The Confrontation between Religion and Fantasy:

A Study of Nineteenth-Century Children's Christian Fantasy

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Michelle Chan, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

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By examining the children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, A.L.O.E.'s *The Giant Killer: or the Battle that We must Fight* (1856), *The Young Pilgrim* (1857) and *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* (1864), Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass: and What Alice Found There* (1872), Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1873), Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies or a Fairy-Tale for a Land Baby* (1863), and George MacDonald's 'The Golden Key' (1867) and *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), this thesis provides a collective study of nineteenth-century children's Christian fantasy. This genre is comparatively under-researched mainly because of the multifarious ways of understanding Christian beliefs and fantasy writings. Nevertheless, this complex and engaging issue enriches the interplay between Christian doctrine and fantastic narration. Indeed, authors were strategically expanding and exploiting the various patterns of these interplays in their children's books. In this thesis, the investigation of the selected texts will show how authors' individual and personal interpretation of their Christian belief and fantasy are intrinsic to form a unique combination between the two entities, while at the same time, to generate a work that echoes other children's Christian fantasies. On top of that, this genre also addresses the educative-entertaining debate, offers a re-examination of religious beliefs in children's books, and recognises the inextricability of fantasy from religious writings and children's literature. At the same time, it also reflects the social, intellectual and scientific developments of the nineteenth century. This thesis will demonstrate that owing to the dynamic interplay of Christian elements and fantasy, children's Christian fantasy becomes a literary middle-ground that embodies various debates and argument concerning children's literature in the

nineteenth century. Although all the selected authors are different from each other in terms of their beliefs and their literary achievements, they all shared the same intention of writing for the spiritual and emotional benefit of their readers.

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Introduction

A. The Critical Context

This thesis sets out to examine nineteenth-century Christian fantasy for children. The genre is a relatively under-researched field. Colin Manlove's *Christian Fantasy: from 1200 to the Present* (1992) is the first monograph on Christian fantasy and the first criticism to examine the genre collectively and chronologically. His commentaries have arguably provided some of the most in-depth examinations of Christian fantasy in academia. Manlove's studies range from *Queste del Saint Graal* and Dante's *The Commedia*, to English works such as *Pearl*, *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, followed by modern Christian fantasy like George MacDonald's fairy tales, Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby* (1863), and C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1949-54). His other books such as *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies* (1975), *The Fantasy Literature of England* (1999) and *From Alice to Harry Potter: Children's Fantasy in England* (2004) also support his critical study by providing arguments of Christian fantasy and nineteenth-century children's fantasy. Apart from Manlove, Martha Sammons' *'A better country': The Worlds of Religious Fantasy and Science Fiction* (1998) also helps define the genre. Her critical examination mainly focuses on the relationship between science and religious fictions of the twentieth century. Instead of presenting a historical examination of Christian fantasy, Sammons concentrates on the theological and thematic study of her examples, which are mostly twentieth-century American literature.

While critical examinations of Christian fantasy are scarce, as might be expected, there is much less about children's Christian fantasy. To put it more precisely, there are scarcely any collective criticisms of children's Christian fantasy. Only a small number of discussions addressing children's literature, fantasy and religion together can be found. In *Secret Gardens*: *A*

Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature (1985), Humphrey Carpenter briefly mentions that fantasies for children are written in response to the religious status of their authors. He notices that the notion of faith is intrinsic to the works of Lewis Carroll, MacDonald and Kingsley.[1] Yet, after all, he is analysing his selected children's texts with all other biographical aspects of the authors. Religious beliefs only take up a small part of his overall discussion. In 'The Development of Children's Fantasy', Maria Nikolajeva also identifies Carroll, Kingsley and MacDonald as the three remarkable fantasists of the English-speaking world in the Victorian age. The works of Kingsley and MacDonald, particularly, consistently addressed various moral lessons and fantastic elements.[2] Still, because her discussion is mainly about the principal features of twentieth-century children's fantasy, her essay does not provide any further comment related to the religious aspects of Victorian fantasy for children.

On the thematic studies of religion and fantasy for children, there is U.C. Knoepflmacher's *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, fairy tales, and femininity* (1998), which particularly examines the female supernatural characters in children's fantasy. Knoepflmacher concentrates his study on issues of power between genders but not the theology in fantasies. In another essay: 'Fantasy's alternative geography for children', Knoepflmacher, Andrea Immel and Julia Briggs argue that both Kingsley and MacDonald were trying to search for a higher form of reality in their fantasies. Their works for children are imbued with their debt to *The Pilgrim's Progress* and their own theology.[3] Yet, similarly, because the central investigation of this essay is the type

[1] Humphrey Carpenter, *Secret Gardens: A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (London: Unwin, 1985), p.41-2,65-7, 83-5
[2] Maria Nikolajeva, 'The Development of Children's Fantasy', *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*, ed. by Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.50-1
[3] Andrea Immel, U.C. Knoepflmacher and Julia Briggs, 'Fantasy's alternative geography for children', *Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature*, ed. by M.O. Grenby, and Andrea Immel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.228-232

and nature of fantastic landscape specific to children's literature, no further analysis is given to the religious beliefs of the fantasists.

Although there is a dearth of criticism on the relationship between fantasy and religion in the study of children's literature, Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1985), Stephen Prickett's *Victorian Fantasy* (2005) and Karen Michalson's *Victorian Fantasy Literature: Literary Battles with Church and Empire* (1990) provided an overview of the confrontation and reconciliation between fantasy writings and religion. None of these critics intends to devote their comments to children's literature, but their choices of texts are mostly the classic examples of the genre. Jackson argues that Victorian fantasists were 'heavily influenced by a tradition of Christian Platonism'.[4] However, without much elaboration, she soon shifts her focus to fantasists' dissatisfaction concerning social issues. Prickett centres his study on the thematic characteristics of his selected texts. The discussion of theology only appears in the chapter on Kingsley and MacDonald. Michalson illustrates the battle between fantasists and religious principles. To some degree, her ideas are overly radical. Nevertheless, her studies provided some insights to the historical battle between fantasy writings and didactic evangelical tracts for children.

In contrast to this paucity of dedicated scholarship on children's Christian fantasy, authors of this genre have been widely studied on an individual basis. In many cases, MacDonald is treated as the major writer of children's Christian fantasy. MacDonald had not received much critical examination until C.S. Lewis openly identified him as his inspiration. Nevertheless, critical discussions of his work have been increasing since the 1980s. Rolland Hein's *The Harmony Within: the Spiritual Vision of George MacDonald* (1982), William Raeper's *George MacDonald* (1987), David S. Robb's *George MacDonald* (1987) and *God's Fiction: Symbolism*

[4] Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London: Methuen, 1981), p.145

and Allegory in the works of George MacDonald (1989) extensively expanded the scale of MacDonald's criticism. Kingsley, similarly, is often taken as another exemplary writer of children's Christian fantasy. *The Water Babies* caught much attention in the nineteenth century, but its heavy moralistic tone has to some degree led to it being studied less often in the twentieth century. Still, this book is generally considered as one of the significant works of children's literature. Although Carroll's religious view is not often correlated to his literary creations, he has caught the attention of the public and academia ever since the first publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass: and What Alice Found There* (1872). Since the first biographic work of Carroll—*The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* published in 1878 by his nephew Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, critical writings about Carroll's works have never ceased.

Much has been done on the individual studies of selected authors, but far less on the genre. This thesis attempts to investigate children's Christian fantasy in the works of several significant writers in the next few chapters. These selected authors include editors of the children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, A.L.O.E. (Charlotte Tucker), Lewis Carroll, Christina Rossetti, Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald. The object of this introduction is to highlight some of the key ideas of children's Christian fantasy, which will help set up a basis for the discussion in this entire thesis.

B. Defining Fantasy

1. Fantasy— A Term of Psychology in the Nineteenth Century

Both Manlove and Sammons relate the shortage of critical examinations of children's Christian fantasy to the various definitions of 'fantasy' and 'Christianity'.[5] To begin with, fantasy was understood a term of psychology in the nineteenth century in the nineteenth century but not as a type of literature in modern criticism. . According to Prickett's review, before the nineteenth century, 'fantasy' was substantially loyal to its root in Greek—*phantasia*, which literarily meant 'a making visible'.[6] The word also meant 'delusion, hallucination, or simply wishful thing'—anything that was 'definitely unreal'.[7] However, from the early nineteenth century, people found the 'unreality of fantasy gave its creations a kind of separate existence, an autonomy, even a "real life" of their own'.[8] Prickett ascribes this change of emotional reception to Romanticism. He takes Samuel Taylor Coleridge as one of the barometers in these revised meanings of 'fantasy'. Coleridge argued that 'fancy and imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties'.[9] There were two levels of imagination. The primary imagination was a 'living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'.[10] The secondary imagination was an 'echo of the former'. [11] It performed re-creation by dissolving, diffusing, and dissipating empirical experiences and forming a new unity. Differing only in the degree of creativity, these two forms of imagination were both the primitive qualities of literary creation. In contrast to imagination, Coleridge identified fantasy as 'a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we

[5] Colin N. Manlove, *Christian Fantasy: from 1200 to the Present* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p.5-6 and Martha Sammons, *'A better country': The Worlds of Religious Fantasy and Science Fiction* (New York: Greenwood, 1988), p.1-2
[6] Stephen Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy*, 2nd edn.(Texas: Baylor University Press, 2005), p.5
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., p.6
[9] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria or, Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions and Two Sermons* (London: Adamant, 2004), p.42
[10] Ibid., p.144
[11] Ibid.

expressed by the word choice'.[12] In this way, fantasy was more a faculty related to dreams instead of creation. Works of fancy, accordingly, are amalgams of disordered ideas.

Perhaps the rise of Romanticism did facilitate a reassessment of the artistic values of fantasy. In 'The Fantastic Imagination', MacDonald attempted to distinguish imagination and fancy in terms of values of fantastic realms. He stated that if fantastical worlds were built with 'new embodiments of old truths', they would be 'products of the Imagination'.[13] Yet, if the literary creations were 'inventions' ignoring moral laws, they would be works of 'Fancy'.[14] In another essay, 'The Imagination: Its Function and its Culture', MacDonald furthered his idea of fancy in his discussion of children's education. He said, 'let him [a child] be as fanciful as he may, but let him not, even in his fancy, sin against fancy's sense; for fancy has its laws as certainly as the most ordinary business of life.'[15] Here, MacDonald treated fancy as a pejorative term of psychology. MacDonald's ideas of imagination and fancy will be delineated later in this thesis. Nevertheless, his ideas showed at least how fancy was being re-examined in the nineteenth century, even though both himself and Coleridge argued that fancy was not as prestigious as imagination.

2. Fantasy and Fairy Tales

Literary fantasy as discussed by modern critics today tends to be identified as 'fairy tales' in the nineteenth century. As Karen Patricia Smith points out, 'up until the nineteenth century, no clear-cut distinction was made between fantasy and its near relation, the fairy tale'.[16] It is true that some of the children's fantasies regarded today were called 'fairy tales' in the past. For

[12] Ibid.
[13] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination' (1890), reprinted in *The Complete Fairy Tales* (London: Penguin, 1999), p.6
[14] Ibid.
[15] George MacDonald, 'The Imagination: Its Functions and its Culture', *A Dish of Orts* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston ,1893), p.37
[16] Karen Patricia Smith, *The Fabulous Realm: A Literary-Historical Approach to British Fantasy, 1780-1990* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1993), p.11

instance, Kingsley called *The Water Babies* a 'Fairy-Tale for a Land Baby'. Carroll wrote in his diary on the 4th July 1862 that he told 'the fairy-tale of Alice's Adventures Under Ground' to the children of Liddell.[17] Critics such as Charlotte Yonge also called *Alice, The Water Babies* and MacDonald's 'The Light Princess' the 'three really original fairy-tales' produced in the mid-Victorian period.[18]

It is possible that the confusion of the genres was caused by their sharing characteristics in fantastic elements. Smith argues that 'fairy tale has had profound and magical effects upon the development of British fantasy'.[19] She says, 'fantasy may possess fairy-tale elements and indeed did so in many nineteenth-century works'.[20] Similarly, Manlove argues in *From Alice to Harry Potter* that 'fantasy' was not known in the nineteenth century because it was presumed that fantasy 'took something from the traditional fairy tale as found, say, in Grimm or Perrault'. Henceforth, fantasy appeared to be 'the descendent of such tales', even if the 'literary and invented narrative' was 'often radically different' in contemporary perspectives.[21] Manlove then argues that there is no direct connection between fairy tales and fantasy. He finds no evidence that shows fantasy has inherited ideas from fairy tales. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that fantasy has been influenced by fairy tales in terms of their sharing interest in supernatural and magical elements. Smith and Manlove continue to identify the two genres by their narrative features. Smith argues that fairy tales and fantasy are different in terms of 'the complexity of the

[17] Lewis Carroll, *Lewis Carroll's Dairies: The Private Journals of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson*, ed. by Edward Wakeling, Vol.4 (Luton: The Lewis Carroll Society, 1997), p.95. Carroll referred *Alice* as a fairy tale again in his entry on the 6th August 1862.
[18] Charlotte Yonge, 'Children's Literature: Part III—Class Literature of the Last Thirty Years', *Macmillan Magazine*, Vol.20 (London: Macmillan, 1869), p.452
[19] Smith, p.24
[20] Ibid., p.12
[21] Colin Manlove, *From Alice to Harry Potter: Children's Fantasy in England* (Christchurch, N.Z: Cybereditions, 2003), p.17

development of the work'.[22] As she says, a 'fantasy may be considered to be a work of some length with characterization and story developed in greater detail than what one would normally find in a traditional fairy tale'.[23] Manlove, on the other hand, argues that nineteenth-century fantasy was comparatively more inventive than the fairy tales created in French aristocratic salons in the late seventeenth century and those created in eighteenth-century England. However, complexity of content, length of the narratives, and inventiveness are all too subjective to characterise Victorian fantasy. Today, with the help of modern understanding of fantasy and fairy tales, these two literary genres are basically divided. Nevertheless, the fact that they were treated in a similar manner means that a better understanding of nineteenth-century fantasy for children can be obtained if it is studied with reference to the arguments concerning nineteenth-century fairy tales and modern fantasy.

a. Fairy Tales—Impeding Children's Spirituality

Literary fairy tales in the nineteenth century were often involved in the argument about the purpose of children's texts. To some moralists and educators of the first half of the century particularly, children's books were written to make their young reader a 'better' Christian. Fairy tales were considered harmful to young readers intellectually and emotionally. In *Guardian of Education* (1803), Mrs. Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810) claimed that fairy tales disturbed readers emotionally:

> The terrific images which tales of this nature present to the imagination, usually make deep impressions, and injure the tender minds of children, by exciting unreasonable and groundless fears. Neither do the generality of tales of this kind supply any moral instruction level to the infantine capacity.[24]

[22] Smith, p.12
[23] Ibid.
[24] Sarah Trimmer, *Guardian of Education: A Periodical Work*, Vol.2 (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2002), p.186

To Trimmer, fairy tales created unpleasant imaginings, which she presumed would injure the 'tender mind' and generate 'unreasonable fear'. Trimmer's protectiveness was to a large extent derived from her loyalty to the didactic function of children's literature. Yet the main reason for her repugnance to fairy tales is that she believed fear and excitement would cancel out the instructiveness of the text.[25] That famously quoted comment from Mrs. Trimmer represents many similar opinions expressed by her contemporaries. Her fundamentally moralistic approach to children's texts continued to impact upon writers of the early nineteenth century. Mrs. Maria Sherwood (1775-1851), who composed numerous texts for young readers and was one of the most popular writers of the Religious Tract Society,[26] stated,

> Instruction when conveyed through the medium of some beautiful story or pleasant tale, more easily insinuates itself into the youthful mind than any thing of a drier nature; yet the greatest care is necessary that the kind of instruction thus conveyed should be perfectly agreeable to the Christian dispensation. Fairy tales therefore are in general an improper medium of instruction because it would be absurd in such tales to introduce Christian principles as motives of action.[27]

Like Trimmer, Mrs. Sherwood found that fairy tales did not agree with the 'Christian dispensation'. Thus, even though fairy tales were pleasant, they were 'improper [media] of instruction'. Mrs. Trimmer and Mrs. Sherwood, like many early nineteenth-century moralists and educators, openly objected to the publication of fairy tales. They believed that this genre made no contribution to 'moral instruction'. To conventional moralists and educators, religious

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[25] For further information about the educational and evangelical ideas of Trimmer, please refer to Chapter 1 and 2 of Margaret Nancy Cutt's *Ministering Angels: A Study of Nineteenth-century Evangelical Writing for Children*; for the discussion concerning fairy tales and Trimmer, please refer to Nicholas Tucker's 'Fairy Tales and Their Early Opponents: In defence of Mrs. Trimmer', *Opening the Nursery Door: Reading, Writing and Childhood, 1600-1900*, eds. by Mary Hilton, Morag Styles and Victor Watson (London: Routledge, 1997)

[26] Religious Tract Society (RTS) and Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) were two of the biggest publishers of religious children's books and tracts in the nineteenth century. Both agencies had been printing evangelical materials for children for more than a hundred years in the nineteenth century.

[27] Maria Sherwood, *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy* (London: F. Houlston and Son, 1820), p.88. Sherwood rewrote Sarah Fielding's *The Governess, or The Little Female Academy* with the same name. For more information about Mrs Sherwood's view on children's education, please refer to Patricia Demers' 'Mrs. Sherwood and Hesba Stretton: The Letter and the Spirit of Evangelical Writing of and for Children' in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. by James Holt Mcgraven (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), p.129-49

teaching was the prime and the most important reason for writing children's books. Any fantastic elements included for entertaining effect were not serving the purpose, and consequently, were not welcomed.

Publishers of religious materials also required authors to compose their texts in a particular manner. The Religious Tract Society for example, clearly stated in its principles that tracts should be 'plain' and made 'according to the rhetorician's rules, "that the meaning shall be not only so plain that it may be understood, but so plain that it cannot possibly be misunderstood"'.[28] Though the Society did not discourage the pleasure of reading, the restriction of fantasy narratives in children's religious texts was clear.[29] The pleasure of reading evangelical texts comes from the spiritual enlightenment resulting from religious materials instead of emotional responses to fantastical narratives. This antagonism towards fairy tales from moralists and educators, as Gillian Avery identifies, was also derived from their belief in children's incapacity to discern truth from fantastic narration. As a result, writers of children's texts found introducing fairyland a waste of time.[30] Evangelical writings for children, as Margaret Nancy Cutt analyses, aimed at moulding children 'into the socially-acceptable adult and guiding him into his allotted station in life'.[31] Hence, the tales often 'included lessons on deportment and conduct, or stressed the duty and the advantages of contentment'.[32] In the world of evangelical texts, rewards and punishment were clearly stated. Sympathy towards children was scarce, while faithfulness, duty and obedience were the prime priorities.

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[28] Samuel G. Green, *The Story of the Religious Tract Society: for One Hundred Years* ([S.I]: Religious Tract Society, 1899), p.6

[29] It is stated in one of the principles of RTS that tract fiction should be 'entertaining': 'Narrative, dialogue, and other methods which ingenuity will suggest must be employed to give an agreeable relish to truth, and to season it so as to whet the appetite of the reader'.

[30] Gillian Avery, *Nineteenth Century Children: Heroes and Heroines in English Children's Stories, 1780-1900*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), p.41

[31] Margaret Nancy Cutt, *Ministering Angels: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Writings for Children* (Dorset: Five Owls Press, 1979), p.2

[32] Ibid.

In the opinion of moralists, educators, and evangelical writers, fairy tales hampered the instructiveness of children's texts. Thereby, they impeded the spiritual education of their young readers. Although fairy tales were pleasant, they were unfit for moral education. The fantastic elements in them confused readers about reality and fantasy. In this way, fairy tales were placed in opposition to religious lessons in the discipline of children's literature.

b. Fairy Tales—Facilitating Children's Education

To some other literary figures of the nineteenth century, however, fairy tales were essential in entertaining and educating their readers. John Ruskin, for example, believed that fairy tales were important principally because they could effectively arouse readers' imagination—the major faculty that develops one's self. He believed that imagination would lead a child to the real message of a fairy tale, and instruction should be given through the process of contemplation. Therefore, fairy tales should keep their entertaining elements and should not try to be overly didactic. Nevertheless, although children ought to be allowed to imagine, they still have to 'seek faithfully for good' and be 'sensitive to wrong'.[33] Ruskin clearly stated that in a fairy tale, children should learn to 'laugh but not mock; and when they laugh, it should not be at the weaknesses and the faults of others'.[34] As he furthered his argument,

> Under conditions of this kind the imagination is enough excited to invent instinctively (and rejoice in the invention of) spiritual forms of wildness and beauty, while yet it is restrained and made cheerful by the familiar accidents and relations of town life, mingling always in its fancy humorous and vulgar circumstances with pathetic ones, and never so much impressed with its supernatural phantasies as to be in danger of retaining them as any part of its religious faith.[35]

Imagination should be provoked but the use of it should still be confined to moral values. His stances on imagination and fairy tales were fully expressed in his children's text, *The King of the*

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[33] John Ruskin, 'Fairy Stories', German Popular Stories (John Camden Hotten, 1868), reprinted in *A Peculiar Gift: Nineteenth Century Writings on Books for Children*, ed. by Lance Salway (Harmondworth: Kestrel, 1976), p.128
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., p.130-1

Golden River (1851). While his tale was modelled after the narrative style of the brothers Grimm, it embodies a strong moralistic tone.

Like Ruskin, Dickens also found the fairy tale a device for inculcating moral values. He suggested that the educational values of fairy tales lay precisely in their enchantment—a powerful aid that nourished 'forbearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force'. [36] To Dickens, education was not achieved through contemplation but by reminding readers of their childhood. As he explained, 'to preserve them [fairy tales] in their usefulness, they [fairy tales] must be as much preserved in their simplicity, and purity, and innocent extravagance, as if they were actual fact'.[37] This simplicity in fairy story served as a reminder of childlikeness. Moreover, precisely because fairy tales were not concerned with factual information, readers were able to escape to fairyland from their tiresome earthy life for a moment. The more a fairy tale is detached from reality, the more it can lighten its reader's burden of living and the better it leads him back to childlikeness. It appears that Dickens' argument on the usefulness of fairy tales was directed towards adult audiences. Perhaps he was implying that fairy tales were educational to both adults and children. After all, many fairy tales were dedicated to double audiences.

Some criticisms in the nineteenth century did not only focus on the function of fairy tales, but also on the values they embodied. In 'Modern Fairy Tales', Andrew Lang explained that 'despite the impossibility of the incidents, the interest is always real and human'.[38] A fairy tale should be able to:

> display courage, loyalty, and address, courtesy, gentleness, and gratitude. Thus they are living in a real human world, though it wears a mystical face, though there are giants and

[36] Charles Dickens, 'Frauds on the Fairies', *Household Words*: *A Weekly Journal*, Vol. 8 (London: [s.i], 1853), p.97
[37] Ibid.
[38] Andrew Lang, 'Modern Fairy Tales', *The Illustrated London News*, (London, England), Saturday, 3 December 1892; pg.714; Issue 2798

> lions in the way. The old fairy tales, which a silly sort of people disparage as too wicked and ferocious for the modern nursery, are really 'full of matter,' and unobtrusively teach the true lessons of our wayfaring in a world of perplexities and obstructions.[39]

He stressed again at the end of his argument that 'the true fairy tale deals with a world which is wide awake, and it goes to the point and comes to business; it has no time to spin description of flowers and "beautiful calm processions of peace and placidity"'.[40] To Lang, fairy stories amuse their readers and teach 'goodness'.[41] They are not crudely didactic but 'diversion of lessons'.[42] Instead of moral lessons, fairy tales demonstrate 'goodness' to young readers. In *The Green Fairy Book* (1892), additionally, Lang clarified the misunderstandings concerning fairy tales. He stated that all those anxieties relating to the possible confusions between reality and fantasy were unnecessary. He never had seen nor would expect to see a child failing to distinguish the real and the unreal. To Lang, children are capable of identifying the fact that the authenticity of fairy tales lies in their values.

In 1897, J. Newby Hetherington divided fairy tales into three classes. First was the type of fairy tales inherited from an unknown time. They were collected for children's reading as well as for investigating 'the early history of humanity and the development of man's intellectual powers'.[43] Second was fairy tales 'put together for the use of children from older materials and accommodated to modern tastes'.[44] The third type of fairy tales referred to those 'successful imitations of the old stories by recent writers'.[45] Yet, all those forms of fairy tales have:

> a kind of real life in them, such real life as a child believes in, where good is always rewarded and evil always punished, where every one, including the Devil, gets his due,

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., p.136
[41] Andrew Lang, *The Green Fairy Book* (London: Longmans, 1892), x
[42] Ibid.
[43] J. Newby Hetherington, 'The Use of Fairy Tales in the Education of the Young', The Journal of Education, XIX, August 1897, p.472-4, reprinted in *A Peculiar Gift: Nineteenth Century Writings on Books for Children*, ed. by Lance Salway (Harmondworth: Kestrel, 1976), p.146
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., p.147

> where everything is possible, and nothing seems so wonderful that it might not happen again.[46]

The 'real life' emphasised by Hetherington resembled Lang's concern with the 'real and human interest' in fairy tales. It appeared to both critics that fairy tales were created in accordance with those values cherished by mankind, or in other words, those values that make life 'wonderful'. Like Ruskin and Dickens, Hetherington argued that fairy tales were useful for developing a child's imagination. Additionally, they could also provoke a desire for ideal beauty, increase sympathy towards all mankind, prepare young readers for the study and appreciation of romantic and ideal literature, develop their memory, and raise their level of reading. Even those entertaining effects provided by the fantastic narrative would embody some sorts of educational values for young readers.

Compare to the first half of the century, there is clearly a shift in the attitude towards fairy tales. All the aforementioned critics believed that this literary form would educate their young readers by conveying the real values of human beings as well as entertaining them through its marvels. Fairy tales were constructive in shaping one's self, although to some extent fairy tales were more related to the educational function than the entertaining one. In this way, critics, including those who dislike and those who welcome fairy tales, examine the value of fairy tales in utilitarian terms. From the values embodied in the fantastic features, in the nineteenth century, fairy tales were mostly understood in relation to their usefulness to young readers.

c. Modern Understanding of Fantasy for Children

Jackson defines fairy tales as a 'closed literature'. It is entirely different from 'fantasy', which she defines as a literature that invites readers to use their imagination to reify the context. She claims that nineteenth-century fairy tales are:

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[46] Ibid.

> neutral, impersonalized, set apart from the reader. The reader becomes a passive receiver of events, there is no demand that (s)he participate in their interpretation. *Structurally, too, fairy tales discourage belief in the importance or effectiveness of action* for their narratives are "closed". Things "happen", "are done" *to* protagonists, told *to* the reader, from a position of omniscience and authority, making the reader unquestioningly passive.[47]

Fantasy's 'association with imagination and with desire has made it an area difficult to articulate or to define, and indeed the "value" of fantasy has seemed to reside in precisely this resistance to definition, in its "free-floating"… qualities'.[48] To Jackson, fantasy is not a 'closed literature', for the reason that its formation involves freedom of interpretation. This freedom will be shown to be one of the main characteristics of those Christian fantasies discussed in the next few chapters. This liberty of interpretation was used in nineteenth-century children's Christian fantasy as a way to introduce religious belief and to educate moral codes to readers. Indeed, it can be argued that in some cases, the authors were conscious of this liberty, and thereby, deliberately utilised it to suit their purpose in writing.

Instead of readership, Nikolajeva characterises fantasy and fairy tales in terms of the realistic and fantastical realms. She takes Selma Lanes' understanding as a reference and says,

> The designation 'fairy tales' is here applied to all tales that take for granted the existence of magical elements or beings in this world. The term 'fantasy' is reserved for those tales in which magical realms may exist, but the tale's characters must somehow find a means of transport to them.[49]

Nikolajeva explains that fairy tales take place in one world, in which 'everything is possible': 'all supernatural elements are taken for granted, and never does the protagonist wonder at them'.[50] Fantasy, on the other hand, involves two worlds, 'a real one (*primary*) and a magic one (*secondary*)': 'Within the magic world supernatural creatures or events may occur and are

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[47] Jackson, p.154, italicised by the author.
[48] Ibid, p.1
[49] Maria Nikolajeva, *The Magic Code: The Use of Magical Patterns in Fantasy for Children* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1988), p.12-3
[50] Ibid., p.13

accepted, but against the background of the primary world they are apprehended as being out-of-place and always cause a sense of wonder'. [51] In this way, there are always two worlds at least coexisting in a piece of fantasy writing. While one is presumed to be the realistic one, the other will be the fantastic one in which supernatural issues are situated.

It is not uncommon to identify fantasy with a two-world structure. J.R.R. Tolkien, for example, refers to reality as the 'Primary World' and the fantastic world as the 'Secondary World'. As he explains, fantasy presents an 'inner consistency of reality'. Fantasy is a 'higher form of Art…the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent'.[52] It is because the higher form of art embraces 'both the Sub-creative Art in itself and a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression, derived from the Image'.[53] In other words, fantasy 'combines with its older and higher use as an equivalent of Imagination the derived notions of "unreality" (that is, of unlikeness to the Primary World), of freedom from the domination of observed "fact," in short of the fantastic'.[54] Tzvetan Todorov also argues that the concept of the fantastic should be defined 'in relation to those of the real and the imaginary':

> In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination— and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality—but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us.[55]

[51] Ibid.
[52] J.R.R.Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories', *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine, 1966), p.69
[53] Ibid., p.68
[54] Ibid., p.69
[55] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p.25

Todorov tries to define the term in relation to readers' responses. Fantasy as a form of literature is understood through the doubts of readers. It presents a form of reality that will challenge what readers recognise as 'real'.

Todorov's idea about 'laws unknown to us' brings out another key signifier of fantasy—violation of natural law. C.S. Lewis argues that narrative fantasy is 'any narrative that deals with impossibles and preternaturals'.[56] He further explains that fantasy is 'full of impossibilities', and it has 'no objection to monstrous psychology and preposterous coincidence'.[57] Fantasy is developed with 'an observance of such natural laws as they know and a general ordinariness; the clothes, gadgets, food, houses, occupations, and tone of the everyday world'.[58] In this sense, Lewis highlights the fact that the essence of fantasy—impossibility—is created by recognising the 'possibilities' as experienced in ordinary life. Similarly, Jackson suggests that fantasy is made out of reality. The fantastic world 'opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, on to that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems'.[59] This thesis will take the two-world structure of fantasy as a major component of Christian fantasy. It is often found that the fantastic world embodies some sort of idealistic values that the realistic world is deprived of. The fantastic world in some cases, such as those in MacDonald's fantasies, is the final reality that embodies all religious truth.

The fantastic realm of this two-world structure, however, can also be subversive in nature. Jackson's theories perhaps can be read as one of the prime examples of viewing fantasy as a literature subversive of reality. She argues that 'literature of the fantastic has been claimed as "transcending" reality, "escaping" the human condition and constructing superior alternate,

[56] C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p.50
[57] Ibid., p.55
[58] Ibid.
[59] Jackson, p.4

"secondary" worlds'.[60] Similarly, Eric Rabkin says, 'the truly fantastic occurs when the ground rules of a narrative are forced to make a 180° reversal, when prevailing perspectives are directly contradicted. This is true, even if the effect lasts only a moment'.[61] Rabkin's ideas point out again that fantasy as a counter-reality should be formed with the knowledge of the reality. As he delineates:

> While fairy tales use the World of Enchantment as their location, and are therefore highly fantastic, a true fantasy such as *Alice* continues to reserve its ground rules again and again.... Fantasies may be generally distinguished from other narratives by this: the very nature of ground rules, of how we know things, on what basis we make assumptions, in short, the problem of knowing infects Fantasies at all levels, in their settings, in their methods, in their characters, in their plots.[62]

Alison Lurie argues that children's literature itself is a subversive narration that allows authors to escape from reality as well as to overthrow natural laws. The great works of children's literature would often 'express ideas and emotions not generally approved of or even recognized at the time; they make fun of honored figures and piously held beliefs; and they view social pretenses with clear-eyed directness'.[63] Since authors of children's books such as Carroll and MacDonald were unconventional figures in the nineteenth century, it should not be a surprise that their books 'had the ability to look at the world from below and note its less respectable aspects'.[64]

The contradictory values in the secondary world can be read as a form of subversion while they can also be closely linked to the escapism of authors. Contextualising studies of fantasy in the nineteenth century, David Jasper suggests that the intellectual, material and spiritual changes at the time had proceeded at an unprecedented pace. Henceforth,

> Fantasy may be simply an escape from the pressures of such a time knowing itself to be the best and worst, or it may be the expression of a sense of the real which is often almost

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[60] Ibid., p.2
[61] Eric Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p.12
[62] Ibid., p.37
[63] Alison Lurie, *Don't tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children's Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990), p.4
[64] Ibid., p.8

> lost in a kaleidoscopic progress too fast to be assimilated into the sense of the individual or society.[65]

Nevertheless, it is debatable whether children's fantasies served as an escape for their authors. For Rossetti, Kingsley and MacDonald all took up fantasy writings for different reasons. None of them appears to use this narrative form purely as an escape. Perhaps their fantastic realms have some qualities that subvert the secular world, but as the next few chapters will show, the ideas that these authors were proposing were not as simple as subversion.

Apart from those interpretations of fantasy mentioned above, there are still many other approaches used in the study of fantasy; too many, indeed, to be accommodated within the limited parameters of this introduction. Nevertheless, it is hoped that by outlining certain main approaches to the study of fantasy, this section can set out how it is understood in academia and how it is different from fairy tales. The theories of fantasy perhaps can be summarised by Manlove's words: 'our definition is best where as said it is a rule of thumb, where it strikes a spark: no more, or we will find no end to it, and no justice to all the writers'.[66] It is true that the meaning of fantasy has changed from period to period and place to place. Instead of studying fantasy with an overview of its features, it is also worthwhile to approach the subject by examining fantasists individually, as will be done in the next few chapters.

3. Children's Book Illustrations

There is no dearth of illustrations in the nineteenth century, in particular, for children's books. In the nineteenth century, owing to the fact that there is a rising number of reading audience and improvements of printing technology, more illustrated materials, such as *Punch* and *The Illustrated London News*, are published in the adult world. Illustration is one of the main

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[65] David Jasper, 'Forward: Making Words Mean a Great Deal', *The Victorian Fantasists: Essays on Culture, Society and Belief in the Mythopoeic Fiction of the Victorian Age*, ed. by Kath Filmer (London: Macmillan, 1991), ix

[66] Manlove, *From Alice to Harry Potter*, p.11

components of alphabet books, chapbooks, religious books, fantasy writings and many other children's reading materials. It is not uncommon to find that illustrations are mentioned in the criticism of children's books. For instance, John Ruskin condemns Arthur Hughes for illustrating *Speaking Likenesses*, a work which he dislikes. Christina Rossetti, even though she is not in favour of Carroll's *Alice*, compliments that the woodcuts in *Alice* are charming.[67] Certainly, this thesis is not going to delineate the long history of children's book illustrations. Yet, it is worth mentioning that illustrations play a major role in enforcing religious messages and enhancing the fantasticality of a text.

For example, *Christina and Her Children* (1860) is a simplified and illustrated book of the second book of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Twelve coloured plates are made for illustrating Christina's journey. At the same time, short descriptions, which place below each illustration, convey the main messages of the original text. Young readers are exposed to a simple framework that introduces the main ideas of Bunyan in an easy and efficient manner. Besides, with the visualisation of characters and plots, readers are able to immerse in the story quickly. In the last scene of *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*, illustrated by Tenniel, Alice stands up and other characters fly away from her. Animal characters remove their human attire and posture, and return to their natural appearance. This implies that the dream, or the fantasy, of Alice is ending and soon she will return to a realistic setting. Tenniel captures the tension of the scene by visualising a pack of angry cards jumping over Alice. The anger of Alice and the fear of other characters are clearly shown on this picture. Tenniel, thereby, illustrates and concretises Carroll's imagination for young readers while at the same time, leads the story to its climax. In *Alice's Adventures Underground*, Carroll also illustrates his story so to introduce his readers some

[67] Ruskin's comment on *Speaking Likenesses* and Rossetti's comments on *Alice* will be explained with more details in Chapter 4.

primitive ideas of the story. Those pictures outline several important scenes of the story, such as the one where Alice is swimming with a group of animals and Alice becomes too big for the door in the hall. These illustrations vividly present the grotesqueness of those characters in Wonderland and clearly show the illogicality of the story. In Linley Sambourne's illustration of Kingsley's *Water Babies* (1885), for example, both Tom and Ellie grow up from a child to a young adult at the end of the story. It is certain that the idea of 'growing up' permeates the text, yet Kingsley does not state that Tom and Ellie are physically growing up all through their journey. Sambourne's illustrations, in this sense, externalise the internal growth of Tom and Ellie, and at the same time, intensify the idea of spiritual evolution, which is one of the main concepts that Kingsley constantly claims throughout the story.

These examples show that illustrations help convey messages and provide amusement to readers. In the process of creating images, illustrators often concretise the texts, visualise imagination, and in some cases, reinterpret the story for young readers. More than a function of presenting a story in a pictorial manner, illustration also adds a new layer of meaning to the texts and makes the plot or scene more interesting. Illustration provides a basic picture of the text, and therefore, young readers no longer have to imagine the text randomly but are able to develop their imagination more extensively with the images given.

4. Fantasy for Children in the nineteenth century

Critics of children's literature often ascribe the rise of children's fantasy writings to the changing consciousness of the Victorians. This shift of consciousness is in many cases read as a result of certain intellectual and social events. Sheila Egoff, for example, suggests that the Industrial Revolution, 'the unprecedented growth of human knowledge', social reforms, the growing materialism generated a need for re-examining living values. Ideas of childhood were

renewed by literary figures like William Wordsworth, and education of children was reformed. Not only the rigid attitude in children's books was moderated, but the education conducted in middle-class families and the introduction of Sunday schools for the poor also brought along different impacts to children's writings.[68] Peter Hunt, on the other hand, argues that the rise of children's fantasy 'with its use of supernatural and invention of secondary worlds, is clearly related to this revival of interest in fairy-tales and the Romantic movement's earlier unease at the primacy of rationalism'.[69] He suggests that the 'popularity of Gothic novels', advance in theatrical technology, and toy theatres offered brand new visual and dramatic effects to the public. Animal fantasies and the success of several fantasy writings for children, such as the reprintings of *Aesop Fables*, *The Butterfly's Ball* and its imitations, also contributed greatly to the genre. He even argues that the archaeological discovery of the remains of dinosaurs was a possible reason that aroused public interests in 'the existence of extraordinary, almost legendary, creatures'.[70] To Hunt, even if those factors may not have directly caused the rise of children's fantasy, they at least 'signalled a changing of consciousness'.[71] Claudia Nelson sums up the situation by saying that 'around 1850, fantasy writing became a pursuit of the eminent' and writers were trying to combine 'serious messages with ornamental settings'.[72] She argues that writers of fantasy were attacking the values of the fact, referred to the Industrialisation of the city and the loss of humanity. Fantasy writings of the nineteenth century were aimed at propagating an idealised childhood. There are numerous causes for the rise of children's fantasy, such as social issues, intellectual advancement or as will be shown in the next few chapters, the personal

[68] Sheila Egoff, *Worlds Within: Children's Fantasy from Middle Ages to Today* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1988), p.36-9
[69] Peter Hunt, *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.90
[70] Ibid., p.91
[71] Ibid.
[72] Claudia Nelson, *Boys will be Girls: The Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction, 1857-1917* (London: Rutger University Press, 1991), p.147

reasons of authors. Certainly the aforementioned nineteenth-century critics do not represent all opinions on fairy tales, yet they can at least provide some clues about the understanding of fairy tales in the nineteenth century. Similarly, it is also true that the ideas of fantasy aforementioned cannot cover every understanding of the genre. Still, they can primarily outline some main ideas related to the critical interpretation of fantasy. Though fantasy was not recognised as a literary genre in the nineteenth century, this thesis sets out to construct a retrospective analysis with reference to both ideas of fairy tales in the nineteenth century and modern definitions of fantasy. While fairy tales in the past concerned 'real' human interests and values, fantasy in modern times is often associated with 'unreality' and 'impossibilities'. It is a form of escapist literature which represents some sort of subversion and perhaps in some cases, counter-reality. Compared to a nineteenth-century understanding of fantasy, modern discussions have paid more attention to the fantasy itself instead of its function for readers. Fairy tales in the nineteenth century influenced the formulation of fantasy. Many aspects of fantasy, such as the impossible worlds, the ideal values that lie behind the narration, were the legacy of fairy tales. The rise of fantasy in the nineteenth century will be discussed in relation to Carroll later in this thesis. Yet just to clarify, this thesis is not attempting to suggest a brand new concept of nineteenth-century fantasy but to state that the differences between fairy tales fantasy had not been much conceived of by nineteenth-century critics. With reference to the ideas of fairy tales and fantasy discussed, nineteenth-century fantasy for children embodied partially the concerns of function argued for in fairy tales, and partially the narrative features identified in fantasy.

C. Multiplicity in Christian Beliefs

1. Nineteenth-Century Context

In broad terms, as Owen Chadwick states in the beginning of *The Victorian Church* (1966), 'Victorian England was religious'.[73] Religion penetrated almost every corner of the community, ranged from the government to the slum. Although as Chadwick points out not even the prime minister necessarily went much to Church, 'everyone confessed England to be Christian and nearly everyone wanted to keep the country Christian or make it more Christian'.[74] Philip Davis also finds that in the mid-nineteenth century, at least 'a third of all books published were of a religious nature' and 'religious newspapers appeared and flourished'.[75] Religion influenced the public and the private lives of the century. Christian beliefs were the main sources that sustained the moral values of the nineteenth century. Yet, while records and statistics showed the falling number of church-goers of the Church of England, multiple forms of dissenters and other denominations were founded. The proliferation of the dissenting churches manifested the falling population of the Church of England as well as the increasing diversity in the interpretation of Christian belief. Some parishes even had more non-conformists than Anglicans. Catholicism, at the same time, was politically recognised. Its believers were legally permitted to stand for Parliament from 1828. The Oxford Movement, additionally, reignited the argument about the possible connection of the Church of England and Roman Catholicism. Simultaneously, the Evangelical movement revived in mid-century highlighted the necessity of developing an individual relationship with God. Its ideology fitted in particularly well with the fashion for writing children's books. Chadwick states that this movement was 'a great movement of the religious spirit' that 'touched every denomination besides Methodists'.[76] The impact of it is also widely noticed as one of the dominating religious movements at the time. In addition to the

[73] Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, Vol.1 (London: Adams and Charles Black, 1966), p.1
[74] Ibid., p.2
[75] Philip Davis, *The Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.99
[76] Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, p.5

existing diversity between the Church of England and dissenting churches, there were even a number of diversities in belief and practice within dominations.[77] The constant confrontation between different Christian beliefs revealed the fact that there were active participations of religious activities. Although different types of ecclesiastical institutions multiplied, they also contributed to wide-spread intellectual debates about Christianity.

Intellectual development in the nineteenth century, particularly Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection, severely challenged the authority of Christianity. To put it simply, Darwin's hypothesis of evolution rejected the privileged position of man and rooted out the Creation story in Genesis. Geology, similarly, renewed the understanding of the formation of the earth. Those scientific advancements overthrew many religious explanations of the earth, and resulted in doubts concerning the Creation story. Additionally, this century was a golden period of British missionaries, colonial expansion and business transactions with foreign countries. These activities brought back new ideas about other parts of the world. Foreign knowledge to some degree had radically changed Victorian society's understanding of their surroundings. More discussions on the challenges of scientific development will be included in the chapter on Kingsley. Kingsley, as Robert Lee Wolff comments, was one of those Victorians who still believed in the authenticity of religious truth. Victorian society still adhered closely to religious dogma, at least in terms of politics and mores. Yet because of all those intellectual challenges, there was a need for the Victorians to re-examine the way 'to practice their religion' and to believe it.[78]

The religious debates in the nineteenth century created an increasing body of autonomous interpretation upon religious issues. As aforementioned, the old order, associated with the

[77] Julie Melnyk, *Victorian Religion: Faith and Life in Britain* (London: Praeger, 2008), p.2
[78] Robert Lee Wolff, *Gains and Losses: Novels of Faith and Doubt in Victorian England* (London: John Murray, 1977), p.2

established Church of England, was increasingly challenged by dissenters and intellectual debates. The understanding provided by religious sources about the earth and the world after death had also been severely challenged. Julie Melnyk argues that the fall of the political dominance of the Church of England, the flood of new knowledge from foreign countries, science and history resulted in the creation of a religious free market and an 'increasing sense of individual choice in religious life'.[79] The multiplicity of Christian beliefs as well as the advancement of knowledge in various disciplines enforced the independence of individual interpretation about the world. Perhaps the nineteenth century can be read, as Melnyk puts it, as 'an era of religious controversy and, increasingly, of religious freedom'.[80]

The multiplicity of Christian beliefs and the religious diversity will be reflected in the selection of authors in this thesis. A.L.O.E. was an Anglican imbued with a strong evangelical spirit. Carroll, although he remained an Anglican for his whole life, believed unconventional ideas such as universal salvation. Rossetti had been a High Church Anglican while at the same time was considerably influenced by Catholic ideas. Kingsley was the Canon of Westminster, but he was also strongly interested in the theory of evolution and scientific subjects. MacDonald, originally a Calvinist, trained to be a priest in his Congregational Church until he was asked to resign due to his belief in universal salvation and purgatorial domains. It is evident that authors' interpretation of religion and responses to intellectual developments varied. Nevertheless, owing to their own theological ground, their Christian fantasies for children were able to give out their own distinctive blend of religious belief and fantastic narration.

2. 'Christianity' in Children's Literature

[79] Melynk, p.134
[80] Ibid., p.2

Before characterising Christian fantasy for children, it is necessary to identify the multiple meanings of Christianity in nineteenth-century children's literature. Perhaps it can be argued that Christianity was one of the main origins of children's literature. Although some critics locate the beginning of children's literature in the mid-eighteenth century with John Newbery's light reading—*A Little Pretty Pocket Book*, religious books have long been printed for young readers. John Rowe Townsend called the pre-mid-eighteenth century the prehistory of children's literature. Instructiveness was closely adhered to in children's books, though before the sixteenth century, instruction also refers to courtesy and manner. Townsend claims that there were two types of literature for children. One was these was made up of 'story material handed down over the centuries but not meant specially for children'; and in the second the 'material that was meant specially for children but was not story'.[81] In the sixteenth century, the Puritans argued that the romantic elements in children's texts were corruptive and ungodly elements. In the seventeenth century, the growing influence of the Puritans stressed heavily on religion and morals.[82] As M.O. Grenby lists, John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563), John Bunyan's *A Book for Boys and Girls* (1686), James Janeway's *A Token for Children being an Exact Account of the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths, of several young Children* (1672), Thomas Gills' *Instructions for Children* (1707) and Isaac Watts' *Divine Songs* (1715) were some of the early examples of children's religious books.[83]

[81] John Rowe Townsend, 'British children's literature: a historical overview', *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, ed. by Peter Hunt (London: Routledge, 1996), p.1252
[82] John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children: An Outline of English-language Children's Literature*, 5th edn. (London: The Bodley Head, 1990), p.4-6
[83] M.O. Grenby, 'The origins of children's literature', *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature*, ed. by M.O. Grenby and Andrea Immel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.4-5

The influence of Christian beliefs manifested in children's literature continued during the eighteenth century when the evangelicals saw the necessity to inoculate children with religious values:

> The effort to influence children's worldviews and psyches, to teach them what is considered essential to their well-being in this world or in the hereafter through appeals to their love of narrative and drama, has always characterized much if not all children's literature.[84]

Besides, *The Child Companion* claims that children's books were widely circulated in the nineteen century by the Religious Tract Society. It recruited some of the best authors of the time. Its publications were 'beautifully illustrated with engravings, and bound in styles to please the most refined taste'. While at the same time, the Society sold the books at 'less than half the price of the coarse and ugly books of former times'.[85] Those books helped raise the level of literacy and spread religious messages. In this way, those children's books printed by the Religious Tract Society were socially and religiously important to the English. With the efforts of the Religious Tract Society, along with another publisher of children's tracts: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Christian beliefs became almost an indispensable mark of children's texts. It is not until Carroll, Kingsley and MacDonald that religious materials start losing dominant roles in those texts. As Hunt describes:

> The greater range of reference in children's books, and the toppling of taboos of all kinds, [had] been paralleled by a decline in the influence of religion. The history of religion in children's books [had] been one of great influence in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (especially through the Sunday School movement), and then of a steady decline, to the point where, as mainstream publishing for children flourished in the 1950s and 1960s, it became a very small and eccentric corner of the industry.[86]

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[84] Naomi Wood, 'Introduction: Children's Literature and Religion', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol.24, No.1, Spring, 1999, p.1
[85] 'Sixty Years Ago', *The Child's Companion* (London: England), Monday, November 01, 1869; p.167; Issue XI
[86] Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, p.35

Nevertheless, Christianity still adhered closely to children's literature. Religious readings were widely used in schools. Perhaps Christian books stopped being the main literary taste of children's literature after the mid-nineteenth century, nevertheless, there were still many tract fictions and Christian magazines published over the course of the century.

The image of Christian belief in children's books can be illustrated by two prolific tract writers of the time: Mrs. Sherwood and Hesba Stretton (Sarah Smith). To Mrs. Sherwood, children's books were made to elevate the moral status of their young readers. Her renowned *The Fairchild Family* was impregnated with horrific images of death, graveyards, punishment and corpses. Sherwood stressed the depravity of children's nature and she had no fear of warning her young readers frankly about the eternal fire of hell. She considered images of punishment to be effective in shaping the morality of her young readers. As well as punishment, Christianity was also a guide to earthly life. Charles Trueman, for example, was the perfect character of an ideal child. He recognised his sinful nature and knew well about the possible punishment for sin. His death highlighted the predicament of the secular life and marked the glory of religion. In contrast to Sherwood, Hesba Stretton presented entirely different images of religion. Most of her novels were set in slums, in which Stretton stressed 'goodness and honesty, human kindness and generosity'.[87] Even if most of her characters suffered from different types of predicament, they kept 'faith and hope'.[88] Many of her child protagonists were ideal children who were innately good and well-prepared for religious faith. In her novels, God was immanent, and her protagonists were rewarded with the rise of social status, reunion of family or other forms of felicities. Although most of Sherwood's works were printed in the early period of the century while Stretton's were printed in the later, diversity in the images of Christian beliefs did not

[87] Cutt, p.138
[88] Ibid.

follow accordingly. Christian beliefs always embodied both images of the hard discipline and love in children's books.

Craig Werner and Frank P. Riga find that religious issues narrated in nineteenth-century children's literature functioned as a confirmed set of beliefs that master the universe.[89] The main job of religion was to provide 'the necessary mental and spiritual security to bring order out of chaos'.[90] In this sense, religious messages in Victorian children's books intended to render a stable cosmological order that can be preserved in any condition, even in the numerous religious debate of the century. And because of this stable cosmological mechanism, 'a person knew himself if he knew the relationship to God; that is, the way a person understood his role had everything to do with understanding the place in the world God had made for him'.[91] Christianity, in this sense, is responsible for building a framework for the future. It takes care of the individual by offering a set moral code, a pattern of living and duties. Naomi Wood furthers the argument of Werner and Riga as follows:

> Religion in children's literature functions as a mechanism of social ordering, of setting up hermeneutic categories with which to view the world. As such it is both ideological and imaginative: narratives are constructed to support an ideological understanding of the world and human behavior and also to reflect the category of cosmic organization defined by the particular religion or worldview that informs them.[92]

Wood's argument elaborates the original function of religion by narrowing its effects to the individual. In addition to the cosmic order and a stabilised social system, Christianity exists in children's literature as a form of ideology that provides a system of understanding the world and human beings. Nevertheless, the functions of religion have also undergone some changes. Since Christian beliefs were no longer framed into ecclesiastical doctrine and the individuals obtained

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[89] Craig Werner and Frank P. Riga, 'The Persistence of Religion in Children's Literature', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol. 14, Number 1, Spring 1989, p.2-3
[90] Ibid. p.2
[91] Ibid.
[92] Wood, 'Introduction: Children's Literature and Religion', p.1

more autonomy in shaping their religious beliefs in the nineteenth century, those functions of stabilising society and providing a moral code were no longer working in same pattern as before. Instead, the individualised belief of authors became the basis for the religious order in children's books.

D. Critical Understanding of Nineteenth-Century Children's Christian Fantasy

1. Christian Fantasy

Sammons defines religious fantasy as 'a work that integrates aspects of Christianity with elements of fantasy'. She highlights the wide-inclusiveness of the genre, making it general enough to include all literary works that contain 'aspects of Christianity'.[93] Nevertheless, among all those 'aspects of Christianity', several features are often included in religious fantasy. For example, God is always a crucial figure of this genre. Sammons states that 'in religious fantasy, the magic comes from God, and a central theme of the book is usually the characters' relationship to Him'.[94] His omnipotence is often demonstrated by His triumph over evil forces. Sammons finds that 'good versus evil is the plot of most fantasy', and 'good wins because God is considered the sovereign and absolute power'.[95] In religious fantasy, even the victory of mortal characters will be attributed to the 'good' of God. Additionally, religious fantasy also 'presents theological concepts, issues or moral values'. Christian themes such as 'creation, the reality of the supernatural, the end times, the importance of the individual, obedience, the inner quest, and the afterlife' are common characteristics of religious fantasy.[96]

[93] Sammons, p.2-3
[94] Ibid., p.2
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.

Manlove argues that different aspects of Christianity are included in religious fantasy, most obviously aspects of the supernatural. As he explains, Christian fantasy is 'a fiction dealing with the Christian supernatural, often in an imagined world':

> What we are concerned with are works which give substantial and unambiguous place to other worlds, angels, devils, Christ figures, miraculous or supernatural events (biblical or otherwise), objects of numinous power, and mystical relationship with some approximation of the deity; and all under the aegis of Christian belief.[97]

Like Sammons, Manlove argues that God serves as the nucleus of this genre. He is the authoritative power that permits the inclusion of both physical and metaphysical subjects in a religious fantasy. In general, to a Christian, although the Bible is considered to be true, its fantastic narrative has provided abundant sources for literary creation. At the same time, it is not uncommon to find in religious fantasy that the supernatural subjects are derived from pagan sources such as Greek or Roman mythology. It appears that as long as those supernatural aspects are under the 'aegis of Christian belief', or as Manlove later claims, the 'license of faith',[98] they become justifiable materials for Christian fantasy.

Apart from the centrality of God, the genre is understood also in terms of the relationship between supernatural objects and characters. Manlove explains that 'fantasy' is '*a fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of the supernatural with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms*'.[99] 'Supernatural', in the understanding of Manlove, refers to subjects that belong to 'another order of reality from that in which we exist and form our notions of possibility'.[100] And out of all those

[97] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.5
[98] Ibid., p.2
[99] Manlove, *Modern Fantasy: Five Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.1. The definition is italicised by the author.
[100] Ibid., p.3

qualities of fantasy, Manlove argues that the partial familiarity with supernatural subjects is *de rigueur* (necessary) to religious fantasy:

> The supernatural or impossible in fantasy is not simply strange and wonderful, nor is it considered in terms only of distance: the reader becomes partially familiar with or at home in the marvellous worlds presented, and the mortal characters establish relationships with beings or objects from the 'beyond'.[101]

The possible and the impossible world co-exist and each recognises the existence of the other. Mortal characters acknowledge the differences between their own world and the impossible one under the condition that the mortal characters find no discomfort in the coexistence of this alternative realm. To be only 'partially' familiar with the supernatural suggests that mortal characters are not forced to comply with the new orders of the impossible world. They only need to keep their awareness of this notion of other-worldliness. Manlove explains, 'in fantasy children meet and talk with a phoenix, or men with angels, the reader become closely acquainted with a world like Gormenghast or Arcturus'.[102] Furthermore, if the supernatural figures are taken as quotidian objects, this also means that the mortal recognises the immanence of the supernatural. However, instead of comfortable coexistence, in Christian fantasy, supernatural figures are not looking for establishing a cooperative relationship with mortal characters but are responsible for imposing conditions on the possible world. This form of relationship is shown in the fairy tale and fantasies, such as Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River*, Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* (1885) and Kingsley's *The Water Babies*. [103] Manlove does not explain the reason for these changes, but it is presumed that it is because the supernatural aspects of Christian fantasy often allude to God, an omniscient and omnipotent figure in control of the cosmic order, hence, the supernatural figures are in many cases superior to the mortals.

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[101] Ibid., p.9
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.

Along with the 'partial' recognition of the supernatural, the impossible world is another essential feature of Christian fantasy. Manlove explains that the alternative world is 'to cover whatever is treated as being beyond any remotely conceivable extension of our plane of reality or thought'.[104] 'Impossible world' means 'only the existence of the realm itself is impossible or wholly "other" in relation to ours, just as ours would be to it: the situation is one of two separate natures'.[105] And in religious fantasy, the 'impossible world' refers to a '"real" world' that 'is often not our universe… but is equated with the final Reality from which all worlds stem'.[106] Manlove's argument is probably derived from his observation that, 'For the Christian, only one fantasy has come true in our world without ceasing to be a fantasy—the story recounted in the Gospel'.[107] Hence, considering that most authors of religious fantasy are Christian, it is natural for them to project their wishes onto their fantastic creations. For example, Tolkien, similarly, argues that 'the Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories'.[108] As he explains, the Gospels 'contain many marvels—peculiarly artistic, beautiful, and moving: "mystical" in their perfect, self-contained significance; and among the marvels is the greatest and most complete conceivable eucatastrophe'.[109] Tolkien further explains that,

> this story [the Gospel] has entered History and the primary world; the desire and aspiration of sub-creation has been raised to the fulfilment of Creation. The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation…For the Art of it has the supremely convincing tone of Primary Art, that is, of Creation.[110]

[104] Ibid., p.3
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p.2
[107] Ibid.
[108] Tolkien, p.88
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., p.88-9

What Tolkien describes is that the Gospels are as a whole a religious fantasy of the secular world. Their plots and values indicate an ideal universe. The Gospels project the eucatastrophe, or a happy ending, of mankind. Although this world-to come is yet to be fulfilled, it is as substantial as the primary world.

Tolkien also believed that the Secondary world offers the realistic functions of recovery, escape and consolation. Recovery refers to a form of 're-gaining—regaining of a clear view' that can lessen the burden that mankind receives from a tiresome life on earth.[111] 'Escape' refers to a breakout from the constraints of the real world to the home, most probably implying the heavenly home in religious terms. Finally the consolation provided by fantastic writings refers to the 'eucatastrophe', a promised happy-ending that denies 'universal final defeat and in so far is *evangelium*, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond all walls of the world, poignant as grief'.[112] In this way, the impossible world is a refuge of mankind, in which man regains the spirituality eroded by the burden of the secular world. Clearly Tolkien takes the fantasy world as a reflection of religious values. Yet of course, for him narrative fantasy can never be as perfect as the Gospels. Although narrative fantasy is modelled after the Gospels, it can only partially reflect the religious truth.

Jackson regards those ideal values in the alternative world as references to Christian Platonism, which reads 'the "real" as the place where transcendental truth was reflected'.[113] 'Death', particularly, is taken as the way to reach this place of transcendental truth:

> Whereas more subversive texts activate a dialogue with this death drive, directing their energy towards a dissolution of repressive structures, these more conservative fantasies simply go along with a desire to cease 'to be', a longing to transcend or escape the human.[114]

[111] Tolkien, p.77
[112] Ibid., p.86, italicised by Tolkien.
[113] Jackson, p.145
[114] Ibid., p.156

To Jackson, fantasy itself embodies a strong sense of escapism which is expressed with regard to the strong desire for death. She finds that the Platonic idealism of both Kingsley and MacDonald was 'less of a transcendental movement, and more of a displacement of psychological and social issues, for their fantasies betray a dissatisfaction with their own idealism'.[115] Yet, it will be demonstrated later in this thesis that Kingsley and MacDonald did not betray a dissatisfaction with their idealism but reaffirmed it by focusing on 'psychological and social issues'. However it is essential to mention that in the process of defining Christian fantasy, the Platonic values of the impossible world have been noticed and argued for by some critics as one of the main features of nineteenth-century fantasy while it is not exactly shared by all nineteenth-century fantasy writers.

Last but not least, Manlove argues that the transcendental world is an anthropocentric religious reality, meaning that it is an ideal order that combines both secular interests and religious values. The alternative worlds, like Heaven and Hell, continue and refine 'human joys on earth—pastoral, sexual and familial'. In other words, 'heaven becomes a mode of utopia rather than a place where we may meet the "wholly other"'.[116] With the emergence of scientific ideas and Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century, Manlove claims that the immanence of God can successfully redeem a sense of 'spiritual meaning' in the world, which has been dehumanised by the aforementioned new phenomena. Though the centrality of God persists, nineteenth-century society has transformed from a more 'God-centred to a much more man-oriented Christian view of the universe'.[117] This shift of ideology from the other world to the

[115] Ibid, p.146
[116] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.157
[117] Ibid. In *Secret Gardens,* Carpenter argues that Manlove intentionally shapes his understanding of religious fantasy for Victorian and Edwardian writings for children. Even if Manlove's discussion in *Modern Fantasy* includes writers of adult fictions such as C.S. Lewis, J.R.R Tolkien and Mervyn Peake, Carpenter is still convinced about the fact that Manlove's understanding of fantasy is tailored for children's book writers like 'Kingsley, Carroll, MacDonald, Nesbit and Barrie'. Nonetheless, Manlove's definition has pointed out some essential ideas of religious

earthly world relocates religious supernatural aspects to a daily-life setting. Similarly, moving secular interests into the heavenly world also inoculates the heavenly world with a sense of familiarity. The impossible world in religious fantasy embraces religious values as well as addressing human needs.

To Manlove, nineteenth-century Christian fantasy can be briefly summed-up as having 'much in common with fantasy as we know it now, but each of these works is relatively isolated as a creation, and without many of the aims that we see in fantasy now'.[118] To a large extent it is true that Christian fantasy is hard to identify and to define because it does not have any specific narrative form or pattern. Christian fantasy is not just about 'virtues of patterns of Christian belief and narrative in them, but also through the inculcation of a feeling, an attempt to make us thrill imaginatively to a divine reality both near and far, both with us and other'.[119] To Sammons, similarly, the 'authentic morality' possessed in Christian fantasy is the most important aspect of the work.[120] As she states, 'the most important aspect of a work is the ideas that apply to our "real" world. Even though the work may contain an imaginary world, the meaning is considered true'.[121] Works are taken as Christian fantasies because they illustrate 'the central supernatural concerns of the Christian faith'.[122] Therefore, no matter how fabricated a Christian fantasy is, this genre is about the real belief—a divine reality.

2. Christian Fantasy for Children

Manlove argues that in children's fantasy, moralists of the nineteenth century and their public all emphasised the importance of the strict 'rules of magic' and absolute justice—an idea

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fantasy by its references to the significant authors of the Victorian period. At least, for Nikolajeva, Manlove's definition of fantasy is so far the most 'adequate description' of the genre.

[118] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.162

[119] Ibid., p.163

[120] Sammons, p.2

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

of 'clear rewards of merit and punishment of vice'.[123] To them, no matter how far-fetched children's fantasy might be, it still should be 'a genre founded on clear certainties and an ordered and just universe'.[124] As aforementioned, critics identify the main purpose of religious fantasy as reinforcing the centrality of God. A clear reward-punish system in children's religious fantasy can easily convey the impartiality of God. Secondly, Manlove argues that the physical and spiritual metamorphosis of characters was 'another recurring theme'[125] of children's fantasy. These changes help express the 'endless possibilities of life and the potential for evolution to higher forms' in a time when the Victorians were worn out by the industrialisation as well as the 'rigidities of moral and religious code'.[126] Manlove does not address the causes of those metamorphoses. However, it is fair to assume they are caused by religious beliefs. For example, in Kingsley's *Water Babies*, morality is the main cause that engenders the physical and spiritual changes of his characters. Perhaps it can be argued that Manlove simply generalises the characteristics of children's fantasy in his criticism. However, bearing in mind that it will not be possible to outline every possible characteristic of children's fantasy, his generalisation to some extent helps provide some basic guidelines in the study of children's religious fantasy.

Additionally, as Nikolajeva argues, it is the influence of German Romanticism that explains why English writers tend to use child protagonists in their children's fantasy.[127] MacDonald, for example, was a writer hugely influenced by German Romanticism. He once stated that Novalis' *Undine* was 'the most beautiful' among all fairy tales.[128] He included child protagonists in many of his children's books, such as *The Princess and the Goblin* and *The Princess and Curdie*.

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[123] Colin Manlove, *The Fantasy Literature of England* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p.167
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., p.173
[126] Ibid.
[127] Nikolajeva, *The Magic Code*, p.12
[128] MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination', p.5

However, apart from the impact of German Romanticism, traditionally, children's books tend to use a child protagonist. Hence, Nikolajeva just points out a general fact of children's books. In a way, Nikolajeva's speculation is accurate, but her argument is also too general. Nevertheless, although the focus of Nikolajeva's studies of religious fantasy is on E.S. Nesbit, she identifies that the cooperation of religious teaching and fantastical narrative had existed long before Nesbit. In fact, even the religious writings of Mrs Molesworth (1839-1921) and Mrs Ewing (1841-1885) included fantastical subjects. Perhaps in contrast to first impressions, fantastical elements were not so distant from religious instruction as many may assume. Nikolajeva's suggestion sheds a light upon the hidden history of the genre.

Unlike the critics mentioned above, Nelson argues that instead of understanding how religious messages are presented in children's fantasy, the fantastical genre itself can be studied as a necessary part of the didactic function of children's literature. Firstly, 'many religious writers see a connection between the literature of the impossible and the Christian didactic forms of allegory and parable'.[129] Even if Nelson does not examine why and how the connection between fantasy and allegory and parable is made, it is possible to link these three forms of writings together, as their literary meanings are often alluding to some other underlying contexts which are different from their surface meanings. Secondly, fantasy fits into the 'evangelical's emphasis on one's "personal apprehension of God"' which '[permits] and even [encourages] the development of an individual symbolic system'. [130] Accordingly, evangelical writers acknowledge the educational function of fantasy for children, as 'the entry of elements of the supernatural (the "above-nature")' of fantastic writings 'tended to induce in the reader a sense

[129] Nelson, *The Boys will be Girls*, p.148
[130] Ibid.

that what lies being our sense is what matters'.[131] In this way, fantastical writing helps the writers invoke introspection on religious matters. Thirdly, those writers support the fantastical because it 'takes place in a world alien to that of the reader, it supports religion in discouraging egotism'.[132] Fantastical narration, therefore, raises the efficacy of religion by encouraging individual comprehension of Christianity while denouncing egotism. Nelson's analysis is to some extent a breakthrough in studies related to children texts, religious instruction and fantasy writings. Her analysis shows another angle on how the three entities are intrinsically related to each other. Accordingly, it is possible that narrative fantasy is an appropriate vehicle for religious education.

E. Outline of the Thesis

The object of this thesis is to provide a coherent study of children's Christian fantasy by examining it through the works of several notable writers of this genre. Chapters are arranged in terms of the characteristics of the texts and their significance to the genre instead of in a straightforward chronological manner. It is not that the chronology is not important, as Manlove does in his discussion. This thesis is aiming at discussing the ideological cooperations and the conflicts among the selected text, and thereby, highlighting significant features and arguments of nineteenth-century children's Christian fantasy. To some extent, this thesis is laying down its discussion in a similar approach as what Nelson has done in *The Boys will be Girls* (1991). However, instead of arguing that fantasy is an appropriate literary form for didactic messages, this thesis is trying to provide a more comprehensive discussion by arguing that authors are implanting their own individual understanding of religion, fantasy, didacticism, entertainment and other important issues that they believe are essential to their writings into their texts. More

[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.

than arguing whether fantasy writing is fit for didactic religious message or not, the thesis is trying to explain nineteenth-century children's Christian fantasy in relation to the various angles that authors take in dealing with their texts.

The first two chapters will look into the religious fantasies that were still influenced by the evangelical tradition of children's literature. Didacticism was the main incentive of those literary creations while fantastical narration was taken as a complement to educational content. The first chapter will study the children's versions of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96) and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678-1684) printed in the nineteenth century. Although these reprints are similar to the original texts, they have been significantly changed to fit with the literary taste of the time. The second chapter will discuss A.L.O.E.'s *The Giant Killer: or the Battle that We must Fight* (1856), *The Young Pilgrim* (1857) and *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* (1864) mainly in terms of her effort in evidencing a fantastic reality. She attempted to present a reality in which God is immanent and Christians are living with faith and felicity. These two chapters will point out that the individual beliefs of authors are the nucleus of children's Christian fantasy and secular subjects become increasingly important to it.

The next two chapters will examine the religious fantasies that expend most of their energy in illustrating the relationship between individual beliefs and children's literature. The third chapter will analyse the renewed relationship between religious materials and fantastical writings in Lewis Carroll's *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*. The fourth chapter will study Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1873) in terms of her effort in reviving didacticism in children's books. These two chapters will show that religious fantasy for children is in brief a reflection of an author's belief. The battle between the didactic and the entertainment function is also the central concern of these two chapters. Yet unlike the evangelical or any other fantasy writers, Carroll

and Rossetti include aspects of both sides. It is only that the entertainment function of Alice is operated by ridiculing educational function and vice versa for Rossetti.

The next two chapters will turn to the religious fantasies of Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald. Their fantasies showed that religious fantasies are not confined to the tradition of evangelical writings, and at the same time, are not just devices of education and entertainment. The fifth chapter will examine Kingsley's *The Water Babies*. The chapter will look into Kingsley's attempt to discover God's traces in nature. The last chapter of this thesis will discuss George MacDonald's 'The Golden Key' (1863) and *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871). These texts illustrate MacDonald's ideas about the innate development of one's religious self. Some critics argue that Kingsley and MacDonald were trying to prove the existence of God. Nevertheless, as will be shown in the chapters, the two authors were assuring their belief by proposing a constant investigation of religious truth. These two chapters will mainly examine individual respond to religious issues and to the new intellectual development of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 1- Legitimisation of Religious Fantasy in Children's Literature—

The Faerie Queene and *The Pilgrim's Progress*

> Notwithstanding the popularity of John Bunyan's writings in the religious world I consider them extremely pernicious to young or ignorant people. I judge them from experience, without the least desire to weaken the effect of any sober work, calculated to promote virtue and rational piety. I have a strong objection to the use of allegories, emblems, and fables in early education: with adults who can understand and rightly interpret their application they may be harmless; but with children they are puzzling and misleading, as I found them to be.
>
> 'Reviews', *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal*[1]

This review of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678-84) recognises Bunyan's effort in teaching religious lessons, but condemns considerably the fantastical elements used in the narration, like 'allegories, emblems and fables'. It is clear that this critic believes religious materials and fantastical narratives belong to two opposing camps, and he or she asserts that the two entities are incompatible with each other. Drawn from his or her personal experience, the critic further argues in the review that a child 'knows nothing of double meanings, of symbolical or allegorical allusions', as his inexperienced mind is still pure and is not yet prepared for 'falsehood', 'deceptive appearances, allegorical allusions and conventional misunderstandings'. Therefore, for children, fantastical writing like Bunyan's is 'puzzling and misleading'.[2] Provided that a children's book is written for its readers' 'improvement' and instruction, the critic believes that it is necessary to present all those religious materials 'in the same literal form and expression in which they are literally received, understood, and interpreted'.[3] His opinion of children books was shared by many late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century children's book writers, who thought children were unable to distinguish between the 'real' and the 'imaginary' and believed

[1] 'Reviews', *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* (Leeds, England), Saturday, March 15, 1845; Issue 383
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

that children's books were written solely for didacticism. Yet, even if educational writings apparently dominated the market, especially early in the century, Christian fantasies such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590-96) were immensely influential, even resulting in a number of reprints and re-editions for young readers in the nineteenth century.

A. Critical Reception of the Children's Versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*

According to Brenda M. Hosington and Anne Shaver, twenty six children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* appeared between 1829 and 1929.[4] Most of them were printed in the latter half of the century.[5] The earliest edition recorded from this period was Eliza W. Bradburn's *Legends from Spenser's Fairy Queen, for Children* (1829). Alterations of the original content were made in some of the new versions, such as *Tales from Spenser's Faerie Queen* (1846), *The First Six Cantos of the First Book of Edmund Spenser's Faery Queene* (1870) by Rev. John Hunter, and the anonymously authored *Knights and Enchanters: Three Tales from The Faerie Queen* (1873). M.H. Towry's *Spenser for Children* was printed in 1878 and again in 1885 by 'The Children's Library'. Mary Macleod's *Stories from The Faerie Queene* (1897) was acclaimed both in England and America. It was reprinted in 1905 and 1908 in New York and London respectively. Sophia H. MacLehose's *Tales from Spenser: Chosen from The Faerie Queene* (1889), published by James MacLehose & Sons (Glasgow) in 1889 and re-edited in 1890 and 1892, was issued in 1893 and 1894 as part of the Macmillan's School Library Series.[6] MacLehose's edition printed for Macmillan in 1905 was also abridged and presented as a text for schools. As Hosington

[4] Brenda M. Hosington and Anne Shaver, '*The Faerie Queene*, children's versions', *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990), p.289

[5] David Hill Radcliffe, *Edmund Spenser: A Reception History* (Columbia: Camden House, 1996), p.123

[6] Hosington misspells the full name of MacLehose as 'Sophia M Maclehose' instead of 'Sophia H MacLehose'. She also misspells 'MacLehose and Sons', name of the publishing house, as 'Macklehose and Sons'.

observes, those children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* had two main functions—'to introduce young readers to a work of great literature and to afford moral instruction'.[7] Only six out of the number were printed 'for amusement or story-values alone', whereas all others 'stress the beauty and difficulty of the original and the purpose of its moral allegory'.[8]

Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, on the other hand, had long been read as a children's text since its first publication (1678). In the nineteenth century, it was presented in numerous new designs. They were described by George Offor:

> Some of his works, printed with the finest ink, on vellum paper, with all the elegant illustrations and embellishments which art can devise, and in sumptuous bindings, adorn the library of our beloved Queen, and the drawing-rooms of her nobles; while millions of copies, in a cheaper form, supply every class of society, even the humblest cottager.[9]

The various formats of *The Pilgrim's Progress* showed the wide reception of the text. At the same time, such variety in presentation indicated the fact that it had been developed as reading material for all classes. Since the beginning of the century it had been printed in multiple forms from '"thumb" size to folio' while there was 'a general preference for octavo'.[10] Those multi-form printings resonate with Bunyan's original purpose of writing for everyone: '[addressing] the hearts of the whole family of heaven—old and young, rich and poor, learned and unlettered—leading all classes to be found "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith"'.[11] Owing to the acclamation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as Offor observes, the Victorians took him as a national prose writer whose name was as 'identified with British Literature as that of Milton or of Shakespeare'.[12]

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[7] Hosington, p.289
[8] Ibid.
[9] John Bunyan, *The Whole Works of John Bunyan*, ed. by George Offor, Vol. 1 (London: Blackie and Son, 1862), vi
[10] Frank Mott Harrison, 'Editions of "*The Pilgrim's Progress*"', *The Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), p.75
[11] Bunyan, *The Whole Works of John Bunyan*, ed. by George Offor, vii
[12] Ibid., vi

It can be argued that all the aforementioned printings acted as a legacy of the fame that *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* had been having all those centuries. Nevertheless, their children's versions signified public acceptance of religious fantasy. Particularly, when the two books were enjoying their canonical status in literary studies, their modifications for young readers highlighted the fact that the literary discipline of children's books had to some extent accepted religious fantasy as a form of children's reading material.

The amount of reprinting and the variety of designs did not lead to an extensive critical reception. Certainly some criticisms are devoted to Bunyan's reception, such as W.R. Owens, Stuart Sim and James M M Francis' *Reception, Appropriation, Recollection: Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress* (2007) while W.R. Owens and Stuart Sim have a collection of essays on Bunyan. There are numerous of criticisms of Bunyan and Spenser, yet, in literary record of children's literature, books such as Harvey Darton's *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life* (1982), John Rowe Townsland's *Written For Children: An Outline of English Language Children's Literature* (1990), Peter Hunt's *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (1994) *and Children's Literature: An Illustrated History* (1995) and Seth Lerer's *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, From Aesop to Harry Potter* (2008) pay no attention to the children's versions of the two aforementioned texts. Though some versions of Spenser's text, like MacLehose's *Tales from Spenser* (1892) and Mary Macleod's *Tales from The Faerie Queene* (1898), were edited for school collections from the nineteenth century onwards, their pedagogical values was not discussed in educational reviews. Only two pieces of criticism on children's editions of Spenser are found. In *Edmund Spenser: A Reception History* (1996), David Hill Radcliffe provides a brief account of children's versions of Spenser's text with regard to their educational value; and in *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (1990), Brenda M. Hosington and Anne Shaver provide

a statistical survey on the publication history of children's versions of *The Faerie Queene*. Valuable as they are, these two studies do not analyse the topic in any depth.

In many cases, Bunyan's text was just one of the examples that manifest the prevailing religious influences on children's literature in the seventeenth century. Though there is a paucity of detailed analysis of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the study of children's literature, it is hard to argue that critics of children's literature do not recognise or acknowledge Bunyan's impact on the genre. Gillian Avery briefly mentions that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was widely read by Victorian children.[13] According to Joyce Whalley, the long printing history of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a children's book accounts for turning it into one of the most famous books in Victorian Sunday readings.[14] However, both Avery and Whalley do not elaborate their argument. Bunyan's text was also associated with the Puritans. In *Ministering Angel* (1979) Margaret Cutt traces the tradition of 'morality tales' to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is not only that some of the tracts have certain references to the book, but tract fiction for children originated from Bunyan's work. Educators, moralists, and writers of tract fiction were considerably influenced by Bunyan since their youth.[15] Lerer associates mainstream Victorian children's literature with *The Pilgrim's Progress* in its conception and presentation of the family unit. Townsend stresses the fact that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was not intended for an audience of children, but it turned out to be one of the great inspirations for many other children's works.[16] Bunyan's influence is discussed in Emma Mason's 'The Victorians and Bunyan's legacy'. She focuses on the similarities and differences between Bunyan's text and works such as Dickens'

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[13] Gillian Avery, 'Beginning of Children's Reading to c.1700', *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, ed. by Peter Hunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.23

[14] Joyce Irene Whalley, *Cobwebs to Catch Flies: Illustrated Books for the nursery and school room, 1700-1900* (London: Elek, 1974), p.59

[15] Cutt, *Ministering Angels*, p.82, 161, 172, and 183

[16] Townsend, *Written for Children*, p.6 and 'British Children's Literature: a historical review', *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, p.1253-4

The Old Curiosity Shop (1840-1) and *Christmas Carol* (1843), and L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of the Oz* (1900).[17] Her studies evidence the fact Bunyan's ideas indeed permeated nineteenth-century texts written both for and about children. Nevertheless, even if critics recognise Bunyan's influence in children's literature, there are only random discussions about this. As might be expected, there are even scarcer studies of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a religious fantasy for children.

Looking into the constant printing of Spenser's and Bunyan's texts, it is possible that there are some underlying incentives that generate and facilitate the creation of religious fantasy; but academia fails to recognise such a possibility. Indeed, this negligence can be explained by the assumption that children's Christian fantasy began in the mid-nineteenth century after the publication of John Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River* (1851). Sheila Egoff's 'The Golden Key: Fantasy of the Victorian Era' (1988), Colin Manlove's 'Children's Fantasy' (1999) and *From Alice to Harry Potter: Children's Fantasy in England* (2004), Stephen Prickett's *Victorian Fantasy* (2005) and Jackson's 'Victorian Fantasy' (1981) all start their examination of fantasy with works written around mid-century. In most cases, George MacDonald and Charles Kingsley were studied in relation to Victorian religious fantasy.

Still, have those reprints been totally neglected by critics? Not entirely: Darton briefly mentions Charles Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) in his discussion of fantasy. Versions of the *Canterbury Tales* for children are at least discussed in Velma Richmond's *Chaucer as Children's Literature: Retelling from the Victorian and Edwardian Eras* (2004). Reprinted religious fantasy has not gone totally unnoticed. It is, probably as with Darton's omission, not that critics are unaware of the publication of these classic texts for children, but rather that they

[17] Emma Mason, 'The Victorians and Bunyan's Legacy', *The Cambridge Companion to Bunyan*, ed. by Anne Ducan-Page (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

do not consider them worthy of critical attention. This is despite the fact that nineteenth-century critics and editors often compared adaptations of *The Faerie Queene* for children to Lamb's work.[18] Such negligence suggests that critics of the nineteenth-century fantasy novel have narrowed their discussion to nineteenth-century writers. They fail to recognise that religious fantasies of the past significantly influenced the development of nineteenth-century religious fantasy, or in some degree, are also part of the genre.

B. The Entertaining and Educative Values of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*

The children's versions of Bunyan's and Spenser's work can be studied as the primitive signifiers of children's religious fantasy, as well as barometers that manifest its development in the nineteenth century. This is because long before they were reprinted, both of them had already embodied the entertaining and educative values which nineteenth-century writers sought in children's books. According to *The Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Faerie Queene* was intrinsically attractive to child readers— 'children, before the cares of life reach them, live in a land of Romance; and Spenser ought to be a favourite with young people, for he is the most romantic of poets':[19]

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[18] *The Times* complained that M.H. Towry's *Spenser for Children* (1878) failed to convey Spenser's ideas to young readers, while Lamb delivered Shakespeare's messages efficiently. *The Times* also mentioned the potential risks in rewriting classic tales as the new versions could easily become 'the mere shadow of a name, or, in the effort to avoid the error, of falling into the opposite extreme and becoming possibly even more obscure than the obscurity it [was] desired to lighten', which Towry failed to avoid. MacLehose's *Tales from Spenser* was also compared to *Tales of Shakespeare* by *The Pall Mall Gazette*, which suggested that MacLehose's text was fashioned in the manner of Lamb's. MacLehose's text was deemed by *Birmingham Daily Post* to be as important as Lamb's *Shakespeare*. *Birmingham Daily Post* commented that MacLehose reminded English readers about or introduced young readers to Spenser's 'imperial and stately verse which [was] one of the chief glories of [English] literature', just as Lamb's tales similarly did with Shakespeare. For these reviews, please refer to 'Christmas Books', *The Times*, Thursday, December 19, 1878; pg. 3; Issue 29442; Col D; 'New Books', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Monday, December 16, 1889; Issue 7721 and 'Gift Books', *Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham, England), Friday, December 13, 1889; Issue 9819. Towry and MacLehose's editions of *The Faerie Queene* will be introduced later in this chapter.

[19] 'The Christians under the Crescent in Asia', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Monday, December 31, 1877, Issue 4013

> The divine beauty of the "Faerie Queene" they [adults] cannot appreciate and probably many grown-up people are in the same condition; but the adventures, the perils, the grim battles, the delightful scenes depicted with such wealth of illustration by the poet, are just such representations as young readers delight in[20]

The observation that a young reader might be delighted evinced a concern for the interest of the audience. The romantic plots, 'the adventures, the perils, the grim battles, the delightful scenes' had prepared *The Faerie Queene* for the century. Instead of providing didactic materials like those written in eighteenth-century evangelical texts, here, *The Faerie Queene* provides a sense of excitement to reading experience. In addition to the pursuit of spiritual enhancement in the growth of a child, editors were also concerned with the instant emotional reception of readers. Here, as the reviewer demonstrated, the emotional values brought by the fantastical writing of Spenser becomes an essential quality of children's text.

In Bunyan's case, the educational value of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was placed under the spotlight. It was written in the version of *The Pilgrim's Progress* printed in 1822 that,

> It does not indeed possess those ornaments which are so often mistaken for intrinsic excellence: but the rudeness of its style (which however characteristic of the subject) concurs to prove it a most extraordinary book; −for had it not been written with very great ingenuity, a religious treatise, evidently inculcating doctrines yet disesteemed by the unenlightened mind, it would not, in so homely a grab, have so durably attracted the attention of polished age.[21]

Rev. J.M. Neale, editor of *The Pilgrim's Progress: For the Use of Children in the English Church* (1853), argued that the religious teaching in *The Pilgrim's Progress* caused 'some degree of anxiety' if it had to be given to children in the Church of England.[22] Neale found that many members of the Church of England found no contradiction between their faith and Bunyan's, due to the fact that they superstitiously venerated the work. To Neale, certain beliefs of Bunyan were

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[20] Ibid.
[21] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress: from the World to that which to Come*, ed. by ed. by Rec. Messrs. Mason, Scott, and Burder (New York: William Borradaile, 1822), preface
[22] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress: For the Use of Children in the English Church*, ed. by Rev. J.M. Neale (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1853), v

ultimately false. In the preface, he warned parents about the possible flaws in the plots. If parents perceived 'its theology as utterly false' then as a result 'no good can possibly come from its perusal'.[23] They may have to omit part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* or even forbid any reading at home. Neale's concern about the 'correctness' of Bunyan's text manifested the traditional usage of the text. Whether or not the beliefs and religious practice narrated were agreed by parents or not, it is conspicuous that the educative value of Bunyan's text had caught the attention of the public.

It is true that the two works were respectively attentive to the emotional and educational needs of nineteenth-century children, but on the other hand, some of their features were incompatible with the literary taste of the time. One of these problems was the allegory in Spenser's text, as *The Pall Mall Gazette* identified:

> Unfortunately for [children], [Spenser's] wonderful poem is an allegory; and unfortunately, too, so far as Spenser [is] concerned, Spenser's leisurely movement and his digression [were] apt to weary them, while much of his finest poetical work [was] altogether beyond their range.[24]

This critic found that even if Spenser's text were one of the finest in literature, the work was too complex and sophisticated for young readers. Allegorical writings and 'leisurely movement', referring to the development of plot, undeniably raised difficulties of comprehension. The tediousness in understanding Spenser was also noticed in many other criticisms. *Saturday Magazine*, quoted by Rev. John Hunter in *The First Six Cantos of the First Book of Spenser's Faery Queene*, argued that the long, sustained allegorical writing of *The Faerie Queene* made the text 'tedious and uninteresting'.[25] John W. Hales, editor of the reprinted version of *The Faerie Queene* in 1897, said that the 'great hindrances to the popularity of *The Faerie Queene* [were] its

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[23] Ibid., viii
[24] 'The Christians under the Crescent in Asia', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1877)
[25] Edmund Spenser, *The First Six Cantos of the First Book of Spenser's Faery Queene*, ed. by Rev. John Hunter (London: Longman, 1870), x

enormous size and its unmanageable structure'.[26] Other than the lengthy and allegorical narration, in the Note of *The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse or on Holiness* (1871), the editor stated,

> The length of [Spenser's] great poem, its involved allegories, one running parallel with or rather underlying the other, and the real, though easily surmountable difficulties presented by the archaic peculiarities of his diction, have deterred many beginners from making any real progress.[27]

The archaic language of Spenser, which was already considered burdensome even in his own time, would be a barrier for nineteenth-century audiences. Additionally, in Hales' opinion, Spenser failed to develop his ideas systematically: 'confused amidst such a multitude of persons, and adventures, and interests; the central story eludes his comprehension', Spenser seemed 'to be entangled in a clueless labyrinth, with fresh, strange faces meeting him at every turn'.[28] Apart from those 'defects' in structure and narration, Hales criticised the work for its flatness in characterisation. As he stated, Spenser's characters lacked 'flesh and blood, that they do not live and move and have their being after the manner of men, but [were] rather phantoms'.[29]

In the case of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Joseph Cundall argued that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was 'overlaid with repetition and conversations about questions of doctrine which children cannot possibly understand'.[30] Even if many reprints of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the nineteenth century kept the original language of the text, the religious disposition mentioned by Neale earlier could be made more problematic by rendering the text more accessible to young readers. In *The Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century* (1849), William R. Weeks said that, despite his veneration of the originality of Bunyan, he perceived 'some mistakes into which Bunyan had

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[26] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, edited by John W. Hales (London: J.M. Dent, 1897), xxxi

[27] Edmund Spenser, *The Legend of the Knight of the Red Crosse or of Holinesse: The First Book of Spenser's Faerie Queene* (London: Sampson Low, 1871), v

[28] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* , edited by John W. Hales, xxxi

[29] Ibid.

[30] John Bunyan, *The Children's Pilgrim's Progress: The Story taken from the work by John Bunyan* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1860), Preface

fallen, in a theology generally sound'. Thus, Weeks rewrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* 'in which those mistakes should be avoided, and which should be adapted to the present times'.[31] It was unknown that whether Weeks' edition, which was published in New York, was made for American audience only or not. Nevertheless, Weeks' intention was welcomed by Rev. Dr. Cooke, who said 'the central design of the work is to preserve the purity and power of revivals of religion, by guarding against the errors, delusions, and harmful measures that tend to corrupt them'. Whether or not the target audiences were British or Americans, it was vital to distinguish the true and false religious views in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, for the reason that the book was generally used as an educational device for young readers.[32]

Those 'defects' mentioned would potentially impede the circulation of the two texts unless they were being rewritten in a manner that fit in the literary taste and religious disposition of the nineteenth century. Apart from the incompatibility between nineteenth-century audiences and the two texts, these reviews of the children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* significantly reflected editors' awareness of children's needs. In this sense, critics were not only paying attention to the cooperation of religious content and fantastical writing, they were looking into the ways that these religious fantasies of the past should be modified for the Victorian age. Through the act of rewriting *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, critics looked for specific ways of composing religious fantasy for the nineteenth-century children.

C. Reedited Versions for Children (In General)

In response to 'defects' in the original text, editors believed that it was necessary to restructure the original texts. For example, in George Burder's *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*

[31] William R. Weeks, *The Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: M.W. Dodd, Brick Church Chapel, 1849), preface
[32] Ibid., Notices of the Work

Versified: for the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth (1804), Bunyan's prose was rewritten into verse. Burder expected that this narrative form was 'peculiarly acceptable to young persons, that it would entertain them more than in prose, and make a more durable impression on their memory'.[33] Verse was chosen probably because of its similarity to nursery rhyme, a form of narration that provided in an entertaining way a first literary education for children. With verse in this style, this new version of *The Pilgrim's Progress* became more memorable and captivating, and it was able to delight the mind of young audiences. This 'durable impression' then served as a preparation for young readers in approaching Bunyan's work later in life. In some other versions for children, such as Isaac Taylor's *Bunyan explained to a child; being pictures and poems, founded upon The Pilgrim's Progress* (1824), additional information was inserted. Taylor introduced a supplementary text for teachers. He was hoping that while *The Pilgrim's Progress* was used as a teaching material for Sunday schools, his commentary will 'direct the Children to find the texts referred to in this work and to repeat them when convenient'.[34] In the first edition of Taylor's rewriting, Christian's journey was newly divided into fifty-one chapters. Each chapter included a short verse and an illustration, which were implemented to highlight the moral lesson and to explicate Christian's religious journey to young readers in a clearer manner. Rather than rewriting the text in a new form of narration like Burder's, and adding in new sections as in Taylor's, in some other versions editors changed Bunyan's diction into simpler and easier language. For example, Spenser's story had been completely rewritten in *Holiness; or The Legend of St. George: a Tale from Spenser's Faerie Queene, by A Mother* (1836). As aforementioned, Joseph Cundall, editor of *The Children's Pilgrim's Progress: The Story taken*

[33] George Burder, *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress Versified: for the Entertainment and Instruction of Youth* (London: T. Williams, 1804), iii

[34] Isaac Taylor, *Bunyan explained to a child; being pictures and poems, founded upon The Pilgrim's Progress, Part II* (London: Frances Westley, 1825), preface

from the work by John Bunyan (1860) argued that the text was full of repetitions and difficult conversations. As a result, he rewrote the whole text in a manner that he described in his Preface: 'all the story of the allegory [was] given in the Author's own words, (with occasional exceptions)'. Long conversations presented in the original text were also removed.[35]

The Faerie Queene was often restructured in a similar way for young readers. Like those rewritings of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Spenser's text was rewritten to bring it closer to other modes of children's books. *The Story of the Redcross Knight from Spenser's Fairy Queen* (1885, 1891) by R.A.Y. started off with a fictional character, Aunt Alice, telling the story of *The Faerie Queene* to a group of children. This reference to Spenser's work was an imitation of other children's domestic stories, such as Mrs. Molesworth's *The Tapestry Room: a child's romance* (1885). In addition to providing a familiarity of textual form to child readers with a similar narrative pattern to other children's books, this story-telling scene in a household setting also mimics actual family-based reading practice. Owing to the familiar family setting, the journeys that knights and heroes underwent in the poem now mirror the life journeys of both child audiences and readers. Besides a familiar narrative pattern, other editors of *The Faerie Queene* removed its allegorical nature for young readers. They intended to simplify the outline of the original text and make it more enjoyable. To some writers, the children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* served as a foretaste of Spenser's original text. In the preface to *Spenser's Britomart: From Book III, IV and V of The Faerie Queene* (1896), Mary E. Litchfield suggested that her book was 'a delight rather than a task'.[36] Even though notes and explanations were included, they '[contained] only such information as [was] necessary to the intelligent study of the

[35] Ibid.
[36] Mary E. Litchfield (ed.), *Spenser's Britomart, from book 3, 4 and 5 of the Faery Queene* (Boston, USA & London: Ginn & Co, 1896), iv

poem'.[37] She also wrote a list of readings that students should refer to if they were furthering their studies about *The Faerie Queene*.[38] As John Du Hale put it, 'We are sure that for all young readers such a version of Spenser's stories as is given in this volume may be truly serviceable in preparing them for the study of the poem itself'.[39] In an attempt to postpone spiritual and religious lessons, Christian allegory within the original texts was removed. In other words, those rewritings made fantasy a facilitator for religious education. The excitement aroused by the entertaining narration kept the students' interest upon the text such until as time they had to learn about the moral lessons that lay beneath the fun. This is not to say that religious didacticism was entirely absent from the children's versions of *The Faerie Queene*, but editors claimed that their new versions should be taken as a foretaste of the original work.

D. Rev. Isaac Taylor's *Bunyan explained to a child; being pictures and poems, founded upon The Pilgrim's Progress* (1824) and M.H. Towry's *Spenser for Children* (1878)

The restructuring of Spenser's text in Towry's *Spenser for Children* was not made merely for the sake of easy reading. Towry filtered the pedagogical messages by expanding and bowdlerising certain parts of the original text. Hosington notes that Towry's version of *The Faerie Queene* was 'the most amusingly bowdlerized: Lust [was] omitted completely from the parade of Sins, but Error's vomit [was] described in lavish details'.[40] The three long stanzas which originally described the appearance, costume and character of Lust were entirely removed. Adult readers might have noticed the problem of having only six out of the seven sins, but it seems that Towry thought it unnecessary to clarify this. Lust, as an emotion and subject matter, was deemed an inappropriate subject for young readers. At the same time, Towry saw the need to

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid. xxv
[39] Mary Macleod, *Stories from the Faerie Queene* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton, 1897), xx
[40] Hosington, p.289

expand the character 'Error'. Error's vomit was described briefly in the original text, but in his edition, Towry greatly extended the scene into two pages. Error, or Errour (for Towry kept the original spelling by Spenser), is a gruesome half-serpent, half-womanly monster, whose children are deformed physically and mentally. Error's vomit is described as 'a flood of poison, horrible and black, mixed with frogs and toads without eyes' and 'a flood of small serpents and foul deformed monsters, black as ink'.[41] Through her vomit, Error is shown to be innately corrupt. Towry also revealed later on in the text that instead of Error feeding her children, they eat her. Error and her children exhibit a devilish and inverted picture of a parent-child relationship. In representing a maternal figure, a person of central significance to most young readers, the first lesson in *Spenser for Children* is shown to be overthrowing this unnatural order. The mistakes in this plot are eliminated by killing Error.

Instead of simply translating Spenser's text into modern language, Towry modified the original materials to promote moral lessons. The selection by the editor reflected her understanding of how and in what way religion should be presented to young readers. Fantasy was supplemented by Christian ideas which the author approved as having a pedagogical advantage. It was not just that fantasy is the sugary exterior of a religious text, but that religious ideas also enrich the value of fantasy writing. By this cooperation between religious ideas and fantastic narration, the values of both were mutually enhanced. The sorts of alterations made by Towry demonstrated that didacticism remained a central part of Victorian children's literature, even for texts that inhabited an explicitly fantastical idiom.

Similar to Towry, Taylor's *Pilgrim's Progress* was also aimed for instruction. His introduction was written in a form of a letter, in which he addresses his readers directly. He laid out the messages for his readers, hoping that young readers will read the text in the way he

[41] M.H. Towry, *Spenser for Children* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), p.5

wished. In his description of Christian's journey, he also openly lays out the steps of being a 'true Christian':

> His setting out on his journey, therefore, means his being converted; becoming serious, beginning to pray, to repent of his sins, to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk in all the ways of religion heartily. His journey represents his living a life of holiness and piety, and shews also the temptations, difficulties, and joys which a Christian may expect to meet with in so doing.[42]

Apart from delineating the lessons right from the beginning, instructive glosses were inserted into the religious journey of Christian. For example, Taylor's comment on the return of Pliable that, 'The world will despise you if you go on, certainly, but they will despise you too, if you turn back'[43] came right after the moment Pliable turns back. This suggests that rather than simply condemning the act of Pliable, Taylor was deliberately outlining to the readers the consequence of leaving religion. The comparison between characters and audiences turned the allegorical writings of Bunyan into direct religious lessons. Sometimes, Taylor not only added new lines, but also a whole passage of educational doctrine. In the chapter named 'Christian's Battle with Apollyon', the fight between Christian and Apollyon, which itself is a metaphor for the fight between humanity and Satan, was replaced with plain didactic passages. After this, the editor also removed the original allegorical appearance of those characters of The House of Beautiful. The religious messages embodied in the original texts were made explicit and none of those emblematic images were kept. In Taylor's work, those allegorical characters become straightforward teachings.

Children are but little acquainted with their own minds, for they do not often think what they are thinking about. Yet they may be aware, that sometimes they are talking to themselves, in their own thoughts; thus, I should like to do this, or that. Then again, they think it is naughty, and they had better not. Then again, but I should like it, and I will. Mamma will not see me so they actually do something wicked this is being temped, and yielding to the temptation

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[42] Isaac Taylor, *Bunyan explained to a child; being pictures and poems, founded upon The Pilgrim's Progress, Part I* (London: Frances Westley, 1825), p.3

[43] Ibid., p.20

If Satan tempts children to do what is evil, he certainly tempts grown people also. Especially, when he finds any, who are setting out for heaven, he always tries to hinder them
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It is well ever to have it in our mind, -- that we must flee from the wrath to come: and, that no one has the words of eternal life but Christ. Those who resist Satan with the shield of faith, trusting in Christ, and the word of the Spirit, which is the word of God, shall find that they are made more than conquerors, through his love, however terrific the battle may be; and they shall be comforted afterward too, by some leaves of the tree of life.[44]

Taylor fostered on the text's educational efficacy by giving up Bunyan's obscure metaphorical writings and replacing them with clear moral lessons. Perhaps after supplementing these religious passages, the text may appear overtly instructive. Yet, those plain descriptions of religious ideas also strengthened the power of fantastical writing without downplaying the moral didacticism of the texts. The explicit lessons have created meanings for fantastic narration. It is because the didactic elements have been shown in such a public manner that the fantastic narration does not become mere sentimental writing.

Furthermore, on some occasions, moral lessons are purposefully disguised as actions and adventures in these religious fantasies. Initially, Towry and Taylor expected to enhance the entertainment value of the two original texts. Towry commented that in *The Faerie Queene*, 'many of the episodes in the poem, though comprising some of the finest descriptive parts, have little or no action, and have, therefore, been necessarily omitted'.[45] The dearth of action was then replaced by Towry with her elaborative narrative of battle scenes and conflicts. Towry developed the text in this way for the readability and interest of young readers. Also, as she observed,

> In Book III. and IV. of the "Faerie Queene" the plot [was] so entangled that it would be difficult for young readers to follow the threads of the different adventures which [were] here given separately, but entirely without repetition.[46]

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[44] Ibid., p.50-2
[45] Towry, M.H., *Spenser for Children*, preface
[46] Ibid.

Accordingly, she separated Spenser's epic into six tales without adhering to the original chapter divisions or structure. Book Six of Courtesy was not included in Towry's collection, and the story of Camel and Trimond in Book IV came in front of Book III. Stories of Britomart and Florimell, which both originally belonged to Book III, were separated into two tales. Structuring these in such a way placed close focus upon one main character per tale. The adventures of the knights were subsequently more clearly and consistently presented after the new arrangements. Although the original text is shortened, the new arrangements remove redundant description and concentrate on the adventure of the heroes. The Christian virtues and the moral code of heroes are subsequently highlighted. The editor carefully selected materials from the original text as well as adding more appropriate ones for young readers. In this way, these alterations enhanced the readability of the text and underscored messages. Instead of being presented later in a child's life or behind fantasy as the supporting principles as aforementioned, Christian values in this case was incorporated into the characterisation and setting.

Though centring the story upon the protagonist and his adventures, the antagonistic relationship between good and evil was highlighted. Taylor emphasised the triangular relationship between man, Satan and Jesus in his introduction. He reinforced the danger posed by Satan in the daily lives of humans for the purpose of highlighting the weaknesses of human nature and the salvational role of Jesus. He listed those biblical references which are related to the degeneration of human beings, and asserted that human decadence was the result of being tempted by Satan. With reference to this relationship between Satan, Jesus and mankind, Taylor advised his readers to rely on Jesus Christ, who 'loves children well, and wishes them all to come to heaven'.[47] The loving Christ and destructive Satan formed a confrontational

[47] Taylor, p.5

relationship. Children were asked to identify with the roles of repentant sinners, who understood their own weaknesses against Satan and their need for Jesus' salvation. Taylor claimed that,

> Those who resist Satan with the shield of faith, trusting in Christ, and the word of the Spirit, which is the word of God, shall find that they are made more than conquerors, through his love, however terrific the battle may be; and they shall be comforted afterward too, by some leaves of the tree of life.[48]

Clarifying such a relationship among the three turned the pilgrimage into a series of conflicts between good and evil, as well as showing how human beings can position themselves in this battle. From the beginning of the text, Taylor designed this conflict as a dynamic that will shape his narration. Looking into all aforementioned structural re-arrangements as well as the antagonistic relationship among characters, both Towry and Taylor purposefully re-organised the original work into adventurous tales.

Through battles and a clear distinction between the good and bad, heroes are admired and villains are reprimanded. This means that the editors based their religious fantasy on ideas of absolute justice. Christian and the Knight of the Red Cross, for instance, constantly triumphed over their enemies. G.W. Kitchin, editor of *Book I of The Faery Queene* (1869), claimed that 'vivid descriptions of human qualities', 'true nobility of soul in man and woman', and 'the intrinsic baseness and misery of selfishness and vice' revealed 'lessons of religious and moral truth' to young readers.[49] In Taylor's *Pilgrim's Progress,* Christian is presented as a type of true pilgrim, whom readers should admire and imitate. In the episode of 'Doubting Castle', while Christian is praised by his faithfulness, Taylor noted: 'God will give bitter suffering to careless walkers. Giant Despair shall teach them the evil of wandering. But God will not leave in his hand such as are true pilgrims'.[50] Christian's success in escaping the castle is equated to the

[48] Ibid., p.52
[49] Edmund Spenser, *Book I of The Faery Queene,* ed. by G.W. Kitchen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1869), xxi
[50] Taylor, p.79

accomplishment of a ‘true pilgrim’, depicting Christian as a hero and in consequence, empowering this religious model. Fantasy writing is the means by which this characterisation is best achieved, as the protagonists shows their virtuous character by undergoing fantastic and magical journeys. The heroic characters of the two texts became literary examples and their experiences demonstrated a series of moral instructions. In this case, while heroic figures demonstrated the victory of virtue, their antagonists exemplified the opposite. In addition to the dividing line between virtue and vice, heroic figures who bear Christian virtues became the idols for admiration and imitation while evil characters were condemned. Religious messages were realised by these fictional characters, making the virtuous representative of religious victory. Through fantasy writing, Christianity created for itself an unconquerable position, which simultaneously instilled such beliefs in reality, particularly when child readers relate themselves to characters such as Christian. In the editions of Towry and Taylor, fantasy coated the religion with fascinating tales. This was done not only to attract young readers, but educational Christian ideas also enrich these elements of fantasy. This cooperation between fantasy and Christianity results in a mutual empowerment, and neatly balances Christian fantasy in the education-fantasy dichotomy of nineteenth-century children’s literature.

E. Public Recognition of Children’s Christian Fantasy

1. Family Reading

The combined didactic and entertaining function of the two texts was extended from literature to relevant social activities. *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was used by families, particularly those of the middle and upper classes, for educating their children about religion and morality. William Mason introduced his edition as an appropriate form for family reading, describing this edition as a version that was ‘well adapted for the purpose of reading to their [parents’] children and

servants on Lord's-day evening'.[51] According to *The Times*, 'benevolent uncles and aunts played for safety when they chose this as their present; the most censorious parents could not object to it; and it was indeed among the very few story books which might be opened on Sundays'.[52] *The Pilgrim's Progress* became a popular collection in the Victorian family library. As *The Bradford Observer* claimed in 1853, 'no family library can be completed without Bunyan's *Pilgrim*'.[53] All these comments appropriately pointed out the culture of reading *The Pilgrim's Progress* in familial environment. Furthermore, Mason also stressed in *The Bradford Observer* that his edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was 'neatly printed, in a clear, bold type, and bound with great taste and elegance—forming a suitable book for the drawing-room table or the library shelf'.[54] References to the 'drawing-room table' and 'library shelf' consolidated the fact that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was widely popular and read at home. Other than Mason's edition, several editions for families were printed. In 1873-4, James Sanster & Co combined Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress, Holy War* and *Grace Abounding* into a family edition.[55] It was introduced by Rev Landels' 'An essay on the life, writings, and genius of John Bunyan', in which he expounded Bunyan's life with detailed biographical data and his comments about other printed works of Bunyan. This sophisticated analysis of Bunyan's works was designed to be read by adults, most probably the parents. The text was glossed with biblical sources to which it alluded. Explanations of religious allegories were also provided. These commentaries were written for the purpose of intellectual and serious study. In the family editions, fonts were much larger than in other editions. This was for the convenience of children as well as for adults, who

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[51] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. by Rec. Messrs, Mason, xiii

[52] 'John Bunyan', *The Times*, Wednesday, Aug 31, 1938, pg.11, Issue 48087; Col C

[53] 'Literary Notice. John Bunyan', *The Bradford Observer* (Bradford, England), Thursday, July 21, 1853; pg. 7; Issue 1013; *19th Century British Library Newspaper: Part II*

[54] William Mason, 'Literary Notes', *The Bradford Observer*, (Bradford, England), Thursday, September 20, 1838; pg. 4, Issue 242, *19th Century British Library Newspaper: Part II*

[55] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, Holy War and Grace Abounding*, family edition (London: James Sangster & Co, 1873), xiii

usually took up the responsibility of reading the text in front of other family members. Coloured illustrations that filled the entire page were included and illustrations in various forms appeared in almost every other page. These features indicated the wide acceptance of educative religious messages in the form of fantasy writings. Family reading manifested the public acceptance of using fantasy writing in religious education.

2. School Editions

Besides being family reading, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Faerie Queene* as a form of school text also manifested the social recognition of religious fantasy. As aforementioned, some versions of *The Faerie Queene* were made as a foretaste of the original text. Yet, more than just an easier version of the original, some texts were made specifically for educating students about Spenser. *Book I of the Faery Queene* (1869) for example, was made purposefully for school usage. As the editor G.W. Kitchin claimed, this volume of Spenser was 'intended to give students in English literature some [notions] of the style and manner of the poet'.[56] In this version, notes were given to explain 'the historical and other allusion, or pointing out grammatical peculiarities, or giving references to the passages which Spenser seems to have imitated'.[57] Moreover, other than addressing the book to students, Kitchin also set out clear guidelines to teachers about the main purpose of this edition. He stated that teachers should use this book to benefit their students in four ways: the training of the poetic faculty, interest in the history of the latter half of the sixteenth century, an insight into English language, and lessons of religious and moral truth.[58]

3. Theatrical Production

[56] Edmund Spenser, *Book I of The Faery Queene,* ed.by G.W. Kitchin, xx
[57] Ibid., xxi
[58] Ibid.

Theatrical performances of *The Pilgrim's Progress* revealed a wider scale of acceptance of the religious-didactic function of fantasy writing. George MacDonald and his family staged the second part of Bunyan's text for twelve years and toured England from 1877 to 1889. According to *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, the performance adhered closely to the original text. This was because MacDonald intended to present an educational moral drama to the audience, particularly for children.[59] *The Leicester Chronicle and Leicestershire Mercury* stated that the educational purposes of the play could be achieved, as 'the whole play [was] admirably adapted to the stage... its production ought never to fail in attracting large audience'.[60] Actors and actresses were able to dramatise Bunyan's religious messages, or as the *Leicester Chronicle* put it, performed the 'spirit of the play'. Of course, there were negative reviews such as the one given in the *North Wales Chronicle*, whose editor severely criticised the act of putting what he termed a Christian message in the playhouse. They claimed that what MacDonald did was a mode of performance that could only lead to the distortion of religious messages.[61] Nevertheless, regardless of the mixed reviews, the educational purpose of this play was still perceptible. Greville MacDonald, the eldest son of George MacDonald, claimed that the play was his father's mission in the world, and 'wherever the family, among rich or poor, in public hall or private house, *The Pilgrim's Progress* awakened deep enthusiasm and spiritual uplifting'.[62] It is hard to assess the actual influence of this form of pedagogy in the performance. Nevertheless, it has been documented that the MacDonalds practiced Bunyan's educational ideas in their own lives. The family members called each other by the name of the roles that they acted

[59] 'The Highfield Lectures', *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* (West Yorkshire, England), Wednesday, September 19, 1883; pg. 3; Issue 5032
[60] 'Multiple News Items', *Leicester Chronicle and the Leicestershire Mercury* (Leicester, England), Saturday, October 1879; Issue 3578
[61] 'Miscellaneous News', *North Wales Chronicle* (Bauger, Wales), Saturday, November 29, 1879; Issue 2737
[62] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* (London: Gerge Allen & Unwin, 1924), p.502

on stage and identified themselves with Bunyan's characters. According to Louisa MacDonald, wife of MacDonald, '*The Pilgrims* has [become] such a reality to [them] that it seems *a duty* to do it—from the multitude of *testimonies* we have had to the moral and good of the play'.[63] The fantasy pilgrimage of *The Pilgrim's Progress* represented a real journey for the MacDonalds. Not only did they practice the lessons in real life, they took up the duty to educate the public about the religious messages of Bunyan.

Additionally, an audience's imagination is also highly engaged in the play, turning the literary values of the play into their real life motto. Winifred Troup, daughter of George MacDonald, described how the play was performed with very few props and a simple stage. In a printed version of the play, she stated that, 'except in the second scene, where a wicket-gate and paling are needed, no scenery was used: the stage was hung with curtains of appropriate colour and design to each scene'.[64] Actors and actresses played multiple roles. With a simple stage design and multi-roled actors, audiences were asked to use their imagination to fill in the details of the story, drawing on their own knowledge of Bunyan's text. As Joseph Johnson writes, with the 'simplicity of production', those 'who came and heard and saw the rendering of the old story… went away feeling that no performance could be more unpretentious and reverential. Every thing was subordinate to the real meaning of Bunyan's dream'.[65] MacDonald transposed the mental experience of reading Bunyan's text to a visual reception through a theatrical production. By virtue of its performing aspect, the play naturally drew the fantasy world and the real world closer. In other words, Bunyan's pilgrimage was no longer confined to the page. The theatrical

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[63] Ibid., p.501

[64] Louisa MacDonald, *Dramatic Illustrations of Passages from the Second Part of The Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1925), preface. For further information about MacDonald's stage, please refer to Rachel Johnson's essay, 'The MacDonald Family and *Pilgrim's Progress*', *North Wind* 8 (1989), p.6-7

[65] Quoted by Rachel Johnson, 'Pilgrims: The MacDonalds and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*', *North Wind* 21 (2002), p.20

performance thus better represented real life experiences. To the extent that MacDonald was austere in his setting, the audience's imagination was to fill in the more extravagant elements of the material from which he was working. In this sense, Bunyan's religious lessons were also being experienced spiritually.

F. Characteristics of Children's Christian Fantasy

1. Imaginative Participation of Readers

It was not simply that the imaginative involvement of audiences happened in theatrical production, but that the texts themselves also invited readers' imaginative participation. These rewritten versions introduced not only the fictional roles of the characters, but also the narrator and the audience. These additions to the original version enhanced readers' imaginative experience with the text and at the same time restricted it for the sake of education. Children, in this case, were steered towards an acceptance of the religious beliefs of the editors. In *Spenser for Children,* Towry used 'we' to address herself and her audiences: 'Let us now return to the fair Una, whom we left abandoned', 'We must now tell the true faith of the Red Cross Knight'.[66] By using 'we' and 'us', Towry created a psychological intimacy between herself and her audience. These deictic terms bring Spenser's story into the contemporary age for young readers, and at the same time, invite them to imaginatively participate in the text. When the tales were read or spoken by a narrator to young readers, they went through the story together, turning the reading into a shared experience between the narrator and child readers. Yet, the imaginative involvement of readers was not totally unrestricted. It has to be remembered that the tales were still guided solely by the narrator, even though 'we' was used in indicative sentences. Implicitly, this gave the narrator an adult role, and in this sense, made young readers receive information passively under the guise of being directly important to the story. The relationship between the

[66] Towry, p.12, 25

narrator and young readers was not as equal as it might first appear. In fact, these roles reproduce a mode of the parent-child relationship. So, even though children may have been imaginatively experiencing the stories, they were limited by an invisible narrator who leads them through the text. In other words, rather than claiming that fantasy writing freely encouraged individual mental participation in the outcome of the tale, the relationship between the narrator and the child reader reflected that children's exploration of faith was undergone by following directions given by an invisible narrator, who himself assumes the role of adult and guide. The entertaining effects of the fantastical tales were under the scrutiny of education.

Compared to Towry's text, Taylor's was more conspicuously instructive. Taylor stated clearly in the preface that the book should be given to 'pious parents' who would expound this 'book of picturesque' representation, revealing the religious significance of this text to their children. In addition to this, Taylor took up a parental role not only in using 'we' in his narration, but also in having 'you' refer to his readers. Through this address, Taylor's instruction came in a more direct manner. Taylor also stated, 'What it is to have difficulties, you little people hardly know. Mamma can tell you'.[67] The imperativeness of this line also indicated that this book offered instruction instead of explanation. The only thing that young readers can do is to learn the lessons from Bunyan and ask for more detailed explanation and further understanding from their mother, who tends to be symbolising a softer approach to moral instruction. Taylor claimed that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was attractive to young readers because it presented 'the interesting nature of the character, and the vicissitudes of their journey',[68] and he stated that the spiritual values of Bunyan's allegory should be left to be understood later in their lives.

[67] Taylor, p.38
[68] Ibid., v

Though the instructiveness of Taylor's text seems strong, he asked for children's independent interpretations. As stated in his introduction: 'so now you have got one of our own, made on purpose to you… so now you may read, and see how Christian, good man, went on and on'.[69] In other words, Taylor encouraged children to freely interpret the text by themselves, while his teaching is prioritised: 'instruction it is which gives wealth its values'.[70] Additionally, Bunyan was given the fictional role of a teacher in Taylor's version. Bunyan's punitive involvement aptly concealed Taylor's authorial imperativeness. From the first chapter, Taylor states that Bunyan was trying to 'bring good out of evil'.[71] Taylor even at times spoke for Bunyan, 'Now that our Pilgrim has become an open professor of religion, he will find himself despised by the world, which Bunyan teaches us, by saying that he next descended into the Valley of Humiliation'.[72] Hence, considering the authoritativeness of the author, though child readers were given their own copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, their own imaginations were put under the supervision of fictional adult characters, namely the narrator and Bunyan. Therefore, even though fantasy works such as Spenser and Bunyan opened the space for children's imaginative participation, young readers were still being in a manner of speaking watched by adults. As the above examples show, it is not simply that fantasy was permitted in religious writing when children were encouraged to explore the text imaginatively and set up their own religious views, but more that the conceptual relationship between man and religion was concretised through the fictional roles embedded in the text. The imaginative exploration of young readers in religious matters is clearly confined.

2. Individual Belief of Authors

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[69] Ibid., p.1
[70] Ibid., vi
[71] Ibid., p.8
[72] Ibid., p.48

In the process of modifying these two religious fantasies for the nineteenth century, the individual preference of editors became a measure of bowdlerising and expanding the text. Towry, for instance, stated in her preface that *Spenser for Children* was served as a foretaste for children before they started their study of Spenser's epic. As *The Times* comments, Towry's edition transformed Spenser's epic into 'plain prose with here and there a line or stanza quoted'.[73] She also removed the historical-religious embedment of institutionalised beliefs from characters. The names of Spenser's characters, which originally imply their religious nature, were ignored. For instance, Una and Duessa, which primitively denote the idea of 'truth' and 'false faith' respectively, also refer to the Protestant (Una) and Catholic Church (Duessa). Towry did not offer any delineation of these implications. This suggests that Towry refuses to stress of the religious conflict of the sixteenth century in her modified versions for nineteenth-century audiences. To Towry, it was not essential for young readers to understand to which Churches Una and Duessa belonged. Instead, it was more important for her to highlight the virtuous and evil nature of Una and Duessa respectively. Rather than identifying with Spenser's allegorical religious references, Towry preferred to have her tales read as a simple children's story.

While Towry's edition redacted and re-directed Spenser's poem selectively for didactic purposes, Taylor put his individual religious views into his instructions to young readers throughout the narrative. Ann Taylor, daughter of the editor, described how 'the two words which [her father] adopted as his daily guide in education, were *mild*, but *firm*': 'he was not easily moved from an opinion once formed, but the kindness of his heart, and the sobriety of his judgment, habitually prevented him from forming hard or unsound ones'.[74] Accompanied with the 'strict' and 'lenient' character of his wife, the children of the Taylors were inspired with 'the

[73] 'Christmas Book II', *The Times*, Dec 07, 1877; pg.3; Issue 29119; col. E

[74] Ann Taylor, *Autobiography and other Memorials of Mrs. Gilbert (Formerly Ann Taylor)*, ed. by Josiah Gilbert, Vol.1 (London: Henry S. King & Co.,1874), p.9

confidence of love by kindness, and to secure obedience by adhering steadily to principles, or regulations once laid down'.[75] Taking his attitude in real life into his writings, Taylor showed no fear in exposing his religious preferences in his edition of Bunyan. In the chapter of 'The Cave of Pope and Pagan', Taylor wrote,

> Since the Roman world professed Christianity, the same cruel spirit continued. And, when the Pope became very powerful, he began to persecute all who would not obey him. Hundreds of thousands have been despoiled, tormented, and slain, by Roman catholic [sic] brutality. Many martyrs were burned here in England. Blessed be God the power of popery here is weakened. Yet the spirit of it remains, and growls at all those who will obey the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than submit their consciences to any men.[76]

Through this scene and characters of Bunyan, Taylor identified the historical problems of the Roman Catholic Church even to the immature minds of children. Ann Taylor described her father having a sense of 'sobriety of his judgement'. And more significantly, her father 'was never a clog on plans of usefulness, or even pleasure', as 'his heart was love'.[77] Her father had embraced a high sense of judgment throughout his life. It was observed by Ann Taylor that 'by a faith in the providence and promises of God', Isaac Taylor found that 'his activity was untiring, and stimulated by a glowing kindliness it enabled him to do with his might for all whom he could benefit'.[78]

Rev. J. M. Neale's *The Pilgrim's Progress: For the Use of Children in the English Church* was another example that further demonstrates how an author's preferences will affect their children's religious fantasy. Rev Neale said the falsehood of Bunyan's belief can be corrected by 'one or two insertions, a few transpositions, and a good many omissions'.[79] In this way, Neale gave himself a very good reason to alter Bunyan's text in accordance with what he believed to be

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[75] Ibid., p.25
[76] Ibid., p.57-8
[77] Ibid., p.8
[78] Ibid.
[79] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress: For the Use of Children in the English Church*, viii

true and correct. For example, the original episode of 'Pope and Pagan' was a direct attack on Catholicism. But Rev. Neale, though claiming to adapt Bunyan's text for children in the English Church, rewrote *The Pilgrim's Progress* in favour of Anglo-Catholicism. Neale contended that Bunyan's work should be used for educational purposes. As he mentioned, *The Pilgrim's Progress* was to be read by the parents to children. He accused Bunyan in his preface of not including any ideas of baptism nor confirmation in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These were the 'implied mistakes' of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and indeed, even child readers would have recognised these 'defects'.[80] Hence, in Neale's adaptation, rather than asking parents to omit or correct errors, he rewrote the book in his own way, and inserted his own educative materials into the edition.

Neale expressed his distaste for other religious institutions in his edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Instead of keeping Pope and Pagan in front of the cave at the end of the Valley of Shadow, Neale tendentiously replaced Bunyan's 'Pope' with 'Mahometan'.[81] Islam was suddenly introduced and immediately put into the camp of vice. Besides, Faithful's speech, in which 'work of grace in the soul discovereth itself, either to him that hath it, or to standers-by, with such appealing signs as "family holiness",'[82] was vastly bowdlerized. This reduction of the idea of the family was probably derived from his support for the asceticism of ecclesiastic persons in the Catholic Church. Neale explains that the alterations he made were intended to 'teach the truth': 'in the editor's judgement, the alterations have tended to the more complete setting forth that truth: —that is, to the better accomplishment of the author's design'.[83] The alternations made by Neale were castigated in *The Electric Review* (1853). The editor found

[80] Ibid., vi
[81] A follower of Muslim's prophet, Muhammad.
[82] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. by Roger Sharrock (London: Penguin, 1987), xviii
[83] Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress: For the Use of Children in the English Church*, x-xi

Neale's folly had done nothing but insult Bunyan.[84] Nevertheless, this at the same time evidenced the fact that rather than merely revealing his religious views to his young readers, Neale restricted his readers to a narrow set of doctrines. The reader's imagination was opened to a journey which was only partially written by Bunyan, for the reason that Neale had already wildly transformed the journey in accordance with his personal beliefs.

G. Conclusion

As shown above, fantastical narration, which was condemned hugely at the beginning of the history of children's literature, becomes an assisting element of religious materials in these children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Though being largely dismissed in critical studies, the reprinting of Spenser's and Bunyan's work evidenced that editors and writers of the nineteenth century had recognised the efficacy of combining fantastical writings and moral lessons. Also, reader's perspectives were being taken as the main concerns of composition. Within frames composed by Bunyan and Spenser, editors bowdlerised, expanded, and rendered the stories into intriguing religious lessons. Adventures, heroic figures, and absolute justice became some of the significant features of those nineteenth-century religious fantasies for children. By including Towry's *Faerie Queene* and Taylor's *Pilgrim's Progress* as examples, this chapter showed that fantasy was to a large extent peripheral to religious writings. While religious content of these works also helped to enrich and strengthen fantastical adventures, fantastical writing was only the sugar coating that helped children swallow bitter religious lessons. In particular, the examination of those children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* reflected a sense that religious pursuit of readers was free yet framed. Imagination was encouraged but editors were conscious about the guidance that they should give. The directions of guidance were shown to be laid down with reference to editors'

[84] William Hendry Stowell, *The Electric Review*, January to June, Vol.5 (London: Ward and Co., 1853)

preferences in education and religion. This framed freedom in religious exploration and the individual beliefs of authors were shown to be the core elements that characterised religious fantasy for children. After all, the examination of children's versions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Faerie Queene* manifest only the tip of the iceberg. In the remaining chapters of this thesis, other nineteenth-century authors will be examined in order to uncover the various modes of cooperation between religious educative materials and fantastical narration in religious fantasy for children, and in order to investigate how this genre flourished and metamorphosed in the nineteenth century.

Chapter 2:

Incorporating Fantasy into Reality—

A.L.O.E.'s *The Giant Killer: or the Battle which all must Fight* (1856), *The Young Pilgrim* (1857) and *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* (1864)

> It is not only in the Bible, the Word of Truth, that we see wondrous proofs of the power and the goodness of God. Behold His workings in Providence, trace His mercy in the daily events of common life!
>
> *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* (1864)[1]

This quotation from *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* reveals A.L.O.E. (Charlotte Tucker)'s belief in the immanence of God. Here she said that only the Bible can validate the 'power and goodness of God', but His 'workings in Providence' can also manifest His 'mercy'. God can be perceived from biblical passages and from the 'daily events of common life'. The literary world of A.L.O.E. is a fantastic reality, in which transcendental truth exists in daily life. All these ideas recur in A.L.O.E.'s religious fantasy for children. In the last chapter, the guided liberation of faith and the inclusion of an editor's personal belief are signified implicitly in children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is clear that those reedited versions were still framed by their original framework. In the case of A.L.O.E.'s texts, although they were still influenced by evangelical tracts, their core values are explicitly drawn from the Christian beliefs and practices of the author.

A. Critical Reception of A.L.O.E.

Charlotte Maria Tucker, whose *nom de plume* was A.L.O.E.—A Lady of England, was a missionary author of English children's books in the nineteenth century. As Kimberly Reynolds notes, she 'was an energetic and effective organizer, a dutiful daughter, and a tireless campaigner'.[2] She spent her first fifty years in England, taking care of her father and

[1] A.L.O.E., *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1864), p.198
[2] Kimberley Reynolds, 'Tucker, Charlotte Maria (1821–1893)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27788, accessed 11 May 2012]

the orphans left by her brother. Though she had been composing tales for her niece and nephews, she was not allowed to publish her works due to her father's objections. Her evangelistic character, originally suppressed, was liberated and fully revealed in her missionary works in India. From her fifties, she devoted herself completely to missionary work and the composition of religious texts for both English and Indian children: 'The busy pen which a loving heart kept moving, has left its traces on both sides of the sea'.[3] According to Cutt, A.L.O.E. published more than 150 tales in around 20 years.[4] Her literary achievement was recognised by both editors and readers. Newspapers like *The Pall Mall Gazette* found her words '[had] won the affections of thousand of readers'.[5] The *Birmingham Daily Post* also stated that A.L.O.E. 'had at one time extensive popularity as a writer of minor fiction for children' in the Victorian period.[6] *The Woman's Signal* quoted *Civil and Military Gazette* to celebrate the author as follows:

> But not until that mortal shall put on immortality will the fruits of all the good she has done be seen… Her life was of a type of self-devotion very high, and but rarely attained…every Christian man and woman can see in it an example of what Christian principles are when fully carried out and lived in this life.[7]

Editors and critics found no difficulties in noticing the high-devotion of A.L.O.E., both to her religion and to her works.[8] These aforementioned resources manifested the fact that not only had the author lived out the Christian principles that she believed in, but also evidenced her humility towards her literary achievement. As her biographer Agnes Giberne notes, A.L.O.E.

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[3] Julia H. Johnson, *Fifty Missionary Heroes every boy and girl should know* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1913), p.158

[4] Cutt's claim about the numbers of A.L.O.E.'s books is criticised by the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. A.L.O.E.'s books were often printed in magazines and there is no evidence that all of her stories were published as books afterwards.

[5] 'The Open Secrets of Literature', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Thursday, May 25, 1882; Issue 5378

[6] 'Biographies', *Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham, England), Monday, November 25, 1895; Issue 11681

[7] 'A.L.O.E.', *The Woman's Signal* (London, England), Thursday, January 11, 1894; pg.21; Issue 2.

[8] For the educative incentives of A.L.O.E., please also refer to Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir's biographical description of A.L.O.E. in *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on Women in Genesis* (Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006), p.69-70. It is repeated several times by the editors that A.L.O.E. was not working for commercial reasons, but for the purpose of teaching Christian faith to children.

'was singularly modest about her writing, never caring to be praised and certainly never seeking it'.[9] Her captivating tales derived from her eagerness in teaching the Indian children about religious truth and her love to all mankind.[10] Accordingly, A.L.O.E. took her educative work as a duty to her belief.

Despite such high regard for her children's works, there is a great shortage of critical discussion. Except for *A Lady of England: The Life and Letters of Charlotte Maria Tucker* (1895), a biography written by Giberne, a chapter dedicated to A.L.O.E. in Cutt's *Ministering Angels: A Study of Nineteenth-century Evangelical Writing for Children* (1979) and some biographical notes, only random discussions can be found in recent criticisms. A.L.O.E was in many cases remembered as a missionary hero. *The Girl's Own Paper* outlines the life of A.L.O.E. with the focus of her works as a 'honourary missionary'.[11] One of A.L.O.E.'s achievements was educating Indian girls and women. It is mentioned that she 'obtained access to the homes of the natives and is gladly received in her efforts to teach girls and women, even of the highest classes, who have been greatly neglected in regard to education'.[12] *The Girl's Own Paper* also particularly recounts the fact that her works have changed Christian education in India. As it says, 'there is great need of such works [tract fiction], the Indian people being now widely taught to read in Government schools, and having very little fit to read in their own language'.[13] In *Fifty Missionary Heroes every boy and girl should know* (1913), Julia H. Johnson describes how A.L.O.E.'s 'stories were often

[9] Agnes Giberne, 'Life of A.L.O.E.', *The Girl's Own Paper* (London, England), Saturday, April 04, 1896; pg. 420; Issue 849

[10] Johnson observed that there is a particular interest in A.L.O.E. in teaching in India. While this class was meant to be the 'lowest caste' in India and those who were in it treated as if they had 'no soul' at all, A.L.O.E. 'cared for them and wished to help them' (Johnson, p.157-8). Similarly, the all-rounded love of A.L.O.E. is also mentioned by Taylor and Weir. They state that in A.L.O.E.'s *House Beautiful; or The Bible's Museum* (1868), the author was addressing the sin of temptation to all of her audience without considering their gender difference and hierarchy (Taylor and Weir, p.70).

[11] 'Answer to Correspondents', *The Girl's Own Paper* (London, England), Saturday, April 30, 1881; pg. 494, Issue 70

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

parables, by which she taught truth in a fascinating fashion'.[14] With such high devotion to teach Christian beliefs, it can be presumed that the works of A.L.O.E were enjoyed and remembered by both 'the fair-faced and the dark-faced boys and girls'.[15] Her achievement in India is not only manifested by the fact that Gilberne devotes more than half of A.L.O.E.'s biography to illustrating her eighteen-year life in India, but also almost all criticisms of A.L.O.E. mention more or less her missionary devotion. *The Woman's Signal* even claims that although A.L.O.E. called herself 'A Lady of England', in an 'even wider and more honoured sense…she was a woman of India'.[16]

Both J.S. Bratton and Gillian Avery notice that A.L.O.E. conveyed moral messages through allegory. To Avery, A.L.O.E. was sternly harsh and rigid. Although the books of A.L.O.E. were printed mostly in the second half of the century, 'her didacticism and severity' were similar to those written thirty and forty years before her time.[17] Avery's criticism results from her examination of two austere creations of A.L.O.E. Other works of A.L.O.E., however, reflect the fact that her stories were impregnated with love and fun. It is undeniable that her didactic stance was stern, but she did not abandon a concern with her readers' emotional receptions. Bratton argues that A.L.O.E. belonged to a group of writers who blended fantastical writings and didacticism together. The cooperation of the two 'opposing' devices was a way A.L.O.E. balanced her own insistence on educational materials with her responses to the sudden rise of fantasy writings.[18] This chapter will take three of her texts as examples to illustrate her ideas on educating and entertaining her readers. Many of her writings reveal her real practice in daily life and they also manifest the centrality of religion in her life.

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[14] Julia H. Johnson, *Fifty Missionary Heroes every boy and girl should know* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1913), p.158
[15] Ibid.
[16] 'A.L.O.E.', *The Woman's Signal* (1894)
[17] Avery, *Nineteenth-Century Children*, p.101
[18] J.S. Bratton, *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p.70

B. Christian Teaching and Fantasy Writings —*The Giant Killer*[19]

1. The Practicality of Religious Messages

The Giant Killer is constructed in two frameworks which interact with each other. The outer framework is set in the realistic setting of the Robys' and Probyns' story, and the inner one, which is also called 'The Giant Killer', is set in a fantastical land. Child characters from the Roby and Probyn families are taught by a fantastical story, a collection of battles between the hero, Fides[20] and his foes, the giants. The inner framework is primarily modelled after Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. It is an adventure in which the hero restores the worldly order and prepares spiritually for heavenly life. Every battle between Fides and the giants is a fantasised version of the moral conflicts which child characters are encountering at that moment. For instance, Bertha Roby's spiritual affliction in discovering her selfishness is represented as the physical wounds of Fides. And the plot in which the pain of Fides' wound hinders his climbing from the pit quarried by Giant Selfishness apparently draws on the difficulties which Bertha finds in getting rid of her sin. A.L.O.E. deliberately positions the fantastical inner story thematically alongside the realistic outer story as a correspondence with it. Each tale of 'The Giant Killer' demonstrates the teaching of a moral lesson, a progress in which child characters are adopting these messages and applying their religious morals in life. The inter-correspondence turns the fantasy tale into an inspirational narration for young audiences. These plots, which involve the acquisition and practice of religious ideas in real life, are repeated throughout the text.

Moral lessons are also taught through the resemblances between fantastical figures and realistic ones. In the tale of 'Giant Sloth', the room of the giant is described as 'a strange scene of confusion' and 'the whole place [is] littered with unfinished work, blotted pages and

[19] For the sake of clarity, *The Giant Killer: or the Battle which all must Fight* will be shortened as *The Giant Killer* in this thesis.
[20] Fides means 'faithfulness' in Latin.

blank ones, play-books torn and without their backs'.[21] Laura Roby is ashamed when she realises that her room is as messy as the one of the giant. Bertha, who is described as 'indolent by disposition', also feels 'the moral [touches] of her unfinished work'.[22] Their loathing towards Giant Sloth stops the girls from repeating the same misbehaviour in real life. In this way, the adventure of Fide justifies the righteousness of virtues and devalues the antagonist simultaneously. The effects of the tale are demonstrated the morning after storytelling. Bertha says that she cannot stand her idleness if she stays in bed later than she should. This same process of reflection also happens to Constantine Probyn, who becomes aware of his misbehaviour and apologises for his mistake after the storytelling of 'Giant Pride': 'I *repent* of my conduct to you; *I am grateful* for your kindness; I hope by the future to make up for the past'.[23] From the resemblance of environments like the untidy room, behaviour like idle actions and emotional responses like repentance, characters become self-motivated in correcting their misbehaviour with reference to the lessons that they learn from the tale of Fides.

Here, A.L.O.E. did not simply write an allegory, but she wrote a double story which embodied an allegory and the real world where messages of the allegory are practiced. The purpose of including a real setting is to highlight the practicality of her religious messages. She explained that fantastical narration is the essence that inspires characters to pursue religious studies, modification of behaviour and correction of mistakes:

> My desire is to lead you to consider that you are all and each of you yourselves in the position of my hero. The foes which he had to conquer you also must fight; you have the same aid to encourage you, the same motives to rouse. The same giant may not be equally formidable to you all, but every one has some enemy with whom he must struggle, in a strength that is given to him, armour not his own.[24]
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[21] A.L.O.E., *The Giant Killer: or the Battle which all must Fight* (London: T. Nelson and Sons: Edinburgh, 1856), p.30
[22] Ibid., p.33
[23] Ibid., p.163, italicised originally by the author.
[24] Ibid., p.34

> Yes, my children, there are many more giants to be slain; but I think that my tale has explained to you sufficiently the nature of our fight, and of the enemies to be subdued, to enable you to find them out for yourselves. Let each search his own heart carefully—our hearts are our chief battle-field,—and having discovered what sins most easily beset him, let him apply himself resolutely, with watchfulness and prayer, to overcome the evil principle within.[25]

However, her tale is not written just for the purpose of reading. It is stressed by A.L.O.E again and again in the text that her knight and giants are iconographies of virtues and vices respectively. Similar to the adventures and actions rewritten in children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Giant Killer* is a series of identifications within which characters of the outer framework are given the choice to avoid or to resemble the fictive figures in 'The Giant Killer'. On the first level, victory of the hero and failure of the antagonists create an attractive image of the former. On the second level, under the guidance of the adult, children are once again being reminded about the shame of making mistakes, as if they have joined the camp of giants. In this way, the tales of the giant killer and his foes are about the selection of roles and how a person should behave in society. It is clear to A.L.O.E. that her fantastic narrative is not written only for the purpose of entertaining her readers, but also aims at providing ideas that they can use on earth. As well as the identification with the fantastic role, young characters are required to see their religious journey as a series of battles. The tale of Fides is a fantasied tale of an ideal Christian's life, whose protagonist has to constantly overcome temptations and sins in the real world.

2. Daily Practice of A.L.O.E.

All these attempts to make yourself a 'better' Christian, retrospections, introspections, and behavioural modification in *The Giant Killer*, to a large extent draw on the experience and belief of the author. According to Giberne, A.L.O.E. had made 'free use of her own experiences' in *The Giant Killer*.[26] Like the children she wrote about, Giberne argues that

[25] Ibid., p.148
[26] Ibid., p.98

A.L.O.E had been battling against idleness all the time. She was always in the habit of waking up at six every morning. Besides, due to A.L.O.E's own 'eager and impulsive temperament', Giberne suggests that the author had also struggled in the fight against selfishness before she received the unanimous acclaim of a 'peculiarly unselfish character' from her friends. Even the hatred towards 'Meanness, Gluttony, Cowardice, and Untruth' of Fides was also 'an echo' of the character of the author.[27]

Giberne's observation on *The Giant Killer* is abruptly explained. The inter-relation between A.L.O.E. and the fantasy tale can be further illustrated with other evidence found in the biography. Waking up at six is suggested by Giberne as a victory against idleness. In 'The Giant Killer', Fides is awoken by an invisible female messenger called Conscious. She claims if Fides slumbers past the hour of six, he will never be able to slay his enemy—Giant Sloth. This plot apparently draws on the habit of early rising of the author. It was a rule for the Tucker girls that 'If you can, always hear eleven o'clock strike in bed'. A.L.O.E also made a promise of 'never write books late at night', 'and through life this promise was most scrupulously adhered to'.[28] Though this habit of awakening looks trivial, A.L.O.E believed that it was one of the prime ways to tackle indolence. Regarding the argument of unselfishness, Giberne claims that the impulsive and energetic characters of the author are reflections of her greed. This is probably not a justifiable argument as an energetic personality in no way suggests greediness. Besides, A.L.O.E. did show deep thoughts about her earthly existence and religion. As a result, she controlled and restrained her desire and behaviour considerably from her youth. Giberne herself describes how 'underlying her high spirits was a stratum of deep thought; and strong principle seems almost from the beginning to have held control over her life'.[29] A.L.O.E. was brought up in 'an atmosphere of kindness,

[27]Agnes Giberne, *A Lady of England: The Life and Letters of Charlotte Maria Tucker* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), p.98-9
[28] Ibid., p.117
[29] Ibid., p.28

of gentleness, of unselfish thought for others, of generosity, of high principle, and of most real religion', and hence, she appeared to have 'naturally' acquired all these characteristics.[30] Moreover, in a letter written by Sir Frances Outram to A.L.O.E's nephew, both the author and her sister Fanny Tucker were described as 'incessantly…busy about everything that promoted the happiness of other people'.[31] A.L.O.E.'s generosity was also shown in her missionary work in India, where she donated her clothes to the poor and kept only some simple ones for her daily usage. Perhaps it can be argued that her love for others was like the cord of love in the tale of 'Giant Selfishness'. And this did not only save her from greed, but also evidenced her generosity and beneficence. Last but not least, Gilberne's argument about A.L.O.E.'s hatred towards 'Meanness, Gluttony, Cowardice, and Untruth' is simply a generalisation about the author's character. Her devotion in missionary works and in preaching religious messages are substantial evidence of her hatred of sinfulness. Her devotion in writing tales for children is clearly a sign of her benevolence as well. Despite the uncertainties and flaws in Giberne's argument, it is still conspicuous that the daily practices and religious views of the author are the sources of the introspective content of *The Giant Killer*. In this way, it can be argued that the author had fantasied her real practice, experience, and belief for her children's story.

C. Spiritual Pleasure

Apart from the moral lessons promoted throughout *The Giant Killer*, spiritual pleasure is also being upheld as the result of being a 'good' Christian. To A.L.O.E., the emotional pleasure generated from reading fantastic stories is peripheral. In *The Giant Killer*, 'Pleasure' is personified as 'A fairy-like creature, with gossamer wings, all sparkling with the tints of the rainbow'.[32] Initially, she assists the Giant of Selfishness and Gluttony by luring their victims. This means that in the beginning, pleasure denotes over-indulgence of oneself

[30] Ibid., p.29
[31] Ibid., p.114
[32] A.L.O.E., *The Giant Killer*, p.40

(selfishness) and obsession with sensual enjoyment (gluttony). The author described 'Pleasure' as a hypocritical light in darkness, giving the illusion that she can bring joy and hope. She is seen as 'yellow flicking beams'[33] in the dark that mislead Fides to a wrong path. However, later in the tale, A.L.O.E. offered another side of pleasure which completely overthrows its sinful associations. After Pleasure's masters are slain, she is placed under the care of Benevolence. This twist turns 'Pleasure' into 'a holy thing', and 'her office no longer to lead thee astray; but to follow thy footsteps in the path of duty, and remain thy companion for ever!'[34] Mrs. Roby explains the moral of this change as, 'our business is not too eagerly to follow pleasure, but if we do our duty pleasure will follow us'.[35] She relocates the origin of pleasure from sin to duty, such as cheering up the sad and helping the distressed. As she says, this pleasure of sharing 'will never die' and will be continuously enjoyed by mankind in heaven.[36] In this way, true pleasure results from philanthropic acts and the execution of religious duties. Instead of a sense of moral anxiety, which is stirred up from serious moral tales of the time, perhaps, it is possible to extrapolate from these scenes that A.L.O.E. is trying to construct a pleasure of reading good and morally educative literature.

1. Practicing Religious Lessons

Before acting on philanthropy and duties, religious principles should be learned. Perhaps it can be argued that the real value of A.L.O.E.'s tale is manifested only when the messages are realised. In chapter XI, Constantine Probyn injures his eye and Bertha takes up the responsibility of taking care of him. Although the children are not getting along well, Bertha's morning and evening prayers give her the strength to overcome her hatred. Labouring brings her joyfulness, for the reason that 'it was a consciousness that her own affection had been tried and proved, that her mother would find that work had been done, and

[33] Ibid., p.42
[34] Ibid., p.49
[35] Ibid., p.50
[36] Ibid.

duties performed'.[37] Other than parental figures, this joy in religious duties also comes from the approval of God: 'Angels look with more pleasure upon the efforts of a little child to overcome temptation, and to serve her heavenly King, than upon the proud trophies of earthly conquests, the deeds of daring of earthly heroes'.[38] At first glance, perhaps Bertha does her duty to earn compliments, yet A.L.O.E. rejected this notion of insincerity. Bertha is shown to have developed a sense of patience and sacrifice throughout the incident. This signifies that duty generates positive alternations in children, thereby making them 'better' Christians.

2. Labour

In the process of practicing religious principles, A.L.O.E. underscored the pleasure of 'labour', which at the same time serves as an addition to the emotional excitement aroused by the fantastical narrative. The notion of labour, particularly as narrated in children's texts, is viewed by critics as a response to the intellectual and social development of the mid-Victorian age. Cutt argues that Victorians associated technological improvements with faith, and this view of religion and society infused itself in many children's literary texts. During the 1850s and 1860s, 'Work and Progress became synonymous, and…the old concepts of religion and charity were being squeezed out of the education of the young (and of the masses) by the incursions of Useful Knowledge'.[39] By the 1860s, 'secular education and the improvement of living conditions through industry (in the sense of Technology) and science' were more emphasised than religious conviction.[40] Due to rapid and influential scientific and technological development, to Cutt, it was unavoidable for tract fiction to recognise the rising importance of secular interests. Instead of being the rival of religion, science was 'treated with respect, approval and at times, with reverence'.[41] The social milieu was as Cutt describes: 'religious exhortation has been replaced by reverence for work, progress and

[37] Ibid., p.147
[38] Ibid., p.114
[39] Cutt, p.75
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid, p.80

science'.[42] Dennis Butts also ascribes the equivalence between religious duty and work to social changes. Taking the middle class to be his main target of study, he presumes that they built their lives with 'a combination of Puritan morality and economic ambition, believing in the virtues of prudence and self-help in authoritarian society'.[43] Compared to the market for children's books of the eighteenth century, plaintive dogmatic readings were less favoured. There were more secular subjects, informative context and practical knowledge included in religious teachings.

In terms of the critical discussion about social influences upon children's texts, the background which Cutt wants to set up for her discussion of A.L.O.E. is unilateral and narrowly scoped. Many factors related to fantastical writings for children are omitted in her discussion. Butts also has overlooked the importance of fantastic narrative in children's texts. Even though both of them may have made sensible assumptions about the influence of social achievement on children's texts, they ignore A.L.O.E.'s aim of writing children's books. A.L.O.E. mentioned in the preface of *A Wreath of Indian Stories* that what she 'chiefly [aimed] at [was] to write in a way to amuse and through amusement to instruct'.[44] Even if religious practicality was important to the author, she valued the role of entertaining narrative as well. Nevertheless, albeit recognising the importance of entertaining her audience, A.L.O.E. still believed that educative information was fundamentally more important in children's reading materials.

3. Duty

Assuming this emphasis on realising moral messages, it is obvious that A.L.O.E. found the pleasure generated from duty more valuable than that created by fantastic narratives. In *The Giant's Killer*, children are entertained through their reading of Fides' tales as well as

[42] Ibid., p.78
[43] Dennis Butts, 'How Children's Literature Changed: What happened in the 1840s?', *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 21.2 (1997), p.153-4
[44] A.L.O.E., *A Wreath of Indian Stories* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1876), Preface

through practicing their religious duties. A.L.O.E. sees religious education, both the process and its result, as the essence of living. This cooperation of religious materials and pleasure single out A.L.O.E. from some children's book writers, who presume entertainment and religious education are two different subjects. They suppose a particular design is needed in order to blend the two together, like those making obvious re-arrangement in the plot and context of the children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* mentioned in the last chapter. Unlike those children's versions of Spenser's work, readers of A.L.O.E. are entertained by both fantastic narratives and religious teachings. To put it more precisely, A.L.O.E. was not only seeking the emotional pleasure generated from an entertaining narrative, but also the spiritual joyfulness that can only be created from religious materials.

Spiritual pleasure is experienced by A.L.O.E. in her active benevolence. She had been involved in various charitable acts. Critics like Bratton, Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir all notice that A.L.O.E. had a strong eagerness to engage in active benevolence. Perhaps owing to her parents' opposition, she could not participate in many charitable acts. Yet, after her parents had passed away, not only did she start publishing religious tracts, but she also performed some parish works and taught in Sunday school. At last, at the age of fifty-four, she decided to be a missionary in India. It is clear from her biography and other criticisms that A.L.O.E. was constantly looking for opportunities to fulfil her religious duty. It is as she had written in her texts that it is not enough to just learn religious principles. A Christian has an obligation to carry out the knowledge they have acquired.

4. Happy Endings

All these pleasures in adopting religious knowledge and practicing duties generate happy endings, which consequently fortify the irreplaceability and importance of spiritual pleasure. After the narration of all the tales of giants, the conflicts of the Probyns and Robys are settled. The Roby and Probyn children have learnt their lessons by facing their own

sinfulness and offering benevolence to others. Bertha, for example, undergoes a tormenting period of understanding her real self. She conquers her fears and weaknesses through her prayers and duties. In the case of Constantine, he overcomes the barrier of pride, and at the end, expresses his repentance and gratitude to the Robys. *The Giant Killer* ends with the children shaking hands and the joyful tears of Mrs. Roby. The unexpected change of Constantine is taken as a sudden disclosure of God's blessing, which is read as the main factor that facilitates humans' penitence for their sins. The ending is metaphorically described as a victory for war: 'thanksgiving—the Holy War had at length commenced; prayer—that it might end in triumph everlasting'.[45] This line restates that the religious journey is viewed as a series of combats between consciousness and sins. Faith and penitence are the major weapons to overcome evil, and all these battles will ultimately lead to happy endings for the protagonists. Since the ending mentions 'commence', the completion of these battles offers hope for the future—the time after the storytelling and also after death. These pleasurable and religious adventures package the educative matters into joyful lessons for young readers.

The felicities in *The Giant Killer* demonstrate not only the author's belief that one's faith is generated from a series of battles against one's sin, but also her ideas of absolute justice, written in both the fantasy world and in the earthly lives of the child characters. No matter what mistakes the giant killer has made, he certainly will gain the victory, for the reason that he is the representative figure of virtue and a true pilgrim. In contrast, the demonic creatures will be doomed to fail. Similarly, the characters of the outer stories receive rewards and punishments in accordance with their behaviour. Regardless which family these children belong to, their behaviour and action are all measured on the same scale. This idea of absolute justice, which will also be analysed later in this chapter, was crucial to A.L.O.E.'s Christian fantasy for children.

[45] Ibid, p.163

D. Fantastic Reality –*The Young Pilgrim*

The Young Pilgrim concentrates on the religious conversion of its child protagonist, Ernest Fontonore, who is originally the eldest son of Lord Fontonore and is stolen away by John and Ann Dowley. The child is found to be the only righteous person in this family. Facing religious differences between himself and the Dowleys, Ernest starts his spiritual and moral education by reading the Bible alone. *The Young Pilgrim* is modelled after Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. This isolation of Ernest resembles Christian's situation, who leaves his family in his religious pursuit. Right from the beginning, the title of 'The Young Pilgrim' suggests this idea of pilgrimage. Lines of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are quoted at the beginning of the first few chapters of *The Young Pilgrim*. Some chapters are also conspicuously named after some of Bunyan's famous scenes, such as 'A Glimpse of the Cross', 'The Armour and the Battle' and 'Vexation of Vanity Fair'. Considering these titles, quotations and names of chapters, it is expected that *The Young Pilgrim* will develop in a pattern which is vastly similar to *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The Pilgrim's Progress is mentioned openly when Mr Ewart (the clergyman) gives Ernest a copy of it, even though the correspondence between the two texts is already an open secret to readers. Ernest's religious journey is constantly compared to Christian's. As Ewart states after his reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the boy may 'recognise some spots that are familiar', 'some people with whom [he has] had to deal' or he may see what he is most 'likely to meet with in the future'.[46] With these expectations, the clergyman directly draws parallels between Christian's pilgrimage and Ernest's. In other words, when he foresees that Ernest's journey will be similar to that of Bunyan's Christian, he views *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a fantasised version of the mortal life of Ernest. Or in other words, Ernest's life will be as fantastic as the one of Christian. As the clergyman further explains,

[46] A.L.O.E., *The Young Pilgrim: A Tale Illustrative of 'The Pilgrim's Progress'* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1857), p.127, italicised by the author.

> We *all* set out from the City of Destruction—we are all by nature born in sin…Even children bear a burden of sin, though the sooner they come to the cross of the Saviour the lighter that burden must be.[47]

The phrase 'City of Destruction', denoting the mortal world, is borrowed directly from Bunyan. This 'burden of sin' also echoes the imagery of Christian's burden, worn by him from the beginning of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Similarly, when the children and Christian 'come to the cross of the Saviour', referring to their learning of Christianity and the beginning of their reliance on God, their sin is unloaded. Inter-references between *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Young Pilgrim* intertwine the plots of fantasy and reality. Experiences of the fantastical and real arena are compared and assimilated. As a result, experiences of the fantastical and real characters also appear to be intermixed.

Perhaps, the difficulties in identifying the two worlds and distinguishing the real and fantastical experiences of the protagonist are what A.L.O.E. intended to present to her audience. For instance, Ernest attends the Sunday service in church and feels he has 'a light step and lighter heart' afterwards, as he thought he may 'now appear before God, not clothed in the rags of his own imperfect works, but the spotless righteousness of his Redeemer'.[48] The 'lightness' alludes conspicuously to the plot in which the burden of sin of Bunyan's Christian '[loosens] off from his shoulders, and [falls] off his back', after he has seen the Cross. The joy of Ernest also recalls the scene where angels strip the rags off Christian and change his raiment.[49] The change of outfit from rags to rich attire is an externalisation of Christian's transformed spirituality from a corrupted soul to a pure one. The disburdening of sin is, at the same time, altered from a physical burden of Christian to the psychological relief of Ernest. Transformed fantastical elements are also exhibited when Ernest fights against John Dowley, who substitutes for the role of Apollyon in A.L.O.E.'s text. The child disobeys the order of his step-father to forge money in shops, just as Christian declines Apollyon's

[47]Ibid.
[48] Ibid., p.61
[49] John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. by Roger Sharrock, p.35-6

offers. Both refusals end up with life threatening warnings and severe assault from their tormentors. When the two protagonists preserve their faithfulness despite outrageous attacks, both are glorified and become heroes of piety. The likenesses in plot arrangement and substituted characterisation effectively blend fantasy and reality together in *The Young Pilgrim*. The ambiguous line between the two worlds in fact significantly demonstrates the author's belief in fantasised reality.

Since reality is filled with fantastic allusions, this story of Ernest additionally transforms literary magical characters and issues into the subject matters of daily life. *The Young Pilgrim* is considerably modelled after *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but some icons of hero and devil are convincingly evinced in the role of Red-Cross knight and some of the adult characters respectively, drawing references from *The Faerie Queene*. This linkage between the two texts associates the boy with the medieval romance of the Christian knight, who is particularly famous for fighting against monstrous creatures and achieving glory and virtue in his religious journey. Ernest has a cross-like birthmark on his shoulder, and thus he is nicknamed 'Red-cross Knight'. His stepfather John Dowley, on the other hand, plays the role of the evil figure, though he does not represent any particular antagonist in Spenser's text. As aforementioned, the roles of Dowley and Apollyon are interchangeable; simultaneously, Dowley incarnates the monstrous characters that obstruct the journeys of the knight. Perhaps this difference is the result of the fact that *The Young Pilgrim* is set in a reality. Thereby, the likeness between *The Young Pilgrim* and *The Faerie Queene* points out certain icons, images and characters which constantly come up as archetypes of the characterisation in religious fantasy. Another example in *The Young Pilgrim* can further elaborate this interconnection. The Searles' house is the incarnation of the Interpretation's House and House Beautiful in a realistic setting. A suit of armour from the Crusades is hung in the Searles' house, drawing references to the armour of the House Beautiful. This armour is composed of the Helmet of

Proof, the Hope of Salvation, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Girdle of Truth and Gospel of Peace for feet.[50] Thus, the armour is obviously a capsulate of the allegorical teachings of the two Houses. It represents the qualities that A.L.O.E. wanted her reader to be equipped with for his religious journey. She secularised Bunyan's characters and through this process delineated her ideas about religious education. Hence, on the first level, the tale of the real life of Ernest is a projection of a fascinated Christian's journey. On the second level, the magic in Bunyan's fantasy is presented symbolically as religious and educative issues in *The Young Pilgrim.*

D. Rewards of Faithfulness

1. Serendipity

Furthermore, A.L.O.E. proposed a new form of the supernatural in children's religious fantasy by suggesting that arranged destiny existed for every individual on earth. As shown in *The Young Pilgrim*, reality mirrors the fantastic issues of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan's fantastic ideas are secularised and become the daily activities and characters of A.L.O.E. However, while the concept of 'supernatural' remains as a magical event or character in *The Young Pilgrim*, it is now presented as serendipity in reality. In the chapter 'Danger, Difficulties, and Doubt', Ernest meets Ellen Searle, the original owner of the Bible which the child has been reading. Due to the child's loyalty to God's word, '*Thou shalt not steal*',[51] he returns the long-lost Bible to the lady. The honesty of the child is rewarded with Mr Searle's request for Ernest's companionship in his household. The returning of the Bible, as it turns out, generates an unpredictable fortune for Ernest. A more explicit attribution of serendipity to God occurs again in the next two chapters. After being severely wounded by John Dowley, Ernest is accidentally found and saved by Charles Hope. This rescue is conceived of as God's

[50] The original description of the armour in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is simply as 'sword, shield, helmet, breastplate, All-Prayer, and shoes that would not wear out', p.49

[51] A.L.O.E., *The Young Pilgrim*, p.85, it is also the eighth commandment in the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:15

benevolence: 'now God grant that the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world may not spring up as thorns to choke it'.[52] In fact, Ewart explains that the attack of Dowley is like 'a good seed' in Ernest's heart getting 'the hot sun of trail beating upon it'. The clergyman refers to Dowley as the hot sun which appears to destroy the child. While the 'hot sun' may look horrendous, it empowers the 'seed' with endurance and forbearance. Thereby, the attack in turn prepares the 'seed' for its religious path. Unfortunate events happen as trials which attempt to train mankind to become stronger and to consolidate their faith. Accordingly, A.L.O.E. created a reality with transcendent meanings, a landscape that blends God's omniscience and human activities together. The main message underlying these lessons is that A.L.O.E. is asking her readers to centralise their thoughts on God. Every subject on earth is under God's governance and love. Whether or not the plot is subjected to men's preferences, all 'magical' happenings on earth can be explained as serendipities, which are perpetually favouring mortals.

2. Absolute Justice

Cutt observes that A.L.O.E. has a tendency to restore literary justice in her children's texts, 'taking for granted that all classes of society were wanting in charity, honesty and sincere religious belief, she dealt out rewards and punishments'.[53] Her novels show a 'strict equality of all in the sight of God',[54] and social measure is used to scale the crime of her characters. When Ernest is sent to receive medical care after the brutal attack by John Dowry, Ewart brings the magistrate to Dowry's house and arrests him and his wife. John Dowry shows no penitence for his crime. Ann Dowry, in contrast, confesses that she has stolen the child. Yet, her remorse cannot save her from prison. The two are punished regardless of whether they repent of their crimes or not. Besides, it is not only that the law of the earth is working along with the law of God, but the arrest executed by Ewart also highlights the fact

[52] A.L.O.E., *The Young Pilgrim*, p.126
[53] Cutt, p.89
[54] Ibid.

that religious power has a higher authority than the social order. Readers may well be aware of the crime that the couple have committed, but those who help the clergyman, such as Jones, two countrymen and the magistrate are given no information about the culprits. Yet, these helpers pour their efforts into assisting the arrest, for it is claimed that John is captured after a furious struggle between Jones and one of the helpers. The societal scale, though it is emphasised, operates under the authority of religion. The moral justice generated from the social agreement of piety also affects Ernest, who is now found to be the eldest son of Lord Fontonore. With regard to the faithfulness of Ernest, A.L.O.E. restored his title and granted him a rise in social status. Indeed, many other nineteenth-century children's literary works elevate the social status of their child protagonists as a reward for their piety. Not only do these child characters enrich themselves morally and spiritually with religious principles, they are also relieved from poverty and abuses in daily life. This absoluteness in justice, which is reflected in social rewards, exhibits the anthropocentric nature of the rewards now preferred in nineteenth-century children's books. Although it is undeniable that the popularity of *The Pilgrim's Progress* evinces a certain preferences in religious reward, such as life after death and the otherworldliness of heaven and so on, some Christian fantasies, like A.L.O.E.'s ones, pay more attention to earthly definitions of rewards and punishment, reflecting the current importance of the secular life over religious ones.

Additionally, the more the focus is on the earthly life of Ernest, the more distantly is the story related to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. For example, titles of chapters of *The Young Pilgrim* gradually shift from close resemblance to *The Pilgrim's Progress* to loose association. The first few chapters, 'The Pilgrim's Call', The Armour and the Battle' and 'Distant Glimpse of Vanity Fair', are apparently named after *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Yet, as the story develops, chapters are called, for instance, 'Fogs and Mists', 'Disappointment, 'A New Danger' and 'Coming to the River'. Connections between the two are still perceptible if the content is read

carefully, but references to Bunyan's text are much less obvious. Instead of moulding Ernest's life in accordance to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Ernest is now living out his religious life in a realistic setting. In this way, the allegorical two-world structure has been slowly merged into one. The unpredictable changes of Ernest's life, including his belief, daily life and social status, are adequate to show real life can be more fantastic than a tale. The merging of fantasy and reality, in turn, demonstrates that educating yourself with religious ideas and living them out can be in fact, a fantasy of real religious life.

3. Death

In the final chapter of *The Young Pilgrim*, A.L.O.E. extends the effects of religious lessons and moral justice after the death of Ernest. Some characters of *The Young Pilgrim* are rewarded with happy endings on earth because they have learned different sorts of religious lessons from Ernest. Charles Hope inherits a title and wealth from his brother, and erects a church in his area. Ernest's brother, Ben Charles Dowley, becomes a soldier, showing 'the power of Christianity even in a hard, rugged nature'.[55] Clementina Hope, once obsessed with pleasure and vanity, turns into a 'careworn-looking'[56] and affectionate mother who works passionately on the religious education of her children. On the other hand, penalties are imposed accordingly on those characters who were once immoral. John Dowley, although he appears to have repented at the end, dies in a battle against Russia. Mr. Hope, who was once ambitious and aggressive, is attacked by apoplexy at the time when his career has reached the zenith. His wife, still proud of her old days, can only rely on the generosity of Charles Hope to survive. It is as Cutt comments on the cottage tale of A.L.O.E., that 'honesty and thrift, patience and faith were as invariably rewarded as lying, drunkenness and ungodliness were punished'.[57] Moral judgement is persistently presented in her novels at all levels. These endings of characters restate that rewards will only be granted to the pious, while

[55] A.L.O.E., *The Young Pilgrim*, p.281
[56] Ibid., p.282
[57] Cutt, p.88

punishments are given to the sacrilegious. Additionally, devoted characters exhibit Christian virtues in various social sectors at the end of this story. Thereby, society is shown to have benefited from the influential piety of one particular Christian. These happy endings, as a result, emphasise the idea that the inter-relationship between society and personal faith is one of the essential features of nineteenth-century children's Christian fantasy.

With all those practical concerns in her children's books, Cutt concludes that the tales of A.L.O.E contain 'much factual information in the framework of instructive moral tales from which religion was often conspicuously absent'. [58] Her observation may refer to the disappearance of the distinction between the realistic world and specifically religious arenas such as heaven and hell. However, it is not that the religion is absent, it is only that A.L.O.E does not often recall phrases of the Bible and stories of biblical characters as other evangelical writers did. For A.L.O.E., religion is not limited to literary reference. Instead, it is a set of applicable principles, echoing the practicality discussed in *The Giant Killer*. Christian beliefs also have the effect of making real life as fantastical as the one depicted in *The Young Pilgrim*. As A.L.O.E.'s novels show, religious belief is no longer confined to biblical reading but is incorporated in every sector of earth, including all individual and societal contexts.

E. Daily Miracles—*Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life*

Unlike the directly corresponding relationship between fantasy and reality in *The Giant Killer*, *Miracles of Heavenly Love* follows the idea of 'fantasised reality' of *The Young Pilgrim*. Yet, the fantastical reality of *The Young Pilgrim* alludes to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The realistic world of Ernest is fantasised to some degree because of its resemblance to Christian's pilgrimage. In *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, however, the fantastical elements belong to the earth. The two-world structure of fantasy writings dissolves and fantastic elements are now blended on earth. It is clearly stated by A.L.O.E. in the preface that every

[58] Ibid., p.83

chapter of this book manifests an idea: the 'Lord works wonders of love in the common events of our lives; that while we adore His wisdom and goodness shown in miracles of old, we should not overlook or undervalue the daily mercies which we receive'.[59] Believing that the supernatural aspects of religion exist transcendentally in reality, A.L.O.E. includes miracles in the quotidian occasions of her stories.

'Miracles', though, are not presented exactly as those conducted by Jesus in the Bible. The miraculous in *Miracles of Heavenly Love* refers to unforeseeable and unpredictable possibilities. It is different from serendipity, which perhaps can be explained as a pre-arranged accident. Miracles happen to convert disbelievers and to consolidate faith. Giles Oldham, the protagonist of *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, says, 'Let us ask for a more thankful spirit to bless God for His providential care; and in what others call *accident* or *chance*, let us see, and gratefully acknowledge new miracles of Heavenly Love!' [60] He calls these unexpected events 'new miracles', to distinguish them from the biblical miracles which have been passed down for centuries. A.L.O.E. reinforced and restated such ideas at the end of every chapter, like the one in 'The Tongue Unloosed': 'to have our lips opened to His praise, is a marvel even amongst Christians, a miracle of Heavenly Love',[61] and the one in 'The Dead Raised': 'For the dead in sin to live unto God, for the buried in guilt to arise, is the noblest triumph of Grace, the highest miracle of Heavenly Love'.[62]

Suddenness of repentance and the accidental inspirations in life are deemed a disclosure of His mercy to men. For example, Oldham is described as having been once 'diligent, honest and truthful', 'cheerful and industrious, a favourite with all'.[63] Yet, his weaknesses in resisting temptation turn him into a 'guilty wretch'. Subsequently, he '[breaks] his good resolution, [breaks] his solemn promise, [offends] the God whom he once served, and whom

[59] A.L.O.E., *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, v-vi
[60] Ibid., p.72, italicised by the author.
[61] Ibid., p.136
[62] Ibid., p.184
[63] Ibid., p.33

he still [reverences] and [fears]'.[64] Nevertheless, the awakening of his conscience happens so suddenly that no prior word can act as prelude to such a plot. Perhaps, it can be argued that his transformation is miracle-like. While he is about to raise a glass of liquor, a 'feeble wailing sound that [reaches] his ear through the jingle of glasses, the din of laughter, and the roll of carriage-wheels in the street'.[65] The wailing sound, as the reader will soon find out, comes from Oldham's idiotic child Minny, who is at that moment sobbing outside the bar. Though it is unexplained by the author how the sound of the child can be heard by her father, it could be imagined that A.L.O.E. implied a spiritual connection between a parent and his child. This realisation of his own sympathy and love towards his idiotic child invokes his guilt about his weaknesses. His resolution in redeeming his faith is hence unexpectedly yet naturally activated. A 'prayer for mercy and pardon welling up from the depths of his soul' and a 'secret cry for help to break from fatal sin'[66] consequently break out. In this awakening moment, God, whom Oldham was taught to think of as the only support of a human being, empowers the drunkard to achieve penitence with irreversible decisiveness. The illumination of Oldham's soul is unpredictable and it seems out of his control, thus consequently, his repentance and enlightenment are deemed miracles. Additionally, before this awakening, the wife of Giles, Mary Oldham has received a book about a miraculous salvation of a drunkard. The sudden penitence of Giles makes a mirror image between him and the drunkard of the book. It is as if the miracle-like metamorphosis is a realisation of a story, rather than a daily occurrence in life. With the sudden repentance of Giles and the mirror images of the drunkards, Giles' spiritual transformation is coloured with a strong sense of fantasy.

In *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, A.L.O.E. abandoned her allegorical style and borrowed fantastic references from biblical sources. Every chapter mirrors certain miracles of the New Testament. Almost all the titles of chapters are named after Jesus' miracles, such as 'The

[64] Ibid., p.34-5
[65] Ibid., p.35
[66] Ibid., p.37

Storm Stilled', 'The Enemy Cast Out', 'The Leper Cleaned' and 'The Dead Raised' and so on. 'Opening Blind Eyes', for instance, corresponds to Mark 8:22-6 and 10:46-52, where Jesus revives the sight of a blind believer. To transform such a story into reality, rather than introducing a physically blind character, A.L.O.E. portrays Deborah, the sister of Mary Oldham, as a spiritually sightless person. Although she is widely acclaimed for her charity work, Deborah's pride has bedazzled her, making her believe that superficial and heartless charitable behaviour can still gain credit for her soul. Her blindness is described as 'a poor sinner decking herself out in fancied merits, all stained and worthless as they are when regarded as means of winning salvation'.[67] All her 'religious' works are void, her prayers are merely mockery of other church-goers, and the gifts she gives are useless trash. By being over-confident about her goodness, she fails to realise the necessity of humility. Similar to the first blind-healing of Jesus, the salvation of Deborah is conducted in two stages. In Mark 8:22-26, the blind man from Bethsaida is partially recovered when Jesus spits on his eyes. The blind claims 'I see men as trees, walking'.[68] In the second attempt, after Jesus puts his hand on the head of the patient, his sight is completely restored, and he sees every man clearly.

In A.L.O.E's story, Oldham initially addresses the story of St. Peter and St. Paul to Deborah. He compares his wife's sister to holy figures, aiming at contrasting her pride with the spotless soul of the saints. At this stage, Deborah may start realising her pride, but her shame creates anger instead of repentance. Oldham continues his preaching by explaining the differences between obeying commandments and being faithful. Deborah has been making a mistake by assuming the former is more important than the latter. When Deborah finds herself speechless and defenceless, her consciousness seems to be awakened. Yet, unlike the Bible story in which the sight of the blind man is fully recovered, after two stages of

[67] Ibid., p.78-9
[68] Mark 8:24

salvation, Deborah is only partially recovered from her blindness: 'it was long before such glimmering light strengthened to perfect day; long before pride-blinded eyes were opened fully to the truth'.[69] The incomplete recovery of Deborah evidences that A.L.O.E. does not write her miracle as if it were a direct transposition of Jesus' one. But when Oldham emphasises that faith is the ultimate medicine for spiritual blindness, A.L.O.E.'s story alludes again to the biblical source: Mark 10:52, where Jesus says to the blind man in Bartimaeus that his faith saves him from disability.[70]

Though the salvation of Deborah is conducted by Giles Oldham, the spiritual metamorphosis of Deborah is generated from the power of God—the only miracle maker. It is as the author exclaimed at the end of that chapter that those who are proud and disbelieve in their salvation by God will be persuaded by the 'work of the Spirit of Truth, a miracle of Heavenly Love'.[71] While God is conceivable from biblical sources, He is also manifested through his immanent and transcendental existence on earth. These illustrations of divine quality alter the literary image of God's existence accordingly. The King in the tale of Fides and the God sought by Bunyan's Christian are presented as a divine power located far from the reach of each tale's protagonists. In *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, however, God is no longer the King mentioned throughout the story but who will never come into the text except in the very last chapter, nor is He metaphorically presented as the divine power which could only been seen after death, like those illustrated in both *The Giant Killer* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. God's existence in *Miracles of Heavenly Love* is penetrated both on earth and in heaven. His omnipotence is evinced from his workings upon mortals. The unreachable distance between God and men is to some extent shortened by these 'daily miracles'.

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[69] A.L.O.E., *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, p. 88

[70] Mark 10:52: And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

[71] A.L.O.E., *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, p. 88

The romantic interpretation of God's immanence is manifested when God is now imagined as assisting human beings anytime and anywhere on earth.

> The Lord is as near to us now as He was to the people who came to Him with their sick when He was dwelling in Judea. Christ hears us just as He heard them. The great God in heaven is as full of pity and kindness now as He was when a Man of Sorrows upon earth.[72]

Such omnipotence happens both in the past and the present, in the otherworld of religion as well as in the earthly world of human beings. It is not that He has ignored human life in the past, it is just that in these nineteenth-century religious children's books, the supernatural intervention of God is put under the spotlight. Also, in the past, His involvement in earthly matters is represented by supernatural figures like angels and Jesus. In the nineteenth century, enlightened mortal figures such as Oldham can be representatively exercising miracles, implying that mortal sinners have somehow substituted the roles of supernatural agents. Not only does miraculous healing happen on earth, but the healer is blended with both a sense of secularity and a supernatural feeling. God's transcendental presence is evinced in earthly subjects. This co-existence of man and God in the same setting becomes the key notion of A.L.O.E.'s children's texts. Other than raising the potentiality of a human being in acquiring some supernatural aspects, Christian beliefs to some extent are secularised as well. Because of the supernatural power of the divinity lingering in earthly subjects, this world is fantasised by the transcendental presence of God.

A.L.O.E. possesses a sense of buoyancy, by which she sees everything on earth as fun, and she also has a heart of gratitude with which she appreciates the 'miracle' of God. Yet, she also states clearly that rather than the life on earth, post-mortem life is the authentic and ultimate glory of man. In commenting on A.L.O.E.'s views about post-mortem life, Giberne states,

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[72] Ibid., p.106

> Paradise was more to her than Earth. It was not that she did not love Earth, but that her love for Heaven was greater. It was not that we could not enter into the bright things of this world, but that she found of the Other World brighter still. She could never be satisfied with the present life; because she was always craving for the higher existence, always longing to rise 'nearer—nearer' to God.[73]

This observation from the critic is a reflection of the real belief of A.L.O.E. and at the same time, an idea which consistently appeared in her texts. Both Anna Gray, who is presented as a pious and generous Christian throughout *Miracles of Heavenly Love,* and Ernest from *The Young Pilgrim,* gloriously pass away at the end of their stories. The death of Anna Gray is metaphorically expressed as 'the glorious sun was setting, cradled in clouds of crimson and gold'.[74] The death of Ernest is compared to Bunyan's Christian's and is described as, 'the Saviour guided by His counsel here—and afterwards—received—into glory'.[75] Similarly, the Indian students of A.L.O.E. compared her life to a crusader's, as if their teacher had also undergone a life of religious battles and journeys. [76] The glorious death of Anna Gray and Ernest reflect two ideas of the author. Death on one level is the triumph of a Christian, as it signifies the completion of earthly duties and the commencement of eternal life in heaven. The after-life is deemed by the author a more valuable existence, for it will be a time when the person is much closer to God. Death is thus a stage where one's soul is elevated to a 'higher existence'. On another level, death denotes home-coming. It is the time when a human's soul goes back to God, who has created and guided him or her all the way in his or her secular life. When the death of the author is also compared to the theme of battling, a topic that she had written about throughout her life, it seems that her belief in glorious living and death had been her strong characteristics, recognised by those who knew her. She had lived out a personal conviction that God is distant in the 'Other World', probably situated in

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[73] Giberne, p.502
[74] A.L.O.E., *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life*, p.196
[75] A.L.O.E., *The Young Pilgrim*, p.278
[76] E.C. Dawson, *Missionary Heroines in India: True Stories of the Wonderful Bravery of Patient Endurance of Missionaries in India* (London: Seeley, Service & Co, 1924), p.83

an after-life; and God is close to humankind as He has taken care of every person in his or her religious journey to heaven.

Concerning all these aforementioned understandings of the supernatural power on earth and the existence of God, the pleasure of religious education in the writings of A.L.O.E. are shown to be generated from faithfulness. In *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, the author rigidly divided the predestined endings of Christians and those of disbelievers. She states clearly that one's belief is the sole arbiter of one's destiny, meaning that only pious believers can receive felicity while other unfaithful ones are doomed to misery. One of the most obvious examples is in the comparison between the marriage of the Oldhams and the Thistlewoods. While in *The Young Pilgrim*, the social judicial systems, concerning the benefit and fairness of the whole community, is considered; in *Miracles of Heavenly Love*, God's power is manifested in the matrimonial system. Anna Gray argues that if a man is not the servant of God, his marriage will not be blessed:

> But if he is not the Lord's servant, Mary, if he is not on the path to heaven, how could you with any peace or comfort go through life with him for your husband? *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* How could you vow to honour him who honours not the Saviour whom you serve; how to obey, when obedience to him must clash with obedience to God?[77]

In this scene, Mary was recollecting the merry days of herself and Thistlewood that happened before her marriage with Oldham. Yet, Gray's speech, as quoted above, pointed out the biblical teaching that marriages between Christian and disbelievers will not be blessed. All those merriments between Mary Oldman and Thistlewood are temporary and impractical. As she explains, no agreement can be made when the couple does not believe in the same religion. Conflicts will be caused when a believer honours the authority of God without her husband's approval. Only religious faithfulness can avoid pseudo-joyfulness and bring real harmony to matrimony. Believing that 'God can and will *make all things work together for*

[77] A.L.O.E., *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life*, p.144, italicised by the author.

good to them that love Him',[78] matrimony is justified and blessed only when faithfulness is involved. Even though matrimonial issues are not directly related to child audience, the mentioning of matrimony in *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* is to prepare young audiences for their future. Oldhams' and Thistlewoods' story are examples to demonstrate blessed and condemned marriages respectively.

Merriment is a promising reward which religion offers to its believers. It is these rewards that attract mankind to follow religion, as Christians believe that God will bestow felicity and justice upon them in all conditions on earth and in the after-life. Merriments and happy-endings, on one hand, are results of faithfulness; but on the other hand, they are also propaganda advertising Christianity. These guarantees of merriment in one's mortal life and the eternal companionship of God after death console believers. The faith of the protagonists in *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* is strengthened and consolidated over and again after their experiences of a 'daily miracle'. Even if Gray does not undergo a 'daily miracle' as much as other characters do, it is believed certainly by other characters that her faithfulness will bring her to God after she passes away. Christianity in children's books eulogises itself as the merciful dominating system, which states that under the rule of God, felicities will be given to believers. Based on the moral judgement given by Christian beliefs, A.L.O.E's children's religious fantasies segregate non-believers from believers. Felicities are granted to Christians and punishments are cast upon their opposites. This induces young readers unconsciously to follow the examples of the believers, particularly when entertaining fantastic elements are also included in religious persuasion. Perhaps, it even can be argued that A.L.O.E. offered no choices to her readers. The promise of felicity is given in rigid terms. Only those who believed wholeheartedly are guaranteed happy endings. In this way,

[78] Ibid., p.148, italicised by the author.

A.L.O.E.'s religious fantasies persuasively drive child readers to live religiously instead of living with the gruesome punishment and misfortune illustrated by the stories of disbelievers.

Happy endings and moral justice can be read as strategically plotted in A.L.O.E.'s children's texts, but it is also undeniable that the author was sincerely crafting her tale for the 'good' of children. These aforementioned serendipities, felicities and justice in children's texts were all strongly believed in by the author. To A.L.O.E., as critics understand, religion is not simply a metaphysical belief but a set of trustworthy disciplines that can be applied practically in real life. Giberne quotes from a friend of A.L.O.E., Mr. Clark's observance that,

> As regards her religious views, she was sincerely attached to the Church of England, firmly believing that the teaching of the Church of England, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Thirty-nine Articles, [was] in accordance with the Word of God.[79]

Cutt's comments that religion is absent in the texts of A.L.O.E. would be true if the author had not shown any particular religious institutional teaching in her children's texts, even though Giberne sees that A.L.O.E. was 'sincerely attached to the Church of England'. Yet her religious messages also come from her own understanding of the Bible and her insistence on practicing those teachings in life. Fantastic elements are her devices to facilitate religious education. Her attitude towards writing children's texts was as E.C. Dawson comments:

> Miss Tucker's thoughts were always with these people. She was always planning to do them good. It was not merely that she would give her bedding away to one sick and her rug to another, but she would be seen picking out of the path pieces of broken glass. She could not bear to think of the bare feet which so often got hurt by the careless scattering of fragments.[80]

Benevolence was the daily practice of A.L.O.E. She truly sympathised with others and considered carefully others' needs and beliefs. Her missionary works were most probably motivated by her concerns for non-believers. Besides Dawson, Mrs Marshall states that 'in her books, as in every work she undertook throughout her life, she had the high and noble

[79] Giberne, p.377
[80] Dawson, p.73

aim of doing good'.[81] Similarly, Cutt conceives that in all A.L.O.E.'s books, the author intends to '*elevate*' her young readers 'morally and spiritually, and *keep them up* to that level'.[82] A.L.O.E's intention of 'doing good' is almost unanimously agreed upon by her critics.

F. Conclusion

In the framework of both former religious fantasy and the tradition of evangelical writings for children, A.L.O.E. developed her texts in accordance with her genuine belief and accommodated them into the corpus of the nineteenth century. Those beliefs included in her texts were intended to benefit her reader emotionally and spiritually. She stressed the practicality of Christian principles as she believed that the real value of religious lessons manifests only when their messages are executed in real benevolent acts. By fulfilling one's duty, labouring and applying religious principles on a daily basis, spiritual joyfulness is generated. Certainly A.L.O.E. showed her concern with both pleasure from reading a fantasy and being a dutiful Christian, nevertheless, it is obvious to her that the latter is much more important than the former. Apart from acting on benevolence, a faithful life will also promise felicities and joyfulness. In these selected texts, the faithful ones are granted moral and behavioural improvement, social justice, serendipities, miracles and glorious death. To some extent, her novels dramatized the blessing of God, yet, those are at least what she believed will happen to Christians. Perhaps it is too extreme to argue that A.L.O.E. was solely interested in the spiritual pleasure of being a Christian. In fact, it should be understood that all those felicities that she narrated in her tales are 'natural' consequences of being a faithful Christian. This means that other than the emotional happiness generated from fantastic narrative, A.L.O.E. also highlighted spiritual joyfulness in her texts. Additionally, she upheld the idea that this world is a fantastic reality. Religion itself is no longer just situated in an

[81] Mrs Marshall, '"A.L.O.E" (Miss Tucker)', *Women Novelist of Queen Victoria's Reign* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1897), p.296-7
[82] Cutt, p.81, italicised by the critic

untouchable outer world and the Bible, but is also located in our daily life in this earthly world. Therefore, those fantastic elements narrated in her writings can be realised. In the works discussed above, religious views are developed from the author's independent interpretation of religion. Fantasy writings remain peripheral to religious education. Nevertheless, even though A.L.O.E.'s literary creations were widely circulated in the nineteenth century and her writings remain one of the eminent examples of children's literature, evangelical children's literary works were greatly superseded and revolted against, as will be shown in the next chapter, by the rise of Lewis Carroll.

Chapter 3:

The Triumph of Entertaining Text—

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass: and What Alice Found There* (1872)

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass: and What Alice Found There* (1872)[1] did not intend to provide any education to young readers but pure entertainment. It is confirmed in a letter by the author, saying that, 'I can guarantee that the books have no religious teaching whatever in them—in fact, they do not teach anything at all'.[2] This absence of specific moral education is widely acknowledged by critics, for instance, Manlove states that 'Alice is the first child in children's fantasy to learn no moral whatsoever, unless it is the "morality" of changefulness itself.'[3] To some critics this absence of didacticism represents a depravity of avowed purpose, for the reason that they see teaching is the sole purpose of writing a children's book.[4] The intention of including just entertaining narration: fantasy, may also cause suspicion that Carroll wrote for commercial reasons.[5] Nevertheless, the innovativeness of Carroll is demonstrated precisely by this absence of didacticism.

A. The Unprecedented Success of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*[6]

[1] Even though the date of 1872 was printed in the title page, *Through the Looking-Glass* was published before the Christmas of 1871. Macmillan's insistence on the early sale of *Looking-Glass* will be explained later in this chapter.
[2] Morton Cohen (ed.), *The Selected Letters of Lewis Carroll* (London: Papermac, 1982), p.137
[3] Manlove, *From Alice to Harry Potter: Children's Fantasy in England*, p.25. This comment is also repeated in another book of Manlove: *The Fantasy Literature of England*, p.171
[4] Egoff, *World Within: Children's Fantasy from Middle Ages to Today*, p.46
[5] Christina Rossetti stated in a letter that her *Speaking Likenesses*, was written as an imitation of Carroll's fantasies because she was working for commercial reasons only. More details about Rossetti's reaction towards Carroll's books will be given in the next chapter.
[6] For the sake of clarity, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* will be shortened as *Alice*, and *Through the Looking-Glass: and What Alice Found There* will be shortened as *Looking-Glass* in this thesis.

Alice and *Looking-Glass* have been very widely read by children and adults, including a great many editors, critics and other significant literary figures of the nineteenth century. The first two thousand copies of *Alice* were printed in July 1865, but because of the poor quality of the work's illustrations, Carroll withdrew all of them.[7] The second edition was printed in November of the same year. According to Elizabeth A. Cripps, owing to the large number of books bought at Christmas, it was 'inevitable' for *Alice* to receive the 'same share of attention' as other children's books.[8] Yet, as both Cripps and Cohen note, the sale of *Alice* started 'steady' and quickly 'spiralled upward'.[9] The book was widely translated and 'edition after edition was called for' throughout the lifetime of Carroll.[10] *Alice* was, as described by *Daily News*, 'a story that has given delight to half the boys and girls in England'.[11] Thus, it was not a surprise that the publisher Macmillan was confident about the sales of his second book—*Looking-Glass*. Though Carroll hesitated to publish it, Macmillan anticipated the potential profit of a sequel.[12] The publisher even hastened to market *Looking-Glass* before Christmas, one of the most critical selling periods of children's books in the nineteenth century. Nine thousand copies of *Looking-Glass* were printed in November 1871, and another six thousand copies were issued in the December that followed. Comparisons of the two books were constantly made, and *Looking-Glass* was in many cases criticised for the absence of spontaneity. Nevertheless, *The Pall Mall Gazette* reasoned that 'it is not, perhaps, quite so good, as a whole, as "Alice's Adventure in

[7] For more information about faults of the withdrawn edition, please refer to Harry Morgan Ayres, 'Carroll's Withdrawal of the 1865 *Alice*', *The Huntington Library Bulletin*, No.6 (Nov., 1934), p.153-163, Derek Hudson, *Lewis Carroll* (London: Constable, 1954), p.138-9, Cohen, 'Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan', *Browning Institute Studies*, Vol.7, (1979), p.31-70, Justin G. Schiller, *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland: An 1865 printing re-described* (New York: The Jabberwock, 1990), p.13-21.
[8] Elizabeth A. Cripps, '*Alice* and the Reviewer', *Children's Literature*, Vol.11, 1983, p.36
[9] Morton Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* (London: Papermac, 1995), p.131
[10] Ibid.
[11] 'Literature', *Daily News* (London, England), Saturday, March, 1869; Issue 7146
[12] For more information on the argument between Macmillan and Carroll about the publication date of *Looking-Glass*, please refer to Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.132

Wonderland," but there is not much to choose between them'.[13] Putting aside the question of which of the two books is a better work of literature, their number of printings was sufficient to show that *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* had achieved equal success. By the time of Carroll's death, Macmillan had printed over 150,000 copies of *Alice*[14] and more than 100,000 of *Looking-Glass*.[15]

As a result of this commercial success, numerous imitations followed. Many other children's authors went on to mimic Carroll's 'nonsense' characters and plot. Many of those imitations were hoping to reproduce the same comical and satirical effects as *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*. According to Carolyn Sigler, there were at least 'two hundred literary imitations, revisions and parodies' of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* since they were first published.[16] The craze for these imitations was probably as *The Manchester Guardian* describes: 'an immense mass of [such] matter [is] produced every day, and not for the most part deserving of much more than a day's life'.[17] And the consequence of all these imitations, as *The Manchester Guardian* comments on Charles Godfrey Leland's *Johnnykin and the Goblins* (1877), is 'that the imitation of Mr. Carroll may be made as obvious as possible numerous parodies are introduced quite as much in his style as anything infinitely inferior can be'.[18] None of those

[13] 'Looking-Glass Land', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Thursday, December 14, 1871; Issue 2133

[14] The sales number of *Wonderland* is debated among critics. While Cohen insisted in his book and article that 150,000 copies of *Wonderland* were sold, Hudson suggests that there were indeed 180,000 copies sold in the life time of Carroll. For Hudson's analysis on the sales of *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*, please refer to Chapter 7 and 9 of his book, *Lewis Carroll* (1954)

[15] Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.134. For more precise and detailed examination on the publication of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*, please refer to Cohen's 'Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan'. Aside from discussion of circulation, the responses of several literary figures are also widely known by critics. For the reception by George MacDonald, please refer to Greville MacDonald's *George MacDonald and His Wife* (1924), p.342; for Henry Kingsley's responses, please refer to Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.126; and for the one of Dante Rossetti and Christina Rossetti, please refer to Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.130, 549 and Anthony Harrison (ed.), *The Letters of Christina Rossetti, Vol. 1 1843-1873*, p.257 respectively.

[16] Carolyn Sigler, *Alternative Alice: visions and revisions of Lewis Carroll's Alice's Books: An Anthology* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), xii

[17] 'Reviews', *The Manchester Guardian (1828-1900)*; Aug 18, 1879

[18] 'Christmas Books i', *The Manchester Guardian (1800-1900)*; Nov. 20, 1876

imitations can reproduce the fantasticality of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*, even though 'the failure of imitations provides clear evidence of what *Alice* achieved'.[19] The failure of those imitations showed, as *The Derby Mercury* describes,

> Alice is unique; her blunderland imitators are comic and often vulgar. Poor jokes, illustrations intended to be comic but just missing the rank, and painfully severe attempts to be funny, do not make a book fit to be associated with the inimitable Alice.[20]

The Derby Mercury calls those imitators of *Alice* 'blunderland imitators', as though to follow Carroll's style is a 'blunder' in itself. Negative receptions of these imitations have hardly ceased. Looking into the general reception of those imitations, it is little wonder that the first historian of children's literature, Darton, notes, 'None of the later works is on a par with the two Alice books, which themselves are an almost unique example of a precedent and sequel inseparably linked and absolutely equal in excellence'.[21] Some imitations, such as Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874) and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Behind the White Brick* (1879), try to put back morality into fantasy writing. However, none of these works can obtain a better reception than Carroll's works. Nevertheless, disregarding their quality, the quantity of these works on the market did show that *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* pioneered a new fashion in children's literature. Besides, all those imitations evidenced how the society of that time was to some degree openly accepting moral-free children's books.

B. Fantasy Writing and Children's Literature

The zeal for Carroll's books showed that fantastical writings were no longer complements to didacticism. They proved that fantasy writing was strong enough to be an independent genre.

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[19] Carpenter, *Secret Gardens*, p.57

[20] 'Literature', *The Derby Mercury* (Derby, England), Wednesday, October 31, 1877; Issue 8497

[21] Darton, *Children's Books in England*, p.265. One has to be aware that not all imitations of Carroll received negative comment. It is argued by several critics, like Carpenter and Susina, that George MacDonald was one of those imitators of Carroll. But because MacDonald has imbued the nonsensical scenes and jokes with his taste for traditional fairy tales, it is less easy to detect the resemblance between MacDonald's and Carroll's works. For the imitations between these two authors, please refer to Susina's discussion about their friendship in p.29-32 of her book.

Apparently, Carroll's children's stories were not the first two fantasies in England and it is even possible to argue that they were influenced by other children's books at the time, such as Kingsley's *Water Babies* and MacDonald's *Phantastes* (1858). To some degree, the two *Alice* books were not extraordinary to the discipline. Nevertheless, due to their commercial success, Carroll's incentive of providing pure entertainment unexpectedly became his label.

1. Rejection to Growth

On the 4th of July 1862, Carroll wrote in his diary, 'On which occasion I told them the fairy-tale of *Alice's Adventures Underground* which I undertook to write out for Alice, and which is now finished (as to the text) though the pictures are not yet nearly done'.[22] The audience he mentioned were the Liddell sisters: Lorina, Alice and Edith. Among the sisters, Alice was Carroll's particular favourite. As Robinson Duckworth, a dear friend of Carroll in Oxford, remembered, when Alice came to bid goodbye to them, she asked Carroll to 'write out Alice's Adventures' for her. Even though Carroll said he should try to do so, he did afterward tell his friend that 'he sat up nearly the whole night, committing to a MS. book his recollections of the drolleries with which he had enlivened the afternoon'.[23] Carroll referenced Alice Liddell in several places in *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*. The most intriguing one appears when Carroll illustrated his dislike of the companionship of Alice's sisters in a poem at the beginning of *Alice*. Tertia who represents Edith 'interrupts the tale/ Not *more* than once a minute', while Alice lays her gentle hand 'where Childhood's dream are twined/ In Memory's mystic band'.[24] It is perhaps overly clear that his creations were made not for all children but Alice Liddell only.

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[22] Lewis Carroll, *Lewis Carroll's Diaries, The Private Journals of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson*, ed. by Edward Wakeling, Vol.4. (Luton: The Lewis Carroll Society, 1997) p. 95
[23] Derek Hudson, *Lewis Carroll* (London: Constable, 1954), p.130
[24] Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (London: Penguin, 1998), p.5-6

To some critics, Carroll's particular favour for entertainment and pleasure was a result of his paedophilic fantasy concerning Alice Liddell. According to Carroll's diaries, he and the Liddell children did not meet for didactic activities but spent most of their time in singing, telling stories, boat trips and playing croquet. Carroll often used 'pleasant' to describe those meetings. One record in his diary showed that Carroll's pleasure went to Alice only. On 10th June 1863, Carroll wrote down the 'delightful' time he spent with Alice while other Liddells were absent:

> We soon lost the others, and Alice and I with Edwin [Carroll's brother], took the round with all principal streets in around two hours, bringing her home by half-past nine…It was delightful to see thorough abandonment with which Alice enjoyed the whole thing.[25]

Since 1862, Mrs. Liddell found Carroll and her daughters were overly intimate with each other. She thereon started to oversee the meeting between the two parties, and finally in 1864, put a halt to their friendship.[26] When Carroll met Alice again in May 1865, he found the 'thirteen-year-old Alice "changed a good deal, and hardly for the better—probably going through the usual awkward stage of transition"'.[27] Critics believe that the suspicion of Mrs. Liddell suffices to prove Carroll's fondness for Alice. And his disappointment with the grown-up Alice simply consolidates arguments about his paedophilic interests. Numerous critical speculations are generated concerning Carroll's 'paedophilia'. Alwin L. Baum, for example, argues that the story of Alice is filled with imageries of 'sexual fantasy—rabbit-holes, magic potions which produce bodily metamorphoses, decapitation threats, desires to become queen'.[28] Baum's argument appears insufficient in accusing Carroll of paedophilia for the reason that those

[25] Carroll, *Lewis Carroll's Diaries*,Vol.4 p.173
[26] On 12th May 1864, Carroll wrote in his diary that, 'During these last few days I have applied in vain for leave to take the children on the river, i.e. Alice, Edith and Rhoda: but Mrs. Liddell will not let *any* come in future--rather superfluous caution'. For Mrs. Liddell's suspicion, please refer to *Lewis Carroll's diary*, Vol.4, p.139, 299
[27] Hudson, p.133
[28] Alwin L. Baum, 'Carroll's Alices: The Semiotics of Paradox', *Lewis Carroll*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), p.66

imageries are often included in fairy tales. Nevertheless, many other evidences and argument also suggest that the two *Alice* books have nothing related to Alice Liddell. [29] Carroll's fondness for young Alice remains an enigma. He used her name in an acrostic at the end of *Looking-Glass*, which was written when she was already in her adulthood. It is unsure whether Carroll liked the youth of Alice Liddell or whether he had truly fallen in love with this little girl, or in some arguments, that Carroll still kept his paedophilic fantasy of young Alice in his second book. Apart from any suggestion of paedophilia, those meetings between himself and the Liddells are nevertheless intrinsic to his writings. It is presumed the pleasant memory of there is one of the main factors that constitute the entertaining effects of the two *Alice* books.

Carroll's favour to the time spent with young Alice, at the same time, is another example that shows Carroll's intimacy with children. It is widely known by critics that Carroll was delighted to make friends with children. In addition to arguing that Carroll was particularly fond of childlikeness, some critics suggest it is no other than the author himself who refused to grow up. Cohen argues that Carroll was fed up with Victorian children's literature, which embodied 'moral baggage that burdened children'. [30] Having himself also experienced this moral inoculation in his childhood, Carroll had no intention of repeating such suffering for his young readers. In this way, *Alice* embodies a sense of subversiveness towards what Carroll had experienced in his childhood. The Duchess of *Alice* says, 'Every thing's got a moral, if only

[29] Carpenter tries to provide a counterargument about Carroll's paedophilic interest. He suggests that first, *Alice* was not shown to Alice Liddell once it was finished but to the family of George MacDonald. Second, Alice Liddell only served as an inspiration of Alice, for her involvement was almost removed in the later part of the creation. However, Carpenter's argument is insecure, for after 1864, the Liddell girls were forbidden to meet Carroll. And when Carroll met the thirteen-year-old Alice in 1865, no interaction remained between him and the Liddells. Therefore, it is possible that Carroll would be delighted to include Alice in his creation, but he did not have any chances to do so.

[30] Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.142

you can find it'.[31] Certainly this line can be read as a parody of the author's experience. Those books which Carroll read in childhood were 'purposeful and dour'.[32] The desire to reconfigure the real but unpleasant experience of the author leads to the impulse of being overwhelmed by the nonsensical content of his text. Henceforth, instead of instilling discipline in his children's books, Carroll replaced the predominance of instructive passages with pure entertainment. Hence, the two *Alice* books become literary rebukes to moral-teaching materials, or 'antidotes to the child's degradation' to the author.[33] More than just the actual childhood experiences of the author, his books also address the child audience universally. Insisting that the dominance of adulthood happens anytime and anywhere, 'the *Alice* books are symbols of his [Carroll's] own struggle to survive, they are also formulae for every child's survival: they offer encouragement to push on, messages of hope in the wilderness of adult society'.[34]

The correlation between Carroll and his creations is further elaborated with references to the problematic life he had in adulthood. Some critics suggest that *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* are Carroll's psychological escape from the Victorian world. Peter Coveney, for example, argues that 'every factor which made for weakness became focused into the astringent and intelligent art of *Alice in Wonderland*'.[35] In Coveney's interpretation, Carroll's passion for children demonstrates his 'regressive escape into the emotional prison of self-indulgent nostalgia'.[36] As

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[31] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.78. This line also appears in Carroll's *The New Belfry of the Christ Church: A Monograph* (Oxford: James Parker, 1872). Carroll comments on Dean Liddell's architectural innovations, stating that 'Everything has a moral, if you choose to look for it. In Wordsworth, a good half of every poem is devoted to the Moral: in Byron, a smaller proportion: in Tupper, the whole'. For the original text, please refer to *The Lewis Carroll Picture Book: selection from the unpublished writings and drawings of* Lewis *Carroll, together with reprints from scarce and unacknowledged work*, ed. by Stuart Dodgson Collingwood (London: Paternoster, 1899), p.117. For the comment on such references and Duchess' words, please refer to notes of Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* (Penguin), p.315.
[32] Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.142
[33] Ibid., p.144
[34] Ibid.
[35] Peter Coveney, 'Escape', *Alice in Wonderland*, ed. by Donald J. Gray (London: W.W. Norton, 1992), p.331, originally printed in *Poor Monkey* (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1957)
[36] Ibid., p.328

a timid and reclusive scholar in Oxford, Carroll found himself most comfortable in the company of children. Coveney focuses on Carroll's nostalgia while Cohen believes that Carroll was looking for comfort from the physical defects that he possessed. Although Carroll was talented, he was suffered from a deaf right ear and stammer. Perhaps Carroll found he was less inferior when he was staying with children. For this reason, as Cohen claims, Carroll 'lived his life pursuing child friendships'.[37] Nevertheless, Carroll 'evidently possessed a specific gift for understanding children that continually endeared him to them'.[38] Letters, diaries, photographs and his invention of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* did not fail to reveal his love for children. Through the adventure of Alice, the author seeks his 'comfort in face of a sense of personal failure and shame'.[39] With reference to Cohen and Coveney's explanation, Carroll's nostalgia for childhood was not simply referencing his genuine experiences. *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* were the 'pursuit of innocence', through which the author imaginatively escaped from social pressure and returned to childhood joyfulness.

Jan Susina argues that 'the lack of religious moralizing, while important, is more a result of the specific audience to whom Carroll was directing his text—initially the Liddells and later the upper-middle class—than any clear sense of separating education from entertainment'.[40] Carroll's reclusive behaviour to the adult world was manifested in his fear in growing up. The comfort that he obtained from his child friends aroused his preference for childlikeness. It is possible to argue that Carroll expressed his desire for childhood through the entertaining narratives in his *Alice* books. It is as Michael Bakewell suggests, Carroll did not wish his audiences 'to be pressed into becoming little adults; he did not, in fact, want them to grow up at

[37] Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, xx
[38] Ibid., xix
[39] Coveney, p.331
[40] Jan Susina, *The Place of Lewis Carroll in Children's Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p.46

all'. What he really wanted to do was to 'share in childhood, to prolong it'.[41] In this way, Carroll's rejection of growth, no matter whether it was caused by his paedophilic interest or his personal rejection of adulthood or his escape from reality, generates his amoral children's texts. Carroll did not wish to mould his readers into socially-acceptable adults nor enforce his reader's maturation. Perhaps he was also afraid that those didactic messages would remind himself of the behavioural restraints and moralistic responsibility of adulthood. As a result, he removed all those moralistic and religious messages, which are in many cases included in children's texts, from his works for children. Entertaining elements remained and became the main focus of his creations.

2. Other Facilitators of Entertaining Writings

To argue that *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* alone turned children's literature topsy-turvy would be an exaggeration of their impact. The situation was hardly similar to what Cohen argues, that the 'the *Alice* books fly in the face of that tradition, destroy it, and give the Victorian child something lighter and brighter'.[42] Before *Alice* and *Looking Glass* were printed, the didactic tradition of children's literature was already falling apart. As Darton observed, in the 1830s to 1840s, 'Moral Tale had flourished reasonably, but was no longer rampant or aggressive'.[43] When it came to the mid-Victorian period, the wish to reduce educative material was noted. Many reviews of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* complimented on their absence of educational incentives rather than deprecating it. *Aunt Judy's Magazine* states clearly that 'Parents and guardians… must not look to "Alice's Adventure" for knowledge in disguise'.[44] *The Sunderland Herald* even said that Carroll's book 'has this advantage, that it has no moral, and

[41] Michael Bakewell, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* (London: Heinemann, 1996), p.139
[42] Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.142
[43] Darton, p.217
[44] *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, 1June 1866

that it does not teach anything'. Now children were no longer preoccupied with redeeming their sinful selves. Entertainment becomes one of the enjoyments permitted for young readers. *Alice* served as a present 'for any children who are in the habit of spending a part of each day in "doing their lessons", and who may therefore be fairly allowed a little unalloyed nonsense as a reward'.[45] This editor of *The Sunderland Herald* differentiates children's texts for education and those for entertainment, and, therefore, reveals a consensus in favour of a much more balanced life. Though the editor suggests that entertaining literature should be saved for after school, this does not devalue its impact. This passage of *The Sunderland Herald* also described educational material as a 'bitter foundation of fat', which manifested a rather dismissive attitude towards educational literature.

While educational materials were losing their prevalence, the Victorians faced the rise of literary fairy tales. Foreign fairy tales were being introduced to England, and they contributed greatly to a revival of interest in literary fairy tales. Jack Zipes argues that fairy tales slowly emerged as a device that expresses social discontent. Idealised order was reinforced via the fantastical realm. Zipes argues that Carroll was seeking a 'psychological rejection and rebellion against the "norm" of English society that would move [his] readers to look forward to change'.[46] Carroll celebrated the questioning spirit of Alice and took it as a sign of revolt against social norms. Jackson, similarly, argues that fantastical writings were a channel for writers to express their subversion of Victorian society. But instead of pointing out the questioning spirit, Jackson finds Carroll's fantastical realm is filled with fear and anxiety. When the world is surrounded by unknown and monstrous characters, an individual like Alice is constantly uncertain about herself. Perhaps through those descriptions of fear in *Alice* and

[45] *The Sunderland Herald*, May 25, 1866, p.2
[46] Jack Zipes, *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2007), p154

Looking-Glass, Carroll unconsciously illustrated his fear of real society. It can even be argued that the adult characters in *Alice* and in *Looking-Glass* presented a chaotic and bewildering world. And this is precisely a correspondence to how Carroll felt about Victorian society. In terms of articulating suppressed discontent, Carroll had made a most 'radical statement on behalf of the fairy tale and the child's perspective by conceiving a fantastic plot without an ostensible moral purpose'.[47] The mid-nineteenth century was a time when children's literature was experiencing a transitional period in which didacticism was losing its dominance and entertaining writings were slowly taking over as the main purpose of writing. Entertaining texts were gradually catching the attention of the public.

The Times relates the wish to remove moral lessons from *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* to the desire of Carroll and his readers to revive childlikeness. There were many factors that facilitate the interest in childlikeness. The most prominent example from literary influences will be the one from William Wordsworth, whose 'Imitations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' was one of the main literary texts that renewed the idea of childhood. In the mid-Victorian age, children were not solely viewed as embodiments of sinfulness. To some Victorians, children were innocent. And, as Robert Pattison argues, Carroll could not 'tolerate the idea of children as part of the world of sin, and in *Alice in Wonderland*, the heroine stands resolutely apart from the machinery of Original Sin'.[48] *Alice* is described as a book that helps those who are 'steeped head over ears in dull realities' to find their 'best treat and beguilement in playing his leisure hour away from children, and becoming a child again'.[49] As *The Times* phrases it: 'dull realities' highlight the propensity towards boredom of Victorian real life. In such a societal milieu, *Alice* is the 'best treat' that averts adult's attention from 'dull realities'.

[47] Ibid., p155-6
[48] Robert Pattison, *The Child Figure in Literature* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), p.156, 159
[49] 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland', *The Times*, Thursday, Aug 13, 1868; pg. 8; Issue 26202; Col C

Carroll's work is a reminiscence of childhood. Adults read the book to forget about 'dull realities' by mentally occupying themselves with childhood's joyfulness.

> Certainly we enjoy the walk with Alice through Wonderland, though now and then, perhaps, something disturbing almost causes us to wake from our dream. That it is a little bit too clever every here and there seems to us to be the fault of a very pretty and highly original book, sure to delight the little world of wondering minds, and which may well please those who have, unfortunately, passed the years of wondering.[50]

This understanding, based upon the suitability of *Alice*'s narrative for Victorian society, provides an alternative explanation for the success of Carroll. The editor of *The Times* suggests that the realistic world is 'too clever'—that is to say, too dominated by the logic of rational intelligence. Rationality has unduly taken over the importance of the emotional side of an individual. The 'fault[s]' of *Alice* arguably remind readers about their own 'Self'. Additionally, the process whereby Alice re-adjusts her identity to conform to the absurd world of Wonderland reflects the relationship between the Victorians and what might be labelled the mechanically inhumane society of the nineteenth century. The constant anxiety of Alice in localising her 'self' in this new mad world, imitates the real condition of those living in the nineteenth century. The Victorians found that the rapid technological and intellectual development of society continued to bring unprecedented alterations to daily life. Just like Alice, the Victorians faced constant challenges to their old values. While Carroll's creations delight children, the book also re-ignites the wondering mind of the adult, who has long lost his or her childlikeness.

Instead of being the originators of this blossoming of fantasy writing in the mid-Victorian period, *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* acted as the catalysts of it. Although Carroll's creations were not the only reason for the changes in literary taste, *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* became the paradigm of entertaining writings for children. To many critics, like Darton, Carroll's

[50] Ibid.

achievement is revolutionary. He states that "Lewis Carroll", indeed changed the whole cast of children's literature, but he founded, not followed, a gracious type':[51]

> The directness of such work was a revolution in its sphere. It was the coming to the surface, powerfully and permanently, the first unapologetic, undocumented appearance in print, for readers who sorely needed it, of liberty of thought in children's books.[52]

Nevertheless, provided with the social, literary and personal factors that possibly had generated the innovation of Carroll, it is fairer to argue that *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* are the most significant works that helped in propagating entertaining writings. As Sigler states, 'the popular and critical appeal of Carroll's *Alice* fantasises did… solidify a shift away from didacticism in children's literature and help to make fantasy a popular paradigm in children's…literature'.[53] In *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*, Carroll has abandoned moral lessons and religious teachings. As a result, as shown in the two *Alice* books, fantastical writing becomes an independent narrative form of children's literature. In addition to the fact that Carroll aimed at entertaining his readers, his works help liberate fantastical writings from didacticism.

C. A New Image of Christianity in Children's Literature

Carroll had no intention of including any religious teaching in his book, but this does not mean that he hated Christianity. In fact, Carroll was a highly devoted Christian all through his life. Not only was he was brought up in a religiously observant family where his father Rev. Charles Dodgson was an active clergyman, and two of Carroll's brothers joined the clergy; he was also educated at Oxford in a studentship of Theology. There were prayers and references to his beliefs throughout his diaries. Though he refused to be a priest in the end, it is still obvious that Carroll was religious. It is true that the two *Alice* books were not teaching religious issues, nevertheless, Carroll recognised the importance of raising a person with a religious education.

[51] Darton, p.259
[52] Ibid., p.268
[53] Sigler, x

At a young age, Carroll composed didactic magazines for his siblings. As Ronald Reichertz notes, Carroll's 'memorization of morally didactic material in his childhood [was] presented in the first of the Dodgson family magazines, *Useful and Instructive Poetry*' as well as the magazine that followed, *The Rectory Magazine* (1848-50)'.[54] It was apparent that Carroll was familiar with biblical ideas and evangelical literature for children. His later creations, *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889) and *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893) were impregnated with religious teachings. It is only that he chose not include any didactic religious materials in *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*.

1. Evangelical Texts

As Bratton notes, 'appreciation of Alice involved knowledge of the moralising tradition, of course, as well as a response to the fantastic: half the fun is the parody of moral tales, rhymes and children's hymns which the book contains'.[55] Religious subjects are included in *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* without their customary function in education but as objects of parody. Carpenter argues that Carroll's way of writing religious materials acts as a 'mockery of Christian belief': 'it is something of a shock to realise that it was, again and again, implicitly religious material that Dodgson was twisting into his own nonsensical, violent shapes'.[56] In Carpenter's opinion, Carroll specifically chose to ridicule old religious texts. Carpenter tries to connect Alice's fall into Wonderland with Dante's entry to the underworld. He argues that Beatrice and the white rabbit resemble each other, and other characters of Wonderland are children's versions of those monstrous characters in *Inferno*. Nevertheless, even if Carroll calls his first *Alice* draft *Underground*, it is farfetched to read *Alice* as if it were an adaptation of

[54] Ronald Reichertz, *The Making of Alice Books: Lewis Carroll's Use of Earlier Children's Literature* (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p.28
[55] Bratton, *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction*, p.70
[56] Carpenter, p.62-3

Dante's *Inferno*. It is only obvious that many rhymes and poems in *Alice* are parodies of evangelical verses. One of the examples is the parody of Isaac Watts' 'Against Idleness and Mischief' in *Divine Songs*. Watts' poem opens with the daily work of a 'bee':

> How doth the little busy bee
> Improve each shining hour,
> And gather honey all the day
> From every opening flower!

Watts introduces an idea that industrious labour will facilitate a person's moral development. The poem is followed by another stanza, which consolidated his argument by suggesting that labour can save a man from the devil. In *Alice*, however, the bee is replaced by a crocodile:

> How doth the little crocodile
> Improve his shining tail,
> And pour the waters of the Nile
> On every golden scale![57]

This description of the idle and playful crocodile is followed by an account of its merciless fish-hunting. Through this, Carroll revolted against the original implications and moral lesson entirely. Besides Watts' 'Against Idleness', Southey's 'The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them', Watts' 'Tis the voice of the sluggard' and Wordsworth's 'Revolution and Independence' are also parodied. Carpenter bases his argument on the grounds that 'Nonsense is inextricably associated with violence, destruction, annihilation'.[58] Hence, owing to the nature of nonsensical literature, Carroll has no choice but to distort those old religious texts. Carpenter's argument appears to be overly radical, still his analysis reveals Carroll's comprehensive understanding of children's religious texts. Carpenter even argues that perhaps some imitations of *Alice* and *Looking Glass* were more innovative and creative than Carroll's

[57] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.19
[58] Carpenter, p.60

books, as Carroll only 'worked with as small a palate as possible'[59] and built up his texts by incorporating old materials with his fancy. Carpenter underestimates Carroll's effort in looking for new twists and interpretations from previous didactic literature. Nevertheless, Carpenter's study of the parodies of evangelical verses reveals that *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* were not random creations but carefully arranged ones.

2. Journey to the Garden

Carroll deliberately modelled his texts in the pattern of a journey that teaches nothing to his protagonists. When Alice enters a 'long low hall' which is 'lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof', she gets a glimpse of the destination of Wonderland: 'the loveliest garden you ever saw'.[60] As Florence Lennon argues, the garden is a 'rich symbol if we call it adult life viewed by a child, or vice versa'.[61] When Alice's journey is conducted in a pattern of dream and random events, perhaps it is possible to argue that the garden is not truly the final destination. Additionally, in the middle of her journey, Alice still thinks that she just needs to get somewhere, whatever the place is.[62] Nevertheless, the garden can still be read as her destination, since other than the garden, Alice has no place to aspire to. The symbolic meaning of it remains from the beginning of the journey. The garden is symbolically the place to escape from entrapment. Martin Gardner notes that Alice's peeping at the garden is a copy of Carroll's real aspiration. He argues that 'Carroll used a small room overlooking the deanery garden where the Liddell children played croquet'. And this must have aroused his desire to 'escape from the dark halls of Oxford into the bright flowers and cool fountains of childhood's Eden'.[63]

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[59] Ibid., p.59
[60] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.12
[61] Florence Becker Lennon, *Lewis Carroll*, rev. edn. (New York: Collier, 1962), p.150
[62] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.56
[63] Martin Gardner, *The Annotated Alice* (New York, Dover, 1974), p.30.The suggestions of Gardner and Lennon are also mentioned in Richard Kelly's discussion of the garden.

This garden of the Liddells is served with a similar function as the garden where Alice is going to. It is symbolically a land of freedom. Thus, among all the chaotic events and mad characters in Wonderland, the garden can be viewed as the possible exit. Certainly, readers will soon find that this garden is a pseudo-destination. It is as chaotic as other places in Wonderland.

a. The Conflict between Pigeon and Serpent

On the way to the garden, Alice adjusts her physical size in Wonderland by nibbling a mushroom. In one of the try-outs, her neck becomes so long that her head reaches the top of the trees and as a result, a pigeon mistakes her for a serpent. This encounter of pigeon and serpent reminds readers of their symbolic representation of angel and demon respectively. Carroll deepens this antagonistic relationship by including natural law, in which serpents hunt the eggs of birds. When Alice appears, the pigeon is guarding against the attack of the serpent. Carroll refuses the usual religious connotations of the two animals. The serpent is entirely different from a demon, as it is just a girl who cannot control her physicality; neither does the pigeon possess any of the divine quality of an angel, as the bird is simply the 'comic imagination of a hysterical character'.[64] And instead of having the serpent attacking the pigeon or making a vicious attempt, it is the pigeon who is attacking Alice. Throughout their confrontation, Alice remains calm and listens patiently to the babbling of the pigeon. The rational Alice marks a sharply distinct image from the vexed bird. Thereby, by contrasting two significant opponents of biblical text, Carroll inverted the relationship between the symbols of virtue and vice. The encounter of Alice and the pigeon is short. Yet, corresponding to the penetrating identity problem of Alice and the unidentifiable nature of those creatures of Wonderland, this confusion of the good and the bad annihilates the moral systems of children's books.

[64] Jackie Wullschläger, *Inventing Wonderland: The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J.M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame and A.A. Milne* (London: Methuen, 1995), p.43

b. Tree of Roses

Before Alice gets into the garden, the first item she sees is a white rose-tree that stands in front of the entrance. Three soldiers are painting the white roses red, so as to hide their mistakes in planting the wrong colour. Wullschläger suggests that such painting is a joke derived from 'a child's colouring book'.[65] Tenniel's illustration of this scene shows that the soldiers are checking whether they have painted the roses well, or in other words, whether they have hidden their mistakes well. By including this children's activity in his work, Carroll on one hand enhances the illogicality of Wonderland, and on the other hand, raises the entertaining effects of his story by restaging how children want to hide their mistakes from parents. Wullschläger believes the inclusion of a rose garden in the story is also an 'artistic imagination' generated from 'courtly medieval poetry'.[66] To some extent, his idea is a random association between literary texts and his argument is inadequately supported. On the other hand, it is hard not to see a version of the Biblical Story of Fall when crime is associated with a mistake in dealing with a tree. Both the authoritative figures of the stories, God and the Queen of Hearts, have specifically given instructions for the Tree of Knowledge and tree of roses respectively. However, all their followers fail to obey the orders. Like Adam and Eve,[67] the soldiers try to conceal their mistake. But instead of banishing them from the garden, Queen of the Hearts orders capital punishment. Here, Carroll belittled the original crime described in the Bible and ridiculed the act of concealing mistakes.

c. Queen of the Garden

Moreover, though there is no evidence showing that Carroll agreed with any Catholic beliefs, he should be well aware of the long tradition of associating female Christian characters

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Gen 3:10

with roses. Red roses are symbols of Mary, the foremost female saint of the Catholic Church. When Carroll's work is studied in relation to religion, it seems that the female tyrant is a parody of the image of Mary, though, undoubtedly, the image of the Queen of Hearts is also an exact opposite of the saint. This tyrant in Wonderland capriciously sentences others to capital punishment, and she is easily irritated by anything that displeases her. Mary, on the other hand, is customary portrayed as a loving heavenly mother caring for the baby Jesus as well as for all mankind. Perhaps in this way, her image resembles that of the fairy godmother in children's stories. Nevertheless, the images of the Queen of Hearts ridicule and distort the idea of a mother in such a kingdom. This is not to say that such parody should be just viewed as an anti-Catholic device. Similarly, the Queen of Hearts is also a parody of the loving maternal figure that is found in many children's literary texts. Carroll has drastically turned the conventional images of fairy godmother or household mother into a female despot.

d. Garden—a Croquet Field

The garden is finally revealed to be a chaotic croquet field: 'it was all ridges and furrows; the croquet balls were live hedgehogs, the mallets live flamingoes, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and to stand on their hands and feet, to make the arches'.[68] When Alice arrives she realises that the garden is not 'the loveliest garden' that she thought at the beginning of her journey. Escaping hedgehogs and rebellious flamingoes are running around, and players of croquet are gaming without rules:

> The players all played at once, without waiting for turns, quarrelling all the while and fighting for the hedgehogs; and in a very short time the Queen was in a furious passion and went stamping about and shouting 'Off with his head!' or 'Off with her head!' about once in a minute.[69]

[68] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.73
[69] Ibid., p.74

This 'Garden of Eden' is a land of disorder, and thereby wipes out the possible aspiration of Alice's adventures. The scene is hilarious because it parodies the peaceful and the happy ending that is in many cases included in children's stories. Instead of the final destinations of both *The Pilgrim's Progress* and A.L.O.E.'s *The Giant Killer* where a heavenly king receives the hero after his arduous journey, the garden of Carroll only makes Alice 'uneasy'.[70] Here, the Queen is prosecuting other characters and the king is helping his partner with the executions. It seems that instead of a completion of a journey, there are more problems created in this garden and the chaotic pattern of Wonderland continues. Considering the pigeon and serpent, the red rose tree and the queen, this garden in Wonderland is more than what Wullschläger describes as a place where two traditions meet: 'the idea of an escapist Paradise, with its resonance of lost innocence and unattainability, and the comic, anarchic spirit of nonsense, with its roots in English nursery rhymes'.[71] Not only is it that this garden of Wonderland paradise in no way resembles the peaceful and graceful heaven in religion, it is a place where the author has exerted his imagination freely and nonsense dominates most of the events.

e. The Court

At the end of Alice's journey, instead of salvation and a happy ending, Alice finds eternal punishment and an empty ending. Divine justice, as Carpenter puts it, 'takes the form of the Queen of Hearts forever screaming "Off with her head!".[72] In the two *Alice* books, punishment most often happens before evidence is presented. In *Alice*, regulations are set in accordance with the favour of the Queen, who insists on pronouncing sentence before verdict. This chaos even continues in *Looking-Glass* where the Hatta is imprisoned before the trial. Justice and trial are all inverted. Crime is detected in every person before the appearance of any justifiable

[70] Ibid.
[71] Wullschläger, *Inventing Wonderland*, p.43
[72] Carpenter, p.66

evidence, and the innocence of a person can only be restored after punishment. Instead of proving a person's crime, in *Alice*, as well as *Looking-Glass*, it is the innocence that needs to be proven. No poetic justice is provided in Carroll's creations.

3. Holy Communion and Eucharist

The reversal of order is also manifested if the argument that Holy Communion and Eucharist to be seen as among the Christian ideas introduced in *Alice*. At the beginning of her journey, Alice is offered a drink labelled 'drink me' and a cake labelled 'eat me'. The drink makes Alice shrink while the cake makes her grow. Carpenter relates this scene to Holy Communion. For Alice, these foods change her physicality and the consequence is that Alice loses her identity correspondingly. The transformation of Alice's physicality confuses her recognised identity. Carpenter discusses the novel in the context of Holy Communion in relation to the Thirty-Nine Articles. He presumes that as a person who was thinking about the question of ordination, Carroll must have been familiar with Article XXVIII 'Of the Lord Supper'. Carpenter argues that Alice's story is an Anti-Communion. He suggests that Holy Communion brings 'the Christian into closer fellowship with his fellowmen and links him to God as a created being'.[73] On the contrary, in Alice's case, these foods change her size abruptly and therefore alienate her from the occupants of Wonderland. Still, Carpenter's argument is justifiable only when he considers the drink and cake at the beginning of the story. Other food in the novels, such as the cakes of the White Rabbit and the mushroom of the Caterpillar, do not carry the same symbolic reference. Even if Carroll was familiar with the Thirty-Nine Articles, it is hard to assess how the Thirty-Nine Articles or how ideas of Holy Communion and Eucharist truly play a role in the composition of *Alice*. Indeed, the food consumed later in the story helps identify the relationship between Alice and Wonderland. It is true that the food disfigures Alice.

[73] Ibid.

She becomes a huge monster in the White Rabbit's house, and she also frightens a pigeon that mistakes her for a serpent. Yet, instead of alienating Alice from other occupants of Wonderland, food is the only medium that she can take to adjust her physicality in Wonderland. As well as alienation, food is simultaneously the sole agent that Alice uses to reconnect herself to the fantastical world.

4. The Naming Story

Regarding the relationship between man and universe, the 'naming story' included in *Looking-Glass* also plays a role in presenting Christianity in an unconventional way. In Genesis, God grants Adam the power to name objects on earth. Everything he names will be under his authority. In *Looking-Glass,* Alice and the Gnat discuss the function of naming the object:

> 'But I can tell you the names of some of them [insects].'
> 'Of course they answer to their names?' the Gnat remarked carelessly.
> 'I never knew them do it.'
> 'What's the use of their having names,' the Gnat said, 'if they wo'n't answer to them?'
> 'No use to *them*,' said Alice; 'but it's useful to the people that name them, I suppose. If not, why do things have names after all?'
> 'I ca'n't say,' the Gnat replied. 'Further on, in the wood down there, they've got no names'[74]

Even if Alice names the objects around her, she is no longer correct in knowing her world by naming. In reality, a name is useful 'to the people that name them'. This makes mankind an authoritative figure. In the world behind the looking-glass, however, human beings receive no response or power from the objects they name. Alice loses the authority or dominance that Adam possesses in the new world. The power of man is threatened by the illogic of Carroll's fantasy land.

D. The Two-Fold Characters of Carroll: Religious and Nonsensical

[74] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.149

While religious issues were presented in new images, Carroll did not intend to mock his belief. It is just that those parodies and fantasised descriptions of religious subjects reveal the other side of the author: a drive toward the development of the 'nonsense' genre. In a letter written by Rev. Charles Dodgson, nonsense was introduced to the eight-year-old Carroll:

> I will not forget your commission. As soon as I get to Leeds I shall scream out in the middle of the street, Ironmongers—Ironmongers — Six hundred men will rush out of their shops in a moment — fly, fly, in all directions — ring the bells, call the constables — set the town on fire. I will have a file & a screw-driver, & a ring, & if they are not brought directly, in forty seconds I will leave nothing but one small cat alive in the whole town of Leeds, & I shall only leave that, because I am afraid I shall not have time to kill it.
>
> Then what a bawling & a tearing of hair there will be! Pigs and babies, camels and Butterflies, rolling in the gutter together—old women rushing up chimnies & cows after them—ducks hiding themselves in coffee cups and fat geese trying to squeeze themselves into pencil cases—at last the Mayor of Leeds will be found in a soup plate covered up with custard & stuck full of almonds to make him look like a sponge cake that he may escape the dreadful destruction of the town.[75]

The 'agreeable taste of anarchic nonsense'[76] of Rev. Dodgson is taken by some critics to be a source for Carroll in developing his own notions of literary nonsense. Rev. Dodgson brought up his son by both religious principles and notions of nonsense: 'a simple idea pursued with a ruthless comic literalness to its very end'.[77] The 'Pigs and babies', 'butterflies, rolling in the gutter together' and other grotesque characters in this letter are described by Wullschläger and Michael Irwan as 'the germ of the Alice's books'.[78] Although this letter may not be the only source that discloses the nonsense writings of Rev. Dodgson, critics agree that it serves as major and early evidence of Carroll's nonsense. Carroll did display his interest in the notion of nonsense in the magazines, stories, drawings, and poetry that he composed for his family

[75] Cohen, *Selected Letters*, p.4
[76] Ibid, p.10, similar comments can also be found in Wullschläger, p.31 and Carpenter, p.45
[77] Carpenter, p.45
[78] Wullschläger, p.31

members. Some of the characters and plots were even reused in the two *Alice* books.[79] At the age of twelve, Carroll wrote a poem called 'Brother and Sister', in which a sister is punished by turning into mutton broth. One has to bear in mind that even with such comic nonsense, the poem still ends with a moral conclusion: 'never stew your sister'. Certainly this line is strange and illogical, yet the poem still inherited some sense of didacticism for young readers.

Carroll was serious about his religious beliefs, but also serious about nonsense. Critics have offered different explanations for the two-fold personality of Carroll. As William Raeper comments, Carroll had 'neatly divided himself into two people: Charles Dodgson and Lewis Carroll—one a shy, rational mathematician, the other full of fun and games and subversive humour'.[80] A hint of split identity is mirrored at the beginning of *Looking-Glass,* where Alice plays a game of 'pretence' with her cat, Kitty. From the very start of the story, Alice lists the mistakes that Kitty has made. After that, she tells Kitty what should be done to correct those mistakes. As this game of 'pretence' proceeds, it becomes obvious that Alice is having a monologue instead of a dialogue with the kitten. She plays the role of herself and of her kitten. In this way, Alice appears to embody the playful self and the rational self of Carroll. On the one hand, Alice imagines that she is talking to her kitten, and fancying a family life between her three cats. She converses with her kitten and asks it to reflect upon its flaws and misbehaviour. On the other hand, Alice takes an adult role and asks the kitten to listen to her as if the cat were a real child. She also has a code of behavioural standards. While she praises the other kitten, Snowdrop, she warns Kitty about the punishment that she will probably give to it. This pedagogic Alice does not last long, as she soon asks her cat to 'pretend' to be the red queen on the chessboard. Accordingly, Carroll's didactic urges are overridden by his playful self. This

[79] For more information about the nonsense works created by Carroll during his childhood, please refer to Richard Kelly, *Lewis Carroll* (Boston: Twayne, 1977), p.41-42, p.34-43, 49-54
[80] William Raeper, 'Lewis Carroll', *George MacDonald* (Tring: Lion, 1987), p.176

game of 'pretence' has made the whole story of *Looking-Glass* a game, developed from a fake identity that Alice has constructed for herself. Alice thus represents the dual personality of Carroll, where the rational and playful selves are interchangeable. But this fission of personality is not entirely correct. There is not much confrontation between his rationality and humour, instead, it can be argued that his humour comes from his rationality. Almost all the humorous elements found in *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* are based on logic and mathematic rules. It is only because Carroll comprehended logic and mathematics thoroughly that he can play around all those rules in his creations.

E. Belief and Rationality

The divided personality of Carroll should be founded on a rather more basic division of Carroll: a mathematician bound by rationality and a Christian bound by religion. After declining the priesthood, he became a mathematics lecturer at Oxford University. As well as writing fantastical works for children, Carroll published mathematical non-fiction on 'symbolic logic'. Jenny Woolf argues that Carroll was constantly trapped between his 'sincere beliefs' and a 'logical approach to life'.[81] Trained as a mathematician as well as a clergyman, Carroll found it was hard to balance the 'belief-based approach of traditional religion with the demands of rational argument.'[82] In addition, it was difficult for an educated person of the mid-Victorian period 'to deny the scientific and historical evidence accumulating against the literal truth of the Bible'.[83] According to Woolf, Carroll was one of those Victorians who had to reconcile his own beliefs with contemporary religious debates. Carroll's ' wish to defy convention vied with an

[81] Jenny Woolf, *The Mystery of Lewis Carroll: Understanding the Author of Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* (London: Han Books, 2010), p.181
[82] Ibid., p.184
[83] Ibid., p.190

equally desperate desire to live a conventionally religious life'.[84] As a result, this children's book author lived 'in a permanent state of mental stress of religion', even though 'his faith was genuine' and 'his religion was absolutely central to his picture of himself'.[85] The apparently moral-free works of Alice manifested a literary escape from Carroll's 'inner confusion'[86]or perhaps, displayed his 'dual personality'.[87] In turn, innocent children became an escape for Carroll. The unconventional, religious education of Carroll's was frequently explained in relation to his creation of the two *Alice* books. With regards to Carroll's strong faith, critics such as Manlove found it 'extraordinary'[88] that Carroll had delivered the a-moral *Alice* when he appeared to exhibit such a strong grounding in Christianity.

Later on in the narrative, in the conversation between Alice and the White Queen, the rational side of Alice highlights the struggle between Carroll's religious belief and rationality:

> 'One ca'n't believe impossible things'.
> 'I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast'[89]

Both Woolf and Hugh Haughton relate this conversation to Carroll's own struggles with religious doubt. Haughton picks out letters between Carroll and Mary MacDonald, Edith Rix and Daniel Biddle to support his comment. In the letter between the first two correspondents, Carroll illustrated his doubts in relation to the 'impossibilities' of religion. In a letter to Biddle, however, the author suddenly offered the answer to his religious doubt. He claimed that impossibilities are 'impossible' only because human beings do not have the capability to

[84] Ibid., p.193
[85] Ibid., p.203
[86] Ibid., p.194
[87] Ibid., p.192
[88] Manlove, *From Alice to Harry Potter*, p.25
[89] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.174. Woolf mistakenly identifies this quotation as the conversation is between Alice and the Queens. Indeed, these lines are spoken by Alice and the White Queen only.

comprehend such matters.[90] Perhaps in this sense Carroll has found a balancing answer that fitted his religious belief and logic.

Rather than approaching the split identity of Carroll through descriptive and factual criticism as Haughton does, Woolf reads this conversation between the White Queen and Alice as an exposure of Carroll's 'inner confusion' towards religion. This uncertainty of his religious belief is revealed in 'the sharp contrast between the perceptive, free-speaking, independent-minded rationality of "Alice" and the over religious emotional anxiety'.[91] In the first instance, the characters of Alice and the White Queen both appear to personify the contradictory anxiety of the author. Alice is the only 'rational' character in the two books. She readily recalls the science, mathematics, geography and logic she has been taught. From the very beginning of her journey in Wonderland, she reasserts her identity through deduction. She assumes that she is not Ada because of the differing lengths of their hair, and that she is not Mabel because she knows much more than Mabel. Alice also tries to identify herself through past experiences, for she attempts to recall all she has learned before. This includes a memorised multiplication-table as well as capital cities of the different countries. In the world behind the looking-glass, Alice identifies different species of insects, such as horse-fly, dragon-fly, butterfly, and gnat. Her mathematical skill is also superior to that of the Red and White Queens'. Alice's 'subtractions' remain in the realm of mathematics, whereas the Queens disobey mathematical rules, choosing instead, for example, to 'subtract' the bone of a dog and then calculate what remains. In comparison to adult characters, Alice is rational in both the 'real' world and Wonderland. She is the only one who is logical in the fantastical realm for she always claims that Wonderland and the world behind the glass are 'nonsensical'. The White Queen, on the other hand, demonstrates

[90] Ibid., p.342-3
[91] Woolf, p.194

confidence in her beliefs. Before she begins the conversation quoted in the beginning of this section, she inquires into Alice's age. When Alice replies that she is 'seven and a half exactly', the White Queen says she does not need Alice to say 'exactually' to state the authenticity of her answer. For the queen, belief does not require any evidence or logical argument to support it; as 'believing' already implies a trust between correspondents. This non-logical belief system also appears in the conversation between Alice and Humpty Dumpty. The latter fails to recognise the danger of sitting on the narrow edge of the wall, as he believes that his fate will continue as the nursery rhyme told.[92] Carroll has changed the last line of the nursery rhyme so that Humpty Dumpty believes that he will be saved by the King and his men. Here, while Alice appears bound by reason, other characters place more importance upon tradition, nursery rhymes and whim.

More than simply presenting an argument between logic and belief, Carroll also discloses his paradoxical mind-set through the quoted conversation between Alice and the White Queen. Firstly, Alice mentions that 'One can't believe impossible things'. The 'impossible things' here refer to items that are logically impossible—things that offend the natural order. Carroll separated himself from other evangelical writers such as A.L.O.E., who believe 'impossibilities' are the daily supernatural gifts of God, as the previous chapter discussed. If a thing is 'impossible', according to Carroll's conceptions, then it should not be believed. But at the same time, this poses an intriguing question about 'belief'. If belief could only be applicable to subjects that exist—that is to say, anything compatible with natural law—then the supernatural and the omnipotence of God can no longer be valid. Thus, to believe in possibility is to disbelieve the core of religion. This contradictory notion of belief and possibility drafts the

[92] The original nursery rhyme is as follows: 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall:/ Humpty Dumpty had a great fall./ All the King's horses and all the King's men/ Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty in his place again'.

general picture of Carroll's struggle with logical thinking and religious faithfulness. Secondly, the following lines of the White Queen bring along a different interpretation of belief and logic. She claims that Alice's disbelief is caused by a paucity of practising believing. When she was Alice's age, she always had such 'practice' for 'half an hour a day'. These proclamations of the Queen define 'belief' as a concept that can be adopted willingly through repetition. Believing therefore becomes self-indoctrination or self-hypnosis. Belief is also subjective. In addition, she boasts about her capacity to believe 'six impossible things before breakfast'. The 'six impossible things' she mentions speak to a sense of randomness in her powers of belief. Firstly, it appears that there are no specific criteria for the things she believes in. Secondly, if these impossible things refer to Carroll's struggle with religious faith, then he coloured his religion with a set of random and unselected concepts. In this way, Christian beliefs can also be indoctrinated in a man when they are practiced with consistent attempts. Thirdly, Carroll implies that only children are left with the ability to trust without considering the logic or the illogic of faith. It is as the White Queen states, 'When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day'.[93] This line can be read as Carroll's lament for an adult's lost capability of believing. Though it will be hard to know whether Carroll intends to highlight children's purity, it is conceivable that this is probably Carroll's observation drawn from his frequent interactions with children in games and play. Such association between the young and belief could be seen as an allusion to the biblical text where Jesus praises the purity of children's souls[94] or, as a product of the romantic fashion of understanding childhood in the nineteenth century.

Although there were doubts and questions, Carroll's faith never diminished, even if his texts can be read as his fantastical escapes into the idiom of children's literature. Perhaps *Alice*

[93] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, p.174
[94] Matthew 19:14, 'But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven'. For other valorisation of children by Jesus, see Matthew 19:13-14 and Mark: 33-37.

and *Looking-Glass* can be understood as escapes from religious anxiety, but his work should also be studied in relation to his religious contemplation and liberation. Cohen perceives that the questioning and uncertainty of Carroll's faith are in fact the result of his piety:

> There emerges a man who thought carefully, deeply, and constantly about what is right and wrong, who asked all the crucial questions about life and death, good and evil, seeking answers from congenial guides, and ultimately tested and shaped his own faith and destiny. He was, in essence, a solid Christian, and he lived by Christian principles, more diligently than most of those high-minded churchmen who despised his moderation.[95]

Cohen understands that because Carroll was faithful to Christianity, he therefore meditated thoroughly upon every detail of Christian doctrine. Carroll's religious opinions were delineated in the preface of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893). He states that only pondering can give a real meaning to religion:

> And he, who allows himself the habit of thus uttering holy words, with no thought of their meaning is but too likely to find that, for him, God has become a myth, and heaven a poetic fancy—that, for him, the light of life is gone, and that he is at heart an atheist, lost in "*a darkness that may be felt*"[96]

Gila P. Reinstein claims that though Carroll 'took his religion seriously', he thought 'it did not belong in a book which children would read for amusement'. This is because religion 'is not made fun of', thus it is 'omitted entirely' in a book that foregrounds Carroll's sense of humour.[97] However, Reinstein's interpretation is based on her idea that religious subjects in children's texts must be explicitly pedagogic. In fact, even in Carroll's works devoid of educational purpose, religious subjects can still be found. In *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*, Carroll's texts break the equivalence between Christianity and education as well as the one between fantasy and entertainment. *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* demonstrate Carroll's own religious

[95] Cohen, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, p.372
[96] Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (London: Macmillan, 1983), xxii
[97] Gila P. Reinstein, *Alice in Context* (New York: Garland, 1988), p.176-7

struggle, by which the relationship between Christianity and fantasy in children's literary texts has been revolutionised.

Some critics try to suggest every possible linkage between the two books of Alice and the religious beliefs in the Victorian age. For example, A.L. Taylor reads the hostile relationship between the White and Red Queens as a metaphorical representation of the conflicts between the Churches in reality. The White Queen represents 'the side of the Church which argued, protested and tried to re-interpret religious ideas by the light of reason—the Protestant side of the Church of England and in particular the Rationalist "mode of thinking"'.[98] When the White Queen is praised for her rationality in interpreting religious matters, the Red Queen is described as: 'a-dressing herself, because every single thing was crooked and she was all over pins'.[99] Although the role of the Red Queen is not delineated in Taylor's analysis, owing to the conflicting relationship between her and the White Queen, it can be presumed that she represents the Catholic side of the Church. Yet, the correlation drawn between the Churches and the queens is rather farfetched. Taylor's idea that Alice represents 'the essential quality of the Christian religion…love'[100] is also debateable. He argues that Alice 'was the True Church, hoping all things, believing all things, suffering long'.[101] It is to say the least controversial to claim that Alice hopes for and believes in all things. This argument is valid only if Alice has been suffering from a loss of identity in the madness of Wonderland, and from nonsensical behaviour in the world of *Looking-Glass*. Shane Leslie reads the two Alice books as a

[98] A.L. Taylor, 'Chess and the Theology in the Alice books', *Alice in Wonderland*, ed. by Donald J. Gray (London: W.W. Norton, 1992) p.379
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid, p.380

miscellaneous collection of 'contemporary ecclesiastical history'.[102] He suggests that because Carroll was living at a time when religious ideas were experiencing series of intellectual challenges, such as Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory and the Oxford Movement, it is possible that Carroll included some of those religious elements in his creations. However, those symbolic embodiments that Leslie argues for are mostly random associations. Most of the plot and character could barely be read as representation of ecclesiastical incidents and figures.

In his late years, Carroll became more and more devoted. His view on children's religious materials was printed in the preface of *Bruno and Sylvie*,

> But, once realise what the true object *is* in life—that it is *not* pleasure, *not* knowledge, *not* even fame itself, 'that last infirmity of noble minds'—but that it *is* the development of *character*, the rising to a higher, nobler, purer standard, the building-up of the perfect *Man*—and then, so long as we feel that this is going on, and will (we trust) go on for evermore, death has for us no terror; it is not a shadow, but a light; not an end, but a beginning![103]

It appears that Carroll's views on children's reading materials evolved during his own lifetime. In this fantasy, Carroll abruptly introduces biblical messages to his young audience. All of a sudden, the narrator mentions the Bible and characters like Arthur explain that the Old Testament 'is best for *children*, and the Israelites seem to have been, mentally, *utter* children'.[104] Arthur, particularly, repeatedly states that education should start with moral instruction. The purpose of instructiveness in a children's book is to reunite readers with the 'Supreme God'.[105] *Bruno and Sylvie* is an amalgam of random fanciful ideas and religious materials. Its chaotic structure and plot development confuses its function as a pedagogical device. To put it precisely, in *Bruno and Sylvie*, Carroll had lost his playfulness, particularly

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[102] Shane Leslie, 'Lewis Carroll and the Oxford Movement', (1933), *Aspects of Alice: Lewis Carroll's Dreamchild as seen through the critics' looking-glass, 1865-1971,* ed. by Robert Phillips (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), p.211
[103] Lewis Carroll, *Bruno and Sylvie* (London: Macmillan, 1898), xx, italicised by the author.
[104] Ibid. p.275
[105] Ibid.

when he tried to include religious education in his narrative fantasy. This book is a void attempt at providing both education and entertainment.

F. Conclusion

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass: and What Alice Found There* (1872) have a great impact on children's literature. The two sides of Carroll's character: religious and nonsensical, generated a new approach to the combination of religious materials in children's fantasy. Although Carroll writes, 'Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it', the religious aspects of his children's books are ironically not intended to render any didactic messages. Disregarding those possible reasons that brought Carroll into favour for his moral-less materials or entertaining narrative, *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* are written deliberately without any education purpose. It is clear that Carroll believed that entertainment was more important to his texts. Yet, it is not that Carroll has not filled his texts with religious materials, but he refuses to correlate them with their customary function in education. In *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*, former evangelical texts are parodied and Christian themes such as journeys, gardens and animals are also ridiculed. Significantly, all those religious ideas deformed and referred to substantially manifested the religious doubt of the author. His struggle between belief and rationality reflects his contemplation to religion, yet, also reveals the possible chaotic condition of a Victorian. Facing the vicissitudes of the daily life and challenges of their intellectual development, the Victorians somehow inevitably have to re-examine their religious beliefs and how they are to be practiced. Carroll's responses to his own beliefs and children's literature created the amoral *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*, and as a result, broke the constant equivalence between education and Christian subjects, a long-time pairing in children's literature. Carroll may not have intentionally subordinated his religious belief to the

fantasy elements of his writings, but the unprecedented commercial success of the two *Alice* books facilitated the rise of entertaining texts and removed religious texts from their dominating status in children's literature. It can be argued that the functions of religious subjects and fantastic narrative were being overturned. Entertaining fantasy becomes the main purpose of writing, and religious materials were tailored for fun. Fantasy stands as an independent genre while the educational functions of children's literature, in the case of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass,* have been completely removed. Nevertheless, not every Victorian agreed with this new direction. Attempts were made to redeem didacticism in children's books within this new fashion of entertainment. In the next chapter, Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1873) will be discussed, in order to explore her attempt to emphasise again the importance of educational materials in children's literature.

Chapter 4:

Compromised yet Unconquered—Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874)

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and *Through the Looking Glass: and What Alice Found There* greatly altered children's literature. Pedagogical materials are not as prevalent as before in the market of children's books, and a remarkable number of writers went with the fashion of providing entertaining texts. To be sure not every Victorian felt comfortable with this shift of literary taste. Some writers like Christina Rossetti[1] remained loyal to educative materials. Her *Sing Song* published in 1872, for instance, was highly didactic. However, out of expectation, in 1874, she published *Speaking Likenesses*, which she claimed as 'a Christmas trifle, would-be in the *Alice* style with an eye to market'.[2] The story was fashioned with an uncharacteristically commercial flavour. On the surface, this book is highly incompatible with Rossetti's strong belief in didacticism. Yet, *Speaking Likenesses* proved to be an obvious cut above other imitations of Carroll's fantasies. While most of those imitations were amalgams of Carrollian style, *Speaking Likenesses* is meticulously planned as a revival of didacticism and a revolt against Carroll.

A. Christina and Carroll

In 1862, Rossetti wrote Carroll a letter about her reading experience of *Alice*. This letter becomes the first evidence that reveals Christina's response to Carrollian fantasy.

> My dear Mr Dodgson,[3]
>
> A thousand and one thanks—surely an appropriate number—for the funny pretty book you have so very kindly sent me. My Mother and Sister as well as myself made ourselves quite

[1] To avoid confusion, apart from Christina Rossetti, other Rossettis will be addressed by their first name in this chapter. Particularly, since the father and the second son have the same name, the former will be called Gabriel Rossetti while the latter will be called Dante Rossetti in this chapter.
[2] 'To Dante Rossetti', *The Letters of Christina Rossetti*, ed. by Antony H. Harrison, Vol.2 (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.12
[3] Lewis Carroll is the pseudonym of Charles Dodgson. Even though Lewis Carroll appeared to be more widely acknowledged by the public, Dodgson kept his real name in daily life.

> at home yesterday in Wonderland: and (if I am not shamefully old for such an avowal) I confess it would give me sincere pleasure to fall in with that conversational rabbit, that endearing puppy, that very sparkling dormouse. Of the Hatter's acquaintance I am not ambitious, and the March hare may fairly remain an open question. The woodcuts are charming. Have you seen the few words of strong praise already awarded your volume by the *Reader*?
> To descend to very prosy prose. Please do not forget that we are still in your debt for the last vignettes of my Sister: 9 copies, I think. Two or three months ago her carte was taken at Harrogate and turned out an admirable likeness.
> My Mother and Sister unite in cordial remembrances. Pray believe me,
>
> Very truly yours
> Christina G. Rossetti.[4]

U.C. Knoepflmacher's 'Avenging Alice: Christina Rossetti and Lewis Carroll', so far the longest and most in-depth interpretation of the letter, finds these 'few words of strong praise' sarcastically framed. Though undeniably Rossetti compliments some of the characters: the White Rabbit, puppy and the dormouse, describing them as 'conversational', 'endearing' and 'sparkling' respectively, her letter is a piece of sugar-coated criticism that 'proffers little actual praise for Carroll's imaginative achievement'.[5]

Rossetti limited her praises to some minor characters and mentioned nothing about the main plot of *Alice*. This shows that she was not at all in favour of the main story. Her few lines of compliment appear nothing more than courtesy. Knoepflmacher finds that those characters Rossetti mentioned are either the tormenters or victims of Wonderland. And he argues that her particular fondness for the vulnerable comes from her preference for 'creatures that she [appeared] to recognize as agents of Carroll's own ambivalence towards his female dream-child'.[6] The dormouse is a favourite of Rossetti because it is 'gentler and more acquiescent' than other characters in Wonderland. It is also the only character that 'at least agrees to tell [Alice] a

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[4] 'To Charles Lutwidge Dodgson', *The Letters of Christina Rossetti*, ed. by Antony H. Harrison, Vol.1 (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1999), p.257
[5] U.C. Knoepflmacher, 'Avenging Alice: Christina Rossetti and Lewis Carroll', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol.41, No. 3 (Dec, 1986), p.306
[6] Ibid., p.305

sequential narrative'.[7] Knoepflmacher explains that 'dormice might be deemed preferable to the destructive Wonderland creatures who actively humiliate a dutiful little Victorian girl'.[8] Knoepflmacher's comment implies that Rossetti was looking for elements of constructiveness in *Alice*. Though she may not adore the fantastical tale of Carroll, she did sympathise with Alice for her tormenting adventure in Wonderland. The dormouse was not included in the league of tormentors, as it is also a victim of Hatter and Hare, who both represent male aggressiveness and 'display an obsessive need for domination'.[9] They splash tea and pinch the dormouse, and at the end of the tea party, put it into a teapot. The victimisation of the dormouse consolidates Knoepflmacher's argument about Rossetti's preference for vulnerable characters.

In fact in other tales of Rossetti, 'weak' characters are in many cases champions at the end of the story. Their passivity is strong in resistance. Knoepflmacher supports his observation by drawing references from 'Goblin Market', where the passivity of Lizzie triumphs over the aggressiveness of the goblins. It is also apparent in *Maude* that the reclusive Magdalene Ellis appears to be the only one who has been staying away from anxiety and finds a sense of security from her noviciate. Knoepflmacher argues that Rossetti's praises are given to 'lethargic' characters as 'emblems for her own imagination'. The dormouse demonstrates his ability in story-telling, despite the fact that he fails to finish it as he falls asleep in its process of creation. And perhaps this references its 'creative inertia'.[10] Similarly, the 'conversational rabbit' and 'endearing puppy' are characters of passivity that are frequently involved in some dramatic moments in Alice's journey. Despite its activeness, the rabbit follows the schedule set by

[7] Ibid., p.309
[8] Ibid., p.308. It is argued by Thomas Burnett Swann in *Wonder and Whimsy: The Fantastical World of Christina Rossetti* in p.59 that the dormouse is sourced from the wombat of Dante Rossetti. Christina's sympathy towards the dormouse and Carroll's sentimental portrayal of it were derived from their admiration towards this 'lethargic' wombat.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

authoritative figures like the Duchess and the Queen of Hearts. Perhaps the rabbit is 'conversational', but it is being bullied and suppressed on many occasions, while the puppy, as one of the few animals that cannot speak in Wonderland, comparatively resembles a real dog. Owing to a lack of fantastical features or ability, the puppy is not an important character in Wonderland but a massive creature to Alice, for she is at that time much smaller than her normal size. It appears that Rossetti's compliments reveal her preference for energetic yet suppressed characters.

To some extent, all those vulnerable characters share some characteristics with Rossetti, or in other words, Rossetti found their lives in Wonderland resembled her own situation in reality. Rather than 'lethargic', [11] as Knoepflmacher suggests, these vulnerable characters are ambiguously living in Wonderland. They all embody a vital power of passivity that never obstructs the journey of the 'dutiful' Alice. [12] At the same time, they embody a sense of constructiveness, which is highly antagonistic to the 'destructive' Wonderland. Instead of suggesting that Rossetti's praises go to 'agents of Carroll's own ambivalence towards his female dream-child', perhaps it can be argued that those vulnerable characters represent her own ambiguous status in the nineteenth century society. Surrounded by literary stars like her brother and his friends, Rossetti's achievement appears less outstanding. Her literary life, to some degree, shares some similarities with the dormouse, whose contribution to literary creation is also overwhelmed by the destructiveness of male aggression. The White Rabbit is also a fantasised depiction of Rossetti, who 'was lively and mischievous as a girl, and then self-controlled and distantly polite as an adult'.[13] Its lively spirit is suppressed by authoritative social values. Hence, both Rossetti and the White Rabbit appear less significant than they should be in

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] K.E. Sullivan, *Christina Rossetti: Passion & Devotion* (London: Brockhampton, 1998), p.7-8

their community. As well as the insignificant puppy, perhaps Rossetti's compliment reveals her own situation in reality.

This letter to Carroll is short and brief, but Rossetti's preferences are clear. The first reading of *Alice* indeed helps Rossetti underlay the aim of *Speaking Likenesses*: to generate an obvious progression in her protagonist's spirituality. Instead of imitating the destructive Wonderland, her fantastical realm will be constructive and will try to do something 'good' for her characters. The letter ends with Rossetti reminding Carroll about their debt to him for the photos. Knoepflmacher reads this reminder as a means of demeaning the literary achievement of Carroll. By paying attention to his photographs, the 'pretty little book' is reduced to an amateur work composed in the spare time of a 'capable resort photographer'.[14] This letter, hence, does not simply imply Rossetti's preference for passivity and constructiveness, but also to some extent expresses her rejection of such entertaining texts for children. Knoepflmacher argues that Rossetti reduces Carroll's 'potential to be her literary rival, a writer whose capacity to portray young and adult females' by belittling his children's book.[15] Certainly Knoepflmacher's analysis does shed light on the study of *Speaking Likenesses*, for critics seldom consider this letter as an importance piece of evidence that reveals Rossetti's opinion about Carrollian fantasy. However, this interpretation of Knoepflmacher may misread this letter as a furious response of Rossetti. Instead of anger, it can also be argued that this letter shows that Christina is not an admirer of *Alice* and has very little appreciation for this fantasy.

B. Critical Reception of *Speaking Likenesses*

Considering Rossetti's displeasure with Carroll's story, her *Speaking Likenesses* which was written in '*Alice* style', seems to be produced for commercial rather than any artistic reason.

[14] Knoepflmacher, 'Avenging Alice', p.306
[15] Ibid.

Nevertheless, not much profit resulted. Albeit more than 1000 copies were distributed, nineteenth-century reviews did 'a very real injury with the buying public'.[16] One of the severe attacks came from John Ruskin. In selecting some of the worst Christmas books of the year, he says, 'I consider Christina Rossetti's. I've kept that for the mere wonder of it "how could she or Arthur Hughes[17] sink so low after their pretty nursery rhymes?"'[18] It is possible that the success of *Sing-Song* had framed Rossetti as a writer of didactic texts. Thereby, *Speaking Likenesses*, as an innovative blend between moral lessons and Carrollian fantasy, seems to have caused disappointment among critics and readers. An editor of *The Examiners* finds himself angry and disappointed after reading *Speaking Likenesses*. Initially, he is expecting this new work of Rossetti will be marvellous poems as *Sing-Song*. Yet he believes that Rossetti has given up her talent of composing poetry and says that 'Rossetti is doing a wrong to the world, and is denying her own birthright'. This editor clearly states that *Speaking Likenesses* is produced with 'absolute lack of confidence', and as a result, Rossetti 'allows to rest unused in idle hands, while she tries unsuccessfully to compete in their own lines with writers immeasurably her inferior in intellect and genius'.[19] *The Pall Mall Gazette* also finds *Speaking Likenesses* 'contains several strange lessons that teaching good lessons'. Yet the design of the stories is beyond children's comprehension, and the choice of words is unfamiliar to young readers.[20]

In the successive century, this negative reception continues. Dorothy Margaret Stuart deplores *Speaking Likenesses* by stating that it is 'not a fortunate excursion'. Although the critic agrees that Rossetti 'succeeds up to a certain point in reproducing the fantastic externals of

[16] Christina Rossetti, 'To Alexander Macmillan', *The Letters of Christina Rossetti*, Vol. II, p.38
[17] Arthur Hughes, a renowned book illustrator of the nineteenth-century, was in charge of the illustrations in *Speaking Likenesses*.
[18] Quoted by Knoepflmacher, 'Avenging Alice', p.310, this comment was written by Ruskin to F. S. Ellis, 21 January 1875, Vol. 37 of *The Works of Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, Library ed., 39 vols. (London: G. Allen, 1903-12), p.155
[19] 'Literature', *The Examiner* (London, England), Saturday, November 28, 1874; Issue 3487
[20] 'Children's Books', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (Londnon, England), Thursday, December 24, 2873; Issue 3075

Lewis Carroll's stories', she fails 'to capture anything of their ironic and subtle inner excellence'.[21] In the process of imitating the spontaneity of Carroll, Rossetti 'cannot be easily inconsequent' but 'can only be deliberately grotesque'. Stuart even argues that Rossetti can only make her characters carp about triviality but not satirise as Carroll's had done. In sum, Stuart finds *Speaking Likenesses* loses all the 'inner excellence' of Carroll.[22] Thomas Burnett Swann, similarly, finds that *Speaking Likenesses* 'is about a little girl too much like Alice, who wanders through a countryside too much like Wonderland'. And the resemblance makes the 'imitated wonder…no longer wonderful', and the 'imitated whimsy…no more than oddity'.[23] *Speaking Likenesses*, as aforementioned criticisms show, is treated as a catastrophic attempt. And perhaps to some critics, *Speaking Likenesses* is another piece of worthless imitation. As Fredegond Shove concludes, 'Christina Rossetti's attempts at story writing are the least interesting things she did'.[24] The critic does not even include *Speaking Likenesses* in her discussion of Rossetti's prose. But to put it plainly, omission of *Speaking Likenesses* is not uncommon in critical writings on Rossetti.

Some critics complain that the moralistic tone of *Speaking Likenesses* is too heavy. Frances Thomas sees that *Speaking Likenesses* is 'not a great success', for 'a light whimsical tone is overlaid by heavy moralising, and Rossetti's own imagination seems to have been coloured by Lewis Carroll's'.[25] Similarly, Eleanor Walter Thomas states that the tales of *Speaking Likenesses* 'are not very original or exciting; their didacticism is inappropriately heavy for the fancifulness of the tales'.[26] Though it is debatable whether or not the tone or the moralising is out of balance,

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[21] Dorothy Margaret Stuart, *Christina Rossetti* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p.151
[22] Ibid.
[23] Thomas Burnett Swann, *Wonder and Whimsy: The Fantastical World of Christina Rossetti* (Francestown: Marshall Jones,1960), p.60
[24] Fredegond Shove, *Christina Rossetti: A Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), p.104
[25] Frances Thomas, *Christina Rossetti* (London: The Self Publishing Association Ltd, 1992), p.297
[26] Eleanor Walter Thomas, *Christina Georgina Rossetti* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p.184

critics find the entertainment and education provided by *Speaking Likenesses* are incompatible with each other. Rossetti's story fails to provide either education or entertainment. And particularly, considering that most of the emulations are principally focused on the fantastical narrative, Rossetti's imitation is one of the few that keeps moral teaching. Thus, it is even difficult to arrogate *Speaking Likenesses* to any other works of the time, for it is collectively an imitation, a fantasy and a piece of moral writing. As it comprises various elements of children's literature, it also becomes an uncategorised and awkward reproduction of Carrollian fantasy.

Still, not every piece of criticism is pejorative. Mackenzie Bell, the first biographer of Rossetti, claims that even though *Speaking Likenesses* 'cannot ranked high among its author's books' and 'is not comparable with the best work of the same kind by "Lewis Carroll"', it 'is not without some qualities'. Some of the passages, such as Flora's entrance to the fantasy land, show 'vivid fancy'.[27] In 'Simple Surfaces: Christina Rossetti's Work for Children', Roderick McGillis sees *Speaking Likenesses* as one of her 'more successful works for children'[28]. He finds that the work is 'didactic and traditionally narrative in impulse' even if it is also 'disturbing and confusing'.[29] Nevertheless, positive comments are limited. *Speaking Likenesses* has not caught much of the critics' attention since it was published.

Looking into the academic responses of these critics, *Speaking Likenesses* appears to be a failed attempt at challenging Carroll's works as well as at providing religious education. Jan Marsh sees that all these negative reviews reaffirm the fact that '*Speaking Likenesses* is not a charming book'.[30] However, as David A. Kent and P.G. Stanwood note, many of Rossetti's

[27] Mackenzie Bell, *Christina Rossetti: A Biography and Critical Study* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1898), p.271 In hercomment on Bell, Jan Marsh has mistaken the stand of the biographer. Marsh assumes that Bell sees Rossetti's work as a second rate, for she omits Bell's compliment about the 'vivid fancy' of *Speaking Likenesses*.
[28] Roderick McGillis, 'Simple Surfaces: Christina Rossetti's Work for Children', *The Achievement of Christina Rossetti*, ed. by David Kent (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.209
[29] Ibid., p.229
[30] Jan Marsh, *Christina Rossetti: A Literary Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994), p.418

prose writings have been 'easily dismissed by critics who have preferred to adhere to a more conventional image of the "poetess" of melancholy lyrics or by those who reduce the prose to statements of doctrine'.[31] The conventional image of Rossetti in poetry belittles her achievement in prose writing and also frames her works as mere 'statements of doctrine'. In addition, as aforementioned, critics are preoccupied with the fancifulness of Carroll, and they have developed set ideas about Carrollian fantasy. Hence, all these circumstances along with the ambiguous nature of *Speaking Likenesses* have caused it to remain insignificant. Furthermore, the negative reception of *Speaking Likenesses* also creates the impression that it is not as worthy as her other works. All these, as a result, unjustifiably contribute to the paucity of critical interest in this children's work.

C. The Multiplicity of Rossetti's Beliefs

Since her youth, Rossetti had been exposed to different Christian beliefs. The most direct influences came from her parents: Frances Rossetti (mother) believed in Anglicanism and Gabriele Rossetti (father) believed in Catholicism. Comparatively, as most critics agreed, Rossetti adhered more to her mother's beliefs. Her strong admiration for her mother is shown in various sources, and one of them appears in the preface of *Speaking Likenesses*: 'To my dearest mother, in grateful remembrance of the stories with which she used to entertain her children'.[32] The dedication was made not only for the stories that Frances had told,[33] but also the religious doctrines that she had taught to her. Frances is described by Bell as 'a devout adherent of the Church of England, and [she] brought up all her four children as Protestant'.[34] To a large extent,

[31] David A. Kent and P.G. Stanwood (ed.), *Selected Prose of Christina Rossetti* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p.13
[32] Christina Rossetti, *Speaking Likenesses* (London: Macmillan, 1874), preface
[33] Sharon Smulders argues that *Speaking Likenesses* 'resembles the tales with which Frances Rossetti had tried—and failed—to amuse her children'. However, there is no evidence to show which stories Frances told her children, and there is no proof that Frances failed to amuse her children. Sharon Smulders, *Christina Rossetti Revisited* (New York, Prentice Hall International, 1996), p.113
[34] Bell, p.6

Bell's conclusion concerning the religion of the Rossettis may appear rudimentary. For the four children—Maria, Dante, William and Christina—had all developed their distinctive religious views as they grew. In the case of Christina Rossetti, she felt more comfortable with Anglicanism while accommodating her belief simultaneously with Catholicism, the patriarchal influence of Gabriele. Gabriele was not strong enough to persuade his daughter completely. Although he himself was a Roman Catholic, 'in religion [Gabriele] was mainly a freethinker… tending in his later years towards an undogmatic form of Christianity'.[35] The open-minded Gabriele simply pushed his daughter to her mother's side. William Rossetti once described how 'I have often thought that Christina's proper place [is] in the Roman Catholic Church,' but it seems that 'her satisfaction in remaining a member of the English Church may have been partly due to her deep affection for her mother'. Several cases evinced the vigorousness of Rossetti's faith in Anglicanism. For instance, when there was a tide of pushing Tractarians to Catholicism after Newman's conversion, she refused to join the Catholic Church despite her close relationship with the Tractarians.[36] She also turned down the proposal of a Catholic called James Collinson, even though it proved to be a life-long regret. However, still, William believed his sister was never much hostile to Catholics, 'considering them as "authentic members of the Church of Christ, although in error upon some points"'.[37]

The Anglican and Catholic belief of Rossetti became more complex when Frances, Maria and herself became involved with the High Church Movement. According to the biographical studies of Lona Mosk Packer, Rossetti attended St. Katherine's Church for Anglican service, while she was also brought to Christ Church by Frances for the sermons of Rev. Charles

[35] Bell, p.6. The fluctuating religious view of Gabriel Rossetti is also discussed in page 3-4 of Shove's *Christina Rossetti: A Study* (1931).
[36] Christina's interest in the Tractarian Movement will be explained in the next paragraph.
[37] Marsh, p.91

Dodsworth and Dr. Pusey, two of the eminent Tractarian leaders of the day.[38] With such intermixed education in beliefs, she had developed her own ideas on Anglicanism and Catholicism, such as agreeing on the idea that the Church of England was a descendent of apostolic tradition instead of the Lutheran one. Along with the support from family members, she further proved herself an admirer of those leading figures of Tractarianism, such as Dodsworth, John Keble, Isaac Williams and John Henry Newman. Since Dodsworth expounded his Tractarianism in the Church which the Rossettis attended, it can be presumed that she had been adopting Dodsworth's beliefs since her childhood.[39] Furthermore, although Rossetti never openly admitted her admiration for John Keble, a founding member of Tractarianism, 'there is extant a curiosity'[40] from her illustration to Keble's *The Christian Year* (1837). She also had 'a great regard'[41] for Isaac Williams, one of the eminent poets of the Tractarians. In a couple of letters to Patchett Martin, she wrote that among the collection which Martin chose for her sick-bed reading, Williams' *Autobiography of Isaac Williams* was suited 'much to [her] taste'.[42] Lorraine Janzen Kooistra suggests that Rossetti's interest in both Keble and Williams is due to the two Tractarian figures sharing the same taste in 'emblematic tendencies' with her.[43] These three all used nature as a literary means of portraying God's authoritative power in the secular context. Additionally, both Keble and Rossetti perceived writing as their vocation in religion. The authoress also followed 'commendably'[44] the 'devotional path' of Keble in dealing with Romantic sensuousness in poetry. To Kooistra, the similar approaches between Rossetti and the two Tractarian figures in literary composition reflect the consent of the former to the religious

[38] Lona Mosk Packer, *Christina Rossetti* (California: University of California Press, 1963), p.6
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Bell, p.165
[42] Ibid., p.166
[43] Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Christina Rossetti and Illustration: A Publishing History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), p.30
[44] Marsh, p.57

beliefs of the latter. Last but not least, in 1890, Rossetti dedicated a poem, 'Cardinal Newman' to John Henry Newman. She addressed Newman as 'Champion of the Cross' (line 1), a name that highlights the faithfulness of the clergyman. A further compliment to Newman's religious beliefs is made when she wrote that, because his love for religion is as great as 'springtides' (line 7), Newman will be received by heaven.

Since Rossetti was close to the Tractarians, critics also argue that she had inevitably taken in some ideas of evangelicalism. As Marsh says, the Tractarians proselytised 'among the young, aiming to attract both men and women through a mission of spiritual renewal'.[45] Evangelical hymns were reinforced by Tractarian verses and those 'seventeenth-century writers rediscovered by the High Anglican' movement.[46] In terms of the cooperation of Anglo-Catholicism and evangelism, *The Edinburgh Review* comments that 'there was a flavour of combined learning and piety, and of literary and artistic refinement, in the representatives of Tractarianism which enlisted floating sympathies'. In other words, Tractarianism was 'the old wine of Evangelicalism settling itself into new High Church bottles'.[47] For Rossetti, the Church to which she went in her childhood was a centre of incorporated evangelism and Anglo-Catholicism.[48] Her evangelism was at the same time consolidated with the children's books of Thomas Day, Maria Edgewood and Mary Sherwood that she read.[49] Considering all this, perhaps one can presume that Rossetti was exposed to evangelical ideas in many ways. The ideas that she had learned in youth were then manifested in her adult life. Looking into her interactions with her nephews and nieces, children of William Rossetti, Marsh finds that '[Rossetti's] concern was not to amuse, but to guide and, if possible, to save' those children. The critic also makes a comment that 'in

[45] Ibid., p.56
[46] Ibid.
[47] Quoted by Packer, p.7
[48] Packer, p.7
[49] Smulders, p. 118

[Rossetti's] eyes to fail to seek the salvation of others was a dereliction of Christian duty, akin to ignoring poverty and pain'.[50] Owing to this need to fulfil her duty, it is unquestionable that Rossetti's evangelical spirit was transformed into the didactic messages of *Speaking Likenesses*.

Rossetti's concern for her readers did not go totally unnoticed by critics. Ralph A. Bellas reads *Speaking Likenesses* as an exposition of Rossetti's 'considerable sensitivity to the "buying public" and concern for her fame as an author'.[51] Bellas argues that she was trying to continue her fame as a children's book writer in the 'vogue for children's literature'[52] created by Edward Lear and Carroll. Yet, it is hard to argue that the rise of children's literature began with fantastical writings, for many factors were involved in generating the flourish of English children's literature. But Bellas' analysis shifts Rossetti from the role of failed imitator to that of the writer concerned with both her audience and her literary career. Even if it is possible that Rossetti was taking advantage of the impact of fantastical texts, her attempt to create her own fantasy for the market can now be read as her fulfilment of a writer's duty. It is her job to pay attention to the public interest, even if sometimes this may commercialise her creation or contradict her own beliefs.

With this determination to articulate her evangelism for her readers, Rossetti composed her *Speaking Likenesses* with severe self-criticism. William identified his sister as an Anglo-Catholic and he finds that, 'among Anglo-Catholics', she is 'a Puritan'.[53] Georgia Battiscombe similarly, perceives that many Anglo-Catholics were simultaneously Puritans. As she states, the emphasis of Anglo-Catholicism on 'personal religion' lies on 'inner discipline, and any display of emotion

[50] Marsh, p.544
[51] Ralph A. Bellas, *Christina Rossetti*, (Boston: Twayne, 1977), p.103
[52] Ibid.
[53] Georgina Battiscombe, *Christina Rossetti: A Divided Life* (London: Constable, 1981), p.32

[is] immediately [suspected]'.[54] However, it has to be clarified that Rossetti was not truly a Puritan, it is only that she had a heavy sense of sinfulness and an urge towards self-criticism. Her sense of criticism is largely in contrast to her natural disposition. It is widely noted by her family members and biographers that Rossetti was initially a 'quick tempered but affectionate little girl, full of whims and fancies'.[55] Yet, due to her severe self-criticism developed later, Rossetti read her liveliness as 'bad temper',[56] or as Marsh puts it, being 'volatile and fractious'.[57] It is no wonder that Rossetti delineated the tales as if they were a progressive regeneration of the protagonists. The story starts with a realistic setting where the narrator- Aunt tells three fantastical stories to her nieces, who are required to work on some sewing and drawing in story-time. The first tale of Flora is mainly a nightmare in which she is participating in a birthday party. The second tale is about a girl called Edith who fails to light a fire, and the third tale of Maggie is about her journey to return some Christmas ornaments to a doctor on a winter evening. Rossetti had never claimed that *Speaking Likenesses* was autobiographical, but it is explicit, as Marsh argues, that 'little Flora, Maggie and Edith are self-images' of the author, 'whose adventures also embody the story of her own moral life, and the lessons she had learnt'.[58]

D. Rossetti's Sinfulness and *Speaking Likenesses*

1. Rossetti's Sinfulness

Flora and Edith mirror the early life of Rossetti. The bad temper of Rossetti is transplanted to Flora, whose vitality and restlessness are accompanied by conceit and arrogance. She constantly claims that she is the queen of her birthday party, saying 'this is my birthday' repeatedly. The author highlighted the mistakes of Flora by exaggerating her misbehaviour and

[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., p.28
[56] Bell, p.13
[57] Marsh, p.5
[58] Ibid., p.419

transposing them into the queen in her nightmare. Similar to Flora, this queen is also having her birthday party. However, Rossetti made the queen very aggressive and violent. The queen repeats Flora's words 'in a cross grumbling voice', saying that 'you shan't, they're mine', 'it's my birthday, and everything is mine'.[59] The trivial mistakes of a child are turned into brutality. Edith, similarly, also possesses a sense of pride as Flora does. Initially, she shows no respect to adults. Sinfulness does not penetrate the narration of Edith and her misbehaviour appears to be less severe compared to that of Flora. However, because of her ignorance about how to light a fire and her negligence of adult warnings, only senses of emptiness and failure are left to her. The bad temper and the ignorance of children are treated severely in *Speaking Likenesses*. It is clear that Rossetti refused to cast any sense of sympathy to the protagonists.

As aforementioned, Rossetti was originally energetic in nature yet she was required to be disciplined since childhood, but the major reason behind her transformation came later in her life when a heavy sense of sinfulness finally stuck Rossetti. According to Battiscombe, there is a shortage of evidence about this sudden change of Rossetti's temperament. Critics can only rely on William's credible account about the reason for such self-abasement and the heavy sense of shame generated in Christina. He claims that after the 1850s, Christina was 'an almost constant and often a sadly-smitten invalid, seeing at times the countenance of Death very close to her own'.[60] It is still uncertain whether her physical illness had also generated a mental breakdown, but major biographers, such as Bell, Battiscombe, and Marsh, all relate the illness to her changes in character. Marsh evidences Rossetti's sense of sinfulness from her literary works related to Mary Magdalene. In 1846, she portrayed Mary Magdalene as 'a young woman weeping for her

[59] Christina Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poems and Prose*, ed. by Jan Marsh (Vermont: Everyman, 1994) p.331
[60] Battiscombe, p.34

"great transgression"'.[61] In the same year, she also worked on *Divine and Human Pleading*, in which she described the penitence of the saint. In *Maude*, Magdalene is also a fictional character who devotes herself totally to religion. Marsh sees that 'the subject' of Mary Magdalene 'spoke directly to [Rossetti's] heart, giving expression to the burden of obscure guilt and self-blame that chained her soul'.[62] Perhaps Rossetti was attracted by Mary Magdalene, though it remains debatable whether they share some characteristics. Additionally, owing to Pusey's influence, Rossetti also found a gratitude for confession and absolution. William confirms that Rossetti 'acquired "an awful sense of unworthiness, shadowed by an awful certainty" of the reality'. Marsh also claims that Rossetti's sense of sinfulness engendered her self-abasement: 'it is probable that like Maude [Rossetti] felt the shame of her admission, and found relief in clerical forgiveness'.[63] A vicious cycle of abasement and guilt was generated in Rossetti's self.

The strong emphasis on the bond between sinfulness and self in *Speaking Likenesses* can be understood with reference to *Maude*, a work which is autobiographical in nature and in turn, reflects the author's propensity for self-criticism. It is generally agreed by critics that the protagonist, Maude Foster represents Rossetti. Not only does the character have the physical ailment that had been shadowing Rossetti since adolescence, Maude also traps herself between the identities of poet, Christian, and woman, just as the author struggled in reality. More significantly, Maude shares a sense of guilt with the author. Maude believes that she is unworthy for Communion. In a conversation with her friend Agnes, Maude says:

> You partake of the Blessed Sacrament in peace, Agnes, for you are good; and Mary, for she is harmless: but your conduct cannot serve to direct mine, because I am neither the one nor the other. Some day I may be fit again to approach the Holy Altar, but till then I will at least refrain from dishonouring it.[64]

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[61] Marsh., p.61
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., p.63
[64] Christina Rossetti, 'Maude', *Poem and Prose*, p.267

When Maude compares herself with her friends, she sees herself possessing neither the goodness of Agnes nor the harmlessness of Mary. Owing to this, she finds herself unfit for the Church. Maude's self-abasement and shame remain an enigma. If Maude is truly an autobiographical image of Rossetti, it appears that the introspection of both Maude and Rossetti had exceeded what she believed it should be.

In the real life of Rossetti, the rigorous introspection so eroded her vitality and 'her force of will that in later life scarcely any trace of this quickness of tempter seemed to remain'.[65] As William says, Rossetti made 'a lifelong practice of moderating self-control', which mostly came from his mother's 'moral training against wilfulness, vanity, impatience'[66] and Maria, who was 'the always-instructive elder sister…imparting the approved counsels of prudence, obedience and self-restraint'.[67] Maria's sternness and self-controlled spirit, particularly, greatly affected the behaviour and temperament of her sister. Rossetti was brought up by following Maria as the example. In the first tale of *Speaking Likenesses*, Flora's sister, Susan, is shown to be the well-behaved sister that takes care of every participant at the party. To Smulders, Susan takes the role of an 'absent mother',[68] who tries her best to 'please everybody'. She shares her mulberries to pacify the grumpiness among the children, she leads the pouting children back to the house, and tells a story about a frog who cannot boil the water. Along with the role of an absent mother, Susan's image as an ideal child is also apparently modelled after Maria. Additionally, Rossetti's childhood reading of Isaac Watts, Anne and Jane Taylor and Sara Coleridge all implanted this sense of self-renunciation in her. These works propagate messages such as 'childish desire had to

[65] Bell, p.13
[66] Marsh, p.12-3
[67] Ibid., p.11
[68] Smulders, p.118

be curbed, with a strong sense of duty instilled in its place'.[69] It appears that Rossetti was following these moral lessons throughout her life. As further explained by Marsh, it was also a general trend in the middle class of the nineteenth century that girls should be taught to suppress ' desire and ambition, told that wishing and wanting were greedy and selfish, and schooled to internalise the values of denial and docility'.[70] Henceforth, owing to all these external factors, Rossetti gradually rejected all social enjoyment and devoted herself to religious duty. And because her growing towards maturity was accompanied with a growing awareness of sinfulness, both in oneself and in social activities, it is presumable that she interpreted her vitality as a sign of moral corruption. Her youth, to some degree, became her sinful past.

The second tale of Edith is a fantasised journey of spiritual transformation. Although not many actions are involved in this tale, and it appears that this tale shows nothing significant, this tale inherits the elements of the tale of Flora and preludes the story of Maggie. Similar to Flora, Edith is filled with pride, and, as aforementioned, she is also presented as a sinful image of Rossetti. However, it is obvious that the sinfulness of this child is less severe than that of Flora. Edith is arrogant and proud, and at the same time, she is ignorant and immature. The fact that she is incapable of boiling water and her seeking advice from those animals from the wood highlights her vulnerability. At the end, even though Edith fails to accomplish her task, her tale is filled with didactic messages. Rossetti deliberately implanted several practical lessons as well as several fables in this second tale of *Speaking Likenesses*. Those educative materials foretell the possible changes to one's sinfulness. They make Edith's tale less harsh than Flora's and indicate a sense of the positive alternations that will come in Maggie's tale. Accordingly, Edith's tale functions as a transitional ground between the first and the third moral story.

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[69] Marsh, p.11
[70] Ibid., p.13

Maggie, the protagonist of the last tale, is a dutiful image of Rossetti. Maggie is portrayed as a child pilgrim who turns down all tempting offers on her journey. Particularly, Maggie's story is set during the Christmas season. She is hoping to get to her destination and has a glimpse of Christmas decorations. But at the end, she is rejected by the doctor's family, and she soon goes back to her cottage. To Rossetti, what Maggie is hoping for is only a form of secular celebration. The original Christmas message is being realised in her return journey, when Maggie takes a wood pigeon, a cat and a puppy back home. As is shown, Rossetti refuses the secular and mundane celebration of this most important time for a Christian. Instead, she looks for opportunities to realise the true spirit of Christmas. Rossetti once described *Speaking Likenesses* as 'the exciting and veracious history of Maggie'.[71] Marsh sees Maggie as the heroine of the author, mostly because the girl is courageous enough to resist temptation, something that the physically fragile Rossetti was not often able to do in reality. Maggie's return to her grandmother with all those animals that she saved on her journey, perhaps, symbolises that the guilt that she has been carrying in the journey has been redeemed.[72]

2. Rossetti and 'Speaking Likenesses'

From the title *Speaking Likenesses*, Rossetti implied that the story would be about comparison. Originally, the story was named 'Nowhere', intended to be read as a parody of 'Wonderland'. 'Wonderland' suggests a sense of amusement, but 'Nowhere' gives a darker mood of emptiness: 'though Wonderland is also a cruel world in many aspects, Rossetti's "Nowhere"… is far darker in mood, and her audience hardly have any time to enjoy the pleasures of naughtiness… before they are brought up against the lesson'.[73] Later in a letter to Alexander Macmillan, Rossetti explains that 'Speaking Likenesses' will replace 'Nowhere', as

[71] Ibid., p.423
[72] Ibid., p.424
[73] Rossetti, *Poems and Prose: Christina Rossetti*, p.324

her 'small heroines perpetually encounter "speaking (literally *speaking*) likenesses" or embodiments or caricatures of themselves or their fault'.[74] Marsh sees that 'imagery realms' invoked by 'Nowhere' become more meaningful when a 'moral lesson', epitomised by 'Speaking Likenesses', is introduced. The new title epitomises the didacticism of the three tales of Flora, Edith and Maggie. As Rossetti said, the entertaining effects of her tales are sourced from the faults of her protagonists, which are written in the form of caricature. The ridiculed behaviour is the medium that generates the introspection of her characters. The mirroring images and reflections narrated in the first tale are shown to function with this sense of 'speaking likenesses'. For example, the frightful image of the birthday Queen '[reflects] over and over again in five hundred mirrors' while flushed and angry faces of Flora appear as 'fiver million-fold faces' on such mirrors as well. These mirrors are not 'simple reflections, but reflections of reflections, and reflections of reflections and reflections, and so on and on and on, over and over again'.[75] Such repetition of images does not simply metaphorically amplify the dominating power of the queen, but also envisions the fearfulness of sin to Flora. Visual reflection of the queen is presented as metaphorical moral reflection upon Flora, suggesting that the two characters are speaking likenesses of each other. This 'perpetuity' in reflection highlights Rossetti's belief in persistent introspection. Yet, while in her letter she also called her protagonists 'heroines', she hinted that her main characters would learn from their self-examination. Glass reappears in the third game of Flora, in which children are throwing them to each other. With the looking-glass that symbolises the reflection of sinfulness and the breaking

[74] Christina Rossetti, *The Letters of Christina Rossetti*, Vol. II, p.19. However, one should be aware that this change in title was initiated by Dante Rossetti, who wrote, 'unlucky because of that free-thinking book called Erewhon, which is "Nowhere" inverted. The title would seem a little stale; I should change it.'
[75] Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poems and Prose*, p.331-2

glass that marks the end of games, the author makes Flora a heroine by achieving a metaphorical victory over her sinfulness.

The three tales of *Speaking Likenesses* are narrated by Aunt to her five nieces. Both Marsh and Smulders argue that 'the spinster aunt is also a self-image'[76] of Rossetti. In reality, she was looking forward to being the aunt of Gabriel and Lizzie's child during the time of writing *Speaking Likenesses*. And with the addition of William's marriage, she had every prospect of becoming one.[77] The role of aunt brings a new interpretation to the reading of this story. Considering that *Speaking Likenesses* is dedicated to Frances, instead of including a loving mother, Rossetti created a character of aunt that 'gives expression to maternal intolerance'.[78] While it is presumable that this role of aunt is modelled after Maria, this narrator is 'also the children's secret ally against the parent whose indulgence masks tyranny, for she embodies the grown-up daughter's animus toward a beloved mother'.[79] By embodying the quality of a mother and the childishness of her nieces, Aunt becomes an ambivalent figure trapped between maternity and childlikeness. Such an uncategorised role allows Aunt to work in freedom, as Rossetti 'usurps' the 'authority' of mother in ratifying 'her own independence as a single woman'.[80] Such uncertainty embedded in the role can somehow reflect the real life of Rossetti. McGillis, however, refuses to read Aunt as a literary representation of Rossetti, as he reads the narrator as 'a source of fun'.[81] McGillis does not explain what this 'source of fun' is, perhaps 'fun' can be detected only beneath the sarcasm and didacticism. Yet, McGillis is self-contradictory, for even if he refuses to read Aunt as an image of Rossetti, he sees that the author

[76] Marsh, p.419
[77] Ibid.
[78] Smulders, p.113
[79] Ibid,
[80] Ibid.
[81] McGillis, p.225

is expressing her 'distrust of fantasy, of make-believe' through the 'irritable, presumptuous, and matter-of-fact'[82] narrator. Considering that Aunt is described as 'priggish'[83] and 'irascible',[84] it seems that she is not telling the story to impress her audience but to educate. In fact, considering the stern character of Aunt, she is portrayed as the figuration of morality in the story.

If Rossetti was modelling the three tales upon the spiritual journey that she had been going through and she was also seeing part of herself in the role of Aunt, she turns *Speaking Likenesses* into a complex system of repression and inspection. Aunt becomes the alter ego that oversees the growth of Rossetti's ego, represented by the three main characters. This system of self-examination is operated fantastically by delineating her sinful life in the first story, her spiritual transition in the second story, and her dutiful life in the present via the third story. Considering that *Speaking Likenesses* was to some extent autobiographical and was intended to teach moral lessons through ridiculing the faults of the protagonists, Rossetti was shamefully laughing at her past. These three tales embody a pathetic view of Rossetti in reading herself. In this sense, *Speaking Likenesses* not only reflects the story of the author, but also reveals that these fictive characters are reflections of the complicated psychology of the author. The framework of rejecting fantasy and reviving didacticism in children's books turns out to be the authentic belief of the author, who did not only believe it but was also practiced it in her real life.

3. Labour and Sinfulness

Speaking Likenesses aims at arousing the awareness of sinfulness, accentuating the notion of self-criticism, and additionally, highlighting the essentiality of labour. In *Speaking Likenesses*, self-criticism extends beyond the fantastical realm and happens in a realistic context. Aunt demands that her listeners work during the story-telling and she clearly gives the instruction,

[82] Ibid., p.225
[83] Stuart, p.151
[84] Marsh, p.419

> Each of you bring her sewing, and let Ella take pencils and colour-box, and try to finish some one drawing of the many she has begun. What Maude! pouting over that nice clean white stocking because it wants a darn? Put away your pout and pull out your needle, my dear; for pouts make a sad beginning to my story…Silence! Attention! All eyes on occupations, not on me lest I should feel shy! Now I start my knitting and my story together.[85]

Maude is introduced with an imperative warning: 'What Maude!' a direct denunciation of her behaviour: 'pouting over that nice clean white stocking because it wants a darn'. The child's unwillingness to labour is immediately criticised. This opening passage is filled with instruction. Before the second tale, Aunt again assigns her child audience different duties. She clearly states that 'no help [on charity work] no story'[86] and 'here is my work for you all, the same as yesterday, and here comes my story'.[87]

Yet, Aunt's urge towards labouring and self-restraint, the two major similarities between *Maude* and *Speaking Likenesses*, also gives a sense that they are the ways pursued by Rossetti in casting away one's sinfulness. Labour is addressed in the very beginning of *Speaking Likenesses* with Aunt distributing different domestic tasks to her nieces. Her aim in telling a story is to let the children complete their unfinished tasks, in the case of Ella, and to work unselectively, in the case of Maude. Besides, here, a 'pout'—a synecdoche of the dissatisfaction or the unwillingness of the girls to labour, deters the story telling. The instructive and imperative passage of the story-teller is not only the first paragraph of *Speaking Likenesses*, but also gives the basic idea that labouring is the only route towards joyfulness (story-telling). Ostensibly, it is implied that working and story are correlated, for an unpleasant attitude to labour leads to a sad beginning of a story. It appears that both labouring and story-telling are equivalent in importance. Yet, because the attitude towards labour can impact upon her mood in story-telling, it creates a cause-

[85] Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poem and Prose*, p.325
[86] Ibid., p.339
[87] Ibid., p.346

result relationship between the two, implying that the former is more important than the latter. Additionally, putting away the pout is an instructive line which indicates that working should be a pleasant occupation. Labouring is not only the priority, but also a positive act. The imperative line of ‘all eyes on occupations’ further consolidates such ideas by restating that the focus of the audience should be placed on labouring rather than listening to the story. Apart from these messages, the imperative tone of Aunt consolidates the stern belief of Rossetti that the words of the story-teller are as true as they can be. In those interactions of the Aunt and her child audiences, Christina revealed the priority she placed upon labouring. Indeed, it is also possible to read *Speaking Likenesses* as one of the labours that Rossetti chooses to save herself from sinfulness.

E. Ridiculing *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*

1. Game

This emphasis upon the necessity of labour aims at castigating the fantastical writings of Carroll. Comparably to the idea of ‘speaking likenesses’ and self-criticism, in *Speaking Likenesses,* Rossetti turned some of the reminiscences of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass* against Carroll. She firstly ridiculed the notion of ‘games’, one of the major elements that constitute the two *Alice* books. In the game called ‘Hunt the Pincushion’, Flora is chosen to be the pincushion, which has to be chased around and be stuck with pins everywhere in her body by other children until someone catches her. This game is transformed from the ‘Hide and Seek’ that Flora was playing with her companions before she enters ‘Nowhere’. In reality, Flora insists, ‘It’s my birthday!’ ‘It’s my birthday’. She has a strong inclination that ‘Hide and Seek’ should be played in accordance with her will. When this game is restaged in her dream, the role of queen is superseded by another birthday girl, who, similarly, takes control of the party. But this time the

game is operated in a tormenting manner. Flora is subjugated as a 'pincushion', and as Smulders reads, she becomes a victim of 'extreme objectification'.[88] Bearing in mind that this game is a sadistic version of the 'Hide and Seek' that Flora was playing, Rossetti deliberately devalues her protagonist in the fantastical realm so as to underscore Flora's misbehaviour at her birthday party. After the first game, Flora's pride is eroded. By juxtaposing the same event in realistic and in fantastical realms, moral lessons are taught to her protagonists and to her audience. In Rossetti's narration, the children attack for fun. This suggests that in the process of reproaching her protagonist for her misbehaviour, Rossetti objectified Flora and relocated her into an extreme game that does not only correct her mistakes, but also severely punished her by devaluation.

2. Victimisation of the Female Figure

This idea of objectification highlights the superficial meaning of Rossetti's 'Pinch the Pincushion', yet critics find that several levels of social criticism are embedded in these games. Pamela K. Gilbert reads 'Hunt the Pincushion' as the sexual victimisation of a woman:

> Quills with every quill erect tilted against her, and needed not a pin: but Angles whose corners almost cut her, Hooks who caught and slit her frock, Slime who slid against and passed her, Sticky who rubbed off on her neck and plump bare arms, the scowling Queen, and the whole laughing scolding pushing troop, all wielded longest sharpest pins, and all by turns overtook her.[89]

She says, 'the pins, the "erect" quills, the tearing of Flora's clothes, and the fluids left on her by bodily contact with the girls are all symbolic of the sexual act—an act which is shown here as a violent victimisation'.[90] In 'Hunt the Pincushion', harassment is meted out to one individual female only. In the second game, Self-Help', 'the boys were players, the girls were played…all

[88] Smulders, p.116
[89] Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poems and Prose*, p.333
[90] Pamela K. Gilbert, '"A Horrid Game": Woman as Social Entity in Christina Rossetti's Prose', *English (Leicester)* (41-69), 1992, p.18

except the Queen who, being Queen, looked on'.[91] This game is similar to 'Hunt the Pincushion', but the number of victims increases. 'Self-Help' is a unilateral attack from all male characters upon all female characters. The boys are not allowed to utilise any 'adventitious aids' but each 'depended exclusively on his own resources' in his attack on the girls. Except that pins are forbidden, 'every natural advantage, such a quill or fishhook, might be utilized to the utmost'.[92] This means that the birthday queen has granted permission to all male characters to use their individual advantages, or to utilise any means to insult female characters. Gilbert distinguishes the first game as sexual victimisation and the second as a social one. To be more precise, the second game is a form of sexual victimisation of the female in a social context. Or it is as Gilbert puts it, that the first two games are 'metaphorical gang rape',[93] conducted in both intimate and social contexts.

Female victimisation reappears in the third tale, where Maggie is harassed by a boy whose 'face exhibited only one feature, and that [is] a wide mouth…for the mouth, which could doubtless eat as well as speak, grinned, whined…[is] full of teeth and tusks'.[94] The attack upon Maggie is symbolic. Several critics see this mouth-boy as representative of male aggressiveness. Marsh takes him as a personification of greed and a 'powerful figure of insistent male sexuality', for he has the aggression to snatch Maggie's food. Gilbert also sees this mouth-boy as a figure of 'lust and avarice'.[95] Apparently, along with the illustration included by Hughes, this boy is modelled after Tweedledum and Tweedledee in *Looking-Glass*. Tweedledum and Tweedledee and the boy share a similar stout and short body shape as well as costume: a waistcoat and a pair of high-waist trousers. However, unlike the well-dressed and tidy costume of Tweedledum and

[91] Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poems and Prose*, p.334
[92] Ibid., p.334
[93] Gilbert, p.17
[94] Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poems and Prose*, p.350
[95] Gilbert, p.21

Tweedledee, the waistcoat of the boy is ragged for it is too small for his belly and its buttons are lost. Tweedledum and Tweedledee may cry out their words, but they do present some form of courtesy by shaking hands with Alice, and some senses of playfulness in their 'dancing round in a ring'.[96] Even though Carroll's characters are somehow dominating, Rossetti's boy is apparently vulgar. To Marsh, this mouth-boy is a phallic figure. He is a personification of 'greed' and also a figure of 'insistent male sexuality, whose wheedling demands are matched by the "lumpish-looking hand" like a clammy fin that darts out to snatch Maggie's basket'.[97] The critic sees him as a new guise of those phallic symbols that had earlier been included in Rossetti's works, such as those fantastical male characters in Flora's dream and the goblins in 'Goblin Market'. Considering that those aforementioned male characters in the first and third tale do possess the strong desire of subjugating female subjects, Rossetti's tale is filled with the dark fantasy of adult desire.

3. Satires of Victorian Society

In addition to discerning female suppression, the second game 'Self-Help' and the third game 'House Building' can easily be taken as satires of Victorian society. The argument is often evidenced by Aunt's statement: 'but remember that my birthday party is being held in the Land of Nowhere. Yet who knows whether something not altogether unlike it has not ere now taken place in the Land of Somewhere? Look at home, children'.[98] In this sense, the speaking likenesses of the three tales are reflecting the real situation that Rossetti faced in the Victorian society. Gilbert relates the second game to self-education, and argues that the game reinforces the 'current fad'. However, such comment insufficiently expounds the nature of this game, and suggests nothing of social criticism. Smulders, on the other hand, relates this statement to

[96] Carroll, p. 158
[97] Marsh, p.423
[98] Christina Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poem and Prose*, p.334

Rossetti's criticism of the 'subjugation of women' in Victorian society.[99] The birthday queen in this nightmare represents Queen Victoria, the female figure that colludes with such social injustice. And Smulders argues that the 'Victorian wife and mother—the queen of domesticity—permits similar chaos to reign'.[100] It is true that this game of subjugating the female proceeds with the unethical permission, ironically, of authoritative female figures. Nevertheless, it is far-fetched to relate this game to Queen Victoria.

The third game, House Building, expands the social criticism to the antagonism between genders. It is a game of trapping oneself in those transparent edifices. Compared to the second game, academic commentaries on the third game have focused on the transgression of space in psychological and societal contexts. Marsh interprets the third game as 'an unconscious re-telling of some trauma that led to a feeling of being trapped in a glass castle or bubble- an image often used by incest survivors to describe their dissociated emotion'.[101] The sadism in Flora's tale considerably echoes the physical harassment of Laura ('Goblin Market').[102] However, the source of Marsh's comment is unknown. It can only be argued that this scene is where Flora is forced to face the brutal queen, her sinful self. Gilbert, on the other hand, compares Victorian society to the '"glass house" structure'.[103] She argues that 'if one transgresses the boundaries of one's appointed role, one stands to lose… all that sustains and protects one, and perhaps even one's life'.[104] She depicted Victorian society as an 'exquisite but restrictive environment', a community that had bounded its people within a set of regulations. Although those bricks are transparent yet full of colour and shapes, they represent only the iridescent tactics by which

[99] Smulders, p.117
[100] Ibid.
[101] Marsh, p.423
[102] The connection between Flora and Laura is also noticed by Kathleen Jones in *Learning not to be the First: The Life of Christina Rossetti* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1992), p.167
[103] Gilbert, p.19
[104] Ibid.

regulation has been imposed on each individual. The more people enjoy Victorian society, the more they constitute their own prison. This entrapment, indeed, as all the children of 'Nowhere' show, is applied to every individual regardless of their gender. In sum, the third game reflects the inter-relation between a person and his society. And to put this conclusion in terms of social harassment of females, this game is a fantasised representation of the female plight and how she situates herself in such an abusive context. And the attack on Flora is the queen's detachment of self. Since Flora and the queen are trapped together, the latent rage of the queen finds the urge to get rid of Flora. In this sense, if the queen is a mirroring image of Flora's sin and everything in that fantastical realm operates as the opposite of reality, then the expulsion of the good-self can be read as Flora's unconscious rejection of her sinful self. Thereby, right before Flora leaves the fantastical realm, the didacticism of this dream is manifested, because Flora is making a right moral decision in reproaching her own sins.

But the final victory lies in the third tale when Maggie successfully turns down all temptations and escapes from harassment. Gilbert reads Maggie's experiences as a manifestation of the main messages of *Speaking Likenesses*:

> As in the earlier story, the male characters are threatening and violent; women are powerless to effect change or to control their environment, and to attempt it is to risk utter destruction of oneself and important others. The only way to be empowered within such a social structure is to victimize oneself, to take on the values of the oppressors… or to settle…for something basically unsatisfactory. Finally, one can withdraw from the world, and give up one's hope of earthly happiness to fulfil a higher ideal.[105]

Hence, the mouth-boy recedes and disappears after Maggie's 'courteous but steadfast refusal'.[106] All other temptations disappear in Maggie's return journey. Her act of saving animals evinces that duty is more substantial and valuable than playful games. In this way, victimisation has turned Maggie into a hero.

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[105] Gilbert, p.21
[106] Marsh, p.423

F. A Journey of Purification

The three tales of *Speaking Likenesses* form a process of purification. Marsh relates this purging to the personal life of Rossetti. The critic finds that in her later years, Rossetti kept a cat as a companion in every house she occupied: 'And if as conjectured the psychological trauma of her adolescence had a sexual component, causing fear, self-loathing and guilt the final story in *Speaking Likenesses* was therapeutic, re-creating fear and desire in order to purge their power'. [107] It appears that *Speaking Likenesses* is speaking in likenesses to the personal experience of the author. This re-creation of fear in the three tales helps the author remove her inferiority, which was imposed, most probably, by herself. Simultaneously, as critics have noticed, *Speaking Likenesses* also reflects on the social problems of the Victorian age. Though the idea that Queen Victoria was involved in the unjustifiable victimisation of women is questionable, it is presumable that Christina had been conscious in weaving social problems into her tales.

In a letter to Macmillan, Rossetti describes how the three tales of *Speaking Likenesses* share a 'common framework'.[108] Perhaps the multiplicity of Rossetti's Christian beliefs makes some critics relate *Speaking Likenesses* to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Marsh describes *Speaking Likenesses* as 'a cathartic narrative with a happy ending, in which Rossetti's heroines learn to withstand monstrous figures and failures—representing 'bad' external or internal forces—in order to defeat them'.[109] The 'cathartic narrative' to Knoepflmacher and Auerbach is associated with Dante's Inferno, Purgatory and Heaven. Both critics see that 'the stories ascend as the Christian soul does, from Flora's birthday hell to Edith's purgatory—whose fire fortunately

[107] Ibid.
[108] Harrison, 'To Alexander Macmillan', *The Letters of Christina Rossetti*, Vol. II, p.6
[109] Marsh, p.421

never quite gets lit—to the martyred Maggie's chilly heaven'.[110] The first tale of Flora is viewed as a representation of Hell. The fantasy land where Flora dreams is a 'dark mirror of the already-existing England into which Flora is going to have to grow up'.[111] According to the critics, this tale is a reflection of real society, which presents grim images of problematic societal phenomena—technological development, consumerism, inequalities of gender, the heroic nostrum of the middle class and so on. This sarcastic view of Victorian society may echo Kent and Stanwood's idea that *Speaking Likenesses* is 'engaged in satire and parody of Victorian values'.[112] However, none of these critics provide detailed accounts of how this work of Rossetti related to the Victorian societal situation. Their comments appear to be a general assumption that the author is criticising her contemporary world via her children's story. The second tale is argued by Knoepflmacher and Auerbach as being a 'purgatorial account of Edith'.[113] This sense of purgatory, though, is only built on its 'flatness' in narrative. Other than comparing the second tale to the first and the third one, it seems the two critics find no way to prove how purgatory is related to this tale of Edith. The third heaven-like tale of Maggie is 'an allegory of dying'.[114] Contrasting with conventional Christmas tales, filled with 'delicious magic', Maggie's wishes all perished on her way to the doctor's house. But Knoepflmacher and Auerbach read that these disappointments 'consecrate' the girl. Her journey back home becomes a way to 'heaven': 'Maggie's joyful return to her grandmother's warmth is less a conventional happy ending than a celestial welcome'.[115]

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[110] Nina Auerbach and U.C. Knoepflmacher, *Forbidden Journeys: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Woman Writers* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.319-20
[111] Ibid., p.320
[112] Kent and Stanswood, p.3
[113] Auerbach, Nina and U.C. Knoepflmacher, p.321
[114] Ibid., p.322
[115] Ibid.

By analysing the three tales of *Speaking Likenesses* as a 'common framework' of cathartic process, in fact, Knoepflmacher and Auerbach can only loosely associate it with Dante's work. It is true that Flora's dream is filled with hellish sadistic games, and it is possible that Rossetti made this nightmare retribution for Flora's mistakes. Yet, it is arguable whether such a world is reflecting the 'hellish' industrial nineteenth century as the critics claim. The purgatorial world of Edith can be justifiable if the tale is viewed as a state of learning. This second tale is highly connected to the behavioural learning of children, and lessons such as 'girls should not play with matches'.[116] However, Edith herself learns nothing after she gives up boiling that kettle of water. The transitional function of purgatory within the second tale is shown to be a failure. Also, the argument relating the third tale to an 'allegory of death' and a 'celestial welcome' is fairly debatable. Disappointments of a child's wishes during Christmas time are very hard to relate to the death of the soul. And the passionate caring for animals on the way home is also hardly linked to a heavenly welcoming of all living creatures. Besides, the two critics ignore how monstrous creatures, which are taken from the 'hellish' tale of Flora and are reused again in the third tale, interrupt Maggie's way to 'heaven'. It seems that Knoepflmacher and Auerbach are aware of the undividable relationship between Catholicism and Rossetti. Yet, their suggestions appear to be unconvincing. Rossetti may have been influenced by Catholic texts like Dante's, but it is arguable that Rossetti modelled *Speaking Likenesses* after *Divine Comedy*. Nevertheless, that the three tales function as a progress of purification is still considerably obvious.

G. Rationalise fantasy--Rejection of Dream and Imagination

Perhaps *Speaking Likenesses* can be read as a process of cathartics or as resonating with *Divine Comedy*, but Rossetti refused to correlate her tales much with the notion of dreams—a prominent feature of the two books of Alice. It is true that 'dream' is used in the tale of Flora,

[116] Ibid., p.321

however, it is written in a didactic manner. *Speaking Likenesses* also speaks likenesses to Carroll's work, and similarly to the self-criticism that Rossetti imposes upon herself, apparently Rossetti turns dream against *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*. Sigler explains that the imitation of *Alice* is possibly due to the 'loose, episodic dream structure and playful use of symbolic nonsense enabling varied and even contradictory readings'.[117] Yet, to argue that the dream structure of *Speaking Likenesses* is loose and episodic will undermine Rossetti's effort in carving her tales. Perhaps the dream appears to be incomplete in structure or incoherent in narration because Rossetti had been picking up materials from different parts of the two books of Alice. Since Carroll's writing is rearranged in different orders and critics are well informed about the fact that Rossetti was consciously imitating '*Alice*'s style', *Speaking Likenesses* creates the illusion that it is plotted in a chaotic manner. In fact, Flora's dream is consistently illustrated in terms of the way she instils her moral lessons. Flora modifies her behaviour throughout the dream. In Carroll's dream, Alice wakes up twice without any significant changes, yet comparatively, Flora successfully changes her misbehaviour. It is clear that Rossetti is not hostile to dreams, but only to those entertaining ones which have no didactic values. Moreover, two of Flora's tormenters: 'a glutinous-looking girl in pink cotton velvet' and 'a boy clothed in something like porcupine skin'[118] reappear in the third story, in which Aunt answers Ella that, 'Ella, you really can't expect me not to utilize such a brilliant idea twice'.[119] Such reappearance echoes the second appearance of Hatter and Hare and the Queens in *Looking-Glass*. And this reappearance signifies the continuation of nightmare. The deliberate reappearance of the two tormentors of a nightmare does not simply restate Rossetti's repugnance towards Carrollian fantasy, but once again

[117] Sigler, xiv
[118] Christina Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poem and Prose*, p.348
[119] Ibid.

ridicules the dream-like narrative of Carroll. Rossetti transformed the fantastical features of Carroll's dreams into horrid and unpleasant plots and characterisation.

Other than dream, the three tales are constantly refusing the indulgence of imagination, evidenced prominently in the interruptions of the nieces in Aunt's narration of the three tales. These interruptions are filled with factual information. In the tale of Flora, Aunt introduces the knowledge of 'The Apple of Discord'[120] and Lord Nelson[121]. In the second tale, explanations are given of particular terms, such as tripod, aborigines, and acoustic. And in the third tale, she explains that sleeping in the snow will probably cause one's death. The three stories appear to teach morals as well as practical knowledge. Auerbach and Knoepflmacher argue that Aunt acts as a 'pseudo-narrator' who 'again and again denies her imaginative control over stories of her own invention'.[122] It is a fear of Rossetti that bringing children into exotic wonderland will expose the young minds to the 'dark side of adult imagination'.[123] Thereby, Aunt consistently insists on the necessity of work, meaning that she has been holding the binary partnership of work and play. Here, the evangelical motivation of Rossetti can be evidenced by the informative conversation between Aunt, the story-teller, and her child audiences. However, is Rossetti rejecting fantasy totally in her children's stories? McGillis claims that her 'work for children treats its readers to an experience of the high morality of art, thus offering them the opportunity for freeplay, for participation in imaginative understanding'.[124] Bearing in mind that she did not totally abhor all kinds of imagination, but only the Carrollian fantasy, perhaps Rossetti viewed the fantastical works of Carroll as harmful reading materials for children. It is as if the transparent bricks allegorise the imaginative freedom that Carroll's texts offer to their readers,

[120] Ibid., p.328
[121] Ibid., p.332
[122] Auerbach and Knoepflmacher, p.319
[123] Ibid.
[124] McGillis, *The Achievement of Christina Rossetti*, ed. by David Kent, p. 208

although they are attractive, they are closing every door for a child's growth. Fantasy can give no real benefit to children, for even though it might look fancy and iridescent, it restricts the spiritual development of young readers.

Moreover, Auerbach and Knoepflmacher argue that Rossetti is rationalising the nonsensical ideas of Carroll. Bellas also notices that the conversation of Aunt and her five nieces is principally maintaining the realistic framework of the story. Undoubtedly, the rationality of these tales lies in the upholding of morality and duty. Also, particularly, Aunt explains fantasy. For example, she expounds how a pot of sifted sugar sprinkles itself, 'let us suppose it sprang up in its china basin like a fountain; and overflowed on one side only',[125] and she explains how the queen has fifty million reflections in mirrors, 'because in such a number of mirrors there were not merely simple reflections, but reflections of reflections, and reflections of reflections and reflections, and so on and on and on, over and over again.'[126] Thereby, when every fantastical feature is reasoned, she has successfully killed the imaginative freedom of her audience. In other words, by using dreams and similar, Rossetti constantly de-fantasied the Carrollian formula of fantasy and reinforced the substantial role of didacticism in children's literature.

H. Conclusion

Speaking Likenesses once again manifests the fact that the individual belief of the author is an essential element in constituting a religious fantasy for children. The multi-sourced religious belief of Rossetti constituted her complicated *Speaking Likenesses*. These three tales mirror the severe criticism of the author towards herself, her protagonists, her young audience and Carroll. Rossetti transformed her displeasure with sin into the sufferings of Flora, Edith and Maggie. At the same time, she expressed her aspiration of rejecting temptation through the victory of her

[125] Christina Rossetti, 'Speaking Likenesses', *Poems and Prose*, p.331
[126] Ibid., p.331-2

protagonists. She found labouring as a way to cast away sinfulness, and simultaneously, she expressed her wishes through the dutiful life that Aunt is asking for. The three tales constitute a sophisticated yet repressive system of self-criticism. Faithful spirit, particularly, permeates her last tale. Stemming from Rossetti's belief, *Speaking Likenesses* retrieves the customary pattern of those evangelical books, in which sins are condemned and dutiful life is appreciated. In the process of reflecting the religious beliefs of Rossetti, *Speaking Likenesses* reveals the complexity of the beliefs of the Victorians. Different from Carroll, who represents the group trapped between different religious debates, Rossetti represents those who possessed a conglomeration of various teachings and, subsequently, constituted their own belief.

With regard to the contradicting purpose in writing children's text between Rossetti and Carroll, *Speaking Likenesses* can be read as a severe stroke against Carrollian fantasy. With her displeasure with the 'destructive' Wonderland, Rossetti intended to ridicule Carroll's creation and, in the light of such a reaction, create stories which construct moral improvement. She illustrated the power of resistance and passivity in the process of ridiculing Carrollian plot and characters as well as satirising Victorian social problems. In *Speaking Likenesses*, it is only by self-criticism and endurance that the protagonists can gain their victory. *Speaking Likenesses* has not caused much impact upon children's literature, perhaps it can even be read as a void attempt in challenging the profound aftermath of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*. Nevertheless, it successfully shows that some writers, like Rossetti, were deeply anxious about the scarcity of didacticism in children's books. *Speaking Likenesses* attempts to solve the problem by reviving didacticism for young readers. Whether or not Rossetti succeeded, her fantastical writing can be read as a perfect example in exhibiting the dichotomy between moral education and entertainment at the time. F.J. Darton concludes that the 'mid-Victorian period was astonishingly productive':

> Books for the young were multiplied to a pattern, and the pattern tended to be the brightest, the most specious, rather than the most enduring or most finely wrought. But all the best characteristics of the preceding generation had been confined, and had been developed and enriched. Fiction was now by a long way predominant over fact, magic was not rebuked but at large, nonsense was free.[127]

Perhaps this flourishing of children's literature was to a large extent the influence of *Alice* and *Looking-Glass*; nevertheless, other writers like Rossetti who embodied both a belief in didacticism and a recognition of fantastical writing also contributed to this 'astonishingly productive' era of children's literature.

[127] Darton, *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, p.297

Chapter 5: 'Real' Fantasy of Religion and Science—

Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies or a Fairy Tales for a Land Baby* (1863)

> We are to have *such* a story from him for the *Magazine*…It is to be called "The Water Babies." I have read a great deal of it, and it is the most charming piece of grotesquery, with flashes of tenderness and poetry playing over all, that I ever seen.
>
> Alexander Macmillan, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 1910[1]

This review was written when Alexander Macmillan had finished the first chapter of Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies: a Fairy Tales for a Land Baby* (1863).[2] He noticed that the book was unique in providing various reading experiences to its reader. This perhaps refers to the uncanny encounter of the mortal protagonist, Tom and the supernatural figure, Irishwoman. Nevertheless, from its first printing in *Macmillan Magazine* as an instalment (1862-3), *The Water Babies* was widely acclaimed. [3] The demand for it can still be seen from the abridged editions, films, radio shows, and theatrical performances produced in the twentieth century. Tom, a chimney sweeper, starts a purgatorial voyage after he falls into a stream. He becomes an amphibian creature—a "water baby", experiences several morality modifying adventures, and ends up as 'a great man in science'.[4] The story is didactic and aims at propagating Kingsley's beliefs in self-motivated moral enhancement and natural theology. Kingsley was aware of the values of this secular world. He believed that the created world was an earthly expression of

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[1] Charles L. Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan* (London: Macmillan, 1910), p.188-9

[2] Charles Kingsley, *The Water Babies or a Fairy Tales for a Land Baby* (London: Penguin, 2008). The book title will be shortened as *The Water Babies* in this chapter. Revisions that Kingsley made for the book version are noticed. This chapter draws references to *The Water Babies* from the book edition rather than the version published in *Macmillan Magazine*'. For further information on the differences between the two versions, please refer to Larry Uffelman and Patrick Scott's essay 'Kingsley's Serial Novels, II: *The Water Babies*', *Victorian Periodicals Reviews*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Winter 1986), p.122-131

[3] For nineteenth-century reviews of *The Water Babies*, please refer to 'Literature', *Berrow's Worcester Journal* (Worcester, England), Saturday, August 23, 1862; pg. 3; Issue 8336; 'Literature', *The Derby Mercury* (Derby, England), Wednesday, October 8, 1862; Issue 6810; and 'Mr. Kingsley's Water Babies', *The Times*, Tuesday, Jan 26, 1864; pg.6; Issue 24778; col A; as well the statistics conducted by *Academy* in 1898 printed in 'Literary Notes', *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Saturday, July 2, 1898; Issue 10379.

[4] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.188

God. Nature, particularly, is filled with God's traces. Kingsley was notable for his support of both science and religion, and this belief in their compatibility becomes the major message of *The Water Babies*.

The Water Babies was written for Kingsley's son, Grenville Kingsley,[5] and at the same time, was intended to propose a new understanding of God and faith. In a letter to F.D. Maurice, Kingsley delineated his efforts in preaching and his planned function for *The Water Babies*:

> I have tried, in all sorts of queer ways, to make children and grown folks understand that there is a quite miraculous and divine element underlying all physical nature; and that nobody knows anything about anything, in the sense in which they may know God in Christ, and right and wrong. And if I have wrapped up my parable in seeming Tom-fooleries, it is because so only could I get the pill swallowed by a generation who are not believing with anything like their whole heart, in the living God.
>
> Meanwhile, remember that the physical science in the book is *not* nonsense, but accurate earnest, as far as I dare speak yet.[6]

In this letter, Kingsley shows his devotion to education and *The Water Babies* is one of the attempts. The current generation was devoid of a wholehearted faith in God. Therefore, Kingsley saw a need to restore the religious belief of his readers. Kingsley described his book as a 'pill' that cures those who 'are not believing' whole heartedly in God. In this way, *The Water Babies* is designed to convert or modify a person's beliefs. It is a parable with its messages wrapped up by an entertaining narrative. In other words, the fantastic story of Tom, or what Kingsley calls 'Tom-fooleries', is written for the purpose of moderating the heaviness of his religious messages.

A. Steps of Salvation

1. Recognition of Sinfulness

[5] Charles Kingsley, *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of his Life*, ed. by his wife, Vol. II, 3rd edn. (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1877), p.137. The origin of *The Water Babies* is widely noted and cited by critics. Mrs. Kingsley recorded that, 'Sitting at breakfast at the rectory one spring morning this year, the father was reminded of an old promise "Rose, Maurice, and Mary have got their book, and baby must have his."' He made no answer, but got up at once and went into his study, locking the door. In half an hour he returned with the story of little Tom. This was the first chapter of 'The Waterbabies', written off without a correction'.

[6] Ibid., p.137-8

The individual beliefs of Kingsley are fantasised as a set of guidelines for his reader's religious salvation. To begin with, his *Water Babies* is a 'pill' that can only be effective when the reader has developed a prerequisite awareness of his or her inferiority and stained self. Kingsley was looking at the improvement of a person's internal values, and he believed that only one's willingness to achieve spiritual enhancement could enforce the process. It is as the Irishwoman states, 'those that wish to be clean, clean they will be; and those that wish to be foul, foul will be'.[7] Standing in front of Ellie and looking at himself in the mirror, Tom faces his self for the first time: 'a little ugly, black, ragged figure, with bleared eyes and grinning white teeth'.[8] But more importantly, there lay Ellie, whose 'cheeks were almost as white as the pillow, and her hair was like threads of gold spread all above the bed'.[9] Because of his new insight into himself and his sharp contrast to Ellie, Tom recognises his physical dirtiness and spiritual worthlessness. As a result, these feelings generate his desire of 'being washed', a wish to clean his stained self. Tom's fantastical journey begins from the moment he thinks: 'I must be clean, I must be clean'.[10] Jackson argues that Tom's desire to be cleaned is caused not by his shame but his desire of becoming a member of the middle class. Instead of a pure soul, he looks for the 'reward with an ideal unity and perfection of' the aristocratic English maiden, Ellie.[11] Yet, Jackson's emphasis on social status ignores the part which religious symbols play in provoking his desire of being washed. When Tom is in Ellie' room, he sees a picture of Jesus before he looks into the mirror. The visualisation of religion symbolically opens his new vision of himself. Before he gets into the water world, Tom hears the church bell. This also signifies his journey under water will be a

[7] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.8
[8] Ibid., p.14
[9] Ibid., p.13
[10] Ibid., p.30
[11] Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*,p.153

religious calling. It appears that before Tom's voyage in the water, Kingsley has already laid down several hints of Tom's religious transformation. Through the picture of Jesus and church bell, Kingsley underscores the fact that awareness of his inferiority and his need for improvement are essential to his journey. Tom's realisation has opened the first gate of his moral enhancement.

After those recognitions, Tom is left alone to develop his moral education. When Tom meets an Irishwoman, who is later revealed to be the supernatural figure that oversees the mortal world, he is attracted by her story about the movement of the sea. He expresses his wishes to 'bathe and play in it' as other children do.[12] This 'sense of wonder' on one hand, enforces the child's willingness to adventure, and on the other hand, provides him with a picture of what to expect in the future. The encounter between Tom and an otter later in the story finally initiates his will to explore more extensively:

> But he could not help thinking of what the otter had said about the great river and the broad sea, and, as he thought, he longed to go and see them. He could not tell why; but the more he thought, the more he grew discontented with the narrow little stream in which he lived, and all his companions there; and wanted to get out into the wide wide world, and enjoy all the wonderful sights of which he was sure it was full.[13]

This wish to see the sea is a demonstration of the will to learn, and more importantly, the will to be more complete by enriching himself with 'all the wonderful sights of which he was sure it was full'. Carpenter argues that, instead of writing for the moral enhancement of his readers, Kingsley filled his *Water Babies* with the most 'personal and private concerns', which refers to his critical addressing of social problems and his expression of sexual sadism[14] Carpenter's argument neglects the centrality of its moral implications and colours *The Water Babies* with a

[12] Ibid., p.6
[13] Ibid., p.62
[14] Carpenter, *Secret Gardens*, p.37

sense of selfishness, and thereby hugely undermines the effort that Kingsley made for his audience. But in the following discussion, it is apparent enough that the children's fantasy is filled with didactic suggestions. Tom is a picture of a child reader, and his awakening experiences demonstrate some of the qualities, awareness of one's inferiority and the need for moral education, that Kingsley wished his readers to acquire in preparation for their religious journey. Followed by his recognition of his sin, Tom's sense of wonder brings along a self-motivated salvation.

2. Observation

a. Nature

Kingsley suggests that one's religious journey should be started by observing nature. In reality, Kingsley himself found a great pleasure in investigating natural objects. As recorded by Charles Kegan Paul,

> [Kingsley's] delight in every fresh or known bit of scenery was most keen, and his knowledge of animal life invested the walk with singular novelty…What were the precise plants which composed that patch? He hurriedly ran over the list of what he thought they were, and then set off over hedge and ditch, through bog and water-course, to verify the list he had already made.[15]

Kingsley's interest in science and natural objects can be seen from his contribution to books, including Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871). He also took up positions in several scientific societies.[16] It is widely evidenced that other than his devotion to the Church, Kingsley was strongly attracted to scientific subjects and the study of nature.

Kingsley developed and fantasised his personal practice and interest in the first few adventures of Tom. In the initial stage of his adventure, Tom is exposed to various natural

[15] Quoted by Chitty, p.141
[16] Mary Wheat Hanawalt, 'Charles Kingsley and Science', *Studies in Philology*, Vol.34, No.4 (Oct., 1937), p.590-593; Arthur Johnston, '*The Water Babies*: Kingsley's Debt to Darwin', *English* 12 (Autumn 1959), p.216-7

phenomena. After he becomes a water baby, he sees 'in great detail the sorts of tiny and "fantastic" events normally invisible to' many people:[17]

> Sometimes he went along the smooth gravel waterways, looking at the crickets which ran in and out among the stones, as rabbits do on land; or he climbed over the ledges of rock, and saw the sandpipes handing in thousands, with every one of them a pretty little head and legs peeping out; or he went into a still corner, and watched the caddises eating dead sticks as greedily as you would eat plum pudding, and building their houses with silk and glue.
> ---
> There were water-flowers there too, in thousands; and Tom tried to pick them: but as soon as he touched them, they drew themselves in and turned into knots of jelly; and then Tom saw that they were all alive—bells, and stars, and wheels, and flowers, of all beautiful shapes and colours; and all alive and busy, just as Tom was.[18]

Tom becomes a 'mobile magnifying glass',[19] which now looks into nature in detail, and, thereby, provides him with a new angle upon the vivid lives of various creatures. He finds the water world is 'a great deal more…than he [has] fancied at first sight'.[20] Later, he encounters several insects and creatures in the stream. Their metamorphosis, hunting, house-building and speeches startle but simultaneously introduce him to new ideas about nature. This world broadens the horizon of Tom, and consequently initiates his will to go beyond the stream. Metaphorically, his 'scientific vision' is 'widened…from being within the confines of the stream, to ranging as widely as the ocean',[21] proposing that the physical and spiritual expeditions of Tom are corresponding to each other. The growing process of Tom can be compared to an experimental scientist, as Manlove argues: 'as an explorer he has himself followed something of the course of an experimental scientist, looking beyond the seemingly chaotic sleet of phenomena and events to the laws by which they operate and come to be'.[22]

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[17] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.187
[18] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.48-9
[19] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.187
[20] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.49
[21] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.187
[22] Ibid., p.189

b. Externalisation of Moral Status

Apart from nature, Tom is exposed to the externalisation of moral status. This interplay between appearance and morality is conducted with references to Darwin's theory on evolution and natural selection. Kingsley called Darwin 'his dear and honoured master', whose evolutionary theories 'inaugurated a new era'[23] to him. Before Tom is drowned, the child is described as a little black ape or a gorilla,[24] the two primates that are highly suggestive of evolutionary theory. After he falls in the water, Tom leaves his old body and transforms into a water baby. Tom's transformation signifies a new beginning of his 'cycle of creation', as Gillian Beer claims. She identifies that Kingsley was trying to reproduce the social models that Darwin implicitly suggested in his works. Both Kingsley and Darwin moralised 'the connections between plants, animals, and human life',[25] meaning that they both were looking for a harmonious and interlocked relationship between all living beings. Yet, in Kingsley's version, evolution develops in two ways: elevation and degradation. Hence, when Tom is transformed from a suppressed child labourer to a water baby, he is 'released from the ordinary cycle of human development, allowed to grow anew'.[26] Indeed, the evolution of Tom is operated in a paradoxical manner. While Tom is physically changed from an ape-like chimney sweeper to a water baby, he is physically regressed by turning from a grown-up boy to an infant. But this degradation in Tom's physicality simultaneously represents an ascendance of his spirituality. His brutal and uneducated behaviour are now removed, and he retrieves his pure state of mind and body.

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[23] 'Kingsley to Huxley', 1 July 1862, Imperial College, London, Huxley Paper, Gen. Letters IX (I-K), p.205. Kingsley's interest in Darwin's idea can also be seen in his speech, 'Science and Superstition'.

[24] The reference which associates Tom with ape and gorilla before his transformation to water baby can be found in *The Water Babies*, p.14, 17, 27.

[25] Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 3rd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.121

[26] Ibid., p.126

While Darwin's scientific studies are related to the natural law, Kingsley studies nature with both natural and moral law. Kingsley recognised that Darwin's study was restricted to explaining the vicissitudes of nature. Therefore, in addition to Darwinian theory, Kingsley interpreted nature via his own theology. Evolution becomes a medium that reflects one's moral status. Most critics also agree on the notion that Kingsley 'first accepted the truth of Christianity and then accepted science as revealing material manifestation of that truth'.[27] In a letter to Darwin, Kingsley reflects:

> I have gradually learned to see it is just as noble a conception of Deity, to believe he created primal forms capable of self-development into all forms needed *pro tempore* and *proloco*, as to believe he required a fresh act of intervention to supply the lacunas which he himself had made.[28]

Here, Kingsley blended his interest in science with theology. Scientific discoveries are found not to contradict religious principles, but support them: 'God's earth and God's word will never contradict each other'.[29] Kingsley believed that 'the more science and history students absorbed, the more firmly would they believe in God'.[30] Browne notes that Kingsley is the first clergyman to see in Darwin's idea 'an internal beauty that could be shared by science and spiritual revelation alike'.[31] But whether or not Kingsley was the first, nature does inspire Kingsley's insight into religion. Chadwick describes how nature '[whispers] to him that in them lay a hint of

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[27] Larry K. Uffelman, *Charles Kingsley* (Boston: Twayne, 1979) , p.74

[28] This part of the letter is reprinted in the second edition of *The Origin of Species*. But instead of reprinting the exact copy of it, Darwin rephrases some of the terms to clarify Kingsley's meaning: A celebrated author and divine has written to me that "he has gradually learned to see that it is just a noble as conception of the Deity to believe that He created a few original forms capable of self-development into other and needful forms, as to believe that He required a fresh act of creation to supply the voids caused by the action of His laws".

[29] Charles Kingsley, 'How to Study Natural History', *Scientific Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p.335

[30] Una Pope-Hennessey, *Canon Charles Kinsley: A Biography* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p.200

[31] Quoted by Lila Marz Harper, 'Children's Literature, Science and Faith: *The Water Babies*', *Children's Literature New Approaches*, ed. by Karin Lesnik- Oberstein (London: Palgrave, 2004), p.129

the meaning of the world'.[32] It is undeniable that the influence of Darwin was profound. Not only is the evolution of Tom the main plot, but ideas of such processes are also massively delineated in *The Water Babies.*

The inclusion of morality in the evolutionary process resonates from the small creatures in the stream to the protagonists and the supernatural figures. Trout originally belongs to the same family as salmon, but because trout chooses 'to stay and poke about in the little streams and eat worms and grubs', it becomes 'properly punished' by growing 'ugly', 'brown', 'spotted' and 'small'. Worse, trout even starts eating the children of salmon, a result of its degraded spirituality.[33] The decline in the morality of the trout offers a picture of degeneration which is later elaborated in the story of Doasyoulike. This is a species which has devolved from human form to primates. This effective degradation is caused by two sinful acts that they have committed: the negligence of reality and their slothfulness. The species is falling in numbers because they ignore typical danger signs. Their indolence in moving away from danger and in creating a safer living environment results in their persecution. Owing to their refusal to change, they successively devolve from cave-living human beings to tree-climbing primates, and finally to gorillas. The simian degradation of Doasyoulike reflects the decline of their human qualities.

Tom's metamorphosis, similar to those of the trout and Doasyoulike, operates in accordance with the rise and fall of his moral status. From the beginning of Tom's adventure, Kingsley reminds readers that 'your soul makes your body, just as a snail makes his shell'.[34] Tom is described as 'ape-like' before he is changed into a 'water baby'. He is uneducated and ignorant about Christianity, and cannot recite any prayers. He is apparently described as the less-

[32] Owen Chadwick, 'Charles Kingsley at Cambridge', *The Historical Journal*, XVIII, 2 (1975), p.313
[33] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.70
[34] Ibid., p.48

developed species. Particularly, compare the two fantastical journeys of the two children: Tom goes into the water while Ellie flies up to the sky. Ellie turns into an angel but Tom starts his journey as a water baby, an earthy creature which still needs moral training. During his voyage, after he has stolen the sweets of Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid, a supernatural figure in charge of punishment, his growth regresses when prickles grow on his body. Later when Tom redeems himself, the flaws of his physicality are removed correspondingly. Finally at the end of his journey, Tom becomes a tall and respectable man. Linley Sambourne's illustrations help to illustrate Tom's transformation from babyhood, boyhood and adulthood under water.[35] With the interrelation between physicality and moral status, Kingsley externalised the internal development of Tom.

During these evolutionary changes, additionally, Tom is taught to recognise the authoritativeness of the natural law. As Manlove explains, 'from seeing nature as a series of isolated phenomena and figures', Tom 'begins to have more and more of a sense of the connectives and principles that unite them'.[36] When he meets Mother Carey, the creator of everything, Tom finds out that every mechanism has its own rules and pattern that even fairies cannot break. Even the all-powerful supernatural figure, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid claims: 'For I work by machinery, just like an engine; and am full of wheels and springs inside; and am wound up very carefully, so that I cannot help going'.[37] The evolutionary journey of Tom, therefore, accommodates Tom to some fixed principles of nature. In order to be civilised as a human being, it is necessary for one to understand that the world is operated under certain natural laws. In this

[35] Please refer to the one hundred illustrations of Linley Sambourne in *The Water Babies: or a Fairy Tales for a Land Baby* (London: Macmillian, 1885)
[36] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.187
[37] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.112

way, Darwin's theory becomes an ideal platform for Kingsley to fantasise on the compatibility of faith and science.

B. God— the Law of Nature

Tom's adventure is a culmination of experiences and knowledge. Gradually through Tom's recognition of the principles of nature, Kingsley reveals to Tom and the readers that there is a single ultimate power— a 'miraculous and divine element' that designs all natural laws. Manlove and Charles Muller see that many contemporaries of Kingsley were similarly trying to prove the immanence of God, showing 'God's abiding love' and 'the guiding force of divine providence that directs and controls the lives of those who venture and dare'.[38] Kingsley's supernatural figures encapsulate the divine qualities that he believed in and act them out in *The Water Babies*. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid handles all punishment and behavioural corrections and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby cuddles and consoles all water babies. The Irish woman provokes Tom's desire for a religious journey, and at the same time, provides an all-time protection to him. Mother Carey, who comes at the end, oversees all creation processes, meaning she has been constantly overseeing the fantastic journey of Tom. At the same time, all of these characters are omniscient. The Irishwoman appears to know everything that a man has done in his life. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby know every misbehaviour and credit of the water babies without anyone telling them what the children have done. Mother Carey knows all the steps of creation. More significantly, all supernatural characters are shown to be one ultimate power. At the end of Tom's adventure, the inter-changeable appearance between the supernatural figures is revealed. When Grimes (Tom's old master) has his retribution, he finds Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid is, in fact, the Irishwoman that he met in his mortal life. Later, Tom and

[38] Charles H. Muller, '*The Water Babies*—Moral Lessons for Children', *UNISA English Studies* (24:1), 1986, p.12

Ellie also discover that Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid share the same appearance with Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, Mother Carey, and the Irishwoman. The mystical unity of the supernatural characters is finally revealed when the two children get a closer look at Mother Carey, and they found that the fairy is 'neither of them, yet all of them at once'.[39]

While this characterisation reveals the supernatural power behind nature, Kingsley's natural theology at the same time proposes new roles for nature and for God. In Longfellow's poem, quoted at the beginning of Chapter VII, Kingsley delineated that there is a final cause, God, to design and explains the rationale behind natural phenomena:

> And Nature, the old Nurse, took
> The child upon her knee,
> Saying "Here is a story book
> Thy father hath written for thee.
>
> "Come wander with me" she said,
> "Into regions yet untrod,
> And read what is still unread
> In the Manuscript of God."
>
> And he wandered away and away
> With Nature, the dear old Nurse,
> Who sang to him night and day
> The rhymes of the universe.[40]

This poem explicitly points out Kingsley's idea on the role of the divine qualities behind nature. Kingsley called nature a 'dear old Nurse', who takes care of the child and tells him about a story book written by his father. Her job of introducing the story book to a child represents nature as a manuscript, a secondary means of apprehending the primary reality of God. The nurse explicitly tells the child that they have to 'wander' to the 'regions' and acquire knowledge. This reading experience becomes a mental journey that explores what has not been discovered or known by a

[39] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.187
[40] Ibid., p.137

child. The result is shown in the Wordsworthian last stanza, in which the child is said to have 'wandered away and away/With Nature': that nature helps cultivate a persona that is more and more deeply attuned to the knowledge of the universe. Kingsley creates an image that the nurse sings the rhyme of the universe day and night to the children. The rhyme of the universe, which was originally written by God, becomes the earthly bestowal of Him. With this, a sense that God is immanent in the secular world is also implied here. By making nature the nurse and reminding us that God is the father of a child, the earth is read as a family. In 'The Natural Theology of the Future' (1871), Kingsley reads physical nature as a device that demonstrates 'how' the work of God has been shown on earth. The 'final causes' of these tangible phenomena are 'moral causes', permeated immanently and transcendently on earth.[41] This relationship is also expressed metaphorically in Kingsley's *Madam How and Lady Why* (1869): 'We must talk first with Madam How, and perhaps she may help us hereafter to see Lady Why. For she is the servant, and Lady Why is the mistress'.[42] In this metaphor, physical nature appears to work as a principle set by the authoritative power behind her. Kingsley also explains that 'God's book, which is the Universe, and the reading of God's Book, which is Science, can do you nothing but good, and teach [readers] nothing but truth and wisdom'.[43] To Kingsley, 'physical nature is that it is far more filled with miracles than any fantasy'. Science is not only a discipline that investigates nature, but moreover a way of 'exploring the very methods of God', the 'supreme Scientist' who sustains all things.[44]

[41] Kingsley, 'The Natural Theology of the Future', p.329
[42] Kingsley, *Madam How and Lady Why* (London: Macmillan, 1899), p.3
[43] Kingsley, xii
[44] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.185

Furthermore, the power that underlies nature is as the author states, 'you do not know what nature is, or what she can do; and nobody knows'.[45] It is mystical yet its existence is certainly believed in by the author. The ultimate divine power, though mysterious to Tom and other characters, remains unseen and omnipotent:

> The most wonderful and the strongest things in the world, you know, are just the things which no one can see. There is life in you; and it is the life in you which makes you grow, and move, and think: and yet you can't see it. And there is steam in a steam engine; and that is what makes it move: and yet you can't see it.[46]

In *The Water Babies*, Kingsley consistently invoked the imaginative power of his young readers. One of his main arguments is whether there are water babies in nature. Kingsley argues,

> There are a great many things in the world which you never heard of; and a great many more which nobody ever heard of; and a great many things, too, which nobody ever heard of; and a great many things, too, which nobody will ever hear of, at least until the coming of the Cocqcigrues, when man shall be the measure of all things…
> How do you know that? Have you been there to see? And if you had been there to see, and had seen none, that would not prove that there were none.[47]

Here, the author leaves his young readers to explore the world through their imagination. Manlove notes that Tom has developed from an 'experimental scientist, looking beyond the seemingly chaotic sleet of phenomena and events to the laws by which they operate and come to be'.[48] Later, Tom becomes a 'natural theologian', who recognises the transcendent force behind all natural phenomena. Kingsley proposes a reality that is interactive with moral principles. Internal evolution and the regression of one's morality are externalised through one's physicality. Hence, the natural world is constructed in accordance with an absolute yet elusive standard. The final cause provides an answer to all questions, as Hawley suggests that Kingsley 'offers his most attractive, deceptively simple presentation of the argument that all purely

[45] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.38
[46] Ibid., p.33
[47] Ibid., p.37
[48] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.189

scientific explanations of reality would benefit by being placed in the larger context of Christian revelation'.[49] It can be concluded that, 'God is ultimately this "Queen of all Fairies," but in the meantime "the great fairy Science" was in the ascendant and "likely to be queen of all the fairies for many a year to come"'.[50] According to Harper, at the time of Post-Darwinism in which religious reading materials could not maintain their standing in providing answers about the world, *The Water Babies* becomes an appropriate text for children.[51] In 'How to Study Natural History', Kingsley states that 'God's earth and God's word will never contradict each other'.[52] The consonance between science and religion in *The Water Babies* '[gives] parents a way to present a new form of scientifically-supported moral teaching to children in a world quickly losing its connection to past spiritual guidelines', while the text also provides a chance for parents to 'assure themselves of the possibility of a reconciliation between faith and science'.[53]

Carpenter sees that *The Water Babies* tries to 'remedy that loss of faith', and Kingsley 'was fumbling towards the creation of some kind of alternative religion, which was made up of things that really mattered to him'.[54] But in 'The Natural Theology of the Future', a speech given at Sion College in 1871, Kingsley stated clearly that 'I do not even affirm that a natural religion is possible: but I do very earnestly believe that a natural theology is possible'.[55] Here, Kingsley tried to justify all the contradictions between the Church and personal belief, nature and religion, rationality and emotions. There is nothing improper in having 'personal religion', as God has granted his children wisdom to explore Him. The Church, instead, should embrace all sorts of

[49] John C. Hawley, 'The Water Babies as Catechetical Paradigm', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No.1, Spring, 1989, p.20
[50] Ibid.
[51] Harper, p.119
[52] Kingsley, 'How to Study Natural History', *Scientific Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1871), p.304
[53] Harper, p.122
[54] Carpenter, p.41
[55] Kingsley, 'The Natural Theology of the Future', p.304

personal thoughts. As Kingsley put it, '"it takes all sort to make a world," so it takes all sort to make a living Church.' Rather than accusing the earth for its fallacy and corruption, Kingsley found that there was a need to reassess the secular world with appreciation. He saw that 'natural theology is likely to attain a high, a healthy, or a scriptural development'. Though the speech was given ten years after the publication of *The Water Babies*, it still corresponds to many aspects of the children's text evidencing the consistent belief of Kingsley. *The Spectator* suggests that *The Water Babies* '[adapts] Mr. Darwin's theory of the natural selection of species to the understanding of children, by giving it an individual, moral and religious as well as a mere specific and scientific application'.[56] With reference to the speech, indeed, *The Water Babies* is shown to be a confluence of Kingsley's beliefs. From the observation of nature, Kingsley comprehended the vicissitudes of nature, and he tried to explain them with Darwin's evolutionary theories and interpreted them in theological terms. Realising that God is behind nature, granting the freedom to men to develop themselves spiritually and mentally, Kingsley appreciated what God has bestowed upon His children. In *The Water Babies*, Kingsley stressed the value of the secular world, in particular regarding nature. He demonstrated his wholehearted thankfulness to God, who has created such a marvellous world for mankind. And here, it is down to each human's responsibility and willingness to create and develop their own morality, and contribute themselves to God's service and to society, just like Tom, who ends up being a Christian and a great man in science.

Scientific observation, theological comprehension of nature and evolutionary processes, and the realisation of God's immanence and omnipotence all contribute to the moral education of the protagonist. Such didacticism is reinforced at the end of Tom's voyage when a section called

[56] The two references are also quoted by Johnston, p.217

'Moral' is inserted. The author states his expectation in the first sentence: 'And now, my dear little man, what should we learn from this parable?' The answer is given immediately: 'We should learn thirty-seven or thirty-nine things'.[57] Richard D. Beards, editor of this edition of *The Water Babies*, identifies that the 'thirty-nine things' are the thirty nine articles that 'Anglican clergy were obliged to swear'.[58] Whether or not the indication of thirty nine articles is authentic, Kingsley makes it clear that religion is at the centre of the book. He addresses his audience directly, asking them 'Meanwhile, do you learn your lessons, and thank God that you have plenty of cold water to wash in; and wash in it too, like a true English man'.[59] The imperative tone throughout enhances the dominant role of the author, giving him an invisible power that directs his readers to a moral lesson. Also, Kingsley calls for fair treatment of those less developed, for he asks his young audiences not to 'ill-use' those who are undeveloped. Instead, readers should 'pity them, and be kind to them: and hope that someday they will wake up, and be ashamed of their nasty, dirty, lazy, stupid life, and try to amend, and become something better once more'. Kingsley tried to harmonise the difference between different species, and suggested that regardless of each evolutionary process, every creature was working under the same natural system, which undoubtedly, is overseen by God, the divine power behind nature. Hence, in this final part, Kingsley makes his *Water Babies* a text that is consistently religious and educative.

C. Children's Education

1. Method of Education

a. Classroom Teaching

[57] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.188-9
[58] Ibid., p.198
[59] Ibid., p.190

Yet, while in the letter Kingsley stated that *The Water Babies* is aimed at teaching readers to 'understand that there is a quite miraculous and divine element underlying all physical nature', the main focus of this children's fantasy is placed on secular subjects rather than theological ones. Uffelman observes that, 'Kingsley's fascination with natural science was lifelong. So was his interest in children'.[60] Kingsley, for example, had been paying lots of attention to methods of teaching religious materials. J.M.I. Klaver discovers the similarity between the education of *The Water Babies* and Thomas Hughes' *Tom's Brown Schooldays* (1857).[61] But Kingsley put forward a different method of education from Hughes as he had a low opinion of conventional pedagogy in the classroom. At the end of Chapter II, he wrote,

> Now if you don't like my story, then go to the schoolroom and learn your multiplication table, and see if you like that better. Some people, no doubt, would do so. So much the better for us, if not for them. It takes all sorts, they say, to make a world.[62]

Hawley concludes from these lines that the 'undercutting of a rationalistic reliance on statistics and his ridicule of rote recitation set the tone for much subsequent children's literature in England, and elsewhere'. [63] Kingsley's position is controversial, as his views might be the 'delight of many' but also cause the 'annoyance of a great many others'.[64] Nonetheless, Kingsley in effect presents his book as an alternative mode of pedagogy to classroom learning. His educative ideas are exhibited in the Isle of Tomtoddies, where the enforcement of exam-oriented education has turned children into 'turnips and radishes, beet and mangold wurzel, without a single leaf among them, and half of them burst and decayed, with toadstool growing out of

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[60] Uffelman, p.70
[61] Chitty records that Hughes sent a completed manuscript of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* to Kingsley and asked for his advice. It is quite unquestionable that the two literary figures were close to each other in 1860s. For the discussion about the linkage between *The Water Babies* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, please refer to Klaver, p.512-4
[62] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.45
[63] Hawley, p.19
[64] Ibid.

them'.[65] These images of not having a 'single leaf among them' but 'toadstool', vividly portray the internal decay of human quality and the lifelessness of these children. Regressing from human form to vegetable-like physicality, the devolution of their bodies is caused by ceaseless lessons:

> There were as pretty little children once as you could wish to see… but their foolish fathers and mothers… kept them always at lessons, working, working, working, learning weekday lessons all weekdays, and Sunday lessons all Sunday, and weekly examinations every Saturday, and monthly examinations every month, and yearly examinations every year, everything seven times over, as if once was not enough.[66]

All the activities of the Tomtoddies are aimed at examination. The Tomtoddies are taught to sing, 'I can't learn my lesson: the examiner's coming!'[67] They speak to Tom 'in half a dozen different languages at once, and all of them badly spoken'.[68] They asks pointless questions like, 'How long would it take a school inspector of average activity to tumble head over heels from London to York?' or 'can you tell me the name of a place that nobody ever heard of, where nothing ever happened, in a country which has not been discovered yet?'[69] Inarticulacy and nonsensical questions reveal that their logic and minds are baffled by such exam-oriented education. The pursuit of knowledge becomes destructive, and metaphorically, life threatening. The more these children learn, the more of their lives will be lost: 'the more he listened, the more he forgot, and the more water ran out of him'.[70] The hard work that goes into studying does not help the Tomtoddies grow, but causes their 'decay'. Avery sees that this low opinion of conventional classroom education is derived from Kingsley's detestation of all forms of cruelty

[65] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.171
[66] Ibid., p.173-4
[67] Ibid., p.171
[68] Ibid., p.172
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., p.173

to children. And hence, when those adults who cram children's heads with facts and didactic literature in general are considered by Kingsley as being cruel, they are castigated.[71]

Some critics read the Isle of Tomtoddies as an attack on domestic policy. The destructive lessons, to Jo-Ann Wallace, indict the 'mindless proliferation of an examination system in English schools'.[72] Larry Uffelman and Patrick Scott also understand the Isle as a criticism of 'a test-dominated school system that stultified children's imagination'.[73] Additionally, because of Kingsley's preferences for scientific subjects, the school system is also attacked for the lack of scientific education. It is just as a turnip reveals, 'my intellect is not adapted for methodic science, and says that I must go in for general information'.[74]

b. Labour

Besides suggesting the abandonment of exam-oriented education, Kingsley encouraged his readers to labour and to be responsible to themselves and to nature. The water babies are preoccupied with tasks, for they mend 'all the broken seaweed, and put all the rock pools in order, and [plant] all the shells again in the sand'.[75] They are responsible for putting shores back into order after storms. The creatures that Tom encounters all have their own tasks to accomplish. The caddis is busy in putting up the bricks of his house while the dragonfly proclaims that, 'I know what I shall do' and flies away to see the world.[76] Correspondingly, the gnat, who is a 'silly shallow-hearted' fellow, abdicating from family duty and hoping for an easy life, dies without any care from others. The brutal employer of Tom, Grimes, is punished for his mistreatment of the chimney sweeper by laborious working. He has to 'sweep out the crater of

[71] Gillian Avery, 'George MacDonald and the Victorian Fairy Tale', *The Golden Thread: Essay on George MacDonald*, ed. by William Raeper (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p.131
[72] Wallace, p.177
[73] Uffelman and Scott, p.127
[74] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.172
[75] Ibid., p.105
[76] Ibid., p.54

Etna', among 'very steady men working out their time there'.[77] Notably, Kingsley states at the end of *The Water Babies* that: 'if I am not quite right, still you will be, as long as you stick to hard work and cold water'.[78] These two subjects, 'hard work and cold water', thus become the two alternative things that Kingsley viewed to be as useful as the religious lessons of *The Water Babies*.

The differences between the 'work' of water babies and of Tomtoddies stem from Kingsley's belief in the necessity of both education and entertainment. Kingsley wrote in a letter that, 'In my eye the question is not what to teach, but how to educate, how to train not scholars, but men, bold, energetic, methodic, liberal-minded, magnanimous'.[79] Although in this letter Kingsley talks about university education rather than children's, he restates in *The Water Babies* that 'I never put things into little folks' head which are but too likely to come there of themselves'.[80] Kingsley considers the essence of education is to develop a person's self, instead of producing lifeless beings like Tomtoddies. The main purpose of education is to 'educate us hereafter to make ourselves and all around us, wiser, better, and happier'.[81] Education develops a person's growth to a better and happier state. His contention concerning the necessity of'entertainment generates the sarcastic rule of the Tomtoddies: 'Playthings not allowed here'. Comparatively, the water babies work assiduously while enjoying playtime with other babies. The essentiality of entertainment is once again revealed from the decaying Tomtoddies and the growing water babies. More precisely, Kingsley sees the importance of education as 'not more fact but a love of learning, and this can best be nurtured by exploiting the child's natural

[77] Ibid., p.184
[78] Ibid., p.190
[79] Kingsley, *Letters*, p.79
[80] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.186
[81] Quoted by Hawley, p.19

inclination for the fanciful'.[82] Hence, in the scene of Tomtoddies, Kingsley castigates those 'foolish' parents for fetching 'the rod when they ought to fetch a new toy'.[83] Some writers of children's fantasy such as A.L.O.E. and Rossetti, considered that fantastical subjects were necessary in order to be able to smuggle in religious didacticism. Kingsley, as Prickett perceives, is 'constantly calling attention to the sugar'.[84] The critic even suggests that if 'sugar' dissolves, the pill will no longer exist by itself.

c. Allegory

Apart from its pedagogy, Prickett and Manlove find that Kingsley's work has many similarities with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. *The Water Babies* is 'meant to be the journey followed from a Christian baptism onwards'.[85] Tom's journey starts when he acknowledges the dirt on his body. He wishes to be washed and to be clean. Water may represent a ceremonial device that both ends and opens a person's life; in essence, a symbol of baptism. The stream that Tom falls into resonates with the scene in *The Pilgrim's Progress* when Christian falls into a river. In both cases, these bodies of water represent the effective death of the protagonist's corporeal body. But physical death in the text purges the rebirth of the spirit, and subsequently, results in the beginning of a spiritual and religious life. Tom's journey starts at the stream and ends in the ocean, 'and onwards shows his faith growing and deepening'.[86] Kingsley has a peculiar but consistent interpretation of 'water' in theological terms. Similar to the steps of salvation that he illustrated in *The Water Babies*, in a sermon 'The Water of Life' (1871), he explained that mankind should first develop their 'divine thirst for the Higher Life'. Such thirst

[82] Hawley, p.19
[83] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.173
[84] Prickett, p.140
[85] Manlove, *Modern Fantasy*, p.51
[86] Ibid., p.52

echoes the 'recognition of sin' proposed in *The Water Babies*. The 'divine thirst' is derived from dissatisfaction towards one's self. Those who are 'discontented with' and 'ashamed of' themselves, suffered from unsatisfied longing, baffled instinct, failure to acquire power, and unperformed duties and so on will be certainly granted God's help, if they asks for it. Kingsley metaphorised religious salvation as the divine water given by God. Kingsley called the water 'water of life',[87] which will clear one from sin and will enrich the believer's spirituality. Kingsley's idea of this 'water of life' is fully exhibited in *The Water Babies*. Tom falls into the stream, meaning that he is completely surrounded by this 'water of life'. And through his adventures in the water world, he is renewed physically and mentally. In this 'experience of illumination',[88] the creatures and characters that Tom meets in this purgatorial journey may parallel some of the figures in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This parallels the scene in which Bunyan's Christian is awakened and acknowledges the necessity to pursue the messages of his saviour.

Some critics deny that there is any allegorical structure to *The Water Babies* at all; perhaps because it does not follow precisely the same form of allegorical narrative found in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Prickett, who sees Kingsley's work and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as equally self-advertising allegories, finds that 'many of the best bits of the story are unaccountably missing',[89] although Prickett does not specify what these 'best bits of the story' are. Carpenter believes that the 'failure' of Kingsley's work is that 'it achieves nothing fully'.[90] Tom does not develop into anything new but remains as he is and arguably many important elements in the book are not satisfactorily elaborated. Comparing *The Water Babies* to Bunyan's

[87] Charles Kingsley, *The Water of Life, and Other Sermons* (London: Macmillan, 1867), p.16
[88] Manlove, *Modern Fantasy*, p.52
[89] Prickett, p.141
[90] Carpenter, p.38

Pilgrim's Progress, the question of these absent storylines reveals the fact that these critics expect more traditional elements of children's literature. Moreover, Prickett points out that 'there is not a clear one-for-one correspondence between the events in the surface narrative and the underlying theme' in Kingsley's *Water Babies*. The text 'is stuffed with superfluous detail that is actually quite irrelevant to the deep structure'.[91] These details convolute the 'allegorical thread', and consequently make the main story 'rambling and ramshackle'.[92] Kendall mentions that in the orthodox view, Tom should die after falling into the stream. Instead, Tom turns out to be a 'great man in science'. This ending confuses many of Kingsley's readers. Tom does not finish his journey in the heavenly arena, instead, he remains on earth. Nevertheless, even if the allegorical structure of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is widely acknowledged, it is not the only model that children's literature should follow and it appears that those aforementioned critiques have unfairly judged Kingsley's text.

2. Secular Interests

a. Excessive Information

To many critics, the information about nature and history contained in *The Water Babies* is irrelevant—hindrances to the main storyline. *The Era* claimed that *The Water Babies* was 'described, not with the simplicity of Andersen, but with the rather hard intellectualism of the Professor'.[93] *Birmingham Daily Post* also grieved that, 'the "Water Babies,"... is sadly damaged by [Kingsley's] frequent mannerisms, and especially his sneers at politics and people whom he does not happen to like—these antipathies, like such things generally, being mostly ill-

[91] Prickett, p.141
[92] Ibid.
[93] 'Literature', *The Era* (London, England), Sunday, October 5, 1862; Issue 1254

founded.'[94] A month later, the newspaper stated that Kingsley's book is 'not in a very intelligible manner—in fact, the whole story is marked by an unusual eccentric manner, and a strange loss of power of invention and description'.[95] In 1885, *The Times* contended that 'Kingsley was not a man of science, but he had an extraordinary gift of observation and something of the true poetic'. The scientific contents are included simply because Kingsley 'knew enough of the strange creatures that dwell in the streams and the sea to make their life seem curiously real as he described it'.[96] Instead of real expertise in the academic study of science and nature, *The Times* viewed the contents of *The Water Babies* as the mere enthusiastic writings of an amateur. Both *The Times* and *Anthropological Review* agreed that *The Water Babies* is entertaining. However, even if the fanciful passages attract young readers, children must 'attain a competent knowledge of biological controversy before they can hope to comprehend it'.[97] *The Times* even says Kingsley's '*Water Babies* was pure nonsense': as 'the whole story was absurd, without rhyme or reason, beginning or end, and a sort of thing that no man could understand'.[98] The criticisms towards the structural and contextual chaos continue in modern criticisms. Townsend finds that the further the story develops, the more the story become confusing. From a splendid opening and 'sensuous and poetic' water world, *The Water Babies* grows 'wild and woolly'. It is 'entangled in [Kingsley's] symbolism' which then becomes self-destructing.[99] Only *The Examiner* pointed out that those opinions championed by *The Times* were incomprehensive and narrow-minded. Even though this children's fantasy is 'too full of man's satire, too bewildering,

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[94] 'The Magazine for February', *Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham, England), Thursday, February 5, 1863; Issue 1413
[95] 'The Magazine for March', *Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham, England), Thursday, March 5, 1863; Issue 1437
[96] '"The Water-Babies," Illustrated', *The Times* (London, England), Saturday, Dec 12, 1885; pg 4; Issue 31628
[97] 'Review: Kingsley's Water Babies', *Anthropological Review*, Vol. 1. No.3 (Nov. 1863), p.473
[98] 'Mr. Kingsley's Water Babies', *The Times*, Tuesday, Jan 26, 1864; pg.6; Issue 24778; col A
[99] Townsend, *Written for Children*, p.99

too deep for a child's understanding',[100] *The Examiner* compared the text to a sunbeam for children, providing delight and energy: 'there may fall a sunshine from the cultivated intellect of any true-hearted man, that may owe its warmth and brilliancy to all the subtleties that can belong to human thoughts…[and] delight a child better than all the prosing of its formal would-be entertainers'.[101]

Kingsley's scientific competence is denigrated, with *The Water Babies* described as merely the enthusiastic speculations of its author. However, as Chitty surmises, this interesting figure of the author should be considered a great charm of the book. In the public eye, he was a 'muscular Christian', 'a preacher with mesmeric qualities', 'passionate champion of the working man', and so on. Yet in private, he saw death as the only release of daily distress, suffered from a shutter resulting from his unhappy childhood, and racially discriminated against Irish and black people, and so on.[102] The positive energetic images in public contrast sharply with the dark and pessimistic character of his hidden self. Manlove describes how Kingsley took up posts in the academic field, the Church, was the teacher of Edward VII, and was a friend of several leaders of literal and social movements. Kingsley was, as Manlove puts it, 'in many ways a restless man, his views subject to flux, his interests manifold to the point of incoherence, and they and his friendships alike are often impulsive and fleeting'.[103]

The restlessness of Kingsley generates the fluctuating ideas in *The Water Babies*, and these ideas, according to many critics, confuse the main storyline of Tom. Manlove finds that 'there is much material in the book which has little relation to Tom and his history—as much, in fact, as

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[100] 'The Literary Examiner', *The Examiner* (London, England), Saturday, November 7, 1863; Issue 2910
[101] Ibid.
[102] Susan Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk: A Life of Charles Kingsley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), p.16
[103] Manlove, *Modern Fantasy*, p.18

takes up one quarter of the whole'.[104] These 'one quarter' of materials are mainly developed through the diverse interests of Kingsley. For instance, Kingsley writes a detailed description of the House of Harthover, showcasing his knowledge of historical architecture. He also spends some time on Gairfowl's history, demonstrating his interrogative thought processes regarding animals and the natural environment. The book is filled with these 'topical references, which so dominate Tom's visit to the Other-end-of-Nowhere that few of the people and events there have any direct relevance to himself or his moral development'.[105] Besides this, Carpenter notes that *The Water Babies* is written in an unfinished manner. Avery also calls *The Water Babies* an 'inchoate mass', and Carpenter sees that 'everywhere there are contradictions and intellectual muddles'.[106] Kendall notes that *The Water-Babies* is 'uneven', as the latter part of the story becomes 'chaotic', almost 'nightmarish'.[107] Of the novel's various episodes 'one harks back to those of the chimney-sweep, the dame-school of Vendale, and the miraculous life of the water-creatures'.[108] It is as though Kingsley has no idea of the direction of his narration. Carpenter calls the unconventional structure of *The Water Babies* 'destructive'. The critic claims that, '[i]n *The Water-Babies* [Kingsley] was making up some of the "heavy arrears of destruction" he felt to be due within children's literature, and was only incidentally interested in telling a story'.[109] Even if Tom's journey is the main storyline, its allegorical implications are confused with diverse and often disparate topical references. Hence, the fracture between literary narration and implication hampers the narrative pattern of the book . Prickett therefore suggests that the professional knowledge of Kingsley hampers the narrative pattern of the book.

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[104] Ibid., p.20
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p.38
[107] Guy Kendall, *Charles Kingsley and His Ideas* (London: Hutchinson, 1940), p.121
[108] Ibid.
[109] Carpenter, p.39

b. Practical Lessons

Still, those inconsistencies may have more specific function and significance than previous critics have allowed. Considering that Kingsley was trying to dramatise several evolutions and progressions in *The Water Babies*, it is probable that these previously considered 'inconsistencies' imitate natural movement. It can also be argued that *The Water Babies* is deliberately portraying and presenting inconsistency for didactic purpose. Klaver notes that 'because Kingsley interrupts his story with endless digressions on these subjects and further irrelevant materials, the unfolding of Tom's story is never straightforward'.[110] When Tom sees his first companion, the water baby, Kingsley tells his reader that 'it is not good for little boys to be told everything, and never to be forced to use their own wits'.[111] Even his wife, Fanny Kingsley, claimed that,

> [This book] was more like inspiration than composition, and seemed to flow naturally out of his brain and heart, lightening both of a burden without exhausting either. Nothing helped the books and sermons more than the silence and solitude of a few days fishing, which he could now indulge in.[112]

Accordingly, Kingsley intentionally made his text inspirational rather than directly didactical. Not only does the book entertainingly describe nature to young readers, but it also takes care of the 'brain and heart' of its readers by lightening the burden of educative content. Thus, it would be unfair to argue that Kingsley rushed his work considering this supposed indirectness to be deliberately planned.

Kingsley had developed his own form of allegory in his children's fantasy, an allegory that lacks the 'one to one correspondence' of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He also makes deliberate use of 'irrelevance and digression'. *The Water Babies* does not have an ending where the protagonist

[110] J.M.I. Klaver, *The Apostle of the Flesh: A Critical Life of Charles Kingsley* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), p.517
[111] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.104-5
[112] Brenda Colloms, *Charles Kingsley: The Lion of Eversley* (London: Constable, 1975), p.255-6

changes into something new. It is argued by Hawley that apart from paying attention to spiritual growth, Kingsley acknowledged the importance of the corporal body. It would be a 'false asceticism and heresy to conceive of the body as a burden or a distraction in prayer', as it would be considered an 'insult to the Creator and perversion'.[113] Kingsley pursued an education of 'utilitarian effectiveness', useful for the 'English future and the maintenance of its empire'. Tom is turned into a scientist and a Christian man, two occupations which mutually benefit the nation. Though religion may be the ultimate goal of his fantasy, life on the earth is never under-valued. Even for critics, the atypical usage of irrelevant elements can be constructive. Prickett argues that the main storyline becomes rambling and ramshackle because of 'irrelevance and digressions', but the critic at the same time notices that these destructive elements in *The Water Babies* are irreplaceable. Abridged versions of *The Water Babies* include none of the original educative or amusing elements. Prickett suggests that these versions 'dissolve the sugar, and something very odd indeed has happened to the pill—it is hardy there at all'.[114] He claims that Kingsley demonstrates a form of 'inverted didacticism', where the focus of the book is ostensibly placed on the sugar instead of the pill. 'Kingsley's frequent disclaimers of "a moral" are coupled with a structure that clearly implies the existence of any number: why else, for instance, should we have that pair in *loco parentis*, Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby and Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid?'[115] However, it appears that Prickett draws his conclusion without much consideration of the author's views on religion and science and the way these two are allied in his children's fantasy. *The Water Babies* is carefully structured, yet Prickett does not elaborate this claim. His argument about irrelevance is insufficiently evidenced.

[113] Hawley, p.21
[114] Prickett, p.141
[115] Ibid.

These critics argue that those informative scenes which appear to bear a limited relation to the storyline are irrelevant, though they may seem necessary; but are all these contents truly irrelevant, causing digressions within the story? In the beginning of Chapter VI, Kingsley openly admits that what he wrote may be, to some extent, irrelevant to the main story. He included the story of a man with a gray moustache. This man is moved to tears when he sees 'a child over a broken toy, and a child stealing sweets'.[116] Some people call him 'sentimental', but one woman calls him 'a truly brave man'.[117] Ostensibly, whether sentimental or brave, this man has little relation to the scene which follows, as he never returns to the story nor does he have any influence in Tom's stealing of the sea-lollipop. Kingsley claims that this tale of the man with the grey moustache may be called 'much ado about nothing'.[118] However, this man accentuates the sentimental side of adults. Similarly to the fairies in *The Water Babies*, this man has lived for a long time. He is driven to tears when he sees a child stealing sweets because he understands that the purity of a child's soul has been polluted by his indulgence in sensual pleasure. Not only will the child be punished through its own guilt, but he will also experience a series of trials before he can redeem his spirit. While Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid and Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby represent the opposing natures of punishment and rewards respectively, this man with a grey moustache represents Kingsley, who expresses the author's reaction to a child's misbehaviour. To Kingsley, Christian allegory is not the only didactic output; other information is also included in his work.

As mentioned, every didactic element in *The Water Babies* is aimed at the education and betterment of young readers, and this content includes all those episodes deemed by critics as

[116] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.120
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

'irrelevant and digressions'. Sometimes, Kingsley tries to define his terms, such as 'amphibious'. Though understanding what 'amphibious' necessarily is may appear irrelevant to the story, it is possible that Kingsley was trying to introduce different kind of materials to young readers. This may not help the main storyline, but the definition nevertheless serves as new scientific knowledge for them. Kingsley also set his story with a real geographical background. As Manlove notes, the stream in which Tom lives could be found 'in the North Yorkshire Moors (even if based on one in Hampshire), and his journey down river to the sea is still in a very real river passing probably Leeds and ending in the Humber estuary'.[119] Apart from the setting, the creatures whom Tom meets in his journey all retain their natural habits. Lerer notes that scientific elements in the story offer 'compelling imagery', and 'the balance of amazement and detail, [is] a need in this moment of wonder for a high level of precision and a detail of language'. [120] Hence, rather than understanding the structure as a chaotic framework, these 'irrelevances' are precisely the factual information that Kingsley wanted to teach children. These informative contents are extra, but not redundant; though they may not be necessary, they are needed for the pedagogical framework of *The Water Babies*. It is as Stephen Paget explains, '[Kingsley] was attempting impossibilities: he put-in everything he left-out nothing'.[121] It would not have been possible for Kingsley to include every discipline in his children's book yet he does attempt to include information that he sees as suitably educative for his young readers.

D. New Appreciation to the Truth

In the last paragraph of *The Water Babies*, Kingsley proposes a new vision of the relationship between fantastical writings and believable lessons in nineteenth-century children's

[119] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.186
[120] Seth Lerer, *Children's Literature: A Reader's history from Aesop to Harry Potter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p.177
[121] Quoted by Manlove, *Modern Fantasy*, p.23

literature. He writes, 'But remember always, as I told you at first, that this is all a fairy tale, and only fun and pretence; and, therefore, you are not to believe a word of it, even if it is true'.[122] Seth Lerer argues that *The Water Babies* includes 'lessons of mid-nineteenth-century science: that the world is changing: that discoveries challenge our understanding of reality; and that what once seemed fantasy could all be real'.[123] However, the expansion of humanity's knowledge and a raised self-awareness in a gradually secular world does not fit Kingsley's understanding of 'truth'. Carpenter calls *The Water Babies* 'true' to Kingsley because it is filled with 'his personal convictions, his destructive hatred of the wrong-headedness of children's authors, and his obsession with maternal-sexual female figures and the purifying, regenerative power of cold water'.[124] Carpenter's analysis of *The Water Babies* mainly relies on biographical information about the author. *The Water Babies* is an autobiographical fantasy through which Kingsley expresses his subconscious desires and psychological conflicts on religious matters. However, in the last paragraph of *The Water Babies*, the truth that Kingsley refers to is not how the story reflects its author, but rather a universal truth, God, who is eternally the only subject to realise the truths of the earthly world. Kingsley believes that God exists immanently in physical nature. This principle is repeatedly illustrated in *The Water Babies*, it is just like what Kingsley writes to F.D. Mauraice, that 'there is quite a miraculous and divine element underlying all physical nature'.[125] Fairy tales, as artificial constructions, are no more true or entertaining than nature; an earthly expression of God. Fairy tales, as Kingsley writes in *Madam How and Lady Why*, are 'untrue—because they are not strange and wonderful enough: far more wonderful sure than any

[122] Kingsley, *The Water Babies*, p.190
[123] Lerer, p.178
[124] Carpenter, p.41
[125] This line is quoted in the start of this chapter, for reference, please refer to Kingsley's volume 3 of *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of his Life*, p.137

fairy tale it is, that Madam How should make a rich and pleasant land by the brute force of ice'.[126] At the end of *The Water Babies*, Kingsley clearly states that the apparent fairy-tale qualities of his narrative are artificial and not believable; but the moral principles and universal presence of God in his *Water Babies* are the authentic laws of the universe.

E. Conclusion

Everything written in *The Water Babies* is aimed at the moral improvement of the readers. Mrs. Kingsley wrote,

> *The Water-Babies* was the last book…that he wrote with any real ease, and which was a pure labour of love, for his brain was getting fatigued, his health fluctuated, and the work of the Professorship, which was a constant weight on his mind, wore him sadly.[127]

The 'labour of love' refers not only to the ease of writing the book, but also its intension and aim. With the cooperation of religious materials and fantastic narrative, Kingsley's educative endeavour is manifested in various ways. Kingsley fantasised the whole process of education as Tom's evolution, in which he implemented his comments on educating religious values, morality, scientific subjects, history and other secular interests. Religion, nature and science are unequivocally the core elements of Kingsley's life and his *Water Babies*. Many of Kingsley's contemporaries found that scientific subjects, especially Darwin's theory, were sacrilegious in their way of challenging religious interpretation of the earth. Nevertheless, Kingsley believed that scientific discoveries only ostensibly disagree with Christian beliefs, as he believed that nothing made by God will overturn Him. Therefore, to Kingsley, science will only confirm religion. The more science discovers, the more it affirms Christian beliefs. Darwin's evolutionary theory helped Kingsley to concretely illustrate the vicissitudes of nature. Yet,

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[126] Kingsley, *Madam How and Lady Why*, p.115. This quotation is also noted by Manlove in *Christian Fantasy*, p.185-6

[127] Quoted by Kenall, p.117

instead of filling his book with scientific facts, Kingsley coloured the theory with religious terms. Nature is inductive, because it nourishes the comprehension of belief. By studying nature, Kingsley encourages appreciation of God's work in this earth. With the adventures of Tom, Kingsley illustrated a series of scientific observation. Throughout *The Water Babies*, Kingsley stressed the fact that the transcendental truth lying behind nature is the key to scientific studies. Science is peripheral yet essential to the understanding of religion. In this way, Kingsley underscored the importance of the secular world in the comprehension of religious truth. *The Water Babies* is written to teach and to amuse its readers. Here, Kingsley lay down a step-by-step guidance of what his readers can do for their religious salvation and how. Fairy tale to Kingsley is a fictional channel that propagates his belief, when he implanted it with authentic natural laws and beliefs.

Chapter 6:

Fantasy as the Only Literary Narration of Religion—

George MacDonald's 'The Golden Key' (1867) and *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871)

Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald are the two authors most mentioned and compared in Victorian fantasy studies. To Manlove, the two authors wrote not about moral lessons, but about the immanence of God. As he argues, owing to the advancement in scientific studies and geologic discovery, God's existence was questioned and challenged in the Victorian age. Biblical materials, which involve '*a priori* assumptions',[1] were no longer convincing. Believers had to rely on 'empirical fact' to assure themselves of God's existence. Despite this social milieu, the Christian fantasies of Kingsley and MacDonald illustrate that 'God is present in nature and this world'.[2] They did not create their works because they doubted their belief. Instead, they were looking for ways to incorporate their idea of God with new intellectual developments. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Kingsley traced God's existence through the study of nature. He believed that a renewed appreciation of the earth and its wonders would help readers to refine their own understanding of the world alongside their belief system. MacDonald, on the contrary, investigated the 'inner world of the mind'.[3] He found religious truth laid in one's inner-self more substantial than the one in the material world. He believed that God lives in the 'imagination' of each individual, and He provides all the guidance to human beings in their metaphysical religious journeys.

A. Theology—the Centre of Fantasy Writings

MacDonald devoted most of his life to his Christian beliefs. After he graduated from university, he worked as a pastor in the Congregational Church. Despite his energetic engagement in clerical activities, in 1853 he was asked to resign. Nonetheless, this did not stop him from preaching, as he says in a letter to his father: 'Do not think I intend giving up

[1] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.164
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

preaching…if so it pleases God. Preaching I think is in part my mission in this world and I shall try to fulfil it'.[4] The end of his clerical duties in the church marked the start of his literary career. He began publishing poems, sermons, novels and religious fantasy.[5] His works are viewed by Joseph Johnson as:

> vehicles for the declaration of the message with which his heart and mind were full. The accusation that he preaches much in his books he would plead guilty to, because this was the only reason that made it worth while to write them. Both directly and indirectly the intention of all his work is to speak the living message that burnt within his soul.[6]

Religion was the kernel of MacDonald's life, and similarly, the nucleus of his writings. As Johnson mentions, theological ideas are the 'only reason that made' his fantasies 'worth while'. His works were intended to preach messages that MacDonald deeply believed in. The value of MacDonald's theology is evident when C.S. Lewis edits an anthology of MacDonald and says, 'in making these extracts I have been concerned with MacDonald not as a writer but as a Christian teacher'.[7] Lewis states that 'if we define Literature as an art whose medium is words, then certainly MacDonald has no place in its first rank—perhaps not even in its second'.[8] Lewis is not alone in his admiration of MacDonald's narrative skills, but he finds MacDonald to be one of the best fantasists he has ever read. As Lewis explains, it is owing to the wisdom and the holiness in MacDonald's theology that his 'expression becomes precise, weighty, economic' and 'acquires a cutting edge'.[9] MacDonald's biographer, William Raeper, also says that MacDonald's talent in fantastical narrations and theology made him 'one of the

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[4] Glenn Sadler (ed.), *An Expression of Character: The Letters of George MacDonald* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p.67
[5] It is recorded by MacDonald's second son, Ronald MacDonald, that, 'having begun to do his work as a Congregational minister, and having been driven…into giving up that professional pulpit, he was no less impelled than compelled to use unceasingly the new platform whence he had found his voice could carry so far'.
[6] Joseph Johnson, *George MacDonald: A Biographical and Critical Appreciation* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1906) p.82
[7] C.S. Lewis, (ed.), *George MacDonald: An Anthology*, rpt. (New York: Harper One, 1996), xxviii
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., xxix

outstanding children's authors of the nineteenth century and a pioneer of fantasy writing'.[10] What MacDonald wrote is simply the religious belief that he practiced in everyday life. Though presented through fantastical narratives, the messages he conveyed through his work were practical and realistic. Johnson sees him as one of the rare characters who transpose all his belief into his work, commenting, 'MacDonald's work is the best revelation of his character. He has lived the songs he sung. He is the best he wrote'.[11] It is widely noted by critics that theology is the centre of MacDonald's literary works. Mary Riso, for example, calls MacDonald a 'great writer of fantasy', 'a great preacher' and 'a great thinker'.[12] Each of these accolades complements the other. Riso says that 'wisdom, vision, and faith which, empowered by a free and gifted imagination, made [MacDonald] a man of unusual talent'.[13] It is clear to her and to many of his critics that the author remained 'at heart a preacher'.[14]

B. Fairy Tales and Imagination

MacDonald believed the fairy tale is one of the best literary forms for conveying religious messages. In order to best examine how it later becomes a necessity to one's religion, it is essential to first pay attention to how MacDonald understand the source of fairy tale—the imagination of the individual. MacDonald understood imagination as a 'faculty which gives form to thought—not necessarily uttered form, but form capable of being uttered in shape or in sound, or in any mode upon which the senses can lay hold'.[15] In this way, imagination can be read as a primitive force that organises ideas, formulates them into thoughts, and presents them in literary form. It is the faculty in man 'which is likest to the prime operation of the power of God, and has, therefore, been called the *creative* faculty, and

[10] William Raeper (ed.), *The Gold Thread: Essays on George MacDonald*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p.1
[11] Johnson, p.277
[12] Mary Riso, 'The Journey of a Soul in George MacDonald's *The Golden Key*', *Mythlore*, 78 (Winter, 1995), p.47
[13] Ibid.
[14] Elizabeth Saintsbury, *George MacDonald: A Short Life* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987), p.141
[15] George MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts*, p.2

its exercise *creation*'.[16] When 'imagination' itself means 'an *imaging* or a making of likenesses', the creation it makes is a likeness to the creations of God. Although a product of man can never be akin to God's marvellous creation, MacDonald's ideas concerning creation implied that there is an image of God's work in every human invention.

MacDonald also believed that imagination would not emerge without provocation from nature, for the reason that it is a metaphysical response to the material world:

> To inquire into what God has made is the main function of the imagination. It is aroused by facts, is nourished by facts; seeks for higher and yet higher laws in those facts; but refuses to regard science as the sole interpreter of nature, or the laws of science as the only region of discovery.[17]

MacDonald found imagination to be aroused and nourished by 'fact'. It is a device of interpretation, through which mankind is able to look for a 'higher' law that lies behind facts. Yet, unlike science which interprets the natural world independently without connecting the result to the interpreter, imagination analyses the world and seeks values from the subjective view of an individual. MacDonald says,

> For the world around him is an outward figuration of the condition of his mind; an inexhaustible storehouse of forms whence he may choose exponents… The meanings are in those forms already, else they could be no garment of unveiling. God has made the world that it should thus serve his creature, developing in the service that imagination whose necessity it meets. The man has but to light the lamp within the form: his imagination is the light, it is not the form. Straightway the shining thought makes the form visible, and becomes itself visible through the form.[18]

Imagination is the medium that helps mankind discover the order and meanings that lie in the forms of nature. In this process of discovery, God is the guiding light of imagination. MacDonald metaphorised the function of imagination in this process of the act as, 'God sits in that chamber of our being in which the candle of our consciousness goes out in darkness, and sends forth from thence wonderful gifts into the light of that understanding which is His

[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., p.5

candle'.[19] God underpins the world with meanings, and all of them are stored in different forms. MacDonald said, God creates the world to 'serve his creature', which means that the result obtained through imaginative analysis will be transformed into resources that help in the building of one's faith. In this way, imagination is used not simply to understand the world, but also to constitute a religious 'self'. The job of man is to enlighten himself as to religious knowledge by looking into the earth with his imagination. With God's guidance, imagination is not completely free of restraints. It is operating under His supervision.

1. Imagination—a Device of Inner-Discovery

Concerning the function of identifying God's meanings from nature, MacDonald viewed imagination as the pre-requisite of one's religious journey. In the beginning of *At the Back of the North Wind*, Diamond plays imaginary games alone in his house. Once he makes a 'cave by the side of his mother's fire, with a broken chair, a three-legged stool and a blanket, and then [sits] in it'.[20] Another time he plays with a chair that has only three legs and with another one of which only half a back is left. In his games, he drives 'two chairs [harness] to the baby's cradle; and if they [do] not go very fast, they [go] as fast as could be expected of the best chairs in the world'.[21] In 'The Golden Key', Mossy is introduced as 'a boy who used to sit in the twilight and listen to his great-aunt's stories'.[22] She tells him that he will find a golden key at the end of the rainbow. Therefore, at the time Mossy sees a rainbow in the forest, he travels into it to get what he desires. Rolland Hein argues that this golden key is a 'symbol of imagination in its capacity to envision and desire eternity'.[23] To some other critics, it may also stand for 'poetic imagination, for warmth and kindness, for religious truth, for

[19] Ibid., p.25
[20] George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*, (London: Puffin, 1994), p.4
[21] Ibid., p.23
[22] George MacDonald, 'Golden Key', *The Complete Fairy Tales* (London: Penguin, 1999), p.120
[23] Rolland Hein, *The Harmony Within: The Spiritual Vision of George MacDonald* (Eureka, California: Sunrise, 1982), p.145

love'[24] or 'faith and promise of heaven'.[25] Multiple implications of the golden key can be argued for, but on the most straightforward level, the key is a result of Mossy's imaginative education. It represents the precious price received once imagination is being used. Additionally, Knoepflmacher, editor of MacDonald's *The Complete Fairy Tales* (1998), suggests that the symbolism of twilight can be read in relation to the ambiguous status of Mossy's spirituality, which results from his imaginative education. Twilight is a 'temporal threshold between day and night [that] mirrors the spatial "borders of Fairyland" in which the houses of the protagonists are situated'.[26] It is also the time when Mossy is filled with imaginative ideas about a so-called 'fairyland'. When Mossy is looking for the key, he is seeking for a realisation of his imagination. The longer Mossy looks for the golden key, the sooner the night comes. While 'night' is strongly related to ideas of unconsciousness, his search becomes a journey to his inner-self. Though twilight is temporary and short-lived, it marks the beginning of his spiritual transformation. The more Mossy investigates fairyland, the more he will be enlightened.

Apart from Mossy's journey, the excursion of Tangle is another paradigm of inner discovery. Starting from her separation with Mossy, she is forced to get into the depths of caves. On her way to the Old Man of the Sea, Tangle is asked to 'throw herself down in the mouth of the cave'.[27] Not only is the house of the Old Man of the Sea located at the bottom of the sea, but she is also sent to the Old Man of the Earth by going down 'the winding-stair, till she [begins] to fear there [is] no end to it'.[28] At the time she leaves the 'glimmering cave'[29] of the Old Man of the Earth, she is shown to a great hole in the ground. The Old Man of the Earth says in order to meet the final person—the Old Man of the Fire, Tangle has to

[24] Richard H. Reis, *George MacDonald* (New York: Twayne, 1972), p.78
[25] Colin Manlove, , '"Not to Hide but Show": "The Golden Key"', *North Wind*, 22 (2003), p.37
[26] George MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, p.349
[27] George MacDonald, 'The Golden Key', p.134
[28] Ibid., p.137
[29] Ibid.

throw herself 'head-long into the hole'.[30] She follows the command and finds her head under water. When the water can carry her no more, she goes 'step for step down the burning descent' until she meets the Old Man of the Fire. He is the last man to meet her, and he symbolises the religious truth that can be found through one's imagination. He is a physical form of the godly figure or the 'candle light' that hides in the centre of one's imagination. He shows Tangle the direction to the gate of heaven and marks the completion of her journey of spiritual elevation.

Riso argues that the inner-discoveries of Mossy and Tangle is intended to awaken the hidden realities from their sleeping souls. At first, 'The Golden Key' reflects the idea that life itself is 'a journey of growing awareness, both of the world without and the world within'.[31] Slowly, as the story proceeds, the protagonists recognise the meaning of their journeys, as 'dreamlike images and symbols' inserted in the journey will 'allow invisible realities to emerge from darkness to light'.[32] Tangle's journey is connected by her realisation of her own status and the world around her. In the first stage with the Old Man of the Sea, Tangle starts understanding the language of fish. This signifies that the boundary between her humanity and other creatures has vanished. Later, in the cave of the Old Man of the Earth, Tangle realises that she died in the bath she took in the house of the Old Man of the Sea. It is described that her path to the Old Man of the Earth is 'quite dark about her, and yet she could see'.[33] MacDonald explains that, 'for after being in that bath, people's eyes always give out a light they can see by'.[34] Tangle's death, thereby, brings forth an opening of her new senses. Her experiences in the house of the Old Man of the Sea enable her to see the unseen and hear the unheard. Besides, before she follows the comment of the Old Man of the Earth, she has been thinking about it for one whole year. Later, she has been watching the Old Man of the

[30] Ibid., p.138
[31] Riso, p.47
[32] Ibid.
[33] George MacDonald, 'The Golden Key', p.137
[34] Ibid.

Fire and his game for seven years before she speaks to him. These contemplations highlight the fact that the exploration of inner-self is a process of realisation and comprehension. Tangle's new senses to animals' language and darkness denote the fact that she is now living in a spiritual reality rather than a physical one. Her decision-making represents her will to go on, and her realisation of her death signifies her recognition of her own condition and status. In this way, her corporeal senses are abandoned. A journey of 'growing awareness', as it is shown, brings forth a person's enlightenment.

Additionally, MacDonald connected Tangle's journey with stairs: a metaphor of spiritual elevation to the author. Carpenter notes that these stairs are reminiscent of the author's working life in a neglected library in the far north of Scotland.[35] Though the structure of this library remains unknown, staircases certainly become one of the most significant recurring images in MacDonald's fantasies. In *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) as well as *Lilith* (1895), staircases bridge the real world and the fantastical realm. Like 'The Golden Key', stairs lead the protagonists to supernatural figures. These meetings prove to be lessons that elevate their wisdom and spirituality. In the case of 'The Golden Key', when Tangle goes downwards through those stairs, she is getting deeper and closer to religious truth. It is as MacDonald suggested that God resides in the depth of imagination. The deeper a person investigates his inner self, the closer he gets to God, who is in this case symbolised by the Old Man of Fire.

Similarly to Tangle's journey, Mossy comes straight to the house of the Old Man of the Sea after he is separated from his partner. At that time Mossy already has the golden key in his hand, therefore his awakening appears in a much more direct and faster manner than Tangle's. After Mossy realises he is already dead, he immediately expresses that death is

[35] Carpenter, *Secret Gardens*, p.72

'better than life'.[36] This realisation about the vivid liveliness in one's spiritual life signifies Mossy's wisdom, maturity, and the sophistication of his spirituality. In contrast to Tangle's journey, Mossy goes up the stairs again and again. He passes through a raging sea, storm, and a rough path. At last, he comes to a hall in which 'floor, sides, pillars, and vaulted roof, [are] all one mass of shining stones of every colour that light can show',[37] and after that, the gate of heaven. The straight-forwardness of Mossy's journey shows that the imaginative education that he received from the beginning of the story has already paved his way to heaven. His inner-discovery was largely completed when he found the golden key. Therefore, he does not need much guidance from supernatural figures. His realisation of truth and the awareness of his own condition are sufficient to bring him directly to the final destination.

2. Dream and Awakening

Raeper states, 'MacDonald's fantasy writing is an act of reclaiming those areas of the psyche long repressed by rationalism and coded out of recognition in "realistic" fiction'.[38] MacDonald's fantasy fiction is the '"night side" complement to the "day side" rationality of realistic novels'.[39] The truth which MacDonald believed resides in the unconscious of every individual. Other than imagination, dream is used as an educative device, particularly in *At the Back of the North Wind*. North Wind says to Diamond that, 'Only you must go to bed first. I can't take you till you're in bed. That's the law about the children'.[40] This means that adventures only begin and proceed with an unconscious manner. MacDonald saw dream as a 'direct pathway to the unconscious, a means of finding out the secret which God has hidden there'.[41] Thus, not only are nocturnal subjects such as 'dream' employed, but also the day-time concreteness of reality is dissolved, exposing another kind of truth—the 'inner reality',

[36] George MacDonald, 'The Golden Key', p.142
[37] Ibid. p.143
[38] Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.321
[39] Ibid.
[40] George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*, p.50
[41] Reis, p.43

that has been hidden in the psyche.[42] Diamond has travelled to the back of the North Wind once before his death. Diamond describes that as if it is a purgatorial realm or a sort of spiritual reality modelled after the Edenic garden. Diamond finds that there are rayless lights that come from unknown sources, flowers that have no strong colour and a river that runs through all the land. He says that no one talks over there, but at the moment they look at each other, they understand each other. No one is singing at the back of the North Wind, but there are tunes singing in their heads. People over there are pleasant but sad, because they all seem to be waiting for something gladder in the future.[43] The land to which Diamond travels is not yet the final destination, nevertheless, this dream of the land behind the North Wind preludes what might come after life. It is as Richard Reis argues, by being imbued with symbols and allegory, dreams 'contain hints of what the afterlife may be like—intimations of the nature of the "truer world"'.[44]

Not all the dreams are impregnated with hints of the afterlife, as some are served as tests to one's integrity. In Nanny's dream, she is led by an old man to go through narrow passages within a house. She says, 'The heart of [the house] must be ever so much farther from the sides [of the house] than they are from each other. How could it have an inside that was so independent of its outside?'[45] At the end of the passage, she finds a small room with a box of bees, which served as a Pandora's box. Nanny disobeys the order not to open the box, and as a result, she is asked to leave her dream. The innateness of MacDonald's journey reveals his belief in human unconsciousness, seeing that it is a place which tests the truth of one's faith. It is a testimony of trusting and believing the authority. Even Diamond has been asked to believe in the North Wind in the first few meetings. It is because Diamond is able to trust and rely on the North Wind that he is allowed to continue his journey. Nanny does not only

[42] Ibid.
[43] George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*, p.97-8
[44] Reis, p.43
[45] George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*, p.272

disobey the supernatural figures in her dream, but she also disbelieves the authenticity of them. Therefore, her spiritual journey is temporarily terminated.

To MacDonald, a dream can be as real as reality. Novalis, who was one of the most venerated writers to MacDonald, says, as quoted in *Lilith*, 'our life is no dream, but it should and will perhaps become one'.[46] In this way, dream is a future-to-come. The dreams that the protagonists are having now imply what is coming forth in their after-life. This is because dream represents a reality in future. It is possible, as what G.K. Chesterton claims, that MacDonald's fantasies consistently remain 'the most real, the most realistic, in the exact sense of the phrase the most like life'.[47] At the same time, MacDonald believed that 'people were princesses and goblins and good fairies, and he dressed them up as ordinary men and women' in his fairy tales.[48] Chesterton is not arguing that MacDonald truly finds certain people like these characters from fairy tales. What he stated is that MacDonald 'made himself a sort of spiritual environment, a space and transparency of mystical light'.[49] This means that he believed in the extraordinary nature of reality in the present. Religion is a living faith and to him, everything is possibly as fantastical as a fairy tale. As a result of living in a world imbued with spiritual values, what MacDonald wrote about is representative of his daily life.

> All dreams are not false; some dreams are truer than the plainest facts. Fact at best is but a garment of truth, which has ten thousand changes of raiment woven on the same loom. Let the dreamer only do the truth of his dream, and one day he will realize all that was worth realizing in it.
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> For I believe that those new, mysterious feelings that come to us in sleep…are indications of wells of feeling and delight which have not yet broken out of their hiding-place in our souls.[50]

In *At the Back of the North Wind*, the authenticity of dreams is often discussed and contemplated between characters. Diamond particularly shows an interest in this subject. To

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[46] George MacDonald, *Lilith* (Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1981), p.252
[47] G.K. Chesterton writes the introduction of *George MacDonald and His Wife*, p.9
[48] Ibid., p.11
[49] Ibid., p.12
[50] MacDonald, *What is Mine's Mine*, this quotation is also cited by Reis in p.43

look into one's dreams is symbolically equivalent to investigating one's unconscious. MacDonald had an immense confidence in imagination, as aforementioned, he saw God living in the centre of it and directing the religious revelation of Man. The dream process similarly is just a channel for Man to investigate the religious truth that resides in one's unconsciousness. It is therefore nothing less credible than reality.

When dream is considered the way to discover religious truth from one's unconsciousness, it is at the same time a device that awakens the sleeping soul of every individual. Diamond learns something about the world every time he meets the North Wind. He may learn about the different facets of the North Wind, or lessons about beauty and destruction. Every awakening of Diamond represents some degree of spiritual elevation. After the first journey to the back of the North Wind, Diamond has become more innocent than ever. In his first few meetings with the North Wind, Diamond disobeys the order of the North Wind, and he judges a person's virtues according to his beauty and appearance. Later his suspicions have gone. Instead of questioning, he does his duty faithfully to his family and friends. The spiritual education that is had through these fantastical narrations is, as Reis puts it, 'mystic's [journeys] towards knowledge'.[51] Reis elaborates such knowledge by claiming that dream is used to teach the nature of adversity, duty, and death.

3. Individuality

Awakening and dream are features which can only be felt and experienced through each protagonist. Through the description of these personal experiences, MacDonald accentuates the necessity of individuality in the process of constructing one's belief system:

> The mass of the Church does not believe that the Spirit has a revelation for every man individually—a revelation as different from the revelation of the Bible, as the good in the moment of passing into living brain and nerves differs from the bread and meat.[52]

[51] Ibid., p.127
[52] George MacDonald, 'The Higher Faith', *Unspoken Sermon: Series I, II and III* (Radford VA: Wilder, 2008), p.36

MacDonald repetitively emphasised the involvement of autonomous comprehension in religious subjects: not only that each person is capable of individual interpretation, but also that religion itself will reveal itself differently to each of them. It often appears that one's religious adventures are isolated from the knowledge of others. In 'The Golden Key', Mossy's great-aunt has little knowledge about what happened to Mossy's father after he found the key. And to the readers, the symbolic adventure of the children can be chaotic. Other characters in *At the Back of the North Wind* have no idea about the spiritual journey of Diamond. They look at Diamond as if he were an outcast. To some extent, Tangle and Mossy go through a spiritual journey together and they share each other's experiences. Yet not only do the two children begin their journey differently, they spend most of their journey apart. They enter the enchanted forest at different times, and the two are also suddenly separated at some point after they have left Grandmother's cottage. Critics identify this plot of bringing together and separating the two children as a process of life. It is suggested that their union resembles matrimony, and that their separation is enforced through their respective deaths. These two children meet different old men on their way to the land of shadow. Similarly in Diamond's case, he is paired up with Nanny in his spiritual adventure. Yet, individual experience to the revelation of religious truth is more important. They both have their separate dreams and lessons to learn. The variance in signs and signifiers indicates that Diamond and Nanny are exposed to different messages. Looking into these individual adventures, MacDonald seems to imply that each person is destined for a different path. Though they may all lead to the same destination (religious truth), their process of nourishing 'awareness' to the higher order of reality is intended to be different from one another.

Provided that journeys are operated on an individual basis, each person has to interpret the signs given by God by his or her own power. MacDonald believed that 'everyone …who feels the story, will read its meaning after his own nature and development: one man will read

one meaning in it, another will read another'.[53] The author was delighted with these discrepancies in close readings of his work, for MacDonald himself encouraged individualised belief. This idea about the liberty of interpretation was probably drawn out from MacDonald's past. When he entered the Highbury Theological College, he 'found his teachers eager to imprison him in the old rather than allow him to explore the new'.[54] The institute was strongly restrictive of the religious exegesis of its students.[55] As Manlove suggests, the author 'felt that what wins people to and quickens faith is not instruction or doctrine, but living truth coming from fresh images'.[56] Instead of following rules blindly, MacDonald believed that man should develop a living faith. When a story is riddled with references to one's nature and experience, the reading experience becomes subjective and yet more closely linked to a person.

4. Truth

MacDonald believed that the discovery of inner self will be ended when an individual find the 'truth' through their autonomous interpretation of symbols and imageries. Yet what does he mean by 'truth'? In *Unspoken Sermon*, MacDonald said what he believed it to be: 'Truth means more than fact, more than relation of facts or persons, more than loftiest abstraction of metaphysical entity-means being and life, will and action; for he says, "*I am the truth*"'.[57] To MacDonald, when God says He is the truth and that is the meaning. MacDonald believed that 'every fact in nature is a revelation of God'.[58] Facts, law, nature, and everything embody certain eternal thoughts. Certainly to MacDonald, 'truth in a man's

[53] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination', p.7
[54] Reaper, p.237
[55] Raeper comments that, 'The teaching was worthy rather than inspiring and was conducted along narrow, doctrine lines. Right thinking and not free-thinking was encouraged', p.63
[56] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.181
[57] MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermon*, p.247
[58] Ibid., p.248

imagination is the power to recognize this truth of a thing; and wherever, in anything that God has made…we see the glory of God.'[59]

Though he was certain about this religious truth, MacDonald refused to illustrate what exactly it is. Perhaps this is what generates the open-endings of MacDonald's fantasies. *At the Back of the North Wind* ends with the words of the narrator, 'They thought he was dead. I knew that he had gone to the back of the north wind'.[60] At the end of 'The Golden Key', the author writes, '[Mossy and Tangle] knew that they were going up to the country whence the shadows fall. And by this time I think they must have got there'.[61] The stories are terminated while the protagonists live on. As it appears, both stories end with the speculation of the narrator, who in these cases, represents the stance of MacDonald. He did not illustrate the final realm because he said he had no idea what it looks like. He explained clearly in *At the Back of the North Wind* that he only learned about the land behind the North Wind through Diamond's recollection. He cannot possibly generate those ideas by himself. As his religious fantasies show, MacDonald saw that he himself was also on the journey to religious truth, therefore, he was unable to illustrate the end to his readers. Perhaps MacDonald also found it unnecessary give a definite answer about the afterlife. It would be better to let his readers to understand those endings for themselves. To some extent, the open endings of his religious fantasies reflect the inter-relation between the theology of MacDonald and his literary creation. At the same time, his religious fantasies authentically reflect what MacDonald believed in or in this case, experienced in reality.

In this way, MacDonald internalised the process of becoming a Christian. Instead of imposing moral laws and behaviour restrictions, his protagonists take their religious lessons from their journey to their unconsciousness:

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[59] Ibid., p.251
[60] George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*, p.341
[61] George MacDonald, 'The Golden Key', p.144

> For all is God's; and the man who is growing into harmony with His will, is growing into harmony with himself; all the hidden glories of his being are coming out into the light of humble consciousness; so that at last he shall be a pure microcosm, faithfully reflecting, after his manner, the mighty macrocosm.[62]

Readers are no longer given a set of rules and moral lesson, and they do not confine themselves through laws that are imposed from external sources. All truth lies innately in the mind of each individual. Looking into other children's literature, moral lessons appear to be imposed by external forces. Even in *The Water Babies*, beliefs are stimulated from nature. But in MacDonald's case, messages are conveyed through dreams and the subconscious. MacDonald states, 'We live by faith, not by sight'.[63] MacDonald disregarded reliance upon physical visibility but promoted the metaphysical vision provided by imagination. It is as MacDonald says, 'What we mean to insist upon is, that in finding out the works of God, the Intellect must labour, workman-like, under the direction of the architect, Imagination'.[64] Hence, with imagination, mankind is provided with a metaphysical insight into the aspiring future in a religious context, just as illustrated with Mossy and Diamond.

5. Multiple Ways of understanding Fairy Tales

To MacDonald, the fantasy realm is a literary expression of the ground of imaginative investigation. It is not a random creation but a world made in harmony with the rules of the real world:

> if he pleases, invent a little world of his own, with its own laws, for there is that in him which delights in calling up new forms—which is the nearest, perhaps, he can come to creation. When such forms are new embodiments of old truth, we call them products of the Imagination; when they are mere inventions, however lovely, I should call them the work of the Fancy: in either case, Law has been diligently at work.
> His world once invented, the highest law that comes next into play is, that there shall be harmony between the laws by which the new world has begun to exist; and in the process of his creation, the inventor must hold by those laws.[65]

[62] George MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts*, p.36
[63] Ibid., p.28
[64] Ibid., p.11
[65] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination', p.5-6

There are strict moral rules for writers in building up a fantastical realm. To MacDonald, fancy is simply invention, and it does not possess any messages about the real world. But for those places which are created by imagination: a faculty that is nourished by reality and truth, they are embodied in the 'old truth' or in other words, moral law.

MacDonald illustrated those laws with evocative and metaphysical images. 'The Golden Key', particularly, is one of the most symbolic fantasies of MacDonald. It is filled with images intended to arouse a reader's imagination on religious subjects. The rainbow, for example, symbolises 'promises'.[66] The instant Mossy sees it, he knows a golden key will be found. Besides, this rainbow extraordinarily includes 'a colour more gorgeous and mysterious' before the colour red.[67] Marilyn Pemberton notes that the rainbow is filled with religious connotations. It is possible to read that unknown colour within it as representing 'the seventh angel': 'a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire'.[68] The rainbow leads Mossy to the golden key and brings children to the land of shadow at its end. Thus, it can also be an echo of the message of Jesus, ''I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last'.[69] Apart from the rainbow, the air fish also embodies great religious significance if it is taken as a symbol of sacrifice, provided that fish is already a symbol of Jesus. The air fish leads Tangle to Grandmother, and soon after, is cooked and eaten by the ladies. After the meal, the fish is resurrected and becomes an aëranth: a 'lovely little creature in human shape, with large white wings, rose out of it'.[70] Critics seem inclined to read the sacrifice of the air-fish as its spiritual elevation. As described by MacDonald, 'the highest ambition' of the fish is to be eaten by others. The

[66] Manlove, '"Not to Hide but to Show": "The Golden Key", p.37. Manlove finds that it is possible to relate MacDonald's rainbow to Gen 9:9-17, in which rainbow symbolizes the promise of the covenant between God and all the lives on earth.
[67] George MacDonald, 'The Golden Key', p.121
[68] Rev 10:1, quoted by Marilyn Pemberton in 'The Ultimate Rite of Passage: Death and Beyond in "The Golden Key" and *At the Back of the North Wind*', *North Wind: A Journal of George MacDonald's Studies*, 27(2008)
[69] Rev 22:13
[70] George MacDonald, 'The Golden Key', p.128

aëranth represents the 'upward mobility of all life'. To Hein, the aëranth represents the 'upward mobility of all life', which means that its physical transformation demonstrates a fact that 'living things [will become] freer and more beautiful as they grow in spiritual wisdom'.[71] Reis, on the other hand, reads the physical uplift of the air-fish as a doctrine of 'metempsychosis—a belief that after death a soul is translated into another body which may be that of a higher or lower species'.[72]

All these images embody multi-layered meanings as MacDonald intended. The author found that the work of mankind must have more meanings than a writer thought: 'A genuine work of art must mean many things, the truer its art, the more things it will mean'.[73] As aforementioned, imagination is a likeness of God's creative power. It is constantly modified and adapts references from 'fact', things that God has made in this world, in its process of creation. When God's work lies in 'layer upon layer of ascending significance' and 'expresses the thought in higher and higher kinds of that thought', man cannot 'help his words and figures falling into such combinations in the mind of another as he had himself not foreseen'. To MacDonald, even an author can 'discover truth in what he wrote; for he was dealing all the time with things that came from thoughts beyond his own'.[74] Due to the discrepancy between the power of man and God, it is unavoidable that man's creation will have some linkage to other sources unrecognised by the creator. The air-fish shows Tangle the beauty of sacrifice and becomes a 'convenient symbol of [MacDonald's] concept of spiritual education'.[75] Yet, some critics like Manlove argue that the air-fish and the three old men are created from heathen sources. They represent the four elements (air, water, earth, and fire).[76] And with the completion of four elements, Tangle has finished her duty to the

[71] Hein, p.143
[72] Reis, p.133
[73] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination', p.7
[74] Ibid., p.9
[75] Reis, p.133
[76] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.169

mundane world. Some images like the rainbow are provided as a reminder of biblical teaching, while at the same time recalling the pagan belief which states that a pot of gold will be found at the end of the rainbow. Numerous interpretations can be applied to MacDonald's imagery. Nevertheless, every image is a receptacle of meanings and there is no definite solution to the images, as each individual realises them subjectively in accordance to his or her preference.

B. The Restraint of Love

1. A Teacher's Responsibility

MacDonald used fantasy writing to demonstrate this process of inner discovery: 'The tale is there not to hide, but to show'.[77] Greville MacDonald states that while these tales contained 'magic and mystery, nonsense and fun—in no egregious fashions of the day', his father saw that 'enduring forms of beauty—did more for [readers] than moral precept or standardized education'.[78] Greville MacDonald's words show that his father had similar ideas to other children's book writers. Fantastical narrative is an entertaining device. He was also convinced that this would facilitate a better religious lesson than a standardised education, therefore, MacDonald filled his tales with magical elements. In the process of putting ideas into form, imagination as a creative faculty became responsible 'in choosing, gathering, and vitally combining the material of a new revelation, [which] may be well illustrated from a certain employment of the poetic faculty in which our greatest poets have delighted'.[79] MacDonald's fantasies are created for both educational and entertainment purposes. They package the religious truth by carefully chosen materials.

Concerning that MacDonald attempted to fulfil his duty in preaching through his authorship, his writings, particularly those geared towards children, have an educative slant.

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[77] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination', p.10
[78] Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and his Wife*, p.363
[79] George MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts*, p.31

Those multiple meanings embodied in symbolic expression are noticed by MacDonald as a device considerably compatible with his idea about teaching. He considered that,

> the mind of the teacher must mediate between the work of art and the mind of the pupil, bringing them together in the vital contact of intelligence; directing the observation to the lines of expression, the points of force; and helping the mind to repose upon the whole, so that no separable beauties shall lead to a neglect of the scope—that is the shape or form complete.[80]

A teacher has a responsibility for raising the intelligence of his students and channelling their imagination into right directions. MacDonald did not intend to impose specific items of knowledge or lessons on his readers, but was hoping to arouse their curiosity. To MacDonald, God is an absolute fact. And He is the only explanation of everything happening in history and all aspects of knowledge will ultimately point to Him as the final answer. Instead of directly telling his students or readers about the truth, MacDonald preferred to let them unearth it by themselves:

> [MacDonald] will encourage [his student] to read history with an eye eager for the dawning figure of the past. He will especially show him that a great part of the Bible is only thus to be understood; and that the constant and consistent way of God, to be discovered in it, is in fact the key to all history.[81]

MacDonald put great attention on the 'true feeling of the child'.[82] As he stated in his opinion on teaching, the job of the teacher is to 'bring' students to intelligence, to 'direct' observation, and to 'help' the mind. In the process of directing, a teacher should 'show excellence rather than talk about it, giving the thing itself' and let it 'grow into the mind' of his or her students.[83] To MacDonald, a teacher is only an assistant in the intellectual development of his students. The main task of a teacher is to let imagination form in the minds of his or her

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[80] Ibid., p.38
[81] Ibid., p.40
[82] Greville MacDonald, p.363. Johnson explains from p.69 to p.72 in his book that his consideration of MacDonald is based upon his true personality: 'He has the elements of character that infallibly produces the highest type of manhood; love for all men, unselfishness of heart, sympathy for others, and imagination that sees clearly through the expressed into the unexpressed'.
[83] George MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts*, p.18

pupils. Henceforth, MacDonald's fantasies are written to arouse imagination, but not for solely instructive purposes.

2. God's Involvement

Certainly, even though MacDonald aimed at arousing his students' curiosity, he did frame their imaginative exploration with some of his beliefs. Considering that God is the light that reveals the hidden reality, free interpretation is constrained in certain degree by God's intervention. As Manlove states, 'the object of MacDonald's fantasy is to express the inner world of the imagination, and in so doing to make available, to those spiritually open to it, something of a sense of the immanent God'.[84] God is the central figure of MacDonald's beliefs, and he stated explicitly that the law of God is necessarily imposed for the benefit of mankind:

> Law is the soil in which alone beauty will grow; beauty is the only stuff in which Truth can be clothed; and you may, if you will, call Imagination the tailor that cuts her garments to fit her, and Fancy his journeyman that puts the pieces of them together, or perhaps at most embroiders their button-holes.[85]

Law relates to the moral rules that should be obeyed in all circumstances. The 'soil', as the basis of fantastical creation, provides the nutrition to generate truth, which is clothed by beauty. The form of beauty is not stated clearly, yet it may be presumed that beauty refers to fantastical narration. The essentiality of God's law is revealed in MacDonald's requirement to other writers, and it is clearly set when the law of the invented realm must be in harmony with that which exists in the real world, as 'in the process of his creation, the inventor must hold by those laws'.[86] In one's imagination, God decides what to (and what not to) show. As the apparent controller of imagination, God governs the whole process of religious investigation of one's subconscious.

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[84] Manlove, *Christian Fantas*y, p.166
[85] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination', p.6
[86] Ibid.

Yet, God's governance is not ferocious but loving. 'God is love' is the main ideology underlying each of MacDonald's works. It is a belief that manifests itself in many corners of the author's life. MacDonald believed all of mankind should be saved. The differences, he believed, in class, and between believers, dissenters and others are all the same before God. In a letter written in his youth, he said,

> I well remember feeling as a child that I did not care for God to love me if he did not love everybody: the kind of love I needed was the love that all men needed, the love that belonged to their nature as the children of the father, a love he could not give me except he gave it to all men.[87]

This idea of universal salvation, though it appeared heterodox to his Church, remains one of his recurring themes. In *At the back of the North Wind*, despite the fact that only Diamond is sent to the land behind the North Wind, there is no indication that other characters will not be saved. Both Diamond and Nanny are offered dreams. After several encounters with the North Wind, Diamond is finally brought to the back of the North Wind. Throughout *At the Back of the North Wind*, Nanny is shown to have only one dream, and after that time her religious exploration is halted. This may imply that her religious journey has just begun. Perhaps her exploration will take longer than Diamond's. Sometime beyond the timeframe of *At the Back of the North Wind*, she will complete her spiritual journey. It may be presumed that the discrepancy between every pilgrimage is because everyone has been allocated a different span and experience in their search for religious truth. In 'The Golden Key', the air-fish is regenerated into an aëranth while Mossy and Tangle have different journeys to the heavenly gate. Many reasons can be presented to account for these differences, yet these variations clearly suggest that even though no one shares the same path in the search for religious truth, all living beings nonetheless have a chance of salvation. His religious fantasy is aimed at communicating what he taught to his son, Greville MacDonald, 'Be hearty with his will.

[87] George MacDonald, *Weighed and Waiting*, Vol 1 (London: 1882), p.47. The quotation is italicised by the author.

Submission is not the right feeling when we say "Thy will be done." His will is the only good'.[88] MacDonald was not convinced by the idea that God will punish His children forever, as this contradicts His indiscriminate love. MacDonald's confidence in God's love justified all formats of salvation, even if they involve suffering, plights or anything that does not follow human's wishes: 'it is only by having wishes of our own that we are able to give up to the will of God…And then we do not know what his will is—it may be the same as our wish, for all that we know'.[89]

Life is planned by God in the name of love. Provided that God's will operates only for the benefit of man, while MacDonald promoted the idea of free interpretation, he insisted that certain limitations should be imposed. It is as he commented on children's education, 'let him be as fanciful as he may, but let him not, even in his fancy, sin against fancy's sense; for fancy has its laws as certainly as the most ordinary business of life'.[90] The author was highly aware of the danger of random fancy. It is possible for a man to fantasise about sinful acts or tracts that rebel against the wishes of God. Thus, even in one's imagination, one should still follow God's law. Yet instead of fearing the possible danger, MacDonald believed that the freedom enjoyed by man is limited for the benefit of mankind. God's laws are not suppression but guidance. Elizabeth Saintsbury argues that MacDonald had also restrained the imaginary freedom of his children. As Ronald MacDonald states, his father 'stood for the inexorable', and sometimes 'corporal punishment' was unavoidable when MacDonald found his son had failed in developing 'moral sense'.[91] Nevertheless, Greville MacDonald states that the stringency of his father was generated from his love for his children. It appears that when it came to education, MacDonald himself would also embody such restrictive measure for his pupils. The religious ideas delineated in his religious fantasy, as it turns out, are

[88] Greville MacDonald, p.535
[89] Ibid, p.292
[90] MacDonald, *A Dish of Orts*, p.37
[91] Saintsbury, p.140-1

derived from the real belief of the author. He believed that a man will find religious truth when his imagination is paradoxically liberated from religious restraints.

D. The Personification of God

1. Maternal Figures

God as religious restraint often appears in MacDonald's fantasies as a female supernatural figure, such as the North Wind of *At the Back of the North Wind* and Grandmother of 'The Golden Key'. Gillian Avery comments that MacDonald invested these female characters 'with mystery and their exact role is never stated'. The only things that readers can be aware of will be 'the love that radiates from them'.[92] This mystic sense of the love of female supernatural figures is precisely what MacDonald intended to depict. In the case of 'The Golden Key', Grandmother sets Tangle in a 'deep tank' which is filled with 'beautiful clear water' and 'the sides of which [are] filled with green plants, which [have] flowers of all colours'.[93] This washing of Tangle on one hand symbolises the removal of dirt that she got from her mortal life, and on the other hand implicates the retrieval of one's pure soul by infusing it with the liveliness of nature. The untidy hair of Tangle metaphorically means her disorganised mortal life. Yet, when Grandmother combs and brushes it, it is rearranged into a new order. Simultaneously, Grandmother symbolically retrieves the original cleanliness of the souls of these children and prepares them for their spiritual journey. It is notable that, as Judith Gero John suggests, Grandmother takes up the role of 'angel in the house', a Victorian imagining of womanhood—a person who '[cares] for and [nurtures] children'.[94] Yet, the motherly figure here is also imbued with supernatural transcendence, particularly when Tangle says that she can feel that Grandmother is watching over her while she is outside the cottage. This sense of immanent presence also separates Grandmother from

[92] Gillian Avery, 'George MacDonald and the Victorian Fairy Tale', *The Golden Thread: Essays on George MacDonald*, ed. by William Raeper (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990) p.136
[93] MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, p.126
[94] Judith Gero John, 'Searching for Great-Great-Grandmother: Powerful Women in George MacDonald's Fantasies', *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 15 (1991), p.29

other women, such as those nurses that take care of Tangle before she runs into the enchanted forest. Raeper suggests that the supernatural female is 'a motherly nurse and not a power-wielding triumphant king',[95] and he and Carpenter also argue that Grandmother as a character often represents 'a face of God' in MacDonald's religious fantasy for children.[96] Despite the fact that both critics are indeed concerned with the role of grandmother in *The Princess and Goblins* (1872) and *The Princess and Curdie* (1883), their discussion is also applicable to 'The Golden Key'. Grandmother inherits supernatural power and knows some principles of the fairy world.[97] Yet, instead of being another face of God, Grandmother inherits the power for her service to the divine power. Perhaps the grandmother in the two princess books possesses more autonomy than the one in 'The Golden Key'. Nevertheless, Tangle's grandmother can be read as an introductory figure of God's law. In fact, Grandmother has to go to the land of shadow one day, showing that she is more a supernatural servant who radiates God's matriarchal side with the love she shows to the children.

The North Wind, on the other hand, is a guiding figure who leads Diamond outside the domestic environment into societal life and finally, to the post-mortem world behind her. David Robb describes her as 'the lovely, motherly, but enigmatic North Wind', who is 'an embodiment of nature and nature's power' that suggests 'the caring, motherly spirit within creation'.[98] In the early part of the novel, the North Wind introduces herself as a friend of Diamond's mother. And at the same time, she displays a motherly instinct that protects and takes care of vulnerable creatures on earth, for example, scaring a nurse who frightened a baby away and nourishing a primrose. Yet, at variance with the motherly nurturing offered by Grandmother, the North Wind is sternly instructive. She often tells Diamond what to do, such

[95] Raeper, p.262
[96] Ibid.
[97] Grandmother has made certain assertions to the children. She knows that the air-fish will be transformed into a higher living beings if it sacrifices itself, and she also knows that a girl who goes on her journey with a boy who possesses a golden key will be fine. These rules will be delineated in detail in the later part of this chapter.
[98] David S. Robb, *God's Fiction: Symbolism and Allegory in the Works of George MacDonald* (California: Sunrise, 1987), p.124

as the time when she asks Diamond not to believe anyone simply because of their beauty, or asking him to pay no attention to her appearance but to insistently believe in her true nature. Besides, rather than the domestic angel in the house, as Grandmother appears, the North Wind is more associated with work and duty in the societal context. Her appearance will be changed in accordance to the tasks she is assigned to, meaning that she is presenting various facets of herself to the public. She is acknowledged as being the size of a toy-woman, but she is also found to be a furious storm. This instructive figure gradually reveals her lethal power, for she is recognised as Fate or Death: 'Sometimes [people] call me Bad Fortune, sometimes Evil Chance, sometimes Ruin; and they have another name for me which they think the most dreadful of all'.[99] Instead of bearing a domestic matriarch figure, the North Wind represents womanly power that 'is a medium through which God's purpose is achieved, even when that purpose seems to involve death and disaster'.[100] Pemberton names both Grandmother and the North Wind as 'fey women', who guide children to their death.[101] If it is so, then the two characters will be the matriarchal power of God that leads His children back to Home, the heavenly world. Considering that a real mother brings a child to the secular world, these supernatural servants of God are guiding children away from their mortal status, and showing the direction towards the heavenly world. These women do not represent the end of living, but a new beginning of eternal life. And through this, the matriarchal love of God is demonstrated by female supernatural figures, who are the guides of post-mortem life.

2. Patriarchal Figures

The power of God does not only evince from supernatural female figures but also patriarchal ones. *At the Back of the North Wind* is set in both a fantastical realm and a material one, and the patriarch figures of the story emerge as representatives of God's power.

[99] MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*, p.45
[100] Robb, p.124
[101] Marilyn Pemberton, 'The Ultimate Rite of Passage: Death and Beyond in "The Golden Key" and *At the Back of the North Wind*', *North Wind*, 27(2008), 35-50), p.42

Diamond's father is introduced early in the story, though he comes up in the latter part. He is a coachman, even if North Wind calls him a 'gentleman'. Although his sickness has caused the poverty of his family, he is shown to be a loyal servant to his master and a great father to his family. Wood considers that the fatherly figures in *At the Back of the North Wind* are associated with the 'principle of suffering', which is in contrast to the 'principle of pleasure', related to the ideal motherhood—North Wind.[102] In the case of 'The Golden Key', Mossy's father existed before the story begins. He is mentioned in the story-telling of Great Aunt, who describes how he has already got hold of the golden key. The success of Mossy's father in finding the golden key preludes the accomplishment of Mossy in looking for the key and the completion of his spiritual journey. The great-aunt says she believes that Mossy's father has already found the key. Her ignorance about the process and outlook of the golden key generates the speculation that Mossy's father never returned. This fatherly figure, thus, provokes the spiritual journey of his son. The virtues picked up by these male figures reflects the idea that God has invested certain aspects himself in every object, including the men that He created. Raeper contends that MacDonald fictionalised God into fatherly and motherly stereotypes.

3. An Invisible Master

Nevertheless, along with these adult figures who indicate the guiding role of God, a major supernatural power appears as the dominating master of MacDonald's religious fantasies for children. Manlove finds that MacDonald's fantasy 'takes on the character of the creative unconscious itself—mysterious, imbued with archetypal images, dream-like in its transitions from one item to another'.[103] In 'The Golden Key', the highest power is symbolised by the Old Man of the Fire, who is described as a naked child 'playing with balls of various colours and sizes, which he [disposes] in strange figures upon the floor beside him'.

[102] Naomi J. Wood, 'Suffer the Children: The Problem of the Loving Father in *At the Back of the North Wind*', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, Vol.18, Number 3 (Fall, 1993), p.112
[103] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.166

The game continues as 'he [goes] on busily, tirelessly, playing his solitary game, without looking up' and shifting and arranging his balls.[104] It is speculated by critics that the balls that the Old Man of the Fire is playing with represent the globe. As Raeper argues, God to MacDonald is very much humanised. Rather than being a revered but a distant divinity, God 'can change his mind, just as his creatures can change his'.[105] Although the arrangement of balls is presented as a 'game' which shows a kind of randomness and recklessness, the real meaning of these patterns is beyond human understanding. Whether or not the meanings can be comprehended, God has absolute control over them. Also, Manlove suggests that in 'The Golden Key', all 'powerful colour images suggest this world', and the various colours are the 'colours of mortality', while the meanings of their pattern are the 'sacramental truth'.[106] If this colourful ball represents the earth, and its arrangement and shifting represent the holy truth that is beyond human comprehension, then the Old Man of the Fire is a masterly figure who expresses the holy truth in a mortal form. Here, perhaps, the symbolic embodiment of the Old Man of Fire can be studied in Platonic terms. Jackson argues that fantasies of the nineteenth century like those of MacDonald embodied an ideal of Platonic truth.[107] Although she neither includes any discussion of children's religious fantasy in the nineteenth century nor examines 'The Golden Key' in her chapter, her ideas about the fantasy realms of MacDonald explain the relevance of this cave. The 'Fire' that this old man symbolises becomes the device that illuminates the truth of secular subjects. Additionally, not only are the concepts of 'cave' and 'fire' suggestive of Platonic ideas, but also the kingdom of shadows. In *At the Back of the North Wind*, the dominance of God is comparatively less apparent than in 'The Golden Key'. God is turned into an invisible master who directs the action of the North Wind, but it is revealed at one point when North Wind says her work is all

[104] MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, p.139
[105] Raeper, p.249
[106] Manlove, '"Not to Hide but Show": "The Golden Key"', p.37
[107] Jackson, p.147

arranged by a baby.[108] It appears several times that the North Wind is not in control of her task. The North Wind refuses to bring Diamond back if he rescued Nanny. She also fails to turn down the task of drowning the ship, even though this may kill many. She is not powerful enough to enter the world behind her back. However, every job that she performs brings forth unexpected changes to the destiny of some characters. Hence, similar to the incomprehensible arrangement of the balls of the Old Man of the Fire, the pattern designed by the supreme figure can only evidence the absolute power of God.

4. Childlikeness

These parental and mastery figures of God, to MacDonald, can only partially express the divineness of God. He believed that the real nature of God lies in His 'childlikeness'. The unique status of childlikeness is revealed in the starting passage of his *Unspoken Sermon*—'The Child in the Midst'. MacDonald elaborated upon the divinity of children by relating them to Christ as follows:

> If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them… he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.[109]

> Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were handed about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.[110]

MacDonald had a 'direct equation between the child and Christ in mind'.[111] And MacDonald argued that when Christ asks his disciples to receive the child as him, Christ is implying that there is some common ground shared by himself and the child: 'For the childlike is the divine,

[108] MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind* , p.50
[109] Mark 9:35-37
[110] Matthew 18:3-6
[111] Robb, p.110

and the very word "marshals me the way that I was going"'.[112] MacDonald unreservedly linked childlikeness to God, claiming 'For it is his childlikeness that makes him our God and Father'.[113] Raeper agrees that MacDonald found the co-existence of paternity, maternity and childlikeness in God. But here, MacDonald clearly stated that being childlike should be retained and could be obtained regardless of one's age. According to Raeper, MacDonald inclined to keep his own childlikeness. His constant visits to Huntly, the place where he spent his childhood, were a sign of his nostalgia towards his youth. MacDonald had a keen interest in his Scottish heritage, and living in the city for a long time, his past in the countryside looked foreign to him. Raeper believes that MacDonald entered imaginatively into his childhood experience in order to retain a complete identity'[114].

The discrepancy between appearance and age in the supernatural characters of 'The Golden Key' was a fantasised expression of childlikeness. After Tangle and Mossy are separated on their journey, the two children ask some 'Old Men' to direct their way to the country where shadows fall. The youngest, the Old Man of the Sea 'has the form of a grand man, with a majestic and beautiful face';[115] while the Old Man of the Earth is 'a youth of marvellous beauty',[116] and the eldest, the Old Man of the Fire is 'a little naked child' and 'the love in his large gray eyes was deep as the centre'.[117] The smile of the Old Man of the Fire is even described as follows 'For the heart of the child was too deep for any smile to reach from it to his face'.[118] Both Reaper and Saintsbury argue that the anti-chronological appearance of the older men is caused by the fact that 'they are moving closer to the source of life'.[119] The youth of these supernatural characters symbolises 'the infusion of life into the soul with

[112] George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons*,p.6
[113] Ibid., p.13
[114] Raeper, p.305
[115] George MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, p.137
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid., p.140
[118] Ibid.
[119] Raeper, *George MacDonald*, p.258

growing maturity and knowledge'.[120] The infusion of life is later incarnated in Tangle and Mossy, who start off being children, change into an old man and woman respectively before they meet the Old Man of the Sea, and end up being young again. Tangle is described as 'tall and noble', and also as beautiful as her grandmother, while she possesses the same aspect: 'still and peaceful as that of the Old Man of Fire'.[121] Mossy, similarly, regains his youthful face and possesses the expression of all the old men. The two children are imbued with the divine qualities of the supernatural old men. Carpenter argues that MacDonald, like Kingsley, explores the idea that 'soul makes body'.[122] Physical appearance is an externalisation of one's spiritual status. And when Tangle and Mossy have gained wisdom from their excursion, their growth in wisdom is shown in their appearance. Since MacDonald had a preference for childlikeness, the wiser a man is, the younger he will be.

In *At the Back of the North Wind*, childlikeness is expressed through the innocence and purity of Diamond, who can be read as possessing a perfect form of childlikeness. Avery finds him to be a rare example of storybook hero as he is almost too perfect as a human being. But most significantly, MacDonald makes Diamond special as if 'little Diamond [possesses] the secret of life, and [is] himself what he [is] so ready to think the lowest living thing—an angel of God with something special to say or to do'.[123] Diamond, in Manlove's reading, imitates the pattern of Christ's life. Diamond resembles the 'immolation of Christ' as he is 'shut into mortality and often isolated from heavenly assurance, as he is brought from the country at the North Wind's back and set in the world with her absent from him'.[124] The family structure is also a replication of the holy family, as Diamond is seen as a 'humble son of a Joseph and Martha in London, acting like a little Christ among his fellow men until he

[120] Saintsbury, p.50
[121] MacDonald, *The Complete Fairy Tales*, p.143
[122] Carpenter, p.73
[123] MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*, p.313. This section is also quoted by Avery in her analysis.
[124] Manlove, *Christian Fantasy*, p.179

grows ill and dies'.[125] Avery notices that MacDonald excels at 'making virtue in children both credible and attractive'.[126] The disposition of Diamond is as the narrator of the story comments, 'it seemed to me, somehow as if little Diamond possessed the secret life, and was himself what he was so ready to think the lowest living thing living- an angel of God with something special to say or do'.[127] Diamond's purity and innocence serve as the main representative features of his childishness.

The target audience of MacDonald's religious fantasy has caused some debates in academia. He re-imagined his target audience in revolutionary ways, as MacDonald stated in 'The Fantastic Imagination': 'I do not write for children, but for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five'.[128] Carpenter argues that 'The Golden Key' is 'too dense, too symbolic, too lacking in ordinary, comprehensive events to communicate much at a first even a second reading. Few children are likely to be moved by it'.[129] Its obscurity to children, perhaps, can be justified when MacDonald was not just writing for children, but also childlike adults. Robb argues that instead of writing for children or adults but for the childlike, MacDonald was writing for himself. The critic draws a conclusion from Robert MacDonald that his father was unable to 'redirect his writing away from his own preoccupations and out towards the tastes and preferences of a readership'.[130] MacDonald had an obsession to 'ceaselessly explore and articulate his own, very personal set of beliefs' drawing to 'an immense extent on his own memories and fantasy'. Robb concludes that MacDonald wrote to 'explore and confirm, to himself, the meaning and significance of his own life, beliefs and

[125] Ibid.
[126] Avery, p.136
[127] George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*,p.313. This remark of the narrator is also quoted in Avery's argument.
[128] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination', p.7
[129] Carpenter, p.82
[130] Robb, p.113

recollections'. [131] Nevertheless, this intention, whether it was conscious or unconscious, contrasts with MacDonald's life mission of being a preacher.

E. Trust and Belief

After all, MacDonald's religious lessons reinforce a living faith, which follows God's will by trusting Him in imaginary exploration. 'Trust' remains the essence of MacDonald's children's fantasies, though it is seldom discussed in critical studies. To some degree, trust does not mean the same as believing. Trust is more about letting go of one's ego and submitting to oneself to God. As in the two princess books of MacDonald, the child protagonists must learn to trust the supernatural Grandmother before they can run away from danger. Similarly, in 'The Golden Key', Mossy starts off his journey by believing the tales told by his aunt and Tangle runs into the enchanted forest because she finds some fairies guiding her way. Both children finally embark on their adventure to the land of shadow after Grandmother promisingly instructs them. In *At the Back of the North Wind*, although Diamond has questioned the authenticity of his meeting with the North Wind, his trust in the supernatural being verifies the journey that they experience.

> All the children's stories are trustful: there is never anything false, though very much that is unlikely. There is no "make believe," no sham or pretence: things are often "topsy turvy," and the people "wrong side out," but so they really are often in life, according to our vision. Best of all, they are full of the highest teaching; truth Divine runs through them like a golden thread. The pattern and design of the tales are curious, and sometimes not to be accounted for, but the precious strands of moral and spiritual glory gleam out; for nothing can hide them. There is less preaching, but more vision. To the children MacDonald has given the best he has to bestow.[132]

MacDonald himself had experienced several up and downs, but whatever happened, he entrusted his will to God. At the moment of a predicament, MacDonald consolidated his faith by trusting his God to arrange the road properly for him. His children's religious fantasy, therefore, appears to follow this belief. MacDonald laid his future in God's hand, open to any

[131] Ibid., p.113-4
[132] Johnson, p.260

possibilities as long as God wishes; and this belief can then explain the open endings of his religious fantasy. ‘The Golden Key’ ends when Tangle and Mossy are still climbing up to the rainbow, and *At the Back of the North Wind* ends when Diamond is believed to be at the land behind the North Wind. No further explanation is offered to delineate the heavenly arena for the readers, and no word is given in the ending about the fate of Diamond. The only clue left to the reader is to trust in God, the dominating figure whether the child who is assigned the task of the North Wind or the Old Man of the Fire.

F. Conclusion

Various messages have been conveyed in MacDonald’s fantasy, and ‘trust’ is the main one manifested at all levels of his narration. MacDonald did not doubt that God is here for all mankind, and He oversees the operation of this world and the life of each individual. Provided that God is omnipotent and truly loving human beings, MacDonald had no fear about the possible distraction which imagination or fantasy may bring to his audience, as other writers of children’s literature may have feared. Instead, MacDonald firmly believed that God will lead a man to religious truth through imaginative exploration of one’s inner self. To put it simply, MacDonald believed that God is love. Hence, everything that He sets up in this world will work for the best for each individual, even if some of these works may appear harmful and destructive. MacDonald viewed God as the centre of this universe, and as the reason behind its happenings. His power can be manifested in various images, such as those supernatural figures in MacDonald’s fantasies. With the help of God’s divine guidance, a person will find the religious truth when his or her imagination is also liberated with religious constraints. MacDonald’s fantasies are reflections of this process of searching, in which mankind is asked to start seeking for the religious truth from their own imaginations, a faculty that embodies the divine messages which God has implanted in each individual. However, the ultimate religious message is not definite. It is as the open and enigmatic

endings of MacDonald's fantasies suggest: the truth is yet to be comprehensible to humans. MacDonald promoted a constant search for religious truth. The imaginative experiences of searching one's inner self appears more subjective, and hence, more substantial to MacDonald. MacDonald made his work not only the paradigm of a religious fantasy, but also a brand new standard of being a faithful Christian.

Conclusion

The beliefs of authors and their understandings of fantasy determine the pattern of the cooperation between religious materials and fantastic narrative in children's Christian fantasy. While critics like Colin Manlove and Martha Sammons argue that it is difficult to define Christian fantasy because it involves multiple understandings of 'Christianity' and 'fantasy', this thesis show that it is precisely the various forms of interplay between them that characterise this genre. Each of these children's religious fantasy has its own literary pattern, but they also share certain characteristics with each other. Provided that the cooperation between Christian materials and fantastic narrative varied among writers, this genre will be elusively defined if it is studied only with references to a particular author. Yet, intriguingly, a collective investigation of several authors of children's Christian fantasy will be able to demonstrate certain characteristics shared between each creation as well as highlighting the uniqueness of each author. Gillian Avery concludes that those who have woven teachings of morality into their fantastical writing shared the same view as follows:

> Most of these writers were wise enough to see that it was the fundamental, not the literal, truth that matters, and they expected children to perceive this too. Their books are serious works of imagination, like *The Faerie Queene*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, not just tales of a fantastical or whimsical kind; and intended to introduce children to profound and important concepts in the most attractive way.[1]

Although religious fantasy has not attracted much attention from the academic world, these texts undoubtedly exemplify 'serious works of imagination'. This thesis has addressed three types of children's religious fantasy. In examining each of them, this thesis provides a broad view on the studies of nineteenth-century Christian fantasy for children.

In the first chapter, the children's versions of *The Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* are examined. They are taken as barometers of children's religious fantasy. Notably, those versions evidence that religious fantasy for children did not start in the mid-nineteenth

[1] Gillian Avery, *Nineteenth Century Children,* p.63

century as some critics assume. By including reprinted versions of Spenser's and Bunyan's texts in the history of children's fantasy, one can observe that the genre started well before the nineteenth century. Although it is undeniable that these new editions were still framed by the original texts, much of their content had been modified specifically for nineteenth-century audiences. Those changes reflect the rising importance of imagination and an increasing concern for the child readers. Imaginative participation of the readers was encouraged while editors framed it within their individual beliefs at the same time. The characteristics apparent in the examination of those reprinted versions are shown to be some of the main features of children's Christian fantasy literature.

In the following chapter, three of A.L.O.E.'s texts: *The Giant Killer: or the Battle that We must Fight* (1856), *The Young Pilgrim* (1857) and *Miracles of Heavenly Love in Daily Life* (1864) are studied. It is clearly shown that the religious views of A.L.O.E permeated her texts. Not only her beliefs are the core values of her writings, but also her practices in daily life became her sources of inspiration. It is conspicuous that she constantly presented a fantasised reality to her readers. In *The Giant Killer* and *The Young Pilgrim*, she juxtaposed the fantastic and real alongside each other. She intended to highlight the resemblance between these two worlds and suggested the possibility of a 'fantasised reality'. In *The Heavenly Life of Daily Miracles*, she illustrated the immanence of God through a relation of miracles. Her children's fantasies highlight the responsibility of a Christian while at the same time stressing the interaction between the supernatural aspects of Christianity and human beings.

The first two chapters show that fantasy writing is peripheral whereas religious lessons and messages are the main purposes of children's books. Fantasy provides an entertaining entry to religious education. The original framework of *The Faerie Queene*, *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the evangelical texts confined not only the plot and characterisation of those

renewed children's editions and A.L.O.E.'s Christian fantasies, but also fixed the priority of religious materials and fantasy writing. It is obvious that the texts examined in these two chapters did not put aside the traditional form of children's books. Although they made an effort to ground their texts in the daily life of their contemporaries, their texts were not vastly different from the model that they followed.

The third chapter looks into Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1872). The success of these two books accelerated the decline of didacticism, which was already losing its prevailing position in children's literature. Entertaining texts, on the other hand, became the main part of the literary landscape. Carroll overturned the relationship between religious materials, fantasy writings and their function of education and entertainment respectively. Especially, he broke the constant equalisation between religious materials and didacticism. In his two *Alice* books, traditional religious ideas are parodied and ridiculed while entertaining fantasy becomes the main content of his writings. The confrontations between fantasy and Christian beliefs in *Alice and Looking-Glass* are reflections of Carroll's dual interests in religion and nonsensical ideas. It can be argued that the parodied religious issues included in his fantasies are mainly reflections of his religious conflicts. Carroll's refusal to give clear statements about his belief in these two children's books manifested his discretion concerning the religious debates of the time.

The following chapter examines the efforts of Christina Rossetti in reviving didacticism in children's books. It was obvious that Carroll's works had brought forth the fashion of writing entertaining materials for children. In *Speaking Likenesses* (1873), Rossetti was trying to ridicule Carrollian narratives by deforming the tales and characters. While it is unavoidable for her to notice the shift in literary taste, she simply saw the need to convey religious lessons with a more entertaining narration. Rossetti found no reason to forgo the inclusion of didactic materials. With references to her belief, Rossetti included ideas of self-

criticism, heavy sinfulness and labour into her tales. She turned her tales into a sophisticated system of self-surveillance. Nevertheless, her insistence on combining religious instructiveness with Carrollian fantasy limited the success of *Speaking Likenesses*. To many critics, *Speaking Likenesses* is a failure in challenging Carroll and an unsuccessful attempt in reintroducing educational materials to the market. It is just that this work still reflects Rossetti's endeavour in elevating the spirituality and morality of her readers.

The religious fantasies discussed in the third and the fourth chapter were composed out of the religious beliefs of their authors. They also responded to what their authors believed to be the main purpose of writing children's books. Both Carroll and Rossetti were responding to the same questions with reference to their belief. In some degree, the works of Carroll and Rossetti reconcile the conflict between educative and entertaining narratives, which has long been debated in the history of children's literature. It is just that Carroll and Rossetti took contrasting approaches. Carroll found the emotional responses of children to be the main purpose of writing, while Christina deeply believed in the necessity to educate the young mind. Although they have shared similar narrative features, a clear line is drawn between them.

The last two chapters discuss the two canonical writers of this genre—Charles Kingsley and George MacDonald. Both of them promoted a constant search for religious belief. It is certain that they had their own principles in religious instruction, yet they also insisted on leaving some room for readers in establishing their own belief. Kingsley believed that religious truth had been transcendentally laid in the secular world and that only through the study of nature will mankind discover it. *The Water Babies* was a response to the scientific advancements of the nineteenth century. Kingsley employed evolutionary ideas throughout his text. In his Christian fantasy, the process of evolution also proceeds in accordance with one's spiritual status. On the surface, the narration of *The Water Babies* is disorganised and

critics complain that irrelevant information is scatted throughout the story. Nevertheless, this evidences Kingsley's endeavour in turning religious fantasy into a reflection that mirrors the vicissitudes of nature. He highlights the importance of nature and asks his readers to appreciate it. He believed that an understanding of the natural law and order will draw a person closer to religious truth.

The final chapter of this thesis demonstrates how MacDonald found fantasy to be an essential literary form for constituting a person's faith. He believed that it is only through the process of investigating one's inner mind through imagination that a man might hope to reach religious truth. In this chapter, MacDonald's 'The Golden Key' and *At the Back of the North Wind* are examined. MacDonald had absolute trust in imagination. He found an imaginative interpretation of the world to be the basis of developing belief. Mankind has the freedom to understand the world and its beliefs by imagination, while God has absolute control of one's imagination. To MacDonald, belief is established by this framed freedom. Among all these messages he tries to convey in his religious fantasy for children, he highlights the prime importance of 'trusting' God. Contrary to all other children's book writers who suspected imagination and fantastical plots were diverting young readers away from moral teaching, MacDonald suggested that one must put trust in God for his supervision over imagination, for the reason that He will never direct a man away from religious truth.

Kingsley and MacDonald each upheld a new set of attitudes to believing, with the former looking for a new appreciation of the physical world and the latter affirming the essentiality of trusting God. Their religious fantasies demonstrate step-by-step guidance in building up one's faith. Rather than providing definite answers to what religious belief is and the guidelines of behaviour, Kingsley and MacDonald found a constant search into religious meanings more substantial. Although Kingsley was looking for objective evidence and MacDonald was seeking subjective experience, the two authors were not contradicting each

other's beliefs. Both arguably reveal fantasy and religious messages as being essential in children's stories. Perhaps in the works of Kingsley and MacDonald, it is only through the cooperation of fantasy and religious messages that a man can find the true value of his Christian belief.

Darton argues that 'children's books were always the scene of battle between instruction and amusement, between restraint and freedom, between hesitant morality and spontaneous happiness'.[2] It is true that children's books are often placed in these battles. In children's Christian fantasy, religious principles can represent moral standards and behavioural guidelines, and can also represent a process of searching. Fantastic narratives can be complements, independent writings, or even the channels to reach religious truth. It is apparent that the degree of emphasis varies among writers. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that religious fantasy includes elements that are both educational and entertaining. As shown in those texts discussed in this thesis, religious content and fantasy writings are blended and incorporated in manifold patterns and formats. Yet, even though each author had developed their own religious beliefs and had taken different approaches in writing fantasy, it is obvious that they worked hard to capture the spiritual and emotional interest of their audience. In this way, children's religious fantasy embodies educative religious materials as well as the entertaining effects of fantasy. In some degree, Christian fantasy for children fulfils the need to nourish the intellectual and behavioural development of children, while at the same time providing emotional and spiritual enjoyment.

Historical criticisms of children's literature often divide the nineteenth century into two parts. While one concerns about religious and educational texts, the other concerns about fantasy and entertaining writings. However, by examining children's Christian fantasy of the time, it is clear that both religion and fantasy are not function in a way as many historical

[2] Darton, p.2

accounts record. It can be argued that it is way too rudimentary to divide the history of children's literature in such a simple manner. It should be noted that there are many opportunities and reasons for religious ideas and fantasy writings to work together. Perhaps, as Nelson argues, the cooperation between religious text and fantasy writing is necessary in the nineteenth century. As she states,

> In an era of rapid change, social instability, and religious doubt, adults felt the need for faith. One kind of faith was furnished by the wave of sentimentality that washed across the century, emphasizing the healing power of emotion and promising ready access to human virtue, since to feel one's heart touched is to confirm that still has a heart, that the harshness of the modern world has not destroyed one's finer self. [3]

Christian fantasy reflects the personal preferences of the author as well as the author's responses to societal issues. In other words, this sub-genre of children's literature is very personal, even though it is clearly composed for the good of a young readers. Certainly religious fantasy for children cannot include all the concerns of the author nor can it represent those of the nineteenth century, but it at least provides a way for authors to strive for a middle-ground between the disparate arguments in children's literature.

[3] Claudia Nelson, 'Growing Up: Childhood', *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture*, ed. by Herbert F. Tucker (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p.80

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