciously for her improvement, and amongst her accounts of daily life are pages full of spelling and handwriting exercises. It is striking how within the manuscripts, the external shaping of Fleming's writing is evident even from the time of her writing. The editorial eye of Fleming's older cousin Isabella Keith is ubiquitous in the manuscripts, as Keith corrects Fleming's spellings by underlining words and inserting letters where her cousin has missed them out.

Equally widespread throughout the diaries are Fleming's descriptions of her beloved cousin who she goes to live with in Edinburgh. Keith educates and socialises Fleming, and writing is the principal mode through which this goal is achieved. Fleming writes: 'As it is Sunday I must begin to write serious thoughts as Isabella bids me [...] Isabella teaches me to [sic] or three hours every day in reading and writing and arithmatick [sic] and many other things and religion into the bargain. On sunday she teaches me to be virtuous.'<sup>232</sup> On rare occasions in the diary Keith's presence is reinforced when Fleming writes in full sentences. In one of these instances, Fleming tells a story which Keith responds to. Fleming writes 'we are reading a book about a man who went

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<sup>231</sup> Steedman, *The Tidy House*, p. 69.

<sup>232</sup> Marjory Fleming, *Diary*, MS 1097, The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, p. 9.

into a house & he saw a sack & he went & look [sic] into it & he saw a dead body in it' and Keith writes in tiny cursive below 'Marjory must write no more journals till she writes better.'<sup>233</sup> Furthermore, whole portions of her writing have been cut out of the manuscript with scissors or carefully torn out; it is not clear when or why this was done. This is an example of another form of external censorship of Fleming's writings, indicating the impact of social constraints on diary writers as I highlighted earlier in this section.

Even with the spelling errors, and her lack of punctuation, the content of Fleming's diary is indeed remarkable in its exploration of acceptable expression. Fleming was praised by Victorian editors for her knowledge of writers, and expressing her literary tastes, which was astounding for a 6 year-old. Yet the editors of her writing did not apprehend that these remarks were a form of communication with the world, of modelling and situating oneself within a society that is knowledgeable about the arts, and adult relationships, amongst many other things. Due to the lack of formal education for girls in the early nineteenth century, self-education in the family library was one way to accrue knowledge about the world, which Fleming did by reading 'love novels' about 'heroins [sic]'.<sup>234</sup> Her poems, knowledge of Mary, Queen of Scots, and her appreciation for Walter Scott's poem 'hill Valein' ('Helvellyn') were viewed by her Victorian male editors purely as amusing and entirely expected accomplishments of the middle-class girl.

Fleming's literary culture is evident in her citational and appropriative writing style. I will explore this theme in greater detail later in this chapter. However her censorship by her cousin, and her framing by late-Victorian men of letters, demonstrates the extent of control that adult – and especially male – arbiters exerted over girls' writings which existed outside the confines of peer manuscript cultures.

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<sup>233</sup> Fleming, MS 1097, pp. 17–18.

<sup>234</sup> Fleming, MS1098, p. 5.

### The pious model: Emily Shore's culture and self-awareness

Another early-Victorian girl diarist whose writings were cultivated for posthumous publication is Emily Shore. Shore was 'conventionally religious', as her father was an Anglican curate, and for the devout family 'reading and open discussion about religious issues were regular activities.'<sup>235</sup> Like the diarising Jebb family, who I will discuss later in this thesis, Shore shared with her two sisters a talent for writing; Louisa Catherine and Arabella Shore brought out volumes of poetry between 1855 and 1890, and Arabella published articles on the rights of women in the *Westminster Review*.<sup>236</sup> Over fifty years after Emily's death, Arabella and Louisa edited Shore's twelve octavo volumes of diaries in *Journal of Emily Shore*, published in 1891 and reissued in 1898 with illustrations.<sup>237</sup> In the words of Barbara T. Gates, who edited Shore's diary in 1991, Shore was a 'prodigious young polymath' whose diary seems advanced in knowledge and flair well beyond her years.<sup>238</sup> She produced a great many creative works, and some of her short naturalist essays on 'An account of a cuckoo' and 'The Golden Crested Wren' were published in the *Penny Magazine* in December 1837. Her learnings are even more exceptional when it is considered that Shore was an adolescent autodidact, after only a spell of being tutored by her parents.<sup>239</sup> Shore maintained her diary religiously, which she saw as 'a valuable index of [her] mind,' even writing her last entry just two weeks before her untimely death, the last time that she was able to pick up her pen.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Mary Ellen Bellenca, *Daybooks of Discovery* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2007), p. 18.

<sup>236</sup> Basil Meyer, 'Consumptive Death in Victorian Literature, 1830–1880' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 2001), p. 275.

<sup>237</sup> Emily Shore, *Journal of Emily Shore* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1891 and 1989). I have consulted both editions in my research for this chapter.

<sup>238</sup> Barbara T. Gates, 'Shore, (Margaret) Emily (1819–1839), writer and naturalist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25454>> [accessed 10 June 2018].

<sup>239</sup> Emily's reading habits are particularly broad and advanced for her age; she reads Rousseau at age 12, for example. A full study of girl diarists' reading habits is contained in the next chapter.

<sup>240</sup> Shore, *Journal of Emily Shore*, p. 262.

Shore's diary entries, which she wrote from eleven years-old, track her growing attitudes and passions, as well as her increasing anxiety. At one point in 1838 Shore considers burning her older diaries, which had been, in her words, 'the record of faults and follies which have made my cheek burn on the re-perusal.'<sup>241</sup> Shore quickly advances from this style as her journal instead becomes enriched with her learnings about history, the arts, and languages. She is also unafraid of expressing critical opinions, which is made clear when she states her dislike for Shakespeare's *Richard III*.<sup>242</sup> Yet as she ages her life writing acquires a more self-conscious abashedness which alters the tone of her previous unflinchingly stoic entries.

In a long passage, she reflects emotionally on her reasons for keeping a diary, and whether she should continue with it. It begins in 1838: 'July 6<sup>th</sup>, Friday. – The eleventh volume of my journal [...] but where it will end I know not.' She continues

I have poured out my feelings into these later pages; I have written them on the impulse of the moment, as well as from the coolness of calm deliberation. I have written much that I would show only to a very few, and much that I would on no account submit to any human eye. Still, even now, I cannot entirely divest myself of an uncomfortable notion that the whole may some future day, when I am in my grave, be read by some individual, and this notion has, even without my being often aware of it, cramped me, I am sure I have by no means confessed myself in this journal; I have not opened my whole heart; I do not write my feelings and thoughts for the inspection of another – Heaven forbid! – but I imagine the vague fear I have above mentioned has grown into a sort of unconscious habit, instinctively limiting the extent of my confidence in ink and paper, so that the *secret chamber of the heart*, of which Foster speaks so strikingly, does not find in my pen a key to unlock it.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Shore, *Journal of Emily Shore*, p. 262.

<sup>242</sup> In this there is a link between Emily Shore and the publications of Shakespearean criticism by the women in the Blue Stockings Society. See Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 121.

<sup>243</sup> Shore, *Journal of Emily Shore*, p. 262. Emphasis in original.



This passage is moving and ostensibly indicates emotional authenticity, yet in it Shore acknowledges that she pens her diary in a self-aware and self-censoring way. Although she has ‘not opened her whole heart’ she is still pained at the thought of someone reading her journals after her death, and thus constructs her writing under this awareness. Yet she goes on to cite her reasons for keeping the journal despite her developing reservations:

[...] a last and remote consideration, but one which, absurd almost as it is, I choose to take into consideration, should it hereafter happen that I should be married and the mother of a family, I think that much of these records of my own early life may be very interesting and instructive to *them*.<sup>244</sup>

Saddening as it is that Shore considers the potential future audience of a family which she was never to have, the sake of posterity is still part of her reasoning. So although the thought of an unknown audience accessing her diaries is repugnant, the idea that her children might *learn* from them, and that they might bring ‘entertainment’ to her family and select friends, motivates her to continue writing.<sup>245</sup> This reveals Shore’s careful self-construction of her identity as a writer, an idea which will be significant in my analysis of girls writers’ self-identification as authors in manuscript magazines.

Shore potentially sees herself as passing on a writing tradition, borne out of her habitus – inculcated through her home education and engagements with literature. She simultaneously anticipates a refinement of her identity as she grows beyond girlhood. This gives an impression of Shore’s own goals for her writing, yet they are easily obscured by the editorial. Like Fleming, Shore’s writings were framed by adult writers long after her death. If Fleming was noted for her humour and relation to Scott, Shore’s editor sisters emphasised her precocity.<sup>246</sup> Both diarists were received as exceptional and

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<sup>244</sup> Shore, *Journal of Emily Shore*, p. 262. Emphasis in original.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>246</sup> ‘Precocity’ was a much-discussed term in late-Victorian child development discourse. Referring to Shore, I use the term to mean juvenile intellectual abilities, as in child psychologist James Sully’s 1886

tragic figures. Yet, as my later case study chapters will demonstrate, girls' writing culture could be a shared and aspirational enterprise; a far cry from this narrow textual representation.

#### Appropriate reading for girl diarists: Emily Pepys

Another aspect of girls' writing which demonstrates their constructed nature is girls' cognizance of proper and improper conduct. Knowledge concerning what is deemed appropriate behaviour is a recurring theme in girls' diaries throughout the nineteenth century. The one known diary of Emily Pepys (1833–1877), who was the descendant of the famous diarist Samuel Pepys provides a fascinating, albeit brief, insight into mid-century middle-class pre-pubescent girlhood. It spans only six months, during which time Pepys turned 11 years old. Yet even in this short prosaic space Pepys presents a deeply textured portrait of her domestic life and her family's social circles. Her two older siblings who still lived at home, Herbert and Louisa, feature heavily in Pepys's entries. Typical for girls of their class, the two sisters were educated by their mother and Pepys reports of her daily lessons in the diary. This training clearly influenced her engagement with literary culture, particularly in terms of what reading was or was not acceptable.

For example, Pepys was prohibited from learning about the future adult body with which she wished to acquaint herself. She records an episode of her curiosity which occurred on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1845. While most of her family dined out at the house of a family friend, Emily writes that

Herbert and I were left alone, and looked at several nice things in the Encyclopoedia [sic], such as Anatomy, Midwifery etc. etc. etc. but Mama told me to go to bed 10 minutes before 9 so we had not much time. Herbert and I always go together let one another into all our secrets that we would not tell anybody else

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article in the *Nineteenth Century*, titled 'Genius and Precocity.' See Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child*, p. 145. I discuss precocity further in chapter six of this thesis.

for worlds.<sup>247</sup>

The absence of adult supervision enabled her to read about the body, and specifically the faculties of the female body. Yet it is curious that she recorded this moment of disobedient learning in her diary.

As David Vincent has noted, feelings of love and grief can be seen in life writings, even if some of these experiences were not given full justice through the individual's grasp of the written word. Yet the taboo of puberty meant that detailed accounts were never explicitly written in life writing. Looking beyond Britain, in Marilyn Himmesoëte's study of over 100 nineteenth-century diaries of French teenagers, she claims that the diaries 'did not really comment on the physical changes brought about by puberty', which implies that this restraint on expression is more widespread than we can apprehend.<sup>248</sup> Julia Swindells writes at length on the configuration of the encyclopaedia in *A Young Girl's Diary*, a diary which was edited by Sigmund Freud. Swindells recounts how when found trying to access knowledge,

the elder sister, Dora, covers for the young girl [...] thereby underlining the contradiction: books, for father, are privileged and must be respected, while curiosity, the search for knowledge, in children, is risky, and for a young girl to speak of some forms of knowledge is illegitimate, is a threat to bourgeois morality and an unacceptable attempt at negotiation with the adult world of 'knowledge.'<sup>249</sup>

Swindells consolidates the taboo of the girl diarist's longing for knowledge, and introduces the notion that this is both encouraged and surveilled by family members. It is

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<sup>247</sup> Emily Pepys, *The Journal of Emily Pepys*, ed. and intro. by Gillian Avery (London: Prospect Books, 1984), Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1845, p. 90. Emphasis in original.

<sup>248</sup> Marilyn Himmesoëte, 'Writing and Measuring Time: Nineteenth-Century French Teenage Diaries', *Controlling Time and Shaping the Self: Developments in Autobiographical Writing Since the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf Dekker and Michael Mascuch (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 147–167 (p. 162).

<sup>249</sup> Julia Swindells, "'What's the use of books?'" Knowledge, Authenticity and *A Young Girl's Diary*', *Women's History Review*, 5.1 (1996), 55–66, (p. 61).

the young girl's older sister, in this instance, who 'protect(s) the little sister from speaking of an illicit curiosity and from attempting a negotiation with the adult world which she, the elder, knows is unacceptable to the adults.'<sup>250</sup> Like in the case of Pepys, who accesses the encyclopaedia with her brother as an accomplice, the young girl has another person who acts as a buffer to her actions. To Swindells it is important that the girl has 'named this curiosity, has attempted to negotiate with adults about it.'<sup>251</sup> Similarly, by acknowledging her curiosity and longing for knowledge Pepys has legitimated it, and suggested that engagement with written material can be empowering and also burdensome.

As well as describing banned books, Pepys also recounts the reward of accessing approved books. Emily and her brother Herbert are entrusted with a task to arrange books in their father's library: 'we went on with the job in Papa's library, which is to arrange some of the books which have got misplaced.'<sup>252</sup> This goes on for several days, and is repeatedly mentioned in diary entries, until she writes 'Herbert and I finished Papa's books this morning. Papa went to Worcester today and brought home for me some books and a pair of kid gloves.'<sup>253</sup> Emily is entrusted with books – they signify a realm that she is allowed into, on occasions. She is also rewarded with books, which she will both enjoy and use to expand upon her cultural education.

Three days after finishing her task and receiving her books as a reward, the books from the circulating library arrive:

Friday, 15th November. Today I wrote two letters which is a great deal for me. I wrote one to Mama and one to Emie. I like writing letters very much, and I do not

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<sup>250</sup> Swindells, "What's the use of books?", p. 61.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>252</sup> Pepys, *Journal of Emily Pepys*, p. 72.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

think I write very bad for my age, though I certainly do not write so well as Emie. This morning the box of books came from Cawthorn's, which we were very glad of, as we are in great want of books. I have chosen Pickwick, as I know I may read that, and the others I may not read till Mama comes home.<sup>254</sup>

Emily's experience of writing and reading are bound up with her daily activity. Later in this chapter I will focus on the work of Charles Dickens as a point of reference that is visible in several examples of girls' writings. During the nineteenth century the circulating library brought more reading material to women and girls in the domestic space, yet there was an anxiety over women, children and young people accessing reading material through circulating libraries. Pepys' diary evidences that although she was at liberty to select some of her own reading material, her engagement with literature was still defined by adult socialisation. It consolidates the constructed nature of girls' reading practices which can also be seen in the writings of Fleming and Shore, and points to how constructs of appropriate feminine behaviour in the diary affected girls' engagements with literature in their writings.

#### Influence and literary engagement in girls' life writing

Girls' writing culture, then, was based on the literature that they read, as well as myriad other influences of parental and peer socialisation. In 1987 Jane Dupree Begos claimed that more girls than boys keep diaries: 'it has always been "all right" for girls to sit quietly and scribble in a book.'<sup>255</sup> Kimberley Reynolds established in *Girls Only?* that girls have always read more material and in greater variety than boys.<sup>256</sup> The link between girls' heightened writing and reading practice can be seen in their self-made written culture. Girls' writings, whether diaries, copybooks or creative works such as manuscript

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<sup>254</sup> Pepys, *Journal of Emily Pepys*, p. 75.

<sup>255</sup> Jane Dupree Begos, 'The Diaries of Adolescent Girls', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 10.1 (1987), 69–74.

<sup>256</sup> Reynolds, *Girls Only?*

magazines, were all indebted to the individual's habitus, and particularly the literature that the girl was exposed to. Wolf and Heath have highlighted the importance of fiction in children's lives: 'As though braided together, literature lies within its connections to reality, children's recreations of literary elements in ordinary events, and their criticism of life that mixes the rules of fact and fiction.'<sup>257</sup> This is particularly true of life writing, which so often mixes the true experience of girls' home life with fantasies and fictionalisation, which are also precipitated by socialisation and cultural habitus. The various girlhood writings of Eva Knatchbull-Hugessen (1861–1895) provide an insight into how the experience of culture at home translated into life writings. Knatchbull-Hugessen wrote both diaries and manuscript magazines, which reflect her cultural and specifically literary habitus. Gleadle highlights how Knatchbull-Hugessen had 'huge cultural opportunities' in her girlhood home.<sup>258</sup> She used the *Cornhill* magazine as a model for writing. She was the great-great niece of Jane Austen (another prolific girl writer), and this heritage was celebrated by other family members.

Children's access to literature and other reading can be seen, often explicitly, in their own writings. A. O. J. Cockshut suggests that

When precocious children write poetry or begin a novel or a *History of England* they are imitating adult models which are usually easy to trace. A child that has read Macaulay will write differently from one who has read Carlyle. But when a child writes a diary, adult diaries are unlikely to have been a leading influence. If the adults of the family keep diaries the children are probably not allowed to see them.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Shelby Anne Wolf and Shirley Brice Heath, *The Braid of Literature: Children's Worlds of Reading* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 8.

<sup>258</sup> Gleadle, 'Magazine culture, girlhood communities, and educational reform', p. 19.

<sup>259</sup> A. O. J. Cockshut, 'Children's Diaries', in *Children and Their Books: A Celebration of the Work of Iona and Peter Opie*, ed. by Gillian Avery and Julia Briggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 382. Jane Austen began writing subversive histories of Britain as a girl.

In manuscript magazines and creative writing elements in girls' diaries in my study, this is also the case. Within girls' writings there can be seen an explicit discourse about literary culture, as well as references and adaptations which are embedded into their creative writing. Girls wrote about reading particular books, and described their opinions on them.

The published letters of Emily Lutyens (1874–1964) depict her teenage correspondence with Reverend Whitwell Elwin, a clergyman and a former editor of the magazine the *Quarterly Review*. Lutyens wrote to Elwin almost daily from the age of thirteen to twenty three. In the published memoir, Lutyens wrote of Elwin that 'he had been the friend of Scott, Lockhart, Dickens, Thackeray, Forster, and many others, and his stories were thrilling and unending.'<sup>260</sup> These attributes made the Reverend, or 'Rev' as Lutyens addressed him in her letters, an ideal figure to give advice to Lutyens. At age sixteen she wrote to him to say

I have often read that bit of Wordsworth that you quote, and am very fond of it, and now I shall love it more and feel all that you have told me as I read it. You are the only person who ever made me feel how grand a woman's life may be. I used to think that men were the only ones who ever did anything great, and I wished that I was not a woman, but since I have been friends with you, I feel that a woman can be as great in her way as any man.<sup>261</sup>

Lutyens felt indebted to the Reverend for forming her mind into the mind of a woman who was capable of doing great things. Moreover, she believed that their sense of connection and mutual understanding established through a shared appreciation of literature was the cause of this.

Lutyens was not the only girl writer made famous in the nineteenth century because of her connection to a man of letters. As I highlighted earlier in this chapter,

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<sup>260</sup> Emily Lutyens, *A Blessed Girl: Memoirs of a Victorian Girlhood Chronicled in an Exchange of Letters 1887–1896* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), pp. 13–14.

<sup>261</sup> Lutyens, *A Blessed Girl*, p. 53.

Marjory Fleming's published diary profited from depictions of Marjory's connection with Walter Scott, in text descriptions and illustrations which depicted their fabricated relationship. When Daisy Ashford's *The Young Visitors* (1919) was published, years after she wrote the fiction aged 9 in 1890, it was prefaced by J. M. Barrie, the creator of Peter Pan, the 'exemplar of eternal childhood.'<sup>262</sup> It was hugely successful on publication, but many readers thought that it was written by Barrie himself.<sup>263</sup> This evidences the deployment of the young girl as emblem of ideal childhood by adult male writers, which has obscured the actual authorship of girls.

Girls' writings were not only connected with and lauded by well-known literary names, but they explicitly engaged with specific writers and texts too. The evidence for this in girls' written and material culture abounds, and demonstrates the adaptive and sometimes subversive nature of girls' appropriative culture. With the theories of youth appropriation as laid out in the previous chapter in mind I will consider the significance of published fiction in girls' diaries and other life writings. The following small case studies lay the foundation for my analysis of girls' appropriative culture in later chapters. They demonstrate the complicated configuration of gender, adaptation, and agency in the creative work of late-Victorian girls.

#### Citing and appropriating Scott and Dickens

In the following section I will spotlight two of the most frequently cited writers in girls' diaries to exemplify the specific citational and appropriative literary culture that I will focus on in later chapters. Charles Dickens and Walter Scott were monolithic figures in

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<sup>262</sup> David Sadler, 'Innocent Hearts: The Child Authors of the 1920s', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 17.4 (1992), pp. 24–30, (p. 24).

<sup>263</sup> *The Young Visitors* started a trend of juvenilia which was published during the 1920s. Sadler writes that 'Child authors became almost a fad, and by the end of the 1920s at least eighteen books by eleven young authors – most of them American – had been published, although none of them achieved the popularity of Daisy Ashford's book', 'Innocent Hearts', p. 24. These published child-authored titles included Hilda Conkling, *Poems by a Young Child* (New York: Stokes, 1920); Barbara Newhall Follett, *The House Without Windows* (New York: Knopf, 1927).



nineteenth-century culture. They were also widely popular with and lionised by aspirational child writers. In this final section I will provide examples of Victorian girls' adaptive responses to Scott and Dickens, and suggest that in them we can see how girls' appropriative culture responded to the gendering of writing. The ubiquitously popular styles of Scott and Dickens represented models for girls' own writing practice. Girls imitated and parodied the historical romance genre which Scott popularised, and engaged in ongoing discussions about the suitability of reading Dickens. It is noteworthy that girls' critiquing and parodying writing technique which responds to these writers is also informed by a distinctly feminine tradition of writing – that of the diary, as I detailed earlier in this section. These two models of authorship – male-authored popular nineteenth-century fiction, and the feminised performance of girlhood diary writing which stemmed from a women's writing tradition, made for an apparently incongruent combination. But I suggest that this is a compromise that adolescent girl writers made in their life writings which manifests in differing techniques of appropriative writing.

It is well evidenced that Scott's writings were enormously popular during the century; John O'Hayden emphasises that 'no writer before him had been so well received by his contemporaries – ever.'<sup>264</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, Scott was viewed as a children's writer, even though he only wrote one history, *Tales of a Grandfather* (1828–30), which was specifically aimed at children. In one diary entry of 1873 Laura Troubridge wrote, 'I read my history till dinner, *Tales of a Grandfather*, very interesting and not nearly so dull as most histories.'<sup>265</sup> Yet Scott's poetry, novels, and myth infiltrated the nineteenth-century British toy industry, children's clothing, as well as children's

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<sup>264</sup> John O'Hayden, *Walter Scott: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1970), p. 1.

<sup>265</sup> Laura Troubridge, *Life Amongst the Troubridges* (London: John Murray, 1966), p. 47. Laura Troubridge came from an aristocratic family, and later in life she was an artist and friend of the children's writer Mary Molesworth.

literature and life writing.<sup>266</sup>

In recent years work has gone into excavating evidence of Scott's popularity with young people, for example in Matthew Grenby's *The Child Reader*. Yet discussions of Scott's work purely in terms of his girl audience have never taken place, arguably because it is not an obvious association to make. Scott is often recognised as establishing the adventure romance genre – the branch of gendered fiction by writers such as G. A. Henty and Gordon Stables which flourished in the late Victorian era. Yet, as Teresa Michals has recently shown, Scott and his contemporaries consciously addressed a mixed-age and mixed-gendered audience.<sup>267</sup> The Brontë sisters' responses to Scott typified early girlhood attitudes towards the author. In a letter to her friend Ellen Nussey, Charlotte Brontë declared 'For fiction read Scott alone, all novels after his are worthless,' and all of the Brontë children mimicked his literary techniques in their juvenile writings.<sup>268</sup> Even earlier, in 1820, the eleven-year-old Fanny Kemble 'hungered and thirsted' at her Parisian boarding school for Scott's 'romantic epics' which had been her 'daily bread' at home. She wrote out the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) and *Marmion* (1808) 'from memory, so as not absolutely to lose my possession of them.'<sup>269</sup> The influence of Scott infiltrated beyond girls' reading experiences and into their lived material culture. In Lucy Cavendish's (1841–1925) diary entry of October 22nd, 1858 she writes how 'We had

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<sup>266</sup> 1860s card games based on Scott's depiction of Robin Hood are held in the Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh. An adaptation of *Ivanhoe* appeared in Hodgson's Juvenile Drama series of 1822 for use with toy theatres. George Speaight writes that 'No less than ten plays from Sir Walter Scott were adapted to the Toy Theatre, but only one play from Dickens.' George Speaight, *Juvenile Drama: The History of the English Toy Theatre* (London: Macdonald and Co, 1946), p. 67. The afterlife of Scott in the written and material culture of nineteenth-century children was so extensive, it warrants a separate research project.

<sup>267</sup> Teresa Michals, *Books for Children, Books for Adults: Age and the Novel from Defoe to James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 100–36.

<sup>268</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Selected Letters*, edited by Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 5. Scott's novels were woven into the plots of Anne Brontë's *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. In both novels Scott's books are given as gifts from one character to another.

<sup>269</sup> Valerie Sanders, ed. *Records of Girlhood: An Anthology of Nineteenth-century Women's Childhoods*, 2 vols (Farnham: Ashgate, 2000–2013), I, p. 168.

great fun in the carriage parodying Scott, and singing all the old songs we could rake up.<sup>270</sup>

The creative afterlife of Scott exists not only in girls' diary entries about performative culture, but also in creative writing. Louisa May Alcott's play which she wrote as a child with her older sister Anna is entitled *Norna, or the Witch's Curse*.<sup>271</sup> The witch Norna is partly based on a character in Scott's Waverley novel *The Pirate* (1822). The Juvenilia Press edition of Alcott's play acknowledges resonances of Shakespearean tragedies as well as fairy tales. George Eliot's juvenile narrative *Edward Neville* was written when she was 14 years old, under the name Marianne Evans.<sup>272</sup> The character name Edward Neville is potentially taken from Scott's *Old Mortality* (1816) or from Madame de Stael's hero Oswald Neville in *Camille* (1810). Alcott and Eliot's examples evidence their cultural parsing and earnest attempts at engaging with historical fiction. It corroborates the notion that appropriation was a suitable way for girl writers to practice professionalism. Juliet McMaster acknowledges of young Marianne Evans that 'The girl who was to become George Eliot is already experimenting with a masculine alter ego.'<sup>273</sup> For a young George Eliot, Scott's work facilitated experiments in authorship, gender and genre.

Later, in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), the haunting influence of Scott on the child's imagination recurs again in Eliot's fiction. In the novel, the character Maggie Tulliver notices that Philip has a copy of Scott's *The Pirate* and says

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<sup>270</sup> Lucy Cavendish, 'Fun in Carriage', *The Diary of Lady Frederick Cavendish (or Lady Lucy Cavendish)* (2006) <<http://ladylucycavendish.blogspot.com/2006/03/22oct1858-fun-in-carriage.html>> [accessed 8 December 2018]

<sup>271</sup> Louisa May Alcott, *Norna, or the Witch's Curse*, ed. by Juliet McMaster and others (Sydney: The Juvenilia Press, 2016).

<sup>272</sup> George Eliot, *Edward Neville*, ed. by Juliet McMaster and others (Edmonton: Juvenilia Press, 1995).

<sup>273</sup> Juliet McMaster, "'Adults' Literature," By Children', *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 25.2 (2001), 277–299, (p. 291).

Oh, I began that once; I read to where Minna is walking with Cleveland, and I could never get to read the rest. I went on with it in my own head, and I made several endings; but they were all unhappy. I could never make a happy ending out of that beginning. Poor Minna! I wonder what is the real end. For a long while I couldn't get my mind from the Shetland Isles; I used to feel the wind blowing on me from the rough sea.<sup>274</sup>

This passage evokes an attachment to Scott which continued to Eliot's adult writings from her juvenilia. It also suggests a frustration with Scott which is expressed by several child writers during the nineteenth century. Notably, William Makepeace Thackeray's childhood peeve with the ending of Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819–20) resulted in him writing *Rebecca and Rowena* (1850) in which he envisioned that Ivanhoe would marry Rebecca following Rowena's death. In it Thackeray satirises literary conventions of historical fiction as well as the social mores that Scott depicted. The adaptive impulses of both Thackeray and Eliot demonstrate a broader trend in nineteenth-century young readers. The case study chapters of this thesis evidence this culture in other late-Victorian girl writers too.

Even when Scott's narratives are not the basis for adaptive fiction, they are still ripe for girls to practice their critical skills. Writing of *Ivanhoe* in her diary on 30 December 1836, Emily Shore avowed that 'Scott spoils his novels by finishing them so carefully with the future happiness of the hero and heroine', referring to Rowena and Ivanhoe.<sup>275</sup> It seems that she dismisses the heteronormative narrative trajectory of *Ivanhoe*, and offers instead her own abridgement of the tale: 'Except for the sake of that pathetic dialogue between Rowena and Rebecca, I would willingly part with the last chapter, and at all events the book should have finished when Rebecca leaves the

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<sup>274</sup> George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (London: Vintage, 2010), p. 347.

<sup>275</sup> Shore, *The Journal of Emily Shore*, p. 172.

room.<sup>276</sup> Shore would prefer a focus on female exchange, and do away with the sentimental ending.

The manuscript writings of Em Jebb, which I discuss in chapter four of this thesis, also depict this revisionary approach to Scott's work. Jebb emphasises the impression that reading Scott's fiction was the incentive of the adults in the household, and was a unifying domestic activity. She expresses an opinion on the ending of Scott's *Old Mortality*, which she believed should have concluded on the union of the romantic protagonists: 'In the afternoon we finished Old Mortality, but I think it ought to have been left alone after L Evandale joined Edith's & Morton's hands.'<sup>277</sup> It is notable that girls' writings become spaces where genre and gender conventions in popular novels can be subverted. Although writing decades apart, both Shore and Jebb subvert Scott's plot, and position themselves as the author of an alternative narrative. They subscribe to the dominance of Scott in literary culture, yet simultaneously engage in a specifically female practice of revisionary writing. This tension will be evaluated in examples of girls' appropriative writing in the following manuscript case study chapters.

#### Girls' engagements with Charles Dickens' work

Alongside Scott, Dickens is another author who is frequently a focus of discussion and cultural engagement in girls' writings. Like Scott, Dickens' work was harnessed in various ways by girls, and enabled many types of writing. Most notably, Dickens' work allowed girl writers to practice their critical and reviewing skills. The digitised diary of Lucy Cavendish is rich in descriptions of her adolescent reading. Kate Flint has commented on the comprehensiveness and usefulness of Lucy's reading descriptions; Flint suggests that the diary

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<sup>276</sup> Shore, *The Journal of Emily Shore*, p. 172.

<sup>277</sup> Emily Jebb, 'Emily's Diary', August 1885 – May 1887.

provides one of the fullest accounts we have of the day-to-day reading of a Victorian girl and woman. It ranges from [...] bowdlerized Shakespeare, Longfellow, and Scott when she was still in the schoolroom, to the combination of religious debate, historical studies, and modern novels which characterised the literary consumption of her adult life.<sup>278</sup>

Dickens is also a notable recurring subject of appropriation in Cavendish's life writing.

Following his death, teenage Cavendish wrote in her diary:

I have been reading 'Little Dorrit' here, and enjoying the humour and observation of it, tho' it is one of his least good books. One feels a great blank in the world; in some ways I should think he was an unsurpassed and unsurpassable novelist. Allowing for his irresistible genius for caricature, which prevents any one of his characters from being quite a possibility, can anyone ever come near him as to creativeness, knowledge of men, the humour which springs from close observation and sympathy? But there is one noble merit about his books in which I should fancy he stands absolutely alone among satirists, their perfect freedom from all impurity and irreverence. He and Mark Lemon (the Editor of Punch, who is also lately dead) were friends; and all English people may be proud to think that the wit of two men who so influenced the country has ever been high-minded and unstained.<sup>279</sup>

Cavendish admired Dickens for his 'genius' and 'freedom from all impurity and irreverence.' The gendered description towards the end of the quotation is notable: Cavendish is in awe of the literary friendship between two 'high-minded' literary men, and genders 'knowledge' as male.

Like Scott's oeuvre, Dickens' work was believed by some to breed wholesome ideas of courtesy in young readers.<sup>280</sup> Conversely, critics worried that Dickens' depiction

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<sup>278</sup> Flint, *The Woman Reader*, p. 208.

<sup>279</sup> Lucy Cavendish, 'Critique on Dickens', *The Diary of Lady Frederick Cavendish (or Lady Lucy Cavendish)* (2010) <<http://ladylucycavendish.blogspot.com/2010/02/09jun1870-critique-on-dickens.html>> [accessed 8 December 2018]

<sup>280</sup> Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Library and American Society, 1876–1920* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), p. 214.

of low life and humour had a coarsening influence on impressionable readers, and that his sentiment was damaging. Bethan Carney suggests that Dickens' diverse readership could not 'be relied upon to reach the right conclusions on the right issues, because they include the uneducated, the young, women, and lower-class men.'<sup>281</sup> These diverse responses to Dickens are perceptible in girls' writings. In a series of letters Emily Lutyens sought Reverend Elwin's opinions on literary taste, and the suitability of reading Dickens in particular. She wrote to him 'I am reading *Martin Chuzzlewit* again. I read it once before [...] I think it is delightful and quite one of the best. I hate Dickens when he tries to be pathetic, but all his comic parts are simply excellent.'<sup>282</sup> Elwin replies to Lutyens' speculations, suggesting that Dickens' vulgarity 'adds to the fun' of reading him, and instructs her to 'continue your enjoyment, and if fresh reflections occur to you, continue your comments, which are enjoyment to me.'<sup>283</sup> Dickens provided a vehicle for Lutyens to express critical opinions, particularly because she was cognizant of some of his unfavourable reviews in the press. It is significant that Lutyens is specifically encouraged to develop her critical views, but these are ultimately a source of amusement to the older Elwin.

Dickens' reputation as a celebrity author had an effect on girl writers. Florian Schweizer highlights how Dickens was writing during the period of Thomas Carlyle's 'hero-worship', which was a major influence on the concept of authorship persisting throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>284</sup> The effects of Dickens' celebrity can be seen in the 1896 diary of Elsie Leslie, a young American actress who aged 16 visited London and

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<sup>281</sup> Bethan Carney, 'Introduction: 'Mr Popular Sentiment': Dickens and Feeling', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 14 (2012), 1–21 <<http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.644>>

<sup>282</sup> Lutyens, *A Blessed Girl*, p. 58.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>284</sup> Florian Schweizer, 'Authorship and the Professional Writer' in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed. by Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) pp. 117–124 (p. 121).

conducted a Dickens tour. Leslie's description of 'the Dickens quarter' demonstrates her complete absorption in Dickens' narratives, as well as her own interpretation of them: 'we visited The Old Curiosity Shop, which was a tile-roofed, tiny little place, just as I had imagined it.'<sup>285</sup> Lutyens clearly experienced a comparable intimacy with Dickens' works, and drew their own sense of writerly authority through their familiarity with 'the inimitable.'<sup>286</sup>

Earlier in this chapter I evidenced Pepys' confidence in reading *Pickwick* when the circulating library delivery arrives, because she is confident that within her home culture Dickens is deemed to be an appropriate writer for girls. In her memoirs of girlhood Molly Hughes also describes the joy at being able to read *Pickwick* on a Sunday, as it 'did not come under the head of novels' but 'papers.'<sup>287</sup> This was fortunate, as the works of Scott, or indeed any novels, were not deemed to be appropriate Sunday reading for Hughes in the 1870s. In chapter four of this thesis I examine an example of a complex girl-written appropriation of Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*. A girl diarist and manuscript magazine editor during the late 1880s, Eglantyne Jebb, recreated Louisa May Alcott's depiction of girl-written magazines in *Little Women* (1868). Alcott's magazine was the *Pickwick Portfolio*, based on Dickens' first novel. In this example the lineage of Victorian girls' influence and adaptive strategy can be mapped: Jebb imitates Alcott who imitates Dickens' creation and the male club tradition which spawned from it. The following three case study chapters demonstrate the appropriation of nineteenth-century writers in girls' manuscript writings. Yet they illustrate this practice in the context of girls' peer writing

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<sup>285</sup> Elsie Leslie, 'Diary' July 1896, MA 7961, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York. The transcriptions of this diary were sent to me, and page numbers were not included in these transcriptions.

<sup>286</sup> Dickens' association with the epithet 'the inimitable' dates back to during the serialised publication of *Pickwick*. See John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, ed. by J. W. T. Ley (London: Cecil Palmer, 1928).

<sup>287</sup> Molly Hughes, *A London Family, 1870–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 75–76.



culture, which is lacking in these published examples of girls' writings.

### Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical context for the content, production and readership of girls' published writings in the long nineteenth century. It argued that girls' published diaries were shaped by gendered self-fashioning as well as external construction. It evidenced that some features of girls' writing culture, including references to reading practice, as well as appropriative culture, were common across the period. It gestured to theories of gendered writing during the nineteenth century, which served to explain girls' compromise between male author role models and feminine forms of writing in their appropriative writing culture. In diaries, girls' resistance to or admiration for published writers took the form of literary criticism or positive appraisal. Girls suggested amended endings to classic novels, yet in manuscript magazines which I will explore shortly, they were able to do that rewriting work directly. In the more explicitly creative, adaptive and peer-informed form of the manuscript magazine, girls' critical literary voices are transposed.

In the following chapters I will examine the variations of this culture in girls' writings from the final four decades of the nineteenth century, focusing on manuscript magazines in particular. In these examples there is a progression towards defining a girls' manuscript culture, which is informed by the enormous upheaval of social mores for women and girls. This is one major contributing factor to the expansion of girls' written culture which took place during the end of the nineteenth century. The next chapter will consider the *Barnacle*, a manuscript magazine written by girls which began in the 1860s. The *Barnacle* was edited by the prolific writer Charlotte Yonge. The writing culture, and particularly the literary citations of the magazine writers demonstrate the nuanced responses of aspirational girl writers to ideas about gender and authorship. The gendering of types of writers, and the writing careers which the girls could potentially access, are

led by Yonge's traditional views on the female station in society, and particularly in the role of professional authorship.

Chapter 3: The Girl Writers of the *Barnacle*: Appropriating Authorship in Manuscript Magazines (1859–1877).



Figure 1: ‘Mother Goose as ye Modern Archimedes.’ This cover from the Michaelmas 1867 volume of the *Barnacle* encapsulates the goals of the manuscript magazine. The Mother Goose (Yonge) props up the world, with all its history and knowledge, from her magazine. 823.99 311–322.

Previous chapters of this thesis have evidenced that during the nineteenth century life writing was a cultural practice which captured girls’ specific experience of adolescence. Diary writing was but one element of this rich and creative life-writing culture. The other main element, at least for girls of the later nineteenth century, was the writing of manuscript magazines. Reflecting the burgeoning of periodical publications for children at the end of the nineteenth-century, the making of at-home or school manuscript

magazines was a favourite pastime of children from the middle- or upper-classes.<sup>288</sup> Writers including Lewis Carroll and Virginia Stephen wrote manuscript magazines as children.<sup>289</sup> Manuscript efforts often reflected the diversity of published children's magazines such as the *Girl's Own Paper* or *Boy's Own Paper*, by including poetry, essays, puzzles and pictures alongside serialised stories which were the backbone of the magazine.

Although both boys and girls wrote magazines, and this practice spanned the nineteenth century, by focusing on girls in the second half of the nineteenth century this chapter contributes to the current research interest in late-Victorian girlhood cultures. Due to the changing landscape of education, gender roles, and publishing, adolescent girls had a specific relationship with this kind of writing. In writing manuscript magazines, girls relished a specific cultural practice which valued them as readers and writers. The output was rich: girls wrote serialised stories, poetry, and travel writings. Girls submitted drawings, essays, puzzles and reviews. At this point in the thesis I will refer to this output under the umbrella term of 'girls' writings' rather than 'life writings.' In order to narrow the focus of these multifaceted resources, this chapter will concentrate purely on girls' writing in magazines that is either creative writing, or a critical commentary on existing literary fiction. This focus enables a study of girls' notions of authorship, of their sense

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<sup>288</sup> Kirsten Drotner suggests that middle-class girls at home were very much integrated into adult life and culture – more so than their brothers at boarding school. The link between middle-class girls and life-writing practices has also been discussed in previous chapters of this thesis. See Kirsten Drotner, *English Children and Their Magazines, 1751–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 45.

<sup>289</sup> Aged 13, Carroll began editing, writing for, and illustrating the *Rectory Magazine*, with contributions from his siblings. The writing within it is seen as foreshadowing his later work, particularly his interest in nonsense. See Lewis Carroll, *The Rectory Magazine*, ed. by Valerie Sanders and Elizabeth O'Reilly (Sydney: Juvenilia Press, 2008). Virginia Woolf and her sister Vanessa collaborated on their manuscript magazine *Hyde Park Gate News* in the 1890s. It contained the daily occurrences of their home, as well as correspondence pages and puzzles. The British Library has digitised the 69 surviving issues. Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Stephen, 'Hyde Park Gate News, Vol I and Vol II', *British Library* <<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/hyde-park-gate-news-a-magazine-by-virginia-woolf-and-vanessa-bell>> [accessed 14 December 2018].

of identity as defined through the fiction they were aware of – in short, their adolescent selfhood.<sup>290</sup>

Jane Hunter aptly summarises this phenomenon in writing: ‘Reading and writing, the twin activities of literacy, became the vehicles to self-culture and the central activities of many privileged Victorian girls’ lives.’<sup>291</sup> This chapter will consider the *Barnacle*, a manuscript magazine edited by the author Charlotte Yonge, and circulated amongst her essay group made up of adolescent girls known as The Goslings throughout the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>292</sup> This manuscript magazine presents a complex negotiation of cultural identity vis-à-vis literary knowledge and writing ability. Although the magazine was predominantly read by and shared amongst adolescent peers, which, as Corsaro suggests, is a specific age-group of cultural understanding, the *Barnacle* was edited by Yonge. The influence of a female role model possessing cultural capital, in Bourdieuan terms, augments this adolescent peer culture, as I will illustrate in more detail later on.

The *Barnacle*’s relationship to authorship was particularly fraught, as the girl writers admired the books written by their editor, and viewed their own participation in the magazine as a sort of writer’s apprenticeship, which could (and indeed did) lead some of them to writing careers. Julia Courtney highlights how ‘several of the Goslings tried their hands [...] at fiction in the manuscript *Barnacle* before graduating to the *Monthly Packet*’, a magazine in public circulation which was also edited by Yonge, and the girls also subsequently experienced independent publication of their fiction during adulthood.<sup>293</sup> The 30-year time difference between the *Barnacle* and the *Evergreen Chain*

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<sup>290</sup> Previous chapters of this thesis have demonstrated the link between girlhood and literacy.

<sup>291</sup> Jane H. Hunter, *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 39.

<sup>292</sup> The *Barnacle*, (1863–1867), Lady Margaret Hall Library, 823.99 311–322. Material from the *Barnacle* is reproduced by kind permission of the Principal and Fellows of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. I discuss Yonge’s biography and fiction in more detail in chapter six of this thesis. Modified parts of this chapter are forthcoming in a journal article for *Victorian Periodicals Review*.

<sup>293</sup> This has been argued by Julia Courtney in ‘Mother Goose’s Brood’ *Character & Scenes: Studies in Charlotte Yonge*, ed. by Julia Courtney and Clemence Schultze (Abingdon: Beechcroft Books, 2007) pp.

will be considered, as the creative writing contained within both reflects changes in literary trends and gendered cultural practices during this time period. Articles in the *Barnacle*, for instance, critique the contemporary appetite for sensation fiction, and engage in topical debates such as women's education – themes which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Surviving volumes of the *Barnacle* are held in Lady Margaret Hall College, Oxford. They were gifted to the college in 1978 by Georgina Battiscombe (Esther Georgina Harwood), who was a Lady Margaret Hall student from 1924 to 1927, and wrote a biography of Yonge, entitled *Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life*.<sup>294</sup> Yonge also had a contemporary association with the college – she was friends with its first ever principal, Elizabeth Wordsworth, who was a prolific writer herself, as well as the great-niece of the Romantic poet William Wordsworth. It is believed that other volumes of the *Barnacle* exist in private collections.

This chapter will build on the recovery work primarily done by Julia Courtney, Clemence Schultze and Charlotte Mitchell, which explores the creative activity of Yonge's apprentice writers, as well as the work of Beth Rodgers, Kristine Moruzi, and Sally Mitchell on cultures of nineteenth-century girlhood and the press broadly. Courtney's book chapter and Georgina O'Brien Hill's journal article on the *Barnacle* are the only two scholarly sources I have identified to date which analyse the *Barnacle*. As such, the magazine is still an under-represented resource in studies on girlhood writings from the nineteenth century. This chapter will argue that manuscript magazines written by girls display a unique relationship to published fiction, a relationship which is based upon understandings of authorship, generic conventions, and ideas about propriety, which

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189–212 (p. 190), and Georgina O'Brien Hill in 'Charlotte Yonge's "Goosedom"', *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies*, 8.1 (2012), para. 1–22.

<sup>294</sup> This acquisition history was kindly provided by the librarian at Lady Margaret Hall. See also Georgina Battiscombe, *Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1943).

are all gendered. Aware of the types of writing that are available to them, girl writers recreate and emulate their favourite writers, but also engage in appropriation in order to mock and subvert texts that are too prescriptive or didactic. Their shared cultural understanding with peers as well as with adult arbiters shape this practice.

### The *Barnacle* and the *Monthly Packet*

The *Barnacle* manuscript magazine particularly flourished between the years 1863 and 1869, although it ran for eighteen years, ending by mutual consent between the editor Charlotte Yonge and her sub-editor Christabel Coleridge in 1877.<sup>295</sup> By that time the magazine had at least 59 members, although some had only contributed for a short time.<sup>296</sup> The girls came from families which were affiliated with the church or with teaching. As Courtney suggests, ‘the names and addresses alone suggest a social range spanning the middle and upper-middle classes.’<sup>297</sup> Yet it was a tight-knit affair, and the most active contributors were blood related to each other, or to Yonge. Indeed one girl, Mildred Mary Coleridge, and her close friends were the inspiration for starting the society. The niece of Yonge’s friend Mary E. Coleridge, Mildred (whose pseudonym was ‘Ladybird’) was 16 years old when the first *Barnacle* appeared.<sup>298</sup> This evidences both the communal and girl-specific motivations which began the manuscript magazine.

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<sup>295</sup> Christabel Rose Coleridge (1843–1921) had a successful career as a writer of children’s books. She had conservative views about the future of girlhood, and in 1894 she published a collection of essays on the subject, *The Daughters Who Have Not Revolted*. She was the granddaughter of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

<sup>296</sup> Ellen Jordan, Charlotte Mitchell, and Helen Schinske, “‘A Handmaid to the Church’: How John Keble Shaped the Career of Charlotte Yonge, the ‘Novelist of the Oxford Movement’”, in *John Keble in Context*, ed. by Kirstie Blair (London: Anthem Press, 2004), pp. 175–89 (p. 185). There is a full list of the Goslings on the dedicated Charlotte Yonge Fellowship website. ‘The Charlotte Mary Yonge Fellowship’, <<http://www.cmyf.org.uk/>> [accessed 23 January 2019].

<sup>297</sup> Julia Courtney, ‘*The Barnacle: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s*’ in *Girl’s Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl*, ed. by Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), pp. 71–97 (p. 73).

<sup>298</sup> Courtney, ‘*The Barnacle: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s*’, pp. 73–74. Courtney provides a list of some of the pseudonyms which have been identified in the *Barnacle*: ‘Chelsea China, Ladyfern, Ladybird, Glowworm, Humble Bee, Irene, Gurgoyne, Cobweb, Magpie, Firefly, Kittiwake, Rowan Tree, Turkscap, Cricket, Heather, Hedgerose, Shamrock, Mignonette, Fernseed, Potato, Ugly Duckling, Bog

Georgina O'Brien Hill describes how the Gosling society and their publication functioned:

It began as a type of essay society in which monthly questions were set and responses sent in for Yonge to correct, critique and edit. This correspondence quickly developed into the production of home-made volumes of a quarterly illustrated magazine.<sup>299</sup>

Yonge was by the 1860s an established and highly popular writer. Her bestselling novel *Heir of Redclyffe* published in 1853 had been hugely successful and she had continued to produce two or three novels a year. Yonge was also the editor of the Anglican magazine for young people, the *Monthly Packet*, a magazine 'For Younger Members of the English Church.' The magazine encouraged reader participation, particularly in the essay society 'Arachne and her Spiders.' Indeed the *Monthly Packet* was home to several essay societies, which required additional subscriptions from its members. Some focused on specialist subjects such as mathematics or botany, but the questions set by 'Arachne' (Yonge) to her 'Spiders' were related to culture or history, and were often on the subject of classical mythology.<sup>300</sup> In Greek mythology, Arachne was a mortal weaver who challenged the goddess Athena to a weaving contest. In Ovid's interpretation of the story, Arachne beats Athena, and also insults the gods, so Athena transforms Arachne into a spider.<sup>301</sup> By aligning with this sobriquet in the *Monthly Packet*, Yonge positioned herself to be a superior weaver of yarns (like Mother Goose) and also an advocate of minority

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Oak, Thistle, Hoopoe, Sparrowhawk, Iceberg.' All of the pseudonyms are published on the Charlotte Mary Yonge Fellowship website.

<sup>299</sup> O'Brien Hill, 'Charlotte Yonge's "Goosedom"', para. 9.

<sup>300</sup> See Clemence Schultze, 'Charlotte Yonge and the Classics', in *Characters and Scenes: Studies in Charlotte M. Yonge*, ed. by Julia Courtney and Clemence Schultze (Abingdon: Beechcroft, 2007), pp. 159–188 (p. 164).

<sup>301</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).



success. The work of the Goslings was merged into the ‘Arachne and her Spiders’ column when the *Barnacle* was ended in 1877.<sup>302</sup>

At any given moment there were twelve members in the Gosling society, who all produced material for inclusion in *The Barnacle*. The group of girls were a mixture of Yonge’s relatives, their friends, and also avid readers of Yonge’s novels and the *Monthly Packet*. The name the *Barnacle* was inspired by the barnacle goose, an animal with a folkloric history, and the Goslings referred to Yonge as Mother Goose. The many associations to Mother Goose as a fairy tale figure dating back to Charles Perrault’s eighteenth-century tales, and the goslings as fledgling writers, were all playfully evoked by the girls themselves in the magazine.<sup>303</sup> In most of the title pages, drawn by one of the more artistically gifted Goslings, Alice Mary Coleridge, there are visual representations of goslings in long dresses, following the Mother Goose figure. The girls chose pseudonyms derived from nature, such as Bog Oak, or Firefly, although these did not obscure each writer’s identity. The Goslings wrote diversely – the longest pieces of writing were serial stories, but the Goslings frequently contributed poetry, essays, maxims, travel diaries, as well as colourful pictures. Yonge set certain essay questions, some of which required research on a subject, but she clearly encouraged fun and imagination in her apprentices (which is evidenced in the colourful and humorous drawings and creative writing) as well as scholarship and pious reflection.

#### Writing specific to adolescence

This chapter will evidence that the type of writing found in *The Barnacle* was an intellectual and creative pastime that was specific to adolescent girls. The historian Siân Pooley, in her study of working-class children’s writing in newspapers and magazines

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<sup>302</sup> O’Brien Hill, ‘Charlotte Yonge’s “Goosedom”’, para. 22.

<sup>303</sup> Julia Courtney and Georgina O’Brien Hill have separately written on the folklore surrounding the Mother Goose figure.

between 1876 and 1914, observes that middle and upper-class teenage girls ultimately won the most writing competitions.<sup>304</sup> Although at this point in history, more younger and working-class children contributed to the columns of family magazines, it was middle- or upper-class teenage girls who impressed editors with their submissions of original fiction. They possessed a more accomplished and polished writing style than younger, lower-class contributors. Adolescent girls who were well-educated, well-read, and aspired to write, then, can be considered a particular breed of writer in amongst the proliferation of child writers during this era.<sup>305</sup> Yet the semi-public nature of the manuscript magazine, in which work was read by contemporaries and an editor (a highly successful author, no less), demanded a type of writing that was unlike that contained in their copybooks, diaries, or letters.

In her study of Victorian diaries and emotional labour, Anne-Marie Millin highlights how girl writers negotiated ‘their own talent in light of culturally determined frameworks of authorship.’<sup>306</sup> Relating this observation to the *Barnacle*, it acknowledges that the girl writers carefully pitched their writing, in order to meet the expectations of Yonge but also fulfill their creative impulses. In a sense, girls had license to write fiction and non-fiction on various subjects, in various genres – the diverse contents of real periodicals modelled diversity for the manuscript equivalent – but they also had to appease a specific discerning audience, and enter competitions for the best writing. Girls who committed to participating in a manuscript magazine, then, committed to maintaining the standard of the published counterpart, and by extension, the performance of authorship.

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<sup>304</sup> Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press’, 75–98.

<sup>305</sup> The rise of the middle-class female writer in the nineteenth century will be discussed in greater detail in a later section of this chapter.

<sup>306</sup> Anne-Marie Millin, *The Victorian Diary: Authorship and Emotional Labor* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 4. Millin’s analysis concerns the diaries of published authors, by viewing diary-writing as a process of practice in their professional development.

The performance of professional authorship is seen most explicitly in manuscript magazines in contrast to other forms of girls' writings. Girls wrote with a known audience in mind: their fellow contributors and the editor. This differed to other domestic writing such as diaries and copybooks, which, as I have shown in chapter two, may have been shared with parents and siblings. Manuscript magazines were not suited to very young writers, who could not adhere to a house style, or aspire to the formal and cultural heights expected of adolescents; nor were they suited to adult writers who could not commit to an amateur production. Furthermore, as the *Barnacle* fostered connections between girls from their home, by enabling them to communicate both with each other and Yonge through the magazine as well as letters, the magazine was particularly suited to the domestic culture of unmarried daughters.

#### Manuscript magazines in context

Yet the nature of the public and private domains, societal expectations and educational opportunities were changing for some young women while the *Barnacle* was being written, and the magazine manifests these contradictory discourses about a girlhood in transition. The domestic setting, which had been the lynchpin of girls' writing exploits, was no longer the only place where girls could be creative. Although the domestic space was essential to Yonge, who viewed girls as 'home daughters', this new generation of writers complicated this relationship between the girl writer and the home.<sup>307</sup> Articles within the *Barnacle* comment on the developments in travel brought on by the railways, and some girls wrote travel memoirs. Letters sent from Cannes signed by 'Kittiwake' (Miss A. D. Johns) were sewn directly into the volume. While the middle-class girls of the *Barnacle* were becoming more mobile, the nature of education was changing, too.

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<sup>307</sup> See Julia Courtney, 'The *Barnacle*: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s' in *Girl's Own: Anglo-American Histories of Girls*, ed. by Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone (Athens: University of Georgia Press) p. 78.

Writing on the *Barnacle*, Courtney has highlighted how the period in which the Goslings were writing was a highly significant one for girls' education:

The 1870s and 1880s saw a move away from home education for middle-class girls. The Goslings of the 1860s thus represent the last generation of daughters from educated clerical or professional families to receive a largely home-based, parent-centered education.<sup>308</sup>

The magazine represents a transition between these two modes that Courtney outlines: the Goslings idealised a feminine at-home education, like Yonge had, and also embraced girls' schooling, particularly as they got older. Many of the Goslings were raised in families working in education. They were vocal about how they prized education, and some of the older teenage contributors sent their writing from their all-female colleges. Yet counter-narratives of women's education, particularly Yonge's own argument that women should not go to university, inevitably created an un-written tension within the pages of the *Barnacle*. Yonge had 'objections to bringing together large masses of girls', and preferred the idea of 'home education under the inspection or encouragement of sensitive fathers, or voluntarily continued by the girls themselves.'<sup>309</sup> Although Yonge does not reference a female literary mentor, she herself adopts this role, and promotes the idea of voluntary but guided continuation of education for the Goslings.

Thus magazine-writing for the Goslings functioned on various levels: it was an opportunity to seek feedback from a published writer; it was also an opportunity to showcase their learnings and talents, and a place in which to learn more, not only from the other contributions, but from seeing their writer's voice in amongst their

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<sup>308</sup> Courtney, 'The *Barnacle*: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s', p. 73.

<sup>309</sup> Yonge wrote this response to Sarah Emily Davies' appeal for support for a women's college. Davies was a pioneering women's rights campaigner and was a co-founder of Girton College, Cambridge: the first college in England to admit female students. The letter is dated July 22nd, 1868, and as such represents Yonge's opinions during her editorship of the *Barnacle*. Yonge's letters can be found at a website hosted by the University of Newcastle, Australia: Charlotte Yonge, *Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823–1901)*, ed. by Charlotte Mitchell, Ellen Jordan, and Helen Schinske (2007) <<https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/yonge/2259>> [accessed 13 December 2018].

contemporaries and receiving feedback. Although this was a specific experience of adolescence, the preparation for this kind of cultural apprenticeship began much earlier in girls' lives. Sociological studies on children's cultures have observed that young people's relationships with adults and peers are informed by earlier adult-child interactions in families.<sup>310</sup> Returning to Bourdieu's theory of habitus as a system of 'durable, transposable dispositions' which generate practice and perceptions, this long process of inculcation starts in early childhood.<sup>311</sup> Anthony Giddens argues that as they grow children seek in adults and peers the emotional bonds that were previously established within the family.<sup>312</sup> Giddens identifies this as a strong factor in the practice of children's community and participation. Through this perspective, the writers of the *Barnacle* found their manuscript culture through a shared understanding; Yonge and the other contributors functioned as a new kind of familial network.

#### Manuscript engagements with published fiction

The complicated process of girl writers honing their magazine-writing craft are epitomised in the ways that they engaged with published literature. In both the *Evergreen Chain* and the *Barnacle* it becomes clear that the contributors adapted and appropriated published fictions in order to affix new meanings to them. Even original work is clearly situated within trends of their own reading – usually historical romance. The girls were clearly inspired by the era of King Arthur, of knights and chivalry.<sup>313</sup> This is reflective of the books that they read, such as the historical novels of Walter Scott, as well as their educational focus on history books. This phenomenon has been identified in many other examples of girls' writings from the nineteenth century; the previous chapter of this thesis

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<sup>310</sup> See Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood*, p. 98.

<sup>311</sup> Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, p. 53.

<sup>312</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self Identity* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>313</sup> This connection between girl writers and Historical Romance has been identified in the second chapter, in relation to girls' rewritings of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* in their writings.

pointed to the diaries of Emily Shore and Marjory Fleming as centres of historical recreation.

Yet the girl writers of the *Barnacle* affixed new meanings to existing literature in their appropriations. They took pride in accessing what they perceived to be unique insight into the published work, and suggested alterations which would enhance it. This was a key part of their writing process. The Gosling known as Lady Fern (Miss M. F. Dundas) contributed a short play based on the story of 'Bluebeard'. She includes an 'author's apology' in the adaptation:

Think not, oh critical gosling, who glancest curiously at the title of this piece, that I mean to palm off upon thee a mere miserable réchauffé of an old dish which was probably thy daily food in the nursery. – not so, – look a little deeper, & see whether, under the old name [...] there may not be something new & original.

This 'apology' does not make excuses for the Lady Fern's work that she presents to the magazine, rather it acknowledges prior inadequate adaptations of the popular story. Lady Fern subtly but confidently asserts her ability to improve upon such well-worn fiction.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Lady Fern, *The Barnacle* Vol IV June 1864. The most famous version of the Bluebeard folktale was published by Charles Perrault in his 1697 *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*. However the Gosling writer Lady Fern might have been more familiar with the Grimms' 1812 version.

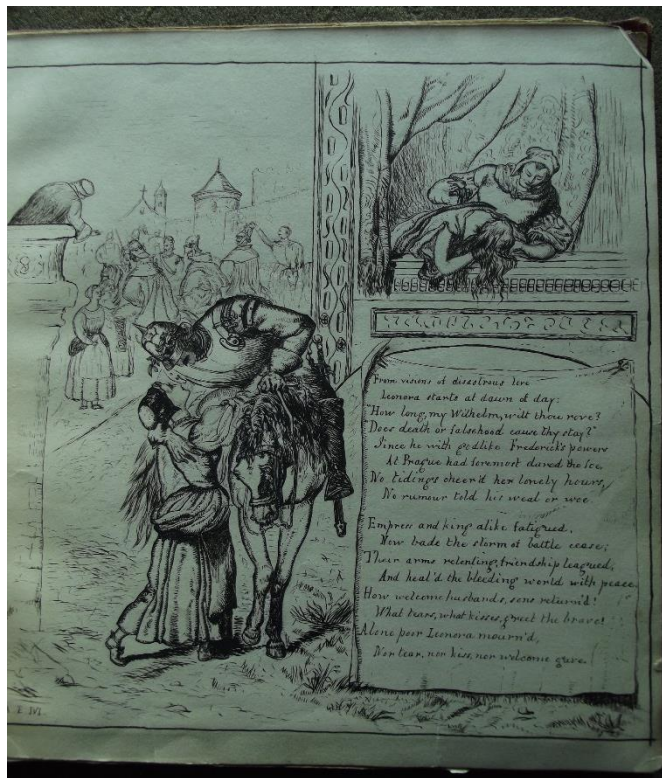


Figure 2: An example of a Gosling's fixation with Medieval Romance, 823.99 311–322.

Inspired by medieval culture, the poem and illustrations by Bog Oak (Anne Elizabeth Morshead) presented here (see Figure 2) evidence the convoluted process of transmission and adaptation that can be seen in the Goslings' engagements with fiction. Born in 1845/6, Bog Oak would have been 21 or 22 years old at the time of writing this for the *Barnacle's* Michaelmas 1867 volume. She was a frequent contributor to the magazine, as were her two cousins Sparrowhawk (born 1840/1) and Iceberg (born 1853/4). In 1868, only a year after contributing to this volume, Bog Oak left the Gosling society and travelled to South Africa to carry out missionary work. She was a successful apprentice to Yonge, as she graduated to contributing to Yonge's published magazine the *Monthly Packet*.

The arresting feature of this short piece created by Bog Oak is not the poem itself but the finely detailed drawings. They depict Leonora and Wilhelm, two figures inspired by the ballad 'Lenore' written by Gottfried August Bürger in 1773. The original is set in 1648; William is a knight who has not yet returned from The Battle of Prague, and Lenore

mourns him and quarrels with God over her strife. One night a stranger who looks like William takes Lenore away on horseback to her marriage-bed; by morning they arrive at a graveyard, where the mysterious knight loses his human appearance and is revealed to be death. Death shows Lenore a grave where William's skeleton is buried, and the ground gives away beneath her and she dies.

The ballad was extensively translated and illustrated throughout the nineteenth century. William Blake illustrated the ballad in 1796, and Julia Margaret Cameron published her translation in 1847, complete with illustrations by Daniel Maclise. Cameron's is perhaps the version that inspired the Gosling, as the writer used the spelling 'Leonora' rather than Bürger's spelling 'Lenore.' In her lengthy introduction to the short poem, Cameron aligns her translation goals with those of the originator, Bürger, rather than with Walter Scott or William Taylor, whose English translations of the story were well-known. Indeed Cameron critiques their lack of fidelity to the plot, complaining that 'these distinguished men have infused their own genius into their translations, and Bürger is forgotten', whereas she 'does not profess to have added anything to the original.'<sup>315</sup> Cameron suggests that her translation is more accurate and transparent, and that she does not have the ego of Scott or Taylor. It is perhaps Cameron's writing back to these two influential male writers that influences Bog Oak. Certainly she borrows phrases from Cameron, who writes

Leonora from an anxious dream  
Starts up at break of day,  
'My William, art thou false or slain?  
Oh! William, why delay?'

In comparison, Bog Oak begins her poem with:

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<sup>315</sup> Julia Margaret Cameron, *Leonora* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1847), p. vi.



From visions of disastrous love  
Leonora starts at dawn of day:  
‘How long, my Wilhelm, will thou rove?  
Does death or falsehood cause thy stay?’

The similarities, then, are clear to see. Bog Oak maintains Cameron’s setting, tone, and rhyme to make a clear connection to Cameron’s translation as the source text over Scott’s or Taylor’s. Bog Oak shows an adherence to a feminine tradition of appropriation.

Bog Oak’s adaptation of the ballad omits any supernatural elements which are seen in Bürger’s version. Instead she focuses on the very beginning of the tale, which depicts Leonore as a romantic heroine, waiting on the return of her beloved Wilhelm: ‘No tidings cheer’d her lonely hours / No rumour told her weal or woe.’ By focusing on this section to suit her interpretation of the plot, the writer shows a preference for the tragically romantic premise of the story, over its Gothic dénouement. This act of cutting out pieces of narrative that were not of interest to the girl writer is similar to the suggestions about how to improve Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, which I detailed in chapter two. The accompanying drawing reflects this interpretive strategy too. The Gosling’s rendering of Leonora shows her doubled-over and weeping out of a window, while a lady-in-waiting comforts her. She has witnessed the scene outside, which shows a woman greeting an armoured knight on horseback with a kiss. Confined to the domestic space, Leonora is positioned in the tower as a fairytale character. Like the fairytale character Sleeping Beauty, or Tennyson’s Lady of Shalott, her waiting seems to be interminable. She is suspended in misery while those around her are relieved of their suffering: ‘How welcome husbands come return’d / What tears, what kisses, greet the brave! / Alone poor Leonora mourn’d / Nor tear, nor kiss, nor welcome gaze.’ The focus on this element of the story, from a girl’s perspective, is clearly gendered. Moreover, Bog Oak’s approval of Cameron’s translation, which situates itself as a superior version to those written by male writers that had gone before

her, is telling, especially as the Gosling only focuses on one part of the story and thus cannot assert that it is a faithful adaptation. What is important here, more than an affiliation to the most faithful adaptation, is the Bog Oak's discerning impulse to demonstrate her desired version of the story. Appropriating existing published fiction to assert authorial autonomy is something which will be discussed in another of the Gosling's poems, 'The Distressed Damsel', later in this chapter.

Historical re-writing aspiring to historical 'accuracy' was clearly prized by the editor and the Goslings alike. It is reflected in Yonge's set essay questions, on topics such as 'Roncevaux – Is it Fact or Fiction?'<sup>316</sup> These essays were spaces where the girls would conduct rigorous research, critique the accepted published histories, and dispel widely-disseminated myths. Courtney has commented on the *Barnacle*'s fascination with history:

the Goslings shared with Yonge an interest amounting almost to an obsession with the past. Here gender explains much. The restricted lives of Yonge and most of the Goslings – and they were restricted, if only by an internalized conception of women as subordinate or even inferior – could be extended by an imaginative examination of history, an area both acceptable as serious study and liberating when fantasy and imagination shared in the re-creation of events. In reconstructing the past, novelist and student alike would find an area of power and control within the framework of accepted 'facts,' just as the female writer of didactic contemporary fiction would find a means of fulfillment sanctioned by social and theological acceptance of woman's role as teacher. The historical novel might also provide a space in which to act out personal fantasies freed from the bonds of typical nineteenth-century existence.<sup>317</sup>

Courtney identifies the association between the work of aspiring women writers and mimetic forms of production. With regards to specific examples we can see how girl writers claimed this 'area of power and control' within a sanctioned remit.

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<sup>316</sup> In response to this question one Gosling gives an account of the written histories of the battle, and takes issue with the fact that Charlemagne is known as a French man when he was really German.

<sup>317</sup> Courtney, 'The Barnacle: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s', p. 81.

The Goslings' impulse to appraise and appropriate the work of earlier authors, as well as their penchant for historical fact, is epitomised in the following example. The writer Glow Worm includes an essay on 'The Lady of Burghley', which takes as a starting point a poem written by Alfred, Lord Tennyson during his early career, 'The Lord of Burleigh' (1835). In the form of an appraisal of Tennyson's poem, Glow Worm highlights Tennyson's flaws: 'the Poet Laureate, unfortunately, shows his ignorance of "all the Midland Countries" in the heading of the poem, as the palatial house of the Marquesses of Exeter is spelt "Burghley."'”<sup>318</sup> The historical inaccuracy is only one part of Glow Worm's review. She goes on to critique Tennyson's focus of the poem:

He also has, with the intention of fulfilling the poets' mission of 'idealizing the ideal,' greatly enlarged his other object, that of 'elevating & idealizing the real,' therefore if we would learn the true story of the 'Lord of Burleigh,' we must perforce divest it of much of the romance, with which Tennyson has beautifully clothed it.

Glow Worm views Tennyson's poetic style as obscuring the true subject matter of the poem. Her aim in this appraisal is to draw attention to what she thinks is the true interest in the poem. The Lady of Burleigh was of low birth, and was young when she married the Lord of Burghley. She was only 23 when she died giving birth to her fourth child. Yet Glow Worm delves deeper into the psychology of the Lady. Although Glow Worm criticises Tennyson's particular version as 'idealizing' she too presents an imagined narrative of the Lady. She describes how the wife would look at a picture of Burghley house longingly:

The young girl would look up with sparkling eyes & say 'Ah, if I could only see so grand a place, how happy I should be!' [...] but the novelty of the splendour, & the cold grandeur of her new home, weighed heavily on her simple mind, she pined for the little wayside home of her youth, & she loved the open hearth of the little inn more than the glory of her new position. Not all the love of her husband, or the caresses of her babes, could keep her in this world.

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<sup>318</sup> Glow Worm, 'The Lady of Burghley', *the Barnacle*, Michaelmas 1867.

By criticising Tennyson's idealising the writer highlights the lack of romance in the story: Glow Worm's version emphasis that the Lady was overwhelmed by married life, and she died cruelly young.

Glow Worm concludes her description of the Lady by evoking Tennyson's concluding line to his poem: 'That her spirit might have rest.' Ultimately she does not greatly alter the existing narrative – she does not create another poem to rival Tennyson's – but by making small changes to the emphases, and particularly by correcting Tennyson's knowledge of regional surnames at the beginning of the essay, Glow Worm establishes herself to be a rigorous apprentice writer.<sup>319</sup>

The subject of history was an accepted topic for the Goslings to engage with, allowing a freedom to write received truths about an event. It also, as I will later discuss in more detail, allowed girls to appropriate a historical event or a historical piece of literature to inspire their own creativity. Engaging with the historical and the canonical, largely masculine arenas of writing, girls worked towards an idea of 'author' and, with it, authority and autonomy, and a fantasy that went beyond the typical existence of girls during the 1860s and 1870s.

### Girls writing history

Scholars of women's history have commented on how women writers from the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth century were prohibited from taking part fully in formal history writing, as it was seen as a specialized and masculine domain.<sup>320</sup> Bonnie G. Smith has argued that 'For almost the entire nineteenth century [a] model of "genius"

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<sup>319</sup> This is not the first time that Tennyson has been appropriated in the pages of *the Barnacle*. Tennyson's poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' is appropriated in one of the title pages which features the line 'All the world wondered!!' in regards to the manuscript magazine.

<sup>320</sup> See Lisa Kasmer, *Novel Histories: British Women Writing History, 1760–1830* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012). Mary Spongberg claims that 'there is evidence to suggest that women have engaged in historical writing from the first century CE. See Mary Spongberg, *Writing Women's History Since the Renaissance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002), p.1.

inspired women writers and feminists [...] But “genius” is a word rarely associated anymore with good history, whose watchwords are “research” and “facts.”<sup>321</sup> However girl writers had female historian role models in figures such as Madame de Staël.<sup>322</sup> Repeatedly writing about history was ultimately a way for the Goslings to work through their experience of comprehending historical interpretations and ultimately their own script of gender, as is seen in the romantic rendering of ‘Leonore.’

This harks back to Judith Butler’s theories on gender performativity in *Gender Trouble*, which suggest that gender is inscribed and re-inscribed through a repetition of acts. As the Goslings contributed to the magazine periodically, and often wrote stories serially, the ‘doing’ of their gender, and its accompanying parts – their age and gender-specific interest in writing history, their intellectual accomplishments – was scheduled into their lives. The historian Jane Hunter corroborates this theory, and suggests that through writing, girls worked through their femininity. She suggests that ‘Girls came to use their writing, especially their writing of diaries, not as an escape from the Victorian family, but as a way of discovering self within it’ and the norms of femininity were keenly imposed on at-home girls.<sup>323</sup> Thus writing creatively was a negotiation of their shared expectation of themselves as authors, as well as young ladies in training. Making connections in their writing to other things familiar to them, whether it be their history books, or Charlotte Yonge novels, aided their navigation of their gendered adolescence, and as such, their newly forming identity.

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<sup>321</sup> Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 15.

<sup>322</sup> The writings of Madame de Staël (1766–1817), a prolific French writer and respected intellectual, provided inspiration for Victorian girl writers, notably George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë. See the notes to the Juvenilia Press editions of George Eliot’s *Edward Neville* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Albion and Marina*.

<sup>323</sup> Jane Hunter, *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 40. Jane refers to American girls’ diaries specifically in her book, but her theory can be applied to British girls’ life writing more broadly.

However girls' recreation of historical romance in particular carries another set of ideological problems, as the Victorian aesthetic of medievalism proffered a limited view of ideal femininity. This could cause conflict in aspiring girl writers who could not identify with either the female subject of the text, or the male speaker. As Adrienne Rich writes in 'When We Dead Awaken':

It has been a particular confusion to the girl or woman who tries to write because she is peculiarly susceptible to language. She goes to poetry or fiction looking for *her* way of being in the world, since she too has been putting words and images together; she is looking eagerly for guides, maps, possibilities; and over and over in the 'words' masculine pervasive force' of literature she comes up against something that negates everything she is about: she meets the image of Woman in books written by men. She finds a terror and a dream, she finds a beautiful pale face, she finds La Belle Dame Sans Merci...<sup>324</sup>

In analysing the Goslings' quest for their self-made culture, Rich's statement is revealing. The girl writers who were on a journey of writing apprenticeship, surrounded by female artists, were informed by a predominantly male oeuvre. Bog Oak's choice of Cameron's translation is one example of their challenge to androcentrism to some extent. Like Rich, Gilbert and Gubar comment on the effect of this distancing in the 'psychology of literary history – the tensions and anxieties, hostilities and inadequacies writers feel when they confront not only the achievements of their predecessors but the traditions of genre, style and metaphor that they inherit from such "forefathers."<sup>325</sup> As such, the quest to develop an independent culture which unavoidably drew upon a male tradition explains the many contradictions and variations we see in girls' appropriative writing.

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<sup>324</sup> Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken', p. 21.

<sup>325</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 46.

## Yonge and gender

As we have already seen, Yonge too was a contradictory figure, who promoted female authorship within a particular remit. Courtney has argued that some of the Goslings based the plots and characterisation of longer serial stories on Yonge's books, which in turn were modelled on male-authored literature. She writes how

reading Yonge's novels would form part of [their] lifestyle, with its common culture and literary experience based on Scott, Southey, Dante, de la Motte-Fouque, Schiller, Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, T. B. Macaulay, and others. The budding novelists of the *Barnacle* were creating worlds based on materials known to Yonge, at the same time incorporating forms and values they had imbibed from her own writing.<sup>326</sup>

Each of the writers listed by Courtney wrote long before the Goslings. As such, the Goslings' harnessing of various historical time-periods, whether it be Shakespeare and the Elizabethan court, or Schiller's depiction of German Classicism, was a delight to the writers of the *Barnacle* who were collectors of histories and stories. It is also noteworthy that all of the writers listed by Courtney are male. Aside from admiring Yonge, the Goslings' sources of writerly inspiration were male-authored texts. Their dual celebration and critique of a male tradition can be seen in the poem 'The Distressed Damsel', and covers of the *Barnacle* which depict Mother Goose conquering or casting away male-authored magazines. I discuss these two examples in greater depth later in this chapter, but it is significant to note here that these examples of creative writing by the Goslings depict an awareness and also a playful dismissal of texts written by men.

But the Goslings' attempts to recreate Yonge's style of writing signpost a complex relationship between the editor and her protégées. In her article 'Authorship', published in 1892 and reprinted in 1893, Yonge wrote that girls should hold off trying to publish

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<sup>326</sup> Courtney, 'The Barnacle: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s', p. 95.

until they accrue enough life experience and thus skill as writers. Her motto for girls was ‘meantime, it is quite well to write’, designating adolescent writing as a practice which is only meaningful in its limited context, but necessary nonetheless.<sup>327</sup> Yet Yonge did not adhere to her own advice for girls, and herself published as a teenager. Like other trailblazing female writers of the later nineteenth century, the example that Yonge set did not marry with her written advice for girls.<sup>328</sup>

Gilbert and Gubar propose a female equivalent of Harold Bloom’s perceived patriarchal theory of ‘anxiety of influence.’<sup>329</sup> They suggest that the female writer feels ‘an even more primary “anxiety of authorship – a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a “precursor” the act of writing will isolate or destroy her.’<sup>330</sup> But Gilbert and Gubar offer a concession, that the female writer can seek a female precursor, who ‘proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible.’<sup>331</sup> In Yonge the Goslings had a highly regarded literary role model, or ‘precursor’, but to view Yonge as a potentially rebellious figure in Gilbert and Gubar’s formulation is an inaccurate assessment. In Bourdieuan terms, Yonge functioned as a repository of cultural capital. As a woman she played ‘a determining role in the dialectic of pretension and distinction which is the motor of all cultural life.’<sup>332</sup> Yonge was certainly the major influencer on the cultural lives of the Goslings.

The gendering of Yonge as a writer of novels and magazines becomes relevant in this configuration. John Stuart Mill’s statement on women having ‘a literature of their

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<sup>327</sup> Charlotte Yonge, ‘Work and Workers: Authorship’, *Monthly Packet* 3 (Fourth Series) (1892), 296–303.

<sup>328</sup> I am thinking, for example, of Eliza Lynn Linton, who was the first salaried female journalist in Britain, yet was known for her anti-feminist essays such as ‘The Girl of the Period.’ Eliza Lynn Linton, *The Girl of the Period and Other Social Essays* (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883).

<sup>329</sup> Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*.

<sup>330</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 49.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>332</sup> Bourdieu, ‘La domination masculine’, p. 29.



own', which I discussed in chapter one of this thesis, is significant for understanding Yonge's influences and motives.<sup>333</sup> Responding to Mill's statement in the late twentieth century, Elaine Showalter claimed that women had already claimed a significant literary place in the nineteenth century, but 'a larger question was whether women, excluded by custom and education from achieving distinction in poetry, history, or drama, had, in defining their literary culture in the novel, simply appropriated another masculine genre.'<sup>334</sup> Mill's original lament focused on the mimetic practice of female artists and intellectuals:

And in the times when a significant number of women have begun to cultivate serious thought, originality has never been easy to achieve. Nearly all the thoughts that can be reached by mere strength of basic intellect were reached long ago; and originality in any high sense of that word is now scarcely ever attained except by minds that have undergone elaborate discipline, and are deeply versed in the results of previous thinking.<sup>335</sup>

Mill's comment implies that although originality is difficult to achieve, some level of appropriation must take place, as women artists must be 'deeply versed' with what went before them, as one must know the extent to which one is treading new ground. However in the writing culture of the *Barnacle* magazine types of appropriative writing were encouraged. Amongst the Goslings this was not perceived to be a passive or frivolous activity, but an important stepping-stone on the path to becoming a published author. It was a component of their adolescent writing apprenticeship. The Goslings were imitators on multiple levels: they appropriated existing published fiction in their magazine offerings, they imitated and aspired to write like Yonge, and appropriated the presentation

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<sup>333</sup> John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869).

<sup>334</sup> Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, pp. 3–36.

<sup>335</sup> Mill, *The Subjection of Women*. This connection between women lacking ability to create original works has a long history. The biblical story of Eve being made out of the rib of Adam has been interpreted as woman being perceived to be a lesser copy of man.

of periodical magazines. Examples of their appropriation, divided broadly by type into mimicry and mockery, will follow in the next section.

### Adapting Yonge's domestic professionalism

The Goslings' appropriation of Yonge adopted the form of mimicry. Since Yonge was the editor of the *Barnacle*, her approach to writing, and features of fiction that she liked and disliked, were well-known to the apprentice girl writers. Yonge grew up as an only child under strict parenting. As an adult she seldom paid visits to acquaintances, an example made by her mother, and never left the country throughout her life.<sup>336</sup> Her experience is reflected in her fiction, which is concerned with domestic relationships and setting. This was a source of idealisation for her admiring readers and contributors to the *Barnacle*. Moreover, Yonge's style of authorship, in eschewing the London publishing scene to adopt a domestic writing career, promoted a kind of female professionalisation which could take place in the home, but still attract readers. Georgina O'Brien Hill suggests that

Yonge's particular brand of domestic professionalism was founded upon the notion of work justified within a domestic framework [...] The construction of a public identity which referenced Yonge's place in the family circle did not negate her status as a professional, but rather highlighted the domestic nature of her work.<sup>337</sup>

Confinement to the home, especially that of unmarried female writers (Yonge never married and none of the Goslings were married while contributing to the society) was harnessed as a tool of girl writers, not a hindrance.

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<sup>336</sup> Julia Courtney has written on this aspect of Yonge's personality: 'All her life she carried filial obedience to extreme lengths: forbidden by her parents to enter the cottage homes of her village neighbours for fear of moral or physical contamination, she observed this prohibition for the rest of her life.' Julia Courtney, 'College Street, Hursley, and Otterbourne: Charlotte Mary Yonge and Her Circle', *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club Archaeological Society*, 49 (1993), 195–205 <<http://www.hantsfieldclub.org.uk/publications/hampshirstudies/digital/1990s/vol49/Courtney.pdf>> [accessed 13 December 2018].

<sup>337</sup> O'Brien Hill, 'Charlotte Yonge's "Goosedom"', para 7.

It is worth considering that Yonge did not equate professionalism in authorship with pecuniary success; indeed she was sceptical about making any associations between literary value and commercial success. In her essay ‘Authorship’ she looks back to a time when amateur authors – she namechecks Horace Walpole as one such author – ‘thought it almost derogatory to accept any remuneration.’<sup>338</sup> Yonge acted on this belief, and gave her earnings from the sales of her books to the church. She points to other authors to prove her link between sales and lasting works: ‘Miss Alcott was found a year or two ago to be the most popular author in America, judging by the amount of sales, but it remains to be proved how far this was an ephemeral matter.’<sup>339</sup> Yonge warns her readers that a lasting work cannot be guaranteed, even if it sold well. It follows that the *Barnacle* harboured no ambitions of publication, money-making or fame. Instead the Goslings made useful contacts through the magazine, and it is this female network that encouraged submissions and showcased girls’ writings for their inherent value. Paradoxically, this creative nurturing launched the professional writing careers of Christabel Coleridge and Mary Augusta Arnold, known by her married name Mrs Humphry Ward.<sup>340</sup>

The writing in the *Barnacle* differs from the kind of literature that was ultimately written in adulthood by the same individuals. Mrs Humphry Ward, for instance, was known for her anti-suffrage campaigning, and wrote religious, improving novels. Gillian Boughton has identified that Ward’s juvenilia, like much of the creative writing seen in the *Barnacle*, is interested in girl characters, and their familial relationships in the domestic context. One of her juvenile stories, ‘A Tale of the Moors’ is a Romantic piece,

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<sup>338</sup> Yonge, ‘Authorship’, p. 296.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., p. 297. This is an ironic example, as Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* has remained part of the nineteenth century canon, particularly in American contexts, whereas Yonge’s fiction has not.

<sup>340</sup> Mary Augusta Ward, known in her publications as Mrs Humphry Ward, was also a popular author, mainly of adult fiction, although her first novel, *Milly and Olly* (1881), was a children’s text. She was also known for her polemical views on women’s roles later in her life. She was the founding president of the Women’s National Anti-Suffrage League, creating and editing the paper the *Anti-Suffrage Review*.

‘strongly influenced by the poetry of Byron, Tennyson, and Scott and the novels of Bulwer Lytton, Grace Aguiler and Miss Porter.’<sup>341</sup> Boughton contends that some of young Mary’s stories were also clearly influenced by the novels of Yonge.

Yet there were some instances where Yonge’s taste in literature was not always honoured by her Goslings. It is not entirely known what Yonge omitted from the magazine, but it would seem that she allowed story submissions to be circulated that she did not wholly approve of. Yonge was known to disapprove of stories that focused on romantic attachments, but Courtney has suggested that she approved the inclusion of one story, ‘A Tale of Four Months’, a ‘love story dependent on the agonies of teenage passion’ because of its ‘high moral treatment.’<sup>342</sup> The story begins with two contrasting girl cousins, Emily and Matty. The older cousin Matty, is 17 years old and in her maturity enjoys ‘books she once thought dry.’ Matty is courted by an Oxford undergraduate, Seaford, which makes her feel ‘as bad as any silly girl in a novel.’ The dismissal of ‘frothy’ women’s writing, and writing for women, was seen in George Eliot’s 1856 criticism of the ‘mind and millinery’ novel. Eliot claims that the feature of these novels is a beautiful and intelligent female protagonist, who ultimately dismisses her education by marrying.<sup>343</sup> Like Eliot, Yonge had a strong moral code in her taste for writing, and in contemporary reviews Yonge’s work was compared to Eliot as well as Austen.<sup>344</sup> In her article on authorship, Yonge asserted there was a present ‘taste for sensation, and a certain

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<sup>341</sup> Gillian Boughton, ‘The juvenilia of Mrs Humphry Ward (1851–1920): a diplomatic edition of six previously unpublished narratives derived from original manuscript sources’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Durham University, 1995), p. 5.

<sup>342</sup> Courtney, ‘The Barnacle’, p. 86 and p. 89. The author of ‘A Tale of Four Months’ is identified not by a typical Gosling pseudonym, but by a monogram combined of the letters Y, I, J, and M. It is unknown whether this connoted one writer or several writers; presumably the identity of the author(s) was obscured because of its risky content. See volumes 11, 14, 17 of the *Barnacle* for ‘A Tale of Four Months’.

<sup>343</sup> George Eliot, ‘Silly Novels for Lady Novelists’, *The Westminster Review* (1856), 442–461.

<sup>344</sup> See Gavin Budge, *Charlotte M. Yonge: Religion, Feminism and Realism in the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 27.

conventional distaste for a moral, pure, and religious tone. It is a fatal thing to be led away by it.<sup>345</sup> Regarding women writing characters, she suggested that:

It is true that women's good heroes are apt to be called prigs. But be content to have them so. If you sacrifice your womanly nature in the attempt at the world's notion of manly dash, you only sacrifice yourself, and mar the performance [...] there is much to be said for the so-called prig.<sup>346</sup>

This case of advocating for the 'prig' as a location of safety for women and therefore more a guarantee of success in being published and read. The Goslings were clearly aware of the perceived dangers of reading, as well as the moral and stylistic compass they were supposed to follow, and used the pages of the *Barnacle* to probe and mock this ideology. Examples of this practice will be detailed in the following section.

#### Writing about dangerous reading

The poem 'The Distressed Damsel' encapsulates the Victorian perceived dangers of reading for girls. Written by 'Bog Oak' it was included in volume XVII of the *Barnacle*, from Michaelmas 1867. It is both knowing and mocking of the apparently inherent 'dangers' of girls' novel-reading. Its subject is a girl who reads novels, against her better knowledge:

Both young and foolish then was she  
As by the sequel you will see.  
She would read novels, new and old,  
Although she had been often told  
That the preposterous things she read  
Would one day really turn her head,  
And that she should apply her mind  
In Maunder's treasury to find  
Things more improving far than those  
Which for her study now she chose.

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<sup>345</sup> Yonge, 'Authorship', p. 303.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

But no – she liked to please herself,  
So Maunder lay upon the shelf  
With Goldsmith, Clarendon and Hume,  
Macaulay and Miss Strickland’s ‘Queens’  
With Bacon’s ‘Essays,’ Johnstone’s ‘Lives,’  
Good little books of village scenes,  
Theology in ponderous tomes,  
Written by bishops and by deans.<sup>347</sup>

In this poem, the writer shows her acute awareness of the literature deemed to be ‘appropriate’ for girls. It is worth considering the relevant details of the writers’ lives and works, and particularly Yonge’s own attitudes towards these writers. Samuel Maunder (1785–1849) was a compiler of reference works with the chief purpose of education. His second published book, which Bog Oak refers to here, *The Treasury of Knowledge and Library of Reference* (1830), sold over 200,000 copies.<sup>348</sup> Oliver Goldsmith’s (1728–1774) publication of his enormously popular *History of England* (1764) elevated his status to ‘among the most distinguished literati of the day’ – he was part of a Soho literary club which included Edmund Burke.<sup>349</sup> His *History* was accused of being above the reading ability of boys, but he defended his lack of condescension in the preface of further editions. The conduct writer Sarah Green recommended Goldsmith’s dense history books for teenage girls, and Yonge wrote about how she was only allowed to read one chapter

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<sup>347</sup> Bog Oak, ‘The Distressed Damsel’, the *Barnacle*, Vol XVII Michaelmas 1867. The *Barnacle* does not contain any page numbers.

<sup>348</sup> G. Le G. Norgate, ‘Maunder, Samuel (1785–1849), compiler of reference works,’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18377>> [accessed 13 December 2018].

<sup>349</sup> John A. Dussinger, ‘Goldsmith, Oliver (1728?–1774), author,’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10924>> [accessed 13 December 2018].

of one of Scott's Waverley novels if she had 'first read twenty pages of Goldsmith's *Rome* or some equally solid book.'<sup>350</sup>

Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarendon produced one of the most influential seventeenth-century histories *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (1702–1704), although it was criticised afterwards by history writers such as David Hume. Yonge admitted in a letter to never having read Clarendon's *History*: 'To my shame be it spoken I have not read Clarendon; we ought to have read him aloud when we were diligent Dicks, instead of which I was set to read him to myself when I was too young and could not get on.'<sup>351</sup> David Hume (1711–1776) was a philosopher and historian; the first volume of his *History of England* (1754), covering the reigns of James I and Charles I, is probably the title that Bog Oak alludes to in her poem.<sup>352</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859) was the most contemporaneous of the male writers that Bog Oak cites in her poem. His *History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (1848) is a five-volume work. He wanted it to be accessible, so drew upon what he viewed as lighter literature, such as chapbooks, ballads, popular songs, and theatre.<sup>353</sup> In a letter to Anna Butler, Yonge described how 'My mother and I diligently read 50 pages of Macaulay every night, in a state of mind amused, incredulous and indignant, but

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<sup>350</sup> Sarah Green, *Mental Improvement for a Young Lady, on Her Entrance Into the World; Addressed to a Favourite Niece* (Minerva Press, 1793), p. 98. See Matthew Grenby's *The Child Reader* for further information on Green and Yonge's opinions on juvenile reading. Grenby, *The Child Reader*, p.125; p. 221.

<sup>351</sup> Hannah More, *The History of Diligent Dick, or, Truth Will Out, though it be Hid in a Well* (London: Evans, 1829). This was a cheap repository tract. Yonge writes this about Clarendon in a letter to Mary Anne Dyson dated 29 October, 1848, *The Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823–1901)*.

<sup>352</sup> John Robertson, 'Hume, David (1711–1776), philosopher and historian,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14141>> [accessed 14 December 2018].

<sup>353</sup> William Thomas, 'Macaulay, Thomas Babington, Baron Macaulay (1800–1859), historian, essayist, and poet,' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004)  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-17349>> [accessed 14 December 2018].

on the whole enjoying our readings.<sup>354</sup> Yonge was an admirer of Agnes Strickland (1796–1874), and particularly her volumes of *Lives of the Queens of England* (1840–1848). She wrote to Strickland in 1848 to offer a small detail relating to theological history, signing it ‘Hoping that you will excuse the liberty I have ventured to take, Believe me, Madam your obedient servant.’<sup>355</sup> Strickland’s motto was ‘facts, not opinions’, which Yonge championed too. Finally, Bog Oak cites Francis Bacon’s *Essayes* (1597) which covered a wide range of subjects, and Samuel Johnson’s *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779). *Lives of the Poets* contains biographies of 52 poets, who are notably all male.

By listing Goldsmith, Hume, Macaulay, and even specific texts, Bog Oak demonstrates that, unlike the girl of her poem, she is indeed familiar with these texts – they may well have been part of her library at home. In this sense, the poem ultimately reinforces the Goslings’ performance as writers with a great knowledge of literary trends and politics. This time the Gosling intrudes on what Bourdieu called the masculine habitus; by acknowledging the historical works of several men, she broaches ‘a reserve space in which serious competitive games are played between men’, games which appeal to the desire for artistic domination.<sup>356</sup> Moreover, the subject of the poem places importance on the idea of selecting material to suit her personal taste – ‘But no – she liked to please herself’ – and is ready to dismiss the aforementioned body of literature which is deemed to be improving. Indeed the morally superior speaker begins the next stanza with

Fair maidens all who read my lay  
And throw it with a grin away,  
Pray do not throw away the moral

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<sup>354</sup> Charlotte Yonge to Anna Butler, 28 January 1856, *The Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823–1901)*.

<sup>355</sup> Charlotte Yonge to Agnes Strickland, 5 April 1848, *The Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823–1901)*.

<sup>356</sup> See Terry Lovell, ‘Thinking feminism with and against Bourdieu’ in *Reading Bourdieu on Society and Culture*, ed. by Bridget Fowler (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 27–48 (p. 28).



But chew it as babes do their coral.

There is a strong correlation here between the final sentiment of ‘The Distressed Damsel’ and Yonge’s injunction in her essay ‘Authorship’ not to sacrifice one’s womanly nature in having a casual attitude towards low-quality reading. The extent to which this can be considered a pastiche of advice literature for girls is debatable, as we know that Yonge held strong opinions about the suitability of reading and writing for girls.<sup>357</sup> Yet the poem is certainly comical and knowing. In the poem any kind of novel-reading seems to be coded as problematic, in contrast to the historical works, essays, and tracts that are recommended. Yet no specific novel titles are mentioned, and by doing this the Gosling maintains the appearance of unfamiliarity with such frivolous works of literature. The same writers and educators who championed children’s reading of various histories of England also vehemently condemned novel reading. For Sarah Green, a supporter of Goldsmith and a novelist herself, novels could be ‘the most pernicious reading in the world.’<sup>358</sup>

‘The Distressed Damsel’ is set in the past, and thus situates the ‘damsel’ in question in an unspecified distant time. The opening rhyming couplet ‘Both young and foolish then was she / As by the sequel you will see’ distances the story temporally, and also distances the narrative voice from the conditions of ‘young and foolish.’ The poet of this original work specifies their own perspective on this subject. ‘The Distressed Damsel’ presents another method of demonstrating literary potential through the Gosling’s ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate literature. However the title of the poem is perhaps ironically subversive. Moreover, an adolescent

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<sup>357</sup> Although published after the era of Gosling society, Charlotte Yonge’s explicit essay on ‘Authorship’ addressed to amateur authors is of significance here.

<sup>358</sup> Green, *Mental Improvement for a Young Lady*, p. 101.

girl writing about the adult perception of girls' inappropriate reading is an inherently a subversive act.

### Reviewing literature

Review essays written by Goslings focused on the state of literary trends broadly, as opposed to targeting specific authors or texts. Some Goslings wrote essays in a series, and two of these focused on books. 'A Gossip About Books' was written by Gurgoyle, and 'Nursery Classics' was by Bog Oak. Both series are very knowing and sophisticated in their cultural referents. The latter looks back on childhood fiction as a thing of the past – a subject of scrutiny and analysis. Bog Oak declared that she is no longer a consumer of children's fiction but is now a discerning reviewer. For instance, on the topic of the nursery rhyme 'Cock Robin', which is based on historical and mythical events, she writes how she finds it be 'infinitely surpassing Macbeth in originality, Hamlet in pathos, and King John in cruelty.'<sup>359</sup> Her assertion that the nursery rhyme exceeds some of Shakespeare's plays demonstrates her wide reading and her confidence in writing. This is reinforced by her historical as well as literary knowledge, as she argues cogently that the rhyme was originally based on Mary, Queen of Scots and Lord Darnley. Again, this formal engagement with literature that was well-known to the Goslings demonstrates a learned approach to writing and authorship. It also elevates children's literature above the level of the male canon, which is another subtle attempt to lend authority to a feminised genre.

The 'A Gossip About Books' article series by Gurgoyle comically presents a history of bibliophilia:

Perhaps the readers of the *Barnacle* will glance at the title of this article [...] they will suspect to learn the last new opinion from the Satire-day Review of Gooseland [...] They are deceived, very much deceived. For once, we take upon

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<sup>359</sup> Bog Oak, 'Nursery Classics: Ye doleful dittye of ye sad death of puir Cock Robin', the *Barnacle*, Vol XI.

us, one often attributes of a Bibliomaniac, as noticed above; we mean to look at books, not as things to be read, but to be regarded from any other possible point of view; as ornaments, relics, monuments, or old members of the society of olden days, about whose precious library we may wonder, & speculate.<sup>360</sup>

Here Gurgoyle playfully evokes the male-dominated periodical *Saturday Review*, and consciously adopts the role of bibliomaniac, which is usually (as evidenced in her examples of Thomas Frognall Dibdin – ‘a bibliomaniac is a peculiar animal, with tastes peculiar to himself’) male-dominated too.<sup>361</sup> This is an instance of gender and writerly performativity, then. Gurgoyle suggests trying-out the role of bibliophile, treating books merely as material things, as opposed to reading them fervently to gain knowledge from them, as girls have been encouraged to do by figures such as Charlotte Yonge. Significantly, this performance mocks male literary authority, particularly the figure of the male collector. Gurgoyle’s irreverent performance continues when she writes: ‘A book, a volume, a leaf – what [...] those familiar words would bring to our minds if we thought about it – literally they mean a bit of beech-bark [...] and the broad dry leaf of a tree.’<sup>362</sup> Gurgoyle, by exhibiting her awareness of bibliomania and the process of bibliography, shows herself to be closer to these men who she implies are profoundly different to herself: ‘Now what was it that these Bibliomaniacs collected? Was their passion, merely in love of acquisition? Were these men nothing better than literary misers – It is a great question.’ The knowledge of being excluded from a certain group, in this case bibliomaniacs and writers of the ‘*Saturday Review*’ brings about this kind of response which is both mimicking and mocking. Courtney draws attention to this in the drawings of the *Barnacle*, and particularly a title page which depicts Mother Goose

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<sup>360</sup> Gurgoyle, ‘A Gossip About Books’, the *Barnacle*, Vol VI, Christmas 1864.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

standing on copies of the *Barnacle* to allow her to toss a net filled with copies of other magazines, namely *Blackwoods*, *Temple Bar*, *Quarterly Review*, and *Cornhill* into the sea. This (Figure 3) is potentially quite a radical image, suggesting a new kind of literature made by and for women.

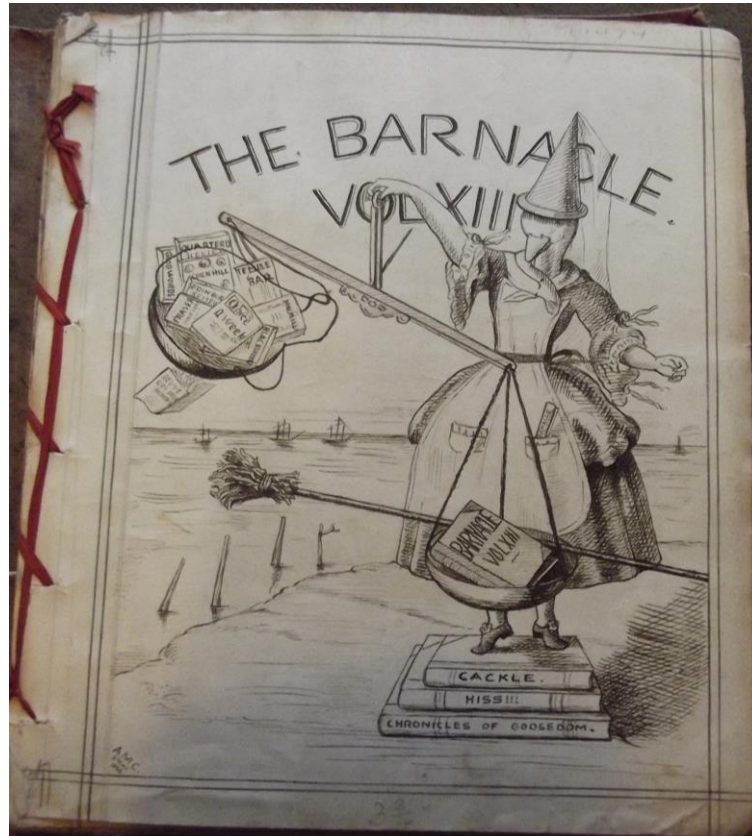


Figure 3: Mother Goose unburdens herself of superfluous magazines, 823.99 311–322.

The *Saturday Review* was a weekly magazine of a conservative bend, and was well known for its reviews. The *Cornhill Magazine* combined critical reviews with serial novels by writers such as William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was also known for its literary talent, publishing work by writers including Margaret Oliphant and George Eliot, and situated against the Whig-supporting *Edinburgh Review*. The *Quarterly Review* was another conservative periodical, which published writers such as Samuel Smiles and Robert Southey. The monthly literary magazine *Temple Bar* published work by Jane Austen, Robert Louis Stevenson and Arthur Conan Doyle. The sensation fiction writer

Mary Elizabeth Braddon was also an editor of *Temple Bar*, yet these publications were overwhelmingly edited and authored by men. In the Gosling's depiction of Yonge casting off these magazine, she presents Yonge as not only discarding the masculine canon but also appropriating the roles of author and editor. She is the complete arbiter of literary skill, taste, and acceptability. Her obvious association with Mother Goose is a further affront to the male culture of serious magazine writing. Angela Carter, in her 1992 *Virago Book of Fairy Tales*, wrote how 'it was Mother Goose who invented all the "old wives' tales" [...] that is, worthless stories, untruths, trivial gossip, a derisive label that allots the art of storytelling to women at the exact time as it takes all value from it.'<sup>363</sup> In her feminist reading of Mother Goose, Carter insists that she is a figure of narrative power, but under the condition that this is a denigrated position. This assessment aligns with the somewhat contradictory position occupied by Yonge.

### Conclusion

Aware of the existence of the androcentric magazines, Mother Goose and her Goslings used them as a springboard but they no longer needed them to succeed in their manuscript goals. For manuscript magazine composition is beyond the sphere of serious adult male writers, but not of serious girl writers. In many ways the manuscript magazines are truly a literature of their own, because they occupy a space that is different from the one occupied by the male canon. They are unseen and unacknowledged by the masculine canon. Alongside the mockery of these magazines, we can see the Gosling illustrator use a type of appropriation of Yonge which amounts to a ventriloquism. She does not depict herself or another Gosling throwing away the basket of magazines, rather the action can only be done by Yonge. Although the Goslings critique androcentric literary culture, they

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<sup>363</sup> Angela Carter, *The Virago Book of Fairy Tales* (London: Virago, 1991), p. xi.

do not question Yonge's authority over their apprenticeship; indeed they venerate her as a figure who has the capacity to create an exclusively female tradition.

Whether by strategies of appropriation, critique, or often a combination of both, the Goslings who wrote in *The Barnacle* demonstrated a culmination of their adolescent learning and culture through engaging with published literature. Aiming to impress their editor – a successful author who promoted caution about girls' desires to write and publish too early – this dual approach of mimesis and critique was symptomatic of this uneven relationship, as well as the girls' own transitioning approach to writing.

The next chapter will extend upon several of the arguments highlighted in this chapter, and contribute new observations about girls' manuscript culture during the 1880s. The *Barnacle* manifested a complicated power dynamic between Goslings and their literary influences, as well as between themselves and Yonge. The following chapter examines how this power dynamic shifted when girls ran their own writing group, and delegated their own rules for appropriative writing.

Chapter 4: The Jebb Sisters: Peer Culture, Diaries and Manuscript Magazines, 1885 to  
1891.

By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, with the culmination of various social and cultural changes affecting women, girls became more included in debates about conduct and education than ever before. The figure of the New Woman which emerged at the *fin de siècle* was independent, educated, and rejected conventional feminine traits such as marriage and motherhood. This new model of womanhood was highly controversial, and was explored at length in late-Victorian journalism. These debates were also raised in girls' magazines and fiction. One girl living and writing at this point in the century was Eglantyne Jebb, who is best known for co-founding the Save the Children Fund in 1919 along with her sister Dorothy Buxton. Amongst her many achievements in adulthood, Eglantyne drafted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child which evolved into the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>364</sup> Her childhood writings, which have heretofore been neglected by scholars, document the earliest thoughts on girls' education, sibling relationships and personal ambition of one of the most significant humanitarian figures in the early twentieth century.

Eglantyne (1876–1928) was born and raised in Ellesmere, in a Shropshire country mansion. The fourth child of Arthur and Eglantyne Louisa Jebb in a family of gentry, her relations were distinguished by their social conscience.<sup>365</sup> Arthur was a Conservative, a country landowner and ex-barrister. Yet he helped to found the Ellesmere Literary and Debating Society and topics for debate included state socialism. Her mother, known as Tye, was an Irish-born artist and poet who founded the Home Arts and Industries

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<sup>364</sup> 'UN Convention On the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)', *Save the Children*

<<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-rights/united-nations-convention-of-the-rights-of-the-child>> [accessed 22 January 2019].

<sup>365</sup> Francesca M. Wilson, *Rebel Daughter of a Country House* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), p. 9. Francesca Wilson had 'thousands' of Jebb letters and 'reams of their private diaries' at her disposal for writing the book. Eglantyne Jebb's cousin Eglantyne Mary Jebb and niece Eglantyne Buxton commissioned Wilson's biography.

Association, one of the most influential arts and education charities in England.<sup>366</sup> Eglantyne's older siblings were Emily, Louisa, and Richard, and her younger siblings were Dorothy and Gamul. The Jebb family all wrote, and many life writing articles from Eglantyne's parents, her aunt, and siblings are still preserved.<sup>367</sup> Francesca Wilson, who has researched the family's documents, suggests that because of the family's prosperity the Jebb girls experienced a prolonged period of girlhood. Their middle-class girlhood was creative and idyllic; they were required to make their own entertainments, and this manifested in outdoor activities, reading and writing. On various occasions the children saw their father speak at his Debating Society, and Arthur clearly cultivated the skills of rhetoric in his offspring.<sup>368</sup> Arthur encouraged and contributed to the family magazine *Briarland Recorder* which Eglantyne edited from the age of twelve to fifteen.

The magazine included a mixture of short stories, poems, riddles and puzzles which were standard inclusions in other girls' manuscript magazines of the era.<sup>369</sup> Also included was 'News of the Month' and a births and obituaries page which reported on the family's domestic animals. Drawings were limited, but there was a full-page advert for Pears soap which imitated the commodity culture of late-Victorian magazines. Themes of the stories and poems, which I will analyse in detail later in this section, were particularly concerned with the girls' home education, the process of collaborative writing, and girlhood conduct in a changing society. The magazines, held at the Women's

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<sup>366</sup> See Linda Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action: Eglantyne Jebb and Save the Children, 1876–1928* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>367</sup> The collections that I reference are held at The Women's Library collection, LSE Library, and are reproduced with permission. Other papers, mainly related to Eglantyne's role in Save the Children are in private collections. These include the Jebb family paper, Buxton family papers, and Gardiner papers. See Linda Mahood, 'Eglantyne Jebb: remembering representing and writing a rebel daughter,' *Women's History Review*, 17.1 (2008), 1–20.

<sup>368</sup> In one of Eglantyne's childhood diaries she tells the story of an all-male debate. I will discuss this in greater detail later in this chapter.

<sup>369</sup> The *Briarland Recorder* has these writing features in common with the *Barnacle* and the *Evergreen Chain* which I analyse in other chapters.



Library in the London School of Economics, are part of a large archive of the Jebb girls' writings. Other materials include diaries written by Eglantyne and Em, fragments of jointly-written stories by the two sisters, Eglantyne's draft writing book, and a colourful book of Eglantyne's invented maps depicting countries such as 'Jebbyland.' The extent and variety of this collection demonstrates the intellectual accomplishments of the Jebb family and Eglantyne in particular. In this chapter I will focus on their manuscript magazine culture but will also draw on these aforementioned writing examples.

Eglantyne's siblings enthused retrospectively about her passion for stories, and particularly her improvised storytelling ability.<sup>370</sup> The family shared reading and writing experiences: every week each child wrote to their aunt Nonie, Arthur's older sister. Em would read improving texts by Ruskin to the family, and their parents would read Dickens aloud 'until the children were old enough to take the task from them.'<sup>371</sup> Amongst themselves the children established their own parsing society, where they would talk on a subject that they pulled out of a hat. Presumably this was inspired by their experiences of seeing their father debate at the Ellesmere Literary and Debating Society. An all-male debating competition was also depicted by Eglantyne in her 1886 diary. Eglantyne's understanding of adult male knowledge appears in her version of a newspaper article in the diary. Turning the rectangular diary vertically, she writes in columns and reports on hearing three men in a competition to give the most compelling speech 'without preparation on a chosen continent.'<sup>372</sup> The three male characters speak on Africa, Europe and Asia respectively, and reveal Eglantyne's knowledge of the British Empire. In real life the Jebb girls were exposed to this androcentric practice from a young age, aware that

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<sup>370</sup> See Wilson, *Rebel Daughter*, pp. 46–47.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>372</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, 'The debate', *Journal*, volume II, pp. 38–39.

this arena was not open to them. I will discuss her comments in more detail later in this chapter.

It is also evident from their childhood magazines and diaries that the Jebb sisters read contemporary novels which were popular with girls, including Charlotte Yonge's *Dove in the Eagle's Nest* (1866), Juliana Ewing's *Six to Sixteen* (1876) and *Story of a Short Life* (1882), and Mary Louisa Molesworth's *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877). Eglantyne's letters are full of references to Walter Scott's novels and poems: *Marmion*, Wilson suggests, she knew almost by heart. The girls clearly had an extensive knowledge of literature as well as literary society practices, and this is evident in their writings.

The manuscript writing culture of the Jebb siblings in the 1880s and into the 1890s provides a fascinating insight into the changing nature of girlhood and print culture during this era. The Jebb writings are also rich as a case study to analyse the adaptive peer culture that has been analysed in other chapters of this thesis. Furthermore, the unique home culture of the family, and the nature of the writing relationships between the siblings, provides an original insight into girls' shared culture, as well as the transition between 1860s print culture where this study begins, and the later-Victorian literary landscape, which affected these child writers and society at large.

This chapter will look both at the diaries of Em and Eglantyne Jebb, and the manuscript magazines which were edited by Eglantyne and written by her siblings. Both materials demonstrate the children's specific cultural habitus, a theory which I have explored at length in chapter one. According to Bourdieu the habitus points to the structures of a particular environment, which generate actions and dispositions in the individual.<sup>373</sup> The magazines exemplify Eglantyne's role in developing cultural values amongst her siblings, and the diaries of Eglantyne and Em indicate the negotiations at

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<sup>373</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 72.

work in girls' private writing culture. This chapter will explore the myriad influences on the Jebb sisters' writing practice. Focusing particularly on Eglantyne Jebb as the driving force behind the family magazine, this chapter will examine her relationships with her siblings in their shared reading and writing culture. It will suggest that the references to literature and particularly Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* in the magazine function to ground this youth culture in a wider and comparable literary context. Finally, this chapter will examine Eglantyne's opinions about girls' education, informed by her siblings, her older relations, and the literary culture she was exposed to. I argue that Eglantyne approaches the subject of 'modern' girlhood through her sarcastic and ironic writings which both draw upon and mock contemporary fears about the future of girlhood. Ultimately Eglantyne's extensive, knowing and appropriative writing culture is symptomatic of her position as a New Girl at the *fin de siècle*.

#### The *Briarland Recorder* and development of a shared magazine culture

The *Briarland Recorder* was a manuscript magazine which was started in 1889 by Eglantyne who was aged 12 at the time. The children's roles in the workings of the manuscript are proudly detailed throughout the volumes: in the first one Eglantyne states: 'The *Briarland Recorder* was founded May 1889.' Even though the readers of the magazine (who were also the writers) would know the date of its inception, this declaration marks an official inauguration of the manuscript. In the magazine Eglantyne lists her siblings' position in the magazine: she was the 'editor and secretary', and also contributed under the pseudonym of 'R. Hare.' Her younger brother and sisters were given specific roles and writing pseudonyms in the manuscript effort. Her younger brother Gamul was given the pseudonym of 'Professor Stamps', sometimes 'A. G. Stamps' who was 'Professor and Reporter.' Her younger sister Dorothy, age 8 in 1889, was known as Letitia Perkins, or Countess Consequence, and was listed as an 'Honorary member.' Eglantyne's older sister Emily (Em) was aged 17 at the time of the first issue

and was not part of the editorial team, but contributed using the pseudonym ‘Periwinkle’ (like the colour periwinkle blue) which presumably reflected her contributions related to her study of art in Dresden. Another older sister, Louisa (Lil) Jebb, used the *nom de plume* ‘Polywol.’

The siblings’ pseudonyms acted not as a method of veiling identity, but as a way to assume a different one altogether. These new identities gave power and agency to the juvenile writers. They allowed them to perform adult job roles, such as professor or a reporter, and they also allowed them to feign the trappings of a long-running, respected magazine with the use of honorary memberships, which were usually given to long-standing and highly valued contributors in published magazines. The children’s mutual embracing of this imitation of the professionalism of published periodicals indicate what Corsaro terms the ‘shared and valued childhood symbolic cultural capital.’<sup>374</sup> Like the Brontë siblings and the members of the Gosling society who were discussed in the previous chapter, the Jebb children cultivated a mutual understanding of their manuscript’s purpose.

#### Developing prestige and humour in the magazine

The process of writing the magazine was clearly relished, as is evidenced in the details given about its production. One poem ‘On the Opening’ included in the first volume, renders the image of the siblings coming together in their ‘meeting room’ to take on their roles in this specific print culture:

1.  
Though the meeting-house is dingy & full of dust,  
And the audience are rude,  
For with laughter they bust,  
& the Editor red, on his fingers has ink,  
& young often giggles & does not often think,

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<sup>374</sup> Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood*, p. 104.

& though the apartment ill comfort does afford,  
Long may the Recorder live to record.  
2.  
Long life to the Reporter, Professor & all,  
Long life to Mr Pollycoll, so distingué & all.  
As they gravely sit on their old rickety chairs,  
And talk of poetry articles, affairs, letters,  
Hurrah for the pen, the writers [sic] good sword!  
And long may the Recorder live to record!<sup>375</sup>

The children clearly reveled in the home-made, amateurish culture of their editorial meetings. Their individual personalities elevate their dingy, dusty meeting room to a juvenile writer's haven. The triumph in this collaboration is this space where the siblings can both 'giggle' and 'talk of poetry articles, affairs, letters.' They are 'distingué' yet they do 'not often think.' This celebration of the juvenile writer's given apparatus for cultural participation echoes what Bette London writes about the Brontës' juvenile exploits; that their specific style of writing, mistakes and all, deliberately went against mainstream publications.<sup>376</sup> The making of the *Briarland Recorder* was also like the Brontës' writing practice in that it took place in a mixed-gender group of siblings. In this way the magazine differs to the *Barnacle* and the *Evergreen Chain* which were written by girls who were distantly acquainted.<sup>377</sup> Yet as Eglantyne took a directorial role in the magazine's production, wrote most of the content as well as much more life writing, her New Girl culture was not hampered by her little brother Gamul's contributions.

Control and order was self-administered and came into force in other elements of their joint venture – particularly in Eglantyne's editing of the stories, which I will discuss

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<sup>375</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, 'On the Opening', *Briarland Recorder*, Volume I, May 1889, p. 1.

<sup>376</sup> See London, *Writing Double*.

<sup>377</sup> See my respective chapters on these two manuscript magazines. The *Evergreen Chain* did receive some submissions from boys, but was a predominantly girl-authored and edited enterprise.

shortly. Yet the aspirations of professionalisation in the Jebbs' writings are to be heeded, as London's analysis of the Brontës' juvenilia demonstrates. London writes that creating 'imaginary worlds' and engaging in 'elaborate literary constructions' could be transformed 'into a practice so sustained as to command professional recognition yet so extensive as to enter the realm of the transgressive.'<sup>378</sup> The sustained nature of Eglantyne's magazine meant that stories and characters were repeated, new writing identities were invented, but the content pushed the boundaries of gender performativity and literary appropriation.

After nearly a year of maintaining the magazine, in March 1890 Eglantyne (R. Hare) contributed a poem 'On the anniversary of B. R.' which continued the tradition of promoting the magazine as a scholarly enterprise:

1.

For many months hath our B. R.  
Much laboured for mankind,  
Its sole aim being to improve  
The populace's mind.  
And everybody will agree  
Its wit & use combined.

2.

Use – for it doth keep us  
From what we're much inclined  
Which is, as everybody knows,  
To overtax our mind.  
With Rule of three & Proportion,  
& bad things of that kind.

3.

Distinguished writers contribute

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<sup>378</sup> London, *Writing Double*, p. 38. This idea will be returned to later in this section.

To make our aim complete,  
& scrolls & scrolls of wisdom  
They lay down at our feet;  
There's Professor A. G. Stamps,  
I'm sure he can't be beat!

4.

In our revered paper  
His wisdom it doth shine.  
And Pollywol – slow you know,  
She writes a word, writes a line,  
Stops to think, and at last  
Brings something very fine.

5.

Periwinkle doth discourse  
With free & ready pen,  
But with tears I'm forced to say  
It's only now & then.  
In the clouds doth our youngest  
Often take high flights,

6.

From which she sometimes doth descend  
To give us poems of knights.  
For fleetly flights was she renowned,  
But now she's turned steady,  
And writes with gravity most great,  
& language free and ready.

7.

O prosper, prosper! Good B. R,  
& labour for mankind,  
& let your purpose ever be

To elevate the mind.  
Then everybody will agree  
You're [sic] wit & use combined.<sup>379</sup>

This is indeed a much more explicit declaration of juvenile brilliance than we see in other nineteenth-century life-writing. Emily Shore, a polymath who wrote much earlier in the century, was modest and self-conscious about her learning in her diaries. Eglantyne's approach was mimicked by her younger sister Dorothy. In the same volume as Eglantyne's poem, Dorothy contributes 'A no-named poem' which is signed off with both her aliases: C. Consequence and L. Perkins. It is clearly an imitation of her older sister's editorial tone:

Now that the B. R. is begun,  
In the name of R. Hare  
A request to the public I'll make  
Which must be tended with care.

You authors of the learned B. R.  
Must rack & rack your brains,  
To give some contributions  
Over which are spent great pains.

And may learned A. G. Stamps  
Send papers of wisdom great,  
And R Hare & Pollywoll  
Contribute things of weight,

And may little Periwinkle  
Write something nice & sweet,  
Interesting & amusing  
Just to fill a little sheet.

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<sup>379</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, 'On the anniversary of the B. R.', *Briarland Recorder*, March 1890 – August 1891, pp. 10–11.



And I hope in days to come  
New authors will arise  
That will fill our B. R.  
With papers learned & wise.<sup>380</sup>

Simultaneous boasting about the magazine and acknowledgement of its amateur status is specific to children's aspirational literary cultures. The inflating sentiment in 'On the Opening' of 'Hurrah for the pen, the writer's good sword! / And long may the Recorder live to record!' reflects writings and drawings in the *Barnacle* and the *Evergreen Chain* ('best of all magazines!') which also boast the esteem of the publication. Furthermore, this technique was seen often in low-quality children's magazines of the 1860s, which attempted to prove their merit against similar publications. Diana Dixon writes how 'editors tended to wax lyrical when extolling the virtues of their own product.'<sup>381</sup> Since the magazine was presented as a source which could be of interest to adult as well as child readers, it was self-consciously written to both amuse and instruct. It provides insight into the interpersonal relationships amongst the late-Victorian young writers, particularly with regards to their self-identification within peer cultural groups, and the interactions between these groups. Although Eglantyne set the tone for the magazine, her younger siblings Dorothy and Gamul were particularly biddable to her specifications.

Eglantyne's leading role amongst her younger siblings can be seen in even earlier writings of hers. In the second volume of her diary from 1886 when she was aged 10, Eglantyne wrote 'I hope if anybody reads this journal, they shall not laugh at me for talking of Gamul, and Dorothy as "the little ones."<sup>382</sup> Aware that by referring to her

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<sup>380</sup> Dorothy Jebb, 'A no-named poem', *Briarland Recorder*, March 1890 – August 1891, p. 31.

<sup>381</sup> Diana Dixon, 'From Instruction to Amusement: Attitudes of Authority in Children's Periodicals before 1914,' *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 19.2 (1986), 63–67, p. 64.

<sup>382</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, *Journal: Volume II*, March – July 1886, p. 3.

younger brother and sister as if she were significantly more mature than them, Eglantyne seemingly straddles two contradictory subject positions. She is inclined to see herself as an older girl and therefore more privileged by being more knowledgeable or mature in society, but she also highlights her overriding ‘child’ status which situates the three on the same level. Corsaro’s theories shed light on Eglantyne’s role in the construction of childhood in her siblings’ peer culture. He writes that ‘children appropriate information from the adult world to create and participate in a peer culture at specific moments in time.’<sup>383</sup> This, as Corsaro suggests, is an ‘evolving’ process, one which children ‘refine’ over time.<sup>384</sup> Although this is based on the ‘institutional structure’ of adult cultures, this is organised by the collective actions of children. Cognizant of the developmental differences between herself and her younger siblings, Eglantyne from an early age reproduced her understandings of culture and society through her creative outputs.

#### Appropriating Louisa May Alcott’s *Pickwick Portfolio*

A significant example of Eglantyne’s reproduction of childhood culture is when she explicitly appropriates sections from a published novel in her magazine. The two poems discussed in the previous section, and indeed other writings in the *Briarland Recorder*, have a distinctive intertext in the fictional manuscript magazine the *Pickwick Portfolio*, made by the March sisters in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* (1868).

*Little Women* tells the story of the four March siblings: Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy (like the four Jebb sisters) and their experience of growing up at home during the American Civil War. They are all involved in reading, writing and theatricals; Jo writes a novel which is memorably burnt by her younger sister Amy, and they organise their

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<sup>383</sup> Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood*, p. 43.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

own society 'The Pickwick Club.'<sup>385</sup> The March sisters' literary society and its manuscript publication are introduced as such:

As secret societies were the fashion, it was thought proper to have one, and as all of the girls admired Dickens, they called themselves the Pickwick Club. With a few interruptions, they had kept this up for a year, and met every Saturday evening in the big garret, on which occasions the ceremonies were as follows: Three chairs were arranged in a row before a table on which was a lamp, also four white badges, with a big 'P.C.' in different colors on each, and the weekly newspaper called, The Pickwick Portfolio, to which all contributed something, while Jo, who reveled in pens and ink, was the editor. At seven o'clock, the four members ascended to the clubroom, tied their badges round their heads, and took their seats with great solemnity. Meg, as the eldest, was Samuel Pickwick, Jo, being of a literary turn, Augustus Snodgrass, Beth, because she was round and rosy, Tracy Tupman, and Amy, who was always trying to do what she couldn't, was Nathaniel Winkle. Pickwick, the president, read the paper, which was filled with original tales, poetry, local news, funny advertisements, and hints, in which they good-naturedly reminded each other of their faults and short comings. On one occasion, Mr. Pickwick put on a pair of spectacles without any glass, rapped upon the table, hemmed, and having stared hard at Mr. Snodgrass, who was tilting back in his chair, till he arranged himself properly, began to read [...]<sup>386</sup>

This detailed description of the March girls' cultural engagement demonstrates that it was carefully organised and orchestrated. The oldest sibling Meg was assigned the highest role, as well as the namesake of Dickens' eponymous character in his first novel. Yet the

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<sup>385</sup> Dickens' first novel *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, Containing a Faithful Record of the Perambulations, Perils, Travels, Adventures and Sporting Transactions of the Corresponding Members* (1836–7) spawned various clubs. The Pickwick Bicycle Club in London, established in the year of Dickens' death (1870), is still going today. In the beginning each member has to assume the name of a character from *Pickwick*, much like the March sisters in their own Pickwick Club. Some of the earliest Pickwick Clubs date from 1836 when the serialisation of *Pickwick* began. See 'Pickwick Bicycle Club', <<http://www.pickwickbc.org.uk>> [accessed 02 January 2019] and Nancy Aycock Metz, 'Pickwick Plumbs the Hampstead Ponds: Chapter One in its Scientific Contexts,' *Dickens Quarterly*, 32.4 (2015) 283–292.

<sup>386</sup> Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (London: Puffin, 1994), p. 141.

other March sisters all adopted male personas from the novel, which reflected their own personalities. Furthermore, the detail about the Pickwick Society's 'ceremonies' also supplies insight into the officiality and importance that the girls invested in this joint venture. The ritual of the meeting room with its three chairs hints at the imaginative proclivities of the sisters, especially their transgressive desire to perform a male gender and profession. This is emphasised when their boy neighbour Laurie is brought into the fold by tomboy editor Jo. She receives expressions of resistance from her sisters. Mr Winkle (Amy) says 'We don't wish any boys; they only joke and bounce about. This is a ladies' club, and we wish to be private and proper' and the eldest sister Meg agrees: 'I'm afraid he'll laugh at our paper, and make fun of us afterwards.'<sup>387</sup> When Laurie attempts to join one of the girls' other societies, the 'Busy Bee Society', in which the girls practice their various feminine accomplishments outdoors, Meg is again reluctant to allow him to participate: 'We should have asked you before, only we thought you wouldn't care for such a girl's game as this.'<sup>388</sup> Regarding their cultural activities, the girls are acutely aware of the gendered disparity between themselves and their neighbour, but also actively claim a space of their own.

As *Little Women* is largely autobiographical, the descriptions of writing in the manuscript magazine reflected Alcott's home life as a girl, in which she would write stories and stage plays with her family.<sup>389</sup> Alcott even alludes to the fact that the *Pickwick Portfolio* is based on a real life example when she writes 'I beg leave to assure my readers [it] is a bona fide copy of one written by bona fide girls once upon a time.'<sup>390</sup> The volume of the *Pickwick Portfolio* that the March girls work on is reproduced in the novel, and

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<sup>387</sup> Alcott, *Little Women*, p. 146.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>389</sup> See Louisa May Alcott, *Norna, or the Witch's Curse*, ed. by Juliet McMaster (Sydney: Juvenilia Press, 2016).

<sup>390</sup> Alcott, *Little Women*, p. 145.

much of it is similar to the Jebbs' magazine writings. The opening poem of the *Pickwick Portfolio* titled 'Anniversary Ode' is under 'Poet's Corner' and evokes the figures and processes involved in the making of the magazine:

Again we meet to celebrate  
With badge and solemn rite,  
Our fifty-second anniversary,  
In Pickwick Hall, tonight.

We all are here in perfect health,  
None gone from our small band:  
Again we see each well-known face,  
And press each friendly hand.

Our Pickwick, always at his post,  
With reverence we greet,  
As, spectacles on nose, he reads  
Our well-filled weekly sheet.

Although he suffers from a cold,  
We joy to hear him speak,  
For words of wisdom from him fall,  
In spite of croak or squeak.

Old six-foot Snodgrass looms on high,  
With elephantine grace,  
And beams upon the company,  
With brown and jovial face.

Poetic fire lights up his eye,  
He struggles 'gainst his lot.  
Behold ambition on his brow,  
And on his nose, a blot.

Next our peaceful Tupman comes,  
So rosy, plump, and sweet,  
Who chokes with laughter at the puns,  
And tumbles off his seat.

Prim little Winkle too is here,  
With every hair in place,  
A model of propriety,  
Though he hates to wash his face.

The year is gone, we still unite  
To joke and laugh and read,  
And tread the path of literature  
That doth to glory lead.

Long may our paper prosper well,  
Our club unbroken be,  
And coming years their blessings pour  
On the useful, gay 'P. C.'.  
A. SNODGRASS<sup>391</sup>

The fictional *Pickwick Portfolio*, and this poem specifically was a clear source of inspiration for the Jebb children. While I have not found evidence of Eglantyne reading Alcott's novel, Eglantyne's own poem 'On the anniversary of B. R' is indebted to Alcott's creation, from its inclusion in 'Poet's Corner', to the rhyme scheme. In both poems the topic is the society members with their *nom de plumes* and the desired longevity of the magazine.

The concept of the Jebb children's *Briarland Recorder* was potentially a product of reading *Little Women*. Since Alcott's novel was still popular in the 1880s and 1890s with British girls, we can confidently assume that Eglantyne would have read it. Philip

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<sup>391</sup> Alcott, *Little Women*, p. 142.

Waller has acknowledged that *Little Women* was the favourite reading of the British artist and writer Constance Smedley when she was a girl.<sup>392</sup> Edward Salmon's 1888 survey discussed its continued significance in great detail, writing that 'in every succeeding season Miss Alcott figured among the authors of books for young people.'<sup>393</sup> He writes that her success with British child readers as an American writer was second only to Mrs Wetherall, whose novel about a young Christian girl *The Wide Wide World* (1850) was a bestseller. Moreover, Salmon suggests that the secret of Alcott's popularity was

that she gave her own large heart to her creations – if, that is, Jo and Amy, and Meg and Laurie, and Mr and Mrs Marsh can properly be called creations. They were rather pen and ink portraits of living beings – none other in fact than her own parents, and sisters, and friends. Jo was to Miss Alcott what David Copperfield was to Charles Dickens. After the first few pages of 'Little Women,' one knows Jo personally. Her character, her sympathies, her trials, stamp her upon the memory as a person worthy of a place among one's literary friends.<sup>394</sup>

Eglantyne Jebb clearly admired and adapted the 'literary friends' and especially their writing culture which was presented in *Little Women*. The *Briarland Recorder* magazine is metatextual, as it cites a fictional magazine within a (mostly) fictional text, but does not reference the novel at all. Eglantyne's engagement with *Little Women* is unique, as she does not only appropriate a literary text, but draws upon the process and materiality of juvenile cultural production. As I will demonstrate through other examples of the Jebb's manuscript material in this chapter, the children did explicitly reference other authors in their writing (see Figure 4) and wove these references into their creative work.

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<sup>392</sup> Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870–1918*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 585.

<sup>393</sup> Salmon, *Juvenile Literature As It Is*.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

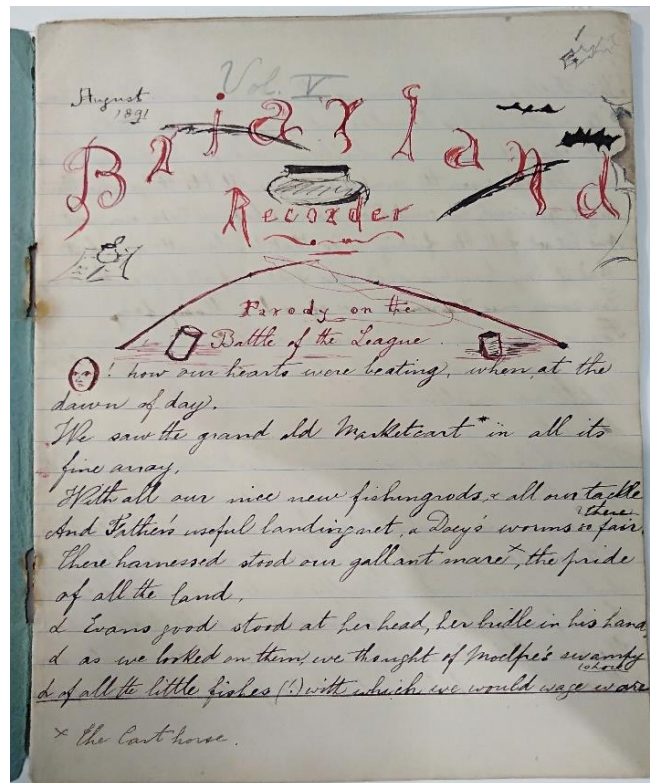


Figure 4: The title page of the *Briarland Recorder* from August 1891, depicting a ‘Parody on the Battle of the League’, 7EJB/A/01/02.

Yet Alcott’s text was so deeply entrenched in Eglantyne’s cultural referents; as Salmon suggested there was a level of identification with the novel which influenced Eglantyne’s own peer culture in the *Briarland Recorder*. In the example of the *Briarland Recorder*, the child agent draws upon a fictional example of children’s culture in a children’s text. *Little Women* occupied a ubiquitous status during the beginning of the Golden Age of children’s literature, and its unacknowledged appropriation in Eglantyne’s writings marks a change in reading material from the Gosling Society. Mitchell writes how by 1880 the word ‘girl’ became ‘dramatically visible’ in titles of advice books and fiction.<sup>395</sup> Therefore Eglantyne grew up around a literary culture which depicted and reinforced the culturally-mobile girlhood of the late-Victorian era.

#### Child-centered subjects in the *Briarland Recorder*

<sup>395</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 6.



The Jebb siblings' manuscript magazine adopted the role of disseminating important information to all of the family members. The children drew on their own lives to inform the magazine's readers. The recurring 'News of the Month' section (see Figure 5) reported on the children in their various pursuits and educational activities, and inflated their positions through mock royal titles:

Prince Gamul departed for the first time to pursue his educational studies at Slough [...] from thence his Highness writes: 'It is Great fun here,' to use his most toward learnedness's own expression. His Royalship Richard departed to Marlborough College the same day, having left special orders for his birthday cake to be sent to him on the day of his festival.

At home the Princesses continue to learn wisdom under their Royal Instructress, who exercises them in Body and Mind.

Her Greatness Emeline, hath painted, with her own fair hand, many excellent landscapes...<sup>396</sup>

The children had a middle-class habitus and this exaggeration of status demonstrates their dual aspiration and mocking for their class. Reports of Richard's school education away from home, and Eglantyne and Emily's home education were reported with equal importance. These accounts emphasised the heterogeneity of the children's activities at this point in time. In a later volume the magazine tells of Em Jebb's stay in Dresden where she studied art, and also involves the adult family members in the royal news circulation:

Prince Richard returns from his pursuit of knowledge at Marlborough college on the 6th of April. We hope he has caught the creature up.

Prince Gamul's term of mind-relief begins this year on March 26.

Easter Sunday falls on March 29.

The Dowager Lady Bun is sojourning at Mentone.

The Princess Emily is following in the footprints of the ancient Masters at Dresden. She returns home in May.

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<sup>396</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, 'News of the Month,' *Briarland Recorder*, Vol III, September 1889 – February 1890, p. 10.

His Majesty delivered a lecture on the 'Cries & Songs of Birds' to the assembled Multitudes of the Ellesmere Literary Soc. on Wednesday last.<sup>397</sup>

Here we see that the children's father, Arthur Jebb, held the highest position in this fantasy hierarchy. He was 'His Majesty', their mother Tye was the 'Queen' and their aunt was the 'Dowager Lady Bun.' The children viewed their magazine as reflective of their domestic taxonomy; it was still wedded to the reality of their family life even as it played with fantasy. This fantastical investment, which can also be described as performance, is of particular pertinence to the construction of girlhood culture and agency in the magazines and diaries. Eglantyne draws upon her habitus – in this case her knowledge of her siblings' education and guardians' pursuits – in order to express her own agency within this connected family.

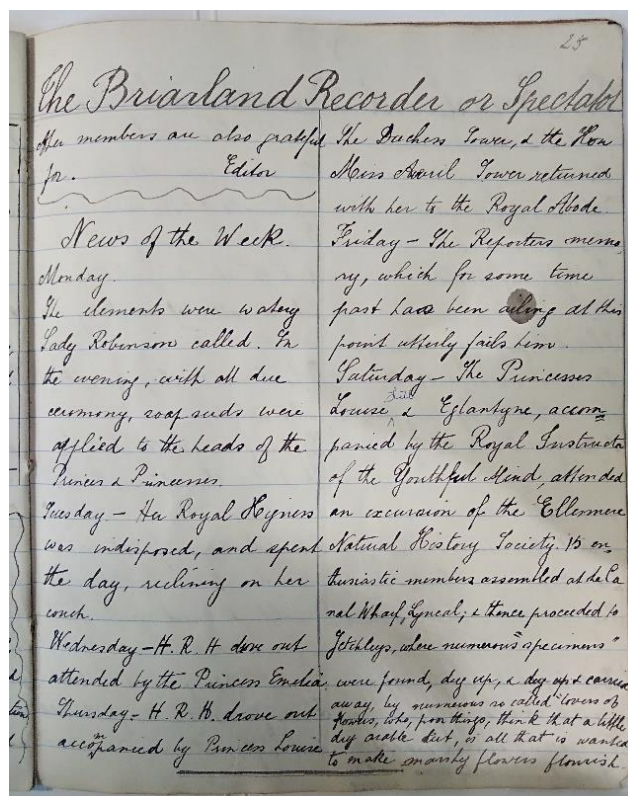


Figure 5: The 'News of the Week' in the *Briarland Recorder*, 7EJB/A/01/02.

<sup>397</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, 'News of the Month' *Briarland Recorder*, March 1890 – August 1891, pp. 32–33.

Gender performance and critiques of girls' education and conduct in the Jebb girls' writings

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which I outlined in chapter one, is significant for the contextualization of the gendered awareness in the Jebb girls' writings. There is an indication that the girls aspire to a kind of study and scholarship which is still viewed as male-dominated during the 1880s. The first installment of one of Eglantyne's serialised stories, 'Records of a Gate,' enacts a discussion about scholarship between a young brother and sister, Harry and Jenny. The story tells of a boy who is 'coming home from school, holding in one hand his slate & his books, & in the other the chubby fingers of his little sister.'<sup>398</sup> He sees another boy carve his name into a tree, and, seeing that it is part of a scholarly tradition to do so, stops to do it too: 'why, all the fellows do, so now I'm a scholar, of course, I must too.'<sup>399</sup> His little sister protests, telling him 'you're not a scholar' 'I'm more 'n a scholar than you.'<sup>400</sup> She goes on: 'Lend me your knife, Harry, I'll cut mine too', to which Harry responds: 'You gals always want to do what the boys do.'<sup>401</sup> But Harry does cut Jenny's name into the tree, underneath his own. Eglantyne's story depicts the gendered discrepancy felt by girls who envied the education of their brothers. Through Jenny's sense of injustice, depicted in her belief that she's 'more 'n a scholar' than her brother, Eglantyne explores the tensions felt by younger sisters towards older brothers in formalised education. Eglantyne's own brothers, Richard and Gamul, both attended the boarding school Marlborough College. Although Eglantyne proudly details the remote education of her brothers in her 'News of the Month' feature, in this

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<sup>398</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, 'Records of a Gate,' *Briarland Recorder*, Vol III, September 1889 – February 1890, p. 2.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

story she recognises the significant differences in the experience of herself and her brothers.

On several occasions in the magazine the editor is referred to with male pronouns. This happens particularly in letters which have apparently been sent to the editor by Judge Gravity, who is the family dog, Jock. The younger sister Dorothy would write as Judge Gravity, and always address the letter with ‘Mr Editor, Sir.’ Gilbert and Gubar write how for Victorian women writers who used male pseudonyms, ‘the cloak of maleness’ functioned as a ‘practical-seeming refuge from those claustrophobic double binds of “femininity.”’<sup>402</sup> Adopting a male persona augmented the creative licence that girl writers had at their disposal. A fictional comparison can be found in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* (1853). In the novel, Lucy Snowe performs a male role in a *vaudeville* held at her *pensionnat* in the fictional Belgian town of Villette. Told from Lucy’s perspective, she is initially hesitant to dress in men’s clothing, but eventually comes to find an insatiable power in this performance. She writes it was as if something else took control of her: ‘I know not what possessed me’ but also that the desire to perform as a man was latent with her: ‘ere long, warming, becoming interested, taking courage, I acted to please myself.’<sup>403</sup> Scholars have commented on the significance of Lucy’s gender transgression in its tensions between authority and subversion. Joseph Litvak writes that ‘At these moments, theatricality itself wears an aspect that alternates painfully between the liberation of role-playing and the conventionality that circumscribes and ironizes any such improvisatory freedom.’<sup>404</sup> Other critics have commented on the dual ideological function of performing as a man. Joanna Russ warns that if a woman writer ‘abandon[s] female protagonists altogether and stick[s] to male myths and male protagonists [...] she falsifies herself and

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<sup>402</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 65.

<sup>403</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 142; p. 143.

<sup>404</sup> Joseph Litvak, ‘Charlotte Brontë and the Scene of Instruction: Authority and Subversion in *Villette*,’ *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 42.4 (1988), 467–489 (p. 473).

much of her experience.<sup>405</sup> As Eglantyne's editor persona is referred to as 'Mr Editor, Sir' by the other children, this indicates that the male label is a result of an inside joke, perhaps based on the children's shared knowledge of the male-dominated nature of their magazines at home.

Although women did take significant roles in contributing to and editing magazines during the nineteenth century, the periodical press was still dominated by men. In 1855, Margaret Oliphant vowed to 'conceal the feminine hand' from her contributions to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.<sup>406</sup> Oliphant valued anonymity in her extensive writing career with *Blackwood's*, one of many Victorian magazines which was dominated by men. In one article she contributed, she wrote that *Blackwood's* 'has her ladies too, but, shall we own it? Perhaps loves them less.'<sup>407</sup> Yet by the time the Jebbs were writing in the 1880s, the New Woman writers were challenging male magazine writers' 'sexual prerogative, their monopoly on professional careers, and even those bastions of gentlemanly privilege, Oxford and Cambridge.'<sup>408</sup> This challenge to a masculine monopoly on education and professionalism was also challenged by New Girl writers through their manuscript magazines.

Education prospects for girls shifted dramatically during the 1880s and 1890s. Elementary education became available to every child in England in 1870 but it was only made compulsory in 1880. The first female university students gathered in 1869, but, as Mitchell has highlighted, 'although intellectual magazines discussed women's higher

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<sup>405</sup> Joanna Russ, 'What Can a Heroine Do? Or Why Women Can't Write,' in *Images of Women in Fiction*, ed. by Susan Koppelman Cornillon (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972), p. 10.

<sup>406</sup> See Solveig C. Robinson, 'Expanding a "Limited Orbit": Margaret Oliphant, "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine," and the Development of a Critical Voice,' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 38.2 (2005), 199–220.

<sup>407</sup> Margaret Oliphant, 'The Old Saloon', *Blackwood's*, 141 (1887), 126–153 (p. 127).

<sup>408</sup> Anne M. Windholz, 'An Emigrant and a Gentleman: Imperial Masculinity, British Magazines, and the Colony That Got Away,' *Victorian Studies*, 42.4 (1999–2000), 631–658 (p. 637).

education during the 1860s and 1870s, the surge in interest did not reach a wide public until the next decade.<sup>409</sup> During the year 1878 the University of London began to admit women and the Association for the Higher Education for Women at Oxford was established.<sup>410</sup> Yet this did not mean that girls were immediately benefitting from the same level of educational access and autonomy as their brothers.<sup>411</sup> In the *Briarland Recorder* Eglantyne writes of Em studying art in Dresden; she spent six months there studying portrait painting and improving her German. Linda Mahood suggests that this was typical of ‘many affluent English girls.’<sup>412</sup> When they grew older Eglantyne and Em both studied at Oxford; Lill and Dorothy studied at Cambridge. Mitchell notes that

even by 1915, no more than a few thousand women had been students at Oxford or Cambridge, taken examinations for a London degree, or attended classes at one of the mixed-sex provincial universities. Nevertheless, the knowledge that women had surpassed men in institutions central not only to the intellectual but also to the political and cultural life of the nation gave the idea of ‘college’ an enormous impact on a thoughtful girl’s sense of potential.<sup>413</sup>

Yet during their childhood home-life, the Jebb girls’ access to higher education was uncertain. Their father, Arthur Jebb, did not believe in sending his daughters to college. Although he encouraged Eglantyne’s aptitudes in her girlhood, he feared for her becoming a ‘bluestocking,’ and wrote in a letter to his wife in 1891 that ‘ladies’ college seems to me a ladies’ school with all its evils intensified, because the time of life is just

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<sup>409</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 49.

<sup>410</sup> Rhama D. Pope and Maurice G. Verbeke, ‘Ladies’ Educational Organizations in England, 1865–86’, *Paedagogica Historica*, 16.2 (1976), 336–61 (p. 336). See also Gleadle, ‘Magazine culture, girlhood communities, and educational reform.’

<sup>411</sup> See Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 120.

<sup>412</sup> Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action*, p. 58.

<sup>413</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 49. Some girl writers of the *Barnacle*, explored in the previous chapter, attended women’s colleges.

the most impressionable and hazardous as any.’<sup>414</sup> He refused to spare 40 pounds per annum to send his eldest daughter Lil to Newnham College, so his sister Louisa Jebb (aunt Bun) paid the fees.<sup>415</sup> Arthur died in 1894 and it was aunt Bun who helped to pay for Eglantyne’s fees when she went to study History at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, in 1895.<sup>416</sup> The first letter that Eglantyne sent from university was to Bun, in which she movingly writes:

When I first heard of your helping in our educational expenses, I began to take an interest in living, as opposed to dreaming [...] It was such a blessing to know that there was no necessity to drivel through [...] days and months; to know that a stepping-stone was laid for you, just at the moment when you would want it most.<sup>417</sup>

Aunt Bun was a major influence during Eglantyne’s girlhood. Along with the governess, Bun was Eglantyne’s day-to-day contact. She supervised the girls’ lessons and was a great supporter of higher education for women, having herself attended Newnham College, the second Cambridge college to admit women after Girton. Bun was unconventional and an inspiration for the girls; Em called her ‘the companion of pranks and the inspirer of dreams.’<sup>418</sup> Their unmarried aunt wore shorter skirts, a man’s linen collar, and was often engaged in outdoor activities and manual work. The New Woman type which Bun adhered to was newly flourishing, and girl writers living earlier in the nineteenth century would not have had direct guidance from a strong feminist role model in the immediate domestic space.

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<sup>414</sup> Letter from Trevor Arthur Jebb to Eglantyne Louisa Jebb, 4 October 1891 (Jebb papers). See Mahood, ‘writing a rebel daughter,’ p. 4.

<sup>415</sup> Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action*, p. 59.

<sup>416</sup> Louisa Jebb also paid for the youngest daughter Dorothy to go up to Newnham to study economics and moral sciences.

<sup>417</sup> Wilson, *Rebel Daughter*, p. 57.

<sup>418</sup> Mahood, *Feminism and Voluntary Action*, p. 58.

This tussle between conservative Victorian beliefs of the separate spheres – which the previous chapter explored in relation to Charlotte Yonge – and the New Women identities which were being created in the 1880s, were distilled in published fiction and periodicals for girls. Mitchell notes how ‘the boy dream had multiple resonances: girls wanted active games, a serious education, and adult rights and responsibilities,’ yet fiction for girls ‘mixed its messages, simultaneously permitting boyishness and ambivalently undercutting it.’<sup>419</sup> New Girls who possessed boyish traits were a source of concern for some Victorian writers. Girls who were too boyish could be labelled hoydens, and their future marriageability was feared for.<sup>420</sup> Yet the use of male pseudonyms in their writings proved that this was not a marked concern for the Jebb girls. Caught between the influence of their father who did not want to send his daughters to university, their New Woman aunt who advocated higher education, and their own co-produced aspirations in their written culture, the Jebb sisters experienced these contradictions which affected the lives of New Girls in the 1880s and 1890s.

#### Sarcastic perspectives on ‘modern’ girlhood and education

Eglantyne occupied both the roles of ‘Mr. Editor, Sir’ of the magazine and ‘Princess’ of the family unit, and this experimentation with gender is seen throughout Eglantyne’s critical pieces. Through their cultural habitus – their exposure to their father’s debating society and their home education from Bun and their governess – the Jebb children perceived that power came from knowledge, and many of their stories which show an interest in power dynamics depict educational themes. The girls’ home education and conduct were recurring themes in the magazine, and also subjects of scrutiny and mockery.<sup>421</sup> The humorous tone of the poem ‘When I was a girl’ comes from Eglantyne’s

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<sup>419</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 105; p. 108.

<sup>420</sup> See Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p. 121.

<sup>421</sup> Kathryn Gleadle has written on Eva Knatchbull-Hugessen’s loyalty to her father in her life writings, which ran concurrent with gentle inferences of his patriarchal egoism. This twofold written response to



posturing as a ‘granny’ who complains of the modern girls of today, and hopes that they will mend their ways in time:

When I was a girl, my dears, my dears,  
I dressed in slaty blue,  
I always did, what I was bid,  
And spoke when spoken to.

And to my elder sisters, my dears,  
I was always to [sic] good to say “no.”  
I wrote to my brothers on Sunday I did,  
I plaited my hair, & tied my bow.

The now-a-day girls, my dears, my dears,  
Are always heard & seldom seen,  
I was the other way in my young day,  
And a very good girl I’ve been.

And I hope you’ll say the same, my dears,  
When you are as old as me.  
If you mend your ways in your young days,  
A very good granny you’ll be.

When I was a girl my dears,  
I always had clean hands.  
I even did have tidy hair,  
And never lost my bands.

I had my shoe laces tidy,  
And my dears, when I was 3  
I knew how to count up to twenty,  
And my alphabet to G.

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the influence of the father can be seen to some extent in the Jebb manuscripts. See ‘Silence, Dissent, and Affective Relations in the Juvenile Diaries of Eva Knatchbull-Hugessen, (1861–1895)’, 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 27 (2019), <<http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.808>>.

I always was a credit to the family,  
When I went to my friends to tea,  
In my little pink muslin frock,  
I was a pretty sight to see.<sup>422</sup>

The irony of the poem is striking; thirteen year-old Eglantyne is aware of the discourses of the time which complain that ‘now-a-days girls’ ‘are often seen and seldom heard.’ The phrase dates back to fifteenth-century texts, and in the nineteenth century William Makepeace Thackeray wrote in *Roundabout Papers* (1860–63) that ““Little boys should not loll on chairs.” “Little girls should be seen, and not heard;” and so forth. Have we not almost all learnt these expressions of old fozzles.’<sup>423</sup> Eliza Lynn Linton’s diatribe against raucous girls in *The Girl of the Period* (1883) was in more recent memory. Linton wrote: ‘All men whose opinion is worth having prefer the simple and genuine girl of the past, with her tender little ways and pretty bashful modesties, to this loud and rampant modernization.’<sup>424</sup> Eglantyne subverts these kinds of discourses through her poetry. The poem mocks the speaker through the recurring theme of girls as silent objects of the gaze.

In a draft notebook belonging to Eglantyne where this poem was practiced, the final three verses were not written. On including the extra verses in the *Briarland Recorder* Eglantyne emphasises the expectations of feminine presentation and conduct, of having ‘clean hands’, ‘tidy hair’ and being ‘a pretty sight to see.’ Yet in Eglantyne’s poem these expectations of girlhood conduct explicitly relate to relationships with other siblings, not to the adult world: ‘And to my elder sisters, my dears, / I was always to [sic]

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<sup>422</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, ‘When I was a Girl,’ *Briarland Recorder*, Vol III, September 1889 – February 1890, pp. 11–12.

<sup>423</sup> *The Roundabout Papers* are a set of essays written for the *Cornhill Magazine* from its inception until after Thackeray resigned the editorship, which were then published in book form. William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Roundabout Papers* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1863), p. 172.

<sup>424</sup> Linton, *The Girl of the Period*, p. 9.

good to say “no.”” Eglantyne suggests that girlhood duty is to her siblings, and in particular this duty is to defer to older siblings, as well as the adult world. Although this poem is heavily sarcastic (in her draft notebook she labels it ‘Sarcasm’), the writer, as a thirteen year-old middle child with both older and younger siblings, understands this age-defined culture from both sides.

An earlier poem by Eglantyne, which was included in her diary of 1886, could be seen as a prototype of ‘When I was a girl.’ Yet instead of being from the perspective of a grandmother to a granddaughter, ‘The Doll’s Lesson’ is told from the perspective of a girl to her doll. The sarcastic message is similar: the granddaughter and the doll alike should be modest and study intensely:

1)

Now, Elizabeth Jane, you know you ought  
To try, & give a few more pains  
How many times I have taught  
That at present Victoria reigns

2)

Repeat, my dear, the little rhyme  
Yesterday you learnt  
I dare say you’ll know more in time  
If you take pains now

3)

Do no [sic] twice two make four  
Then why say you five  
O ‘Lizbeth Jane, I never saw  
A sillier child alive

4)

You wouldn’t like to be a dunce, dear

No, no, I'm sure you wouldn't  
But that's what you'll be I fear  
If you don't understand this soon.

(dolls answer)

5  
Ma, ma please I'm not alive  
If you don't explain I can't understand  
You told me yourself twice two were five  
Then why do you say now four.<sup>425</sup>

In this poem the girl admonishes her doll, Elizabeth Jane, for not retaining information that she has learnt in lessons. In doing this Eglantyne mimics the chastisement the girls received for arrested attainment by governesses. Ultimately, Eglantyne suggests, this is the fault of the teacher, when she writes: 'You told me yourself twice two were five / Then why do you say now four.'

Eglantyne's criticism of governesses is also evident in a serialised story in her early diaries, 'The Story of Anna Hooks' (see Figure 6).<sup>426</sup> Again, in this story Eglantyne encourages the reader's sympathies with the girl pupil who is frequently contradicted and compromised. One can assume that Anna represents Eglantyne in various ways; she is a girl who is educated at home, who has a governess and siblings (one of which is named Dorothy, like Eglantyne's younger sister).

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<sup>425</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, 'The Doll's Lesson', *Journal*, Volume II, p. 75.

<sup>426</sup> In a number of Eglantyne's stories the character Anna Hooks recurs time again. She sometimes variates the name to 'Anne' and 'Hook', showing that this girl character was still in formulation as Eglantyne was writing.

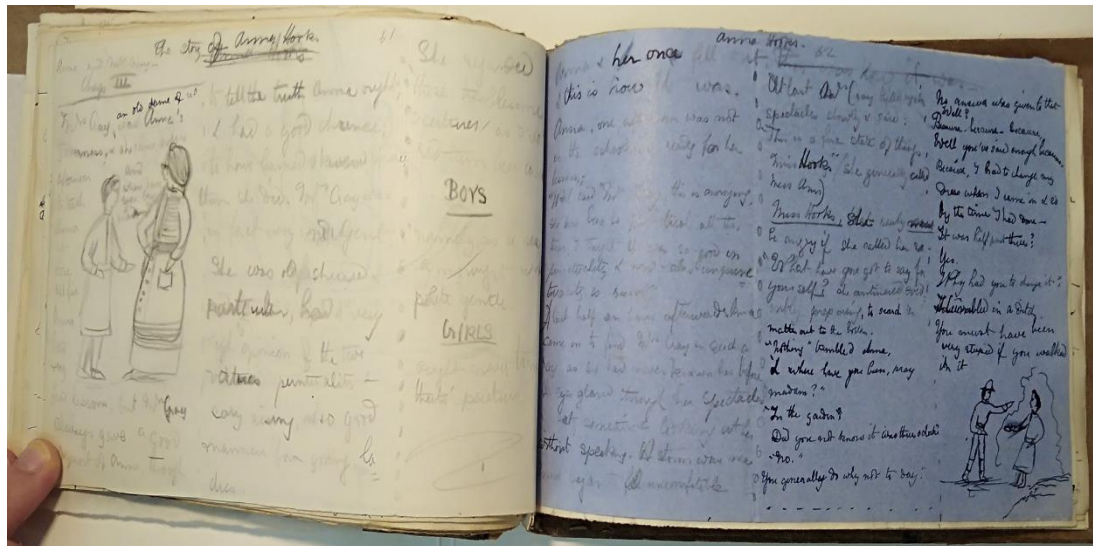


Figure 6: ‘The story of Anna Hooks’ complete with imitation newspaper columns and illustrations, 7EJB/A/01/02.

In the chapter ‘Anna and Mrs Gray’, Mrs Gray the governess is described as ‘an old dame’ and ‘old fashioned’ with ‘a very high opinion of the true virtues punctuality [...] also good manners.’<sup>427</sup> Mrs Gray awaits her pupil who is late for her lessons, and when Anna finally arrives, she feels ‘a storm was near, Anna began to feel uncomfortable.’ A long conversation between the girl and Mrs Gray ensues, in which the governess interrogates Eglantyne on her tardiness. This story could potentially be a verbatim account of Eglantyne’s punctual misgivings with her then governess, Mademoiselle K. Yet indeed that begs the question of why the event is presented as fictionalised, instead of as a journal entry. Considering the semi-public nature of girls’ diaries, this is also a tactical device to create distance between herself and the interrogation of the power struggle, which could be regarded as inappropriate or transgressive. The theme of girl-specific criticism is repeated throughout Eglantyne’s writings. These criticisms are often subversive, as

<sup>427</sup> Eglantyne Jebb, ‘The Story of Anna Hooks: Anna and Mrs Gray’, *Journal*, Volume II, pp. 61–64.

Eglantyne adopts a different subject position in each instance, commensurate with her age, peer group, and style of writing.

#### Sisterly roles in cultivating development

Through her stories related to Anna Hooks Eglantyne challenged conventional authority figures. Yet through her editorship of the *Briarland Recorder*, a new form of sisterly community was imagined to facilitate the flourishing of new types of girlhood. Eglantyne enjoyed the benefits of being an older authority who could critique the work of the younger and less experienced writers. One example of this practice, which also gives a fuller picture of the home education of the girls, is the poem ‘Holidays! Hooray!’ written by L. Perkins, also known as Eglantyne’s younger sister, Dorothy:

Hurrah! Lessons are all done!  
No more sums to tax the brain,  
Now the holidays have begun.  
No more German compositions,  
No more fractions & additions,  
No more multiplications,  
With English & French dictations.  
The piano will squeak no more,  
No more grammar on which to pore;  
Done with verbs that muddle your head,  
And make you many tears to shed.  
Hurrah! Lessons one and all done.  
Now the holidays have begun.<sup>428</sup>

Beneath the poem, Eglantyne adds a comment which cuts through the jubilant tone of the poem: ‘The Editor begs that Miss Perkins will occasionally favour us with a few commas & full stops. She leaves them for the Editor to put in. Perhaps she has forgotten how to make them?’ This critical editorial comment is also perhaps taken from the *Pickwick*

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<sup>428</sup> Dorothy Jebb, ‘Holidays! Hooray!’ *Briarland Recorder*, March 1890 – August 1891, p. 36.

*Portfolio* in *Little Women*. Following a letter to the editor on the subject of sin, which starts ‘Mr Pickwick, Sir’ the editorial comment beneath it reads: ‘[The above is a manly and handsome acknowledgement of past misdemeanours. If our young friend studied punctuation, it would be well.]’<sup>429</sup> In *Little Women* as in the *Briarland Recorder* this functions as a component of the children’s interpersonal relationships. Dorothy’s enthusiasm for her holidays does not excuse ill-executed grammar and punctuation in their manuscript magazine. As well as editorial power, this also suggests the advanced nature of Eglantyne’s education. Being five years older than Dorothy and in her teenage years sets Eglantyne in a distinctly different cultural phase to her younger sister.

The negotiations required for joint cultural production are evident throughout the *Briarland Recorder*, but also in a longer collaborative-written story which depicts girls’ differing opinions on the education of their sibling who is in need of cultivation. Exploring the balance between agency and capitulation, ‘The Youngest Sister,’ has little to do with actual adult influence, but suggests that inculturation of feminine accomplishments and education comes from between girl siblings. The story was a collaborative writing effort between Eglantyne and Em, which depicts ‘a family of sisters, all blessed with long noses, large eyes & opinions [...] they liked to work out their many ideas, as one works out a sum.’<sup>430</sup> In the story, the youngest sister is soon to be without a governess, and, given this opportunity, the older sisters take it upon themselves to decide what her education should look like.

The five older sisters cannot agree on the course of education that thirteen year-old Jane ought to take. One of them, seventeen year-old Berengaria, suggests they arrange for music lessons from a Cambridge professor, but she quickly changes her mind: ‘I must say that I see no reason why we shouldn’t educate Jane ourselves. I could teach her music

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<sup>429</sup> Alcott, *Little Women*, p. 143.

<sup>430</sup> Eglantyne and Emily Jebb, ‘A Youngest Sister,’ *Miscellaneous Writings c. 1890–1920*, p. 1.

just as well as any professor.’<sup>431</sup> In response, another sister, Cloelia, suggests that ‘we should each take her in different subjects. I have got very decided views on education myself.’<sup>432</sup> She believes that ‘the entire system has retrograded since the days of our grandmothers’:

the way the practical part of a girls’ education is now entirely neglected fills me with surprise. The Germans are much wiser than us, in that they teach their children all the branches of sewing & cooking. Neglected in these directions, as I myself have been, I am determined Jane shall not suffer the same deprivations.<sup>433</sup>

The oldest sister longs for a traditional and earlier model of girls’ education for her young sister. Her sentiment is met with agreement from Amaranthe, the second oldest, but Atalanta protests. She insists that ‘Jane’s education shall be up to date.’ Atalanta sees haste in this decision: ‘there are some subjects a knowledge of which is indispensable for girls who wish to keep pace with the times, there’s not a moment to lose, I shall begin teaching her Latin & Greek tomorrow.’<sup>434</sup> It is significant that Atalanta functions as the voice that welcomes new ideas about girlhood. In Greek mythology, Atalanta was strong and self-reliant. She was a ‘bold tomboy of Greek myth’, who was raised in the wilderness, and grew up to be a fierce hunter and pledged to remain a virgin.<sup>435</sup>

The name was also adopted for the magazine published between 1887 and 1889 and edited by the Irish writer L. T. Meade. *Atalanta* was a sixpenny monthly which printed high-calibre contributions from writers such as Grant Allen, Amy Levy, H. Rider Haggard, Edith Nesbit and Frances Hodgson Burnett. Meade’s magazine was intended for serious and intelligent girl readers; she was a politically active writer who also

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<sup>431</sup> Eglantyne and Emily Jebb, ‘A Youngest Sister’, p. 1.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>435</sup> Adrienne Mayor, *The Amazons: The Lives and Legends of Warrior Women across the Ancient World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 1.



promoted higher education for women and girls' participation in sports such as swimming and cycling.<sup>436</sup> Moruzi highlights how it differed to many other girls' magazines of the era:

Unlike the *Monthly Packet*, which until its last years reflected Charlotte Yonge's objections to girls' education outside the home, L. T. Meade's *Atalanta* adopted a more progressive stance, a notably different focus from other girls' magazines of the period. The *Girl's Own Paper*, for example, rarely addressed the need for girls to be adequately educated.<sup>437</sup>

In 'A Youngest Sister' there is also a sense of urgency and action to *Atalanta's* plea for an 'up to date' education, as if these new opportunities for women ought to be grasped while they are open. Berengaria then suggests dancing lessons, Cleopatra suggests mathematics, and Amaranthe drawing lessons. *Atalanta* quotes the early-Victorian educator Thomas Arnold, urging her sisters to remember 'The words of immortal Arnold: "a number of names & events crowded into a small place is overwhelming to most readers."<sup>438</sup> The sisters' debates exemplify the individualistic nature of the girls' habitus, commensurate with their different stages of peer culture. What one girl values at one time during her girlhood is not valued by her sibling; yet this story can also be seen as a wider cultural commentary – a rehearsal or mimicking of the opposing perspectives in contemporaneous debates about girls' education.

The second installment of the story is subtitled 'In which Jane's age & capacity are taken into account.'<sup>439</sup> This section focuses on the reading that Jane ought to conduct, according to her older sisters. The eldest, Cloelia, who promotes an older model of girls'

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<sup>436</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 10.

<sup>437</sup> Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*, p. 115.

<sup>438</sup> Eglantyne and Emily Jebb, 'A Youngest Sister,' p. 5. See Thomas Arnold, *History of Rome, Volume II* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1840), p. vi.

<sup>439</sup> Eglantyne and Emily Jebb, 'A Youngest Sister,' p. 1.

education, offers Jane ‘books suited to your age & capacity’ which include *The Parent’s Assistant* (1796) written by Maria Edgeworth. Atalanta, in contrast, recommends the Sophists, to which Jane responds with defiance: ‘We were at that all yesterday! [...] and I don’t know yet what he thought or even what the Sop-fists were, & I don’t believe you do either!’<sup>440</sup> She rebels against all of her sisters’ advice, on the grounds that they do not know better than her as they insisted. One of the sisters chastises Jane: ‘my method is wasted on you, my dear.’ Jane responds: ‘You shan’t call me dear, you are only 4 yrs older than me. You are only 17. You are too young to have a method at all.’<sup>441</sup> By the end of the story, Jane has taught herself and achieved a scholarship to study. Yet the sisters congratulate themselves on her achievement: ‘We are all right, all our theories have proved correct!’<sup>442</sup> If taken to be ironic – meaning that in reality not one single theory on girlhood education is ‘correct’ – the Jebb sisters’ message is potentially quite subversive. It demonstrates the newfound heterogeneity in girls’ culture and educational opportunities in the 1880s. Moreover, the sisters’ story champions the idea that girls should choose their own path to education.

The story demonstrates with humour the Jebb’s experience of sibling participation in learning. It acknowledges the often antithetical models of girlhood that girls of the 1880s were exposed to, and ultimately suggests that self-directed learning is the best choice that a girl can make. Furthermore it highlights that choosing for themselves was a new option for these girls, which was not available to previous generations. And through manuscript writings these alternative models of girlhood, as well as different peer culture stages, could be accessed.

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<sup>440</sup> Eglantyne and Emily Jebb, ‘A Youngest Sister’, p. 1.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

## Conclusion

The Jebb siblings actively constructed their own experience of girlhood through their creative, culturally engaged, and appropriative literary culture. Girls who wrote in the 1880s had new opportunities and aspirations which were not available to the Goslings who wrote in the 1860s and 1870s. This is reflected in the girls' ironic stories and poems about education, and in allusions to the New Girl magazine *Atalanta*.

Moreover, the Jebb sisters' manuscript culture evidences the specific peer culture that was generated between the siblings. The differences in the siblings' life stage and educational experience was recorded and celebrated. The collaboration was orchestrated by Eglantyne, but each child contributor of the *Briarland Recorder* adopted a role according to their aspirations, and Eglantyne interacted with them according to their age. The cultivation of collaborative writing was also based on a shared understanding of literary knowledge. The Jebbs' peer culture was deeply indebted to published literary fiction and periodical culture. In a metatextual gesture, the Jebb siblings appropriated the process of manuscript magazine collaboration in *Little Women*. Alcott's novel, which celebrates the in-between culture of girls who are on the cusp of womanhood was a model for Eglantyne's perception of her own ideal sibling culture.

As in the other manuscript magazines that I examine in this thesis, the *Barnacle* and the *Evergreen Chain*, the Jebbs' cultural engagement in the *Briarland Recorder* was attuned to gender differences. Eglantyne's performance and reproduction of girlhood culture was aware of its liminal position in a broader masculine culture. But in claiming a space, and developing networks of cultural production through sibling collaboration, Eglantyne cultivated a writing culture which epitomised the hopeful New girlhood of the later nineteenth century. The next chapter on the *Evergreen Chain* concludes the tripartite study of girls' manuscript magazine culture, by building upon the evidence of gendered

appropriation and peer collaboration which have been explored in the previous two chapters.

## Chapter 5: The *Evergreen Chain*: Originality and Imitation in the 1890s

The girl-produced manuscript magazine the *Evergreen Chain* is the focus of the final archival case study in this thesis.<sup>443</sup> Continuing on from the examples of the *Barnacle* and the *Briarland Recorder*, this chapter will contextualize girls' manuscript magazine writing in the dynamic social and publishing landscape of the *fin-de-siècle*. The *Evergreen Chain* has never been written on in a critical context, so this chapter will draw upon the arguments set out in previous chapters to provide an analysis of this obscure resource. The 1890s was a significant decade for women's equality, and girls were experiencing vast changes in all aspects of their lives. This chapter will explore the ways in which the manuscript magazine form adapted to the new type of girlhood culture that was fully established by the 1890s.

The increased visibility of girlhood culture in the 1890s had a clear impact on the *Evergreen Chain*. These changes can be seen in girls' self-organisation in the magazine, particularly the implementation of peer groups and hierarchy. Late-Victorian developments in female social roles and their representation in fiction effected the content of girls' magazine contributions, as well as the production of them. Literary appropriation in the *Evergreen Chain* adopted subversive forms which highlighted inequalities of the genders. Imitation of published literature became a contested subject in the dedicated critics' pages of the manuscript magazine, during a time when women's opportunities for different types of writing work were manifold. Citing various examples of writings from the *Evergreen Chain*, this chapter will focus on the establishing of a girls' community in the magazine, and its relation to ongoing developments in girls' appropriative writing culture, and their position in the world more broadly.

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<sup>443</sup> Modified parts of this chapter are forthcoming in a journal article for *Victorian Periodicals Review*.

### Beginnings of the *Evergreen Chain*

The six surviving volumes of the *Evergreen Chain* held at the Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh date from 1892, 1893–4, 1895, 1897, 1898, and 1899.<sup>444</sup> They have not been written on in a critical context before now, yet they provide a rich and diverse case study of girls' self-made literary culture. Exact details of how the magazine began are not known, but when the first editor Miss Lear handed editorship over to Olive Johnstone Douglas in 1894, she mentioned that Johnstone Douglas helped to found the group, along with Helen Mary Gillon. Miss Lear lists two addresses in Edinburgh and London, and most of the contributors list Scottish addresses. How the rest of the contributors were recruited is also not known, but some of them were related, and the others were presumably linked by family acquaintance.<sup>445</sup>

Each magazine issue contained short stories, longer stories in serial format, poems, riddles, drawings and paintings. Members of the *Chain* would send their creative work to the editor every month who then copied out the writing in her own hand and stuck the pictures in to the bound volume. The editor then sent the completed volume, with notes, and criticism in later volumes, back around the *Chain* members. They were under strict instruction to send it on to the next member at the provided address, and to not keep the volume for longer than two days.

The contributors were generally teenage girls, although there was a minority of boy writers.<sup>446</sup> In the first volume from 1892, the ages of contributors were between 11

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<sup>444</sup> The *Evergreen Chain* (1892–1899), Museum of Childhood, Edinburgh, MC.2018.059. Material from the *Evergreen Chain* is reproduced by kind permission of City of Edinburgh Council, Museum of Childhood. I have maintained the original spelling, grammar, and punctuation of the manuscript magazines where possible.

<sup>445</sup> No other life writings are attached to the magazine volumes, but it would be a fair to suggest that the contributors were in correspondence with each other through letters, as was the practice for middle-class girls.

<sup>446</sup> Out of 34 writers that I have counted, only 5 of them were male.

and 14 years old. Even the editors were teenage girls; Johnstone Douglas was 16 years old when she went from contributor to editor in 1894. Her sisters Nina and Caroline also contributed to it. Their address was usually listed as Comlongon Castle, a fifteenth-century castle in Dumfries. There are other children of the aristocracy who contributed to the *Evergreen Chain*. The Honorable Isobel Edwardes also contributed from the beginning of the magazine, when she was 13 years old. Both Isobel Edwardes and the Johnstone Douglasses were descended from royalty, and are listed in the *Tudor Roll of the Blood Royal*.<sup>447</sup> As such, the contributors had in common the experience of middle- or upper-class adolescence. As it has been suggested in the previous chapter of the *Barnacle*, sustained magazine writing was usually found in wealthy domestic spaces and schools.

#### Girls' pride, organisation and hierarchy in the *Evergreen Chain*

Yet unlike the *Barnacle*, the *Evergreen Chain* was entirely written and edited by adolescents. As the editor seldom set essay questions or writing prompts for the contributors like Yonge did for the Goslings, the tone of the *Evergreen Chain* differs significantly. The magazine functioned as site for girls to explore literary creativity, with limited pressure to research as rigorously as the Goslings did. The following poem, 'To The Evergreen Chain', describes the collaborative process of creating the manuscript magazine. Although at the helm of the publication there was a 'justly impatient' editor, 'in spite' of this, the magazine unites its contributors.

'The Evergreen Chain is a magazine  
Of far & wide renown.  
The writers are, some of them, not thirteen,  
And the head of it all is lovely 'Miss Brown.'  
'It goes on its round each month in the year,  
The addresses are given inside,

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<sup>447</sup> Melville Henry Massue, The Marquis of Ruvigny and Raineval, *The Blood Royal of Britain Being a Roll of the Living Descendants of Edward IV and Henry VII Kings of England, and James III, King of Scotland* (London: T.C. & E. C. Jack, 1903).

The rules are not strictly kept, I fear,  
Which the Editor made as a General Guide.’  
‘Towards the end of the month come letters, with curses,  
From the justly impatient ‘Miss Brown’:-  
‘Oh, where are your drawings, your stories & verses?’

The receivers these of take them meekly, – or frown!’  
‘Two of the writers are very well known to the author of this little ditty,  
After one of these letters, she hears a moan:-  
‘No time,’ – ‘no ideas,’ – seems a Pity!’  
‘But in spite of these letters, delays & small woes,  
Which are kept quite behind the scenes,  
The result is a neat-written volume, which grows,  
Of the Evergreen Chain, Best of All Magazines!’  
(by S.E. otherwise ‘Sarah’, a pal of ‘Miss Brown’s’)<sup>448</sup>

The magazine communicated the diverse experiences and cultural habits of its girl writers. The core focus of the magazine was the lived adolescent experience of its writers and readers. This is evident in the focus on domestic life, encompassing relationships with siblings, parents, and governesses, in the contributions. The magazine also reflected the girls’ literary habitus in various ways. For example, in a September 1893 issue, the editor Miss Lear suggested an advertisements page where contributors’ belongings could be put up for sale or exchange. This policy was modelled on other magazines of the era, notably *Atalanta*, a magazine which, according to Moruzi, ‘targeted middle-class girls who were interested in study.’<sup>449</sup> By the January 1894 issue, the ‘Advertisement’ page announces that ‘Freda Johnstone has three books which she would like to exchange with any of the Members’, which were by L. T. Meade, S. Warner and Beata Francis.<sup>450</sup> The diversity of

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<sup>448</sup> S. E., ‘To the Evergreen Chain’, the *Evergreen Chain*, 1895, p. 75. It is not clear who ‘S.E.’ or ‘Sarah’ was; if described as a ‘pal’ she was perhaps an honorary member of the *Chain*.

<sup>449</sup> Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*, p. 115.

<sup>450</sup> Miss Lear, ‘Editorial’, the *Evergreen Chain*, January 1894, p. 67. L. T. Meade’s books and magazine *Atalanta* were popular with New Girls. Beata Francis’ books concerned fantasy and animal characters,



these texts indicate that the writers of the *Chain* had access to a dynamic circulation of literature. The contributors' habitus and appropriative writing culture will be discussed later in this chapter.

#### Division of ages and peer culture in the magazine

The stress on adolescent experience is also evident in the magazine's inclusion of work done by 'honorary members', who were either older or younger than the regular contributors. Regular contributors who were not listed as 'honorary' were between 11 and 19 years old. This special inclusion of the work of 'honorary members' is established by the editor in the very first issue of the magazine:

The Editor wishes to say that although Honorary Members are permitted to contribute to the Magazine, under no condition will the Magazines be forwarded to them for reading, so that as they will not even see the Members contributions there can be no rivalry between Honorary Members who may be grown-up and junior members.<sup>451</sup>

From the outset the manuscript endeavour was defined as being for writers who were in-between 'grown-up' and 'junior' identities. Submissions from others were welcomed, but rivalry was limited, as these people could not read the completed magazines. Therefore it would seem that the competition aspect of the magazine was strictly maintained to be amongst direct peers, in order to enable the contributors to hone their craft.

This supports Corsaro's theory of peer culture as being maintained within stages of development. Corsaro maps adolescent peer culture as being one of four distinct peer cultures: preschool, preadolescent, adolescent, and adult. Peer cultures manifest a 'stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share

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and as such were perhaps more suitable to younger readers. American writer Susan Warner's 1850 bestseller *The Wide Wide World* was a sentimental and didactic text which preached Christian morals.

<sup>451</sup> Miss Lear, 'Editorial', the *Evergreen Chain*, August 1892, p. 63.

in interaction with peers.<sup>452</sup> Although Corsaro identifies four individual phases, each one is connected: ‘children’s experiences are not left behind with maturity or individual development; rather, they remain part of their life histories as active members of a given culture.’<sup>453</sup> This goes to explain the inclusion of older ‘honorary members’ throughout the volumes of the *Evergreen Chain*, as different generations of this peer culture still maintained an affiliation to the magazine, even if they were not in its current catchment for contributors.

The potency of the members’ ‘life histories’ is apparent in the editorial contributions. In the February 1895 volume of the magazine, the new editor Olive Johnstone Douglas, by then aged 17, included a story which she had written many years before. In the third person she describes to the contributors her rediscovery of this manuscript piece:

The other day, the Editor of the *Evergreen Chain* was routing about in an old box of treasures & at the very bottom carefully hidden away, she discovered a bundle of foolscap paper, closely written in pencil in a very straggling, childish hand. She recognised it as a story she had written long ago; – quite a number of years ago, – when she was about the age of most of the members of the *Evergreen Chain*. [...] She thinks it might interest the ‘*Evergreen*’ to read this early – almost the earliest – attempt of hers in the literary line. She has left it exactly as she wrote it then, though there are a good many mistakes in grammar & punctuation such as the members often make themselves, & which they will perhaps be able to find out.

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The editor recognises her distance from the peer culture of the younger contributors to the magazine; her style has matured as she has aged. Yet she sees a continuity between

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<sup>452</sup> Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood*, p. 21.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>454</sup> Olive Johnstone Douglas, ‘Rag, Tag and Bobtail’, the *Evergreen Chain*, February 1895, pp. 48–49.

the two stages, and believes that her story which has ‘many mistakes’ will serve as a model for the development of the younger writers.

Anxieties about writing across peer culture boundaries are evident in fiction in the *Evergreen Chain*. ‘A Poem’ is a short story which concerns a girl character who is mocked by her siblings for writing a poem. Alice, the writer, is 12 years old, ‘nearly thirteen’ and on the cusp of the teenage years. She is a middle child, but it is her older siblings who are particularly scathing about her literary efforts. The context is domestic; it is set in the shared at-home schoolroom which hosts the children who are of varying ages. The story begins like many other stories in the *Evergreen Chain*, with a discussion between children; but in the story’s focus on Alice’s struggle for creative acknowledgement it becomes more metatextual than other stories about cruel sibling behaviour. The story launches into Alice’s humiliating experience:

‘Go on Alice, we all want to hear it, so read it, do, there’s a dear.’

And the five children, clustered round the schoolroom fire, looked imploringly at their little sister.

Alice hesitated. ‘I wish I had never told you about it,’ she said, ‘it is so silly.’

All the same she unfolded a bit of foolscap paper and began

‘The lady sat in her flowery tower

‘A letter by her lay

‘Her heart was sad for the news was bad

‘She could not more be gay.

‘Tomorrow morn if all went well

‘She was to have been wed

‘But she shook in her shoes when she heard the news

‘That Thomas was now dead. –

Alice paused. 'There are eight verses' she said, 'do you like it, shall I go on.'

'I daresay it's very nice,' said one of her brothers 'only isn't it rather odd.'

'To begin with' said Edith, 'who is the lady?

Alice looked a little confused.

'Oh! Just a person, she said, 'who lived hundreds of years ago.'

'Then her lover's name wouldn't have been Thomas' objected Edith, 'however never mind, go on.'

'No, don't Alice dear,' said Edith, her eldest sister, 'it isn't a nice poem dear, and I don't think its poetical to say, she shook in her shoes,' and Ella laughed as she glanced down the neatly written verses.

'I don't care,' cried Alice angrily, 'I think you're very rude and I won't read you any more.'

There was a shout of laughter at this and a chorus of voices cried 'We're only too glad.' This was too much for Alice's feelings, she seized the paper from Ella's hand and slamming the door after her, she ran downstairs. Her feelings were really hurt, it had been her first poem and she assured herself it would be the last.<sup>455</sup>

As the reader is party to Alice's first verse of her eight-verse poem, we are able to detect the common themes that have been identified in the writing of adolescent girls: expressions of self doubt, tropes of historical romance, and a prizing of historical accuracy. The first line presents 'a lady' 'in her flowery tower' which immediately sets the poem in a location both distant in time, and potentially fantastical. This is confirmed when Alice is questioned on her historical accuracy by her older sister, which was a priority of studious girl writers. This can be seen in the Goslings' commitment to accurate historical research in the *Barnacle's* articles, which Yonge's contributors expected from her challenging essay society in the *Monthly Packet*. It can also be seen in the early

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<sup>455</sup> Helena Mary Gillon, 'A Poem', the *Evergreen Chain*, Extra Xmas no. 4. January, 1894, pp. 5–21. I have presented the poem with the same line breaks that were used by the editor who copied out the poem.

nineteenth century diaries of Emily Shore, and other girl diarists who used their writings to display their learnings.

In 'A Poem', fifteen-year-old Edith functions as the arbiter of literary credibility. When Alice admits that her 'lady' is 'just a person' 'who lived hundreds of years ago' Edith immediately criticises Alice's choice of name for what will presumably be her chivalric hero: 'then her lover's name wouldn't have been Thomas.' Edith's superior knowledge over Alice's comes only from her extra two years in the schoolroom. Yet within the culture of adolescent writing, this can make all the difference. This goes to some extent to explain the strict membership categorisation in the *Evergreen Chain*: younger or older writers could contribute, but they were listed as 'honorary members.' A hierarchy between girls is also seen in other examples of girls' writings. An image which particularly captures this relationship is from the 1910s manuscript magazine the *Pierrot* (see Figure 7), which is also held at the Museum of Childhood. In this image the oldest and tallest girl in the group holds power over the manuscript, which includes withdrawing it from the young and eager readers and writers.



Figure 7: A picture in the July 1914 volume of the *Pierrot* which was edited by Ruth Dent (b. 1898 in Kirkcudbright), a girl who was older than most of the other contributors, MC 86 86.

The *denouement* of the story does not give Alice the reassurance in her creative efforts that she initially craves. A rich neighbour moves next door to the family, and one day Alice finds the old man reading her story in their living room. He criticises it too, stating ‘who wrote this rubbish.’ When she tells him it is hers, he laughs and she snatches it off him, tearing the manuscript in the process. He asks how he can make it up to her, and she says she longs for a pony. On Christmas day a pony called Toby is sent to her, and the story ends on her receiving the gift. This is regarded by all of the children as a happy resolution: ‘Edith and the twins have written poems too in hopes that generous old gentleman will tear them and give them ponies to make up. [...] I really think she will always remember her first poem which brought her greatest wish.’<sup>456</sup> Alice’s poem is forgotten about, and her satisfaction with the pony replaces her ambitions to write.

For the writer of ‘A Poem’, Helena Mary Gillon, it announces a recognition of forms of girlhood writing; she depicts Alice’s fascination with the historical romance genre. By playfully mocking this habit of girl writers – to experiment with historical romance without conducting the required research – she highlights the superiority of the older girl who has greater experience in writing and reading. But, by introducing the pony as an alternative to the glory of having Alice’s poem appreciated by her siblings, Gillon also debunks the great sincerity that girls attach to their writing efforts. She suggests that writing is but one of many pursuits that girls desire. Yet the story demonstrates that the critique of writing attempts was still a concern for aspiring writers. While the presence of critique is better than outright dismissal, it also seems to highlight that young girl writers were being held to standards they could not satisfy.

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<sup>456</sup> Helena Mary Gillon, ‘A Poem’, the *Evergreen Chain*, Extra Xmas no. 4. January, 1894, pp. 20–1.

### Competition, criticism, and A. M. Hitchcock

The competitive aspects of the *Evergreen Chain* increased as the magazine and its contributors matured. In the early volumes a story competition was occasionally held, and the best story was decided by the editor and earned a few shillings as a prize. However in later volumes a voting table was introduced, in which the contributors could mark 'x' next to their favourite piece of writing or drawing. In 1893, just before she took over as editor, Johnstone Douglas wrote up an 'Editor's Report' which appraised the submissions. These efforts became more refined as time went on; Johnstone Douglas planned 'to offer another Prize for a longer story for I am afraid some of you have found 500 words rather a small allowance.'<sup>457</sup> Thus there was an ongoing engagement in contributor competition and improvement throughout the magazine's life.

As was evident in the inclusion of 'honorary members', the competitive element of the magazine was commensurate with the contributors' stage of adolescent peer culture. From the beginning regular contributors deliberately included their age at the request of Miss Lear: 'The editor should prefer if each Member, when signing her name, would also state age.'<sup>458</sup> When the second editor, Johnstone Douglas, ran a competition for the best story in an 1895 volume, she stated that she would 'judge the stories, according to the age of the competitors.'<sup>459</sup> Strict guidelines on contributors' ages were enacted in other manuscript magazines during the nineteenth century. Pat Pfleiger highlights that the *Weekly Magpie* (1859) an American magazine edited by 15 year-old Thomas Donaldson, Jr, had to amend its rule of 'No Contributions are inserted from

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<sup>457</sup> Olive Johnstone Douglas, 'The Editor's Report', the *Evergreen Chain*, December 1893, p. 40.

<sup>458</sup> Miss Lear, 'Editorial', the *Evergreen Chain*, August 1892, p. 63.

<sup>459</sup> Olive Johnstone Douglas, 'Editorial', the *Evergreen Chain*, January 1895, p. 74.

persons over 15 years of age' when the editor himself surpassed that age.<sup>460</sup> In later volumes of the *Evergreen Chain* the editor is made to reconfigure her categorisation of contributors by age. In the 1898 volume Johnstone Douglas grouped the contributors into Class I and Class II; contributors in Class I were over the age of 19, and girls in Class II were under the age of 19. However the upper and lower limits of the two classes were not clearly delineated, and some contributors were still given the vague 'honorary member' label, which did not demarcate their age. The strategy of confining the age of contributors worked towards promoting teenage writing as a discrete category, which was deserving of its own platform.

The Critic's Page was also introduced in 1897, which provided a short appraisal of each submission to the *Chain*. This was written last, as the critic would remark on the number of peer checks that each submission received. The Critic's Page was long left anonymous, although in the March/April volume of 1899 it is signed 'A. M. Hitchcock, Head Mistress of Kensington High School.' Agnes M. Hitchcock was Headmistress at the school from 1879 to 1900, and during this time she made a lifelong friendship with her student Emily Wilding Davison, the suffragette who in protest threw herself under the king's horse in 1913.<sup>461</sup> It is unknown how Agnes Hitchcock was recruited to comment on the *Evergreen Chain* but it is significant to consider that her support of women's education cultivated one of the most militant early feminists of the twentieth century. This context differs vastly with the anti-university beliefs of Yonge during her editorship of the *Barnacle*. The two adult women notably played different roles in the development of the respective manuscript magazines. Whereas Yonge started the *Barnacle* and set the

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<sup>460</sup> Pat Pflieger, 'Teens with Printing Presses, 1812–1859', *Humanities and Social Sciences Online*, <<https://networks.h-net.org/node/2602/discussions/1413175/american-childhoods>> [accessed 21 May 2018].

<sup>461</sup> Carolyn P. Collette, *In the Thick of the Fight: The Writing of Emily Wilding Davison, Militant Suffragette* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 7.



precedent for submissions, Hitchcock joined the magazine in its latter stage, when the contributors were in their late teens, and functioned as a distant reviewer.

Yet Hitchcock still shaped girls' writing culture, and particularly appropriative efforts, through her feedback. In response to a story set in the highlands, Hitchcock jokingly questions the writer's choice of name for their Scottish hero: 'What would Rob Roy say?' Literary adaptation was still a technique valued by these girl writers, whatever their age. The rest of this chapter will explore the appropriative culture in the *Evergreen Chain*. It will demonstrate the significance of late-Victorian literary movements in girls' new appropriative strategies, and provide specific examples of re-visions in the manuscript magazine.

#### *Evergreen* in the Scottish cultural imagination

The title of the magazine refers to a Scottish publication, and alludes to an investment in sharing literature that had previously been marginalised. *The Ever Green: Being a Collection of Scots Poems*, published in 1761, was the project of Allan Ramsay, a poet, publisher, librarian and playwright of early Enlightenment Edinburgh.<sup>462</sup> His collection features Scots poems, including several by the Scottish makar and love poet Alexander Montgomerie (1550–1598). It was re-printed by the Glasgow publisher Robert Forrester in 1875, seventeen years before the first existing volume of the *Evergreen Chain* was written. Patrick Geddes' *Evergreen* magazine (1895–97, 4 volumes) reflected Allan Ramsay's project to renew and consolidate Scottish culture. Geddes (1854–1932) was a polymath who was interested in communities, cities and cultures. His short-lived 'little' magazine was published as the Celtic Revival and Arts and Crafts movement peaked in Scotland. It was compared to other avant-garde magazines such as the *Yellow Book*, often unfavourably. Elisa Grilli highlights that 'Negative criticism often compared art in the

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<sup>462</sup> Allan Ramsay, *The Ever Green, Being a Collection of Scots Poems, Wrote by the Ingenious before 1600* (Edinburgh: Alexander Donaldson, 1661).

*Evergreen* to Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations or dismissed it as an attempt to create hybrid and decentralized aesthetics, a Scottish Art Nouveau moving away from London periodicals to draw on its traditional Celtic roots.<sup>463</sup> Grilli suggests that the *Evergreen* was something of an amateur magazine, as it prioritised its aesthetic over the remuneration of the contributors and editors.<sup>464</sup>

As the editor of the *Evergreen Chain* and many of the contributors were based in the Scottish lowlands, they perhaps drew inspiration from Allan Ramsay's reprinted publication which revived older poetry for contemporary nineteenth-century audiences. Therefore the title of the magazine coded it as a serious literary endeavour imbued with national cultural pride. The poem 'To the Evergreen Chain', which is cited at the introduction to this chapter, for instance, encapsulates the feelings of joy and duty that the *Evergreen* contributors felt. Although writing the original content sometimes engendered 'delays & small woes', ultimately the contributors continued to submit work to the collaboration as they prided it as being the 'Best of all Magazines.' The homage in the *Evergreen Chain* is indicative of significant developments in girls' culture. The re-gendering of Ramsay's all-male *Ever Green* points to a feminine appropriative culture.

#### Writing, appropriation, and gender in the 1890s

Sally Mitchell, Beth Rodgers and Kristine Moruzi have shown that the literary landscape for young people at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in the periodical press, facilitated a new cultural autonomy for girls. This work has focused mainly on the reading cultures rather than on the writing cultures of girls. Hilary Marland observes that 'the notion of girlhood as a separate stage of existence with its own values, interests, and readership potential evolved from the 1870s onwards, as publishers began to identify

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<sup>463</sup> Elisa Grilli, 'Funding, Publishing, and the Making of Culture: The Case of the *Evergreen* (1895–97)', *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, 1.2 (2016), 19–44 (p. 37).

<sup>464</sup> Grilli, 'Funding, Publishing, and the Making of Culture', p. 20.

readers who were neither children nor adult women.<sup>465</sup> Naturally in the analysis of girls' manuscript magazines it is important to consider their reading and involvement with published magazines, but supplementary scholarship on *fin de siècle* literature and life writing studies is needed to render the full picture of girls' at-home magazine writing habits at this point in time. A contextualisation of the various shifting conditions of professional female authorship, and the New Woman identity, which flourished in the 1890s, is significant in this explanation.

The time period between Yonge's 1860s manuscript magazine the *Barnacle*, and the Edinburgh-based 1890s *Evergreen Chain*, witnessed many great changes which affected girl writers. The 1870s was a revolutionary decade, in which the age of sexual consent was raised; education became compulsory, and developments in both women's suffrage and women's higher education were dominant in public debate.<sup>466</sup> By the 1890s these various debates which had been in existence for some time, made themselves known in subversive cultural products, particularly print culture and theatre. Britain in the 1890s experienced great social change, particularly in regards to gender-related social norms, politics and education.

Elaine Showalter's historiography of women's writing points to the 1890s as the decade during which earlier modes of 'imitative' writing turned subversive. In her theorisation of the three stages of women's writing during the nineteenth century, she suggests that following a stage of mimesis and 'advocacy of minority rights and values' was a final stage of 'self discovery, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition.'<sup>467</sup> Showalter argues that by the end of the Victorian era, women writers

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<sup>465</sup> Marland, *Health and Girlhood*, p. 3.

<sup>466</sup> I expand upon this history in the first chapter of this thesis.

<sup>467</sup> Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own, British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 13.

were rejecting their ties to the masculine literary world, and made women's experiences and trials the central concern of their fiction. New Woman writers of the *fin de siècle* critiqued gendered double standards, such as the social stigma attached to 'bachelor' or 'spinster' women who worked and never married, or who were sexually liberated.<sup>468</sup> These upheavals in women's writing at the end of the nineteenth century inevitably filtered through to aspiring girl writers. Adolescent girls read Olive Schreiner's novel of a modern girlhood *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) which, according to Mitchell, 'contained forbidden knowledge about feminism, atheism, cruelty, and sexuality.'<sup>469</sup> New Woman novels by L.T. Meade and Sarah Grand which contained similar themes, were also read by girls. One of Meade's novels, *The Cleverest Woman in England* (1898) was described in publishers' advertisements as being about 'emancipated women devoted to the cause of their sex.'<sup>470</sup> Magazines for girls including *Girl's Own Paper*, *Atalanta* and *Girl's Realm* all produced articles on the New Woman, on education and careers for girls, but not without inconsistencies. For example the symbol of the New Woman identity – the bicycle – was offered as a prize in magazine competitions. The medical contributor to the *Girl's Own Paper* Dr. Gordon Stables approved of cycling for girls, but other health warnings associated with the activities of modern girlhood were simultaneously issued by other magazine contributors.<sup>471</sup> Yet there was no doubt that in the 1890s girlhood had changed, and was changing still.

Mitchell and Moruzi have both suggested that through reading, circulating and contributing to published magazines, girls engaged with political debates about the

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<sup>468</sup> Texts such as these include Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895), Emma Brooke's *A Superfluous Woman* (1894).

<sup>469</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 143. Mitchell also cites the girlhood memoir of Helen Corke, who 'felt no longer alone' when she read Schreiner's novel, p. 141. See Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy: An Autobiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 97–98.

<sup>470</sup> Mitchell, *The New Girl*, p. 11.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110; Hilary Marland, *Health and Girlhood*.

changing social position of females. For example, Moruzi highlights that the magazine the *Young Woman* (1892–1915) sought to educate girls on how to choose a husband, and in doing so expanded ‘notions of girlhood by insisting that men be held to similar standards as women.’<sup>472</sup> Thus these magazines promoted ideologies which were unknown to Yonge’s followers of the 1860s, particularly as in her article on ‘Womankind’ Yonge stated that ‘I have no hesitation in declaring my full belief in the inferiority of woman, nor that she brought it upon herself.’<sup>473</sup> Yonge believed that the female writer’s role was a domestic one, and women should be content with home education. Yet this ideology was being supplanted by new and radical approaches by the 1890s, and can be witnessed in the *Evergreen Chain*.

The middle-class girl writers of the *Evergreen Chain* could expect to pursue qualifications and a career of the sort that their mothers could not. They had the potential to write, and aspire to write, in ways which had previously seemed unattainable. The possibility to disrupt the feminine domestic hegemony, then, through manuscript magazine writing became a potential in the *Evergreen Chain*. Before this, the *Barnacle* promoted writing practice as a proponent of separate sphere values: for the editor Yonge, a woman writer still had to maintain traditional feminine attributes; and she viewed women as ‘inferior’ to men. Yonge offered an acceptable approach to female authorship which was in adherence with mid-Victorian gender roles. Yonge promoted the image of the woman writer as a domestic professional, able to have a writing career but unwilling to compromise her pious feminine values by accepting profits or engaging with London literary circles. Yet by the 1890s the girl writers of the *Evergreen Chain* had begun to ask further questions about the nature of authorship for girls. In one memorable poem from an 1894 volume of *Evergreen*, the speaker discusses various careers of men, and in the

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<sup>472</sup> Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood*, p. 139.

<sup>473</sup> Charlotte Yonge, ‘Womankind’, *The Galaxy*, 24.6 (1877) 857–858 (p. 857).

final stanza turns to her status as an at-home writer: ‘No examinations [...] but Alas! Also no pay.’<sup>474</sup> The full poem will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, following other examples of contributions from the *Evergreen Chain* which manifest varying degrees of engagement with the gendered literary culture of the late-Victorian era. This is visible in girls’ literary appropriation, which ranges between imitation, homage, and subversion.

#### Editor’s reports and the critics page

Critiques of girls’ contributions to the *Evergreen Chain* also shed light on gendered literary appropriation that this thesis explores. These critiques often focused on the formal elements of the contributions, such as spelling and grammar, and at other times they focused on features of style and genre. The girls’ attempts to recreate reality were particularly scrutinised. In the December 1893 volume the editor chose a winning story which was signed by the pseudonym ‘Lalla.’ The editor, Johnstone Douglas begins with her criticisms of the story: ‘I must tell “Lalla” that parts of her story are very carelessly written and she has not taken enough trouble to word her sentences clearly and correctly.’<sup>475</sup> Although ‘Lalla’s’ story contains some of the worst in faults of style, she awards the prize because

her story makes a sort of picture – she saw it in her mind’s eye and she has written down what she saw in such a way that we see it too. For instance when she described the nursery, she mentioned just those things which brought a picture before our eyes – the blazing fire, the tea-things ready to be washed, we can imagine the two little figures on the hearthrug, and so on.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> J. H., ‘Life’s Difficulties’, the *Evergreen Chain*, March no. 6, 1894, pp. 35–37.

<sup>475</sup> Olive Johnstone Douglas, ‘Editor’s Report’, the *Evergreen Chain*, December 1893, p. 6.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The writer is praised for her ability to describe the domestic detail of the story in a convincing way. Lalla's story is used as an exemplar, and the editor goes on to suggest how the other writers of *Evergreen* could endear their stories to her literary judgement:

I daresay you think I am very fault-finding but you know people cannot correct their faults if they do not know of them. And I daresay too that some of you do not understand all I have said, but you will someday, if you go on trying to write stories, which I hope you will all do. And this is my parting word of advice, try and make your stories as much like real life as you possibly can. Tell us what you see and hear in the world round you, and don't, oh don't write stories that are only echoes of stories you have read.<sup>477</sup>

As the person who judges the writing competition, as well as being one of the older and more experienced members of the *Chain* (she was 16 when she took over as editor from Miss Lear in 1894 – see Figure 8) the editor feels able to give the members advice on their writing technique. Notably, she reinforces the advice given by adult arbiters of children's culture, that young writers should acknowledge their limited life experience if they want to be taken seriously. The editor encourages members to write with a limited imaginative capacity to reflect their real lived experience. There is a promotion of realism, i.e. an accurate representation of the ordinary. This editor also advises against imitation, like Charlotte Yonge did, as it indicates a lack of wider world knowledge.

A bricolage of theories might enhance these understandings of appropriation, imitation and originality in girls' manuscript magazines. Adrienne Rich, in her article 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision' sees re-vision as an act of feminist survival in a male dominated society. She writes: 'Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival.'<sup>478</sup> Furthermore, she argues

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<sup>477</sup> Olive Johnstone Douglas, 'Editor's Report', the *Evergreen Chain*, December 1893, p. 10.

<sup>478</sup> Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken', p. 18.

that ‘to a lesser or greater extent, every woman writer has written for men’, which is not the case for male writers. In the context of the manuscript magazine, girl writers repeatedly revise male-written literary texts and print culture. It represents not only their valuation of established cultures, but marks an inauguration into what Corsaro calls ‘interpretive reproduction’, the process whereby children reproduce and extend adult cultures.<sup>479</sup> Considering the socio-historical context of the magazine’s production, in 1890s Britain, it is apt to assess the revisionary impulses in the *Evergreen Chain* as influenced by contemporary debates about women and authorship.

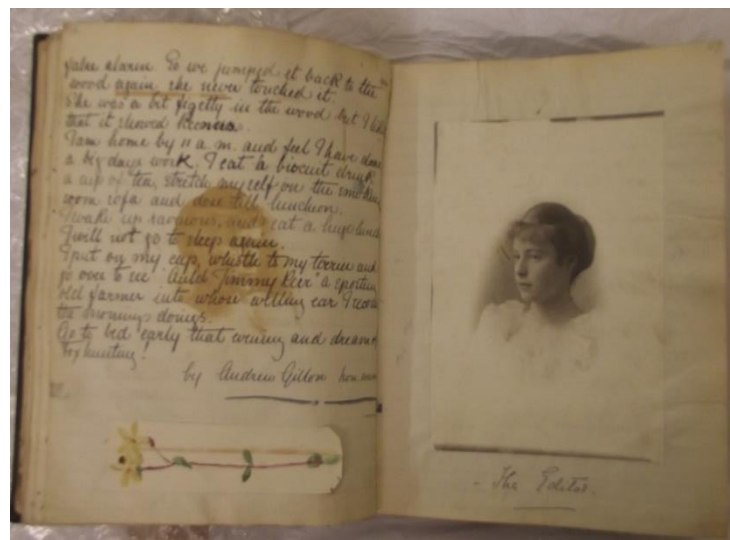


Figure 8: A photograph of the second editor, Olive Johnstone Douglas, from 1895, MC 2018.059.

Realist writing, according to George Eliot and Charlotte Yonge, was the enterprise of serious female writers. Fancy and sensation were, for conservative Victorian writers, the antithesis of writing informed by reason and research.<sup>480</sup> Yet restricting imagination goes against the impulse of young writers, who via ‘unfamiliar or extra familiar connections, lifestyles, landscapes, and literature [...] anticipate[d], imagine[d], or invent[ed], whether

<sup>479</sup> William Corsaro, ‘Interpretive Reproduction in Children’s Peer Cultures’, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 55.2 (1992), 160–77, p. 160.

<sup>480</sup> See Maura Smyth, *Women Writing Fancy: Authorship and Autonomy from 1611 to 1812* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 151.



as a means of temporary escape while still home, or as a process of preparing for the as-yet untravelled territory of adulthood.<sup>481</sup> Writers who were older and more experienced (even negligibly so, like the *Chain*'s young editor) encouraged girls to put aside the play of writing, and to instead write in a realist register, drawing on their real life experience to write convincing stories. Of course this advice was rather limiting, and as the *Chain* members were keen readers as well as writers, their writing appropriated imaginative modes, especially those familiar to them in published form.

The advice from the *Chain*'s editor on the limited knowledge and experience of girl writers is close to what Yonge advised in her article 'On Authorship', in which she wrote that young people's 'knowledge of life cannot help being limited, and if taken from books, their work is imitative.'<sup>482</sup> The fear of imitation is repeated in the *Evergreen* editor's page – 'don't write stories that are only echoes of stories you have read.' This can potentially be read as contradictory, as some members engaged explicitly with appropriating existing fiction, and the manuscript magazine as a whole is an imitation of the printed magazine form.<sup>483</sup>

#### Editor's comments on imitating poets

Whether praised or criticised for it, writers of the *Evergreen Chain* nevertheless wrote in imitative forms. The April 1897 volume of the *Evergreen Chain* includes a poem titled 'The Despairing Sister (with apologies to the ghost of Coleridge)' written by a fifteen-year-old, identified by her *nom de plume* as 'Anna Commena.' The poem was placed next to a pencil drawing of a girl reading, entitled 'Recreation' (see Figure 9). The image

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<sup>481</sup> David Owen and Lesley Peterson, eds. *Home and Away: The Place of the Child Writer* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2016), p. xv.

<sup>482</sup> Charlotte Yonge, 'Work and Workers: Authorship', *Monthly Packet* 3 (Fourth Series) (1892), 296–303.

<sup>483</sup> Charlotte Yonge, for instance, was inspired to launch the *Barnacle* because of another magazine she had read, the *Hursley Magazine* made by the Heathcote family.

supports the idea of the pleasures and benefits of self-directed reading. Yet the poem describes the eponymous sister's frustration at trying to teach her siblings how to play the fiddle. The writer does not acknowledge Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the poem, nor does she adopt his themes, but instead recreates the meter of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner':

I

Tis a despairing sister  
Who teaches two of three  
To play upon the fiddle  
Yet they can't tell where is c!

II

Day after day, day after day  
They stick, nor time nor motion  
As idle as two geese can be  
When of music they've no notion

[...]

Dear Winnie comes into the hall  
Meek as a lamb is she-  
"It comes by change when I am good  
Also when I'm naughtee

VI

And if I do not play in time  
Why need you be so wild?"  
I feel inclined to use bad words  
About that guileless child.

VII

The other one she storms and yells  
And even tears does shed,  
Then wildly brandishes her bow

Round my unlucky head

VIII

Right thumbs bend in left thumbs poke out

I scold and I correct

The thought of Mr Slocombes wrath

On them has no effect

IX

It has on me: the bare idea

Of what my master'll say

When that pair plays before him

Does fill me with dismay<sup>484</sup>

Ostensibly the content of the poem is typical of other *Evergreen* submissions. It focuses on sibling relationships, and dramatises an ordinary domestic interaction. However in the deprecatory subtitle, 'with apologies to the ghost of Coleridge' it becomes evident that the poem is another piece of imitative work. In the critic's page, 'The Despairing Sister' receives the following appraisal: 'This parody only remains a parody for the first few verses. The end [...] drifts away into quite a different sea, both of ideas & rhythm & the peculiar "chant" of the "Ancient Mariner" – The last verse is faulty in grammar & construction. "Master'll" is quite impossible.'<sup>485</sup> As the critic recognises it to be an adaptation of 'Ancient Mariner' this immediately evidences the shared oeuvre of the contributors of the *Evergreen Chain*.

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<sup>484</sup> Anna Commena, 'The Despairing Sister (with apologies to the ghost of Coleridge)', the *Evergreen Chain*, April 1897, p. 19.

<sup>485</sup> A. M. Hitchcock, 'Critic's Page', the *Evergreen Chain*, April 1897, p. 136.

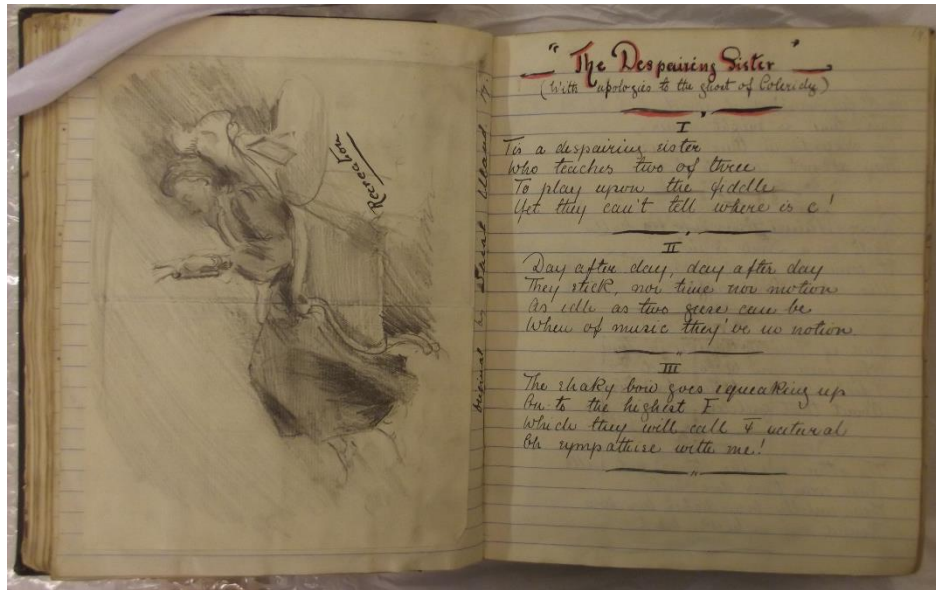


Figure 9: The poem ‘The Despairing Sister’ is positioned next to a drawing of a woman reading at leisure entitled ‘Recreation’, from 1897, MC 2018.059.

The critic is hardly flattering about the writer’s adaptive effort. The critique of the poem stresses that it is not close enough to the work of Coleridge to qualify as a parody. The writer borrowed the structure of four-line stanzas with rhyming couplets from ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’:

It is an ancient Mariner,  
 And he stoppeth one of three.  
 ‘By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,  
 Now wherefore stopp’st thou me?’<sup>486</sup>

The editor’s issue is that the ideas, rhythm and ‘peculiar chant’ of ‘Ancient Mariner’ are lost as ‘The Despairing Sister’ goes on. This goes against the emphatic advice that was given by the editor: ‘don’t write stories that are only echoes of stories you have read.’ Therefore it seems as if adaptive forms of writing were welcomed in the magazine, but the contributors had to adhere to certain strategies of adaptation.

<sup>486</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’, *The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 2008), p. 49.

An essay on 'Beowulf', written by the same contributor in the July 1897 volume of the *Evergreen Chain*, adopted a different approach to textual appropriation. Anna Commena was praised in the critic's page. The essay begins by contextualising the historical adaptations of the story:

The story of Beowulf is very old indeed, in fact some parts of it are traced back to the stone age when the North people first came out of the east, and, in superstitious dread of the strange and uncouth creatures that they found dwelling in the gloomy caves and morasses of those wild lands, turned them into the 'nickers' and 'trolls' and 'giants' of early folk-lore.<sup>487</sup>

Commerna avoided criticism in the critic's page because instead of attempting adaptation, she produced a researched critical essay. The editor appraises it as a 'refreshing departure from the "story" proper' and the author is praised for seeming 'thoroughly imbued with a love of the subject.' This example refers back to the idea that it is in a female tradition to 'do justice' to a text', in a similar way to the translation and adaptive work in the *Barnacle* which was discussed earlier in the thesis.

Adolescent girl writers assume this position on several occasions. Even though the contributors aspire to create original pieces, and adapt literature in intellectual ways, they are most of all encouraged by the older editors to prove themselves. This is done either through engaging with the domestic realism that they can truthfully write about, or through the process of researching and critiquing. Both strategies allowed girl writers to demonstrate rigour in their development of culture.

#### Transitional literature, genre and form

As opportunities for women expanded during the 1890s, so too did publishing culture, and women's roles within it. In the final three decades of the nineteenth century literary production had tripled, and fiction had a mass readership. Peter Keating, in his study of

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<sup>487</sup> Anna Commena, 'Beowulf', the *Evergreen Chain*, July 1897.

fiction between the 1870s and 1914, calls this period an ‘age of transition’, which many contemporary writers acknowledged. This transitional stage, he argues, ‘could provoke uncertainty, confusion, pessimism [...] alternatively, it could inspire pride, excitement, and eager anticipation.’<sup>488</sup> As magazines, New Woman fiction and other kinds of new literature came to inform the manuscripts that girls could recreate at home, the discourse surrounding genre and propriety changed, too.

Yet even though differences in genre were felt by the girl writers, they engaged with the same techniques of appropriation that can be seen in manuscript efforts of previous decades. The dual approach of mimicry and parody was still a useful way to approach the writing of literary fiction. Writing in a combination of genres, from the familiar historical romance, to nonsense poetry, was an accepted mode of creativity in the pages of the *Evergreen Chain*. The magazine becomes a metaphor symbolising wider cultural transitions in literary fiction and the discursive understandings of girlhood. The magazine’s flexible approach to genre reflected both the autonomy granted by the manuscript magazine form, and the plethora of children’s literature at the end of the nineteenth century. By analysing the girls’ responses to contemporary ideas about genre, as well as their strategies of textual appropriation, one can comprehend the mechanics of girls’ self-generated culture.

The poem ‘Bagheera’ indicates that wide reading, and a knowledge of literary culture were still valued attributes in girls’ manuscript writings of the 1890s. ‘Bagheera’ was written by a contributor identified only as H.N.C, age 18, and was included in the January 1898 volume of the *Evergreen Chain*. The poem anthropomorphises a black cat who chooses to name himself after Rudyard Kipling’s black panther character in *The Jungle Book*, and is apparently immersed in literary culture:

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<sup>488</sup> Keating, *The Haunted Study*, p. 3.

## VIII

He was very well read  
Thought highly of ‘Stead’  
Liked ‘Merisman’, ‘Kipling’ and ‘Twain’,  
But he said for my part  
I see no one in art  
To compare with the great ‘Louis Wain.’

## IX

His own name he took  
From the famed ‘Jungle Book’  
For thought he – ‘I can see nothing clearer  
From tail-tip to paws  
We’re as like as two straws  
From henceforth my name is ‘Bagheera.’ –

This humorous and knowing speaker adopts the same approach as the speaker in ‘The Distressed Damsel’ in the *Barnacle*. The allusions to literary culture in ‘Bagheera’ show that the poem is a display of cultural learning. Girls still use this technique of displaying knowledge, literally listing writers they admire in this 1890s magazine as they did in the earlier *Barnacle*. The speaker thinks ‘highly of Stead’, referring to the journalist William Thomas Stead (1849–1912) who during the 1880s was the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and had in 1885 helped to raise the age of consent from 13 to 16, with the publication of his hugely influential essay ‘The maiden tribute of modern Babylon.’ Mark Twain’s best known children’s novels were *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1875) and its sequel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885).

Louis Wain was an artist who created various depictions of anthropomorphised cats. He contributed regularly to children’s books and magazines, and his illustrations were often of a sardonic nature. His cats annuals and posters were very popular in late

Victorian and early Edwardian nurseries.<sup>489</sup> The writer of ‘Baghera’ then, displays her literary knowledge in this poem. Furthermore, by prioritising one artist over others, she creates a taxonomy. This is an adult and especially masculinised form – the categorisation of knowledge and reviewing of writers was a mainstay of male-authored literary magazines. Yet incited in this way, with artists who were specifically appealing to a youth audience (Wain and Kipling), this approach to literature becomes a product of youth culture; a re-distribution of this well-established cultural currency. The examples of literary adaptations in the following section are also culturally engaged, and are even political.

#### Confronting traditional authorship in appropriation

In the later volumes of the *Evergreen Chain* from 1898 and 1899, when most of the contributors were aged 19 or approaching the later teenage years and they had cultivated an ongoing engagement with literary appropriation, there manifested a more direct and aware confrontation with ideas of authorship and imitation. One poem, ‘To Alfred Lord Tennyson’ was presented as outright hero-worship for the recently deceased Poet Laureate:

Poet, whose words have charmed me from a child,  
Thousands rise up to bless thy name today,  
And tens of thousands bow beneath thy sway,  
On whom thy countenance hath never smil’d  
Although the echo of thy words have fill’d  
Their hearts to overflow, while a bright ray  
Hath fall’n on Life, and Sorrow’s mantle grey  
Like Dawn’s swift arrows, and dark pain is still’d.

So from the darkness comes the lucent light  
So from the rock the chrystal waters flow

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<sup>489</sup> See Rodney Dale, *Louis Wain: The Man Who Drew Cats* (London: Michael O’Mara, 1991).



And we are strengthened by thy inmost thrive.  
The use of 'measured language' shines most bright  
When happiness is parted from our sight,  
And by thy faith a deeper trust we know.<sup>490</sup>

The context of the poem, the blessing of 'thy name today' in 1898 is perhaps associated with Leslie Stephen's biography of Tennyson which was published that year.<sup>491</sup> His depiction as a 'lucent light' which 'shines most bright' implies his benevolent and celestial configuration in the imagination of this particular writer.

Also anticipating the need to qualify their creation, Katharine L. Osler, age nineteen, submitted 'An Apology, written when asked for an original contribution' to the magazine. 'An Apology' dramatizes a girl writer's realisation of her distance from published writers and their seemingly unsurpassable work:

If England's poets had never sung  
Then might my verse adorn your page.  
But with such store to choose among  
The best they gave to every age  
'Twere waste such lines as I could write  
Within your album to indite

If only you were not so sweet  
Original I'd try to be  
(And thus your requisition meet)  
In eulogies addressed to thee  
But all the best there was to say  
The poets have said before my day.

For praise of women good and true

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<sup>490</sup> Blanche Stewart, 'To Alfred Lord Tennyson', the *Evergreen Chain*, May 1898, pp. 19–20.

<sup>491</sup> Leslie Stephen, *Studies of a Biographer Volume I* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1898). Stephen's essay on Tennyson had been previously published in a magazine.

In every land and every clime  
Surveyed from every point of view  
Has been a fav'rite theme for rhyme  
And I cannot improve I fear on Keats and Tennyson my dear.

And I should certainly have thought  
You would have had enough to do  
As 'art is long' and time is short  
To read your English Classics through  
Without expending precious time  
On frivolous and modern rhyme.

So be admonished pray by me  
And seize the moments as they pass  
Take Alfred Tennyson to tea  
Keep Shakespeare by the looking-glass.  
And don't until you've read them through  
Ask amateurs for 'something new.'<sup>492</sup>

In this poem Katharine is enmeshed in her own cultural referents, and experiences a Bloomian 'anxiety of influence' in her acknowledgement of literary tradition.<sup>493</sup> Her worry that she 'cannot improve' on Keats and Tennyson epitomises Adrienne Rich's feminist argument about the re-visionary impulses of women writers, which was also relevant for the *Barnacle*. Rich argues that 'the myths and images of women' have been a source of 'particular confusion to the girl or woman who tries to write [...] she meets the image of Woman in books written by men [...] she finds La Belle Dame Sans Merci.'<sup>494</sup> Through her experience of contributing to the *Evergreen Chain*, this girl writer

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<sup>492</sup> Katharine L. Osler, 'An Apology', the *Evergreen Chain*, 1898, pp. 35–6.

<sup>493</sup> Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*.

<sup>494</sup> Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken', p. 21.

came to realise her exclusion from the image of authorship that she had consumed. Moreover, by evoking the maxim ‘art is long and time is short’ she dwells on the temporariness of not just human life but of adolescence specifically, and how this transitional stage wrestles with aspirations to literary greatness. The positioning of the girls as ‘amateurs’, the antithesis of Tennyson and Shakespeare yet always exposed to their images, articulates a feeling of girl writers being cowed by tradition, or being held to standards they could not hope to achieve. While this alone did not prevent girls from writing entirely, it did force them to content themselves with private publication. Furthermore, the girl writers of the *Evergreen Chain* knew that their manuscript magazine, and the types of writing they could explore within it, was time-limited. However, embracing such liminality in the pages of the magazine which was shared between adolescent peers allowed such a discrete literary culture to be cultivated, albeit temporarily.

#### Writing the bigger picture: work and pay

As well as writing about the difficulty of attaining the status of authorship in manuscript efforts, there is one poem in the *Chain* which makes a subversive and ostensibly bitter complaint on the subject of girls’ irreconcilable relationship to male professions. ‘Life’s Difficulties’ was written by an honorary member, known only as J.H. As mentioned before, honorary members were either younger or older than the main group of contributors, and due to the knowing tone of this poem, it is plausible to assume that this was an older member. The poem begins by discussing the *Chain*, and the trouble of composition, but swiftly moves to broader issues which affect the life and work of females, via a comparison with men working in the armed forces:

When invited to write for the ‘Evergreen Chain’  
Sensations at first are those of some pain  
Your brains at that moment are sure to be ‘out’

And you wonder, whatever you can write about.

Well, first take the army, and all it entails  
Or the soldier, whose stout heart with fear fairly quails  
When he think of the knowledge his brains must contain  
E'en the bravest, these thoughts might well render insane.  
[...]

Then think of the Navy with its long line of ships,  
Which, daily increasing, now make 'Trial trips!'  
All full of brave sailors as anxious to brave  
The dangers and horrors of Life 'o'er the wave.'<sup>495</sup>

The poet begins with metareflexive commentary, on the subject of having writer's block when asked to pen something for the *Evergreen Chain*. The second stanza moves on to consider male soldiers at war, as well as those 'brave' men at sea in the navy. The speaker seems to have sympathy for men in these roles, and at first it reads as if their serious and noble work is exemplified to trivialise her apprehension about writing for the magazine. Yet the tone soon turns, as the speaker describes the 'vener' and 'sneer' of lawyers and barristers. These male professions are evoked to emphasise the speaker's exclusion from such employments.

The Law of our Land is a study for some  
And if lucky the Star soon provides an income  
So Lawyers and Barristers, all wear a long gown  
And curled wig in the court, of course not in the town.

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<sup>495</sup> J. H., 'Life's Difficulties', the *Evergreen Chain*, March 1894, pp. 35–37.

The resolution of the poem comes in a humorous quip about rejecting these demanding roles, and instead staying in a state of ‘play’:

P'raps from all the Professions which exist in our day,  
Tis best to keep clear and just take your own way.  
Hunt, golf, and fish or a good day's play  
No examinations for these but Alas! Also no pay.<sup>496</sup>

The speaker resolves to distance herself from the professions she discussed in the previous stanzas. In a potentially subversive statement, she advises her audience to ‘keep clear and just take your own way’, encouraging pursuit of an occupation which is detached from the roles invoked (lawyer, sailor, soldier) all of which are traditionally masculine pursuits.

This is the most explicit critique of economic and social gender inequality in any of the manuscript magazine case studies in this thesis. The speaker begins the poem by describing male professions as the only possible sources of writing inspiration. By rejecting all of them by the end of the poem, the speaker undermines them, suggesting that they have no place in girls’ manuscript culture. Whereas some girl writers in the *Chain* still expressed their feelings of exclusion from masculine traditions, poems ‘Life’s Difficulties’, ‘An Apology’ and even ‘The Despairing Sister’ are all interwoven with subversion, irreverence or sarcasm. They seek to invert the balance of tradition and exclusion. By the 1890s, the girl writers of the *Evergreen Chain* had come to test their sense of power in their manuscript culture.

This potentially also shows a growing awareness of the paid employment opportunities for young women in the 1890s. During this decade, girls’ magazines such as *Atalanta* started to show job advertisements, for roles such as typists and secretaries. Journalism also became a profession which was increasingly occupied by women.

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<sup>496</sup> J. H., ‘Life’s Difficulties’, p. 37.

Women's paid writing opportunities were at their most prominent and visible than ever before. It is the first time that pecuniary matters are raised in the context of the *Evergreen Chain*, which was of course written for pleasure and not for profit. Yet, like the poem 'The Despairing Sister' which was categorised as a parody of Coleridge's work, the rhyme scheme of this poem prevents it from being read as truly scathing. The scheme of rhyming couplets give the poem an upbeat and humorous tone. Equally, the more poignant lines of poetry can be read as flippant because of this effect: 'Tis best to keep clear and just make your own way' as well as being subversive, can be read as vague, even a dismissal of seeking professions entirely.

Yet the reality of girls seeking developmental opportunities is something that can be seen in the pages of the *Evergreen Chain*. The first editor of the magazine resigned in the February 1894 volume of the magazine because she was about to pursue education:

It is with great regret that the Editor feels herself obliged to resign. She finds it impossible any longer to give the time which the work of editing entails as she is preparing for an Examination which will take up all her spare time. The Editor is very sorry to give it up as the Magazine has given her a great deal of pleasure. It is, however to be carried on by Olive Johnstone Douglas who helped to start the Magazine, who will arrange all the contributions with the help of a friend who will do all the copying.<sup>497</sup>

Running the *Evergreen Chain* was not feasible alongside the new educational opportunities for young women. It was strictly a temporary pursuit, fit for the experience of adolescence. Contributors to the *Chain* left because of examinations, too. In the January 1895 volume, the editor's page includes the notice: 'The Editor has to inform the members that Joan Howard has left the Mag: – as she is kept busy preparing for an exam.

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<sup>497</sup> Miss Lear, 'Editorial', the *Evergreen Chain*, February 1894, p. 71.

There are now only 12 members of the mag.<sup>498</sup> The realities of changing girlhood life manifests in these 1890s manuscript magazines.

### Conclusion

The *Evergreen Chain* attests to the historical conversations that were taking place in self-made girls' cultural products of the late nineteenth century. In the magazine, girl writers were in discussion with the past, with literature that they had consumed and adapted into a new constituent of their adolescent experience. Girl writers were constantly engaging with various writers, genres, and time periods. The text that they created, which encapsulates the contents as well as the metadata concerning the production and circulation process, engages the reader in a contemporary conversation about the rich and collaborative literary culture of late-Victorian girls.

Much like their published antecedents, the rich awareness of print culture in girls' manuscript magazines offers a 'very special window into the life and thought of the Victorian age.'<sup>499</sup> Writers of the *Barnacle* and the *Evergreen Chain* engaged with textual appropriation in manuscript magazines in response to the conflicting messages about originality and imitative work that they encountered through their shared enterprise. Moreover, girls displayed their cultural habitus while acknowledging their position on the margins of a literary tradition, and through this formed their own. Regarding the irregular form, spelling and structure in the Brontë juvenilia, Bette London suggests that these lapses can be seen as 'indications of a style of authorship that refuses to be regulated [...]' From this perspective, we might read the juvenilia collaboration not as a limiting condition but as an enabling vehicle for a form of writing that resolutely stands outside

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<sup>498</sup> Olive Johnstone Douglas, 'Editorial', the *Evergreen Chain*, January 1895, p. 91.

<sup>499</sup> Vann, J. Don, and Rosemary T. VanArsdel, *Victorian Periodicals: A Guide to Research* (New York: MLA, 1978), p. ix.

the mainstream.<sup>500</sup> Although there are moments of anxiety in girls' appropriative strategies, the outcome is primarily a reclamation.

As we have seen in the *Evergreen Chain*, appropriative writing was still an integral part of girls' manuscript magazine culture in the 1890s. Some adaptive writing efforts indicated the anxiety of influence that was felt as a result of the norm of appropriation, and critiques which valued realistic and original representations reinforced this anxiety around girls' creative work. However in the magazine there were also examples of girl writers turning this discourse on its head, through rejecting or othering masculine traditions and styles of writing. Yet the girls' rejections still cited Coleridge, Tennyson, and Shakespeare as a measure against their own work; and in citing these writers (even subversively) they potentially reinforced this distance.

Furthermore the *Chain* demonstrates a finessing of a more holistic collaborative manuscript culture, in which hierarchies were established amongst girls and the older critic A. M. Hitchcock. The *Chain* was both a formal pursuit and a family affair; in this sense the magazine encompasses features which are seen in both the *Barnacle* and the *Briarland Recorder*. The *Evergreen Chain* proves that although the girl writers were as dynamic in their contributions as in previous generations of manuscript magazines, the concerns of late-Victorian New Girlhood further complicated their execution of original and appropriative work.

The final chapter of this thesis considers the representation of writing girls in Victorian fiction. It evidences that depictions of girls' collaborative manuscript culture are scarce in fiction, offers some explanations for this dissonance, and underscores once again the necessity for archival research into girls' cultures alongside analyses of fiction.

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<sup>500</sup> London, *Writing Double*, p. 58.



Chapter 6: ‘Meantime, it is quite well to write’: girls’ writing in fiction and *fin de siècle* gender politics.

Furthering the narrative that this thesis has mapped of the various forms of girls’ writing that manifested in the Victorian era, from published diaries, manuscript life writings and manuscript magazines, this chapter will conduct an inquiry into the representation of writing girls in nineteenth-century fiction. I have identified three overarching and sometimes overlapping themes in my analysis of novels which categorise the depictions of girl writers. The first theme addresses the fictionalisation of collaborative manuscript culture which I have explored at length in my case studies. The second theme concerns girl writers being caught between their writing ambition and adherence to more conventional feminine duties. Finally, the third significant theme is girl writers’ struggle within a patriarchal publishing industry.

With regards to the first theme, the first section of this chapter will consider two Victorian women writers of children’s literature, Juliana Horatia Ewing and Charlotte Mary Yonge, in their lived experience and fictional depiction of girls’ writing cultures. Both Ewing and Yonge wrote stories featuring adolescent girl protagonists, and these stories abound with metatextual references made by their writing girl characters, linking the fictional act of writing to the published literature that the characters cite. Moreover, Ewing and Yonge lived this writing culture during their girlhoods. Writing was a lifelong occupation for the two writers, and their lives and fictions give an insight into the experience of girlhood that they promoted, as well as their influence on a generation of their girl readers. This chapter will consider the biographies and writing practices of the two authors, which consolidated their writing focus on girlhood experiences. The first section will focus on Ewing’s *Six to Sixteen* (1876), as well as Yonge’s *The Disturbing Element, Or, Chronicles of the Blue-bell Society* (1878) as texts that promote reading, life writing, and intellectual connection between girls. It will also gesture to other children’s

literature which closely represented the written culture of girls which can be found in archival evidence. The two novels that I discuss represent the collaborative, peer aspects of girls' writings which I have explored in my case study chapters.

The second section of this chapter considers alternative representations of writing girls during the later Victorian period. Several novels will be analysed as brief case study examples in relation to the two themes of girls' tussle between writing ambition and conventional feminine womanhood, and girls' struggle in a patriarchal publishing industry. The novels under consideration, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) by Thomas Hardy, *A Struggle For Fame* (1883) by Charlotte Riddell, *New Grub Street* (1890) by George Gissing, and *My Brilliant Career* (1901) by Miles Franklin reiterate many realities of the practices of writing girls, but also offer alternative narratives which draw upon elements of the New Woman narrative. Thus the depictions of girl characters who publish their writings for financial gain or fame function as a commentary on gender equality.

Much like my earlier chapters which analyse the divide between manuscript and published girls' writings, this chapter will posit that the fictional representation of girls' writing hinges on whether the writing is in manuscript form, or whether a quest for publication is sought for it. When it is the former, in the plots of Ewing and Yonge, girls can learn and develop in their adolescence through their manuscript writings. When it applies to the latter, in the works of *fin de siècle* novelists such as Hardy, Gissing, Riddell and Franklin, the narrative often has a cynical outlook, as the novice girl in question attempts to navigate the world of publishing or battles with her own inner desire to be a writer. This sharp divide between the Golden Age writings of Yonge and Ewing and the provocative genres of the *fin de siècle* evidences the ideological differences between representations of girls who engaged in domestic manuscript writing culture, and the girl characters that were used as ideological devices in fiction.

Here my methodological approach can illuminate the nuances between these novels which either represent girls' collaborative writing culture, or represent girl writers as struggling outsiders in a publishing context. The girls of *Six to Sixteen*, *The Disturbing Element*, and to an extent *A Writer of Books* operate within their specific Bourdieuan 'habitus', a specific set of cultural norms within a 'field' of cultural production, where peer recognition is the primary goal. Although there is still evidence of 'the site of a struggle over the definition of the writer' in these novels, particularly in portions which depict the girl writers' struggle with identity, the act of writing has a broadly validating effect on girls' perceptions of themselves as writers.<sup>501</sup> However when girls' writing is removed from the context of peer culture and a mutually-understood habitus, as we see in the later novels, the value of girls' writings changes.

Bourdieu's theories of cultural production serve to explain this differentiation. Bourdieu recognises that 'works of art exist as symbolic objects only if they are known and recognized, that is, socially instituted as works of art and received by spectators capable of knowing and recognizing them as such.'<sup>502</sup> Bourdieu argues that the value of a work is therefore determined by the producers of the work, 'but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work – critics, publishers,' which, in my archival case studies, are other girl writers or adult overseers of girls' literary production.<sup>503</sup> As the girl characters represented in certain late-Victorian novels function outside of a discrete girls' culture, the symbolic value of their work deteriorates. This struggle is reinforced by the contextualisation of girls in a late-Victorian literary scene which was hostile to aspirational girl writers. Therefore these characters undergo a symbolic struggle in a

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<sup>501</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 42.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

literary field which does not value their contribution to the extent that it is valued in a peer culture context.

With regards to the girl characters that I will example shortly, I reiterate Carol Dyhouse's assertion that Victorian girlhood was definitely ended by marriage.<sup>504</sup> This becomes important to the analysis in this chapter, as we see a correlation between the start of married life, and the ending of girlhood writing cultures.

#### Charlotte Yonge and Juliana Ewing's girl-centered writing culture

It is unsurprising that Juliana Horatia Ewing (née Gatty, 1841–1885) represented manuscript girlhood writings in fiction given her own immersion in this culture. One novel by Ewing, *Six to Sixteen* is unique in its depiction of adolescent girls' autobiography. Ewing was an influential figure in children's literature of the mid- to late-Victorian period. She was born in Yorkshire to a clergyman father, Reverend Alfred Gatty, who, together with Margaret Gatty, encouraged Juliana and her sister Horatia to write creatively from a young age.<sup>505</sup> Juliana first published most of her fiction in *Aunt Judy's Tales* (1859), *Aunt Judy's Letters* (1862), and *Aunt Judy's Magazine* (1866–82), which were edited by Margaret Gatty, and eventually published by George Bell. After her mother's death, Juliana became joint editor of the magazine with her sister, and the publication maintained a nineteen-year run because of the family's stalwart commitment to it. In the early 1860s Ewing was also published in the *Monthly Packet*, the Anglican magazine edited by Charlotte Yonge.

Yonge (1823–1901), too, wrote voraciously throughout her life and was highly successful in her publications. When she was 15 years old, she wrote a story entirely in French, published it and sold it in order to raise funds for her local girls' school. Thus her

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<sup>504</sup> See Dyhouse, *Girl Trouble*.

<sup>505</sup> See Horatia K. F. Gatty, *Juliana Horatia Ewing and Her Books* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1885).

first published work, *Le Chateau de Melville*, appeared in 1838. In 1842 she began to write stories and articles for a Sunday school magazine, *Magazine for the Young*. Yonge was then invited to become the editor of the *Monthly Packet*, intended for young ladies aged between 15 and 25 years old. In 1853 she published *The Heir of Redclyffe*, which was one of the most widely read novels in the nineteenth century.<sup>506</sup> She wrote over a hundred books during a career which spanned over five decades.

In their fiction both women wrote extensively about girlhood practices and especially reading and writing cultures as being an important component of adolescence. For these two women, who wrote as girls and maintained epistolary friendships as adults while being successful authors, their promotion of girls' writing for peers was integral to their lives. Their writing girl protagonists deserve to be re-appraised, and mapped against the culture of home-made magazines and girlhood life writing, which has been discussed in the previous chapters. In texts by these authors, writing is depicted as an ordinary, everyday but also a cherished habit of girls – one which should be promoted. Ewing and Yonge's novels are still mildly didactic in this promotion. In most of their stories, the practice of writing makes girls honest, creative, intelligent, and sometimes marriageable – frequently conflicting ideas which will be explored throughout this chapter. The writing girl characters in the fiction of Yonge and Ewing adhere to conservative ideas about child-rearing yet also tally with *fin de siècle* ideas about modern girlhood.<sup>507</sup>

#### Alternative representations of manuscript magazine writing in Victorian fiction

It was not until the late Victorian period, and no doubt associated with developments in publishing, ideas of adolescence, as well as 'the woman question', that writing girls became not only visible in fiction, but the subject of novels. Prior to this, there were few

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<sup>506</sup> Brian Doyle, *The Who's Who of Children's Literature* (Evelyn: University of Minnesota, 1968), p. 300.

<sup>507</sup> Theories about the New Girl's health and vitality but also fears for her modesty and safety have been explored in the first chapter of this thesis; they will be signposted again later in this chapter.

representations of writing girls in fiction. In eighteenth-century literature, representations of writing girls were present in epistolary sections of novels. Jane Austen's literary-minded fifteen year-old protagonist Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* (1803) and Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) which was read by adults and children alike, are two such examples. Even in the oeuvre of Charles Dickens, whose novels abound with representations of girls who appear to be endowed with larger imaginative capacities than boys, it is the girls' literacy that is emphasised, instead of their creative or intellectual potential. Biddy in Dickens' *Great Expectations* and Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* are more accomplished in their literacy than the boys Pip and Kit from the respective novels.<sup>508</sup> Yet at the *fin de siècle*, as girlhood and its accompanying cultures became more pronounced, girlhood engagements in manuscript writing became visible in fiction.

In my previous thesis chapter on Eglantyne Jebb's manuscript magazine, the *Briarland Recorder*, I discussed the culture of manuscript magazine composition between sisters which was based on Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. I suggest that the inclusion of the fictionalised manuscript magazine *The Pickwick Portfolio* in Alcott's novel was a source of inspiration for Jebb. Yet the representation of manuscript magazine production featured in other late-Victorian children's literature, and I will briefly reference these examples before focusing on Yonge and Ewing's novels.

Magazine composition was not unique to girls but could be mixed-gender. This is explored in E. Nesbit's *The Treasure Seekers* (1899).<sup>509</sup> It tells the story of six siblings: Dora, Oswald, Dicky, Alice, Noel, and Horace Octavius Bastable. The children decide to

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<sup>508</sup> See Peter Merchant and Catherine Waters, eds, *Dickens and the Imagined Child* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>509</sup> Edith Nesbit, *The Story of the Treasure Seekers; being the adventures of the Bastable children in search of a fortune* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899).

help restore the fortunes of their impoverished father, and Noel manages to sell some of his poetry to a newspaper. Inspired by this, the children take it upon themselves to start a magazine of their own. But the desire for profit is soon overtaken by the negotiations of composition: ‘Everybody wanted to put in everything just as they liked, no matter how much room there was on the page. It was simply awful!’<sup>510</sup> The magazine is written up with a typewriter, and copies sent out to friends, so the children do not make money from their work as they initially hoped. Differences in gender, age and personality between the children create tensions: ‘Dora wanted to be editor and so did Oswald, but he gave way to her because she is a girl.’<sup>511</sup> This mixed-gender magazine composition reveals the children’s perception that the writing is ultimately controlled by the eldest sibling Dora. Yet Oswald does not give way to her because of her age, but her gender. The fact that she is a girl means that she is more greatly invested in being the magazine editor than her brother. This gendered difference in approach to magazine composition can be seen in the case study example of the Jebb siblings. Although the younger brother Gamul Jebb contributed to their manuscript magazine, there was no doubt that older sister Eglantyne Jebb was the creative and driving force behind it.

A group of schoolboys also create a manuscript magazine in Rudyard Kipling’s *Stalky and Co* (1899).<sup>512</sup> Stalky names their school newspaper the *Swillingford Patriot* and his school friend Beetle edits it. The space of the Head’s ‘tobacco-scented library’ is conducive to the boys’ manuscript culture: ‘There Beetle found a fat arm-chair, a silver inkstand, and unlimited pens and paper.’<sup>513</sup> The children’s ritual is encouraged by an older arbiter, the Head, who gives the boys free reign of his library, ‘prohibiting nothing,

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<sup>510</sup> Nesbit, *The Treasure Seekers*, p. 112.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>512</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Stalky & Co.* (London: Macmillan, 1952).

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

recommending nothing.’<sup>514</sup> Unlike the March sisters or the Bastable siblings, the pleasure and aspiration of youth composition is shared beyond their peer cultural group. The Head comes ‘drifting in under the pretense of playing censor to the paper’ and ‘with half-shut eyes above his cigar, would he speak of great men living, and journals, long dead, founded in their riotous youth; of years when all the planets were little new-lit stars trying to find their places in the uncaring void.’<sup>515</sup> Although the writing culture in *Stalky and Co* is child-led, this example demonstrates that male adult pedagogy and socialisation also influenced youth composition. This form of adult supervision is also clearly gendered: the Head speaks of ‘great men’ while the boys compose, imagining that they emulate this male literary tradition. The Head’s cultivation of cultural development links back to Bourdieu’s theories of habitus and field which have been utilised in my archival case studies of girls writers. The writing culture in *Stalky & Co* demonstrates that the boys possess the requisite ‘amount of knowledge, skill, or “talent”’ so that they may participate in this particular cultural ‘field.’<sup>516</sup> Their participation in this cultural field, then, differs from that of girl writers. The boy writers of the *Swillingford Patriot* participate in a writing culture which is a result of a habitus (set of experiences) which is unique to them as privileged boys who are educated in an all-boys’ school.

The Head’s response to children’s manuscript composition differs greatly from Yonge’s representation of girls’ writing culture in *The Disturbing Element*, which I will analyse shortly, as well as her own prudent editing of the *Barnacle*. As I have established in previous chapters, late-Victorian girls wrote in diary forms, and also made manuscript magazines which included creative pieces. When girls’ writings were published they were edited from their original manuscript format, and much of their inflections of girlhood

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<sup>514</sup> Kipling, *Stalky & Co.*, p. 217.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>516</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p. 8.



life and culture were lost in the process of adult mediation. The examples of Emily Shore and Marjory Fleming which I explored earlier in this thesis demonstrate this kind of censorship. There were few writers, Ewing and Yonge included, who actually depicted manuscript writing cultures of girls in their fiction. Although Yonge was hugely commercially successful at the time, Susan Walton suggests that her ‘cultural significance has been overlooked.’<sup>517</sup> Contemporaneous fiction that was genuinely read by girls, and depicts their habits that their own writing could not represent, combined with archival evidence, demonstrates that the late-Victorian adolescent experience of girls can indeed be seen in contemporaneous fiction, as the following discussion will show.

#### Ewing, periodicals and *Six to Sixteen*

Although differing in some ways, the similarities between Ewing and Yonge’s representation of writing girls, and their personal experience with writing for periodicals and writing in girlhood mean that their comparison is justified. Both Ewing and Yonge had direct involvement in the creation of two magazines for girls: *Aunt Judy’s Magazine* and the *Monthly Packet* respectively. In chapter three I discussed Yonge’s manuscript magazine the *Barnacle*, which was compiled by a group of girls known as The Goslings. Many of Yonge’s Goslings wrote fiction for *The Barnacle* and later in print in the *Monthly Packet*, and some even published independently. Indeed Julia Courtney describes the *Barnacle* as ‘somewhere between a family magazine and an in-house version of Charlotte Yonge’s the *Monthly Packet*’ where Yonge’s collective of girl writers could practice their writing under her supervision.<sup>518</sup> The *Monthly Packet* was a publication in a similar vein to *Aunt Judy’s Magazine*, and indeed the editors of both, Charlotte Yonge and Margaret Gatty (Ewing’s mother), would often correspond through letters.

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<sup>517</sup> Susan Walton, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge’s Models of Manliness* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 10.

<sup>518</sup> Courtney, ‘Mother Goose’s Brood’, p. 189.

Although Ewing's fiction predominantly presents stories of people and animals, appealing to a child readership, her novel *Six to Sixteen* projected a specific readership of adolescent girls, thought of by many Victorians as one of the groups that require the most guiding in their reading.<sup>519</sup> Yet Ewing's example for girls promotes writing and remembering one's girlhood experiences as a form of growth and self-improvement. As Ewing's writings were initially published in her family's magazine – indeed *Six to Sixteen* was first serialised in *Aunt Judy's Magazine* – their particular approach to raising girls was promoted in her fiction, namely, the promotion of creativity.<sup>520</sup> In her dedication in *Six to Sixteen*, which Ewing addresses to her own childhood friend Eleanor Lloyd, the inspiration for one of the characters, she writes: 'if [...] it seems to you to illustrate a belief in the joys and benefits of intellectual hobbies, I do not think we shall differ on that point.'<sup>521</sup> *Six to Sixteen* is a fictional autobiography supposedly written by the character Margaret (Margery) Vandaleur, a sixteen year-old girl who agrees with her friend Eleanor Arkwright to write the stories of their lives from the ages of six to sixteen. Margery is an orphan, who has been raised by various adults who have differing approaches to the upbringing of girls.<sup>522</sup> Some elements of *Six to Sixteen* are based on Ewing's own girlhood; Ewing begs her friend Eleanor Lloyd 'to accept it in affectionate remembrance of old times and of many common hobbies of our girlhood in my Yorkshire home and in yours.'<sup>523</sup> Also mirroring her own

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<sup>519</sup> Juliana Ewing, *Six to Sixteen* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016). See for example, Mitchell, *The New Girl*.

<sup>520</sup> This maxim is manifest throughout their publications – *Aunt Judy's Magazine* is even referred to with a female pronoun by Gatty and Ewing.

<sup>521</sup> Ewing, *Six to Sixteen*, p. 6.

<sup>522</sup> For this reason Claudia Mills has likened it to Louisa May Alcott's *Eight Cousins*, which also concerns different approaches to child-rearing. See Claudia Mills, 'Choosing a Way of Life: *Eight Cousins* and *Six to Sixteen*', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 14.2 (1989), 71–75.

<sup>523</sup> Ewing, *Six to Sixteen*, p. 6.

life experience, the championing of girls' creativity, namely girls' writing and sense of authorship, is evident throughout the novel.

Much of the beginning of Margery's autobiography constitutes ruminations on girlhood writing culture. While acknowledging the discourse that their writing practice could be viewed as a 'fad', she voices her opinions on girls' writing directly and unapologetically: 'Eleanor and I are subject to fads [...] life would be comparatively dull, up here on the moors, without them [...] we propose this winter to write the stories of our own lives down to the present date.'<sup>524</sup> This dismissal of their writing as a 'fad' is reminiscent of the 'self-snubbing' done by the Goslings in their publication the *Barnacle*. By referring to themselves as silly geese and 'self-snubbing', the Goslings maintained a modest approach to their highly cultivated and aspirational magazine.<sup>525</sup> Similarly, Margery is careful not to promote her writing too candidly.

Although Margery initially sees this writing enterprise as 'egotistical and perhaps silly', she writes how her writing partner Eleanor convinced her to participate by pointing out that 'Supposing Mr Pepys had thought so about his everyday life, how much instruction and amusement would have been lost to the readers of his Diary.'<sup>526</sup> Presented in earnest, this comment makes a subversive claim for the value in girls' writing, not only for immediate amusement but for posterity too. Comparing their project to that of the famous diarist Samuel Pepys again, Margery is finally convinced that they are justified in writing their own life stories: 'Eleanor observed that the simple and truthful history of a single mind from childhood would be as valuable, if it could be got, as the whole of Mr. Pepys' Diary from the first volume to the last.'<sup>527</sup> When Pepys' diary was first published

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<sup>524</sup> Ewing, *Six to Sixteen*, p. 6.

<sup>525</sup> Courtney, 'The *Barnacle*: A Manuscript Magazine of the 1860s', p. 72.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

in the nineteenth century, it became a yardstick against which to measure other male auto/biographical achievements. Trev Broughton's work has developed this idea; she suggests that in the nineteenth century, men of letters constructed their masculine identity through autobiography.<sup>528</sup> By comparing her autobiography to that of Pepys, Margery claims that her own voice is as worthy of being heard as the famous male diarist's.

Despite her initial profession of hesitation, Margery wrote diaries before, and now regrets having burnt them, as they would be valuable in piecing together her autobiography:

I used to write diaries, too, but when I was fourteen years old, I got so much ashamed of them (it made me quite hot to read my small moral reflections, and the pompous account of my quarrels with Matilda, my sentimental admiration for the handsome bandmaster, etc., even when alone), and I was so afraid of the boys getting hold of them, that I made a big hole in the kitchen fire one day, and burned them all. At least, so I thought; but one volume escaped the flames, and the fun Eleanor and I have now in re-reading this has made me regret that I burned the others.<sup>529</sup>

In this admission Margery brings to light her girlhood motivations for keeping some life writing 'private.' Her reasons for doing so span the range of subjects that are certainly cited in girls' manuscript and even published life writings (Emily Shore for her moralising; Emily Pepys for her flirtations). Furthermore, it indicates a developmental shift which corresponds to both her age and her writing style. In the space of only a few of her teenage years, Margery has transitioned from writing extensively about her daily events and emotions, to destroying them through shame, to finally wishing she could access them so that she could better remember her past experiences of girlhood. As Ewing's narrative only concerns the girls' lives up to the age of sixteen, their reclamation

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<sup>528</sup> Trev Broughton, *Men of Letters, Writing Lives* (London: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>529</sup> Ewing, *Six to Sixteen*, p. 7.

of writing is the final destination of this trajectory. This indicates that their girlhood is coming to a close, and they believe that this period of their lives ought to be preserved.

Diaries are not the only type of writing that the girls in *Six to Sixteen* engage with. Together Margery and Eleanor reflect on their previous endeavours, in manuscript magazine writing and learning Italian. Yet Margery is self-critical of these too, and the critical voice is gendered male:

I am too apt to be discursive. When I had to write leading articles for our manuscript periodical, Jack used to laugh at me, and say, 'If it wasn't for Eleanor disentangling your sentences, you'd put parenthesis within parenthesis till, when you got yourself into the very inside one, you'd be as puzzled as a pig in a labyrinth, and not know how to get back to where you started from.'<sup>530</sup>

Margery's assertions here make it evident that their shared culture of writing – whether it takes the form of a manuscript periodical or an autobiography – serves various functions. Within a small group of adolescents, she 'had to write leading articles' to maintain the manuscript periodical. The accuracy of her grammar does not matter, as the emphasis is on the collaborative production, as well as educational and creative opportunity, in the domestic space. This harks back to the various roles that girls take in manuscript magazine writing, which was analysed in the previous chapters. Eglantyne Jebb, for instance, felt impelled to take on a leading role in her co-written manuscript magazine the *Briarland Recorder*, just as Margery 'had to write leading articles.' Margery's leading role in the periodical provides a specific kind of agency within the domestic realm, informed by the home habitus.

*Six to Sixteen* mirrors the writing culture of the Jebb girls in other ways, too. Just as Eglantyne Jebb views her writing role as one which is a crucial part of family life – she chronicles the family's developments in the 'News of the Month' section of the

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<sup>530</sup> Ewing, *Six to Sixteen*, p. 7.

*Briarland Recorder* – Margery Vandaleur also adopts this role in the fictional autobiography. Kathryn Gleadle has highlighted that child writers played a part in portraying family life, suggesting that ‘girls could be significant agents in creating and challenging family practices.’<sup>531</sup> Certainly the girls in *Six to Sixteen* create their own narratives about their lives within the broader context of their peer culture and the family.

Commenting on the final pages of *Six to Sixteen*, which reflect on the fictional autobiography form, Soya Sawyer Fritz suggests that it reaffirms ‘its implication that intellectual and creative pursuits are among the most satisfying for girls because of the personal fulfillment that they bring.’<sup>532</sup> In both form and content, *Six to Sixteen* champions the creative and intellectual writing output of Victorian girls, and in doing so projects a depiction of real girls’ manuscript culture which tallies with some of the case study examples presented in this thesis. However the text also demonstrates the insecurities inherent in adolescent girls’ writings, most of which are gendered. This aspect of girls’ writing lives is a recurring theme in the several other fictional examples I explore in this chapter.

#### Writing girls in the works of Yonge

An extensive discussion of Charlotte Yonge’s role in relation to the *Barnacle* in chapter three of this thesis detailed Yonge’s beliefs as a writer. I will further this analysis in this section by examining the representations of girls’ writing culture in the fictions of Yonge. Although undoubtedly a promoter of girls’ writing cultures, Yonge’s opinions on what girls should and should not attempt to write were made clear in her article ‘Authorship’ which she published in the *Monthly Packet* in 1892. In it she states:

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<sup>531</sup> Kathryn Gleadle, ‘The Juvenile Enlightenment: British Children and Youth During the French Revolution’, *Past and Present*, 233.1 (2016), 143–84 (p. 183).

<sup>532</sup> Soya Sawyer Fritz, ‘Girlhood Geographies: Mapping Gendered Spaces in Victorian Literature for Children’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University, 2010), p. 127.

One very unpalatable piece of counsel I would give. Do not try to publish very early in life. Many people have a gift of narration, and when they have plenty of leisure, they are much inclined to use it; and there is no reason against their practising it in home MSS. and competitions, but at the very best, they are really incapable of using it to the fullest effect without some experience.<sup>533</sup>

Yonge cautions her young readers against writing with the aim of publication, and guides them instead towards manuscript writings and entering competitions, two forms of apprentice authorship which encourage a professional approach but do not encroach the territory of penning fiction for a wider public, beyond the relatively limited circulation of the manuscript magazine. This promotion of female domesticity in Yonge's writings has been identified by several scholars. Kim Koeun suggests that 'Yonge's numerous domestic novels such as *Scenes and Characters* (1847), *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853), *The Daisy Chain* (1856) and *The Pillars of the House* (1873) would play a substantial role in establishing a section of juvenile literature that is nowadays commonly called 'young-adult' fiction.<sup>534</sup> In Yonge's guidebook to domestic novels, 'What Books to Read and What to Give', she suggested that these books are ideal for 'growing maidens who are beyond the child-story.'<sup>535</sup>

Yonge's fictions fixated almost exclusively on girl characters, but Christine Alexander writes how 'in [...] contemporary writing *for* children by Juliana Ewing, Louisa Molesworth, Elizabeth Sewell, Charlotte Yonge, and others' we see 'the quietly religious, diligent, submissive girls and their more lively, superior and honourable brothers.'<sup>536</sup> As

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<sup>533</sup> Yonge, 'Authorship', p. 297.

<sup>534</sup> Kim Koeun, 'Going beyond the domestic sphere: women's literature for children, 1856–1902' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 2015), p. 89.

<sup>535</sup> Charlotte Yonge, *What Books to Lend and What to Give* (London: National Society's Depository, 1887), p. 70.

<sup>536</sup> Christine Alexander, 'Play and apprenticeship: the culture of family magazines', in *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, ed. by Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 26.

well as depicting submissive, domesticated girls in her fiction, in her personal life Yonge did not believe in women's higher education. In a letter of 1868 to feminist and suffragist Sarah Emily Davies, Charlotte Yonge wrote,

I am obliged to you for your letter respecting the proposed college for ladies, but as I have decided objections to bringing together huge masses of girls, and think that home education under the inspection or encouragement of sensible fathers, or voluntarily continued by the girls themselves is far more valuable both intellectually and morally than any external education I am afraid I cannot assist you.<sup>537</sup>

Although Yonge remained thoroughly conservative in her views and Anglican in her morality throughout her career, Yonge's goal was not to inhibit her girl readers, and later she softened in her views on women's university education.<sup>538</sup> Walton sees Yonge as a useful 'route into the cultural beliefs [...] in the nineteenth century', particularly in relation to gender.<sup>539</sup> Although Yonge's strict advice on girlhood writing suggests otherwise, Koeun suggests that Yonge, like Ewing, was 'keen to encourage [her] young readers to question the boundaries that separate home from the public realm, and to imagine a society wherein these dividing lines would be mitigated and even be extinguished.'<sup>540</sup> Furthermore, Tamar S. Wagner has recently drawn attention to Yonge's 'self-conscious endeavour to combine narrative opportunities created by seemingly irreconcilable literary trends.'<sup>541</sup> It is these more liberal readings of Yonge's work that I will follow in this section, and suggest that in *The Disturbing Element, Or, Chronicles of*

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<sup>537</sup> Charlotte Yonge to Sarah Emily Davies, 22 July 1868, *The Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823–1901)*.

<sup>538</sup> I have explored Yonge's beliefs at length in the chapter on the *Barnacle*.

<sup>539</sup> Walton, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers*, p. 2.

<sup>540</sup> Koeun, 'Going beyond the domestic sphere', p. 2.

<sup>541</sup> Tamara S. Wagner, *Charlotte Yonge: Rereading Domestic Religious Fiction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 3.



*the Blue-bell Society*, which obviously deals with girls' life writing, she is particularly open to discussions of the benefits of girls' self-expression.

#### *The Chronicles of the Blue-bell Society*

Like *Six to Sixteen*, *The Disturbing Element*, Or, *Chronicles of the Blue-bell Society* represents girls' positive developments through manuscript writing groups, but also highlights the limited epoch during which this writing takes place.<sup>542</sup> Yonge published *The Disturbing Element* in 1878, a year after ending the Gosling society, which for eighteen years produced the manuscript magazine the *Barnacle*. The novel is told from the perspective of Miss Frances, whose 'purpose is to write the history of the Blue-bell society,' the fictional group of girls based on Yonge's experiences of corresponding with many aspirational girl writers.<sup>543</sup> *The Disturbing Element* depicts the motivations and machinations for beginning girls' writing societies, as well as the changes in girls' individual lives which affect their continuation in such societies. These details often cannot be detected when reading girls' manuscript productions, and therefore the novel makes a significant addition to our understanding of this culture. As the former editor of the *Barnacle*, Yonge was accustomed to reading and writing about the lives of girl writers, particularly as they pursue adult careers and roles. As this was published later in Yonge's career, her beliefs about girls' and women's education was starting to develop alongside broader changes in British society.

The demand for the intellectual space of the Blue-bell society comes from the girls themselves, and indeed the girls also dictate the purpose and goals of the endeavour. One of the Blue-bell girls, Lettice, tells Frances 'we feel we are all wasting a great deal of time in a desultory manner, and we want to arrange some scheme for working together with a

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<sup>542</sup> Charlotte Yonge, *The Disturbing Element, Or, Chronicles of the Blue-bell Society* (London: Marcus Ward & Co., 1878).

<sup>543</sup> Yonge, *The Disturbing Element*, p. 13.

view to the local examinations.’<sup>544</sup> Their goal is to establish a ‘Mutual Improvement Society.’<sup>545</sup> From around 1825 Mutual Improvement Societies were established which provided democratic supplementary education. Thousands of these societies were established during the nineteenth century. Initially populated by working-class men, more women attended them later in the century.<sup>546</sup> These types of societies are visible in the archival girls’ writings I have analysed in this thesis. The Literary and Debating Society that the Jebb siblings sometimes attended with their father was cited in their life writings many times.

The Blue-bell society girls invite Frances to take an overseeing role only; their plan is already arranged:

Their present notion was to give out some subjects once-a-week, work them up at home, and meet to correct and compare results, and they had unanimously fixed on [...] my stupid old self as the president, critic, or as Penny called it, cricket, who was to chirp comments on my own hearth, and serve as a kind of centre.<sup>547</sup>

Referring to Dickens’ *Cricket on the Hearth*, Frances acknowledges that she is only required to facilitate the society; the motivation comes from the girls themselves. Girls’ hunger for this kind of occupation even verges on the excessive. One of the Blue-bells, Penny, jokes that another Blue-bell, Winifred, is already part of too many societies:

She gets up by the Early Rising Society, that’s one; she reads by the Half-Hour Society, two; she practices by the Classical Musical Society, three; draws by another, four; walks by the Out-of-door one, five; works by the – is it two or three

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<sup>544</sup> Yonge, *The Disturbing Element*, p. 15.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>546</sup> See Christopher Radcliffe, ‘Mutual improvement societies and the forging of working-class political consciousness in nineteenth-century England’, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 16.2 (1997), 144–55.

<sup>547</sup> Yonge, *The Disturbing Element*, p. 18.

working ones, Winifred? – Sewing, Knitting, and Fancy Work, and an Essay Society besides –<sup>548</sup>

Yet the novel insists on the ongoing relevance of writing societies for girls; by the end of the novel the Blue-bell society continues with a new generation of aspirational girls. Yonge's purpose was to encourage the formation of new writing societies, even as the Gosling society had ended. Concluding her narrative of the society, Frances writes that 'we have filled up our numbers again with some young girls and governesses.'<sup>549</sup> It corroborates the evidence that this thesis has uncovered in archival examples of girls' writings, that this kind of collaborative peer writing practice was specifically harnessed for the transitional period of girlhood. In the *Evergreen Chain*, the categorisation of submissions by the author's age was one of the accommodations made as the girls progressed. This transition is also reflected in the change of editor in a volume of the *Evergreen Chain*, when the first editor left to sit an examination.

#### Marriage and spinsterhood in *Six to Sixteen* and *The Disturbing Element*

Although all of the Blue-bell girls initially benefit from the society, it becomes clear that some of them are fated for a change of circumstance. The girls vary in their age by a few years, but they all aspire to improve themselves in terms of their knowledge. The differences that mark their age-significant experiences are the Oxbridge local examinations they go in for, and whether they pursue romance.<sup>550</sup> The society members are in a state of girlhood / maidenhood, and the 'disturbing element' of the title refers to the introduction of men into the girls' lives, which Frances and her sister Susan predict will at one point terminate the society.

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<sup>548</sup> Yonge, *The Disturbing Element*, p. 15.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>550</sup> Cambridge University opened its Local Examinations to girls in 1865. See June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991); Jane McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1900* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

The phrase ‘disturbing element’ might refer to John Ruskin’s 1860 essay ‘Unto The Last’ which was published serially in the *Cornhill*. Ruskin writes that ‘the social affections [...] are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature.’ These disturbing elements ‘alter the essence of the creature under examination the moment they are added; they operate [...] chemically, introducing conditions which render all our previous knowledge unavailable.’<sup>551</sup> The fate of marriage is a spectral presence for the members of the Blue-bell Society when they begin their work. In her narration, Frances mentions that Winifred is age twenty, and as such has experienced two years of being ‘not wanted’ in her parental home.<sup>552</sup> Yet Yonge refrains from promoting marriage over girlhood pursuits, or vice versa. By the end of the novel, Winifred marries, but ‘carried the point of having the Blue-bells for bridesmaids, with their appropriate flowers in their bonnets.’<sup>553</sup> This example is notable, as it suggests that the two pursuits can potentially co-exist. Some girls marry, some go up to Oxbridge, and we learn that some have passed their local examinations. Emma Lacy is one Blue-bell who does not pass her examination, and she resolves to prolong her girlhood learnings, and ‘do all I can to improve myself, and try to keep other girls from seeking their excitement and interest in the miserable deceptions of common society.’<sup>554</sup> Ultimately, Yonge’s Anglican beliefs occupy the parting message of the novel:

It is the duty of woman to make herself all that she can possibly be, and to work up her capabilities to the utmost that opportunity allows, but only for the sake of

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<sup>551</sup> John Ruskin, *Unto This Last and Other Essays on Political Economy* (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1912), pp. 127–8.

<sup>552</sup> Yonge, *The Disturbing Element*, p. 31.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

that love to God and her neighbour which finds its opportunities and channels in the charities of life.<sup>555</sup>

Yonge suggests that female self-improvement can happen in multiple ways, but the best opportunity for girls comes in the form of peer collaboration and learning.

In Ewing's representation of girls' life writing in *Six to Sixteen* and Yonge's depiction of a girls' manuscript essay society in *The Disturbing Element*, both writers partially reflect 1870s writing culture back to their girl readers. In *Six to Sixteen* Ewing pays homage to her own experience of writing in girlhood, and suggests that the narrative of girl writers makes a significant contribution to family life, and also to peer friendships. In Ewing's text, girlhood is a time when the characters 'led lives of considerable intellectual activity, constant occupation, and engrossing interest.'<sup>556</sup> Self-improvement and agency is achieved through Margaret and Eleanor's practice of domestic writing during their adolescence. In *The Disturbing Element* Yonge also exemplifies the girl-driven nature of collaborative manuscript endeavours. In her portrayal of the various Blue-bells, of varying ages and with different abilities, Yonge champions the format as an improving, unifying pursuit for girls on the cusp of womanhood who are in need of occupation. Yonge's fictional Blue-bells in many ways reinforce my analysis of the girls' writing culture in her real essay society the Goslings. The Blue-bells believe their mutual society will bring them along in their self-education, and the members of the Gosling Society wrote with the same aspirations. However the crucial addition in Yonge's fiction which is not detectable in the manuscript issues of the *Barnacle* is the 'disturbing element' – the promise of marriage which will ultimately end the girlhood manuscript culture. The novel suggests that girls' writing culture is valued, but it is a stage that is to be left behind

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<sup>555</sup> Yonge, *The Disturbing Element*, p. 240.

<sup>556</sup> Ewing, *Six to Sixteen*, p. 93.

after marriage. This is in keeping with Yonge's conservative views; although Yonge herself remained unmarried she promoted traditional values in her apprentice girl writers.

#### Between writing ambition and feminine duty

Yonge's 'disturbing element' in the midst of her girls' essay society anticipates another theme which can be seen in fictions about girl writers. Girls' writing culture is threatened by its inevitable termination and the eventual duties of conventional feminine womanhood. This theme comes into view most clearly in New Woman narratives. Rachel Blau Du Plessis writes that New Woman narratives 'are lacerated with conflicts between femininity and ambition.'<sup>557</sup> Maria Carla Martino acknowledges the various themes that can be found in New Woman novels about the plight of females. These include:

the inequality of man and wife before the law, the excessive power of fathers over children, the virtual impossibility for a woman to obtain a divorce, the ruin of 'innocent-ignorant' girls brought about by husbands 'with a past,' the excessive demands of enforced maternity, and the plight of single women not equipped to get themselves a living.<sup>558</sup>

Many of these themes can be found in novels concerning the girlhood of women writers. Juxtaposed to the fictions of Ewing and Yonge from the first Golden Age of children's literature which abound with representations of creative and intellectual girls, writing girl characters appear in *fin de siècle* fictions which were not aimed at a youth audience. Yet instead of depicting networks of girls, and the practice of domestic writing such as manuscript magazines or diaries, the defining feature of girl characters in these novels is their attempt to publish and profit from their writing. This representation is at odds with the archival evidence that I have uncovered in previous chapters of this thesis, which

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<sup>557</sup> Rachel Blau Du Plessis, *Writing beyond the Ending, Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 87.

<sup>558</sup> Maria Carla Martino, 'Woman as Writer/ Writer as Woman: George Paston's "A Writer of Books"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32.1 (2004), 221–36 (p. 225).

demonstrates that girls cultivated a writing culture which was maintained within peer collaboration. Although girls like Eglantyne Jebb, the Gosling Society, and the writers of the *Evergreen Chain* imitated periodical publications in manuscript form, they did not envisage actual publication for these writings, even though the best Goslings went on to publish in the *Monthly Packet*.<sup>559</sup>

In this section I will analyse the representational gulf when girls are taken out of the context of domestic magazine production, and situated instead in the context of the changeful and cruel world of late-nineteenth-century publishing. Girls' quest for publication in these novels respond to cultures of writing for girls, and how these authors adapt this topic to specifically address the 'Woman Question' which was gaining traction in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. I will refer to several of these fictional examples, which differ greatly in terms of authorial purpose. This is indicative of wider anxieties about the publishing industry in the late-Victorian era, as well as women's new place in journalism and other previously male-dominated professions.

Penny Boumelha suggests that 'in the fiction of the late nineteenth century, whether avowedly feminist or not, there is a strikingly frequent female figure: the independent heroine as writer, whether novelist, journalist, or amanuensis and researcher for a male writer.'<sup>560</sup> This figure, in her various forms, can be seen in the New Woman fiction of writers such as Grant Allen and Mona Caird. Sally Mitchell has written on the organisation and increasing professionalisation of women journalists in the 1890s.<sup>561</sup> In 1892 the Society for Women Journalists was established, and Arnold Bennett's manual

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<sup>559</sup> Although I acknowledge earlier in the thesis that some girls' diaries were published during the nineteenth century, these were few and did not represent the writing practices of many girls.

<sup>560</sup> Penny Boumelha, 'The Woman of Genius and the Woman of Grub Street: Figures of the Female Writer in British Fin-de-Siècle Fiction', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 40.2 (1997), 164–80.

<sup>561</sup> Sally Mitchell, 'Careers for Girls: Writing Trash,' *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 15.3 (1992), 109–113 (p. 109).

*Journalism for Women* had a significant readership when it was published in 1898.<sup>562</sup> I have detailed elsewhere in this thesis that the final decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a paradigm shift in the industry of publishing, as well as the social customs of women and girls.

In the words of Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, the label ‘New Woman’ ‘signalled new, or newly perceived, forms of femininity which were brought to public attention in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.’<sup>563</sup> The New Woman was a multi-faceted

cultural icon of the *fin de siècle*. In the guise of a bicycling, cigarette-smoking Amazon, she romped through the pages of *Punch* and popular fiction; as a neurasthenic victim of social oppression, she suffered in the pages of New Woman novels such as Sarah Grand’s hugely successful *The Heavenly Twins* and Grant Allen’s notorious *The Woman Who Did*. The New Woman was not one figure, but several.<sup>564</sup>

Richardson and Willis’ analysis demonstrates the complexity of the New Woman figure, especially the often contradictory ways in which she was deployed. Moreover, the New Woman was ‘semi-fictional’ in the words of Sally Ledger; Richardson and Willis identify over a hundred novels written about the figure between 1883 and 1900.<sup>565</sup> Ann Ardis also acknowledges that the Woman Question became a ‘more strictly literary affair following the naming of the New Woman.’<sup>566</sup> Moreover, the New Woman as represented in fiction

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<sup>562</sup> See Margaret Diane Stetz, “Sex, Lies, and Printed Cloth: Bookselling at the Bodley Head in the Eighteen-Nineties,” *Victorian Studies*, 35.1 (1991), 71–86 (p. 73).

<sup>563</sup> Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, eds, *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>564</sup> Richardson and Willis, *The New Woman in Fiction*, p. 13.

<sup>565</sup> Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 3; Richardson and Willis, *The New Woman in Fiction*, p. 1.

<sup>566</sup> Ann Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 12.



often had a connection to writing. Ledger highlights that many New Woman novels ‘are peopled with female writers of feminist fiction: Beth, in Grand’s *The Beth Book*, is a novelist, as is the eponymous heroine of *Ideala* by the same author; Hester Gresham in Mary Cholmondeley’s *Red Pottage* writes fiction.’<sup>567</sup>

I suggest that the fictional representation of women’s writing work needs to be considered in terms of the period of girlhood which some of these characters occupy, and how this relates to the culture of writing in girls’ manuscript cultures. Until now, these texts have not been assessed through the lens of girlhood and girls’ writing cultures. Just as the New Woman was coming into prevalence in fiction, and women were occupying previously male spheres, the figure of the New Girl was also gaining more visibility in literary forms. Moreover, as my previous thesis chapters have uncovered, a creative, intellectual, and semi-autonomous girlhood culture materialised as New Girl and New Woman identities were gaining traction. The unstable boundary between these two categories and life stages complicates my argument, as both figures negotiated their identity textually. Manuscript magazines were commonly used by adult networks too, and there was ‘an infrastructure for women to communicate with one another and exchange ideas’, in the words of Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, in women’s political magazines concerning the New Woman.<sup>568</sup> Yet the differences between girlhood manuscript culture and adult writing for publication in the novels I consider reinforce the distinction I propose between girls’ culture and the New Woman. The novels I assess in this section, *New Grub Street*, *A Struggle for Fame*, *My Brilliant Career* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, can all be meaningfully reassessed in light of the archival evidence that I have uncovered relating to the manuscript writing cultures of late-Victorian girls. Through the lens of my

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<sup>567</sup> Ledger, *The New Woman*, p. 27.

<sup>568</sup> Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, ‘Inventing the New Woman: Print Culture and Identity Politics during the Fin-de-Siècle’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 31.2 (1998), 169–182, (p. 172).

methodological approach I propose that these novels contribute to understandings of girlhood culture, by virtue of their overall distance from the kind of collaborative manuscript culture I have focused on in previous chapters.

Until now, this thesis has focused on the significance of peer collaboration in girls' manuscript writing culture. The following novels demonstrate the reception of girlhood writings which exist outside of peer culture. The girl writers of these novels experience disenfranchisement in a patriarchal publishing industry, as well as gendered prejudice concerning girls' mimetic forms of writing.

#### Crushing writing ambitions in *My Brilliant Career*.

Some of these *fin de siècle* novels depict girls' literary publication as a potential means to escape an undesirable situation, and particularly an undesirable marriage and life as a woman. Girl writers' feelings of anticipation and aspiration which can be seen in the writing culture presented in *Six to Sixteen* and *The Disturbing Element*, take on a pessimistic complexion in these later novels, in which the period of girlhood is no longer celebrated, and the responsibilities of womanhood become a daunting prospect. This is particularly explicit in Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* (1901), which I will discuss in the next section.<sup>569</sup> In this novel the character Sybylla's desire to publish is in conflict with her need to marry and have economic stability through such a union.

In Stella Miles Franklin's (1879–1954) *My Brilliant Career*, Sybylla Melvyn is the eldest daughter of a large family living on a farm in New South Wales, Australia. With inclement weather in the area and a drunken father, the family's poverty increases as Sybylla grows to adolescence. She is an active and boisterous girl, albeit it is often remarked that she is 'ugly.' The novel is written as Sybylla's fictional autobiography. Autobiographical readings of this book can be taken, as the author Miles Franklin was

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<sup>569</sup> Miles Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, intro. by Carmen Callil (London: Virago, 1980).

only 16 years old herself at the time of writing the novel, and she too was raised on a farm. The novel itself was received as fact, not fiction, in the district where Franklin was raised. In Franklin's words, the 'stupid literalness' with which the book was received led her to keep it out of print from 1901 until 1966. Havelock Ellis' 1903 review for the *Weekly Critical Review* described the novel as being 'embittered and egotistical' yet having 'psychological interest' insofar as it represents 'the confessions of a Marie Bashkirtseff of the bush.'<sup>570</sup> Franklin's use of a pseudonym, as well as her removal of the novel from print until well after her death, speaks to broader questions of valuing girls' experiences in literary circles which this chapter addresses.

Jill Roe and Sylvia Martin have provided detailed accounts of Franklin's precocious childhood and later writing career. As a girl Franklin was educated at home with the help of a tutor, Charles Blyth. She later attended a bush school, but left before high school. Martin highlights young Franklin's 'many talents' including horse riding and singing, and Roe notes that Franklin claimed to be able to say nearly every word in the dictionary by the age of two.<sup>571</sup> By age eight Franklin had penned her first literary effort, a verse titled 'Man's a Fool' written in 1887. Franklin's girlhood reading in particular left a significant impression on her. She read many of the daring novels of the day, such as George du Maurier's *Trilby* (1895) and George Moore's *Esther Waters* (1894) and, many years later, according to Roe, she 'recorded that the novels she read between the ages of thirteen and twenty remained her favourites.'<sup>572</sup> Franklin left Australia for the United States in 1906, and through working for the National Women's Trade Union League she

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<sup>570</sup> See Carmen's Callil's introduction to *My Brilliant Career* for this historical and biographical information. Marie Bashkirtseff (1858–1884) was a Ukranian-born French artist and diarist. She kept her diary from the age of 13.

<sup>571</sup> Sylvia Martin, *Passionate Friends: Mary Fullerton, Mabel Singleton, Miles Franklin* (London: Onlywomen Press, 2001), p. 35; Jill Roe, *Her Brilliant Career: the Life of Stella Miles Franklin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 8.

<sup>572</sup> Roe, *Her Brilliant Career*, p. 36.

made connections with other politically active women writes, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Mary Fullerton. Janet Lee, who has published several articles on Franklin's life and works, suggests that 'Franklin's life mirrored that of the independent New Woman who challenged traditional questions of gender and marriage as a single woman living and working in the city.'<sup>573</sup> Her transnational activities offer scope to explore the configurations of girls' culture in its spread through the empire, something which has been meaningfully explored in Moruzi and Smith's edited collection *Colonial Girlhood in Literature, Culture and History, 1840-1950*.<sup>574</sup>

In *My Brilliant Career*, Sybylla is sent away to lessen her mother's burden, and while staying with her grandmother and her unmarried Aunt Helen, Sybylla is re-acquainted with cultural practices that had to be neglected in her poverty: she plays music, delights in 'the beautiful pictures on the walls and a table [...] strewn with papers, magazines, and several very new-looking books', things for which she 'had been starving.'<sup>575</sup> Her female relations offer her guidance on proper feminine conduct, particularly regarding the cultivation of friendship love, as opposed to romantic love. Her Aunt Helen tells her to 'curb and strain your spirit and bring it into subjection' and 'rub off some of your gloomy pessimism and cultivate a little more healthy girlish vanity.'<sup>576</sup> Yet while staying at her grandmother's house she also engages in flirtation with a rich and eligible 25-year-old Bushman, Harold. The satisfaction of her writing practice fluctuates again when she is sent to work in another house, completely void of the culture that she craves. Eventually Sybylla declines a proposal from Harold, and at the close of

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<sup>573</sup> Janet Lee, "'Early Flower' Meets 'Petted Lion': The New Woman and New Man in Miles Franklin's 'Lost' Novel, *The Net of Circumstance*", *Women: A Cultural Review*, 28.3 (2017), 193–216 (p. 198).

<sup>574</sup> Kristine Moruzi and Michelle Smith, eds, *Colonial Girlhood in Literature, Culture and History, 1840-1950* (London: Palgrave, 2014).

<sup>575</sup> Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, p. 43.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48; p. 50.

the novel she is left to continue striving to voice the ‘soul’ of her ‘life’ through her writing.<sup>577</sup>

At the beginning of the novel, while Sybylla is living with her parents and siblings, her desire to write is born. Sybylla views her literary ambitions as her way out of what she perceives to be a directionless existence. Following an argument with her mother, during which Sybylla is accused of being ‘a very useless girl for [her] age’, her ambition is renewed afresh.<sup>578</sup> In the face of adversity, Sybylla’s desire to write becomes crystallised. In this instance, she recounts how after arguing with her mother she

arose from bed next morning with [...] a fixed determination to write a book. Nothing less than a book. [...] the idea of relieving my feelings in writing had taken firm root in my brain. [...] Two years previously I had purloined paper and sneaked out of bed every night at one or two o’clock to write a prodigious novel in point of length and detail, in which a full-fledged hero and heroine performed the duties of a hero and heroine in the orthodox manner. Knowing our circumstances, my grandmother was accustomed, when writing to me, to enclose a stamp to enable me to reply. These I saved, and with them sent my book to the leading Sydney publisher. After waiting many days I received a polite memo to the effect that the story showed great ability, but the writer’s inexperience was too much in evidence for publication. [...] This was a very promising opinion of the work of a child of thirteen, more encouraging than the great writers got at the start of their literary career; but it seemed even to my childish intelligence that the memo was a stereotyped affair [...] After that I wrote a few short stories and essays; but now the spirit moved me to write another book.<sup>579</sup>

Sybylla’s writing ambitions are strong from a young age, but she also experiences antagonism from publishers from this time. Sybylla clearly views her early efforts as somewhat wanting, but she is nonetheless given some encouragement: ‘the story showed

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<sup>577</sup> Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, p. 228.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

great ability.’ Initially her writing amounted to ‘relieving [her] feelings’, yet later on writing is represented as a stressful enterprise, not one for casual enjoyment like in Ewing’s *Six to Sixteen*, where publication is not the girl writers’ goal. Sybylla’s writing practice also receives opposition from her family, and is a cause for medical concern considering her age:

My mother knew not what to make of it. At first she thought I was lazy and bad, and punished me in various ways; but while my book occupied my mind I was not cross, gave her no impudence, and did not flare up. Then she began to fear I must be ill, and took me to a doctor, who said I was much too precocious for my years, and would be better when the weather got warmer.<sup>580</sup>

The opinion of the doctor and Sybylla’s mother reflects the concerns for the health of girls at the end of the nineteenth century. The word ‘precocity’ was highly loaded in the nineteenth century in relation to girls. Sally Shuttleworth has drawn attention to link between girls and precocity coded as sexuality, which was manifested in Victorian medical literature and practice.<sup>581</sup> As Roisín Laing suggests, ‘the adult is [...] of determining significance in [...] literary studies of childhood precocity.’<sup>582</sup> Yet as girlhood became more explicitly discussed by the later nineteenth century as a unique life stage which required unique treatment, girls were given more autonomy, and advice books increasingly detailed the health benefits of both outdoor pursuits and proper reading.<sup>583</sup> Sybylla’s girlhood writing is at odds with the proper conduct that her family envision for her, particularly in this rural context.

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<sup>580</sup> Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, p. 40.

<sup>581</sup> Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child*.

<sup>582</sup> Roisín Laing, ‘Candid Lying and Precocious Storytelling in Victorian Literature and Psychology’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 21.4 (2016), 500–13 (p. 502).

<sup>583</sup> See the introduction of this thesis for contextualisation of girlhood at the *fin de siècle*. See particularly Hilary Marland’s *Health and Girlhood*.

Through the process of writing Sybylla reflects on her position in life, and she does not come to positive conclusions. Ultimately, Sybylla's discontent arises from her aspirations. She sees herself as differing from other girls in her desire for more in life: 'What was the hot wild spirit which surged within me? Ah, that I might weep! [...] Why was I not like other girls? [...] Why were not a new dress, everyday work, and an occasional picnic sufficient to fill my mind?'<sup>584</sup> The simple pleasures she perceives other girls to partake in hold no interest for her. The further Sybylla moves physically from books, music and a space where she can write, the more her mental state deteriorates. Simultaneously, as she ages, her situation worsens. Her feelings of injustice amount to despair:

This was life – my life – my career, my brilliant career! I was fifteen- fifteen! A few fleeting hours and I would be as old as those around me. I looked at them as they stood there, weary, and turning down the other side of the hill of life. When young, no doubt they had hoped for; and dreamed of, better things - had even known them.<sup>585</sup>

Sybylla is trapped, as her girlhood is not the creative period she wishes it to be, and she anticipates that her prospects will only worsen. Sybylla's urgency for her desired life as a writer to begin reflects that of Glenarva Westley in *A Struggle for Fame*, which I will discuss in full shortly. But unlike Glenarva, who attempts to push herself into the urban publishing world of literary London, Sybylla's interactions with fiction are confined to her rural existence. But both girls experience loneliness in their pursuit of writing and publication, which is antithetical to the supportive peer culture of girls' manuscript magazines.

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<sup>584</sup> Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, p. 28.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

As *My Brilliant Career* focuses so much on the struggle involved in pursuing a writing career, it speaks more about the nature of women's life and work than it does the cultures and practices of youth. It reflects the feminism of Franklin herself, who struggled initially to publish *My Brilliant Career* in her homeland before *Blackwood's* in Edinburgh accepted it for publication. As such, although the focus of the novel is ostensibly on writing for publication, Sybylla's *bildungsroman*, and Franklin's autobiographical inflections, mean that this novel can be read as a fictional autobiography. Indeed there are occasional instances of self-reflection in Sybylla's narrative which highlight its cultivated nature. Early on in *My Brilliant Career*, when Sybylla describes her family life, she interrupts herself and writes 'N.B. – This is dull and egotistical. Better skip it. That's my advice. – S. P. M.'<sup>586</sup> *My Brilliant Career* critiques the self-consciousness of creative adolescent girls. This critical self-editing gestures not only to her writing but to Sybylla's lack of identity and belonging more generally: 'Why was I ugly and nasty and miserable and useless – without a place in the world?'<sup>587</sup> Such introspective criticism can be seen in *Six to Sixteen*, which is also presented as a fictional autobiography.

Through her socialist feminist perspective, Miles Franklin utilises the figure of the aspirational *fin de siècle* writing girl to explore gender and class inequality in an Australian literary scene which was misogynistic.<sup>588</sup> In her introduction to the novel, Carmen Callil describes the 'openly chauvinistic' male writers of the Australian weekly magazine *The Bulletin* during the 1890s.<sup>589</sup> Franklin's novel, then, represents the aspirational nature of girls' manuscript writing practice. But in Sybylla's isolation as a writer, and her fight against adhering to a conventional life of marriage, the novel extends

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<sup>586</sup> Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, p. 33.

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>588</sup> There is an exploration of Franklin's life and politics in Devaleena Das and Sanjukta Dasgupta, eds, *Claiming Space for Australian Women's Writing* (London: Palgrave, 2017).

<sup>589</sup> Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, p. 2.



the representation of girls' culture to form a feminist critique of late-Victorian gender inequality, particularly with regards to crossing between class contexts.

### Transitioning from girlhood writing in *A Writer of Books*

Although *My Brilliant Career* looks exclusively at the anxieties of writers in their girlhood, *A Writer of Books* (1899) dramatises the real transition from girl writer to woman writer who must make compromises for her art.<sup>590</sup> *A Writer of Books* by George Paston (pseudonym of Emily Morse Symonds) is a New Woman novel and *künstlerroman* which depicts the plight of a woman writer in a loveless marriage. One *Academy* reviewer described Paston's feminist novels as such: 'If as novels they have faults, they are the best "woman rights" pamphlets ever written.'<sup>591</sup> Yet before the marriage plot, the novel depicts a creative girlhood culture for the protagonist, Cosima Chudleigh. Cosima's narrative renders the transition between this culture and the pursuit of publication in young womanhood. As a girl Cosima:

possessed a vivid, and at present almost an uncontrollable, power of imagination [...] Thanks to her early adoption of a literary career, she has served more than a seven years' apprenticeship to her profession, though, unlike most young writers, she had made no attempt as yet to force the fruits of that apprenticeship down the throat of an unwilling world. She had written stories innumerable, essays, sketches, verses, dialogues, in imitation of her literary idols, but these early efforts being labours of love, she had never had occasion to consider what the public taste demanded, or what would find most favour in the editorial sight. Her methods, as may be imagined, were still chiefly imitative, though here and there were symptoms of their crystallisation into a personal style.<sup>592</sup>

Cosima's 'apprenticeship' which constituted 'imitation of her literary idols', is central to girls' manuscript culture, as has been demonstrated in the case study chapters of this

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<sup>590</sup> George Paston, *A Writer of Books*, intro. by Margaret D. Stetz (Chicago: Academy, 1999).

<sup>591</sup> 'Some Younger Reputations – "George Paston"', *Academy* 55 (1898), 520.

<sup>592</sup> Paston, *A Writer of Books*, p. 31.

thesis. Cosima's adolescent writing practice anticipated later publication as a distant possibility, but at the time of writing she 'made no attempts to force the fruit of that apprenticeship.' Although only a minor portion of the narrative describes this part of Cosima's life, it is set up as a formative aspect of her life as an aspiring young woman writer in London. Cosima's girlhood writing culture is rich in imagination, and also varied in its forms, as this quotation depicts:

Of course she kept a literary journal, which she filled with word-sketches, both portraits and landscapes, summaries of books, suggestions for plots, bon-mots, epigrams, and scraps of character analysis, the raw material of the masterpiece which, she had already decided, would make her famous in the future.<sup>593</sup>

Like the Jebb archive which I discussed in an earlier chapter, Cosima's 'literary journal' depicts the various ways in which writing girls accessed their writing culture. The specificity of this culture to Cosima's gender is emphasised in her in contradistinction to her childhood friend (and later husband), Tom. Although they play together, Tom does not possess the creative faculties of Cosima: 'he was absolutely incapable of inventing games or making up stories to amuse himself.'<sup>594</sup> Instead, Cosima dominated their childhood creative culture:

Their games were dramas [...] which were freely adapted from the stories and legends that had made the strongest impression on Cosima's imagination. The heroes of Greece and the Old Testament, the *dramatis personae* of Shakespeare and Scott, were all pressed into service, and sometimes encounters one another in the same piece with eccentric results.<sup>595</sup>

This creative culture that was solely generated by Cosima as a girl was based on an extensive knowledge of literature and a desire to appropriate this culture. Archival

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<sup>593</sup> Paston, *A Writer of Books*, p. 6.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

evidence provided in my case studies chapters supports that this was a common feature of girls' creative writing.

#### Girls in a patriarchal publishing industry

The prevalent themes in *A Writer of Books* lead us into the final consideration of this chapter: the presence of girl writers in a patriarchal publishing industry. Cosima learns a writing 'apprenticeship' under the supervision of her literary-minded but distant father. This girlhood 'apprenticeship' which Cosima considers her foundation in novel-writing, lasts for seven years. Cosima writes from the age of fifteen, and at twenty two moves to London following the death of her father in order to pursue a literary career. On her first day in the city she deposits her manuscript novel with the illustrious publisher 'Shortmans' (an allusion to the publisher Longman's).

As in another New Woman novel, Ella Hepworth Dixon's *Story of a Modern Woman* (1895), the lone father figure dies before his daughter's writing career can truly begin. In *New Grub Street*, *A Struggle for Fame*, *A Writer of Books* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, which I will discuss shortly, a problematic father-daughter relationship is integral to the young writer's debut. The girls in each of these examples are evidently reliant on their father's assistance in their education, but these fathers to varying degrees stifle their daughters in their writing aspirations. Furthermore, girl writers are depicted in these novels as amanuenses to male writers, or as limited by their gender as to what they write.

This analysis will begin with *A Struggle for Fame* (1883).<sup>596</sup> Although she has been largely forgotten, the writer of *A Struggle for Fame*, Charlotte Riddell, was a highly successful writer during the Victorian period. She published over fifty novels during a career which spanned half a century.<sup>597</sup> Like Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*, Riddell's

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<sup>596</sup> Charlotte Riddell, *A Struggle for Fame*, intro. by Emma Dale (Dublin: Tramp Press, 2014).

<sup>597</sup> S. M. Ellis, *Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others* (Constable: London, 1934).

novel *A Struggle for Fame* is partially autobiographical. In her youth Riddell travelled from County Antrim to London following the death of her father. In London she struggled to publish her fiction, and experienced a loss of social standing on her transition to the capital. All of these experiences are to some degree manifested in *A Struggle for Fame*. In the novel Glenarva Westley, a girl ‘turned sixteen’ sails from Ireland to London with her widowed father in 1854.<sup>598</sup> On her arrival Glen approaches publishers with her novel manuscript, and although she is frequently rejected and warned of the coldness of the publishing world, she perseveres. Her struggles do not end at her first success; Glen becomes embroiled in the male publishing landscape where she is poorly remunerated, receives scathing reviews, and must publish under pseudonyms. Never satisfied even when her novels gain some commercial traction, Glen associates her two successes in ‘fame’ with heartbreak – the first instance with the death of her father, and the second instance, later, the death of her husband. In this sense success in the literary world is tainted for this protagonist, as it involves straying from the domestic domain. This highlights the pessimism and conservatism of the author.

In *A Struggle for Fame* the machinations of writing and publishing are made explicit. Glen undergoes sustained disappointment through her pursuit of literary fame in an industry that is cruel to all, and particularly prejudiced against girl writers. Her age, gender and provenance intersect to make Glen an outsider to the publishers and writers on the scene. The one woman writer on the publisher Vasset’s books, Lady Hilda Hicks, is especially critical of the Irish girl’s attempts. She dismisses Glen on grounds of class, but according to the publishers, Hilda and Glen are two sides of the same spectrum – Glen has as much to learn and Hilda has to unlearn. Another aspiring Irish writer, Bernard Kelly, sees Glen as ‘raw, gauche, practically utterly ignorant of the manners and habits

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<sup>598</sup> Riddell, *A Struggle for Fame*, p. 94.

of good society.<sup>599</sup> Although her father supports her writing ambitions, every other character Glen encounters is dubious as to the merit of her attempts. The very condition of her early struggle – her gender, which engenders scepticism and dismissal amongst literary men, is also the reason for her tenacity. Piecemeal successes spur her on, and her writing never ceases, only alters according to her own inner changes: ‘she betook herself to a different sort of writing – bolder, more ambitious, and indeed, considering her youth and inexperience, extraordinary.’<sup>600</sup> Her drive and talent belies her age, yet in spite of this she is still excluded from the publishing world.

Coming from the wild and beautiful landscape of Ireland to the sordid world of literary London, initially Glen longs to return to that simpler time and place, which not only represents a geographical location but a life stage, too. Her ‘last memory of Ballyshane was that she could not see the stumpy church tower, or the grand headlands [...] or the ducks in the stream, by reason of a mist of tears that blurred every familiar object.’<sup>601</sup> Although childhood maintains for Glen an inherent association to an innocent and longed-for past, girlhood, divergently, can occupy a precarious place in the male-dominated world of the city publishing house. On her first meeting with a publisher Mr Vasset, her physical innocence renders her completely unpublishable to him:

She was a child – bah! The notion of that young thing writing! It was too absurd. But the glint of the golden hair, the soft curves of the girlish face, the half-eager, half-bashful glance she cast appealingly at him, the shy gesture with which, taking the roll of paper out of her father’s hands, she rose and placed it in his own, the scarcely audible ‘I only brought the first two chapters,’ reminded him of a past long gone, brought for a moment far-away springs and summers out of their

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<sup>599</sup> Riddell, *A Struggle for Fame*, p. 358.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. Irish national identity and gender are clearly mapped onto each other in this novel. For a discussion of this significant field of study, see D. A. J. MacPherson, *Women and the Irish Nation: Gender, Culture and Irish Identity, 1890–1914* (London: Palgrave, 2012).

distant graves, and filled his office with the perfume of the hawthorn of May, and the odour of June roses, dead years and years before.<sup>602</sup>

To Mr Vasset, Glen represents a Romantic child, a paragon of ideal innocence. Yet her outward appearance jars with her internal drive. The publisher who glances over her manuscript advises that she will have to hone her skills for some years before she attempts to publish. Glen reacts adversely to this advice, stating ‘I *must* go on writing! [...] *Till* I succeed or fail.’<sup>603</sup> Unperturbed by Vasset’s refusal, Glen sets to work practicing her writing. This meeting marks the beginning of a transition in Glen, in her outward presentation and actions: ‘Miss Glen, of her own accord, began to turn up her back hair, and “take kindly to her book.”’<sup>604</sup> This implies that she begins to style herself in a more ‘mature’ fashion, and reads material which is deemed to be improving. Members of her new neighbourhood notice that she is ‘losing her colour a bit’, at the same time they realise that she is 16 years old, and she is right to ‘take[n] up with her book.’<sup>605</sup> The products of Glen’s self-induced apprenticeship as a writer are indivisible from the changes of adolescence. Her aspiration to literary greatness is a rite of passage, but these changes indicate one thing to those around Glen. Even in Ireland, ‘every woman in Ballyshane had [...] arrived at the conclusion that the only thing for Miss Glen to do was to get married.’<sup>606</sup>

Although the novel is set in the 1850s, making Glen’s objective for success in a patriarchal industry perhaps even more unlikely than it would be at the *fin de siècle*, Riddell’s narrative resolution is symptomatic of the shifting landscape of both publishing and gender during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Linda Peterson suggests

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<sup>602</sup> Riddell, *A Struggle for Fame*, p. 47.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

that ‘Riddell establishes a contrast between an amateur “then” and a professional “now”’, but highlights that aspiring women writers of the 1850s did have some guides with which to begin their careers.<sup>607</sup> But Peterson has a suggestion as to why the mid-century setting is significant:

Riddell sets *A Struggle* in the mid-1850s not only because it coincides with her own entry into the profession of letters but, more important, because 1855 recalls the most famous authorial life and death in nineteenth-century women’s life writing and the most influential account of women’s authorship in the Victorian period: Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857). In *A Struggle for Fame* Riddell invokes – indeed, reproduces and interrogates – this seminal narrative as it influenced a generation of mid-century women writers, popularized a “parallel currents” model of authorship, and then came into conflict with the professional realities of the later nineteenth-century literary field.<sup>608</sup>

These dual currents are never resolved in the novel; indeed Peterson highlights the ways in which the text ‘reinscribes myths of women’s authorship [...] myths of genius and vocation, of domesticity and duty, of solitude, of loneliness, and tragedy.’<sup>609</sup> By the end of the novel Glen is living peacefully in the country as she always desired, far away from the chaos of the London offices. A widow, she rejects another proposal of marriage from her childhood friend, choosing instead to live alone, writing a serial story for a magazine. The serial is successful, and she is satisfied to not be confronted with scathing reviews as she would be in London. This newly established mode of writing, i.e. the popular serial form, and living alone by independent means – make an ambiguous conclusion to Glen’s ‘Struggle for Fame.’ Her fate as a woman writer is akin to the rallying dissatisfaction

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<sup>607</sup> Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 153.

<sup>608</sup> Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, p. 151.

<sup>609</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

inherent in writers of New Woman fiction.<sup>610</sup> She achieves the career she aspired to in her girlhood, yet she must ostracise herself from the Grub Street and eschew socially normative living in exchange for this career.

The tone of the end of the novel is mournful, and hints at the impossibility of writing success alongside contentedness. When her husband dies, the narrator expresses ‘Once again Fame had crossed the threshold hand-in-hand with death!’<sup>611</sup> Contemporary critics highlighted the pessimism of *A Struggle for Fame*. One review in the *Athenaeum* claimed that ‘Mrs Riddell’s way of breaking her bad news is most depressing’ and declared that ‘The lady’s story is not cheerful; but if it serves to deter persons of no aptitude from writing novels it will have done good.’<sup>612</sup> The reviewer suggested the apparent lack of ‘aptitude’ was the cause of struggle in Glen’s narrative, rather than the patriarchal and unequal context in which the novel was set. This response evidences Riddell’s necessity to harness this semi-autobiographical depiction of the girl writer to draw attention to the social and creative injustices that girls have long faced. Peterson suggests that the denouement is ‘embarrassing’ to a modern reader, in its equation of Glen’s success with the death of her loved ones. Similarly Silvana Colella notes that ‘the novel seems impatient when it comes to reassure readers that female authorship need not clash with domestic duties: Riddell shows little interest in exploring the happy convergence of the two or, alternatively, their disharmonic divergence.’<sup>613</sup> To both critics, Riddell’s ending indicates that the woman writer’s ‘parallel currents’ of being both professional woman and domestic figure are problematic to resolve. This jars with the

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<sup>610</sup> Sarah Grand coined the phrase ‘New Woman’ in 1894, 11 years after *A Struggle for Fame* was published, yet I believe that the use of the phrase in this context is appropriate, since the novel anticipates many of the concerns of the New Woman.

<sup>611</sup> Riddell, *A Struggle for Fame*, p. 402.

<sup>612</sup> Review of *A Struggle for Fame*, *Athenaeum* 18 Aug, (1883), 201–02.

<sup>613</sup> Silvana Colella, *Charlotte Riddell's City Novels and Victorian Business: Narrating Capitalism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 239.



representations of writing culture leading up to the moment of marriage in a girl's life, as seen in Ewing and Yonge.

'It seems to be written by some girl in her teens': the injustices of publishing and appropriative writing in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*

Thomas Hardy's dissident and rebellious female characters were some of the most controversial in late-Victorian literature. Hardy believed in the abolition of marriage, and promoted the sexual desires of women. Although Hardy himself distinguished between his personal views and those expressed in his fiction, novels such as *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) were met with moral uproar in reviews. Rosemarie Morgan suggests that in his novels, Hardy had a 'complete commitment' to depicting 'active, assertive, self-determined women of the kind satirised in the pages of *Punch*.'<sup>614</sup> While various critics such as Morgan have highlighted Hardy's commitment to strong women characters, I focus on his representation of girls' aspirations. It is this view of girls' publishing aspirations as transgressive behaviour which links the novels *My Brilliant Career* and *A Struggle for Fame* to Hardy's novel.

One of his earliest novels *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) concerns the eponymous Elfride Swancourt, a young woman in her twenties who is 'no further on in social consciousness than an urban young lady of fifteen.'<sup>615</sup> When a promising young architect Stephen Smith comes from London to assess work to be done at the rectory where Elfride lives with her father, he begins to court her. Although Mr Swancourt initially approves of Stephen as a suitor, he soon discovers that he is of low birth, and dismisses the idea that he could marry his daughter. Stephen takes an opportunity to go to India and make his name and fortune as an architect, but not before he proposes to Elfride and they elope for

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<sup>614</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. X.

<sup>615</sup> Thomas Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 1.

a night to London, only to return unwed. Elfride, to whom ‘anything anywhere was a mine of interest,’ publishes a romance novel under a pseudonym, and she meets the stern reviewer of her book, Henry Knight, when he comes to stay with the Swancourt family.<sup>616</sup> She is intrigued with Mr Knight after he beats her at several games of chess. They start their courtship, but when Elfride eventually admits her previous experience with Stephen, Knight cannot forgive it. The narrative then moves away from Elfride and on to Knight and Stephen, who meet, discuss their respective love for Elfride, and journey back to Endelstow only to find that she married a local Lord and died during childbirth.

In typical Hardy style this novel is a pessimistic one. Although a sub-plot of the novel, Elfride’s publication of her novel and its reception contributes to the overall marriage plot. Elfride’s published novel receives negative reviews from Knight, in *The Present*, a social and literary review. Elfride greatly admires this publication, even though her father is not a subscriber as he is ‘so conservative.’<sup>617</sup> Henry admits that he only deigned to review it on account of ‘Its badness. It seems to be written by some girl in her teens.’<sup>618</sup> Knight’s review reads that her

chapters are simply devoted to impossible tournaments, towers, and escapades, which read like flat copies of like scenes in the stories of Mr G. P. R. James, and the most unreal portions of *Ivanhoe*. The bait is so palpably artificial that the most credulous gudgeon turns away.<sup>619</sup>

Elfride is encouraged to think of this as complimentary by her mother-in-law: ‘Now, my dear, I don’t see overmuch to complain of in that. It proves that you were clever enough to make him think of Sir Walter Scott, which is a great deal.’<sup>620</sup> Once again in discussion

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<sup>616</sup> Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, p. 229.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>620</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

of nineteenth-century girls' writing Walter Scott's novels become a yardstick against which to measure literary attainment (or lack of it).<sup>621</sup> As girls read Scott widely throughout the nineteenth century, the assertion that their own writing could be inspired by his historical romances is reasoned, although in this instance is used reductively.

The kind of girl-specific appropriative culture which has been explored in my case study chapters is unrecognisable in this novel. Whereas appropriative writing in manuscripts allowed girls to engage with and subvert literary culture, and reinforce peer connections, in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* Elfride's sole imitation of Scott engenders exclusion and critique from older figures. Thus any exposure to an audience that is not explicitly part of the peer culture ensures that the girl writer is judged by impossible standards. Knight flattens other aspects of Elfride's individuality. When Elfride asks him how old he thinks she is, he responds 'How old? Why, seventeen, I should say. All girls are seventeen.'<sup>622</sup> Knight's generalisation implies that all girls are entirely alike, yet his judgements close off the possibility of rebuttal since the author cannot deny her youth or her gender. Elfride launches into the world of publishing without much thought for having to defend her creation as a consequence – something that she would not have to do to such an extent if her writing was contained within a peer manuscript culture.

But Elfride writes for a public audience without recognising it as such. She admits to Stephen that she writes her father's sermons for him, saying: 'I write papa's sermons for him very often, and he preaches them better than he does his own; and then afterwards he talks to people and to me about what he said in his sermon to-day, and forgets that I wrote it for him. Isn't it absurd? [...] You take the text. You think, why is it? What is it? And so on.'<sup>623</sup> Elfride underestimates her own writing capacity; rather it is seen as

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<sup>621</sup> I discuss this in my chapter on the manuscript writings of the sisters Eglantyne and Em Jebb.

<sup>622</sup> Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, p. 140.

<sup>623</sup> Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, pp. 19–20.

mimetic, and indeed her own input is lost when her father speaks. Her father comments ‘the little rascal has the very trick of the trade.’<sup>624</sup> It is perceived that Elfride does not have originality of her own but models her output on what she has already read – whether it be moral stories from the bible, or the historical romance fiction of Walter Scott.

Indeed mimetic writing is even advised by her mother-in-law Mrs Swancourt, who has connections to the publishing world. Again, this differs significantly to the appropriation seen in girls’ peer cultures. Mrs Swancourt advises Elfride ‘You should write a novel. The regular resource of people who don’t go enough into the world to live a novel is to write one.’<sup>625</sup> When Elfride tells her that she already has, and it is a ‘romance of the Early Ages’, Mrs Swancourt replies ‘Knowing nothing of the present age, which everybody knows about, for safety you chose an age known neither to you nor other people. That’s it, eh? No, no; I don’t mean it dear.’<sup>626</sup> Although certain types of literary imitation are encouraged for girl writers if they are perceived to be profitable, this imitation is perceived to be a low art form. Knight, on the subject of Elfride writing another novel, has equally disparaging advice: ‘I think you will. But I advise you to confine yourself to domestic scenes.’<sup>627</sup> Due to Elfride’s limited knowledge, Knight advises her to stick to what he imagines she knows – domestic life. The older critics in the novel prevent her from acknowledging ownership of her writing and creativity.

Not only does Knight critique Elfride’s novel in his magazine *The Present*, but he also stigmatises her conduct in his personal writings. The criticism of Elfride’s girlhood nature perhaps reaches its zenith when, with Knight’s permission, she reads his thinly-veiled observations about her in his notebook:

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<sup>624</sup> Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, p. 20.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Aug 7. Girl gets into her teens, and her self-consciousness is born. After a certain interval passed in infantine helplessness, it begins to act. Simple, young, and inexperienced at first. Persons of observation can tell to a nicety how old this consciousness is by the skill it has acquired in the art necessary to its success - the art of hiding itself. Generally begins career by actions which are popularly termed showing-off. Method adopted depends in each case upon the disposition, rank, residence, of the young lady attempting it. Town bred girl will utter some moral paradox on fast men, or love. Country miss adopts the more material media of taking a ghastly fence, whistling, or making your blood run cold by appearing to risk her neck. (*Mem. On Endelstow Tower.*)

An innocent vanity is of course the origin of these displays. 'Look at me,' say these youthful beginners in womanly artifice, without reflecting whether or not it be to their advantage to show so very much of themselves. (Amplify and correct for paper on Artless Arts.)<sup>628</sup>

In this example the figure of the diary as an introspective aid in girlhood, as it functions in *Six to Sixteen*, is subverted. Girls' diaries were used as a way of looking back on and making sense of their own earlier behaviour and therefore being able to gauge 'improvement' or maturity. Knight describes his own assessment of Elfride's adolescent nature, her 'self-consciousness' and 'showing off', in a disparaging way. This passage is particularly damning of the ways in which girls might be seen to make 'a spectacle' of themselves, and suggests that older figures see through these attempts. Furthermore, these notes are intended for the basis of a paper on 'Artless Arts.' The word 'artless' suggests an innocence, but also a naiveté. It is a word that can be held up by male critics as praise or condemnation.

The idea of 'artless arts' suggests the art of appearing artless, which Elfride can cultivate, and which Knight would approve of. Knight's gesture of writing on behalf of the girl writer, and particularly his use of the word 'artless' is reminiscent of the method

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<sup>628</sup> Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, p. 139.

in which male editors framed girl writers' lives in nineteenth-century published diaries. In Clifford Smyth's introduction to Marjory Fleming's published diaries he describes her several times as 'artless.' Marjory was a much younger girl when she wrote, rather on the brink of girlhood than emerging out of it like Elfride, yet Elfride is still perceived as lacking both awareness and skill. Moreover, Knight's comments on 'these youthful beginners' and his remark that 'all girls are seventeen' seem to refer to all girls. This flattening of Victorian girl writers to a homogenous group ignores the diversity of girlhood experiences, and misses the true goals of peer collaboration and self-improvement which real Victorian girls' writing sought to achieve. The phrase 'all girls are seventeen' epitomises the dismissive prejudice that literary men like Knight held about girl writers. This outsider's assessment of girlhood culture is at odds with the self-actualisation that girl characters realise in *Six to Sixteen* and *The Disturbing Element*. These latter two novels, as well as the case study chapters of this thesis, evidence that girlhood is a time when creative and intellectual fulfillment can be achieved.

Knight comes to represent the male-dominated publishing industry at the end of the nineteenth century, which both mocks girlhood writings but cannot help but engage with them.<sup>629</sup> Clearly for writers like Hardy, who circulated their polemical views on society through their work, the girl writer becomes another fictional illustration of gender inequality at the turn of the twentieth century. Hardy encourages his reader to sympathise with Elfride's plight, but the true extent of her struggle is only realised when contextualised in a broader consideration of girls' writing cultures.

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<sup>629</sup> I am thinking here of the publication of Marjory Fleming's diaries during the late-Victorian period, and Cecily's comment in Act II, Scene I of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: 'You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication.' *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays* (London: Penguin, 2000).

### Girlhood on New Grub Street

George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891) provides prime examples of the representation of writerly girls on the brink of womanhood, and their position amongst literary men.<sup>630</sup> Gissing's novel depicts the late-Victorian literary markets, girl characters' occupation of the male-dominated professional writing space, and the credit (or lack thereof) that these girl writers receive for their literary endeavours. These elements can variously be seen in *A Struggle for Fame* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* as I have previously discussed. *New Grub Street* presents two sisters, Maud, age 22, and Dora, age 20, who are convinced by their brother Jasper into writing for a living. Jasper Milvain has used up his mother's funds through pursuing his own writing career in London. The girls, who still live at home, do ad hoc teaching work which does not satisfy them. Maud works as a music tutor and Dora as a visiting governess, but the death of their mother impels them to take up writing as their brother suggests.

The environment of literary production in London had changed by the 1890s; it was the 'new' equivalent of Samuel Johnson's 1755 dictionary definition of Grub Street, which became a pejorative term carrying connotations of impoverished writers and low-quality publishers.<sup>631</sup> The fast-paced nature of this industry, and the proliferation of printed material which was often of poor intellectual quality, are causes of anxiety and uncertainty for the various writers depicted in the novel. Writing is bound to pecuniary responsibilities, and the base need to survive affects the characters who live in genteel poverty. Jasper Milvain, however, is unfazed by this situation which seems to be a crisis to others. He informs his sisters that 'Literature nowadays is a trade [...] your successful man of letters is your skilful tradesman. He thinks first and foremost of the markets; when

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<sup>630</sup> George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (London: Penguin, 1968).

<sup>631</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language: An Anthology*, ed. by David Crystal (London: Penguin, 2005).

one kind of goods begins to go off slackly, he is ready with something new and appetising.<sup>632</sup> This applies to Maud and Dora too; Jasper encourages a pragmatic and perhaps cold view of writing to make money. When he suggests that Maud and Dora write a children's history, Maud protests:

‘And please, why am I to take up an inferior kind of work?’

‘Inferior? Oh, if you can be a George Eliot, begin at the earliest opportunity. I merely suggested what seemed practicable. But I don't think you have genius, Maud. People have got that ancient prejudice so firmly rooted in their heads—that one mustn't write save at the dictation of the Holy Spirit. I tell you, writing is a business.’<sup>633</sup>

Subject matter for women writers, and journalists specifically, was limited by a gendered view. By the close of the nineteenth century, women were increasingly drawn to journalistic work. Beth Rodgers suggests that ‘the career of journalism in particular plays a key role in debates about what it means to be a modern girl’, but as well as having ‘the ideals and aspirations associated with the modern girl’ the career also carried ‘negative connotations.’<sup>634</sup> Although women had worked as writers throughout the nineteenth century, the social and technological developments of the late-Victorian era brought an altogether new facet to their profession. Rodgers argues that journalism was

represented as defiantly modern and new on the one hand, and also as a continuation of an older tradition of women's literary work on the other hand [...] it also involved a much greater engagement with the public world and modern technology than earlier literary pursuits may have done.<sup>635</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, p. 38.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>634</sup> Rodgers, *Adolescent Girlhood*, p. 181.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189. See also Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005).



As F. Elizabeth Gray has highlighted, this ‘swelling feminine cohort gave rise to considerable anxiety in Victorian men, on the part both of men who perceived their position and privilege in established professions under threat, and also a number of women.’<sup>636</sup>

In *New Grub Street*, the two Milvain sisters have success with their writing over time. Beyond the children’s book that Jasper suggests they write, they are also involved in the periodical press: ‘the two girls made good progress with the book they were manufacturing for Messrs Jolly and Monk, and early in October it was finished. Dora was now writing little things for *The English Girl*, and Maud had begun to review an occasional novel for an illustrated paper.’<sup>637</sup> Yet Jasper maintains his derision towards the publications which his sisters can write for. After reading one of Maud’s papers that she was to send to ‘a ladies’ illustrated weekly’, Jasper advises his sister that there is ‘rather too much thought in it, perhaps’ and that she ‘must remember that the people who read women’s papers are irritated, simply irritated, by anything that isn’t glaringly obvious.’<sup>638</sup> Jasper reserves his most cynical and pompous views about the publishing world for those publications aimed at girls and women. His views come into sharp distinction when his friend and fellow writer Whelpdale compliments one of Dora’s articles in *The English Girl*. Whelpdale argues:

How can it be called a humble line of work to provide reading, which is at once intellectual and moving and exquisitely pure, for the most important part of the population – the educated and refined young people who are just passing from girlhood to womanhood?<sup>639</sup>

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<sup>636</sup> F. Elizabeth Gray, ed., *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle: Making a Name for Herself* (London: Palgrave, 2012), p. 5.

<sup>637</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, p. 302.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 495.

Jasper replies ‘the most important fiddlestick!’ to this, dismissing Whelpdale’s appreciation for Dora’s literary labours. Similar to Knight, Jasper represents the male writer who has complete disregard for the growing literary culture of young people, and particularly periodicals aimed at women and girls, which in his opinion are read by ‘vulgar thinkers and feelers.’<sup>640</sup> Yet Maud and Dora Milvain possess some agency to publish what they desire, which is not the fate of the other girl writer in the novel, Marian.

The girl ‘from the valley of the shadow of books’

In the novel Marian Yule is the daughter of John Yule, an ageing and formerly eminent writer of periodicals. Jasper describes Marian as ‘a good example of the modern literary girl’ by which he means she has ‘a very delicate, pure complexion, though morbid.’<sup>641</sup> Jasper recognises her from ‘the valley of the shadow of books’ meaning the British Museum Reading Room, where she spends long days conducting research for her father’s literary projects. Marian is presented as a meek and lonely figure, but with great intellectual potential. She does not interact with other girls of her age, but ‘From the nursery her talk was of books, and at the age of twelve she was already able to give her father some assistance as an amanuensis.’<sup>642</sup> Although Marian toils in the British Museum Reading Room, and assists her father with writing, she never hopes to see her name in print. Instead, she feels herself ‘a mere machine for reading and writing.’<sup>643</sup>

Like Elfride Swancourt in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Marian has potential talent but this is stifled by older male figures, and her contribution is erased. As Elfride is an amanuensis for her father when she writes his sermons and receives no credit for her labour, Marian does the same for her father. Marian’s role in the text draws attention to the broader

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<sup>640</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, p. 424.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

concerns of women's invisible contributions, particularly in anonymised periodical pieces. Marian's visibility only becomes possible when the patriarchal Alfred Yule authorises it. Marian is promised to receive £5000 inheritance when her uncle dies, and her father attempts to take advantage of her improved situation. He desires her to place her inheritance into starting up a new review paper that he will edit. As a concession for his selfish scheme, he begins to praise Marian's work and suggest that she can start to publish under her own name. With regards to one of her draft review essays, Alfred says: 'I think it is altogether too good to appear anonymously. You must sign it, Marian, and have the credit that is due to you.'<sup>644</sup> She doubts the value of her work, and 'is far from easy under his praise', but Alfred insists 'I'll undertake there's no other girl of your age who could turn out such a piece of work. I think we may say that your apprenticeship is at an end.'<sup>645</sup> Marian has been described as a 'tragic', 'morbid' and 'unhappy' character of Gissing's novel.<sup>646</sup> Her occupation of masculine writing spaces such as the British Museum Reading Room impresses her alienation from an institution that 'threaten[ed] to crush women with the weight of its male-oriented knowledge.'<sup>647</sup> Although Marian is not crushed by her experience with a patriarchal industry, the novel offers an ambivalent outcome for her. Although she transforms into a writer in her own right, she depends on male licence and is uncomfortable with her independence. This ambivalence is representative of the tensions that emerging girl writers had to negotiate.

Although girl writers are ostracised by male writers of New Grub Street, to some extent the need to produce literary material for quick monetary gain narrows a gendered

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<sup>644</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, p. 433.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>646</sup> Marisa Palacios Knox, 'The Valley of the Shadow of Books' George Gissing, *New Women and Morbid Literary Detachment*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 69.1 (2014), 92–122 (pp. 95–96).

<sup>647</sup> Ruth Hoberman, 'Women in the British Museum Reading Room during the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries: From Quasi- to Counterpublic,' *Feminist Studies*, 28 (2002), 489–512 (p. 494).

divide between the characters, as both inexperienced young women and seasoned middle-aged male writers alike must write to live. As Marisa Palacios Knox writes, ‘In the late nineteenth century, literary men and women were vying for success on the same professional terrain.’<sup>648</sup> Although the girl characters of *New Grub Street* take to writing for publication, and find some degree of success, most of the male characters suffer in a gendered fashion. The scene of literary production presented in *New Grub Street* depicts a crisis of masculinity. Poverty and failure leads to a ‘feeling of unmanliness’ amongst the characters, which suggests that failure is by default gendered feminine.<sup>649</sup> Clearly *New Grub Street* is a self-reflexive novel; in it Gissing portrays his views of the current state of literary publishing in late-Victorian London; the novel is ultimately an androcentric and autobiographical study. Stephen Arata describes the problems in the novel as resulting from ‘a world in which the final vestiges of Carlylean heroism have been drained from the writing life,’ referring to Thomas Carlyle’s 1841 essay on ‘The Hero as a Man of Letters.’<sup>650</sup> Gissing wrote the novel in the space of two months and sold the copyright for £150. He published it in three volumes; five years later, 1895, marked the ‘death’ of the format.<sup>651</sup> Ultimately in terms of girlhood culture this novel problematises girls’ inclusion in this new literary machine, but makes it clear that it punishes men and destabilises masculinity too.

### Conclusion

In addressing three key themes, this chapter has demonstrated the ways in which the writing cultures of girls and the publication of girls’ writings were represented in nineteenth-century fiction. The first section demonstrated how two writers of the Golden

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<sup>648</sup> Palacios Knox, ‘The Valley of the Shadow of Books’, p. 96.

<sup>649</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, p. 223.

<sup>650</sup> George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, ed. by Steven Arata (Peterborough: Broadview, 2007), p. 11.

<sup>651</sup> Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 204.

Age of children's literature, Juliana Ewing and Charlotte Yonge, paid homage to the practice of at-home manuscript writing in their novels. Both writers wrote as girls, and later promoted the writing of young people through their involvement in serial children's magazines. Ewing's novel *Six to Sixteen* praised the practice of girls' autobiographical writing as self-educational and self-esteem building. Yonge's *Disturbing Element* acknowledged the necessity of collaborative writing for aspirational girls who were approaching the age of marriage. Although she believed in girls' practicing their writing skills, Yonge was cautious not to give girls ill advice regarding their writing aspirations, lest they should compromise their proper conduct.

This tenuous divide between celebrating girls' manuscript writing practice and fearing girls' futures is further complicated by *fin-de-siècle* novelists. The second part of this chapter evidenced that the novels *My Brilliant Career* and *A Writer of Books* both sympathise with girl writers' choice between their writing practice and the inevitable fate of marriage and maternity which marks the end of girlhood. Finally, *A Struggle for Fame*, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, and *New Grub Street* all criticise the patriarchal nature of the publishing industry or other male-dominated spaces; arenas in which girl writers are devalued. Although all of these characters have varying degrees of publishing success, each girl undergoes a bleak struggle. Ultimately denigrated as writers because of their age, and apparent lack of life experience, these characters show tenacity in their continued pursuit of a writing career. The overarching message of these novels promotes perseverance and maturity for the writing girl characters, but this still obscures the writing culture of girls, which became increasingly self-defined by the end of the century, and which celebrated the specific and temporary period of girlhood.

In its entirety, this chapter evidences that girls' manuscript writing practices were to some extent depicted in Victorian fiction, but were ultimately altered to reflect the broader culture of the rapidly changing publishing industry and female figures within it.

As children's writers Ewing and Yonge offered their own vision of what girls' writing culture should be. The habitus of girlhood is an important factor in these narratives. Although *fin-de-siècle* writers voice this experience of girlhood, which, in the case of Franklin and Riddell, is reflective of their own life experience, these novels are removed from the explicit depiction of girls' manuscript writings and the motivations that prompted them. Hardy, Gissing, Riddell, Franklin and Paston witnessed first-hand the inequalities and hypocrisies of society and exhibited them in their fiction. The figure of the girl, known to these authors as being inclined to write due to the girls' diaries that were increasingly published throughout the century, was suited to their messages of protest against social and gender inequality. For the purpose of this thesis, this chapter buttresses the argument that girls' writing culture in the final decades of the nineteenth century depended on a shared habitus and peer acknowledgement to thrive. It also evidences the myriad 'struggles' that girls might encounter when this writing culture spills beyond the period of girlhood, and beyond an immediate peer audience.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to expand upon the current research interest in late-Victorian girlhood culture. Although there have been studies published on Victorian girlhood in fiction and society, recent studies on girls' writings are few. Therefore this research is both timely and original. This thesis has analysed archival material, some of which is previously unseen, and focused on peer collaboration between girls, as well as girls' appropriative writing style. It has united various theoretical frameworks in order to achieve this.

This thesis has evidenced through archival case studies that manuscript magazine creation took place amongst girls throughout the final four decades of the nineteenth century. Each case study proved that this process was collaborative and involved adolescent peer engagement. The differences in each case study highlighted that girls' collaborative writing culture was initiated by various motivations, and that each one had varying levels of involvement and influence from adults and adult culture.

Moreover, this research identified that girls' writing culture was rooted in textual engagement and adaptation. The girls in my study appropriated male writers – sometimes venerated them and other times critiqued them. But the girl writers also drew on distinctly female styles which sought to carve out a writing voice and a writing space divorced from male models of authorship. Textual evidence from case studies epitomised this negotiation, for example in the Jebb sisters' adaptation of *Little Women* in chapter four, or in the Goslings' dismissal of androcentric magazines in the *Barnacle* as discussed in chapter three.

During the final decades of the nineteenth century young women were increasingly entering into writing professions, as well as educational opportunities. These changes in opportunities can be identified in the Gosling Society's following of the famous writer Charlotte Yonge, or the instances of girls leaving their manuscript project

the *Evergreen Chain* in order to sit examinations. Yet, to the girls, authorship was still largely coded as androcentric and exclusionary. Girls' negotiation of an authorial identity demonstrated their conciliation of both societal gendered expectations and their own aspirations to authorship. As writers like Yonge insisted that girls should indeed write, but limit writing to manuscript culture and the years of adolescence, attempting to follow such indistinct advice meant that girl writers worked through a complex trajectory of compromises in order to arrive at their own writing culture. Indeed that is how girls' writing style might be distinguished from other examples of children's or women's writing. It involved a unique compromise between ostensible dichotomies: agency and compliance, originality and imitation, child and adult, even masculine and feminine. Ultimately girls embraced and claimed these compromises as a foundation of their own discrete writing culture.

The first chapter of this thesis provided an expansive and diverse methodology which speaks to the dynamic current field of childhood studies, and the theoretical sensitivity required of Girls Studies projects. It outlined the importance of the work of scholars such as William Corsaro and Jackie Marsh who acknowledge that children's culture encompasses appropriation as well as peer collaboration. It explored the possibilities of discussing theories of culture put forward by Raymond Williams and others in relation to girlhood, but emphasised the usefulness of Pierre Bourdieu's language of 'habitus' and the cultural 'field' in relation to girls' peer adaptive culture.

This methodology was then harnessed in the analysis of three case studies of girls' manuscript writings, dating from the 1860s to the 1890s. They each explored the presence of girls' peer writing culture, girls' appropriative approach to engaging with literature, and linked these themes back to broader developments in nineteenth-century society and print culture. The exploration of the *Barnacle* in chapter three uncovered a sense of aspiration and apprenticeship in this manuscript magazine which was directed by a



successful female writer, Charlotte Yonge. This chapter focused on the nature of appropriative writing, which had not been explored fully in the few previous studies of the *Barnacle*. It demonstrated that the appropriative writing culture of the Goslings was rigorous. Much like in the juvenile writings of the Charlotte Brontë, the Goslings imagined a rivalry between their manuscript publication and published magazines such as *Blackwood's*.

Chapter four extended this enquiry to the archival holdings of the Jebb family's juvenile writings. The analysis of Eglantyne Jebb's manuscript magazine the *Briarland Recorder* established Eglantyne's leading role in maintaining the periodical between her siblings, and illustrated the children's shared habitus and sense of peer hierarchy. Furthermore, through the example of Eglantyne's appropriation of the fictional magazine the *Pickwick Portfolio* in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, this chapter demonstrated how Eglantyne's periodical epitomised the appropriative aspects of girls' culture during the final decades of the nineteenth century. These themes were also the subject of chapter five which explored the *Evergreen Chain*, a manuscript magazine which was maintained by a group of girls throughout the 1890s. The girls organised amongst themselves a sophisticated and long-standing publication. That in later volumes the girls sought the critical perspective of the Headmistress of a girls' school evidences that this writing pursuit was an important component of the girls' maturing identities. In their appropriative poetry and prose culture the girls of the *Evergreen Chain* broached subjects of girls' proper conduct, employment for women, imitative versus original writing styles – all indicators of the changing social landscape for New Girls, who were increasingly educated outside the home and employed as writers in the 1890s.

Adding perspective to the thesis' concentration on specific facets of late-Victorian girls' writing culture, the second and sixth chapters served to frame my case study chapters, by providing broader contextual analysis of writing girls in Victorian literature

and culture. The second chapter provided multiple case studies of girls' writings during the nineteenth century. It demonstrated that girls' diaries were constructed by editors who upheld specific ideologies about the girl writer. It focused on examples of girls' adaptations and criticisms of Walter Scott's and Charles Dickens' work, which evidenced the complex question of influence, and particularly the gendering of influence, in girls' writings. The sixth and final chapter of the thesis focused on representations of writing girls in fiction written during the period of my analysis. It highlighted novels by Juliana Ewing and Charlotte Yonge, which represented girls' writing as a rewarding enterprise, but one which was constrained to the limited period of adolescence. It then explored the representation of the writing girl in novels written by Thomas Hardy, George Gissing, George Paston, Charlotte Riddell, and Miles Franklin. These novels explicitly problematized the girl writer as being caught between writing ambition and conventional feminine duties, or battling against a patriarchal publishing industry. Against the previous case study chapters, this chapter articulated the discord between girls' collaborative writing culture as evident in archival material, and this writing's actual reception in Victorian society. In doing so, this chapter reinforced my primary argument evidenced in previous chapters, that girls' appropriative writing culture was unique to peer groups of adolescents.

Crucially, chapters two and six emphasised the importance of consulting archives in tracing histories of youth for producing informed research and new insights to the study of Victorian published material. Moreover, these chapters highlighted the benefits that this approach brings to not only Girls Studies, but nineteenth-century studies generally.

#### Recommendations for further research

Within the remit of a doctoral thesis, the opportunity for close analysis of novels and archival material was limited. However, this research has identified gaps and opportunities for further research. For example I would like to extend my enquiries into

girls' writing culture through accessing more manuscripts from around the British Isles. Researching manuscripts from Ireland and Wales would complement my existing research in terms of regional distribution, and would invite an enquiry into how girls' writing culture corresponds to national identity. This interest was raised in my chapter on the *Evergreen Chain*, a manuscript magazine which borrows its title from a poetry collection celebrating Scottish writers. Further work with the collections held at the Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh, as well as the Pollard Collection of Children's Literature held at the Library at Trinity College Dublin would enlighten this aspect of the project.

Extending the enquiry in terms of dates would also be an enriching addition to this existing research. I was primarily concerned with identifying the development of late-Victorian New Girl culture in the archival case studies explored in this thesis, yet in a future iteration of this work I would extend my search of manuscripts to around 1915, which is generally considered to be the end of the first Golden Age of children's literature.

As for this thesis I have been required to employ a pluralistic methodology in order to amply analyse aspects of girls' writing culture. In the manner of the extensive feminist reappraisal projects in recent decades that have focused on Victorian women writers, I would like to see a similar exertion spent on comprehending Victorian girlhood cultures. As my diverse methodology has proven, critical discussions on women writers or Victorian childhood alone do not justly serve an analysis of girlhood culture. The frameworks that I have uncovered in this thesis can enhance future studies of Victorian girlhood cultures. For instance the use of sociological methodologies on children's shared cultures and adaptive instincts add unique insights into the established view of Victorian women writers and their goal to find 'a literature of their own.' In combining these approaches in this thesis, we can appreciate more comprehensively the writing impulses of Victorian girls. As girls' writing culture is so predicated on conditions of gender, it

would be fitting to extend this enquiry further by developing a queer theoretical framework into my existing methodology.

In line with this goal to build upon this research project, I also envisage it having a digital afterlife. Methods in digital humanities provide a platform for and analysis of manuscripts which can enhance the study of children's literary cultures. Digital humanities has a democratising influence; recent scholarship has asserted how the field is now geared 'towards transformative, social justice oriented engagements.'<sup>652</sup> This can be a powerful tool in analyses of manuscripts, and especially life writing. Projects such as RED, the Reading Experience Database 1450–1945 at the Open University, is one such example. This digital project codes descriptions of reading experiences to produce a comprehensive database of texts which are searchable by date, reader's age and gender, and many other parameters.<sup>653</sup> An initiative like this would especially be suited to promoting girlhood cultures. A database of children's writings would be a novel project which could inform future research into historical children's cultures. A project such as this would pursue Franco Moretti's 'distant reading', in distinction to the 'close reading' that I have employed throughout this thesis. Moretti's ambitious digital approach encourages computational analysis of large corpora. He suggests that by aggregating and analysing vast amount of data, this approach can address questions 'much *larger* than any text' individually, by focusing on devices and genres: two *formal* units.'<sup>654</sup> Moreover, this technique focuses on non-canonical literature, which girls' writings can be classified as.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Roopika Risam, 'Beyond the Margins: Intersectionality and the Digital Humanities', *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, 9.2 (2015) < <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/9/2/000208/000208.html> > [accessed 2 January 2019].

<sup>653</sup> 'The Reading Experience Database, 1450–1945', *The Open University* (2011) <<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/index.php>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

<sup>654</sup> Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (London: Verso, 2005).

<sup>655</sup> See Peter Boot, 'Distant Reading. Franco Moretti', *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 30.1 (2015), 152–54.

This thesis has contributed significantly to the current interest in studying children's cultures of the past. It has suggested a multi-disciplinary approach for doing such work, and has showcased obscured archives and texts from the Victorian era. Moreover, this research reflects the current climate of British feminism, specifically the interest in promoting female voices in the media, online, in the workplace and so forth. This thesis has demonstrated that there is more work to be done on uncovering the nuances of girls' cultures, and that there are greater ways of communicating this work than ever before.

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