Mistress Mary, Quite Contrary: Transformational Anger in the Heroines of Children's Literature

Shannon Davis

> Anger is unseemly and discommendable in all, but more especially in young ladies, who like doves, should be without the gall that ferments and stirs up these kind[s] of passions to disturb and hurt the mind….Be diligent, then, ladies to observe that it gain not too great a power over you….Anger arising in your breasts, instantly seal up your lips, and let it not go forth; for like fire, when it wants vent, it will suppress itself.
> -*The Ladies Dictionary,* London 1694

When I was a child I thought I should have been born a boy. It wasn't that I wanted to be like any of the boys I knew, for by the time I was twelve I had already developed a strong sense of self. I was outgoing, fiercely independent, hot tempered, impatient, impulsive, and in love with adventure and mystery. These personality traits seemed more fitting in a boy, so I felt out of place as a girl.

It was not until much later that I recognized that I associated my personality traits with male heroes. My longing for adventure, to be a hero, seemed achievable only as a boy. I devoured *Lord of the Rings*, treasured *Journey to the Center of Earth*, and wanted desperately to be Prince Caspian. Where were the girl-heroes? The women adventurers? Unfortunately, I was not the only gender-confused child. Marjorie Allen, in her book *What Are Little Girls Made Of?*, challenges another critic's appraisal of Pippi Longstocking:

> 'It is soon apparent,' [Kik Reeder] says, 'that Pippi isn't a girl at all, even a tomboy, but a boy in disguise. Astrid Lindgren has simply equipped Pippi with all the traits we have come to think of as male . . . white, male values; strength, wealth, success, defiance, and staunch unemotionalism.' But isn't this the very problem today's young women are trying to overcome? Why can't women share some of the traits long considered male. . . . (Allen 119, Reeder 139)

If we are ever to achieve any sense of equality, we must not assume that when girls exhibit defiance and independence they are *acting like boys*. There is a distinct feeling that heroines are merely hijacking male roles in their adventures, rather than exercising inherent traits and natural reactions.

In classical children's literature heroines like Pippi, when present, are often in compromised condi-

tions that reduce their potency as heroes. In the Victorian era, as the canon of children's literature began to emerge, strong women, and indeed all the traits I favored in myself, were specifically discouraged. Faced with the same threats as women of the time–censorship, conduct books, arranged marriages, hysteria diets, and even lobotomy–the angry heroines of children's stories sought more subversive methods of infiltration. Some few prevailed, against all odds, and found their way into the canon.

Of the many traits that made these heroines dangerous role models for Victorian children, the most interesting to me is the way in which they deal with anger. The opening quote from a ladies conduct book is exemplary of the attitude towards anger in young women. Yet, the finest heroines of children's literature are hot tempered and experience anger intensely enough to out step the bounds of propriety. The truly fascinating heroines not only express their anger, but also transform themselves and other characters in positive ways through it.

Mary, in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, is able to influence her unruly, bed-ridden cousin Colin only when she finally loses her temper and meets the force of his tantrums with a volley of her own. In this way, it is her anger that transforms both Mary's and Colin's lives into something natural, healthy, and ultimately happy.

When Mary first comes to Misselthwaite Manor, "everybody said she was the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen. It was true too" (Burnett 1). When we first meet Mary, she is presented as an unattractive, unhealthy, spoiled, mean-spirited child, quite the opposite of a traditional young lady. In the chapter titled "A Tantrum," Mary confronts Colin, whose hysterical "sobbing screams" push Mary's limits: "She hated them so and was so terrified by them that suddenly they began to make her angry and she felt as if she should like to fly into a tantrum herself and frighten him as he was frightening her" (Burnett 209). Rather than making her meek, Colin's intimidation makes Mary angry. The description of Mary as wanting to replicate the way Colin makes her feel has the potential to be read as Mary *imitating* Colin's aggressive (male) actions. But we might rather see that, when put in an intimidating situation, Mary does not find it *natural* to hide meekly and wait to be protected from violent male emotion. Mary's natural reaction is to equalize the power distribution by the same tactics that Colin uses to intimidate. Mary reverses the dominant role by subjecting Colin to his own treatment. Anger is Mary's natural reaction, one that she chooses not to suppress, as other Victorian girls were taught to do.

Mary "felt quite wicked" as she enters upon Colin's tantrum. She exclaims: "'You stop! I hate you! Everybody hates you! I wish everybody would run out of the house and let you scream yourself to death! You *will* scream yourself to death in a minute, and I wish you would!'" (Burnett 210). Conduct books warn young girls to swallow their anger. Part of Mary's subversive charm is her awareness that her anger is just as compelling as Colin's, and her emotions just as valid. The narrator comments: "A nice sympathetic child could neither have thought nor said such things, but it just happened that the shock of hearing them was the best possible thing for this hysterical boy whom no one had ever dared to restrain or contradict" (Burnett 211). Burnett makes no attempt to candy coat Mary's reaction. Mary is neither nice nor sympathetic, two traits that girls are traditionally expected to demonstrate. A nice girl might have tried to talk rationally to Colin, or comfort him, which would not have worked; or she might have been too scared to enter the room at all. Colin needs Mary's savagery to break his egotistical childhood shell so that he may mature.

Mary also recognizes that, although she is of lower status than Colin, she has more power in the situation. She threatens Colin, "If you scream another scream….I'll scream too–and I can scream louder than you can and I'll frighten you, I'll frighten you!" (Burnett 211). Mary surpasses Colin in volume and intensity, placing her in a physically dominant and traditionally male position.

The adults of the story support Mary's methods, acknowledging the positive effects of Mary's anger and reinforcing Mary's authority over both themselves and Colin. Colin's nurse encourages Mary's be-

havior by saying, "You're in the right humor. You go and scold him. Give him something new to think of" (Burnett 210). As an adult the nurse is expected to enforce proper conduct, but is actually in favor of Mary's temper because, as Mary later realizes, "all the grown-up people were so frightened that they came to a little girl just because they guessed she was almost as bad as Colin himself" (Burnett 210). It is to Mary's credit as a powerful and potent heroine that she is considered almost as bad as uncontrollable Colin, who occupies the privileged power role because he is not only male but also older and, as heir to the manor, of higher social status than she. By giving free reign to her anger, Mary usurps authority over both children and adults.

> When both Colin and Mary have calmed down, the nurse tells her: "It's the best thing that could happen to the sickly pampered thing to have some one to stand up to him that's as spoiled as himself….If he'd had a vixen of a sister to fight with it would have been the saving of him." (Burnett 205)

Mary is equipped to save Colin because she is a vixen. In Burnett's time, a vixen was "[a]n ill-tempered quarrelsome woman" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). But Mary quarrels for the good of all: she gives Colin something new to think about, reduces pressure on the adults who fear him, and gains the well-deserved respect of everyone.

As wicked, savage, sour, and contrary as Mary is, she is the heroine of the story, and we love her because she is wicked. It is her wickedness that saves Colin, her savagery that translates as a positive medicine necessary to treat Colin's particular ailment. Through her anger, Mary transforms Colin. That the temper of a girl might be positive and necessary for the healthy growth and development of a boy is a seditious idea for Burnett's time.

Mary's subversive character is partially explained by her unconventional childhood. Unloved by parents who hardly wanted her, Mary grows up in India under the care of an Ayah (an Indian nursemaid). Mary's childhood is further aggravated by her parents' death in a cholera epidemic, which causes her to be sent to Misselthwaite. It is her unfortunate childhood neglect and abandonment that allow her an atypical perspective. Shirley Foster and Judy Simons apply a feminist reading to *The Secret Garden* in their book *What Katy Read*: "Marginalized, forgotten, refusing to conform to the romantic archetypes of either femininity or childishness, she forms a complex study of a problem child" (Foster and Simons 179). Mary lacks the usual parental role models and traditional Victorian upbringing that provide socialization for other children, leaving her course into womanhood undecided. She does not fit previously established gender roles, allowing her to develop a personality uninhibited by traditional behavioral models and power structures.

Mary is presented as neither a handsome, charming young girl allowed special privileges despite her femininity (like Burnett's Sara Crewe in *A Little Princess*), nor an energetic tomboy (like Jo in *Little Women*). Mary is unaware of her rejection of feminine or tomboy ideals. Her neglected childhood and the subsequent death of her parents free her of the education provided by adults already assimilated into Victorian ideologies. Once she is transplanted to foreign soil, she is fully outside the familiar. With only occasional role models and tidbits of adult influence, Mary is free to discover a self relatively unfettered by societal pressure.

Burnett's *The Secret Garden* is exemplary of the new type of female heroine being explored in children's literature at the time. Heroines like Mary provided opposition to the idealized, domesticated angel-in-the-house, and helped develop and instruct the next generation of feminists, whose access to provocative literature influenced the social transformation of femininity.

Mary is not alone in challenging oppressive patriarchal traditions. She is joined by a host of powerful heroines like Alice, of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*, who both metaphorically and

literally transforms her surroundings through expressions of anger. When physically threatened, Alice's defiance of propriety and assertion of anger allow her to escape danger; thus the book portrays anger as life-sustaining and ultimately positive. As Alice moves through Wonderland she challenges social conventions and redefines her relationship to authority. Like Alice, Anne of L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* deconstructs behavioral codes and exacts positive change from her community. With a vivid imagination and limitless energy, Anne contests the limited perspectives of her caretakers and friends, inspiring transformation and growth in the stuffiest of her elders. Jo, the beloved tomboy of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, has long inspired rebellion against the stereotypical female model. Both Anne and Jo fill male roles and substitute themselves for men. Jo acts as father and brother to her sisters, who provide a striking contrast to Jo's unconventional ideals.

These and other stories provide fascinating examples of subversive heroines as they challenge gender stereotypes and societal conventions. They are heroines not only in their own tales, but in my story as well. Mary and Alice offered me exhilarating alternatives in the primarily masculine world of literature, and reinforced my longing for adventure by challenging the assumption that girls stay at home and don't do much. I owe them many thanks for providing strong opposition to the development of a male-dominant gender identity that is too often encouraged by the canon of children's literature. I see reflected in them the challenges of many girls in the history of sexual equality who have struggled to become women. These independent girls break the mold of patriarchal tradition and provide insight to the grand narrative of Her-story.

Transforming Self in a Parentless World

Allison Lurie explores subversive children's literature in her book *Don't Tell the Grown-ups*. She points out one of my favorite features of children's tales:

> One of the most innovative things about *The Secret Garden*…is that the children are not reformed through the intervention of some wise and kind other person, but mainly through their own efforts, something very uncommon in earlier children's books. (Lurie 142)

Although the parentless world structure was innovative for its time, many authors followed suit, creating situations in which child characters played out their conflicts and found viable solutions with little to no intervention from the adult world. On occasions when an adult is involved in the child's story, she or he plays the role either of benevolent guardian, providing just enough contact to encourage or comfort the child along her way, or of devil's advocate, challenging the child and presenting another obstacle that the heroine must overcome.

There are many motives for creating a parentless world in which children enact their own stories. The parental role is problematic in children's literature, especially in subversive tales–in large part because parents represent society's code of conduct, a role that creates an aura of responsibility around any figure of authority. An adult who breaks the code of conduct and engages in subversive action is considered a criminal, for an adult should know better and set an example for children. And there is nothing that stifles an exciting plot quite so much as the voice of authority serving as the omniscient corrector of conduct, for then it is a grown-up story and few children would be interested. Simply removing adults from the landscape sidesteps the question of adult behavior and moralistic involvement, allowing the focus to rest naturally on the child.

Edith Honig, in her book *Breaking the Angelic Image*, is specifically interested in the absent mother figure:

> Mothers, very problematic figures for subversive presentation, are often absent from stories where we would expect to find them. Their removal,

> however, accomplishes two things: First, the author does not need to bow to convention by presenting a mother who is a True Woman, and second, the child heroine or hero is allowed far more freedom for the display of independence and for growth and maturation through experience. (Honig 8)

As Honig rightly points out, Mother figures were under special surveillance from society, constantly compared to the blueprint "angel in the house" or True Woman of the Victorian era. Removing the mother figure from children's literature frees the adult woman from the burden of self representation and perpetuation of the norm, while at the same time freeing the child from a predetermined personality and allowing her to explore alternative modes of behavior while still at a stage in which experimentation is socially acceptable.

Foster and Simons (*What Katy Read*) address the freedom necessary for the healthy development of Mary and Colin in *The Secret Garden*: "The text…uses the image of the garden to emblematize the idea of a private space as a prerequisite for the development of individual creativity, and identifies this as a crucial factor in the formation of identity" (Foster and Simons 174). The privacy afforded by the garden is essential to the transformation that Mary and Colin undergo. It is the crux of the tale: Mary is ready for the transformation and needs only the right place, where, for the first time in her life, she is alone in a healthy way. She has something to care for, something that encompasses the buried plants in the garden, her own buried self, and Colin, buried in his father's house. They need this refuge in order to identify themselves as separate from the negative patterns set for them by the authority figures in their lives. Mary's parents ignored her presence until they abandoned her in death. Colin seems threatened by the same fate until Mary appears and offers an escape into the inner realm of the garden.

Although both Mary and Colin lack a literal mother, several symbolic representations of the positive aspects of motherhood present themselves. Foster and Simons suggest that Dickon (whose own mother, caring for twelve children as well as Mary and Colin, is surely a Superwoman) provides a nurturing feminine model:

> Although Dickon, the main agent of pagan ideology, is a male child, the qualities he embodies are those with strong female connotations: mothering, protective nurturance, tenderness and nature.…[H]e inspires the spirit of motherhood with which the garden is endowed to work its magic. (Foster and Simons 188)

Dickon rescues and cares for baby animals deprived of mothers, much as he cares for Mary and Colin. He teaches Mary about plants and the natural order of the wild Yorkshire moor. If Dickon represents the enlightened and empowered side of femininity, Colin is the suppressed and raging opposite: "Initially Colin's illness, largely imaginary, is reminiscent of classic nineteenth century versions of female frailty which results in a tendency to exploit his debility so as to attract attention to himself and to manipulate the household" (Foster and Simons 184). Mary tells Colin in their explosive scene, "Half that ails you is hysterics and temper–just hysterics-hysterics-hysterics!" (Burnett 211). The common Victorian cure for hysteria, or female frailty of any kind, was the rest cure, to which Colin is subject: enclosure, little to no stimulation (including literature, in a female's case), and a diet of heavy, rich food, including raw milk and rare meat. If Dickon and Colin represent the positive and negative aspects of femininity, what role does Mary fill? Out of the story, would be the bitter response. Allowing boys to tell the tales of girlhood is dangerous in that it suggests that Mary is not necessary even to represent aspects of her sex. At the same time, with the traditional roles split between her accomplices, the story leaves Mary free to develop beyond those stereotypes into a new and alternative gender enactment that is influenced but not inhibited by conventional expressions of femininity.

Like Mary, Alice, of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, travels independently through a parentless world. But whereas Mary is free to do as she pleases in the garden as long as she remains undiscovered, Alice must confront authority continuously throughout her journey. Wonderland is crowded with symbolic representations of dominant adults who challenge Alice's sense of identity. Honig says in *Breaking the Angelic Image*:

> …[O]ne way of looking at Alice's journey is as a child's-eye view–albeit in the distorted dream fashion–of an adult world. The workings of the adult world, adult rules, and the terrible anger of adults must all seem bewildering and often incomprehensible to the child. (Honig 76)

Inevitably, Alice's expectations for rational adult behavior will be disappointed: the only reason adults seem comprehensible to each other is that by this time in our lives we have mostly accepted a set of ideologies that allow us to function together in bewildering complexity. As a child, Alice has not yet subscribed to these groundless rules and so still approaches the world with the innocent expectation that adults will act respectfully and have reasonable explanations for their anger, as Alice requires of herself.

Alice is unfailingly polite yet has complete disregard for unsubstantiated authority. When the Lory claims to know better than Alice because it is older than she, Alice will have none of it, unless it can prove its age. Alice demands that any authority claimed over her must be confirmed by reason and proof. Most young ladies of Alice's time would have to wait about a century to receive such respect. Later, Alice enters the Duchess' house without receiving permission, establishing her growing confidence. She is becoming more assertive when she sits down to tea with the March Hare and the Mad Hatter. As Alice approaches they cry, "No room!" "'There's *plenty* of room!'", Alice replies "indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table" (Carroll 68). Not only does Alice have little respect for groundless rules and commands, she is also indignant when she receives them. Although she finds much of her world baffling and curious, she has high expectations that other creatures will have valid explanations for their behavior and act in a reasonable manner.

As Alice moves through Wonderland she realizes that her Victorian education is lacking. As a young lady, Alice has learned to be polite and obedient. Yet these traits do not serve her when faced with violent and unpredictable adult interaction. Alice shows great adaptability as she learns lessons by acquiring new tools. She progresses from the obedient servant of the White Rabbit, who calls her Mary Jane and orders her to find his gloves, to the assertive young lady who will sit down to tea uninvited and correct the impudent behavior of the Hatter: "'You should learn not to make personal comments,' Alice said with some severity: 'it's very rude'" (Carroll 68).

Alice's confidence continues to surface when other creatures appeal to her for help. The Queen orders her gardeners' heads cut off, but Alice assures them, "'You shan't be beheaded!'…and she put them into a large flower pot that stood nearby" (Carroll 80). Not only does Alice disregard the Queen's command to behead the gardeners, but she also undermines the Queen's authority over her own subjects. Alice's strong sense of justice and reason propels her to act assertively to protect others from the Queen's misplaced death tolls. Like Burnett's Mary, Alice rises to the challenge, but chooses a more moderate method: rather than challenge the Queen's authority, as Mary challenges Colin, Alice avoids confrontation at this point. She hides the Queen's servants, but wisely waits to announce her actions to the Queen. Alice is building toward her moment of supreme anger.

Alice begins the trial scene the same size as the playing-card King and Queen, but begins to grow at once. Alice's growth is symbolic of her final maturity at the end of the tale. She has one more "trial" to overcome, and how appropriate that it takes place during the trial of the Knave of Hearts. The trial is a hodgepodge of irrelevant evidence, tyrannical authority, and disappearing witnesses. When finally the Queen calls for "Sentence first–verdict afterwards," Alice has had enough. "Stuff and nonsense….The

idea of having the sentence first!" Alice refuses the Queen's command to hold her tongue: "I won't!" she simply says. "Who cares for you?" she says to the Queen (Carroll 115). Carroll notes that by this time Alice has grown to her full size. She has matured and is in full confidence, bigger than both the King and the Queen. When the playing cards attack, Alice "gave a little scream, half of fright and half of anger, and tried to beat them off, and found herself lying on the bank" (Carroll 116). The physical manifestation of Alice's anger in beating off the cards is extremely surprising given its subversive nature. When Alice's patience is tried past its limits, Alice engages directly with her anger and reacts with violent physical defiance of the Queen's oppressive superiority. Through the various challenges of Wonderland, Alice moves closer to the ultimate assertion of autonomy: expression of anger in bold rebellion against authority. Alice's lesson culminates in her ability to directly challenge misplaced authority. She grows more assertive as the story evolves until finally she is ready to challenge the Queen, and upon doing so, wakes up, to find her journey complete and herself returned home.

Although Alice returns to the "real" world after her adventure, she has had a journey in which she both figuratively and literally grows up. While in Wonderland Alice develops an identity no doubt impacted by the environment, which is most often hostile, confusing and oppressive. Yet at the end of the journey and the symbolic entrance to maturity, Alice is the victor, dominant both mentally and physically over the threatening aspects of her experience. While the return from the imaginary world marks one way in which feminist narratives pass under the radar of patriarchal Victorian society, by allowing adults the excuse of a make-believe scenario which, they reassure themselves, could not occur under normal circumstances, it is significant that Alice remains stronger. Her assimilation into the traditional world is preempted by her journey to maturity as a strong, independent girl, beholden to none, not even to the highest symbol of Victorian power, the Queen.

Wonderland challenges Alice's notions of identity almost at once and subsequently provides her with the experiences necessary to form her identity with both positive and negative reinforcement. While she sits at the bottom of the rabbit hole, waiting for something to happen, she muses on the unfamiliarity of her surroundings:

> Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: *was* I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, *that's* the great puzzle! (Carroll 28)

Alice addresses "the great puzzle" with enviable cool. She confronts the problem logically by considering all the other girl children her age to see if she might have been changed for one of them. She rules out Ada, "for her hair goes in such long ringlets, and mine doesn't go in ringlets at all." It does not bother Alice in the least that she does not fit the Victorian feminine aesthetic and so cannot then be Ada. She also rules out Mabel, "for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh, she knows such a very little! (Carroll 28). Alice is quite aware of her intellectual superiority. Although she can assert differences between herself and her peers, she cannot at this point answer the question of who she is. She knows she is different, but she is still in a state of transformation and has not yet emerged with a fully formed sense of self.

Dissatisfied with stereotypical options of identity provided by accessible models of femininity-–the other girls she knows–Alice does, however, conclude:

> It'll be no use their putting their heads down and saying, 'Come up again, dear!' I shall only look up and say 'Who am I, then? Tell me that first, and if I like being that person, I'll come up: if not, I'll stay down here till I'm somebody else.' (Carroll 29)

Wonderland puts Alice in the powerful position of being able to choose whom she would like to be. If she does not like the conventional options offered her, she need not return to the traditional world.

Although no one literally puts a head down, Alice does encounter several models of femininity, including the abusive Duchess, the independent and subtly vengeful Cook, and the tyrannical Queen. Not being interested in these models of identity either, Alice does just as she says and remains in Wonderland until she is somebody else. Her assertion of identity in the courtroom, a setting that lends itself to Alice's own identity trial, coincides with her entrance to maturity. Having discovered a self that is confident, intelligent, ethical, imaginative, logical, and assertive, Alice does "come up."

Before Alice is ready to assert that identity, however, she must undergo many disturbing trials, including an interview with the famous hookah-smoking Caterpillar, who questions her, "Who are *you*?" (Carroll 49). When Alice cannot positively respond, the Caterpillar offers traditional advice: "Keep your temper." At first Alice tries to comply with this negative reinforcement. She must test notions of traditional feminine behavior before she realizes that they do not serve her. Half way through the conversation the narrator comments, "Alice said nothing: she had never been so much contradicted in all her life before, and she felt that she was losing her temper" (Carroll 53). In this way the Caterpillar functions as the motivation that eventually forces Alice to contradict both authority and education. Of course, as many adults have discovered to their great benefit, children can be depended upon to do precisely that which they have been told *not* to do.

The Looming Father Figure of Yore

I enjoyed an unusual upbringing as a child: I was allowed to do nearly everything I wished. When I wanted something my parents saw as dangerous, they would compromise rather than forbid. Many children may think that this would be fantastic, but when I reached my teens, I longed to enjoy the rebellious behavior in which my friends indulged. I rarely ever had the privilege of screaming "You don't understand!" and slamming the door as hard as I could. The act of defiance functions as a literal and symbolic division between parent and child, allowing the child to establish a separate identity and to mature into adulthood. Yet with nothing substantial to rebel against, I was always a good child, and it took me much longer than most children to establish an identity apart from that of my parents.

The Brothers Grimm recorded a common folktale exemplifying the necessity of defiance. In "Iron Henry" (often called "The Frog King" or "The Frog Princess"), the beautiful princess grudgingly admits the Frog only when commanded to do so by her father. But when threatened by the Frog (and away from the surveillance of the Father), she reacts quite differently:

> But when she was in bed he crept up to her and said: "I am tired, I want to sleep as well as you, lift me up or I will tell your father." At this she was terribly angry, and took him up and threw him with all her might against the wall. "Now, will you be quiet, odious frog," said she. But when he fell down he was no frog but a king's son with kind and beautiful eyes. (Grimm 19-20)

The princess' furious and violent reaction physically transforms the ugly frog into a kind and handsome prince. This may never have occurred had her father not "forced" her to let the frog in, let him dine with her, and take him to her room. In this way the father functions as the necessary impetus for the princess' anger to cause the prince's transformation from beast to human.

I am loath to suggest that any form of oppression be used to instigate rebellion. And yet, history shows us that reverse psychology has been known to work on even the most acute perceptions. In this story, a kiss would not have worked, and like Mary, the princess is not a nice, sympathetic child; but that is not what the Frog Prince needs to initiate transformation. Whatever his curse may have been, it takes the princess' violent reaction to cure it.

To reinforce the point, the princess' rebellion and ill-treatment of the Frog is not punished but rewarded. The anticipated outcome to the princess' actions would be the Frog's injury or death, but instead she is rewarded with a handsome and gentle King. Her anger benefits both herself and the Frog King. Her expression of anger is the stepping stone between the princess' childhood home and the home she will make with the prince. It is her gateway to maturity.

It is worth noting, however, that marriage represents the princess' entrance to adulthood. No matter how kind and beautiful the prince may be, we can question whether the princess would have had any choice in marrying him, considering that she was commanded to let him into the house. She may react rebelliously again, but as she is no longer a child after she has been wed, her defiance may have less positive consequences. After such a violent display of feminine power, societal constraints of the period may dictate a censored ending in which the princess is immediately married and thereby placed under the rule of another powerful male. The command of the father is replaced with that of The Frog King.

True Love, or Eventual Assimilation?

"*…And they were married and lived happily ever after. The End.*" It needs no identification. Any English speaking child would recognize this as a staple of the fairy tale, the anticipated ending, memorialized in countless tales, clichéd by contemporary retellings, and only occasionally challenged. Even these novels that I have marked as progressive for their unconventional heroines and positive portrayals of anger have decidedly disappointing endings, and too often defer to the traditional conclusion in which the heroine marries and becomes the hero's wife.

As a child I almost exclusively read classic children's stories, nearly all of which ended in either a maiden's marriage, or, less commonly, her death. So it happened that I was nearly fifteen before I began to read books that featured girls of marriageable age who did not marry and managed to stay alive. I draw a positive correlation between constant exposure to this theme in literature and my erroneous belief that *there was no other ending*.

Strangely enough, even alternative tales featuring independent heroines do not challenge that norm. Jo of *Little Women*--who swore she'd never marry!–marries an older man with whom she begins a boys' boarding school. Although Anne does not marry at the end of *Anne of Green Gables*, foreshadowing leaves little to the imagination as Anne finally makes peace with rival Gilbert Blythe and, though unbeknownst to her, feels the first flutterings of love. Ella, of *Ella Enchanted*, who reenacts antiquated fairy tale mythology, not only falls in love and marries, but is also freed from her curse by the power of her love for the Prince, rather than of her inner will or devotion to herself. And, of course, the Brothers Grimm's Frog Princess marries the Frog King despite their violent courtship.

The eventual assimilation of all these heroines troubles me because it seems at odds with their personalities and actions up to that point. While in some stories it's clear that the heroine is forced to marry against her will—Grimm's tale of the "Twelve Dancing Princesses" comes to mind–the heroines of these stories are not forced by anyone to marry. They choose their husbands and willingly engage themselves, even when other options are available. Even the Frog Princess seems dazzled by the King's sudden transformation, perhaps intoxicated by her own power to transform through fury, and struck by a gentleness she perceives in the Frog King once transformed. Considering the disparity between the nobility and the peasantry from which the Grimm stories were collected, it is no surprise that gentle eyes were reason enough to marry a king. Some say love conquers all, but for the purpose of literary interrogation, I question the portrayal of love and marriage to a dominant male as the expected conclusion to tales of heroines who challenge those norms.

Jo March is our heroine because she will not be ruled; not even for guilt and brotherly love will she marry Laurie. She cares not a whit for the conventions of courtship and flirtation. But after Beth dies, Jo

lapses into loneliness, compounded by Meg's marriage and children, and Amy and Laurie's engagement. While Jo has always been different, she finds herself longing for some of the love and companionship that her sisters have found. This does not seem an unreasonable desire, and as Jo reminisces about the time spent with Mr. Bhaer and wishes that he would come to her, the story itself addresses my concern: "Was it all self-pity, loneliness, or low spirits? or was it the waking up of a sentiment which had bided its time as patiently as its inspirer? Who shall say?" (Alcott 425). Of course, no one will want to believe that Jo falls in love with Mr. Bhaer because of self pity and loneliness, so I believe most readers would embrace the second option. However, the narration, for sound literary purposes, does not address the social situation in 1868, when the options for companionship outside of wedlock were slim. I do not dispute the validity of Jo's loneliness and longing for love, nor that Jo's marriage may seem natural in its historical setting. Yet, while marriage represents entrance to the traditional gender roles and patriarchal culture that Jo has long defied, it is significant to observe that marriage is still Jo's ultimate destination. Each of the March sisters' stories ends in marriage or death, which, regardless of intentionality, carries with it a strong social message of oppressively few options, even for the most unusual of women.

Although it is conceivable that Jo could have taken another path–she might have continued her writing career, for example–and not married, that story would most likely not have been marketable as a children's book and would have been censored for its suggestive content. Convention changed little from Grimm to Alcott: the narration of a girl's or young woman's story consists of the time from puberty until death or marriage, whichever comes first. The story only goes so far as to show how deliriously happy all the married and childbearing March sisters are. When asked if she remembers her childhood dreams, Jo replies,

> "Yes, I remember; but the life I wanted then seems selfish, lonely and cold to me now. I haven't given up the hope that I may write a good book yet, but I can wait, and I'm sure it will be all the better for such experiences and illustrations as these." (Alcott 473)

It is to Alcott's credit as a writer that this ending feels natural, yet it leaves me with an awkward feeling to be reminded of Jo's unfulfilled literary ambitions. Her exchange is portrayed as positive, however, and suggests to the reader that marriage and family provide a more holistic satisfaction than Jo's "selfish" aspirations for an independent career. *Little Women* begins by challenging gendered norms, but then amputates its own subversive message by assimilating Jo into the rites of traditional femininity, thus self censoring its own rebellious themes.

In Levine's *Ella Enchanted*, Ella recreates the classic Cinderella story with a contemporary twist. As a clumsy, witty, naturally disobedient heroine, Ella is inspiring. As Ella battles the magical fairy curse of obedience, she eventually realizes that the power and privilege to disobey and break the curse are within her. When Prince Char unknowingly commands Ella to marry him, endangering his country, Ella finally finds the strength to break the fairy curse. Yet, the way in which Ella accomplishes this leaves something to be desired by a modern reader:

> …[M]y thought burrowed within, concentrated in a point deep in my chest, where there was room for only one truth: I must save Char….In that moment I found I had a power beyond any I'd had before…a fortitude I hadn't been able to find for a lesser cause. (Levine 226)

The disturbing element of this realization is that it centers on Char, Ella's beloved Prince. The climax of the tale portrays her triumph as having *needed* Char and her love for Char as the impetus to break the curse. Ella explains,

> I'd had to have reason enough, love enough to do it….My safety from the ogres hadn't been enough; zhulpH's rescue hadn't been enough, es-

> pecially not with guards about; my slavery to Mum Olga hadn't been enough. Kyrria was enough. Char was enough. (Levine 228)

Ella is quite clear that she could not have broken the curse for her own safety or for the love of her friends, or even to combat her enslavement to a cruel stepmother. But patriotism for her homeland, Kyrria, and her love of Prince Char are the powers that initiate her own power. This suggests that love is a source of great power, which is undisputable; but here love of Char is portrayed as a greater power than Ella's love of herself, placing the male in the dominant role.

After Ella breaks the curse, the first liberated decision she makes is to marry Prince Char. For Ella, marrying the Prince is proof that she is now free to do as she pleases. With *Ella Enchanted*, Levine reclaims the traditional fairy tale ending by allowing the act of marriage to symbolize not submission but an exercise of liberty. There is danger, however, in revisiting a traditionally oppressive cultural norm and breathing new life into it. It is powerful to challenge the meaning of marriage and redefine it as a symbol of free will and choice, but at the same time it suggests that the only liberty one has is the liberty to give up that liberty.

The emphasis on marriage as the ultimate conclusion to a story, and the fact that the only substitute for marriage seems to be death, imply that marriage is a sort of death. After either marriage or death the story must end. Why is that? Is there nothing to be said after marriage? Or is it unpleasant to relate? If either of those are so, then why is marriage presented as a positive ending for Jo and Ella and the Frog Princess? Why perpetuate the cultural convention that propagates traditional gender roles? In order for the voices of these unconventional, pioneering heroines to be heard at all within the canon of children's literature, they must fit within a structure of social expectations that sometimes requires self censorship. If it is the writer who censors her own work, whether she believes it is right or not (or is aware of it or not), that censorship gives the illusion of greater autonomy. Again, the only choice appears to be the choice to give up choice– writing in the bitter moral as though it is natural, and making sure to keep Jo's hopes alive and to reclaim Ella's contract with a new perspective.

When I think of an alternate life for Jo, I am reminded of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, published thirty years after *Little Women*, which imagines the sexual and emotional independence of Edna, who breaks from her traditional role as a woman, not a child, and in the end finds no other course but death. Kate Chopin's piece (never promoted as children's literature) was attacked by critics, censored everywhere, and met with firm resistance from Victorian feminine ideals. This example reminds me of the improbability of a warm reception for a *Little Women* in which Jo grows into an old maid of an author or seeks any alternative to the companionship of marriage.

With such incredible resistance and restriction from cultural norms, it is a wonder that any models of alternative femininity came down to us, even with partially diluted subversive messages. But we must not let that keep us from questioning and challenging history as we continue to look for new alternatives. These stories are a beginning but cannot be an end.

Anne of Green Gables' Gilbert Blythe functions similarly to Prince Char in that Gilbert motivates Anne to strive for success. Rivalry between Gilbert and Anne provides incentive for Anne to excel and surpass Gilbert. When they first meet as schoolmates, Gilbert embitters himself toward Anne when he touches on her most sensitive subject, and calls her "Carrots" for the color of her hair. Upon hearing the insult, Anne jumps to her feet and exclaims, "You mean, hateful boy!...How dare you!" and cracks her writing slate over his head and proceeds to speak not a word to him, despite his apologies and attempts at friendship, until after their first year of college (which takes place only in the last few pages of the novel).

Anne uses her anger at Gilbert's outrageous and long-ago insult to fuel her academic drive. And it works extremely well for many years, until they are both competing for first in class in their last year of

school, when Anne has a realization that her anger has faded:

> It was in vain that she told herself with a toss of her head that she did not care. Deep down in her wayward, feminine little heart she knew that she did care….All at once, as it seemed, and to her secret dismay, she found that the old resentment she had cherished against him was gone….It was in vain that she…tried to recall the old satisfying anger…. Anne realized that she had forgiven and forgotten without knowing it. (Montgomery 244)

Although Anne's forgiveness seems perfectly natural, her realization that she cares for Gilbert's friendship is puzzlingly framed within her "wayward, feminine little heart." "Wayward" at once suggests unconventionality, unruliness, and willfulness, while "feminine" implies the traditionally female realms of sensitivity, care, forgiveness and love. The coupling of these words creates a paradox that has multiple effects.

First, traditional femininity is unified with deviation and rebellion, suggesting the two can and do exist together in the person of Anne. Because of the binary created between traditionally passive femininity and traditionally active or aggressive masculinity, a "feminine, little heart" is associated with passivity and weakness, thereby linking Anne's act of forgiveness with traditional feminine stereotypes of sentimentality and subordination, while contrasting her essential femininity with her aggressive male rivalry with Gilbert. The ambiguity of this passage is exemplary of the novel's self-censoring adherence to convention. Foster and Simons address this issue:

> Despite its gender deconstructiveness, *Anne of Green Gables* is not a radical text which overtly seeks to overthrow sexual hierarchies. Anne's innocence disorients the orthodoxies on which Avonlea is built, but, unlike Jo March or even Ethel May, she herself never directly rebels against the constraints of femininity. (Foster and Simons 162)

Anne's traditionally feminine tendencies toward romance, and her absolute love of symbols of conventional femininity, comfort and grace, such as puffed sleeves and long, dark hair, contrast excitingly with her disdain for social protocol and her aggressive reactions to (personal) injustice. However, events such as her contrived and dramatic apology to Mrs. Lynde show that Anne is not really invested in challenging social convention, but is simply giving reign to her nature, which, as the narration suggests, is both wayward and feminine. By acting on impulse and disregarding custom, Anne often comes into conflict with social expectations; yet, because she is not focused on that goal, as Jo March is in despising all things womanly, Anne passes innocently under the radar of editors and censors. If waywardness and (the traditional use of) femininity are not mutually exclusive, as Anne's person suggests, then Anne acts as the missing link between traditional models of femininity and a new feminine, without form but with much individuality and variation.

As Anne grows up it is natural for her to let go of her childhood resentments, although she does so only long enough to acquire some even sillier, adult resentments toward Gilbert. Thinking Gilbert to be as competitive as she and to take pleasure in her defeats, Anne mistakes his appreciation and love-interest for triumphant antagonism, and renews their rivalry as they enter their first year at Queen's College. The contention between Anne and Gilbert challenges Anne to compete with him for the Avery Scholarship. Her victory causes Matthew to say, "Well now, I guess it wasn't a boy that took the Avery Scholarship, was it?" (Montgomery 291). Again, Anne's anger (even though based on imaginary insult) provides impetus for her success in college.

Anne does not let go of her grudge against Gilbert until Marilla tells her a forgotten secret of her own youth: Marilla might have been married if her own stubborn anger had not kept her from forgiving her

beau after a falling-out. Although Anne takes her advice, formally forgives Gilbert, and feels the better for it, still the implications linger. Marilla's anger sustained her independence. Her loneliness, like Jo's, is due to a longing for companionship denied outside conventional marriage. Her freedom is portrayed as an expected sacrifice for necessary human companionship, privileging marriage over autonomy. Marilla's admission encourages Anne to let go of her own anger and provides an appropriate place for Anne to correct Marilla's mistake and open the way for a union with Gilbert.

Although Anne doesn't marry Gilbert until the sequel, *Anne of Avonlea*, she does return home to Green Gables, giving up the scholarship to Redmond College. She returns after Matthew's death, in part to fill his position, thus both metaphorically and literally saving Green Gables. But, for some critics, this is a defeat:

> Significantly, at the end of the novel the narrative positions her firmly within the domestic sphere. This apparently regressive closure can be partly accounted for by publishing criteria which demanded a conventional conclusion, but it may also reflect Montgomery's own ambivalence about women's roles. (Foster and Simons 162)

Regardless of the intentions of the author, it is indisputable that Anne once again fills a domestic role. But the ending is not as bleak as the sunshiny, domestic final scene of *Little Women*. Anne is adamant that she will continue college studies during her time at Green Gables, and her plans are far more definite than Jo's aspirations. Anne will be teaching, and so providing income for herself and Marilla. The unconventional pair of independent women, old maid and orphan, are successful alterations of traditional female roles. And, whereas in *Little Women*, Jo's future is defined within the terms of domesticity, Anne's future remains indefinite and undetermined, lending to an ambiguous closure not present in other books of this genre.

Both *Little Women* and *Anne of Green Gables* arise from a canon of sentimental fiction for girls that glorifies domesticity and urges essentialist notions of traditional femininity. While these books may challenge some of those norms, they are still limited by publication requirements and audience approval. While Anne literally fills a male role, she does so without the fierce intention of Jo, yet both still return to the domestic realm, even after having been given their guardian's encouragement for independence and individuality. The paradoxical and ambiguous nature of femininity as portrayed in these novels illustrates the changes occurring in Victorian society at the turn of the twentieth century. As women began to write and support themselves independently as authors, a new heroine was imagined to mediate between the traditional and the radical. In Anne, the two worlds are merged; Jo fights the good fight, and seems to give in from weariness and desperation; while contemporary Ella reclaims the realm of marriage by using love's fairy-tale conventions to empower her strength of will. As Anne and Jo attempt to mediate a complex social transition, they reflect the challenges and achievements of many women's struggles to retain autonomy in the face of oppressive patriarchal traditions.

Self censorship: Where'd My Story Go?

While *Little Women*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and *Ella Enchanted* endeavor to reconcile conflicting notions of femininity, Burnett's *The Secret Garden* makes no attempt, but takes a different approach to the problematic ending-scene by removing Mary entirely from the last few chapters of the book, thereby framing the censorship of Mary's subversive behavior within the story's structure. After Mary challenges Colin at nearly the midpoint of the book, the story turns from Mary's development to Colin's recovery and subsequent reunion with his father. Mary does not feature at all for the last chapter of the book, which ends with the words "Master Colin!" Colin usurps Mary's story of unconventionality, turning the book into a boy-father narrative.

The last scene features a race among Mary, Dickon and Colin, of which Colin is the victor. This ending introduces a sense of competition not present in earlier chapters, where the focus on collective play is key in deconstructing gender binaries. Foster and Simons note:

> It is only in the final chapter of the novel, when the story is nearing completion and the return to a full societal dimension is anticipated that a competitive activity is introduced. The race between Mary, Colin and Dickon, when Colin emerges as the clear winner, carries obvious symbolic implications. (Foster and Simons 183)

By winning the race, Colin asserts his physical dominance, further reducing Mary's potency and necessity. With Colin's improved health comes the assumption that he will live to inherit Misselthwaite Manor in traditional patriarchal fashion. Just as Colin wins the race, he runs into his father, metaphorically suggesting Colin's maturity and entrance to the conventional adult sphere.

Although switching the story's focus from Mary to Colin makes the subversive themes more palatable to the public, it also leaves the reader with a sense of incompletion. Mary's story is left wide open, removing the problem Jo faces with an ending all too complete and limited in its domestic serenity. But avoiding this challenge comes at the cost of perpetuating traditional male ideals of legal authority and physical superiority, as well as reducing the heroine's potency by reducing her voice to nonexistence. It is almost as if, for the last third of the book, Colin's story was written over Mary's, stifling her unconventional discourse and discrediting her powers of articulation.

Where Are We Going, And Where Have We Been?

As a child and teenager first engaging with *The Secret Garden* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, I spent whole days in the woods, devouring their stories and envisioning myself in their exalted roles. I escaped my parents, and with apples and books, disappeared into Wonderland, Misselthwaite, and Green Gables. Like Mary and Alice, I eluded the adult world, and in so doing found adventures and created fantasies that allowed me to develop an identity apart from the overwhelming and bewildering authority of parents, teachers, and community. As Mary, Colin, and Dickon teach each other to live and grow in the space of the garden, so my friends and I spent hours building tree forts, hunting newts, and exploring old mine tunnels. In our adventures, we often became "lost" in the woods, devising plans for how we would live if we never found our way back. This was a tantalizing plot for us, as it is for Alice once she overcomes the initial shock of sudden autonomy, because that freedom from authority and intervention allowed us to exercise our own excellent logic, synthesize information, learn lessons, and mature. I longed for the power of choice that Alice asserts when she says, "Who am I, then? Tell me that first, and if I like being that person, I'll come up: if not, I'll stay down here till I'm somebody else" (Carroll 29). Alice and Mary develop independent identities in their parentless worlds, finding selves less fettered by patriarchal gender conditioning.

While Mary finds freedom in a parentless environment, she and Colin also take great pleasure in deceiving the adults at Misselthwaite. The necessity of keeping the garden a secret inspires them to devise creative ways to outwit Dr. Craven and the housekeeper. Similarly, Alice must eventually confront and conquer the Queen of Hearts, overcoming ill-placed authority and asserting her physical and intellectual superiority. Likewise, the heroine of the Grimm Brothers' "Frog King" is empowered by rebellion against her father and the powerful masculine tradition he represents. The potency of her furious revolt activates her transformational power, thus freeing the Frog King from his enchanted form.

I cannot rightly say whether I was ever so instrumental as Anne and Mary in transforming my elders through expressions of anger. But Mary and Anne are inspirational to me because of their transformational capacity. Through unconventional social critique and fearless, imaginative communication, Anne

breathes life into the Avonlea community, challenging authority and offering creative alternatives. Anne is an exciting model of the success of independence, honesty, and individuality in challenging oppressive structures and transforming authoritative enemies into supportive allies.

Anne's individual power is highlighted by her immediate substitution for the expected male laborer. Anne is able to exceed the gendered expectations of her caretakers and community and to alter their environment with profoundly positive effects. While Anne literally fills a male role, Jo of *Little Women* acts as brother and father in her real father's absence. Jo enacts a performance of male gender by actively defying all things traditionally feminine. Jo's confidence in the masculine arena and disdain for conventional femininity reinforce her literary potency, allow her financial independence unknown to most women of the era, and mark her as an exemplary alternative to traditional gender stereotypes.

In the symbolic land of Oz, Dorothy's anger flares when the Cowardly Lion displays masculine aggression in an attempt to frighten Dorothy's dog Toto. By asserting dominance on behalf of Toto, Dorothy inverts the traditional gender roles occupied by herself and the Cowardly Lion, placing herself in the dominant position. Dorothy's actions reduce gender pressure on the Cowardly Lion and allow him to acknowledge his fears. She then guides him on a journey of self discovery resulting in his positive transformation into a friendly beast who serves the Empress Ozma. As Princess and Empress of Oz, Dorothy and Ozma fill traditional patriarchal roles in government. Their utopian success attests to the power of Dorothy's passionate and aggressive methods when mingled with Ozma's pacifism.

The feminine utopia of Oz is home to the Women's Army of Revolt, who subversively conquer the Emerald City with knitting needles as weapons, reclaimed from traditional feminine practice. Although the needles may seem trifles when wound with yarn, they are sharp and intimidating when wielded with anger. The Army of Revolt provides an excellent metaphor for the power of the language of trifles.

Knowledge of the language of trifles, the ability to read significance in signs associated with orthodox femininity, also serves the March sisters of *Little Women*.[1] When Amy recognizes Jo's ring on Laurie's finger, she is able to infer his love for Jo and to reconstruct a chain of events leading up to her realization. This knowledge aids Amy in breaking through Laurie's apathetic shell, which she eventually accomplishes through an unusual expression of irritation and resentment. The complexity of the language of trifles baffles Matthew Cuthbert, who braves new territory for love of Anne in *Anne of Green Gables*. Matthew's fear of all things feminine reflects the enormous but silent force of a women's language, and stresses the subversive fortification protecting a women's language from exploitation.

The perseverance of a feminine language testifies to a great and long history of women, subversively infused in such sources as *The Secret Garden*. Mary is subversive because she substantiates the seditious claim that women's anger is a powerful tool for the transformation of self and others. By rebelling against Colin as a frightful tyrant and symbol of masculine dominance, Mary releases them both from an oppressive, patriarchal cycle, thus allowing them to develop identities in the unprejudiced space of the garden.

It is unfortunate that *The Secret Garden* and other novels must incorporate censored endings, which, in Mary's case, eliminate her from the conclusion of the story and return Colin to the world of patriarchal privilege and authority. While Mary's role is diminished to the point of being unnecessary to the novel, *Little Women* reflects the most common outcome for a feminine tale: marriage and eventual assimilation into traditional domesticity. Contemporary retellings of fairy tales such as *Ella Enchanted* attempt to reclaim the idea of marriage as a source of empowerment. But like the folk tale "The Frog King," the moment between empowerment and assimilation is brief indeed. No sooner has the Frog Princess realized her transformational power than she is safely married and contained. In Ella's case, her love for Prince Char is a more potent motivation for personal strength than is her concern for her own life, and although her marriage is unconventional, her endorsement of the traditional story structure remains.

Yet despite the disappointment I may feel at the end of such tales, classic stories such as these

detail the history of challenges and struggles faced by women in both their everyday lives and literary careers. They are monuments to the triumphs of subversive action under the surveillance of overwhelming patriarchal opposition. *The Secret Garden*, *Little Women*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are invaluable landmarks for where we have been as women and as a society. They are our past, but need not be our future. We can envision alternative endings for our future heroines. And we must. It is not enough that we reclaim patriarchal traditions; we must create new traditions. It is not enough that we attempt to fix the traditional structure; we must create a new structure to fit the vision we wish to realize.

Notes

1. The language of trifles derives from Susan Glaspell's play Trifles (1916), which reveals a language of domesticity comprehensible only to women. Through this language, women are able to read a series of signs indecipherable to men, thus allowing it to pass beneath the radar of patriarchy. The concept of an all-feminine mode of communication would surely have been disturbing to avid supporters of a patriarchal system.

Bibliography

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.

Allen, Marjorie N. *What Are Little Girls Made Of? A Guide to Female Roles Models in Children's Books*. New York: Facts On File Inc., 1999.

Baum, L. Frank. *The Marvelous Land of Oz*. Mawah, NJ: Watermill Press, 1983.

—. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Mawah, NJ: Watermill Press. 1983 [1900].

Brown, Joanne and Nancy St. Clair. *Declarations of Independence: Empowered Girls in Young Adult Literature, 1990-2001*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2002.

Burnett, France Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*. New York: Harper Collins Pub. Inc., 1911.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventure's in Wonderland*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc.: Signet Classic, 1960.

Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Female in Folklore and Legend*. New York: Seabury Press, Inc., 1975.

Dodson, Shireen. *100 Books for Girls to Grow On*. New York: Harper Collins, 1998.

Foster, Shirley and Judy Simons. *What Katy Read, Feminist Re-Readings of 'Classic' Stories for Girls*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

Grimm. *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1944.

Honig, Edith Lazaros. *Breaking the Angelic Image, Woman Power in Victorian Children's Fantasy*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988.

Jweid, Rosann and Margaret Rizzo. *Building Character Through Literature*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2001.

Lehnert, Gertrude. "The Training of the Shrew: The Socialization and Education of Young Women in Children's Literature." *Poetics Today* 13, 1 (1992): 109-122.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. New York: Scholastic, 1997.

Lurie, Allison. *Don't Tell the Grown-ups: Subversive Children's Literature*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1990.

Montgomery, L.M. *Anne of Green Gables*. New York: New American Library, 1987 [1908].

Nilsen, Alleen Pace. "Women in Children's Literature." *College English* 32, No 8 (1971): 918-926.

O'Keefe, Deborah. *Good Girl Messages: How Young Women were Misled by Their Favorite Books*. New York: Coninuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2000.

Radner, Joan Newlon, ed. *Feminist Messages: Coding In Women's Folk Culture*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Reeder, Kik. "Pippi Longstocking- Feminist or Anti Feminist." *Children's Literature Review: Excerpts from Reviews, Criticism, and Commentary on Books for Children.* Vol.1. Ann Block and Carolyn Riley, eds. Detroit, Mich.: Gale Research, 1976, p.139.

Taxel, Joel. "The Black Experience in Children's Fiction: Controversies Surrounding Award Winning Books." *Curriculum Inquiry* 16, No 3 (1986): 245-281.

Von Franz, Marie Louise. *The Feminine in Fairy Tales*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1972.

West, Mark I. *Trust Your Children*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1988.

—. *Children, Culture, and Controversy*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1988.