

A Space to Be Herself: Locating Girlhood  
in Children's Literature

Louise H el ene Johnson

MPhil

University of York

English

September 2017

# Abstract

This thesis argues that the representation of both the 'girl' and 'girlhood' within children's literature can be best understood through a reading of space and place. The opening chapter considers the Golden Age of children's literature, and investigates *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett and four of Angela Brazil's most typical school stories: *The Fortunes of Philippa*, *For the Sake of the School*, *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* and *The School in the Forest*. It is argued that these stories represent an attempt to mediate between an unorthodox idea of girlhood and an Arcadian stereotype whilst effectively rendering neither. The second chapter considers the mid-twentieth century and argues for a tentative aesthetic of liberation, substantiated through analyses of the *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* series by Enid Blyton, and *A Little Love Song* by Michelle Magorian. Chapter three shifts towards the contemporary period of children's literature with analyses of *Murder is Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens, and *My Name is Mina* by David Almond, and argues that the contemporary notion of girlhood is characterised by the apparently contradictory idea of permitted transgression. It is concluded that the nature of girlhood within children's literature faces an imminent crisis; whether to consolidate the perspective of the child to the exclusion of the adult, or to pursue an ever greater aetnonormative perspective. The findings of this thesis also come to question the role of the golden age within children's literature and suggests that rather than reading a golden age as temporally definite, it can be, instead, recognised thematically.

# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Author’s Declaration .....	5
Introduction .....	6
Chapter Outline.....	19
Chapter One: Looking for Arcadia.....	23
Chapter Two: A Landscape of Tentative Liberation.....	70
Chapter Three: The Age of Transgression.....	116
Conclusion.....	157

# Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Richard Walsh, for his support, patience and sense of humour throughout this process. I am especially grateful to Francesca Arnavas, Claire Boardman and Yu-Hua Yen who have provided encouragement, cake and support along the way. I would not have achieved this without you all.

I would also like to pay tribute to my colleagues both real and virtual in the children's literature community. In particular, I would like to thank Alison Baker, Jim Dean, Matt Finch, Melanie McGilloway and Zoe Toft who have all made me better in what I do.

And finally, I would like to thank my family without whom none of this would have been remotely achievable. They are wonderful. Don't tell them.

# Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author.

This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University.

All sources are acknowledged as References.

# Introduction

In his protohistory of children's literature, Roger Lancelyn Green writes of his "attempt to chart some of the more or less definite islands off a portion of the mainland of our more generally recognized literary heritage" (Green 60). It is an intriguing spatial metaphor which ultimately leads him towards conceptualising and recognising the 'Golden Age' of children's literature for the first time.<sup>1</sup> It is, I suggest, a metaphor that has not yet been fully explored. This thesis attempts to redress that deficit and apply it towards notions of both the 'girl' and of 'girlhood' within children's literature, whilst also posing a challenge to dominant paradigms of periodization within the sector. It argues that the representation of the girl and girlhood within children's literature can be best understood through a reading of place and space. It concludes that children's literature faces an increasing crisis centring on the influence of the adult literature; whether to consolidate the idea of the girl and her associated girlhood as a discrete identity, or to pursue an increasing homogeneity between girlhood and adulthood.

I shall claim that the fundamental relationship between space, place and girlhood functions as a metaphor somewhat akin to the relationship between human and 'daemon' in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* series (1995-2000). Daemons are creatures with an animal-shaped body and a deep personal connection to a specific human individual (Colás 50). These daemons shift through a range of animal identities before finally settling into a

---

<sup>1</sup>The Golden Age is a recognised term in children's literature, referring to the stylistic shift of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when children's literature moved from didacticism and moralising towards writing for the child as a recognisable figure in their own right (Carpenter; Green). This shift, in combination with a wider societal growth in literacy, shaped what is recognised as children's literature today.

fixed and permanent shape upon their human reaching adulthood. Both the daemon and their partner feel the pains and emotions of the other on a physical and immediate level, and the daemon's final form reflects the characteristics and emotional makeup of its adult human. The daemon thus comes to function as a metaphorical and physical representation of an individual's identity, sexuality and selfhood. It is through the relationship between human characters and their daemons that the practical and spiritual worlds of the *His Dark Materials* novels are represented, navigated and challenged (Greenwell 99). I appropriate the characteristics of this relationship and argue that just as the daemon adopts a new form depending on the psychological makeup and life-experiences of their paired human, an understanding of the girl and girlhood can be gained through an understanding of space and place.

From a methodological perspective, this thesis locates itself squarely within the "material turn" of children's literature (Beauvais and Nikolajeva 3). Such work attempts to adopt a firmly inter-disciplinary approach, and to deny the critical and theoretical bottlenecks that can be perpetuated by rigid, often unintentionally canonical and "illegitimate" divisions (4). Thus, in hybridizing close reading, a mode of analysis familiar to the humanities, with case study theory, an approach perhaps more familiar to quantitative and empirically grounded disciplines, I attempt to do precisely this. I utilise case study theory in order to help focus on the "relationships and process" embedded in my texts, investigate them with "multiple methods" and to develop a "holistic interpretation" of the representation of space and place within children's literature as opposed to concerning myself with the "isolated factors" of such (Denscombe 32). In partnership with this approach, I look towards close reading to help mediate and concretize my interpretations

throughout this thesis, capitalising on children's literature's increasingly pronounced reliance upon post-modern technique (Nikolajeva, "Exit Children's Literature" 221). As Brian Alderson reminds us, it is all too easy to adopt an overly elaborate and subsequently restrictive vocabulary of interpretation when considering children's literature, and so this mixed method approach with its interdisciplinary scope and practical outlines, hopes to deny those instances where "nobody knows what you are talking about, but it really sounds terrific." (249).

In order for this study to break new scholarly ground and indeed, to satisfactorily realise its arguments, it is necessary to resist the temptation to work solely within the pre-established canon. In consequence of this, many of my selected texts lack a substantial critical context despite their marked popular appeal. In this thesis, I will show how the representation of space and place within these texts is characteristic of their respective periods of production and substantiate this argument on a case-by-case basis. An obvious rebuttal to this approach might be to say that these texts are unrepresentative of general trends; however my reading of under studied texts is complemented by attention to texts with a much more prominent critical profile, so that the thesis mediates between the canonical and the marginal, whilst resisting the temptation to base interpretation on a narrow footing in either respect.

Perhaps the most important implications of my thesis for future scholarship centre upon the idea of the golden age and its relationship towards periodizing children's literature. Roger Lancelyn Green first introduced the idea of the golden age in 1962, using it to designate the stylistic shift in the early nineteenth century towards that which we recognise as children's literature today. For Green, this period was a golden age which saw



children "no longer being written down to any more - they were being written up" (Green 59). He saw the idea of childhood in this period resisting the previous inherently retrospective emphasis upon the figurative child as a precursor to adulthood. The child of Green's argument was able to enjoy "the Spring for itself, not looking on it anxiously as a prelude to summer" (Sorby 69). It is notable that this child is considered as having no specific gender identity, being referred to it as 'it' or 'they' throughout Green's writing. This could be perhaps recognised as a symptom of Green's approach; he shows little concern for semantically "marking boundaries" and more interest for "describing the underlying cultural shifts that allowed excellent children's books to be published" (Sorby 96). It can equally be recognised as one of the first denials of girlhood's relevance towards an understanding of the Golden Age.

The idea of the Golden Age soon became established in critical vocabulary (96), and perhaps most emphatically with the publication of *Secret Gardens: the Golden Age of Children's Literature* by Humphrey Carpenter. Carpenter argued that the Golden Age was a stylistic shift in writing for children in the early nineteenth century, marked by an urge to fix childhood as a paradisiacal state of being, namely an Arcadian idyll. Again, this conceptualisation of the golden age saw female-centric narratives be considered as a barely present phenomenon (15), despite the cultural dominance of authors such as Charlotte Yonge and Angela Brazil throughout the period. Such an androcentric reading of the period was challenged by Marah Gubar in her aptly named *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* which exposed the lie of Golden Age critique namely, that the innocent child of cultural isolation, a dominant archetype of these romantic Arcadias, could not exist without a deeply felt cultural context (*Artful Dodgers* 7). As these "dependent,

acculturated beings" (5-6), the child could never wholly escape nor deny the impact of an adult led society upon their actions.

Whilst I examine the impact of these different readings in my first chapter at some length, and in particular with relation to the work of Angela Brazil, I wish to dwell here on the evolving idea of the Golden Age itself. The term then resurfaces in the mid-twentieth century, a period commonly referred to as a second golden age of children's literature (Butler; Pearson; Townsend) where titles such as *Swallows and Amazons* by Arthur Ransome (1930), *The Little White Horse* by Elizabeth Goudge (1946) and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (1950) indicated the presence of an increasingly empowered and liberated protagonist driven by a "new, global moral consciousness" (Craig "The Three Golden Ages"). Amanda Craig's commentary here, articulated in a piece called "The Three Golden Ages" neatly provides a bridge towards the final phase of golden age of critique, that is to say the early twenty-first century of contemporary children's literature. This is a period which is often described as another 'golden age' (Akbar; "Carnegie Medal"; Craig), with critics seeking to connect contemporary literature with the epochal qualities of that first Golden Age. I view the evolution of the idea of a 'golden age', and the (re)appropriation of the term, in a positive light, taking it as a serviceable critical vocabulary for periodizing children's literature, and that is the sense that I adopt it in this thesis. However such an adoption brings with it several questions to be answered, not in the least the question of temporality. I highlight three key periods above which sit at odds with assertions of golden ages in the 1980s (Abrahamson and Stewart), an American golden age of illustration between 1880 and 1910 (Schulman), and those who assert the idea of a Golden Age as being fixedly located to the distinct socio-cultural context of the Victorian era (Carpenter,

Green, Rose, L. Stevenson). Yet, as I will suggest throughout this thesis, the idea of a Golden Age rests not in temporal specificity but rather in thematic cohesion. Thus, authors such as Angela Brazil (1868 - 1947) are Golden Age authors despite writing beyond the asserted end of the period, and authors such as Michelle Magorian (1947 - ) can adopt Golden Age characteristics despite being located at a remove from the period in question. I argue that by recognising those stylistic distinctions, it is possible to discern the conceptual orientation towards girlhood that distinguishes a golden age.

This thesis additionally contributes to the lively research context of spatially inspired critique in children's literature. An early and relevant contribution to the field is *Experiencing Environment and Place through Children's Literature* (Cutter-Mackenzie et al.) which focuses upon the integration of children's literature into teaching about environmental changes, challenges and crises. The editors of this volume argue that children's literature represents the first encounter between an individual and nature (1) and that by understanding this moment, educators can effectively and legitimately introduce a environmental consciousness into their classrooms. The volume concerns itself with the particular and personal encounter with fictional space by recounting a series of educators' direct experiences of working with texts in the classroom. It is interesting that the editors highlight the perceived lack of a sociological or educational framework in children's literature research; given that if anything may start to describe children's literature, it is a concern for understanding the nature and systems of human society. As such, this thesis offers no overtly sociological perspective yet still offers a response to Cutter-Mackenzie et al. by offering an approach replete with opportunity for future development.

Another point of contact for my research is the special issue of *The Lion and The Unicorn* on "The Environmental Imagination and Children's Literature" (2011). Amongst the several aims articulated in this issue, one of the most important is to understand and encapsulate the environmentally aware imagination within children's literature. The special issue features contributions from authors, academics and scientists who offer readings of environment within children's literature inspired by a conference on the same topic. For some, environment becomes synonymous with a series of other spatial and psychological factors, as in David Almond's "The Necessary Wilderness". Here Almond outlines his approach to the distinct and recurring presence of the wilderness within his work and comments that: "my job seemed to be to help shape a story that would allow children to go out into darkness and ... get them back home again safely" (112). Whilst the idea of 'home' does not reduce to child-adult binaries, much of Almond's discussion here hints towards one of the intriguing results of the third chapter of this thesis. In this chapter, I analyse Almond's relatively under-researched novel *My Name is Mina* and uncover, alongside an increasingly liberated usage of space, an increasing concern for the adult within children's literature. This is a somewhat unlooked for result and yet one which rises directly out of my methodological approach.

Another relevant text for this thesis, driven by the findings of a prior conference, is *Knowing their Place? Identity and Space in Children's Literature* (Doughty and Thompson) which aims to interrogate the identity of children through a geo-political framework of enquiry. This collection argues that for a child to understand their personal identity and place within the world, they firstly require an understanding of what place actually is (1). The editors, and contributors, to this volume place great emphasis on the relationship

between adult and child and the hierarchical Western model of childhood which positions the child as "subordinate to, and some might argue subject to colonization by, adults." (1). Though the intimation towards colonisation is one that I do not pursue within this thesis, I do however spend some time discussing the relationship between child and adult. Indeed, this idea of rationalising and understanding the role and identity of the "girl" resonates immensely with my research and the drive behind this thesis.

I find a key touchstone for my work within the research of Jane Carroll. *Landscape in Children's Literature* subtly and convincingly argues that to recognise the representation of landscape requires an understanding of the nature of landscape itself. She suggests that this understanding can be achieved through a reading of the elements of landscape, in which she recognises a series of topoi: the green, the lapsed, the roadway and the sanctuary (17). She then persuasively applies this approach in a sustained critique of the British fantasy writer Susan Cooper, a luminary of the second golden age of children's literature. Several of the case studies used in my research connect with Carroll's work and I am heavily influenced, on a methodological level, by her construction of landscape as a series of topoi. I apply her ideas around the sanctuary topos in my second chapter, where I discuss the representation of landscape in Enid Blyton's school stories, and map this against the idea of a tentative aesthetic of liberation. In her more recent "Spatiality in Fantasy for Children" (2017), Carroll reminds us that despite its recent visibility, the "spatial turn" has always been of interest towards scholars in children's literature (55) and highlights the natural affinity of spatially inspired critique with fantasy children's literature (56). The school story, encompassed in Carroll's nod towards "realistic fiction" (56), is naturally removed from such a focus and yet perhaps has more affinity towards fantasy fiction than may be recognised.

The school story is similarly "set within a fantastic realm" whilst also offering the opportunity to move "between a consensual reality and a fantastic space" (57). Whilst the implications of such a statement require a thesis of their own, I merely aim to assert the relevance of the school story, and of stories of schooling, at this point towards spatially inspired children's literature research, and the potential reach and relevance of this thesis' findings. Indeed, I do not deny that for reasons of methodology and thematic cohesion, this thesis works with a very specific corpus of literature. I do, however, deny the limited impact of the findings based on such specificities. It is also worthwhile emphasising at this point that despite the breadth of literature now investigating space and place in children's literature, no clear connection has yet been convincingly drawn between spatial critique and notions of periodization.

*Space and Place in Children's Literature, 1789 to the Present* (Sachiko Cecire et. al.) attempts to rationalise the diverse approaches to the analysis of landscape within children's literature by offering a "foundational study" of the field (14). Much of the strength of this volume comes from recognising the interdisciplinary nature of such foundational study, and the editors provide an effective mediation of such by including geographical readings, philosophical questions of space, and interrogations of adult-child power dynamics. Through my methodology, with its references to techniques familiar to both the humanities and social sciences, I aim to support this interdisciplinary focus. Indeed much of my subsequent analysis is driven by an urge to recognise and stimulate potential future interdisciplinary dialogues around both the representation of landscape, and the evolving state of children's literature.

It is also important to acknowledge that there exists a subset of relevant work which analyses the role of landscape and environment within the work of particular authors. Nolan Dalrymple, to take one such example, explores the representation of the North-East landscape within children's literature (*North-East Childhoods*) whilst his later work concerns itself with the thematic usage of this landscape by individual authors, such as Robert Westall ("North-East Childhood") and David Almond ("Birdmen"). Whilst Dalrymple's work is undoubtedly fascinating and relevant to the thrust of this research, much of it is driven by an interest in the authors' personal circumstances as well as the produced text. I adopt a contrary position within this thesis and instead attempt to centre my analysis in the analysed text itself. Indeed, in my discussion of Enid Blyton's school stories in chapter two I make an active attempt to release my critique from the critical discourse surrounding Blyton as author.

This thesis also touches on the heavily theorised issues of the adult-child relationship within children's literature, and the associated power dynamics (see Flynn, Grenby, Nodelman, Trites, amongst others). Initially, I accept that children's literature is written for the powerless by the powerful (Nikolajeva *Power 8*), and see the relevance of both acknowledging and potentially adopting an aetonormative stance in adopting such. A term proposed by Maria Nikolajeva, aetonormativity requires the understanding of the "adult normativity" of children's literature (8), and by implication a consideration of the weighted power dynamics between adult and child. It is important to note that this is not a new debate within children's literature, and that rather Nikolajeva offers a framework within which to understand it. Such a framework is appealing to spatial critique, a subject rooted within a clearly adult dynamic. As Edward Relph remarks, to understand place requires the

acknowledgement of "sameness in difference" (45); and to recognise such presupposes a form of communication sophisticated enough to communicate with a wide enough section of society in order to both gain and legitimise this recognition. Though I do not deny the communicative skills of the child, I do however see spatial analysis, and my role as a researcher of such, as being inherently laden with adult privilege.

It is useful to recognise that the work of Edward Relph provides offers an alternative reading upon this assertion. He argues that space is a phenomenological experience which "has content and meaning, for it cannot be divorced from experience and intentions" (10). This recognition of the ego, and its impact on understanding immediate space, starts to hint towards a childish understanding of landscape and thus the applicability of a non-aetonormative reading. It is here that I turn towards the work of Marah Gubar and her idea of the kinship-model which argues for child and adult to be understood from a position of shared understanding. As she writes: "instead of presuming that adults represent the norm and then investigating how children deviate from that norm... what happens if we regard the position that children generally inhabit as standard or shared" ("Hermeneutics" 300). Thus, in the case of agency, it becomes possible to understand how both adults and children are able to function and perform as "social actors" despite the restrictions of age upon that action (300). Clémentine Beauvais points out that the kinship model offers a useful "theoretical variable, at a time where it would be tempting to forgo its focus" ("Next of Kin" 266) and reminds us that it is not necessary to wholly adopt such, but rather consider its relevance. In one sense, such a discussion is unable to be wholly achieved within the remit of this thesis, yet I touch on the applicability of both models throughout this work. In particular, the third chapter of this thesis sees an overt recognition of the idea of



transgression within children's literature, an idea recognised by Beauvais (2013), Nikolajeva (2010) and Trites (2000) as being inherent towards the understanding of power.

Finally, a note on terminology. I am influenced heavily in my understanding of space and place in this thesis by the work of Edward Relph who, in 1976, reminded us that "there were almost no discussions about what 'place' means." (*Place and Placenessness*). As he writes: "my inclination now is to see landscapes not simple as revealing *either* place or placelessness, but everywhere as manifestations of *both* distinctiveness *and* standardisation. Place and placenessness exist in a state of dynamic balance". It is this state of dynamic balance that I investigate within this research, conscious of that place, and the recognition of such, is a resolutely human experience: "To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know *your* place." (1). Place, then, is a resolutely humanised thing; similarly, the recognition of space, requires an understanding of the relationship between space and human. For Relph, space can be experienced in a variety of forms: perceptual, experiential, geographically vertically, and horizontally. These axes of experience centre again upon the human interactions with such; for example, egocentric space is that which has "content and meaning for it cannot be divorced from experience and intentions" (10). I therefore read space as being a deeply human experience, both part of the formalised system and rhetoric of place making, and yet equally distinct from such: "part of a framework of *circulation*." (3). This system is, as Relph writes with some grace, "profoundly human and meaningful" (7) and as relevant towards my understanding of girlhood as it is for space and place, for as Beth Rodgers reminds us, "There have, of course, always been girls, but what it *means* to be a girl is not always the same thing across time and circumstance" (4). I would suggest that being a girl is as

profoundly human an experience as place-making, similarly located within a framework of circulation. Thus within this thesis, I do not attempt to locate the specificities elements of girlhood, nor to precisely define the notion of girl, but rather to explore the characteristics of juvenile feminine identity. It is interesting to note that in applying spatial critique towards these aims, I am part of an established tradition within girlhood studies and find several immediate points of connection. The most immediate of these is the inspirational work of Sally Mitchell who, in her study of girlhood between 1800 and 1915, embraces spatially inspired metaphor in order to understand the shape and nuance of *The New Girl*; an approach I hope to compliment in the opening chapter of this thesis. I also come into contact with those scholars such as Colleen Vasconcellos who use the idea of mapping in order to understand the global dynamics of girlhood (*Girlhood : A Global History*). Finally, and perhaps most potently, I situate this thesis alongside those who recognise that spatial critique can help to provide a "specificity to the very meaning of *girl*." (Rentschler and Mitchell 1).

## Chapter Outline

I open this thesis with a discussion of the asserted "first" Golden Age of children's literature in relation to *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and four of Angela Brazil's most typical school stories: *The Fortunes of Philippa*, *For the Sake of the School*, *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* and *The School in the Forest*. I argue that *The Secret Garden*, which "more clearly than any other single book, describes and celebrates the central symbol of the Arcadian movement" (Carpenter 189) also defies this label of Arcadian perfection. Similarly I argue that to read Angela Brazil's school stories as a clear evocation of Arcadian principles is, in fact, a partial reading of these texts. I suggest that the children's literature of the first golden age instead attempts to mediate between the child of nature (Carpenter; Green,) and the acculturated child borne of society (Gubar *Artful Dodgers* 7) and that this tension comes to render girlhood as a state of normative coercion where any apparent freedom is, in fact, inherently regimented and controlled.

The second chapter of the thesis shifts towards the mid-twentieth century and to a period that, I argue, functions as a second golden age of children's literature. I argue that the representation of landscape within the texts of this period can be characterised as a tentative aesthetic of liberation for girls. This aesthetic is a direct response both to the passing of the first golden age and to the increasingly radical context of mid-twentieth-century children's literature publishing (Reynolds *Left Out*). I substantiate this claim by analysing the *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* school stories by Enid Blyton. I begin by addressing the paucity of critical research on these texts, and challenge the tendency to subordinate them to the critical discourse on the author herself. This is not to deny the

relevance or legitimacy of such critique but rather an attempt to reposition these texts as important subjects of enquiry in their own right. I argue that the landscapes of both the *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* series depict a counter-cultural ideal of girlhood, which attempts to resist the prevailing norms and inherent orthodoxies of such. I then move to a discussion of *A Little Love Song* by Michelle Magorian (1991), which provides a valuable counterpoint to this chapter as a text which, despite being published in the early nineties, deliberately seeks to locate itself within the context of the second golden age. I suggest that this text depicts a landscape of transformative liberation and empowerment, informed both by its invocation of the mid-twentieth century and by the late twentieth-century context of its production. Whilst my appeal to *A Little Love Song* is not the most obvious methodological choice, I argue that the text in fact provides a valuable perspective upon the mid-twentieth century through its invocations of both the tropes and stylistics of this second golden age. In doing so, it challenges the idea of a temporally discrete golden age and instead poses the question as to whether a golden age can be recognised through thematic characteristics. A final justification for *A Little Love Song* lies in the way it looks towards my third chapter and in particular my reading of *Murder Most Unladylike*, a text similarly invoking a prior period of childhood and children's literature. Where *A Little Love Song* differs from *Murder Most Unladylike*, and earns its place in this chapter as opposed to elsewhere, is in its approach towards my assertion of a second golden age. Whilst *Murder Most Unladylike* is a novel which could not have existed as a text in the period of its setting, and thus offers a contemporary appropriation of a historical period, *A Little Love Song* instead seeks to remove itself from its contemporary context of production, offering a retrospective reading of the second golden age itself.

The third and final chapter of this thesis attempts to give substance and specificity towards claims for a contemporary and third golden age of children's literature (Akbar; Craig; Rankin). It is important to first note the difficulties of researching such an immediate phase of literature and those claims I make upon such are inevitably made without the benefit of hindsight nor retrospective considerations. To mediate these factors, I analyse two middle-grade novels, *Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens (2015) and *My Name is Mina* by David Almond (2010) which, as with the rest of my corpus, consider ideas of girlhood and the experience of mainstream and alternative education. Indeed, both novels find a clear space within the thematic trajectory of this thesis and illustrate how the relationships between girl, space and place comes to express an idea of transgression. I show how the transgressive act, and the apparently contradictory idea of permitted transgression, function as key characteristics of this third golden age of children's literature. This use of landscape, I go on to argue, supports an aetionormative reading of children's literature, namely a crisis of identity centred upon the increasingly emphatic presence of the adult.

*Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens is the first of a series of boarding-school mysteries set in the 1930s, concerning the adventures of two schoolgirl detectives. I argue that through its invocation of a former golden age of children's literature, the novel serves to conflate contemporary and historic representations of girlhood; yet *Murder Most Unladylike* is a resolutely contemporary text which invokes these historicised representations of girlhood with the liberty such a contemporary context of production allows. In contrast with *A Little Love Song*, *Murder Most Unladylike* offers a reading of the second golden age as the vehicle for a school story that otherwise belongs within its

contemporary frame of reference. I then move to a discussion of *My Name is Mina* by David Almond, a prequel to *Skellig*, which traces the experiences of home-schooled and idiosyncratic Mina McKee. I argue that this text can be similarly understood through the idea of transgression, emphasising the figurative representation of landscape within the novel and in Mina's own imaginative writing. I focus in particular upon 'The Glibbertysnark', a nonsense story of Mina's which results in her removal from mainstream education, arguing that rather than being nonsensical, this story in fact presents a key depiction of landscape within the novel and illustrates the role of the individual in understanding space. I show how Mina's transgressive status as an individual is subtly altered as the novel progresses, ending with her successful reintegration into society. It is, however, a reintegration characterised by noted traits of adulthood and thus comes at the expense of her formerly transgressive childhood.

I conclude this thesis by looking towards the future intersections of research focused into landscape and children's literature, and recognising the role this research can play in these discussions. I begin by acknowledging how the representation of the girl within popular children's literature has become increasingly self-reflective, and that this seems to support an increasingly aetnormative understanding of children's literature. I acknowledge the limitations of these findings, whilst pointing out that they nevertheless present several interesting implications for both the representation of girlhood, and children's literature as a whole. I conclude that, whilst my conclusion, perhaps, raises more questions than it answers, it underlines the relevance of applying spatial critique towards notions of the girl and girlhood.

# Chapter One: Looking for Arcadia

Stretching across the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom, the 'Golden Age' marked a shift in style and publishing model that inaugurated an idea of children's literature that we still recognise today. Texts published during this period were deliberately written for children, viewing childhood as a distinct phase in its own right, and thus rejecting the formerly dominant impulse to moralise and lecture. The Golden Age was first recognised and named thus in Roger Lancelyn Green's proto-history of children's literature *The Golden Age of Children's Books* (1962). Here he attempted "to chart some of the more or less definite islands off a portion of the mainland of our more generally recognized literary heritage" (60) and, in doing so, articulated the Golden Age (73). Green described this age as one in which children's literature evoked a green and Edenic landscape. Both the child located within this environment, and the reader of it, could learn to appreciate the innate joys of childhood as a distinct period of life; namely, to enjoy "the Spring for itself, not looking on it anxiously as a prelude to Summer" (69). Green's turn towards the language of landscape and the implications of setting as a way of understanding the Golden Age was a theme subsequently taken up by Humphrey Carpenter, who goes so far as to integrate landscape in the title of his review of the period, *Secret Gardens: a Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (1985). Carpenter argues that the novels of the Golden Age viewed children as in need of protection, in the broadest terms, from the consequences of the Industrial Revolution. Texts such as *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley (1863), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (1865) and *Peter Pan* by J.M Barrie (1911), were driven by an attempt to rebuff the corrupting influence of modern

industrial society, and as a consequence embraced rural, natural and bucolic settings and themes. Gardens, in particular, are crucial to Carpenter's discussion, and are conceived as spaces of Edenic seclusion and safety. His invocation of "a secret garden where no harm can come" (223) inevitably looks towards *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett which "more clearly than any other single book, describes and celebrates the central symbol of the Arcadian movement" (189). Yet I will suggest that this is only a partial reading of a complex text; that *The Secret Garden* in fact articulates a sense of unease about the role of the 'girl' and of girlhood during the Golden Age. This unease is largely ignored by Carpenter, who focuses his attentions not on exploring the complexities of the text but rather in critiquing the author, writing that "Mrs Burnett seems scarcely to understand" (189) or "comprehend that no Magic is needed to explain the potency of the Secret Garden" (190). In consequence, despite calling it the "last book which uses the Arcadian image quite so confidently" (190), Carpenter gives *The Secret Garden* just two pages of increasingly convoluted and recursive analysis. The garden is at first the "'the place of making' that lies at the heart of the Wild Wood" (189), a statement which positions it as a creative refuge within an ungovernable larger society; but then it is characterised as "the Waste Land." (189). Such a shift disregards the paradisiacal remove and refuge of the garden, instead rendering the landscape as a barren space of cultural and psychological desolation, most immediately akin to T. S. Eliot's poem of the same name. This is no garden in which to retreat from the ravages of contemporary society, but rather one that embodies the darkest and most culturally barren aspects of that society. Carpenter does not pursue the complexity and contradictions of this reading, preferring instead to withdraw with a further expression of his clear distaste for the author: the garden motif at the heart of *The Secret Garden* is, he airily states, "a symbol which greater children's writers than [Burnett] only



dared treat with the utmost delicacy, hinting at it, and reaching out towards it rather than grasping it" (190).

This chapter utilises this reductive and often androcentric discourse around the Golden Age as a provocation, and attempts to locate the "new girl" (Mitchell 3) and notions of girlish childhood within such. I will argue that *The Secret Garden* and the experience of Mary Lennox simultaneously accords with and denies much of the established Golden Age rhetoric, ultimately rendering the notions of Arcadia as unstable and inherently false. I focus my attention first on the representation of landscape as experienced by Mary Lennox, both in India and at Misselthwaite Manor. I then move towards a discussion of the role of the landscape in the emotional relationship between Archibald and Lilies Craven, before finally concluding with an analysis of the real world location of Great Maytham Hall, once the home of Frances Hodgson Burnett herself.

The second half of this chapter examines the work of Angela Brazil and several of her most typical school stories. For a thesis concerned with both the nature of girlhood, and the periodization of children's literature, the longevity of Brazil's career, with publication credits ranging from 1904 - 1946 poses an interesting methodological dilemma. Is Brazil an author of the first Golden Age, or is there the case for her to be considered as a participant of the second golden age? Indeed, a similar question could be asked of the other members of the 'Big Four'<sup>2</sup> (Knuth 123) with publication credits spanning 1921-1941 for Dorita Fairlie Bruce, 1922-1969 for Elinor M. Brent-Dyer, and 1907-1959 for Elsie Oxenham. Though I shall resolve much of this question as it relates to Angela Brazil in the chapter itself, I will content

---

<sup>2</sup>A term often used to describe the four epochal authors of twentieth girls' school stories: Angela Brazil, Elinor M. Brent-Dyer, Dorita Fairlie Bruce and Elsie Oxenham. It is notable that the 'Big Four' can occasionally, with the omission of Angela Brazil, become the 'Big Three' but that Enid Blyton is rarely considered as part of this group. The second chapter of this thesis, with its deliberate and sustained focus upon Blyton's school stories, hopes to address that sin of omission.

myself here with the assertion that Golden Age literature can be recognised thematically as opposed to temporally. Thus the work of Angela Brazil, for example, can be considered as bearing Golden Age characteristics despite stretching across a period where no Golden Age is commonly held to have taken place. In doing so, I place myself in opposition to established scholarship on the subject (e.g. Green, Carpenter) but find an intriguing point of connection with critics such as Eric Hayot who argues that periodization is a "collective failure of imagination and will on the part of the literary profession" (740). As he points out, the inherent limitations of periodization have seen "the tendency to extend rather than cross periods - the long eighteenth century, now longer than ever, the early modern, reaching ever backwards into the old medieval..." (740).

It is in this spirit of questioning that I turn towards my subject, the relatively unclassifiable and unquantifiable genre of the school story. This is a genre which does not easily fit with a romanticised conception of Arcadia, nor Golden Age influenced attitudes of periodization towards children's literature, and is thus summarily dismissed by many critics. It is only those critics who seek to rework the Golden Age and thus the implicit foundations of contemporary children's literature, as a space which not only recognises both the child of "cultural isolation" but also the child of "cultural context" (Gubar *Artful Dodgers* 7), that seek to locate the girl's school story within mainstream children's literature critique. In support of Gubar's work, and that of Rosemary Auchmuty, Juliet Gosling and David Rudd amongst others, I utilise Angela Brazil's school stories as an aid towards both understanding the role of the school story within the Golden Age, and the limitations of the Golden Age itself. I argue that Brazil's stories represent an attempt to harmonise two apparently incompatible states of childhood; the static and bounded Arcadia of the Golden Age, and a

contemporaneous sense of the unfixed and rapidly developing idea of childhood. I conclude, however, that this mediation is a largely unsuccessful endeavour and that any Arcadia rendered is largely illusory.

There are, of course, other authors who offer a similar grounding upon which to develop such a claim, but I choose Angela Brazil for specific reasons. The first of these is the length of her creative tenure as a children's author; her first novel *A Terrible Tomboy* was published in 1904, her first school story *The Fortunes of Philippa* was published in 1906 and her last, *The School on the Loch* was published in 1946 and thus becomes embedded in the discourse of what, I shall later assert, is a second golden age. She is also a female author, as is Frances Hodgson Burnett, and so contributes to the cause of gender parity in Golden Age scholarship (Gubar 6). For reasons of brevity I must regretfully neglect the contributions of other relevant female authors within the sector such as Charlotte M. Yonge, May Baldwin and Dorothea Moore, though I do emphasise the role of the female writer of school stories within the Golden Age is one which both requires and deserves a thesis of its own.

A further justification for my focus in school stories comes from the theorisations which exist around power. Maria Nikolajeva argues for the school story as a somewhat recursive genre, which adheres to cyclical patterns of power where the child must conform in order to reinforce and perpetuate those power structures: "yesterday's oppressed newcomers all too soon become head boy or girl and channel their revenge towards those younger and weaker." (Power 7). This assessment of the school story as a power-based norm is a valid, yet problematic interpretation of the genre. The school story genre has a microcosmic quality where the nature of wider society may be reproduced within a definite and limited space. In this first Golden Age of children's literature, those limits are, I suggest,

expressions of control which are perpetuated by the adult discourse that surrounds the nature of girlhood itself. This control becomes an emblematic expression of power within the text, made manifest through the introduction and management of humanised elements in a landscape. A flower in a garden differs from that within the wild; the former, for example, may appear free to self-seed and spread but does so within cultivated soil, and at the liberty of the garden owner. This is, I suggest, a useful approach within which to understand the school story, and particularly the school stories discussed within this thesis. These girls are agents of power, located within an adult understanding of that power. As such, they are not wholly subservient to that adult framework; but rather are subjected to its influence. As Clémentine Beauvais reminds us, the adult of children's literature "is not - or not just, and certainly not always - an omnipotent, manipulative, authoritarian, repressive, oppressive entity. Authoritative, yes - but not authoritarian." (*The Mighty Child* 3). As the trajectory of this thesis will show, the child, an inherently powerful individual within their own right, shall increasingly be enabled in expressing and maintaining their agency in relation to such authority.

*The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett opens in India, the familial and familiar environment of Mary Lennox and her socialite mother. This landscape is not equally known to both figures, however; Mary's mother "had not wanted a little girl at all" and thus for much of her life Mary is kept "out of sight as much as possible" and in the company of her Ayah (Burnett 1). This restriction upon Mary is not particularly comfortable for any of the parties involved and results in Mary becoming "as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived" (1) – the "worst of all" things to call somebody (2). Mary's childhood environment is thus characterised by tension; she is comfortable neither in the Western

society inhabited by her mother, nor in the Indian society of her Ayah. Mary's earliest attempts at play, in the form of a kind of gardening, exhibit this tension through the dominance of her bad temper. She "[sticks] scarlet hibiscus blossoms into little heaps of earth" whilst growing "more and more angry" at her Ayah's absence (2). These initial interactions with gardening, in a novel concerned with its redemptive powers, are futile and destructive acts. The blossoms and the earth are incidental; only the scarlet of the flower accords with Mary's increasing temper, while her focus of attention is directed away from the garden she is creating. As the text emphasises, Mary is playing at gardening (7) and such efforts are to be characterised as artifice and thus as empty, worthless and fruitless gestures.

Mary's second experience of gardening comes when she is at the family of a local clergyman. It is a brief sequence which bridges the gap between her mother's death and the journey towards England, and sees Mary once more play at gardening. As with her prior attempts at play, she is doomed to failure. She is alone and outside, "under a tree, just as she had been playing the day the cholera broke out" (7), when she begins to make "heaps of earth and paths for a garden" (7-8). The characteristics of Mary's interaction with the landscape around her are subtly nuanced. The garden itself has no flowers and is constructed solely of earth. Mary's focus is upon creating the stable underpinnings of landscape. As John Urry comments, paths are an expression of human interaction with a landscape; they symbolise an expression of stability and future intent through marking both the path which has "already been walked " and the "intention to return" (Urry 202). Mary's attempt at gardening here, with its precise detail, represents an urge for personal stability and orderliness, but she is disrupted in completing her efforts. One of the clergyman's

children, Basil, arrives and offers unwelcome aesthetic guidance on Mary's garden: "put a heap of stones there and pretend it is a rockery" (Burnett 8). Basil's assertion of control negates Mary's previous effort and her rare expression of personal agency, and the children naturally fall out. The resulting argument sees Basil refer to Mary as "Mistress Mary, quite contrary" (8), a nickname which stays with Mary throughout the rest of the novel. The adult characters immediately read this as a comment on Mary's personal character (9) while the allusion to the nursery rhyme itself, with its hints towards ideas of growth and fertility, is neglected. Mary's prior interactions with the barren ground of India have been characterised by a sense of futility, a characteristic which is transformed upon her arrival at Misselthwaite Manor where her interactions acquire a different timbre. She skips around the garden before pausing at a bed of bulbs: "she bent very close to them and sniffed the fresh scent of the damp earth. She liked it very much" (66). Her skipping, a notably childish mode of movement, juxtaposed with the reverent bow towards the bulbs, imbues the landscape around Mary with the sense of a particular authority. She is both allowed and able to express characteristics of childish behaviour for the first time in the novel and to do so without the fear of chastisement or interruption. Thus the landscape becomes characterised as a space of empowerment for Mary, yet it is an empowerment that is also controlled. Mary's unconscious acknowledgement of this constraint comes through her initial bow; an expression of subservience and deference to an as-yet-unrecognised other. The encounter with the bulbs leaves her changed: "She did not skip, but walked. She went slowly and kept her eyes on the ground" (66). This averted gaze and slow, steady movement is imbued with the same sense of deference. Mary is able to learn but must do so as a pupil, attending to the signs of growth in the landscape. It is important to recognise that these bulbs, these literal and figurative points of growth, are characterised as adult in nature,

having been originally planted by Archibald and Lilius Craven. In learning to recognise this, Mary is learning to recognise signs of adulthood and maturity, as embedded within the landscape, and to ultimately ally her behaviour with these: "She had found ever so many more sharp, pale green points, and she ... [became] quite excited... 'It isn't a quite dead garden,' she cried out softly to herself" (66). It is only upon leaving the adult-space of the secret garden that her childishness reasserts itself: "she ran lightly across the grass, pushed open the slow old door and slipped through it under ivy" (67). Much of this contrast between action and stillness, play and seriousness, becomes a key factor in Mary's relationship with landscape. It is not enough to attempt or play at gardening; rather, one must garden with the right set of qualities. In *The Secret Garden*, these qualities are grounded in the nature of the person doing the gardening. Mary's prior attempts at gardening have proven quite literally fruitless, for it is only at Misselthwaite Manor that her personal state of mind adapts to the landscape around her and combines with it to facilitate the act of appropriate, legitimate and suitably restrained gardening.

Though much of *The Secret Garden* seems to suggest an increasing sense of liberation and empowerment for Mary Lennox, a spatially inspired critique allows an alternative perspective. Mary is a character within a "drama for which others have written the script" (Price 12), and the earliest example of this can be found at the start of the novel. Mary is isolated in her bungalow as the cholera epidemic takes hold, and comes across a small snake "rustling on the matting" (Burnett 4). It seems "in a hurry to get out of the room [and slips] under the door as she [watches]" (5). Mary is left inside the bungalow, alone. Whilst the snake clearly references the Edenic motifs which underpin the novel as a whole, what is more specifically relevant at this juncture is its freedom of movement. Mary is

confined to the bungalow, unable to leave its limits, whilst the snake can enter and exit the building at will. Her bungalow is no Garden of Eden but rather a place of stasis within which Mary must remain until the adult authorities deem it appropriate to discover and subsequently release her. Alongside this period of entrapment, a stern lesson about the results of too much female freedom is underscored. Mary's mother is a "great beauty who [cares] only to go to parties and amuse herself with gay people" (1). Upon being informed of the cholera epidemic and that she should have left the area two weeks ago, she replies "I only stayed to go to that silly dinner party. What a fool I was!" (3). While her mother's inappropriate liberty results in her death, Mary's restriction within the bungalow results in her removal from India and the death of her childhood. In being severed from the known and experienced places around her, Mary becomes a tabula rasa to be re-written by the improving moral effect of the secret garden. She is only acceptable when within the environment of the garden, a controlled, walled space, subject to the patriarchal rule of the Cravens, and unacceptable when outside of it.

In discussing the representation of space and place within *The Secret Garden*, it is easy to deny the relevance of the house itself and focus upon the dominance of the garden. Yet Misselthwaite Manor plays a distinct part in the text and in particular, once more, in relation to Mary's journey towards pseudo-emancipation. This journey of growth is intimately linked with the landscape of the Manor and requires different registers of behaviour depending on whether Mary is located within or without the building. When with Colin, the housebound heir of the estate, Mary is fiery, stubborn and tempestuous. It is a mode of behaviour which recalls Mary's previously unsuitable Indian childhood and yet, within this context, is now deemed appropriate: "she was so un-hysterical and natural and



childish that she brought him to his senses" (153). Mary's connection with Colin and her role in bringing him back to health is viewed by Stephen Roxburgh as her "real achievement" (172) within the text. This androcentric reading of girlish purpose positions Mary as a symbol of fertility and fecundity and thus as fixed within the gendered boundaries of social expectation as within the spatial boundaries of the garden. For Roxburgh, Mary reaches a state of "communion and fulfilment in a fertile paradise" (173); yet other critics read Mary's conformity as a mark of emancipation, arguing that a certain power exists in "standing aside and letting someone else win" (Gunther 160). In both these readings Mary inhabits a position of power "which can *even* transform this dead and imprisoning labyrinth, and which can *even* restore the self-pitying, self-absorbed males who belong to it" (161). Adrian Gunther's argument hinges upon a reading of environment, rather than the agency of individuals, as the locus of power. The garden is "the domain that really holds the power, and on which all other domains, including the patriarchal great house, depend" (161). This is a more convincing reading of space because it recognises both the shift between the domestic and wild spaces of Misselthwaite Manor and the dominance of these spaces over the actions of the inhabitants. A garden is a controlled and formal space, created by a formalist intervention in a formerly wild environment. This formal landscape is juxtaposed with the wilderness of the moors, emphasising the secluded splendour of the walled rose garden. What Gunther fails to acknowledge is that the power within the walled garden is confined to its own sphere of control. The door is locked, the walls are high, and the patriarchal authorities have designated it as a forbidden space that exists in opposition to the house (Roxburgh 174). The secret garden's power is controlled and tightly constrained; it does not pass to the wider garden itself, nor to the house. Because Mary's sense of power, and indeed much of her practical self, is located within the garden, she is restrained

and her agency is curtailed. The walled garden remains walled, feminine power remains enclosed, and Mary's newly formed sense of empowerment remains strictly delimited. It is an empowerment constrained by ideas of "closure, imprisonment and instruction" (Price 5), and a repeatedly didactic one at that. This is a narrative concerned with locating the locus of power within the landscape and reminding Mary that she is only allowed to engage with that through circumscribed circumstance.

Mary Lennox, then, presents a problem to those such as Humphrey Carpenter who characterise *The Secret Garden* as a blandly Arcadian ideal. She is a character who seemingly accords with convention, and yet at the same time a problematic figure with unwelcome characteristics: femininity and childish independence. For Mary, Arcadian existence requires her to accept subjugation in order to become acceptable to society. However, this isn't the requirement of a fixed and eternal Arcadia (Carpenter; Green), but rather the expression of a society attempting to rationalise gender politics in a rapidly changing social context. As Danielle Price observes, there was an ideological crossover for the Victorians between ideas of "the perfect woman and the perfect garden" (5). She goes on to explore this hybridized politics of person and place, identifying its assumption that "perfection in women and nature requires enclosure, imprisonment, and instruction so that ultimately they will provide beauty and comfort" (5). My interpretation of space clearly accords with this reading. *The Secret Garden* has the appearance of being Arcadian but instead represents a complex attempt to mediate between that ideal perspective and the then contemporary social experience. Mary requires restraint and removal from the masculinised spaces of power, and her personal agency does not extend to those spaces. In fact, despite all of her physical, personal and emotional transformation, Mary at the end of the novel, as at the

beginning, remains hemmed in by the "dense darkness on either side" (Burnett 17). *The Secret Garden* may resemble an Arcadian ideal for some, but not for her.

One of the relationships which is most convincingly and coherently reflected in the landscape of *The Secret Garden* is that of Archibald and Lilies Craven. It is a relationship which underpins the novel throughout and is intertwined with spatial metaphor from its first mention: "He'd have walked the world over to get her a blade o' grass she wanted" (13). The relationship is set against both the landscape of Misselthwaite Manor and the Tyrolean valley where Archibald ultimately experiences his moment of personal revelation; here the Manor's walled garden figures as a space of romantic absence, a foil to the emotional maturation of Mary Lennox, destined to fill that absence.

The details of the tragic romance that triggers the locking of *The Secret Garden's* titular garden are well known. The walled garden was the province of Lilies Craven who, alongside her husband Archibald, worked the garden and refused the help of the household staff in doing so (40). The garden thus becomes a site of privileged intimacy; a space within which only the couple may be present. When Lilies becomes pregnant, her state is allied with the newly worked garden and its inherent fertility; yet her pregnancy is brought to crisis through her presence in that space. She is particularly fond of sitting in "an old tree with a branch bent like a seat on it ... [and] roses [growing] over it" (40), and one day, whilst sitting in this tree, she is struck by a falling branch. She dies the next day after the trauma makes her prematurely give birth to their son, Colin.

Mary learns of this history through her maid, Martha. Martha is initially reluctant to recount the story of the garden but, after a hesitant pause, tells Mary that "One of th' gardens is locked up. No one has been in it for ten years" (27). She skirts the reason behind

this peculiar circumstance, however: "Mr. Craven had it shut when his wife died so sudden. He won't let no one go inside. It was her garden. He locked th' door and' dug a hole and buried th' key" (27). It is noticeable that Mary, despite her own strong emotional connection with landscape, is unable to discover the story behind the landscape herself. Access to the garden is practically and metaphorically prohibited.

In her reference to the burying of the key, Martha touches upon one of the great gender dynamics that bisect the landscape of Misselthwaite Manor. As previously noted, the Manor can be read as a masculinised space, and the gardens as the province of feminine power. By burying the key within the female space of the gardens Archibald Craven returns ownership of the key to the absent feminine. According to Adrian Gunther's reading of the novel, again as previously discussed, this suggests a reinforcement of the power dynamics of the garden. All, in life or death, centres upon the natural Arcadia of the walled garden, and the human inhabitants of Misselthwaite Manor are fated to return to this landscape. However I would suggest instead that the burial of the key is an expression of masculine control imposed upon these gendered spaces. Archibald buries the key where it cannot be found by Colin, his housebound son; he does not give it to his gardener for safe keeping; nor does he throw it over the walls into the garden and thus lock the door for eternity. In fact he does not really bury the key. It is rather placed to be found.

Linda Parsons offers an intriguing reading of the romance at the heart of *The Secret Garden*, placing it within the fairytale tradition. She suggests that it can be read as an interpretation of Sleeping Beauty: "the love and devotion of Lilies and Archibald, the Queen and King, [are] to the foreground" (255), whilst Archibald's bereavement can be read as the "source of the cursed blackness that penetrates the manor" (255). Mary, the Prince figure

within this retelling, arrives at the Manor and begins to "cut through the rose bushes to gain entrance to the castle" (255) and thus awaken Colin (255). I turn to this reading because of its interesting and relevant interpretation of the landscape of Misselthwaite Manor.

Although the figurative landscape of a fairytale is clearly detached from the literal, much about the Manor does seem to support this reading. The overgrown plants, the locked gardens, and that evocative ten year period of isolation all invoke clear fairytale tropes. Yet these tropes are remote from the prosaic concerns at the heart of *The Secret Garden*.

Parsons's reading capitalises on the romance at the heart of the landscape of Misselthwaite Manor, but in doing so it neglects the practical realities of its locations. While the garden becomes a deregulated, wild space it retains a sense of the domestic orderliness of human intervention. Whilst there is undoubtedly an affective and romantic relationship between Archibald and Liliias as invoked by Parsons, it is governed by a concrete relationship to space; practical determinations overwhelm it. When the door is locked and the garden confined, it is punished for its emotional romanticism, not celebrated for it.

One of the most notable representations of landscape in *The Secret Garden* comes towards the end of the novel, where an unnamed figure is "wandering about certain far-away beautiful places in the Norwegian fiords, and the valleys and mountains of Switzerland" (Burnett 228). For ten years, he has "kept his mind filled with dark and heartbroken thinking" and refused to allow "any rift of light to pierce through" (229; 230). Whilst in a valley in the Austrian Tyrol, he finally finds respite from his emotional turmoil and, in the process, regains his identity: "Archibald Craven gradually felt his mind and body both grow quiet, as quiet as the valley itself" (230). Gazing at the "sunlit water, his eyes began to see things growing at its edge" (231). The reference here to Archibald's gaze

echoes a recurrent theme within the novel, in which characters shift from being passive consumers of their environment to being active participants in it. Mary opens the novel as a removed observer of her surroundings, unable to interact directly or effectively. She studies the snake, she does not interact with it; she studies the flowers and bulbs in the gardens before learning how to work appropriately with them. The initial remove, as intimated in the references to her vision, prepares for her subsequent redemption, which could not occur without that distance having been first established. Archibald Craven undergoes a similar personal transformation from passive attention to reflection upon what actually needs his attention. His ability finally to see the flowers, and thus connect to a symbolic "rift of light" in the landscape (229), is a rebirth that has taken some time for him to achieve. When Mary first arrives at the Manor, Archibald chooses not to welcome her in person: "He doesn't want to see her..." (18). It is an attitude facilitated by the staff: "You make sure that he's not disturbed and that he doesn't see what he doesn't want to see" (18). For Archibald, paying attention to Mary's arrival would disturb his attention to his grief; his neglect is also a refusal to accept the return of the feminine to the landscape of Misselthwaite Manor. He will not see Mary until he is able to displace his bereavement from his thoughts and accept the return of the feminine. Since the death of Lilies, the house and land have been marked by signs of the absent feminine. Her portrait is covered within Colin's bedroom, and her beloved garden is locked up and removed from public view. This is a landscape characterised by grief and longing for a feminine presence that, until Mary's arrival, is lost in the past. Mary represents the return of both the wife and child he has attempted to forget, and so exceeds the bounds of his grief and his grief-based reading of space, place and landscape.

It is only upon their second meeting, when Mary asks Archibald for "a bit of earth" (97), that the two start to connect. The change manifests itself in a shift of behavioural register, centred again upon the ideas of sight and seeing. Archibald finds himself concerned over Mary's wellbeing, passing "his hand quickly over his eyes" (97). His eyes are "almost soft and kind" as he finally assents to Mary's request; she is to have "as much earth as [she wants]" (98). Mary's reference to the garden expresses an urge towards the only cultural sphere open to her agency (Price 14). The tamed landscape (12) of the garden is also a safe space for her to express her nascent sense of personal identity because it is a space indelibly marked and managed by British cultural values. As Danielle Price notes, "Plunging her hands into English soil becomes a cure for creolization" (12), and through this cultural redemption Mary becomes eligible to be the subjugated, controllable feminine presence that both the garden and the Craven family requires. She is "a girl who, like the ideal garden can provide both beauty and comfort, and who can cultivate her male cousin, the young patriarch-in-training" (12); namely, a girl who is required to subvert her own personal desires and agency in order to reinforce the patriarchal status quo.

Archibald's rebirth in that distant valley is centred on a patch of blue flowers at the water's edge. He finds himself thinking of "how lovely it was and what wonders of blue its hundreds of little blossoms were" (Burnett 231). The simplicity and implicit purity of the flowers triggers the final stages of emotional transformation within him: "It was as if a sweet clear spring had begun to rise in a stagnant pool and had risen and risen until at last it swept the dark water away .... Something seemed to have been unbound and released in him, very quietly" (231). To recognise the flowers is to recognise the presence of Lilius's values within his present landscape and to accept his bereavement. In writing of the horticultural

vocabulary of the Victorians and their predilection for floriography, Parsons highlights the link between Lilies, the 'lily' and the associated ideas of purity and modesty. Through this natural coding of Lilies's presence, and Archibald's ability to finally recognise it, the spatial connection is clear. Lilies is "In the garden!" (233), and in one sense, that is where Archibald has been all along; it has just taken him a while to realise it. This reading chimes with Katherine Slater's argument that *The Secret Garden* is a translocal text, that is, a text which "manufactures an immediate and embodied locale constituted through multiple transatlantic and global networks, both literary and lived" (Slater 3). The locale is thus a "contested site" (4), shaped by the hybridised discourse of the localities manifested in it, so that the "ability to achieve emotional closeness" depends upon the ability to "[perform] local identity as simultaneously intimate and mobile" (3). Slater argues that *The Secret Garden* represents a dialogue between local and translocal environments, pitched "aggressively against inter-minded provincialism" (20). It is a convincing reading of the spatial dynamics which underpin the novel and, in particular, Archibald's journey of emotional growth. It is only upon his moment of connection with the landscape of the Tyrolean valley and his recognition of the topographical parallels between that space and Misselthwaite Manor, that he is subsequently able to reconnect and figuratively 'see' his home. Slater emphasises how adopting a translocal perspective allows us to understand place as "a mutually constitutive network where local place forms through both everyday, low-range perspectives *and* global exchanges" (5). Thus Archibald's valley becomes characterised as a local space despite its geographical removal; it is as much Misselthwaite Manor as the soil that Mary herself works with. Archibald's ability finally to 'see' the flowers enables his return and successful reconciliation with his son.



The walled garden was formed in response to the feminine instincts of Lilius Craven and following her death comes to symbolise an expression of the absent feminine within the landscape of Misselthwaite Manor; through Mary it provides a space of resurgent maternal warmth and encouragement for the formerly housebound and pseudo-orphan Colin. Archibald witnesses the change in his son upon his return to the garden at the end of the novel. The once crippled Colin, now vibrant and healthy, is re-birthed into the arms of his father from the gates of the garden (Boëthius; Parsons). For Archibald, much of his interaction with landscape at this point invokes an Edenic motif. The garden was a site of romance, sexuality and procreation from which he was expelled. This landscape, the "*real locus of power*" (Parsons 266), has thus fallen under juvenile control. Colin, the "young rajah" of the novel (Burnett 105), autocratically expresses this power through both his gender and social status. In Mary's case, power is manifest in a concern with motherhood and more specifically the issue of fecundity (Boëthius 188). It is a conclusion supported by many of the relationship structures established by the novel. Mary and Dickon come to re-enact the relationship of Lilius and Archibald through their parallel concern for the wellbeing of Colin. Mary's relationship with Dickon, and the improving and beatific presence of his mother, enables her to act as an apparent mother for Colin. It is important to emphasise that this maternal coding is not limited solely to Mary through her gender, but also Dickon and the garden itself (Silver 193). Despite its initial appearances to the contrary, *The Secret Garden* is clearly a "novel about mothering" (193), and expends considerable effort to achieve this by rendering positive depictions of motherhood, either through practical example or thematic representation. The garden is able to restore people to health by providing a form of figurative mothering. It is an ability which is presented with a strong caveat about understanding the limits of that power; the power is limited to certain

individuals and restricted to the walled garden itself, indirectly reflecting the role and status of women within Misselthwaite Manor. As Archibald and Colin reconcile, they return to the house: "Across the lawn came the Master of Misselthwaite, and he looked as many of them had never seen him. And by his side ... Master Colin!" (Burnett 242). Mary's absence within this scene is marked; she is spatially restrained within the garden and denied a participatory role in this final moment of resolution. Feminine power, fecundity, and maternal strength is to be celebrated within the environment of the garden itself but these powers and patriarchal power are antithetical in the wider world.

Any analysis of landscape and environment within *The Secret Garden* also requires a consideration of its potent connections to a real-world landscape, namely the walled garden of Great Maytham Hall<sup>3</sup>. Located beyond the figurative landscape of the novel, and within a literal and accessible context for the reader, the Hall raises the question of the role of real-world landscape within the novel; I suggest that understanding the connection between the real and fictional aids in understanding "the story somehow" (Burnett 100). The Hall itself is located in Rolvenden, Kent and has existed in some state since the middle ages. The estate sank into an increasing state of dilapidation before being redesigned and rebuilt in 1909 by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Following a period of rejuvenation, the estate once more sank into disrepair before being purchased in 1965 for restoration. The modern estate is now divided into a series of luxury apartments and privately owned houses with the present-day gardens still recognisable as Lutyens's work, though substantially different from the landscape Francis Hodgson Burnett experienced during her own tenure between 1898 and 1907. The walled garden was one of the few elements to survive Lutyens and the subsequent redesign,

---

<sup>3</sup> As Katherine Slater rightly highlights, Great Maytham is not the only walled garden encountered by Burnett; in light of this and the impossibility of quantifying inspiration, I position Great Maytham as a potential real-world referent for the secret garden, not its sole and definitive source.

persisting as a floral garden until the Second World War where the spirit of Dig For Victory prevailed and the roses were replaced with vegetables.

Much of the literature surrounding Great Maytham Hall plays heavily upon its connection to *The Secret Garden* (Parsons; Historic England; Roxburgh; Thwaite). It often seems to be driven by an urge to establish the current gardens as the definitive and enduring expression of *The Secret Garden* and thus fix a palpable expression of Arcadia within the 'garden of England', namely the Kentish countryside. For Edward Hyams, an advocate of organic principles and opponent of new forms of mechanised agriculture, the linkage between Arcadia and England was a natural and inevitable connection to make. The garden of Eden was, after all, driven by English design principles:

Eden was, clearly, an English garden ... a natural garden of all manner of beautiful plants, a garden whose charm can only have depended on those plants, on the lie of the land, and the disposition of pleasant waters. (9)

The nationalistic hyperbole of this argument aside, Hyams offers an interesting reading of the Garden of Eden. He understands English garden design principles through their imitation and evocation of Eden (10), whilst the Hellenic garden moved away from this natural idyll to represent a space of human-imposed control where "the good life [was] what man makes it" (9). If this distinction is pursued then the English garden becomes an expression of longing which needs to be understood both as a lesser copy of that Edenic perfection, and as a space that is never quite complete in itself. The urge to fix Great

Maytham Hall as having 'inspired' *The Secret Garden* adheres to such a reading of space, the link between the Hall and text overlaying the real landscape of the estate with the idea of the fictionalised landscape represented in the novel. To study the landscape of Great Maytham Hall is then to engage in a negotiation between reading the real landscape through the filter of the fictional landscape, and reading the fictional landscape through the filter of its real-world source. Both readings can co-exist and inform each other, but they are not equivalent; to read the landscape as a discursive environment situated between the fictional and real is to ultimately privilege one landscape above the other.

During Burnett's residence at Great Maytham Hall she turned her own hand towards the landscape and began the renovation of her newly found Arcadia (Thwaite 183). The brick walls of the gardens were "leaning and lichen covered" (179) and the old walled rose garden had "reverted to wilderness" (183). During Burnett's tenure it was restored to a cultivated state, and "the ground underneath the twisted, leaning old apple tree ... [was] cleared of all its weeds and thorns and sown with grass" (183). The reclaimed gardens became a "beloved space" within which Burnett experienced an apparent creative idyll (215). Much of *The Shuttle* and *The Methods of Lady Walderhurst* were written here, whilst *Sara Crewe* was transformed into *A Little Princess* and *The Dawn of Tomorrow* was completed (182). As Anne Thwaite notes, the rose garden also witnessed a relationship between Burnett and a robin "who would come to take crumbs from her hand" (182). This note is clearly intended to evoke the robin that is so central to *The Secret Garden*, and thus fix the novel directly to the situation of Great Maytham Hall, but in fact illustrates a conflation between the fictional and literal that is detrimental to both landscapes. For Humphrey Carpenter, such a conflation is inevitable and his writings on Beatrix Potter

illustrate, perhaps unconsciously, its effects. Potter's gender makes her a complex figure within Carpenter's heavily masculinised discourse of the 'Golden Age,' and his subsequent reading of her work serves only to increase that complexity. Potter inhabited a "real Arcadia" in Cumbria and thus "There was no need to be yearningly nostalgic about a childhood paradise in her stories: she had her feet planted on the soil of an adult one" (Carpenter 140). Yet in merging these two landscapes together, Carpenter denudes the distinct relevance of each environment and problematises his overall reading of the Golden Age. The Arcadian landscape, which represents freedom and liberty for the child, is here made accessible from the adult perspective and so comes to represent the opposite. Carpenter almost acknowledges this contradiction when it comes to Beatrix Potter, but he denies it, quite wholeheartedly, with Frances Hodgson Burnett. For him, *The Secret Garden* remains the eponymous Arcadian novel and he has no interest in exploring the limits of this statement, or indeed the extent to which he challenges his own argument. But *The Secret Garden* does indeed enact its own version of the contradiction latent in the Arcadian ideal, depicting a childhood that is both alternative, and mainstream; liberated, and yet carefully controlled.

In this second half of the chapter, I move towards a discussion of one of the theoretical absences of the first Golden Age - namely, Angela Brazil and the genre of the girl's school story. The school story is a genre that does not fit comfortably into the idea of the Golden Age, and it is perhaps unsurprising that it is largely absent from most analyses of this period. For Jacqueline Rose, the Golden Age was best embodied by J.M Barrie's *Peter Pan*, a text which encapsulated the "cult of childhood" in its representation of the eternal child (43). The cult of childhood presented 'the child' as a superior, idealised and socially

isolated being, an idea brought into existence by adults' psychological need for such values (11). Rose's argument is buttressed by a complex hybridization of multiple texts, even while it seems to centre upon a reading of Peter Pan as *character* as opposed to text (Rudd, "Children's Literature" 293). What is most interesting for my purposes is the somewhat familiar contradiction in her approach towards the role of popular fiction in the Golden Age for, in arguing for children's literature as a culturally 'safe' space, Rose legitimises a retreat from critiquing the culture from which refuge is sought and instead focuses her attention on critiquing the nature and structure of the cultural safe-house she posits. This 'legitimised retreat' from a contextual understanding of children's literature is something that Humphrey Carpenter also engages in; but if, as he suggests, "all children's books are about ideals" (1), then the referenced texts of *Secret Gardens* seem to suggest that some are more so than others. Carpenter's preference is for the introspective fantasy (16), which aligns neatly with his argument, but he is too readily inclined to marginalise those texts which do not fit comfortably within his framework. The school story writers of the golden age, amongst them L.T. Meade, Thomas Hughes and Angela Brazil, are acknowledged and then briefly dismissed: their "breezy, optimistic adventure [stories], [are] set firmly in the real world (though greatly exaggerating certain characteristics of this world)" (15). Carpenter does not entirely disregard texts of this nature, but his marked preference for the fantasy novel inevitably neglects "realistic fiction" (15). Jacqueline Rose similarly acknowledges the exclusion of a number of named forms from her argument, citing "folklore, nursery rhyme and nonsense" (139), but this limited concession fails to acknowledge genres of children's literature outside of these categories. It is only much later after the efforts exerted by Marah Gubar, David Rudd, Rosemary Auchmuty, Juliet Gosling amongst others, that both popular fiction and the school story finally gain a secure place in the critical landscape. It is

to Marah Gubar I turn to at this instance, and her assertion that the authors of the golden age conceived

of child characters and child readers as socially saturated beings, profoundly shaped by the culture, manners and morals of their time, precisely in order to explore the vexed issue of the child's agency, given their status as dependent, acculturated beings. (*Artful Dodgers* 5-6)

Such an interpretation challenges prior affirmations of the golden age as a celebration of innocence and introspection (Carpenter 19), arguing instead for the child as a product of context, and invariably influenced by such. Gubar's reading of the domestic environment within children's literature is of particular interest to this chapter, touching as it does upon the "good and bad influence exercised on children by peers, parents, and various kinds of teachers" (*Artful Dodgers* 5). She sees the figure of the child as a savvy and culturally smart individual able to understand complex literary techniques and a wide range of cultural references (7), and offers a reading of the golden age that challenges the dominant myth of miraculous autonomy for the child (5), helping to legitimate my interest in the school story genre within this chapter. This brings me to Angela Brazil, an author who, in her own particular way, drove a stylistic shift within the sector that helped develop the blueprint for school stories yet to come. I will discuss four of Brazil's most typical school stories: *The Fortunes of Philippa*, *For the Sake of the School*, *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* and *The School in the Forest*, and show how these texts attempt to mediate

between Arcadian notions of childhood and opposing ideas. By attempting to express conflicting ideas of girlhood, the texts reveal both sides as unfulfilled and unsustainable ideals. Girlhood is ultimately depicted as a state of normative coercion in which apparent freedom is, in fact, inherently regimented and controlled.

Angela Brazil's *The Fortunes of Philippa* marked a fundamental shift within the school story genre and the expression of a "new exhilaration" (Cadogan and Craig, *Women* 24), in contrast to the previously dominant urge towards moralistic didacticism (*You're a brick* 111). Brazil's "wild, impulsive and sometimes transgressive heroine[s]" were figures of change and verve, independent of spirit and resolutely adolescent in their outlook (Simons 167). In attempting to accurately depict childhood as a state of being in its own right, Brazil found a "winning narrative formula" (172). Published in 1906, *The Fortunes of Philippa* was Brazil's second novel and her first specifically focused upon the girl's school story. It opens with the eponymous heroine looking out onto the landscape of her South American home. Lemon trees, framed by the distant mountains and bright blue sea, together with a crowd of bright flowers, seem to look back at her (9). It is a vivid scene from which Philippa is soon to depart; a motherless girl, as befits the genre, she is to be educated in England. She leaves the grave of her mother "under the shade of the campanile" (11), and kisses her father goodbye; upon her arrival in Liverpool she is met by her Uncle, and they journey together to London through a landscape of "green fields and hedgerows, ... picturesque villages and churches, ... smooth rivers and ... quiet pastoral scenery" (21). Following a two year acclimatisation period with her new relations, Philippa is sent to continue her education at The Hollies, a select day school located in the English countryside (40).



In this rapid sequence, Brazil detaches Philippa from her established familial space and places her in an unfamiliar landscape. Her home in Argentina is characterised by vibrant, bright and often jarring colours whilst the English landscape is one of subdued and muted hues. It is not until her arrival at the school that a stable point of reference for Philippa is introduced, and it is a reference grounded in topography. Both her home and *The Hollies* look upon distant hills and a horizon marked with trees, the ocean of Argentina becoming an English river located docilely in the distant landscape. Through such spatial parallels, *The Hollies* is established as a familiar and safe space for Philippa. Buttressed by this connoted familiarity, she makes herself at home within her new environment. She is a "jolly sort of girl" (72) who thrives both at school and during the school holidays, which she spends in the countryside home of her new friend, Cathy. Whilst at the latter location, Philippa is described as being always "ready to ride, fish or tramp miles over the heathery moors" (72), and is as able to discuss botany as she is to talk to Cathy's younger brothers.

This representation of a healthy, happy and obedient girlhood located within a stylised landscape of Arcadian bliss, located at some remove from highly populated environments, is a typical characteristic of Brazil's work. Many of her later novels, even when set in more urban and densely populated locales, still show a preference for rural and bucolic settings.<sup>4</sup> For Gillian Freeman, this was a problematic tendency of Brazil's. The writing of these scenes was "ultimately destructive and unconvincing" and Brazil's talent lay elsewhere: "[her] forte was her girls" (79). Yet Freeman does not seem to acknowledge how the rural setting facilitates an exploration of character; as Humphrey Carpenter shows,

---

<sup>4</sup> *The Girls of St Cyprians*, for example, opens in a notably urban context, yet much of this novel also concerns itself with a concerted effort to relocate the heroine from her familiar town to a more rural environment, by the means of a romantic personal mystery propitiously located within the family's stately home.

locating the child character within the countryside offers a myriad of dramatic opportunities. The most potent of these is to allow a recreation and repurposing of the Genesis story (9). The child character, within a "beautiful and numinous" landscape where "growing up becomes synonymous with the loss of Paradise" (9), both forms and participates in a new creation myth. Philippa's "expulsion" from Paradise (9) adopts the familiar structure of such a monomyth, but the conclusion of the novel challenges this through its reassertion of Paradise around Philippa. As with the opening, she is shown studying a landscape (Brazil, *Fortunes* 206); the golden sands of South America have been replaced by the golden sands of the English coast, and the newly formed English garden has been sown with "vibrant flowers" (207), while lilies, with their floriographic symbolism of purity and virginity, have been planted. Philippa reflects that she "would not change its hills and its fresh breezes for all the brightness of southern skies" (207). In one sense, she has not been required to; through the establishment of a topographical parallel between England and South America, the Paradise of her former home has been re-established and her apparent return to Arcadia is complete. Yet it is also different from the paradisaical landscape she once knew. Her mother remains buried abroad, but her father, presumed dead in an accident, providentially returns, granting Philippa a partial facsimile of Arcadia. To adopt Humphrey Carpenter's phrasing, she cannot return to her "secret garden" (223) but is instead allowed to return to a version of it.

*The Fortunes of Philippa* shows another key characteristic of Brazil's novels, namely the development of a curriculum that is aware of its place within the local landscape and the ability to directly demonstrate the benefits, or otherwise, of this. The curriculum of *The Hollies*, for examples, combines "the very best points of a thoroughly modern course of

study with the rigid rules and exemplary behaviour of a past generation" (54). Pupils learn chemistry within "well-fitted laboratories" (54) alongside darning and sewing (54), and in the summer term the girls walk in formal crocodiles every morning to "go and drink the waters for which Helston Spa was famous" (55). The pressure of this restrictive and intensive curriculum, however, proves to be too much for Philippa. After a spell of fainting, ascribed to "overwork" (162), the teaching attitude of the school is noticeably relaxed. The once-formal walks become exuberant "rambles over the hill or in the beautiful woods by the river" (162) and a disliked autocrat of the former regime is replaced:

Miss Percy had mysteriously disappeared, and her place was filled by a new teacher who was fond of natural history, and who encouraged us to find specimens of stones, leaves, or flowers, explaining them with so much enthusiasm that the stupidest girl could not fail to be interested. The new scheme answered well; the extra time given to outdoor recreation was not wasted, for we went back to our books with fresh zeal; and I think we really got through as much work as we had done before, if not in the actual number of pages learnt, at any rate in the amount we remembered afterwards. (162)

The girls are trained, through this hybrid between the orthodox education of the mind and a more unorthodox approach to female physical education (Auchmuty, *The World of Girls* 80), in understanding the natural and formal expectations of the world in which they live. It is important to acknowledge also that though real world curricula was increasingly

influenced by progressive attitudes, these attitudes had not yet wholly nor convincingly crossed into the school story genre prior to Brazil's efforts. As can be seen in Brazil's coy and often oblique autobiography *My Own Schooldays*, this new approach to girls' education was a clear source of both inspiration and envy: "When I go to see modern girls' schools, and know what jolly times they have with games and clubs and acting, I feel I missed a very great deal" (149). In depicting such a successful alternative education, and the downfalls of a more rigid approach, *The Fortunes of Philippa* challenged conventional preconceptions about girlhood. This nascent attempt to embrace a new form of childhood existence came to characterise Brazil's 'new look' for the genre; as noted by a diverse range of critics (Simons; Auchmuty; Gosling; Cadogan and Craig), these texts both recognised and celebrated the energy of girlhood.

Yet all girls grow up and for Philippa, her fate seems to be one marked by gendered conventions. She is destined to keep house for her father (207) and is blissfully happy (208). A final note of independent hope rests upon her personal plans, which look outward towards civic and community pride:

"We do not want to fritter away our lives in that aimless fashion which girls sometimes do when school-days are over, and we have many plans for our own and the village improvement" (207)

*The Fortunes of Philippa* is a novel which celebrates a deeply conventional idea of girlhood and yet, even at this early stage of Brazil's career, also offers an alternative mode

of expression. Independence and personal liberty are gained and have practical impact, albeit within narrowly restricted circumstances.

The revolutionary aspect of Brazil's educational perspective is perhaps most cogently expressed in *For the Sake of the School* (1915). The titular school in this instance is The Woodlands, a boarding school located within the secluded environment of a rural Welsh valley where the landscape is rhapsodically characterised with Arcadian values. The school itself is located in a "beautiful glade, planted with oaks" (20) and intersected by a "mountain stream, tumbling in little white cascades between the big boulders that formed its bed, and pouring in quite a waterfall over a ledge of rock into a wide pool" (25). As a direct consequence of its idyllic location, there is a cultural trend at the school to appreciate the natural environment (8); an aesthetic perhaps most noticeably expressed during the girl's journey to school. For Pat Pinsent, the journey is a key chronotope of the school story genre, marking "the boundary between home and school territory" (13). This space, a "kind of liminal time-space zone, in which, by the inevitably scattered nature of authority, no one is in total control and associations of characters are provisional" (13), allows the characters to move from the control of the family to that of the educational authorities. The journey to the Woodlands is a lush and romantically rendered affair in which the girls initially take a train to a small rural station in Wales, then continue on foot, entering a part of their journey which is "a particular source of pride to the school" (*For the Sake of the School* 16):

To the south stretched the wide pool of the river, blue as the heaven above where it caught the reflection of the September sky, but dark and mysterious where it mirrored the thick woods that shaded its banks. Near at hand towered the tall,

heather-crowned crag of Cwm Dinas, while the rugged peaks of Penllwyd and Penglaslyn frowned in majesty of clouds beyond. (16-17)

The environment of the school is thus not characterised as solely located within the building itself, but rather performatively manifested through the girls' relationship with and reading of the local landscape. Comparison with the work of similar authors within the genre reveals the marked difference of Brazil's work. The school stories of L.T. Meade, to focus on one such precursor, tend to represent the journey as a period of dramatic and starkly rendered emotion. In *A World of Girls: The Story of a School* (1886), Hester experiences a lonely carriage ride to school, eventually arriving in darkness: "when the gates were shut behind them by a rosy-faced urchin of ten, she once more began to feel the cruel and desolate idea that she was going to prison" (14). Priscilla of *A Sweet Girl Graduate* (1891) endures a similarly traumatic journey which ends with her being unceremoniously "deposited ... at the back entrance of Heath Hall" (13). In *Betty Vivian: A Story of Haddo Court School* three bereaved siblings are forced to move from Scotland to London, following the death of their aunt. They arrive in London "late in the evening" and the light in the carriage seems "to throw a shadow on ... [Betty's] miserable face. She was very young - only the same age as Sir John's dear Fanny; and yet how different, how pale, how full of inexpressible sadness was that little face!" (36). Whilst in her own way, L.T. Meade challenged the dominance of the journey trope by locating many of her schools within the home and thus a familiar environment for many of her readers, *For the Sake of the School* by Angela Brazil adopts a different approach. It suggests that the journey can be considered as part of the environment of the school itself and thus an extension of its educational

control. That such authority is located within adult hands returns us clearly to the idea of aetnormativity (Nikolajeva "Theory"). The girls of *The Woodlands* possess the ability to appreciate and recognise beauty, but they do so only under the tutelage and facilitation of the adult educational authorities.

*For the Sake of the School* also touches upon ideas of appropriate femininity and behaviour in the girls' school story, through its representation of a Camp Fire Guild. Originally developed in America, the movement stemmed from an urge to provide girls with the same opportunities for physically enriching activities as the popular Boy Scouts organisation offered boys. Yet Camp Fire also gave girls the opportunity to "serve the community, the larger home, in the same ways that they have always served the individual home" (*The Book of the Camp Fire Girls* n.p). For Cadogan and Craig, Camp Fire was problematic and something akin to a long con: girls were "duped into investing drudgery with romantic overtones" (*You're a brick* 160), while much of the movement's attraction depended upon its appeal to the "childhood impulse [of] dressing up" (159). It is a reading of the movement which is hard to deny; much of its representation by Brazil characterises the girls as participants in a rhetoric of domesticity. However, much of this rhetoric is ultimately undercut by the complex position that the Camp Fire Guild holds within the novel; what remains instead is an attempt to mediate between dominant patriarchal values and the potential to be found within an apparently liberated notion of girlhood.

This complexity comes to light early in *For the Sake of the School*, when a new girl, Rona, finds her peers gathering wood. Unaware of what these efforts symbolise, Rona assumes they are lighting a camp fire for practical purposes and offers to help with characteristic alacrity: "I've made 'em by the dozen at home, and cooked by them too. Just

let me know where you want it, and I'll set to work" (21). She is rebuffed by a fellow pupil who tells Rona, "This fire is a very special thing. Only Wood-gatherers may bring the fuel. No one else is eligible" (21). Rona's "backwoods" (23) skills are rendered abnormal and thus unworthy of the Camp Fire rituals. It is unsurprising that Una<sup>5</sup>, who is deeply immersed in the Camp Fire principles, is encouraged to mentor Rona and acculturate this raw material into a form more acceptable within the school's environment: "Every diamond needs polishing. What an opportunity for a Torch-bearer!" (23).

The depiction of the Camp Fire meeting is saturated with a vocabulary of obedience and obeisance. A girl must arrive at the "open green space in the glade ... quietly and with a certain sense of discipline" (21). Discipline is firmly regulated by the girls themselves: "if any loud tone or undue hilarity made itself heard, it was instantly and firmly repressed by one or two who seemed in authority" (21). It is a curiously contradictory scene: on the one hand, the girls are empowered to hold the meeting independently, whilst on the other hand, the rhetoric of the adult-sanctioned Camp Fire movement tightly controls the manner in which they do this.

Following the conclusion of their meeting, the girls engage in a concert. They perform songs which are "delightful in the open air ... and step-dances [which have] a weird effect in the unsteady light of the waning fire" (27). The concert continues deep into the evening and, as the moon rises and the "silver beams [catch] the ripples of the stream" (27), the ideologically burdened scene reaches a visual apogee. The landscape around the girls is seen to participate in the ritual of the Camp Fire: the "gentle rustle of the leafy boughs ...

---

<sup>5</sup> One of the key edits made in the Armada reprint of *For the Sake of the School* was to rename Ulyth as Una. As all references to the text are made to the Armada edition within this section, I will retain this edit and refer to her as Una throughout.



and the persistent tumbling rush of the stream" (22) sound "like a faint orchestral accompaniment of Nature for the ceremonial" (22). In merging the theatre of the Camp Fire ritual with the landscape, the scene delivers a moment of unadulterated Arcadian bliss.

A noticeable characteristic of the Camp Fire is that no staff are present. Located deep within the school grounds and thus absented from the immediate space of the school building, the environment is governed by other controlling influences. The natural landscape, the object of cultish worship at the school (8), provides a basic level of authoritative influence upon the girls. A second influence comes from the presence of a "trustworthy outsider" (22), Mrs. Arnold, "young, very fair, graceful and golden-haired" (23), who has knowledge of the Camp Fire movement from her former life in Pennsylvania. She is "delighted to pass on its tradition to British schoolgirls" (22), functioning both as the promulgator of an improving code of behaviour for the girls of Woodlands and as an external observer of events. In the latter capacity, she comes to embody the wider perspective of society upon the girls, whilst being herself an ideal of femininity, married and yet able to remain, as Angela Brazil once described herself, "an absolute schoolgirl in [her] sympathies" (Freeman 18).

Whilst at the Camp Fire ceremony, Mrs. Arnold is seated on a "throne of state ... made of logs and decorated with ferns" (23), set within an "open green space in the glade" (23). Following Mrs. Arnold's enthronement, the environment around her transforms: "the trees might have been the pillars in some ancient temple, with the branches for a roof" (24). The religious overtones of the scene are unmistakable. The married Mrs. Arnold is placed at the centre of the landscape and paid tribute by the waiting girls. The natural environment around them mutates into a religious building and thus a manmade environment where

previously there was none. Mrs. Arnold as the sacred feminine, both imperious and benevolent, confirms Cadogan and Craig's view that the Camp Fire league provided training in servitude and very little else. The movement's comparison to a religious order makes its means of subjugation clear:

Any girl was eligible as a candidate, but before she could gain admission to even the initial rank she had to prove herself worthy of the honour of membership, and pass successfully through her novitiate. (39).

For Michelle Smith, the tension between the domestic and the wilderness manifests changing attitudes towards girlhood whilst remaining deeply aware of the gendered expectations of society. In mediating this tension, Brazil attempts to connect between the "old and new visions of femininity" (Smith 156), seeking to privilege alternately the orthodox and unorthodox, whilst never wholly favouring either. This view is also expressed, albeit less emphatically, by Judith Humphrey, who argues that the school story is a genre providing "resistance and subversion" (25), but that the subversive impact of these novels is limited because they are "written *by* women *for* girls and women *about* girls and women" (44). Such a sentiment is shared by Patricia Tinkler who highlights how the subversive elements at play within the genre are limited due to the pull of the domestic environment upon reader, writer and content (1). I find such arguments to be replete with problematic assertions, centring upon the narrow construction of the ideal implied reader, and also in their implicit denial of feminine power. Such assertions seem to implicitly recognise a

patriarchal and andocentric framework of reference, thus rendering the domestic and implicitly feminine as a queer, unknown and increasingly irrelevant other. Brazil's depiction of an unorthodox idea of girlhood, reflecting the increasingly progressive attitudes of the real world, offers the clear chance to deny such limited reading of power and impact; as indeed, does the genre of girl's school stories as a whole. To locate the genre as being subject to the influence of an external gendered dialogue feels like an increasingly reductive effort.

*For the Sake of the School* represents, then, an attempt to mediate between the poles of wilderness and domesticity whilst ultimately favouring neither. The Camp Fire movement is an adult-sanctioned expression of otherness; a form of permitted difference, and thus loses much of its weight when it comes to any idea of individuality; girls were allowed to participate in physically enriching activities providing that they maintained an ability to serve their home and community. In some key senses it connects with the Arcadian impulses of the golden age, keeping the child under controlled circumstances, whilst in other respects it differs drastically, offering a divergent expression of childhood. The child could escape the domestic environment; activity was not constrained by the terms of home but able to be pursued beyond it. Whilst this reading is ultimately at odds with the still bounded landscape of *For the Sake of the School*, it is still a significant expression of difference. In presenting such opportunities for divergence and individual expression, Brazil resists the dominant trends of the Golden Age even as she acknowledges them.

Brazil has been characterised as an author who was able to "make participation in the [first world] war seem colourful and inviting to girl readers" (Cadogan and Craig *You're a brick* 178); titles such as *The School by the Sea* (1914), *The Luckiest Girl in the School* (1916)

and *A Patriotic Schoolgirl* (1918) all characterised the First World War as an experience of feverish excitement and nationalistic pride. *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* (1942), however, marks a stark shift in timbre, depicting the Second World War in very different tones. From its opening pages, the novel seeks isolation and safety; an evacuated school is relocated to "a very fine example of one of the former 'stately homes of England'" (17), on the border between England and Wales. The building, Maenan Grange, "one of [those] small fortresses" (17), was once only accessible by a drawbridge (23), though it can now be accessed by car. It is a relatively isolated building, set close to a few nearby farms and a hamlet which is "too small to be called a village" (17), and though the war is referenced, the relevance of the conflict seems negligible: "Birds, insects, animals, trees and flowers were in full enjoyment of the sunshine and as oblivious of the war as if it did not exist" (7). This is an Arcadian landscape characterised by security and safety, and yet *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* disrupts that ideal by allowing the war to intrude. Its Arcadian "charm [is] broken" (263) when a plane, which seems "to be a solitary effort" (264), bombs the school. Rather than doing any lasting damage, the bomb, in fact, reveals the location of the missing Abbey treasure (266) and instead provides a moment of narrative resolution. At the end of the novel the schoolgirls, who had been evacuated from a town "which had suffered severely in a recent air raid" (33), return to their homes. They are expected to return to the Grange though this is by no means certain (270). The Arcadia of this school is a provisional and fragile entity, contingent upon the circumstances of society.

Perhaps in recognition of the frailty of its depicted Arcadia, *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* is strikingly introverted. This can be recognised at one level in its concern for storytelling, both on the part of adults and the children themselves. In one instance, the

girls are gathered in order to listen to a talk about their new neighbourhood. They are joined by a group of boys from a similarly evacuated school and together provide an audience of "ninety receptive minds" (56). The invited speaker, the Rev. Howard Carter, is delighted, as "to pass the torch onto youth was always his ambition" (57). He reflects that "in these strenuous days of modern warfare the study of aeroplanes and tanks was apt to oust any interest in the former history of their country from young Britons and he considered it an important part of their education" (56). The talk consists of stories about the Grange and its local landscape, referencing areas as precise as "the third field to the back of the house" (7), and the land "behind the cowhouses" (62). Most of the topics of his talk, however, prove unsuitable for the younger children and he leaves them "almost too scared to go to bed" (69). The cumulative effect of the episode is to render the landscape as a qualitative experience, to be understood through its own increasingly reflexive identity and story. The place where the girls feed the hens (69) merges with the landscape where Sir Hugh "paced up and down" (62); the passages that the girls walk through daily become hybridized with the story of Brother Ambrose (64), who was murdered during the English Reformation. Whilst the immediate impact of these stories within the novel is to make the children nervous and apprehensive, incapable of spending the night apart (69), the broader impact of such moments upon a wartime readership must also be considered. The lecture ranges freely over a period of nearly three thousand years (36) and in doing so, didactically reminds both the girls and the reader of their context within a period of history. When the headmistress, Miss Brookes, decides to deliver a talk to the pupils herself, she adopts a similarly broad reach. Her topic concerns "life in the olden days, and how the lot of modern boys and girls differed from that of those who had lived many centuries ago" (139). The talk emphatically underscores the constancy of humanity itself: "children were much the same

then as now ... human nature never altogether changes" (140). The girls are asked to consider themselves as the "heirs of the ages" (150) and to "congratulate [themselves] that they live in the twentieth century" (150). By positioning the girls as inheritors of a steadfast and enduring humanity, the text offers a comforting, if somewhat tired, message of solace to the wartime reader. A comparison with the wild zeal of *The Luckiest Girl in the School* is revealing. There, Winona establishes a cryptogram with her serving brother which allows her to work out where he is fighting (143-144). She keeps an album full of cuttings, photographs and postcards (144) and patriotically knits socks (115). Winona's wartime life is an engaged experience, to be both performed and made visible. Wartime life for the girls of Maenan Grange, requires an inward turn and consolidation of their own resolve. In turn, this offers the reader a model of solace to follow.

Legends and folklore come to characterise much of the girls' relationship with Maenan Grange. Such preoccupations allow the practical circumstances of this environment to be clothed in a queer, near magical, fabric which allows the girls to figuratively themselves from the contemporary world. One of the most striking instances of this in *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* comes during a midnight feast, when several pupils witness two figures standing in the garden. One of these figures cannot be seen clearly whilst the other is "just caught by a glint of the moonshine [...] a lady in the old-fashioned costume of the reign of Charles II" (133). It is only upon the arrival of their prefect, a symbolic manifestation of adult authority within the genre, that the girls realise they are in fact witnessing a member of staff and not an episode of the supernatural: "It's only Miss Humphries! ... it's her day off, and I know she was going to Leomford to a fancy dress dance" (133). It is a fitting episode as *The Mystery of the Moated Grange* suggests that it is only

through knowing and understanding one's personal position within the world of immediate lived experience that one can cope with the pressures of wider society. Whilst at one level, this serves to assert an aetnormative stance which undermines the Arcadia that the text has laboured so hard to construct, it additionally allows the novel to embrace a key trope of the carnivalesque, namely the opportunity to temporarily disconnect from a conventional mode of society. The girls are allowed their time in this unconventional landscape, but are ultimately required to return. As Maria Nikolajeva recognises, there are "ways of empowering the child without magic" (*Power* 18) and this hybridization of the real and fictional landscape offers a clear opportunity of empowerment for the girls, albeit brief.

Perhaps the nearest that Brazil comes to achieving and sustaining a concrete representation of Arcadia is in *The School in the Forest* (1944). Jean Langton, an orphaned heiress, is to be sent to boarding school. A suitable school has recently relocated to the area and has taken up residence at Wildeswood Hall. The name of the Hall reflects its location near a forest: "It was surrounded by lawns and an extensive garden, a sufficient clearing to let in plenty of light and air, but beyond that lay the forest, a thick background hemming them in as if it folded the house and gardens in encircling green arms" (17). This is an ambivalent landscape where the "allure of the far horizon" (Carpenter 157) beyond the garden is denied by the visual line of the trees. Thus the landscape effectively encloisters the school; the forest screens the girls from both seeing and being seen by the wider world. It protects those held within its arms from the reach of society, whilst also denying them access to that society. Underscoring this sense of spatially embedded control, the school authorities assert their authority. They decide to celebrate the influence of their new location by introducing a "Sylvan Year" (24). As the headmistress explains: "It's a privilege

for us to be able to have this whole year in this lovely spot, and I want us to make the best of it" (24 -25). She incorporates nature within the school's educational approach, treating it as an impulse towards spiritual and moral betterment. The girls are thus trained in seeing the barrier of the forest as an opportunity, rather than as a constraint.

The nature of opportunities to be found within the forest are bound by social and gender mores, which come to render this landscape as an unsuitable environment for the girls to inhabit. This paradox is most visible through the character of Jemima Lee – "My little evacuee - my Romany child!" (35). One morning on a walk, the girls of Wildeswood Hall leave their enclosure and enter the wood. They soon find themselves lost within this unfamiliar environment and in need of assistance. It is at this point that Jemima Lee providentially appears, guides the lost girls back to the school and, upon the completion of her task, vanishes back into the forest "like a sprite of the wild" (33). This explicit association between Jemima and the fey reaches a peak when she is renamed "Pixie" (37). Her new name is given to her by her adult guardian who, in explaining this to one of the teachers, comments that "I couldn't bear the name of Jemima" (37). A social judgement is also present in this apparently bland statement: Jemima is an evacuated Romany girl, with a family who have followed her to her new home and now live in the ungovernable landscape of the forest. The negative influence of this familial connection is dwelt upon at length. Jemima's renaming, driven by the orthodoxy of her guardian, expresses an attempt to extricate the girl from her former life and reposition her within a more legitimate social context, even as it registers the qualities associated with her previous situation. As part of this social reprogramming, Jemima's freedom of movement is curtailed. Of course no individual's movement through landscape can be entirely free but, to paraphrase George



Orwell, some individuals can be freer than most. Jemima's guardian is admonished by a member of the school's staff: "it's hardly wise to let her roam alone in the forest. She shall be welcome to come into the Wildeswood enclosure any time she likes" (38). Jemima ultimately attends the school and becomes a satisfactory pupil, and her redemption arc is complete when she is revealed to be Jean Langton's long lost sister. Such a journey typifies Brazil's approach to class. Jemima's childhood is one of outlandish otherness for the middle-class characters of the school. Their successful attempt to reclaim her transforms this otherness into a state of acceptable orthodoxy.

Many of Jemima's characteristics attempt to reconcile an orthodox, middle-class childhood with the demands of the Arcadian. She functions as a shepherd to the girls and staff, sharing her intimate knowledge of the forest and guiding them through this unknown landscape. As her guardian comments:

"...she loves to wander alone in the forest. It seems like her native home. She knows the calls and songs of the birds and the ways of the wild animals, and brings back plants and nuts and flowers. She knows every haunt there." (38)

It is perhaps the clearest evocation of an Arcadian childhood which exists in Brazil's work, and yet the narrative emphasises the unsuitability of such an existence. Jemima is dissociated from her Romany background by linguistic difference: "But she spoke so nicely - like a lady!" (36); by physical difference: "She's too fair. Her eyes and her hair are dark, but her skin isn't. The gipsies I've seen have brown skins" (39); and by her clothing: "[she was]

"hatless and stockingless, though she wore shoes" (32). This foreshadowing of her true identity also serves to legitimise Jemima's social transformation. The "old gypsy life" (41) is unsuitable for her, and she must be "civilized" (41). This Arcadia is presented as ultimately unacceptable to society; it is at best a tribute to a former, superseded idea of childhood. The emphatic point is that such a childhood can and should no longer exist.

*The School in the Forest* seems, however, to withdraw even this qualified tribute to the Arcadian. Through narrative sleight-of-hand, Jemima and Jean become close friends, and the two girls spend time together in the Wildeswood Hall grounds, at a remove from the uncontrollable and unsuitable landscape of the forest. They share "many quiet rambles together and Jean learnt several quaint items of gypsy lore." (136). Their excursions are characterised as opportunities for personal growth for both girls: Jemima is exposed to the behavioural standards of Jean and thus encouraged in learning how to adopt the new norms expected of her, whilst Jean is forced to confront her personal prejudices against gypsies. Yet Jemima is, as has been repeatedly emphasised, no gypsy, and thus Jean's personal growth is undermined and the social and practical boundaries of the landscape remain intact.

It is only within the controlled and controllable landscape of the school that their friendship is allowed to develop. Though much of this relationship seems to suggest a level of personal autonomy for Jean, the geographical circumscription of the friendship instead shows deference to the adult authority previously denied by the character. Jean is only reunited with her sister when she has begun to adopt and adapt to the orthodox childhood required by the school, and to reflect the text's innately heteronormative stance. Thus, in reward of her adherence to the school's rule and lore, and by no longer attempting to run

away and escape the morally improving atmosphere of the school, she is rewarded with the return of her once-lost Sister. *The School in the Forest* thus attempts to mediate between instruction and amusement (Carpenter 2) but instead finds itself instead in a hinterland of ambivalence. The landscape of the book seems to at one level embrace the spirit of the carnival and gesture towards the unorthodox, whilst also presenting it as effectively unsustainable and requiring those who have not conformed to subsequently do so.

Brazil's school stories investigate and attempt to mediate between a range of oppositions: girlhood and adulthood, domestic and wild, class identity and otherness. Yet, for example, any overtures towards the unorthodox come to be swiftly undermined and rendered carnivalesque in their brevity. The initially disenfranchised Rona in *For the Sake of the School* turns out to be related to the rich local land-owner, whilst in *The School in the Forest* the rich heiress, Jean Langton, recovers her sister from the gypsies who have bought her up. Such romantic plot developments ultimately avoid the oppositions they seem to explore. The girls exist in a privileged domain, their middle-class orthodoxy contrasted with the primitive and unacceptable manners of the lower and working classes. Those girls who appear, at first, as positive representations of a lower social status are inevitably revealed to have high social standing. This logic is also manifest in the girls' relationships to their landscapes, where the apparently liberal spatial alternative prove to be similarly, and in some cases more so, controlled than the normative. Philippa must leave her Arcadia before being allowed to recreate a facsimile of it; the girls of *For the Sake of the School* are allowed to perform the Arcadian but are never really free from adult influence. Maenan Grange is a fortress unable to withstand the onslaught of the Second World War, whilst *The School in the Forest* exerts considerable effort redefining a character who embodies the Arcadian as

something more conventional. This model of faux-independence and temporary liberty is perhaps the defining feature of Brazil's work. Her girls are teased with the promise of being able to inhabit or perform Arcadia whilst knowing that such a privilege is itself subject to adult authority. The girls play at being wild and yet are never allowed to forget their privilege at being allowed to participate within these faux-wild landscapes.

I have suggested throughout this chapter that Arcadia represents a false promise, functioning only ever as the indirect vehicle of adult authority. When it comes to the work of both Angela Brazil and Frances Hodgson Burnett, that is an axiomatic assertion. Both authors render childhood as that which may be experienced and enjoyed best from the child's perspective, whilst also exposing the artificialities of such. This, I argue, allows a vital rupture in our understanding of the first Golden Age of children's literature. To rupture something is both to draw attention to difference and to emphasise points of similarity. *The Secret Garden* functions as a stereotypically Arcadian text yet, when considered through the filter of girlhood and spatially inspired critique, clearly challenges such an assertion. The marked popularity of Angela Brazil's work, and their relative absence from the canon provides a similar opportunity to question theorizations of this period, most notably a recurrent absence of populist girls' fiction from theorizations of the Golden Age. This chapter has located itself alongside those scholars working to counter such efforts, such as Marah Gubar, and begun to subsequently problematise the construct of the Golden Age itself. Much of this centres on the assertion that, rather than viewing the Golden Age as a temporally and conceptually discrete period within children's literature, it is more productive to see this period as the first of a series of Golden Age's. As Roger Lancelyn Green might read such an argument; it is only by sailing the "perilous seas" located beyond

the border (Green 65), that one is able to understand the nature of the border itself. The subsequent chapters provide another step of that journey.

## Chapter Two: A Landscape of Tentative Liberation

In this chapter, I move towards a postulated second golden age of children's literature which is, I suggest, to be found in the mid-twentieth century. The first Golden Age is generally taken to have ended prior to the First World War, but critics have also applied the term flexibly. Kimberley Reynolds makes an intriguing case for the mid-twentieth century as a Golden Age, though she shies away from using the phrase 'golden age' itself. She presents children's literature as a space which "participates in redirecting writing and thinking" (Reynolds *Left Out* 5) and thus exhibits a "demonstrable capacity for innovation" (9). Texts that encouraged such thought through their embrace of "modernist thinking" were present in children's literature by the 1930s and continue to make their presence felt today (9). Lucy Pearson similarly acknowledges a thematic shift in twentieth-century children's literature but traces it to the publishing trends of the 1950s and 1960s (2). In a precise and convincing argument, adopting the currency of the golden age, she shows that "the perception of this period as a second golden age of children's literature means that these debates have had a lasting impact on children's literature in Britain" (2). Both Pearson and Reynolds recognise the roots of contemporary children's literature in the mid-twentieth century, yet they locate these beginnings in different parts of the ideological spectrum. Through my analysis, I attempt to mediate between both perspectives; seeking to identify and recognise a space for the mid-twentieth century girl to be herself.

For Kimberley Reynolds, the post-war years were a period of striking innovation within children's literature. She illustrates this most convincingly with the case of Ted Hughes, whose radical and bold work sat uncomfortably in a sector of publishing more accustomed to traditionally conceived material such as the 'I Can Read!' series (*Left Out* 4). Yet eventually Hughes' work "reflected so strongly the aspirations of those involved in the production of children's books ... that his writing became a benchmark" (4). Because the boundaries of children's literature were in a state of flux in this period, the sector no longer represented Jacqueline Rose's idea of a "cultural safe-house which preserves an ideal of the innocent child" (Reynolds, *Left Out* 5) but rather the development of an "aesthetic of transformation" (9). It is noticeable that Reynolds adopts a spatial metaphor in articulating this transformation; she begins to "map" (1) the "vast inside" (2) of children's literature in the opening pages of a chapter which is titled: "Breaking Bounds" (vii). As Reynolds notes in her introduction, and again resorting to spatially inspired language in order to fully articulate such, both children's literature as a sector and the individual book function as paradoxes: the "inside often turns out to be surprisingly larger than the outside might suggest" (1). Susan Ang adopts a similar perspective to Reynolds, recognising a theme of liberation within children's literature but describing it instead as an "aesthetic of freedom" (168). Ang argues that this aesthetic comes through unpacking the continuum which lies between representations of "enclosure and openness" (2). As with Reynolds, Ang also turns towards a spatial metaphor in order to fully articulate her thoughts.

My initial case studies for this chapter are the *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* series by Enid Blyton. Blyton, who had published seven hundred and sixty two titles by the time of her death in 1968, was a figure of vital importance in this second golden age, yet as Lucy

Pearson observes, there was a concerted effort to move the children of the 1950s and 1960 away from her work. Children were directed towards what were perceived as loftier literary goals, and were aided in doing so by graded reading schemes (Pearson 127). Pearson rightly recognises the "inherent class dimension" (127) of this aim, a reaction against the mass-market popularity of Blyton's often blunt and unadorned narratives. Children were only understood to be literate individuals when the manifestations of their literacy adhered to the views of the adults working within publishing and the wider educational sector. Though, in many respects, those views themselves were in flux, one point remained consistent: an opposition to Enid Blyton. The author of the "most popular children's novels of the time (of all time)" (Auchmuty, "Enid Blyton" 82) seemingly had no place within what was to be understood as children's literature. In their characteristically strident *You're a brick, Angela!* *A new look at girls' fiction from 1839 to 1975*, Cadogan and Craig barely mention either the *Malory Towers*, *St Clare's* or the *Naughtiest Girl* series, which, it could hardly be denied, were somewhat popular during the latter half of this timeframe. The pony-loving Bill from *Malory Towers* is briefly mentioned (374) whilst Blyton's adventure stories, with their more ideologically acceptable mixed gender casts and real world situations, are carefully analysed. Whilst some of this omission naturally reflects Cadogan and Craig's idiosyncrasies as feminist critics, it remains a curious and notable imbalance.

It is not, however, an imbalance unique to them. Rosemary Auchmuty admits in *A World of Girls*, her review of school stories, that she "had not originally intended to include Enid Blyton in this book" (45) but, in response to the recollections of her interviewees, was forced to do so. However, in Auchmuty's later volume, *A World of Women: Growing up in the Girls' School Story*, this prominence is revised and Blyton is negligibly referenced. Some



of this difference can be attributed to the different intent of the books: *A World of Girls* explores the boarding school story whilst *A World of Women*, with its nuanced subtitle, clearly focuses upon the movement towards adult womanhood. Authors such as Blyton had a tendency to abandon their protagonists in the sixth form (*A World of Women 2*) and it is hard to disagree with this angle of Auchmuty's work: for all of Blyton's immensely varied output, a convincing depiction of the adult woman was not one of her strengths. Yet even where Blyton is given sustained attention by Auchmuty, the interest of her texts is minimized either because of their genre links or for the derivative nature of the narrative; they share "many of the characteristics of those which came from the imaginations of Oxenham, Bruce and Brent-Dyer" (*World of Girls* 54), taking "a familiar formula and [reducing]... it to its barest bones. This is not a criticism, for she accomplished this with consummate skill, but it does mean that there is less variety and less of particular interest in the portrayal of her characters, and consequently less to say about them" (99). Despite the protestation to the contrary, this is clearly a criticism, and one that Auchmuty herself amends in a later publication where she points out that "...notwithstanding Blyton's recent rehabilitation, the adventure and mystery stories get most of the attention and the school stories none" ("Enid Blyton" 79). Though she does not acknowledge her own participation in such, Auchmuty subsequently suggests that much of the rationale for this imbalance from a critical "difficulty in taking the genre of girls' school stories seriously" (92) due to the predominance of male critics (92) within children's literature. Whether or not this is a valid claim, it is a provocation and an additional ground for the inclusion of Blyton in this thesis. What is undoubtedly valid, however, is Auchmuty's qualified and hard-won sympathy towards Blyton is not easily shared by other critics. For example, in Daniel Hahn's recent and otherwise excellent encyclopaedia of children's literature, the entry for 'school stories'

comments that Blyton's school stories are "unremarkable in everything but their huge and enduring popularity" (231). Yet this popularity is more than remarkable. Blyton remains the fourth most translated author in the world (UNESCO) and sequels to both the *Malory Towers* and *St Clare's* stories were published between 2000 and 2009. Not many other children's authors continue to dominate best-sellers and publishing lists nearly sixty years after their death, let alone achieve this within the frame of the girl's school story, a genre on the verge of obsolescence before the arrival of Hermione in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series in the mid-nineties.

The continued appeal of Blyton's work, and in particular the appeal of her school stories, is clearly a legitimate topic of academic investigation. At issue is not the absence of Blyton from critical discourse, as she undoubtedly is present in the scholarship, but rather the specific timbre of the commentary around her. Issues of gender politics and sexist attitudes dominate irrespective of critical stance, revealing (according to the approach adopted) either a retrograde or a radical depiction of femininity. David Rudd argues that Blyton represents the latter, analysing *Malory Towers* and the *Famous Five* series to highlight the creative liminality of Blyton's work and suggesting that this indeterminacy ultimately engenders diverse representations of femininity (*Enid Blyton and the Mystery* 109). Much of his reading however relies on the agency of the reader in the relationship between reader and text, which must be considered "central ... even if it means that the reader is ignoring a book's more patriarchal framing" (131). Rudd argues that to isolate specific signifiers of sexism results in the "delimiting of a text according to whatever is currently 'pc'" (131). Putting aside the reference to political correctness, a laden and complex term in its own right, much of Rudd's argument bears directly upon this chapter

and my characterisation of a second golden age of children's literature. I will argue that both *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* do indeed depict a wide range of feminine potential, yet I differ from Rudd by retaining an awareness of the patriarchal framing and publishing contexts of the texts (131). The school stories of Enid Blyton, I shall suggest, function as a metaphorical hinge paying tribute to both the stasis of the first Golden Age whilst attempting to also capture the sense of new found liberation for the girl which was to be found in the mid-twentieth century. I will assert this aesthetic as the basis of the second golden age of children's literature, arguing that it is still subject to a bounded and controlled spatiality which ultimately curtails and controls any ideas of ultimate freedom.

*A Little Love Song* by Michelle Magorian (1991) forms the other case study of this chapter and might, at first glance, be an unusual methodological choice due to its publication date. This thesis, however, is one which has attempted to use spatial critique to consider the idea of the Golden Age within children's literature through a study of novels of girlhood and education. *A Little Love Song* contrast a restricted boarding school existence with the liberation of a suddenly guardian-free summer holiday and, whilst being written in 1991, actively appropriates and solicits the tropes of mid-twentieth century children's literature. It therefore clearly supports the claim of an aesthetic of liberation that I ascribe to this second Golden Age of children's literature, whilst also questioning the relationship between girl and childhood, and also the validity of a Golden Age that is based on temporal specificity. *A Little Love Song* allows this thesis to pursue the point that a Golden Age can be considered thematically. A final point of correlation between *A Little Love Song* and the other texts considered in this thesis, namely the issue of critical silence. Magorian's debut novel *Goodnight Mister Tom*, with its male-centred narrative, was commended for the

Carnegie Medal, adapted for television and rewritten as a musical. *A Little Love Song* has received no such attention. For Rosemary Auchmuty, such neglect might reflect the dominance of a literary canon constructed and perpetuated by patriarchal values (*Enid Blyton*), as girl's stories are fated to be unrecognised under a structure which inherently privileges such discourse. I sympathise with Auchmuty's perspective, and indeed have constructed much of this thesis in defiance of these preconceived notions of canonicity. Kelly Jensen comments that award lists, and associated ideas of canon, "rarely reward and celebrate girls' stories written by women in the same capacity that we do boys' narratives, or men who write girls' stories" (para. 1). It is, she reminds us, "impossible not to look at the choices, the absences common among all of them, and wonder what we're collectively saying about girls' voices" (para. 3). I thus invoke these arguments specifically here in relation to *A Little Love Song* and Enid Blyton, but also as a standing caution throughout this thesis to not contribute towards such critical effacement.

Enid Blyton's school stories form a relatively small part of her tumultuous oeuvre. They consist of the stand-alone title *Mischief at St Rollo's*, the *Naughtiest Girl* series, the *St Clare's* series, and the *Malory Towers* series (Sims et al. 58). I will initially focus upon the *St Clare's* series before turning towards a consideration of the *Malory Towers* books; maintaining this thesis' focus on texts concerned with notions of education and girlhood. I discount *Mischief at St Roll's* and the *Naughtiest Girl* series as they are located in co-educational boarding schools. I will analyse both *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* and show how these texts represent an idea of feminine liberation, albeit within the often particular and restrictive circumstances of both society and gender. In arguing for the notion of liberation, I find myself making a distinction between the idea of liberation and freedom and

returning to discussions of power within children's literature and the notion of the carnivalesque. Making reference to Bakhtin's theorisation of the carnival, that is to say a text which has the characteristics of "hyperbole, distortion, upside-down-world" (Nikolajeva *Power* 10), Maria Nikolajeva recognises how these texts provide the opportunity for an interrogation of power structures within children's literature by allowing children to become "strong, brave, rich, powerful, and independent - *on certain conditions and for a limited time*" (10). The carnival eventually ends, and the status quo is reasserted. This is not freedom but rather liberation; an allowance of liberty granted by the adult writers and producers of children's literature and granted to the fictional child on the tacit proviso that it is not an infinite act. Thus to label the aesthetic of this second golden age as one of tentative freedom seems to both deny the adult normativity of the texts of this period, and also act as a somewhat presumptuous act. The girl of the second golden age is not free but tentatively and temporarily liberated. She must still work against and deny the stratas of spatial authority which exist about her.

Perhaps the most potent demarcation of such authority is the aura of practicality which surrounds St Clare's. It is a prosaic and sensible environment, to be contrasted with the more glamorous Ringmere which is the twins' preferred school. Ringmere lets pupils have their own bedrooms and studies, and requires them to wear evening dress at night (*The Twins at St Clare's* 6). However, following the intervention of their parents, the twins are sent to St Clare's instead. It is a school which requires girls to sleep "six or eight" (6) to a dormitory and is, as Mrs O'Sullivan characterises it, "really a very sensible" (6) school. One of the key principles of St Clare's is that the younger girls "wait on the two top forms" (21) and provide with general assistance in and around their studies. This can range from helping

them light fires in cold weather through to cleaning their boots after games practice (21).

The custom clearly has parallels with 'fagging', a practice most emphatically central to a classic boy's school story: *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes (1857).

Both Pat and Isobel immediately struggle with the idea of supporting the elder forms. Hilary, their form's head-girl, points out that when they're older, they will be able to have the younger girls help them: "It's the custom of the school - and anyway, it doesn't hurt us. We can have our turn at sending messages and ordering the lower forms about when we're top-formers ourselves!" (*The Twins at St Clare's* 21). This turn and turn about system of servitude does not convince Pat. She loses her temper and is punished by a prefect who tells her that she is no longer free to walk down town (24). The girls' relatively free movement from school to town and back again is one of the key markers of the St Clare's environment; the school does not exist in isolation but rather as an integral and integrated part of the local environment. Though the local environment is itself a landscape of relative isolation and remove in its own right, what is important is that it offers the allure of liberation. The girls are allowed to go beyond the school providing they do so in groups of two, though the elder girls are permitted to leave the grounds independently. When Pat is restricted to the school grounds by the prefect, a figurative embodiment of adult authority within the school, she is required to adapt to a new form of control. She is no longer one of the eldest girls at her day school but rather a member of the first form and thus a subordinate figure who enjoys her liberty at the discretion of others. Restricting her movement provides a stark reminder of this fact.

Spatial limits and the enforcement of them are, for Maria Nikolajeva, a key trope within children's literature. Nikolajeva writes that space is often "open but limited. It seldom

involves going out into the wide world, but is instead restricted to an investigation of nearby surroundings" (*Children's Literature Comes of Age* 128). Nikolajeva advances an idea of space as cultural metaphor, suggesting that when depicted in a "modern" text, such limits reflect "the insecure, detached existence of today's children" (128). She argues that such a treatment of space in children's texts is driven by an authorial effort of sympathetic understanding and empathic alliance: the author aims to understand the experience of the child and their "difficulties [in] perceiving their existence in a larger spatial and temporal perspective" (128). Such an argument is intriguingly complex, articulating as it does an issue which seems to, if anything, characterise literature as a general whole. Whilst the pursuit of that train of thought is outside of the remit of this thesis, I shall agree that the *St Clare's* stories do accord with this reading. The school environment is represented as both spatially limited and temporally compressed (129), whilst the "wide world," in Nikolajeva's phrasing (129), is located near to the school but laden with rules. The girls are able to move freely between school and town, but do not go beyond it. The metaphorical implication of this for the child reader is hard to miss; the girls of *St Clare's* exhibit a model of permitted adolescence within a straitened set of circumstances. As this spatial model develops throughout the series, the distinct environments of town and school acquire more nuances. The girls leave the school and engage with the environment of the town, but most notably, with a specific set of its cultural landmarks. They visit the cinema, the circus and the cake shop. These points share a specific timbre as spaces of cultural introduction. To take one example, the cake shop with its associated consumption of food, is a site which provides a "significant, ritualized temporal" point of cultural significance which, through the child's participation, helps to "integrate the child into the community" (Keeling and Pollard 11). These totemic points of interaction and cultural significance are, in the main, child-

appropriate sites of culture. The children do not attend a hospital, to expose them to ideas of death and illness for example. They are only allowed to engage with those elements of society which have been deemed acceptable and appropriate. Prescribed behavioural standards may seem somewhat redundant within such a setting but I see an intriguing emphasis here. Much of the detail of the *Clare's* and *Malory Towers* books were borne from the real world experience of Blyton having her children at boarding school. The parallels between the wartime evacuation of Benenden School to the Cornish coast, and the positioning of Malory Towers are, for example, immediately relevant towards such a statement. Thus I would suggest that Blyton's school stories, many of which were written and published whilst her daughters were away at these establishments, can also be considered as a curiously fictionalised form of real world-instruction to her daughters. Thus the prescriptive elements within such text manifest as an immediate form of parental concern, but also, ultimately, import such concern and ideologies upon the reader.

In arguing such, I come into the contact with the work of Susan Ang. In her consideration of the role of 'freedom' within children's literature, she recognises the opportunity to "develop without the constant watching and nagging of the adult [presence]" (4), but also the associated potential "decline of authority and responsibility for the way in which the child will develop" (4). Such an argument is intriguing for the onus it places upon the role of the adult within children's literature. The authority and responsibility located within children's literature is, to adopt Ang's phraseology, is clearly not the child's, for that agency would only increase with their liberation. Power rests here with the adult, as does responsibility for the child's personal development (perhaps in one sense harking back to the real world context of gestation around these novels). *Summer Term at St Clare's* (1943)



however, adds an interesting note of subversion to this discussion by allowing the children to temporarily appropriate adult authority. A girl, Erica, is punished for her counter-cultural behaviour by her peers. They refuse to form a 'pair' with her and thus Erica is unable to visit town without breaking the rules by doing so on an independent basis. This is, as Ang would read it, a "quest for definition" (5) on the part of the girls who punish Erica. They appropriate adult structures of authority by restricting her movement; and by enforcing such structures, they seek to define themselves as senior figures within their environment, legitimising their punishment of Erica whilst maintaining their own ability to move beyond the school limits.

Whilst for some critics, Blyton's work did "nothing to explain the real world" (Tucker and Reynolds xiii), her school stories were in fact inherently concerned with explaining and exploring the complexities of real life. For David Rudd, the landscape of Malory Towers is a feminine landscape (*Enid Blyton* 125) and by existing in opposition to the externally located "bounds of patriarchy" (123), the school provides a cultural and ideological refuge from social authority which allows the girls to "explore an alternative path of development" (123). It is possible to extend Rudd's critique from Malory Towers to St Clare's, which has a similar geographical context; it is a "pleasant white building, built of large white stones, with two towers, one at each end" located at the head of a valley (*The Twins at St Clare's* 12). Whilst Rudd's gendered reading of landscape is intriguing, it is also problematic. An environment restricted to one gender does, by its very nature, seem to render gender difference somewhat irrelevant; and if anything, the landscapes of both Malory Towers and St Clare's are marked by cultural homogeneity, where those who do not adhere to its coding

are forced to exit. This is most potently illustrated through the experience of Eileen, a new girl in the third novel of the series: *Claudine at St Clare's*.

Eileen is the daughter of the new matron and is at St Clare's upon reduced fees. She is required to help her mother when necessary but also to be a schoolgirl. Caught between these two class roles, Eileen's tenure at the school is markedly uncomfortable and becomes more so upon the arrival of her unemployed brother, Edgar. The two siblings are unable to meet with each other in daylight or on the school grounds, so they meet at midnight in a nearby lane. Circumstances conspire to bring these meetings to light, and both Eileen and Edgar visit the headmistress, Miss Theobald. They confess that Eileen has been stealing from her mother in order to provide help to Edgar whilst unemployed, and beg Miss Theobald to intervene for them with their mother. Miss Theobald facilitates a painful reconciliation for the three family members, before they depart St Clare's for good. After her departure, Eileen writes a letter to her nearest friend in the form: "it was a most frightful shock to Mother ... she couldn't bear to stay at St. Clare's another day. So we packed and went ... [Miss Theobald] offered to keep me on at St. Clare's, when Mother went. But I couldn't face you all, and anyway I don't fit in there. I know I don't" (154). Eileen has since begun to study "shorthand and typing" (154), and is going to work in the same office with her brother. She hopes "that when we are both earning money Mother won't need to work and then she can take a rest and perhaps feel happier" (154).

Much of this episode is intriguing when considered through the lens of spatially inspired critique. Upon Edgar's first arrival at the school he is restricted by the boundary of the school grounds (31), so he gives a letter to a girl in Eileen's form and asks her to communicate with his sister. Notably Eileen does not subsequently invite her brother into

the school landscape but rather goes out to meet him. These meetings cannot occur within the town or the school, nor within daylight hours, but instead have to take place beyond bounds, located in darkness and without adult knowledge; accordingly, they soon come to appear in a different light. These are characteristics of a romantic rendezvous, not a familial rendezvous. St Clare's is a space which allows for independence and expressions of selfhood, providing that they are expressed in a legitimate and culturally acceptable manner. Eileen's trespass beyond these permitted forms of behaviour is as indicative of transgression as her reasons for doing so. Retribution is swift, and she leaves the school in relative ignominy; her expression of independent movement, and the evocation of forbidden romance, has violated the established cultural norms and its inappropriateness must be both recognised and publically addressed. It is interesting to compare this episode with *Second Form at St Clare's* (1944), which similarly features a new girl experiencing impoverished circumstances. Lucy, a popular and appealing girl, is encouraged towards a scholarship after her father, a painter, suffers an accident and is unable to work. The much more working-class figure of Eileen, daughter of a single mother, is instead required to leave education and enter full-time paid employment. Though Blyton's treatment of class is undoubtedly complex and a matter for another discussion, it is notable that these differences in treatment function somewhat independent of it. Eileen is an unacceptable expression of both girlhood and adulthood and thus is expelled from the St Clare's landscape. The didactic point is made; the social hierarchies are re-established, and the carnival ended.

Many of the places that are represented in St Clare's can be understood as possessing adult, or child characteristics, or a hybrid both. This sense of 'aged' space is

emphasised in *Summer Term at St Clare's*. Sadie, a new girl, is an heiress. She is destined to come into "money when I'm twenty-one. It's a proper fortune" (31). She is duped into leaving school grounds and subsequently kidnapped. Her kidnapping is discovered by several of the other girls, most notably a fellow new girl named Carlotta, whose own status is complex. Her right to be at the school has been challenged by another new girl, Prudence, who is fixated on Carlotta's socio-economic background. Carlotta has grown up in a circus, and while many of the girls accept this unorthodox childhood at face value, Prudence remains resolutely opposed. Yet Carlotta's alternative upbringing becomes pivotal upon Sadie's kidnapping: she responds to the incident by contacting her friends in the circus camp, asking them to form a barricade for the kidnapper's car in order to rescue Sadie (140-41). Carlotta leaves the school herself, steals a nearby horse from a field and goes off to join "in the fun" (140). Perhaps more remarkable than Carlotta's ability to leave the school without permission is her ability to subsequently return to the school and have this behaviour legitimised by the school authorities. She is able to successfully mediate between her unorthodox and orthodox identities and is not, as in Eileen's case, summarily required to leave the school and relocate to the real world. A level of nuance comes here from the attitude of the circus folk which further inflects Carlotta's anomalous position; they remain on the edge of the school grounds, practically unwilling and socially unable to progress any further, and Carlotta is left to return Sadie to the school herself. Carlotta's ability to cross and re-cross the bounded space of St Clare's is an ability denied to the working class circus folk; it is a privilege earned by the virtue of her now integrated and accepted unorthodoxy, her own personal form of cultural liberation. Through such patterns of movement, the spatial qualities of St. Clare's are both marked and enforced; they are initially established by the adults, but are broken and remade through the actions of the children. Carlotta rescues

Sadie outside of the school grounds but returns her to them, both recognising and affirming the cultural and social refuge that the school environment provides for these girls.

It is no surprise that Carlotta and Sadie's arrival back at school requires a visit to the head's study: "Miss Theobald had them in her room in a trice, quite bewildered with the strange tale she had heard. She made the tired girls hot cocoa and gave them biscuits to eat" (147). Miss Theobald is established as the figurative heart of the school. She is similarly the refuge of Eileen and Edgar when circumstances conspire against them, receiving the siblings and their confession, in lieu of their absent mother: "Oh, Miss Theobald, we don't dare to tell Mother!" (147). Whilst the position of mothers within Blyton's fiction is clearly influenced by her personal experiences (Hunt, "How Not to Read" 238) and deserving of a thesis of its own, more important is the centring of Miss Theobald within both the practical and emotional landscape of St Clare's. For Jaako Suvantola, a centre represents "what we know directly in contrast to what we don't know or know less directly" (25); the centre can function both as a "spatial component [...and...] spatial metaphor" (25). When located within the school building, the headmistress clearly functions as the literal and metaphorical centre of the school. She provides spiritual and emotional clarity to the girls under her care, whilst her study and associated rooms function as a practical centre within the school landscape. Yet interestingly enough, when located outside of the school building, but still within the school's landscape this metaphorical function wavers. The head is rendered moot and ineffectual even when within the bounds of the landscape that ordinarily gives her an unimpeachable authority. This is potently shown in the second novel of the series: *The O'Sullivan Twins* (1942). St Clare's sanatorium is on fire (100) and as the school is evacuated, they realise that a girl named Erica is trapped within. Miss Theobald pales and "her heart

beat fast. A girl up there! And the staircase burning!" (103). The fire engine has not yet arrived, and a new girl, Margery, decides to take action herself. She is "up [a ladder] like a monkey, though Miss Theobald shouted to her to come back. 'You can't do anything, you silly girl!' cried the Head Mistress. "Come down!"" (104). Margery, however, successfully rescues Erica before the fire engine arrives to put out the fire. The cumulative impact of this incident is to confine Miss Theobald's importance firmly within the school buildings. Outside of them, she is no longer a godlike presence but just another face in the crowd.

The incident is also crucially bound up with the character of Margery herself, who is an unusual pupil in the school. She is strong (18, 66), savage (19, 71), fierce (65) and "plays games and does gym as if she was fighting somebody fiercely all the time!" (18); this physical prowess aids her in rescuing Erica, but also has other connotations. After the rescue, Margery reveals to her new-found friends that she has a difficult relationship with her newly remarried father: "My stepmother had three boys and my father was terribly pleased. He always wanted boys..." (118). Margery's desire to assume a masculine role underlies both her rescue of Erica and her defiance of Miss Theobald. She is the hero rescuing the damsel in distress, and Erica is the princess locked in the castle; whereas the matriarchal Miss Theobald is divested of her, formerly absolute, power. Margery's defiance of Miss Theobald signifies an ideological split, and a temporary assertion of patriarchal values within the series that, once teasingly revealed, seems to be instantly withdrawn from. The head has been shown to be ineffectual in the wider world and the dominant femininity of the school has been challenged. It is difficult to unpick this intercession of physical authority from the real world circumstances of women at the time of publication. Perhaps then, in retreating into the school environment and neatly moving Margery into

another form, and thus out of the narrative spotlight, the text is concerned to escape from such questions. At one level, as David Rudd phrases it, this may be an affirmation of the fact that the liberation of Malory Towers, and by implication St Clare's, "is more desirable than a return to the Patriarchal Fold" (*Enid Blyton* 131). However, I see something else here; these schools do not solely represent a landscape of liberation located in opposition to a landscape of patriarchal oppression. These are liberatory circumstances which function not as part of the wider world, but in spite of it. The girls are naturally desirous of liberation and able to achieve it within St Clare's, but the context of both the desire and its circumscribed fulfilment is that there is nowhere else for them to realise it.

Margery provides a useful point to segue from *St Clare's* into a discussion of *Malory Towers*. If Margery is a representation of gendered difference, then Amanda Chartelow of *Malory Towers* performs a similar function within her series. Both girls have strongly masculinised attributes; they are powerful, well-built individuals with a marked prowess for games and physical activity: Margery's physicality expresses itself on the games field, while Amanda's prowess is in swimming. Whilst the girls of St Clare's are in general physically able, this physicality is presented as a facet of their wider character and thus a more acceptable character attribute; Margery, in contrast, remains an emphatically physical presence, even following her removal into a different form. In *Malory Towers*, the character most similar to Amanda is Mirabel Unwin, but her physicality is tempered by her friendship with the ultra-feminine Gladys. Amanda's difference is reined in by the consequences of her own actions; she decides to swim in the sea as opposed to the swimming pool, suffers an accident, and is subsequently forced to confront a future without actively participating in sports. This narrative is, I would suggest, an expression of forced normalization. Amanda resists

adapting to the ideological stance of Malory Towers, and so is ultimately physically forced to do so. The didactic undertones here are unmistakable; Amanda's hyperbolic and near grotesque physicality, an inherently carnivalesque trope, must be subsumed within the dominant hegemonic standard of the school.

Amanda's transformation centres around swimming, and the swimming pool itself is a noted feature of the *Malory Towers* books. First appearing in *First Term at Malory Towers* (1946), the swimming pool is rendered in loving and vivid detail:

One of the things that Darrell liked best of all was the big swimming-pool down by the sea. This had been hollowed out of a stretch of rocks, so that it had a nice rocky, uneven bottom. Seaweed grew at the sides, and sometimes the rocky bed of the pool felt a little slimy. But the sea swept into the big natural pool each day, filled it, and made lovely waves all across it. It was a sheer delight to bathe there. (*The Early Years at Malory Towers* 39)

In his discussion of the landscape of Malory Towers, Rudd reads the swimming pool as a "key, female spot" (*Enid Blyton* 124). The pool is subject to periodic renewal and rejuvenation (125), and possesses a "generally sensual quality" (125). Yet he does not really address the implications of such an assessment for the swimmers in the pool. Certain girls are shown as immediately at home in the water and thus, if we are to adopt Rudd's reading of space, as being innately, and somewhat instinctively, in touch with their feminine selves. The quick-witted and vivacious Alicia swims a width underwater (*The Early Years at Malory*



*Towers* 53) whilst Gwendoline, the disliked new girl, struggles with the experience. Gwendoline, who is an overtly feminine character with "loose golden hair" (12), is clearly terrified of the pool. She struggles with the first cold moments of entering (40) and ultimately stays in the shallow end (54). Upon seeing another girl struggle, Gwendoline is seized by a "sense of power" and ducks Mary-Lou under the water (54). The incident is seen by Darrell who intervenes and saves Mary-Lou: "She pulled Mary-Lou to the surface, and held her there, gasping and choking, blue in the face, almost sick with the amount of water she had swallowed" (55). I would argue that the swimming pool is not simply indicative of a blanket sense of femininity as in Rudd's reading, then, but of a particular *type* of femininity, and ultimately privileging those individuals who most appropriately embody such. Rudd, whilst arguing that the swimming pool is a feminine space, also suggests it is a space of "levelling" (*Enid Blyton* 128); the girls come together at the pool where they are "stripped of uniform and other pretension" before their selfhood and personal qualities are tested (128). Some girls, such as Mary-Lou, succeed whilst others such as Gwendoline fail (128). Rudd concludes that the landscape of *Malory Towers* is a "proving ground" (128) for character, but he steps back from understanding the timbre of that character evaluation. As the episodes around the swimming pool illustrate, the approved form of girlhood within the *Malory Towers* series involves the ability to wholeheartedly engage in physical activity where the opportunity has been created, sanctioned and ideologically approved. The swimming pool is a human environment, created for the betterment of the girls, and thus they are required to use it. The effect is to present girlhood as an expression of obedient liberty; a contradictory and ideologically powerful construct. The girls are allowed to be independent in the circumstances that have been deemed appropriate for such, and nowhere is this more pertinently illustrated than when Amanda decides to swim in the sea.

A strong swimmer, destined for the Olympics (*Last Term* 30), Amanda is uncomfortable in the swimming pool. She finds it constricting, even though it is "big and deep" (36), and so one morning she decides to swim in the sea instead. The sea is a forbidden space due to the severe current (37), in which Amanda is, inevitably, caught and soon overwhelmed. The strength of the current is pointedly emphasised: "How could she ever have laughed at it? It was stronger than ten swimmers, than twenty swimmers!" (130). Exhausted, she is thrown against the rocks and her leg and arm are badly injured. As she recovers, Amanda realises that she may never be able to play sport to the same standard as before:

...if my leg muscles never get strong enough for me to play games really well again, I shan't moan and groan.... After all, it's courage that matters, not the things that happen to you. It doesn't really matter what happens, so long as you've plenty of pluck to face it. (137)

Much of this episode is driven by Amanda's inability or unwillingness to adapt to the constraints of Malory Towers. These constraints are made manifest through the school's landscape where the manmade features, such as the pool and the towers, coexist in a state of relative harmony and the girls are secure and safe so long as they remain within this environment and do not trespass beyond its bounds. The notion of a wilderness located beyond these borders, synonymous with adulthood and a loss of control, becomes manifest in Amanda's decision to swim in the sea. This is an unsanctioned encounter with the wild, and adulthood, and thus Amanda is inevitably punished for it. The liberation to be found in

the school landscape is a provisional liberation that is confined to specific bounded and adult-sanctioned circumstances. Amanda is physically injured, perhaps permanently, and has to reconsider her future endeavours. She settles upon coaching and encouraging the younger girls: "She gave all her extra time to the eager youngsters, the time that normally she would have had for playing games herself" (138). This is a pointed reorientation away from personal glory towards a more maternal role 'behind the scenes.' Amanda must learn how to nurture and give care before being allowed to leave school and return to the wider world.

The separation between Malory Towers and wider society is emphasised upon Darrell's first trip to the school. Adhering to one of the standard school story tropes, she has taken the train from London, and during the journey asks when she'll be able to see the school.

"There's a corner where we suddenly get a glimpse of it," said Alicia.

"Yes. It's lovely to get that sudden view of it," said Pamela ... Her eyes shone as she spoke. "I think Malory Towers shows at its best when we come to that corner, especially if the sun is behind it." (Blyton, *The Early Years* 10-11)

The building itself eventually appears and, with the sunlight indeed shining behind it, is rendered as a scene of idyllic perfection. As Darrell studies the school, she sees a "big square-looking building of soft grey stone standing high up on a ... cliff that fell steeply down to the sea." (11). The cumulative effect is of "an old-time castle" from a fairy tale (12).

Gwendoline picks up on this characteristic and comments that she will feel like a "fairy princess" upon arrival, but her romantic sentiment is undercut by the reactions of the other girls. Rudd argues that this is a moment of fairy tale subversion showing that "the fairy-tale image of the feminine - of ornamental beauty, of being gazed upon and admired - is not appropriate" (*Enid Blyton* 124). But rather than functioning as a moment of subversion, this is one of cultural struggle; while the overly romantic idea of girlhood, as represented by Gwendoline, is unacceptable, the quiet and practical reverence of Pamela and Darrell is approved and encouraged. Blyton is not reticent in underlining this distinction, and Gwendoline is ultimately required to leave school early in order to nurse her ill father, and subsequently work in an office. It is a punishment similar to that imposed upon Amanda, and upon Eileen in *St Clare's*; a girl is required to nurture, care and to maintain structures of patriarchal expectation, often at the expense of her personal goals and identity. These affirmations of restrictive gender stereotypes contrast with the future of the other girls who are off to study at university, start their own businesses or train in the arts. Emancipation and subversion undoubtedly exist within both the *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* series, but they do so within very specific and regulated circumstances.

At this point I come into clear contact with the work of Roberta Seelinger Trites, and her ideas around the role of power and repression in children's and young adult literature. As she writes, much of adolescent literature is related to notions of power (*Disturbing x*); and I would appropriate several key points of this argument. As Trites writes, the "social power that constructs" adolescent characters "bestows upon them a power from which they generate their own subjectivity" (7). Thus the boarding school, in Trites' phrasing, functions as both a source of liberation and repression. It is interesting to note that the fine

distinction here between liberation and freedom, implicitly recognising that though the individual may express ideas of freedom they remain bound by the institutional structures about them. Yet there remains an unexplored element to this argument and that centres around the idea of adolescence. Trites is interested in the notion of what "adolescents do with that intimidating power?" (7) but Enid Blyton is rarely interested in the adolescent girl at all. Those girls who do show stereotypically adolescent qualities, such as an interest in romance or their physical appearance, are expelled from the school's environment, and as part of this process are required to take "responsibility for their position in society" (7). Though the adolescent is often sidetracked, the notion of adolescence is, I would suggest, paramount throughout the work of Enid Blyton.

For David Rudd, Malory Towers was "a liminal space in which girls, out of the bounds of patriarchy, could explore an alternative path of development" (*Enid Blyton* 123). I have argued instead that both Malory Towers and St Clare's represent spaces of tentative liberation which exist in spite of these dominant gender codes. These schools are sites of sanctuary (*Carroll Landscape*) and therefore both confirm and withdraw from dominant gender binaries. In a manner similar to Maria Nikolajeva (*Power*), David suggests that the school represents a space of cyclical and perpetual tradition that exists as a counter-space to the real world; it is a site of "return and renewal" for the inhabitants to perpetuate through the "rituals of arrival and departure" that mark the beginning and end of each term (*Enid Blyton* 125). Yet the nature of those journeys is rarely critically acknowledged. Among the few scholars who do consider these moments of transition, Rosemary Auchmuty focuses her interest rather delightfully upon Darrell's parents. She neatly highlights the division of labour between Mr and Mrs Rivers, who "drives the car *once*. To *relieve* her husband: that

is, she can drive, but only demonstrates her skill when he needs a rest. Mr Rivers is in charge; her contribution is secondary" ("Enid Blyton" 84). The journey to school is predominantly characterised as masculine, even if this ends at the gates. Mr and Mrs Rivers must return home whilst Darrell, and later her younger sister Felicity, are permitted to enter the school grounds themselves. The tentative liberation of the school environment is available to the children, but Mrs Rivers, adult and married, has conformed to a standard located beyond such. Thus she is forced to return home and to this coding of self; no longer able to "disturb the universe" (Trites *Do I Dare* 1), but rather committed to shoring up some small ideological part of it.

The real world does have a presence within the *Malory Towers* books, albeit a fragmentary one. The girls are partially exempted from dominant social coding throughout their attendance at the school, but this is not to argue for the absence of gendering within these environments. As I have shown, both *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* expend considerable effort in affirming a distinct form of femininity. The affirmation is often undercut by the same effort, however. In *Malory Towers*, girls such as Amanda are forcefully made to conform to nurturing and maternal stereotypes whilst others such as Bill and Clarissa are allowed to start their own business. In *St Clare's*, girls such as Margery and Carlotta are celebrated for their physical prowess, whilst others such as Alison and Gwendoline are required to undergo painful and challenging periods of personal growth. Gender binaries do not exist within the landscape of the school; nuances of gender, however, do.

In *Last Term at Malory Towers* (1951) the sixth formers contemplate their future. They have been educated as "good-hearted and kind, sensible and trustable" girls, whom

"the world can lean on" (25). In one sense, this description of the school's educational approach is troubling. It seems they are to be secondary participants within an already established and immovable patriarchy and not active leaders in society. Yet in another sense, this is a further manifestation of the complexities at the heart of both *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers*. These are texts which search for both psychological and practical purchase within the wider world, even as it is a process doomed to failure on both counts. Amanda must, quite literally, hit the rocks and face a questionable future. Eileen must leave school and work in an office. Gwendoline must deal with her father's illness. Unorthodox girlhood is unable to flourish within these landscapes, yet the manifestations of a more traditional orthodoxy seem similarly fated to a problematic future. We do not see Pat and Isobel O'Sullivan as triumphant head girls, embodiments of all that they have learnt at St Clare's. We do not see Darrell and Sally leave Malory Towers to face the unknown choices, sexual liberation and headiness of university life. Instead the girls who have conformed are rewarded with a temporary, tentative liberation emphatically circumscribed within a controlled landscape. Whether it remains available outside those limits is another question entirely.

The idea of limits provide a useful halfway point for this chapter. Written and published between 1941 and 1951, the *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers* books sit squarely within Lucy Pearson's demarcation of a second golden age of children's literature (1). The first Golden Age, located in the early 1900s and the remit of the first chapter of this thesis, was marked by the creation and perpetuation of a very particular form of landscape within children's literature. The golden age of the mid-twentieth century seems to evoke something very different, much more permeable and indefinite where limits undoubtedly

existed and were enforced, yet at the same time there was a covert, yet definite, sense of tentative liberation where limits could be tested. It is therefore plausible that the second golden age of children's literature might be conceptualised as hinging upon such a shift; and also that subsequent golden ages might be recognised upon such a framework. Yet in arguing for subsequent golden ages, and indeed the potential unknown future of such, I position this thesis in opposition to dominant scholarship on the notion of golden ages. Golden ages, and their affirmation, tend to hang upon the recognition of individual works which achieve canonicity or meet a commonly accepted, even if ephemeral, criteria of quality. Lucy Pearson highlights texts such as *Dogger* by Shirley Hughes (1977), *Watership Down* by Richard Adams (1972) and Roald Dahl's *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* (1964) as those which "have been both critically acclaimed and enduringly popular" (1). Humphrey Carpenter, as discussed in the first chapter, identified texts such as *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley (1863) and *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911) as being indicative of the first Golden Age, and these texts remain canonical to this day. Yet in children's literature, at least, it seems that golden ages embrace the paradox of running more or less continuously, and to distinguish between them requires a notion of thematic paradigm; to merely highlight singular instances of 'golden' texts, I would suggest, somewhat obscures the pattern of the general development of children's literature. To test this assertion and indeed the outer limits of such a paradigm, I now turn towards *A Little Love Song* by Michelle Magorian as the second case study for this chapter.

*A Little Love Song* by Michelle Magorian (1991) is a book about girlhood and education, and thus, as with the other texts of this thesis, representative of an often marginalised sector children's literature. It is far too often discounted in favour of



Magorian's debut novel, *Goodnight Mister Tom* (1981), ignored from critical discussion of 1990s children's literature nor post-world war thematics, and thus exists in a relative critical hinterland. Yet, as I will argue, *A Little Love Song* is vitally representative of the treatment of landscape in children's literature during the Second World War, through its appropriation of the characteristics of that paradigm, and can be considered as a Golden Age text, despite its apparently removed context of production.

I begin my investigation with one of the few critics to address *A Little Love Song* from a scholarly perspective. Rose May Pham Dinh analyses the novel in the context of Michelle Magorian's wider work, and suggests that these texts present war as a process of catalytic change for the women located within: "[Elle] présente la guerre comme le catalyseur du changement dans la condition féminine" (abs.). This development of a new form of femininity was one which could contradict and challenge a historical orthodoxy through sexual liberation. Pham Dinh notes that *A Little Love Song* makes "the somewhat transgressive suggestion ... that premarital sex - at least in the context of a loving relationship - is not necessarily wrong" (para. 56). The context of the novel's production here is relevant. Written in the nineties, *A Little Love Song* is undoubtedly distanced from the social pressures and conventions of the Second World War and thus has a degree of liberty clearly denied to texts published during that period. By merging its relatively contemporary perspective with a historic setting, the text works at a narrative remove that allows the reader to question and challenge the social conventions of that age. Yet this is not to discount the evocation of mid-twentieth century context both achieved and sought by *A Little Love Song*, a characteristic which is crucially underpinned by the representation of space and place within the text. As the novel opens, a young girl enters a seaside village

on her bike; she is Rose Highly-Robinson, who has been evacuated to Salmouth with her sister, Diana. Rose's status as a schoolgirl is immediately emphasised. She wears her hair down in two thick black braids (1), a whim imposed by their mother upon both her and her sister (6). Rose's frustration over this is marked: "Diana was almost twenty-one! Rose would gladly have had hers cut if she hadn't been afraid of looking like a boy" (6). Female hair and the treatment of it is worthy of investigation in its own right (Lesnik-Oberstein), but I shall confine myself to briefly noting how hair is used in *A Little Love Song* as a symbol of girliness. Diana and Rose are children, despite Diana's age, and begin their summer of liberation marked as such. Later in the novel, Rose does cut her hair as a mark of her own personal liberation. Initially, however, both girls are rendered as subservient figures in a world dominated by customs which work to deny their girlish influence. It is upon their arrival in Salmouth, a space notably absent of adult censure and control, that Rose begins to challenge the conspiracy of oppression about her most immediately through the adoption of masculine clothing. She puts away her gymslip and skirt, swapping these for a pair of shorts (12). In defending this shift, Rose makes reference to their new surroundings, highlighting how the coastal landscape of Salmouth requires practicality of a new sort:

"Diana, this is Salmouth, not London. They're far more respectable than skirts. At least the wind can't blow them up and show your knickers."

"Please," said Diana, shocked. "Don't use that word." (14)

A common theme in *A Little Love Song* is liberation from personal and cultural boundaries, located in both gender and class. Whilst several characters undergo such a

transformation, the personal boundaries are most definite for Rose, and her arrival at Salmouth seems to underscore this. She is arriving at another location to which her mother has sent her, a pattern reminiscent of her boarding school past where Rose has remained subject to an adult orthodoxy. Rose is accustomed to living within a landscape that is not her own, and doing so upon the authority of adult figures. Yet her first view of Salmouth is from the top of a hill and thus characterised by its own air of authority: "Below her, an expanse of pale green sea brushed against a tiny village and the surrounding covers and cliffs" (1). By locating Rose above this vista, the novel subtly suggests an increase of agency within her life. Her mother may have sent her to Salmouth, but Rose is, at last, in control.

After the two sisters discover their chaperone has been called up and that they are formally alone, they argue. Diana, an adherent to normalised expectations of behaviour, goes off to find a telephone to report their situation whilst Rose goes "For a *long* walk. After all, I might as well make the most of my short stay here" (15). This movement into, and through, landscape hints at one of the great binaries at the heart of young adult fiction. As Kimberley Reynolds points out, young adult literature is inherently paradoxical in that it must both "be a literature of breaking away and becoming" and a "literature of control and conformity" (*Radical Children's* 79). It is of use here to invoke the work of Roberta Seelinger Trites and her argument here that the school story holds an "agenda to indoctrinate children into the social order" (*Disturbing* 14). *A Little Love Song* is no traditional school story, providing as it does the opportunity to disrupt the dominance of the educational institution with the carnivalesque liberty of the school holidays and the sudden absence of guardianship, but it is still a story about school and the influence of an educational agenda, both negative and positive, is dwelt on at some length. It is only through Rose's temporarily

liberated sense of movement: out of the house, over the cliffs and to an eventual “grassy tussock” (Magorian, *A Little Love Song* 15), that she is at last located in her own *bildungsroman*; her story of growth. It is this landscape that offers her that initial opportunity to grow, at first by allowing her to inhabit a position of height and power on the cliffs, but secondly by requiring her to directly confront and resolve her issues of self; issues that will, once resolved, allow her to “take up” one of the already “established roles in the existing social order” (Reynolds, *Radical Children’s* 79). This process of maturation and conformity begins when Rose pulls up some grass and throws it into the air: “A gust of wind caught some of the blades and carried them to a ledge. Rose lay on her stomach and looked down. Below her was a cove” (16). The coves have been deemed inaccessible by land, a judgement made by the male caretaker of their holiday home, and Rose's reaction is driven by an urge to defy this patriarchal limit upon her movement: “We'll see about that, Mr Par-a-artridge” (17). She carefully climbs down into the cove and upon her successful arrival, experiences an immediate and deep sense of security:

She felt so private and safe. Surrounded by a semicircle of pink and grey cliffs, her only companions were the seagulls perched high on the ledges above her.

Her anger had somehow left her. Instead, she felt sad. (17)

The pinkish edges of the cliff, coupled with the womblike seclusion and security of the cove, create a space, recessed from the real world and inhabited solely by Rose. It is important to recognise the gendering of this space, both through the presence of Rose but also through

the role of colour. *A Little Love Song* repeatedly works to make pink located within the feminine; it is connected with Lapwing Cottage and the flowers which sprawl "up to Diana's bedroom window" (19), Rose's "shell pink" bloomers (268), her dress (106) and perhaps most intimately with Rose herself: "It looks as though you have pink straps where the lines of your tan end ... You're wearing a pink bathing suit" (303). Thus despite Rose's adoption of masculine clothing and her prior movement through heightened positions of landscape associated with power and an increased sense of agency, the intimate space of the cove, with its embedded gender coding, now functions as a prompt for her to confront her femininity. Rose is in a state of adolescent flux, negotiating her incipient adulthood and the role she is required to take in it, whilst still being viewed as a child, unable to live how or where she wishes without permission. In confronting this challenge of self, it is perhaps inevitable that she returns again to the feminine landscape of the cove. Her next visit is purposeful; she wakes early and leaves Diana behind in the house, entombed in the domestic environment. Her elder sister is to be read within this space, trapped in a more conventional iteration of femininity. Rose, in contrast, is now dressed in a black swimsuit and carries only her notebook, a towel and shorts with her in a bag (28). Upon arrival at her cove, she takes a "good hard look at the sea [before she stands] up and [steps] out boldly" (28). This is the beginning of her independence, and the death of her former obedient and orthodox identity. The swimsuit, providing for a state of near nudity, hints towards the shedding of Rose's former, entrammelled ideas of femininity, whilst the colour of the suit also implies a sense of mourning for that former identity. In wearing the swimsuit, Rose has presented herself as a physical *tabula rasa*, and yet in doing so within the feminine landscape of the cove she is in fact confronting her ideas of gender to an unanticipated extent. For Pham Dinh, this journey of change is driven by the wider social change of the

Second World War, which helped to “widen the range of potentialities that women may contemplate” (para. 19); but I see something more akin to Kimberley Reynolds' arguments here. Reynolds writes that contemporary young adult literature can be classified in three distinct categories: as “writing the present” (*Radical Children's* 79), “blinded by the light” (81) or “we can change the world” where the “texts hold out a belief that change is necessary and, crucially, possible” (82). Reynolds is careful to note that these categories are contemporary constructions, drawing a connection between young adult literature and the increasing tendency for “youth culture” to be “hived off into a designated cultural space and so made safe” (78-79). It is the modern context of *A Little Love Song*, as embodied both in its carefully delineated landscapes and broad spectrum of social class, that enables Rose's journey towards selfhood. Reynolds describes her third category of young adult literature as texts which celebrate the “coming to creativity and power that takes place in adolescence and shows young people as ethical, engaged and effective” (82). This perspective exceeds the scope of novels located solely within the mid-twentieth century, which was a period only beginning to experience and experiment with an “aesthetic of transformation” (9). However, texts that mediate period attitudes from the vantage of retrospection are able to successfully render such changes; and, what's more, *A Little Love Song* is able to present this change as a lasting process of transformation not only for Rose but also for the other inhabitants of Salmouth.

Rose's first attempt at swimming is unsuccessful: "A wave hit her with such force ... she staggered to her feet coughing" (29). The sea thus rebuffs her and she is sent back onto land; an episode destined to be contrasted with Derry's confidence in both swimming and sailing. She subsequently abandons the physical activity of swimming and instead turns to a

more legitimate feminine activity: writing. For Diana Chlebek, who has offered one of the few attempts to understand water as a thematic device within children's literature, such a turn of events would be unsurprising. Chlebek argues that rivers are "a narrative device to illustrate the reality of life as a process" (35); Victorian children's literature used the river as an emblem of "the wild adventure" (35), an idea which was later notably repurposed in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, thereby capturing a more contemporary notion of the river as "mythical ... archetype" (35). Though much of Chlebek's argument seems to stem from the idea of flowing water and thus the intimation of process, renewal and rejuvenation, it is easy to extend this reading to the sea itself. If all rivers ultimately flow towards the sea and if rivers signify the process of life, then the sea becomes inevitably associated with death. In being rebuffed from the sea upon her first attempts at swimming, and forced to return to a more gender appropriate activity, Rose is required to live and confront her own personal demons around the issues of gender and identity. Only then can she let them 'die'.

When Rose finishes writing in her notebook, she sees a boat in the distance. It turns and tacks towards her despite her best efforts to "[will] him away" (Magorian, *A Little Love Song* 31). The boat belongs to Derry, the cousin of the bookshop owner that Rose has already briefly met. Upon Derry's arrival at the cove, Rose is struck by her "state of undress; of her swimsuit clinging damply to her skin" (31). She pulls "her plaits down over her shoulders to hide her chest and [draws] up her knees" (31). The sexual dimension of the situation is explicit. A masculine figure has entered - notably not from the land but from the unknown sea - and thus the spatial dynamics of the cove are transformed. It no longer celebrates the sacred feminine but rather is forced to confront the inevitable intrusion of a

masculinised other. Rose's journey of personal growth requires her to understand her own adolescent identity as an increasingly desirous, and desirable, individual, participating in a wider system of gender identity. The denial of these facts, in this landscape that energetically works to facilitate them, is impossible.

Upon Derry's arrival, the sea adopts a new spatial characteristic. No longer resonant of death and finality, it instead becomes a masculinised space that Rose can only navigate with permission and help from Derry. He tells her that he will take her out on the boat "as soon as [she] can swim" (62), and the two begin swimming lessons; Derry arriving from the sea, whilst Rose climbs down into the cove, both figures locating themselves in their specifically gendered environments. It is noticeable that upon her first meeting with Derry, Rose is "angry with him for invading her private place and angry with herself for being so embarrassed" (31). This language serves to emphasise the complex presence of Derry; he *invades* Rose's 'private place', and thus the unwelcome sexual undertones of their encounters start to make themselves felt. Although Pham Dinh acknowledges the complex nature of this relationship, she argues that Rose is in fact "thoroughly preoccupied with the perennial anxiety of whether or not a man will ever want her" (para. 56) and that although "unconventional femininity ... might bring its own rewards," the novel provides the "conventional happy ending by which Rose gets a man" (para. 57). Yet when viewed through the medium of landscape, Pham Dinh's summation is only partially accurate. Rose is preoccupied with questions of her own femininity and sexual identity because the landscape around her recursively works to pose these questions. As Rose practices floating in her swimming lesson with Derry, the "thought of him looking down at her made her tense up. Suddenly she was aware of her breasts and the hair under her armpits" (34). Formerly



accustomed to high points in the landscape, and thus implicit positions of power, Rose now finds herself on a lower plane and thus in a position of subservience. This retrograde step is emphasised as the lesson continues and Rose becomes increasingly uneasy: "It was even worse when he touched her....time after time she slipped, swallowing great gulps of ocean on her travels down" (35). For Rose to embrace the potential of female life, whether orthodox or unorthodox, she is forced to embrace a cycle of death and rebirth, provided by immersion in the water. The death, in this instance, is pointedly articulated through her relationship with Derry. As this relationship develops, she finds herself relieved when Derry is not at the cove (175). Upon his eventual arrival, they kiss: "She closed [her eyes] hurriedly, conscious that her right hand was filled with sand, and wondering if she ought to let go of it" (176). As Rose herself commented at the start of the novel, she has nowhere to be herself (46). The cove, a once deeply feminine site, is symptomatic of that through its shift from feminine unorthodoxy to a more orthodox, heavily masculinised, coding: a coding which, despite her best efforts, remains absent from Rose's experience.

Derry and Rose's relationship is not solely confined to the cove. In an episode following their first kiss, Derry arrives at the sisters' holiday home, Lapwing Cottage. The cottage on an isolated site, was previously inhabited by 'Mad Hilda' who was allowed to live there at the mercy of her brother. For Hilda, the cottage provided a sense of emotional and practical liberation; it is similarly transformative for both Diana and Rose, representing a release from societal and gendered constraints. Yet Derry's unasked-for arrival recodes the cottage as a space of patriarchal orthodoxy, and subsequently oppression and domestic entrapment. As circumstances conspire to make Diana stay away one night, Derry instead stays over and Rose finds herself, once more, increasingly tense: "She couldn't bear Derry

sitting there, staring at her" (183). She eventually starts to prepare a meal for the two of them and, underlining this shift into servile domesticity, Derry asks her to wear a dress (183). Though no sexual intercourse occurs in this instance, Rose does eventually lose her virginity to Derry in the cottage. She sleeps with him out of a sense of misplaced duty, in response to his call up to join the war: "the reality of Derry being dead came home to her... she would have to do it. Not to agree would be so selfish" (201). The pain of the encounter is reflected in the environment around her: "A strange silence passed over the cottage. She watched the twilight creep with deadening slowness around her and the shadows from the garden lengthening across the tiny lawn" (202). The cottage thus transforms to become a fascimile of marital orthodoxy, characterised by an sense of deadening routine; Rose wears a dress, cooks for her partner, before engaging in formalised sexual intercourse. Because this negative sexual experience is located within the cottage as opposed to the cove, the site where Rose had first confronted and embraced her femininity, it serves to emphasise that the orthodox and restrictive femininity represented by these behaviours is not for her. Any relationship identified with such oppressive characteristics is similarly doomed to failure. For Jane Carroll, such a failure would not be surprising, recognising as she does a connection between the home and an intimate sense of self: "The dialectic of self and other is especially important as the home is a highly exclusive zone, and the things gathered there form a carefully selected collection. The group of people admitted is similarly select" (*Landscape* 19). In locating Rose's first sexual experience within the cottage, a space with a markedly feminine past, her personal identity is once more subsumed by the wider expectations of her gender. She sleeps with Derry because it is what is required of her; and in doing so, submits to the dominant orthodoxy of a wider world. However the cottage itself, a space marked by unorthodoxy and rebellion, rebuffs this capitulation.

Lapwing Cottage has an unusual history. Mad Hilda, Rose learns, was "just a bit *queer*, you know. See that door in the corridor, that's where her things are. They're all locked up. Been in there since last autumn when she died" (10). One morning, as she looks out of the window, Rose begins to discover the truth behind this story. She notices a package wedged into the fabric of the house itself. There is "something dark and soft sticking out of the brickwork underneath the sill" (49), and upon working it free, she discovers an oilskin package. Inside is a canvas bag containing two keys and a letter from Hilda addressed to the "Lover of this view" (50). The location of the package is relevant, providing as it does a bridge between the bounded domesticity of the cottage and the wider world. For Jane Carroll, the domestic environment is a liminal space (*Landscape* 24) and that liminality gives an edge to what she describes as the sanctuary topos, a space which allows for the "opening and closing of many stories" (23). As I noted in the introduction, the sanctuary topos has a natural connection with the school story genre, but it also has a relevance here. Lapwing Cottage is a domestic environment sacred to the memory of Hilda, comprising both the enclosed rooms of her belongings and the rooms which have been made open and available to the sisters. The heart of this sanctuary, to adopt Carroll's phrasing, is located in the package that holds the truth about Hilda's personal history. The package is small, invoking childish connotations (cf. Sachiko Cecire et al.), wrapped in oilskin, a material coded with external industry, and located at the threshold of the sanctuary in a space which is not normally accessible to adults. Rose, both passively looking out the window, and actively investigating the surroundings of the window itself, foregrounds a key characteristic of the sanctuary topos. These spaces are charged with an indefinite liminality (Carroll *Landscape* 24) that reflects the "identity of their inhabitants" (24). The package's location at the boundary of the building draws attention to Rose's relationship with her

landscape: “shifting, and unstable ... reflected by the instability of the home” (24). Being hidden in a space accessible only to those able to explore the boundary between constrained and liberated ideas of femininity, between definite and indefinite ideas of selfhood, the package was always destined to be found by Rose, as opposed to her more conventionally feminine sister, Diana. The charged information within the package gives Rose access to a level of adult knowledge formerly unavailable to her.

Hilda’s retreat to the borders of the sea had followed the oppression of her family who, disgusted at her becoming pregnant outside of marriage, placed her in a mental asylum and took away her child. Having experienced both life and symbolic death, Hilda is unafraid of the landscape, recognising her distance from the village as a potential benefit. She goes so far as to adopt a protective mantle of madness in order to capitalise on this severance from society and assures her family that she will manage without servants who, afraid of the landscape’s isolation, are unwilling to visit the house. Thus Hilda transforms the landscape of Lapwing Cottage into one of enablement and succour, drawing on her own experience as an unruly figure of womanhood, as opposed to the more conventional interpretations of the landscape provided by the servants and her more socially orthodox family. Hilda’s use of performed madness for personal liberation, her conscious adoption of an irrational mode of existence in order to find liberation, resonates with the work of Kim Reynolds on ‘nonsense’ in the children’s literature of the mid-twentieth century. Reynolds writes that nonsense “sets out to question received wisdom and in the process [stimulate] new ways of thinking. This makes it a highly effective mode both for writers who want to comment on and so affect society, and those who propose new ways of representing culture” (*Left Out* 45). Nonsense, Reynolds is careful to point out, is not the refuge of a “fatigued brain” but rather that which “requires a high degree of technical knowledge and

intellectual sophistication for its effects” (47). She traces the development of nonsense from the Victorian wordplay of Lewis Carroll (55) through to the 1960s and its embrace of a “modernist aesthetic,” which repurposed nonsense and its inherent focus on “language, literary knowledge and intellectual play” with the aim of producing children’s literature of the “highest merit” (56). She concludes that nonsense allows the opportunity of “calling attention to (not necessarily dismantling) conventions so that their effects on our lives are more visible” (67). Hilda’s performed madness finds a parallel in this idea of literary nonsense; her madness is a state sought through her intellectual reading of circumstance, and while nonsensical to others it is profoundly logical to herself. This performed faux-madness, located within the unorthodox landscape of a “white unkempt cottage, with weeds and brambles growing wild round it” (Magorian, *A Little Love Song* 8), where no previous tenant has lasted longer than a week (10), becomes synonymous with cultural and personal liberation. It is a form of liberty available to those who can read the landscape in the same manner; those who can see through the “disguise, masquerade, and imposture” (Reynolds 48) of both Hilda’s story and the cottage itself. Hilda’s liberation was gained at a physical and mental cost, however, which the narrative takes care to redress by locating Dot’s birth within the cottage itself. She arrives after Rose and Derry have spent the night together, and Rose sends Derry for help. The cottage seems “almost to sigh with relief” (226), expressing an environmental sense of Derry’s oppressive presence as one of the few masculine figures who encroach upon the intimacies of this feminine, unorthodox landscape. After Dot gives birth, Rose experiences an epiphany. “By the time Rose reached the coastal path, she was aware of feeling different; lighter, yet more earth-bound. She couldn’t stop smiling... A strange excitement welled up inside her and she began to run wildly, yelling it out over and over again. ‘I like being female!’” (237). This is a tightly

circumscribed form of female liberation, driven by the geographical and *a fortiori* cultural isolation of the cottage and its inhabitants, but it is still better than no liberation at all.

Rose does, however, find a further space of personal liberation in the middle of the town itself: a bookshop, next door to "an empty fishmonger's shop" (4), which ultimately proves to be an ideological island for both male and female visitors. The bookshop would be, for Gaston Bachelard, a space of "protected intimacy" (3); he argues that such spaces represent "our corner of the world ... our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word" (4). The bookshop offers equality of knowledge and mutual understanding, and provides a space for Rose to engage with ideas that have been previously denied to her. It is a space which merges both reality and "virtuality, by means of thoughts and dreams" (5). The bookshop facilitates and legitimises Rose's independence of thought, as it does for Alec, the owner of the shop. As the novel progresses, it is revealed that Alec is the illegitimate son of Hilda, who had come to realise this and, whilst never making her identity known, had funded the bookshop to ensure her son's security. This allows the bookshop to be read, in Bachelard's terms, as a metaphorical "cradle" (5) which both swaddles and protects its inhabitants. For Hilda, home was where life was "enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house" (*A Little Love Song* 7) and in lieu of her personal presence, she seeks to extend this maternal coding of space to the bookshop for Alec.

The bookshop also comes to offer a maternal sense of support for Rose herself. Subjected to a restricted diet of literature at school, she is at last able to freely pick her reading material and thus her journey of psychological liberation begins. Initially she searches for a book on "human biology" (24), and importantly does so without the presence of her sister or adult authority. She falls into conversation with Alec, who offers her

unhindered access to works that have previously been forbidden to her. Rose follows him upstairs to a "bookish living room" (26) and, when he finds the book he wishes to lend her, she feels "both annoyed at being saddled with a book not of her choice, and flattered that he had lent it to her" (27). The book contains "Discord in Childhood" by D.H. Lawrence, a poem concerned with exploring the natural wilderness located beyond an immediately domestic and personal context. It is a poem which Rose finds revelatory: "Probably some sickly sentimental thing about ... she stopped ... This wasn't poetry. Well, not her idea of poetry" (30). The insights provided by the poetry propel Rose back to the bookshop where she breaks down and confesses her feelings about school to Alec: "I feel I can't breathe there. There's no room for me to be myself. I have to be on guard all the time" (46). As Jane Carroll reminds us, homes are spaces which are "clearly appropriated to a person" (*Landscape* 27) and Rose's ease and openness within the living room of the bookshop, including her subsequent breakdown in this room, establishes both her affinity and equivalence to Alec.

During one of their first meetings, Alec and Rose sit together in the bookshop's living room, each sat on a separate arm chair by the fireplace (Magorian *A Little Love Song* 44), in a scene of equality and harmony. It provides a significant contrast to the previously unequal meetings between Rose and Derry. Here, Alec and Rose find an initial compatibility through their interest in literature. Alec provides Rose with a formerly forbidden book, and access to more: "'Have a look round, and see if there are any other banned books here" (45). Alec treats Rose as an adult equal, allowing her the intellectual liberation afforded by the bookshop. It is a privilege he openly offers others in Salmouth, most noticeably the unmarried mothers sent to the village to have their children and give them up for adoption.

This literary sense of liberation has a “defamiliarising” effect, a key characteristic of the sanctuary topos for Jane Carroll (*Landscape* 29), providing as it does the opportunity for characters to be “shaken out of their ordinary routines as they realise their lives are connected with a mythic and magical world” (29). Carroll is referring here to the Drew family at the heart of the *Dark is Rising* novels by Susan Cooper, but the description similarly applies to Rose, who is being given an opportunity to see beyond her current limited status. Literature, and the benefits of literacy, are now the entitlement of all, not just the privileged few.

Alec's sense of literary liberalism is supported by the environment of the bookshop itself. The bookshelves offer a literal refuge from the world outside, whilst the living room, located up above the ground floor, adds a further degree of removal. Height, as previously noted, is also vital to Rose's previously lacking sense of her own agency. While Derry seeks to bring her down to a more orthodox position of womanhood, demure and subservient, Alec is content to enable and support her sense of personal growth. The figurative spatial contrast is evident in the scene after Rose's trip to the bookshop, when she runs "without stopping along the beach", a space formerly identified with Derry and their awkward relationship, whilst in fact feeling "as if, had she leapt, invisible wings would have carried her sailing to the tops of the cliffs and on to the coastal path" (48). As Jane Carroll reminds us, it is the “interaction between geography and human culture [which] transforms land into landscape” (*Landscape* 2). In running along the beach, whilst also allowing her thoughts to move upwards, Rose is now able to embody both orthodox and unorthodox expectations of femininity. She is a passive and active embodiment of femininity, and she reads the landscape around her as both reflecting and reacting to this change.



The spiritual sanctuary offered by the bookshop is particularly manifest towards the end of the novel. An accident has occurred at a local farm and as one of the few local men still present, Alec is called to help with it (298). The experience proves traumatic and triggers memories of his time as a soldier (300). Rose comforts him and, as the weather turns, ends up staying the night. The intellectual closeness formed between Rose and Alec now transforms into a physical relationship, nurtured by the intimacy of the bookshop itself. They find themselves "cocooned together by the rain" (300), "squashed up together in one of the armchairs" (304) and when they make love, they do so at the very heart of the building: "They sank down on to the carpet, pulling the cushions off the armchairs, and lay in front of the fire with them scattered and tucked under their heads." (316). This warmly rendered moment of romantic equality stands in stark contrast to Rose's relationship with Derry. In one instance, she is in the cottage with Derry, similarly trapped by the rain, and the two share a bed overnight. Intercourse does not occur, but Rose spends much of the experience in a state of increasing anxiety at her predicament: "She had been awake for some time. She lay quite still, not daring to move, afraid of waking Derry, yet even more afraid that Diana would return..." (189). On his next visit to Lapwing Cottage Derry has sex with Rose for the first time. As they engage in intercourse, Derry weighs "so heavily on her, she could hardly breathe" (203) and Rose realises that she has made a mistake: "This wasn't wonderful at all, she thought. This was a nightmare" (206). Her relationship with Alec, driven by mutual choice and respect, is fulfilling; her relationship with Derry is anything but. This difference is emphasised through Rose's domestic leanings within the bookshop. Once compelled to pantomime household orthodoxy, she instead now chooses to partake in domesticity: "She turned the towels over on the fireguard. This simple action felt more intimate than all the wretched business she had experienced with Derry" (301). In her

domestic affirmations of intimacy, Rose reinforces the sacred nature of this sanctuary (Carroll, *Landscape* 19) and the space to be herself, which she has sought throughout the novel, has now been found.

This chapter has discussed texts written in and about the mid-twentieth century and, through a discussion of the representation of landscape within those texts, attempted to locate and understand the key characteristics of a second golden age of children's literature. It has challenged the notion of a discretely temporal golden age, rather arguing instead for the notion of a golden age to be recognised through textual characteristics. I have argued that the characteristics of this second golden age can be broadly summed up under the idea of an aesthetic of tentative liberation for girls. I began my exploration of this aesthetic with Enid Blyton and her single-sex school stories which provided a valuable provocation to an understanding of the representation of girlhood during this period, and offered the opportunity to, once more, assert the relevance of popular fiction within the periodization of children's literature. This analysis also led to a somewhat counter-cultural reading of Blyton's work where I argued that both the *St Clare's* and *Malory Towers*, despite some undoubtedly problematic episodes in both series, tend towards representing mid-twentieth century girlhood as a period of tentative liberation. One may read such conclusions as referencing the metaphorical adolescence of children's literature itself, but there are problems with such an analogy. Adolescence leads to adulthood, and I do not wish to intimate such a sequential logic in the argument of this thesis. Instead, I want to suggest that the period from the Second World War in fact functions as a metaphorical hinge, paying tribute to the Victorian period of children's literature whilst also attempting to mediate the demands of an unknown future. Children could walk along cliff tops, as

opposed to admiring them in the distance. Children could fall in love and actively participate in the telling of their own stories. Occasionally this brave new world faltered and the unknowable future would be brought up short by the unmovable present. Yet, as Lucy Pearson rightfully acknowledges, there was a definite sense of "excitement and possibility" (3) in the air, and children's literature was exerting considerable effort to "access the 'real' child" (50). This chapter has aimed to both discover and uncover that represented real child within the mid-twentieth century of children's literature. The next chapter, with its move towards a notional third golden of children's literature, will continue to map that transformation and trace a movement from a definite landscape to a much more figurative space.

## Chapter Three: The Age of Transgression

A common concern throughout this thesis has been to show how the notion of a discrete golden age, temporally fixed and finite, is in itself a flawed premise. I have instead attempted to argue for a recognition of theme in order to understand the notion of a golden age and, in contrast to much of the established scholarship on the area, argued for these golden ages to run more or less contiguously. To identify a golden age, then, is not only to make an evaluative judgement of literature but also to recognise the distinctive characteristics of a period. It was such a recognition that drove both Roger Lancelyn Green and Humphrey Carpenter to characterise the early twentieth century as a golden age, replete with secret gardens and romanticised ideals of childhood; a claim unpacked in the first chapter of this thesis. Lucy Pearson then picked up the thematic baton and characterised the mid-twentieth century as a golden age of its own, driven by the increasingly radicalised context of children's publishing. The second chapter adopted this claim of a second golden age, but saw it as being characterised by the increased spatial freedom allowed towards child characters. In this final chapter of the thesis, I work towards the culmination of such efforts and argue for a third golden age of children's literature to be located in the present day context. I am not alone in such an assertion. Amanda Craig repeatedly returns to the idea of a Golden Age ("The Three Golden Ages of Children's Fiction" ; "Why This Is A Golden Age for Children's Literature"); Arifa Akbar invokes the idea of a Golden Age as a marker of quality ("Here's Hoping This 'Moment' for Children's fiction leads to a Golden Age"); Jennifer Rankin explicitly relates a Golden Age towards the strength of contemporary children's publishing statistics ("Golden Age' of UK Children's Books Bucks

Falling Sales and Print Runs"). In response to Craig's claims in particular, Imogen Russell Williams, after reviewing contemporary children's literature, writes that: " After immersing oneself in these, or witnessing the mesmeric effect they can have on the children who read them, it is hard not to believe that Amanda Craig's claim is justified." ("Are You Really Sure You Want To Play?"). I would suggest that such claims both require and deserve investigation, not in the least in how they challenge the notion of a Golden Age as a historicised ideal (Sorby 99) but also in the fact they are, for the whole, being vocalised within a non-academic context. Throughout this thesis I have attempted to adopt an interdisciplinary approach and the acknowledgement of critique being made by those located outside of the conventionally academic paradigm seems to be the natural complement towards such.

I open this discussion with a text which mediates between twenty-first and mid-twentieth century concerns whilst, in contrast to the previously discussed *A Little Love Song*, locating itself squarely within a present day perspective. *Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens (2014) is, as with the others discussed in this thesis, a story that centres upon girls and education. The two heroines, Daisy and Hazel, become detectives following an unexplained crime in their single-sex boarding school, Deepdean. I argue that the representation of space in this novel can be understood in terms of an increased scope for transgression on the part of the girl. I trace the nature of the transgressive act within the text, and argue that the actions and status of Daisy and Hazel can be considered as a form of permitted transgression. This seemingly contradictory idea is characterised by an increasing consciousness of the adult perspective within children's literature. I argue that this phenomenon is a clear manifestation of the modern orientation of the text and yet

through invoking a prior golden age, the text neatly mediates between the distinct ideals of contemporary and historic visions of childhood. Transgression becomes an important act of expression, and central to the way in which *Murder Most Unladylike* seeks to facilitate a contemporary model of girlhood.

The second half of this chapter moves towards a discussion of the figurative and metaphorical landscape which I argue is a key characteristic of both contemporary children's literature and the proposed third Golden Age. I locate much of this argument within *My Name Is Mina* by David Almond (2010), a middle grade text (that is, a book intended for readers between approximately eight and twelve years old), which deals with the exploits of home-schooled Mina McKee. Mina is a precocious and otherworldly girl, and much of the text, with its freewheeling and innovative stylistics, reflects her outlook upon the world. I argue that this novel, in a manner similar to *Murder Most Unladylike*, depicts a landscape of childish transgression, and show how this transgression exists at odds with the increasingly aetnormative bent of children's literature. I frame much of this analysis through Mina's own writing and therefore offering an argument centred upon the novel's representation of Mina's perception of space and environment. This approach provides an understanding of girlish space and place in the novel, from which I then step back in order to interrogate its presentation of the role of the adult. Whilst *Murder Most Unladylike* functions as a twenty-first century text whilst harking back towards a previous golden age, *My Name is Mina* is a resolutely forward thinking piece of children's literature which suggestively hints as to what the future of the sector may be.

I argue that both *My Name Is Mina* and *Murder Most Unladylike* clearly embody the face of the third golden age of children's literature, that is to say the idea of transgression.

Transgression is an inherently spatial metaphor, centring as it does upon the idea of a forbidden crossing of boundaries between distinct domains. To transgress requires an "assumption and a recognition of 'that' which can be transgressed" (Jenks 15), followed by the conscious decision to act in opposition to those social structures. To transgress, to choose the act of transgression, is to inhabit an oppositional space, located somewhere beyond the boundaries of what society deems as acceptable. Jenks argues that in order to transgress, an individual must identify with the relevant "social norms", and so can subsequently "become committed to the social system" where they are "claimed as members" and their "behaviours cohere" (39). Such a description seems to characterise the individual's maturation into an adult; one able to recognise prevailing social norms, adopt those that apply and behave accordingly. If integrating with society is the final goal, though, childhood might be characterized as a premature state of this framework, in which the question of the child's integration with adult norms has yet to be resolved. The nature of transgression within childhood, and within children's literature, then, remains relatively obscure, marking a critical absence with which this chapter concerns itself. I shall argue for a consideration of childhood transgression as both a legitimised and an illegitimate act of self-location. Whilst the ideas of illegitimacy and transgression accord with each other, the relation between transgression and legitimacy requires further unpacking. These apparent antonyms are nonetheless manifest together within both *Murder Most Unladylike* and *My Name is Mina*, in a palimpsest of conscious and unconscious, or legitimised and illegitimate, levels. The conscious act of transgression is that which locates itself within an adult frame of reference; the unconscious act of transgression, that is to say the transgressive act which occurs without a specific awareness of being transgressive, is inherently childish. This is not

to treat transgression as a simplistic binary between the conscious and unconscious, or the adult and childish act, but to argue instead for a continuum of transgressive expression.

*My Name is Mina* is a challenging text to consider under such circumstances, for it expresses a potent urge for the child to transgress whilst the aetionormative structures within the text work towards nullifying the effect and impact of such. Such a neutralisation of the child actor seems to clearly support Maria Nikolajeva's perspective that children's literature describes "situations in which the established power structures are interrogated without necessarily being overthrown" (*Power* 9). As the novel progresses, Mina begins to re-engage with mainstream schooling and deny her more transgressive qualities; thus participating in the "existing order of adult norms" (53). In other words, the carnival has ended, the status quo has been restored and the threat of Mina's otherness has been nullified. Such a reading clearly denies Marah Gubar's kinship-model of the adult - child relationship, as discussed primarily in the first chapter of this thesis, through its denial of "the existence of shared experiences, of considerable magnitude, between adult and child" (Beauvais "The Child" 270). Despite the wish to "find diagonal ways of slicing up" (272) that relationship between the adult and the child, *My Name is Mina* is a text which, I shall suggest, clearly denies such through its perpetuation of an adult - child opposition.

Amanda Craig, who labels contemporary children's literature as a third golden age, argues that it privileges "what comforts us ... we all still want the fairy-tale to end happily. We still want to return home" ("The Three Golden Ages"). The insecurity of moving away from home and experiencing the unfamiliar in itself transcends the distinction between golden ages, but what moves this description towards the centrality of adulthood is Craig's usage of "still". With this word she hints towards the perpetuation of childhood experience;



the idea that childhood is something which can remain somehow accessible to those who have outgrown it. By describing children's literature in this way, Craig creates an adult image of the sector and places it within an adult frame of reference - embracing the aetonormative perspective purposed by Maria Nikolajeva (*Power*). This naturally has some implications for the evaluation of actions represented within children's literature; is the behaviour of a sympathetic child character implicitly sanctioned by the text's communicative address to adults? This question becomes particularly relevant to texts like those considered in this chapter, which both feature transgressive heroines: what is the status of such transgression if it is, tacitly, a permitted act? My answers must wait on the detail of the relevant analysis, but a suggestive initial thought can be found again in Maria Nikolajeva's work, and her suggestion children's literature is "increasingly transgressing its own boundaries" (*Exit Children's Literature?* 221). She argues that children's literature is increasingly exhibiting postmodern stylistics, and that subsequently it is moving itself "closer to mainstream literature" (222), concluding that "sooner or later, children's literature will be integrated into the mainstream and disappear" (233). As much of this chapter, and indeed the trajectory of this thesis will show, this concern for children's literature is not just raised by postmodern technique, but also by the increasing centring of aetonormative concerns. In utilising such multiple registers, children's literature becomes increasingly reflexive; it speaks to the nature of childhood experience through a reflexive concern with its own pre-formulated assumptions about the exact nature of that experience.

*Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens is a text which looks back towards the second golden age whilst embracing the ideological liberties of its more modern context of writing. The novel is set at Deepdean boarding school, a single-sex boarding school adjacent

to a village of the same name, and there is a crime to solve. Two schoolgirls, Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong, rise to the occasion and form the Wells and Wong Detective Agency. Though the opening novel is set at a boarding school, the sequels to *Murder Most Unladylike* will step away from this location towards a series of other instantly familiar detective genre settings. *Arsenic for Tea* takes place at Daisy's ancestral countryside home; a poisoning occurs, the house is full of guests, and the weather has conspired to prevent anybody arriving at or leaving the house. In *First Class Murder* the girls are on the Orient Express, faced with a locked-room murder and a train full of potential suspects. *Jolly Foul Play* returns Daisy and Hazel to their boarding school and the case of their murdered head girl. *Mistletoe and Murder* takes place in the Christmas holidays, during which the girls solve a murder mystery located at a college. Most of these locations invoke key spatial tropes of the detective genre: the country house party, the locked room murder and the college-based crime. The hermetic self-sufficiency of the locations, in particular, is relevant because it makes them bounded microcosms of space; in effect, instances of a spatial 'super-trope of sorts. The locked room is doubly removed from popular space and society; a sealed space. The boundaries between the locked room and society are impenetrable, save for one initially unrecognised flaw which is to be discovered by the detective and no other. The crime located within such a space is held apart from public space and is therefore outside of mainstream society. The locked room inherently foregrounds the marginal; and those who are able to resolve the crimes discovered in such spaces are often represented as marginal figures in their own right. Daisy and Hazel are both children and female, but it is precisely their marginalisation in these respects that enables them to solve the crimes.

By becoming detectives in *Murder Most Unladylike* Daisy and Hazel transgress beyond their roles as schoolgirls, and the novel clearly legitimises their transgressive acts. The legitimised act of transgression is, by implication, no longer transgressive; yet from Daisy and Hazel's childhood perspective, their actions are not sanctioned and so remain transgressive. This doubleness refers back to the duality between the adult and child reader of children's literature; the adult legitimises the transgressive nature of Daisy and Hazel's actions by situating them in context. The most basic context involved is that of fictionality; the transgressive act in fiction has no consequences in the real world beyond the book itself, and so the fictionalised transgressive act need not impinge upon the accepted societal norms of the real world and is neutralised. The child reader, on the other hand, may view the transgressive acts of Daisy and Hazel through the kinship of childhood, as genuine transgression. The rhetoric of fictionality around the act is still present, but facilitates identification with Daisy and Hazel rather than detachment.

Mary Moran, however, argues that the mystery genre functions not in terms of a dialogue between adult and child reader, but in terms of the intertextuality of the genre itself. This claim has particular relevance for *Murder Most Unladylike*, a text with female protagonists which seeks to represent and foreground juvenile female agency within a genre relatively inhospitable towards such. Moran writes that "the freedom demonstrated by female sleuths such as Nancy Drew may derive not so much from a textual vacuum of parental authority, but from an intertextual source: the rich imaginative traditions of heroines like Mary Lennox and Sara Crewe" (Moran 45). In drawing a parallel between these female protagonists, Moran creates a thematic scaffold which draws as much upon these fictions as it does upon Arcadian ideals of childhood. But this scaffold denies the relevance

and cultural difference of the individual figures themselves: Nancy Drew repeatedly defies the influence of practical or societal orthodoxies through her fervent and impetuous actions; Mary Lennox, as the first chapter of this thesis showed, is a complex locus of power within her own right; Sara Crewe, another Frances Hodgson Burnett protagonist, is a resolutely upper class figure who, through the dissociative power of her imaginative faculties, is able to survive her temporarily impoverished state. Moran's argument recasts these diverse and proactive figures as instances of a typical, and interwoven, fictional archetype. I see this as a problematic denial of the "fluid and interfused" discourses which impact upon children's literature (Rudd *Reading the Child* 24); to efface the specificity of individual characters is to deny their embodiment of multiple cultural representations. To take only one of Moran's highlighted characters, Nancy Drew is a character who has both reflected and challenged the changing circumstance of teenage girls throughout the history of her franchise, the evolution of which only confirms the social mirroring of character that Moran's argument ignores.

The spatial environment of *Murder Most Unladylike* is characterised by the idea of connectivity and integration. From the opening pages of the novel, which show an internal and external map of the school, to Daisy and Hazel's free movement between locations throughout the text, the novel's setting is presented as an interconnected landscape, with relations and purposes established and enacted by the movements and interactions of the characters within it. There is a useful parallel here with Edward Relph's ideas about space: "space ... is humanised by the naming of places, by its qualities for men, and by remaking it to serve better the needs of mankind" (16). The spaces of Deepdean School are named and identified specifically by the adults empowered to make such social and critical

designations. Though the girls themselves do engage in the act of renaming and repurposing space, the girlish appropriation of this is emphasised. It is an action that the children recognise as their own: "a little room ... for us to change and leave kit in, which we call the Cupboard" (15). When considered in a broader context, the girls themselves possess little agency. They are placed in adult-sanctioned forms and dormitories, inhabiting "an institutional location [and made subject] to its rules" (Wolfreys 179). The individuality of the girls is suppressed; they are "overwritten, reinscribed and interpolated" (179) by cultural mores and roles. Yet *Murder Most Unladylike* subtly challenges such homogenisation. On the outside, Daisy is "famous throughout Deepdean School", a "good sport" and "absolutely English" (4). In fact, as Hazel recognises, Daisy is something quite different: "The inside of her is not jolly-good-show at all. It took me quite a while to discover that" (4); indeed "The Daisy Wells we all pashed on was, in short, not real at all, but a very clever part" (116). Hazel herself also differs from the accepted type of the schoolgirl. She is Chinese and "[bulges] all over like Bibendum the Michelin Man; my cheeks are moony-round and my hair and eyes are stubbornly dark brown" (4). In maintaining their independent cultural and personal identities alongside their more global identities as schoolgirls, both Hazel and Daisy resist the ideological constraints of their schoolgirl form (Wolfreys 12).

Much of Hazel and Daisy's empowerment, however, has to be qualified by the complicity of an adult perspective. In providing for and allowing childish transgression, the adult character overcodes the impulse as legitimate and so as the very antithesis of transgression. In one particular incident, Daisy and Hazel are able to overhear the final confrontation between the police and the suspects; the girls are in one room, whilst the suspects are in another. The two rooms are connected by a door which is "covered with a

heavy velvet curtain on the big music room side" and, once through that door, there is a space "just big enough for two girl detectives to squeeze into" (290). It is Hazel who picks up on the nuances of this situation and wonders:

... whether the Inspector had planned on us listening in. It may have just been a nice coincidence - he never said anything about it to us afterwards - but all the same, Daisy and I opened the connecting door and slipped in behind the curtain. So we heard exactly what went on at Inspector Priestley's meeting. (290).

In being able to listen and witness the final meeting between the Inspector and suspects, Daisy and Hazel transgress their identities as schoolgirls. But the girls are, apparently, enabled in their incursion into the meeting by the Inspector who has asked them to wait in this room in particular. While this may be a clear transgression when viewed from a childish perspective, when viewed from the adult perspective, it seems to be reduced to an act of legitimised transgression. The girls are not equals in status to the adults, but rather indirectly, and never explicitly, rewarded with that empowered status for their efforts in solving the crime. This is transgression that is constructed and understood within an adult frame of reference. Hazel and Daisy transgress from their own perspective, but when viewed from an adult perspective, they help to restore social order and bring about justice. These latter two elements are clearly legitimate expressions of social coherence and antithetical to ideas of transgression. It is here that *Murder Most Unladylike* hints at an interesting characteristic of the third golden age, namely a shift from the dual

representational perspectives of adult and child characters, to an acknowledgement of the dual readership of children's literature - the adult and child reader. This is not to identify a characteristic previously foreign to children's literature, but rather to identify a change in its import and register. *Murder Most Unladylike* illustrates not only an alternative model of childhood but also one of adulthood. In doing so, the children's literature of the third golden age becomes an increasingly aetnormative space, which not only accommodates adult concerns and adult imagination alongside childish interests, but also seeks to integrate them as equal, and occasionally dominant, concerns.

It is notable that Daisy and Hazel's process of transformation begins with their own decision, in the absence of adult permission. Daisy, who has "discovered crime" (6) during the holidays, decides on returning to school that she and Hazel will become detectives. They start "creeping about behind the others' backs and pretending to be ordinary when all the time *we* knew we were detectives on a secret mission" (7). This training involves "[creeping] into the other third-form dorm" (7) where they read a fellow girl's diary for clues. Through their steady and purposeful transgression of the established places of Deepdean School, Daisy and Hazel begin to create a subversive relationship to their environment. They are able to move into places where they should not be, and are able to function successfully there. An initial detective agency meeting is held in the "airing cupboard on the second-floor corridor" (51), only relinquished upon the arrival of a prefect who "only wants us out of it so she and Belinda Vance can canoodle in there" (60). It is noticeable that neither the prefect nor Daisy and Hazel use the cupboard for its domestic purpose, but rather they repurpose it to fit their personal needs. The adult labelling of the place is irrelevant; this is a place which is defined and controlled by the girls themselves.

This girlish environment is one often understood best through notions of scale. A big music room is connected to a smaller (290), whilst a little changing room (15) within the larger gym becomes pivotal in understanding the circumstances of the murder. Much of this play between large and small spaces articulates a dialogue between adulthood and childhood. A desire for small spaces is an orientation towards childhood: "In an environment typically built for larger adults, the child's place in the world is frequently as the smaller, usually weaker Other, to the adult norm" (Sachiko Cecire et al. 3) and "this conceptual space of childhood is one to which adults may attempt to return or reclaim" (1). In this somewhat aetnormative reading of childhood, an environment which is built for an adult norm generates childish space as its "Other" and adults must attempt to return to or reclaim this diametrically opposed other. The activities that are located in these smaller spaces place adults in a position of "not knowing" (11), cultivating the existence of a counter-space. For Julian Wolfreys, this counter-space would invoke clear ideas of transgression. Describing Venice, he argues that the city is a labyrinth where "every identity is endlessly transgressive within itself, every identity is both a mosaic accommodation of heterogeneous agglomerations of fragments, and also a shifting, fluid accommodation of disparate elements coming into unique concatenations" (290). The city is both singular and plural, a transgressively heterogeneous space which exists both as a series of small disconnected shards and as paradoxically unified whole (290). I suggest that the landscape of Deepdean School functions in a similar way; that it is both transgressive and legitimate, legible at one level by the child characters and the externally located child reader, and at another level by the adult characters and the externally located adult reader.



As their training progresses, Daisy and Hazel move from reading another girl's diary to "memorizing the licences of every motor car" they see (7). This task establishes a connection between the school and the real world which surrounds it; the cars are emblems of society, and their presence within the local environment of the school frames it as part of a wider social context. The girls may be at school but they are not removed from the world; the privileged local limits of the school itself exist within the larger domain of society. Or, reframing this idea, the school exists within the larger context of the adult world at the same time as it maintains a privileged and precious space for the childish. *Murder Most Unladylike*, by representing an environment that is neither one nor the other, mediates between child and adult readings and, unlike Angela Brazil as discussed in my opening chapter, effectively fulfils the needs of both.

The distinct needs of the child and the adult reader, and the tensions that occur between such, drives much of the transgressive characteristic of the third golden age. Perry Nodelman suggests that by recognising the repeated characteristics within children's literature, it is possible to discover "useful and ... potentially liberatory knowledge - knowledge that might help children to find and to use their own voices." ("The Hidden Child" 269-270). In doing so, he draws attention to the presence of the adult within children's literature, recognition of which, he argues, is vital for an understanding the nature of the child as represented within the text. *Murder Most Unladylike*, as a text that provides for both adult and child perspectives, stimulates those "liberatory" (269) forces that help towards such an understanding. Nodelman goes on to suggest that critical reading should "focus on how a text might be inviting and encouraging a specific response it intends readers to share" (270), and that in articulating such intentions it expresses an adult

perspective, and so indirectly reaffirms the presence of the adult. I would like to suggest, however, that this critical reading may also be childish in nature and thus reflect those liberatory (269) forces to be found within a text by a child. My argument here supposes a unified child reader, and thus opposes those like David Rudd who argue that "it is impossible for any children's book to speak to and for children as a group" (*Reading the Child* 290). I would suggest that this is something of a *fait accompli*; I am not attempting to articulate the idea of child readers as a homogenous group but instead merely asserting the idea of a broadly cohesive readership.

*Murder Most Unladylike* is a hybridised genre novel with influences drawn equally from the detective genre and the boarding-school story. It juxtaposes and affirms both the image of the schoolgirl, traditionally an emblem of limited agency, and the detective, an emblem of independent and contrarian agency: "Daisy Wells is the President [of the club] ... I, Hazel Wong, am its Secretary. Daisy says that this makes her Sherlock Holmes, and me Watson" (3). Daisy and Hazel thus add the socio-cultural capital of both adulthood and masculinity to their identity as schoolgirls by invoking these gendered totems of the genre. Such an appropriation of adult agency lends support to David Oswell's argument that the twentieth century is "the age of children's agency. Children are not simply seen to be, but seen, heard and felt to do" (1); for Oswell, children are not "simply beings, they are more significantly doings. They are actors, authors, authorities and agents. They make a difference to the world we live in" (5). Doing is thus not only action but also reaction. Daisy and Hazel are able to follow instructions, but also able to defy them, embodying both childish and adult agency, within and outside structures of adult centred authority.

*Murder Most Unladylike* integrates a series of intriguing paratextual elements within its pages. Alongside the expected elements of copyright information, endpapers and title page at the start of the novel, there is a cast list of characters, and a detailed map of Deepdean School. The book concludes with a glossary of key terms, providing handwritten explanations of the period vocabulary and unique expressions used within the novel itself. The double page spread of Deepdean School, which maps both the interior and exterior environment, is of particular interest to this thesis. The map colours the school in a muted palette of greys displayed against the negative space of a background with scalloped edges. This negative space functions reflexively, against the demarcated spaces of the map, to create a threshold within both the material and represented spaces of the book. The map also functions as both a representation of the space of the school from a pupil's perspective, and also as a representation of the one drawn in the journal that Hazel keeps. It therefore provides a dual perspective upon a child's interpretation of Deepdean and the possibilities of movement within it, underscored by the girlish vocabulary used in the legend; one room is labelled as "The One's Cubby" in reflection of the teacher's popular and deeply unofficial nickname.

I would argue that the urge to map space within children's literature, and thus translate it from space into the more formalised rhetoric of place, becomes particularly evident during the third golden age. Stanley Lloyd's neatly rendered maps of Malory Towers existed in relative isolation within the genre until the advent of *Murder Most Unladylike* and its near contemporaries, *Ribblestrop* by Andy Mulligan (2009) and *The School for Good and Evil* by Soman Chainani (2013), all of which map their respective schools. It is notable how many of these maps concern the external environment, seeking to represent in visual terms

the literal and symbolic landscape of the school, rather than just delineating the internal layout of the building itself. Nonetheless, *Murder Most Unladylike*, like one of the most famous boarding schools of the contemporary period, Hogwarts from J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, focuses upon also making the internal space of the school visible. In Rowling's case, this priority is manifest most clearly in the device of the Marauder's Map, which shows the location of each inhabitant within Hogwarts. It is an object which becomes a vital plot device as the series develops, yet it was only with the advent of the *Harry Potter* films, and the affordances of a visual medium, that the map itself was iconographically represented and became established as a visual artefact within the series' mythology. The map of Deepdean in *Murder Most Unladylike*, however, is a dominant visual device from the outset, presented as part of the paratextual framing of the novel and serving the external perspective of the reader as well as the internal needs of characters. The map invites readers to interrogate and navigate the space of Deepdean School as if they were detectives themselves, exploring the environment of the buildings and searching for clues. In addition to mapping the school, the image also depicts a magnifying glass which both refers back to a key icon of the detective genre and implicitly asks the reader to adopt a particularly attentive mode of reading and looking. The landscape of Deepdean is not to be accepted at face value; it needs investigation. The sanctity of the boarding school is to be challenged, transformed and refashioned by both text and reader.

Much of the movement within and around Deepdean School has an unpredictable and carnivalesque quality. Both the girls and the murderer utilise alternative routes of travel through the school's landscape. These lie outside the adult reading of the space; in one notable example, the murderer disposes of her victim's body through a disused tunnel

between the "Hall and Old Wing," originally intended to allow the girls to get to "Prayers without getting wet" (167); Hazel and Daisy, on their part, hide behind curtains and listen at doors throughout their investigation. The few spaces that Hazel and Daisy are unable to investigate in person remain accessible to them by listening in, so that the girls have a degree of agency even in those spaces from which adult rules have prohibited them. Hearing and listening requires a clear degree of proximity and intimacy. The quality of intimacy, in particular, challenges the formerly rigid divide between adult and child within the boarding school genre. One instance involves Hazel listening: "with all my might to what was happening in the room behind me" (135), namely a discussion held by two members of staff in their private office. Such an episode, in which a girl infiltrates an adult place, has rarely occurred previously within the genre; it is thanks to the unique context of *Murder Most Unladylike's* production, namely its retrospective invocation of the second golden age, that allows it to occur. In eavesdropping, Hazel challenges the exclusivity and mystery that attend the adult places and spaces of Deepdean. On the map they are enigmatic, barely labelled spaces, devoid of the additional symbols that mark the public and pupil areas. Daisy and Hazel enact their transgressive status by literally violating borders between childish and adult space and place; between the environment they inhabit and know, and one that nominally lies beyond their experience and knowledge.

One of the key incarnations of adulthood in the novel, and indeed the school story genre as a whole, is the headmistress. Miss Griffin is "a presence" (37) and Hazel "cannot imagine Deepdean without Miss Griffin, or Miss Griffin without Deepdean. If the school was a person, it would wear Miss Griffin's neat swooped-back grey hair and immaculate Harris tweed" (37). By wedding Deepdean and Miss Griffin, Hazel makes the head emblematic of

the whole school, but also confines her to that context. Miss Griffin does not function within the real world, the landscape of the town, but remains circumscribed by the spatial microcosm of the school itself. As the novel progresses, it is notable how Miss Griffin stays within the environment of the school, in marked contrast to the other members of staff who move freely from the school to town and vice-versa. Two of the teachers share a house and, it is intimated, are in a same sex relationship: "Miss Bell ... and Miss Parker ... lived together in Miss Parker's little flat in town" (9). Another mistress, Miss Tennyson, is seen at the Willow Tea Rooms (197). This fixing of the head teacher to the school environment is not in itself unusual within the genre; but in this case is intricately bound up with the revelation that she is the murderer. As Daisy and Hazel read in a former pupil's diary: "Seventeen years ago, before she came to Deepdean, [Miss Griffin] ... was a mistress at another school - she had a baby. She was not married and so of course it was hushed up. The baby was given away... That baby was me" (268-269). The pregnancy, its suppression, and Miss Griffin's subsequent career all occur within the closed spatial system that a school represents. The seclusion of this environment from wider society, and Miss Griffin's confinement to it, establish her as a figure of transgression herself. This transgression is deeply buried: her pregnancy was hidden and her daughter, Verity, given up for adoption, so that when she subsequently enrolls for Deepdean, she is ignorant of Miss Griffin's role in her life. The boarding school is an exclusively feminine realm, in which the other sex has no place, yet Miss Griffin, its iconic headmistress herself has a hidden sexual history, and so is a transgressive paradox within the genre. She is both head and mother, yet ultimately she proves to be nothing more than a gross caricature of such.

Following a summons from Miss Griffin to come to the "gym balcony [and] discuss the situation between us" (271), mother and daughter argue and Verity falls to her death. The location of this initial death, and the subsequent murders, challenges the normal signification of the space: the gym, a space of vitality and physical exertion, becomes synonymous with death, to the extent that this characteristic becomes integrated into the gym's place-myth (cf. Urry). As Hazel reflects, "the Gym corridor is awful. It's packed full of dusty, broken bits of old school furniture that stand up like people in the gloom. That evening all the lights were off, and everything was smudged in murky shades of grey and brown" (15). The gothic overtones in such a description are unmistakable, transforming the corridor into something akin to a graveyard; and subsequently Hazel discovers the dead body of her teacher in the gym. The spectacle of Miss Bell's body, lying beneath the viewing balcony "with her arm thrown back behind her head, and her legs folded under her" (15), overwrites the dynamic associations of the gym space itself with grotesque parody evoking the preternatural gothic aura it has acquired. Hazel sees an immediate connection between this death and the previous victim, whose death before Hazel's arrival at the school nonetheless still haunts the atmosphere of the gym: "I suddenly remembered the ghost of Verity Abraham, and thought that perhaps it was *her* who had killed Miss Bell, pushing her off from exactly the same spot she jumped from a year ago" (16-17). The cumulative impact of these deaths gives an uncanny cyclical rhythm to the place-myth of the gym, inverting its normal implications of repetitive physical activity into a sinister narrative of recurrent death. The gym of life becomes the gym of death.

The boarding school genre thrives on the significant construction of space and the inhabitants' understanding of the implications of that system. The prefects have their room,

the members of one dormitory play tricks against another, the staff gossip in their private common room and every individual knows the expectations and limits of their behaviour within these spaces. The girls do not visit the staff common room, they return to their own dormitories after playing their tricks, and the status quo of the system asserts itself. Daisy and Hazel, however, establish a counter-system in which they are able to transgress both practical barriers to, and cultural expectations about, their movement within the school. They are not where they should be at the relevant times, contravening a basic motif of the genre: as Hazel reflects in one self-conscious instance, "I was jumpy with worry that we might be late for dinner up at House and thus incur the awful wrath of Matron" (13-14).

The permeable borders between the child and adult spaces of *Deepdean* contradict the argument of Maria Sachiko Cecire et al. that "a recurring characteristic of canonical children's literature in English is the designation of special spaces of childhood into which only children may pass" (1). Such a reading has the implication of constraining children within space, however much it may intend the reverse. Space may possess adult or childish qualities, or being aspects of both at the same time, but there is no exclusively childish space. It is only when space is rendered as place-making, that reading which is "irrefutably and profoundly human and meaningful" (Relph, 45), that layers of exclusivity, privilege and restriction can be formed. Prior to such a reading, the landscape remains in relative flux where "place and placeness exist in a state of dynamic balance" (n.p). This fluid quality of environment is perhaps most clearly illustrated when Daisy and Hazel visit town. They immediately head for the "most overgrown bit of the park" (195), where they change out of their school clothes and redo their hair: "Without our uniforms, and with our hair up like grown-ups', there was no way to tell we were *Deepdean* girls, but we still had to be careful



in case we came across a master or mistress" (195). Daisy and Hazel adopt a mantle of adulthood and in doing so appropriate a degree of adult agency and empowerment, enabling them to enter new places in town. Most notably their transformation allows them to enter the Willow Tea Rooms (197), a cafe that they are not normally allowed to frequent, leading to their accusation of one of their suspects. Hazel pauses briefly before entering, conscious of the illegitimacies of such: "I still feel a guilty lurch in my stomach whenever we go somewhere we're not allowed" (197). This sense of transgression is intensified by their suspect's reaction: "Her eyes flicked over us, but I could tell that she wasn't seeing us at all" (198); and later, "'this is not a place for children. Does Matron know you're here?'" (199).

In this encounter, Daisy and Hazel assert their own agency within their local landscape, affirming their right to free movement between town and school and, through their costume, the right to alternate between an adult and childish identity. By performing these roles, even while not yet being able to sustain them (as evidenced by Hazel's sense of guilt and self-awareness), they challenge the exclusive privileges of adulthood. Childhood is no longer excluded from the domain of adulthood; but a corollary of this is that both states are permeable. If the child can move freely between childhood and adulthood then the adult figure may also revisit and reconnect with childhood, either from within the school environment, as with Miss Griffin, or by infiltrating in the guise of an identity not their own, as with the Mamzelle.<sup>6</sup> Daisy and Hazel's transformation within the natural environment of the park is also an indirect tribute to the Arcadian myth of childhood, as discussed in chapter one, but one which neatly inverts it. The natural space here is not one of societal preclusion but of societal integration. The Arcadian ideal of childhood invoked a fixed and

---

<sup>6</sup>It is revealed that the French Mamzelle is, in fact, Stella Higgins from Leicester.

bounded landscape; *Murder Most Unladylike*, however, presents a landscape of thresholds and spaces which both facilitate and encourage transgression (Jenks 43).

*Murder Most Unladylike* also offers an opportunity to discern the potential future landscape of children's literature. For Mary Lennox, confined within *The Secret Garden*, and the girls of Angela Brazil's school stories, the landscapes about them symbolised adult control and the imposition of adult orthodoxies. The girls of *Malory Towers* and *St Clare's*, and the characters of *A Little Love Song* inhabited a landscape of tentative liberation, which they were able to explore, albeit only up to a certain and definitive point. *Murder Most Unladylike* builds on this progression towards the empowerment of the girl by depicting a landscape full of potential. Whilst this landscape carries the hallmarks of adult influence and control, it is not solely determined by them; many of the features of this landscape reflect and are driven by the actions of the girls located within it. They are able to move relatively freely throughout the space, reading, redefining and place-making according to their needs. The natural landscape of the park becomes a threshold to adulthood through which the child can pass and, more importantly, return. The global landscape of *Murder Most Unladylike* is one that mediates between girlhood and adulthood whilst wholly favouring neither. It offers instead a figurative exploration of both the adult and child self within the third and contemporary golden age of children's literature.

The second half of this chapter considers *My Name is Mina* by David Almond; a text which, unlike *Murder Most Unladylike*, does not position itself in relation to the tropes of a former golden age but engages directly with the dialogue of what is, I suggest, the third golden age of children's literature. *My Name is Mina* advocates for the rights of the child, and yet is strikingly conscious of the adult presence in children's literature. The novel's

representation of transgression and divergence ultimately positions the child, within children's literature, as a manifestation of novelty, difference and divergence. This, I suggest, is in response to the increasingly aetnormative reach of children's literature and suggests a key trajectory for both the depiction of girlhood and the representation of landscape within such.

*My Name is Mina* is a formally and thematically striking text, presented as Mina's personal journal and recording her exit from mainstream education. It investigates and reflects upon her experience of alternative education, ending at the precise point where the previously published *Skellig* (1998) begins. Distinctively told in a range of typographic styles, and with shifting authorial perspective, *My Name is Mina* is an exuberant and often disorienting read. As is common with Almond's work, the landscape of *My Name is Mina* is an evocative combination of the figurative and the literal Northern landscape<sup>7</sup>. Nolan Dalrymple interprets these confluences as an engagement with marginalization and identity (Dalrymple "Navigating Borderlands" 3). Such issues, he notes, may be "of particular interest to a young adult readership" (3), and he draws a metaphorical parallel between the "marginalized, borderland zone" of the North and the "liminal space of adolescence, itself situated on the cusp of autonomy" (4). This broad reading of space in Almond's work is complemented by Perry Nodelman's argument that landscape in Almond's work functions as cultural allegory:

---

<sup>7</sup> *A Song for Ella Grey*, for example, is a lyrical young adult novel that repurposes the landscape of the Ouseburn Valley and Northumberland as the backdrop for a contemporary retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth

These semi-decayed, semi-wild boundary settings represent the actual situation of much of northern England, its industrial past in ruins and its future yet to emerge ... [they are] allegories of how such places and their inhabitants might best come to terms with themselves ("Versions of the Savage" 39)

To some extent, I agree with these readings, with their common emphasis upon the representation of landscape as a threshold space in Almond's work, neither fictional, nor literal, but existing in a state of perpetual unrest between the two. However, such readings work at a high level of abstraction, privileging global interpretations of Almond's work and presupposing a very distinct type of reader. *My Name is Mina* does not easily support such a reading, being, as Nodelman observes, a book that "reads more like a scrapbook of not especially related materials than as a plot-oriented novel with relationships to an ur-story" (45). Nodelman does not recognise that this monomythic divergence does, in fact represent much of the interest in *My Name is Mina*. Eve Tandoi is one of the few scholars to recognise such and writes persuasively of the novel's transgressive qualities, describing Mina as an "unruly girl" (n.p), whose very unruliness defies unified interpretations. It is this transgressive singularity that provides a clear justification to include *My Name is Mina* in this thesis. As with much of the other texts in this corpus, its refusal and resistance towards a dominant paradigm of thought does not mean it should be disregarded from such discussions.

Mina's alternative education, centred around the needs and requirements of Mina herself, is a key part of the text's transgression. For Jenks, such education would be transgressive in how it "exceeds boundaries [and] exceeds limits" (3): it is not confined to a

school building, or to specific hours, but rather presents a constant experience of learning. Homeschooling like this remains a theme relatively under explored within children's literature.<sup>8</sup> Mina's life outside of mainstream education is an abnormal and ultimately transitional experience. After her initial sense of liberation, she becomes increasingly isolated from society; she is the "contemporary rebel [who] is left with neither utopianism nor nihilism, but rather loneliness" (Jenks 6). Mina herself recognises the development of this emotional state, and attempts to address it at the end of the novel by making friends with her new neighbour. The idea of loneliness is perhaps most potently recognised when Mina studies a tree she used to write on "like it was some kind of secret notebook" and finds the phrase "Mina is lonely" written "on a narrow branch, in very very tiny writing" (69). Loneliness involves a self-conscious recognition of difference and a sense of divergence from a cultural norm, and for Mina, this recognition demands a shift from first person perspective into third person. One instance of this shift occurs when she realises that she is unable to maintain first person narration and deliver a truthful account of her behaviour at a pupil referral unit following her removal from mainstream education. Mina adopts a third person perspective, creating a sense of disconnect and remove, to describe her visit: "...She couldn't stop herself from blathering on and showing off and trying to show she was something special and nothing like the people here" (225). Mina's cutting self-analysis reaches the recognition that living in isolation is both unpleasant and unsustainable; happiness rests in becoming part of society. At the end of the novel Mina cautiously begins a process of re-engagement with the world around her, with the ultimate effect of diminishing her difference. Her childhood, with its "unsettling dissimilarities amid

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://thegallivanters.blogspot.co.uk/2015/08/books-about-children-who-dont-go-to.html?m=1> provides a useful list of titles featuring children which "do not go to school". A notable number of the titles featured are for a middle-grade readership (approximately ages 8-12) and feature home education as a transitory phase of education to be bookended with either an exit or a return towards mainstream education.

similarities" (Ross Johnston 33), is an unsustainable act of self-expression. There is a tension between the individual and society, and since Mina cannot exist outside of society her independence is, necessarily, curtailed. A distant echo of Mary Lennox can be heard here; both Mina and Mary exist beyond a traditional framework and both girls are required to curtail their unorthodoxy in order to conform. Where *My Name is Mina* differs from *The Secret Garden* is that it attempts to locate the agency for this cultural adaptation within Mina herself; but I would suggest that this agency is not wholly childish in nature and rather symbolises an expression of the hidden adult within children's literature (Nodelman *The Hidden Adult*) and the increasingly aetnormative bent of the third golden age. Mina's transformation is driven by her increasing awareness of what is acceptable, informed by her exposure to adult society. Because her transformation is effected in this way, rather than emerging within the framework of childhood itself, Mina's transgressive status is reconfigured as a state of socially allowed, and thus acceptable, difference. She no longer represents the unknowably different, but just an expression of the threshold of society; a threshold that, in the course of her personal growth, she is bound to cross.

An initial marker of Mina's transgressive status is her affinity with environments and periods of time which are not normally associated with children. The novel echoes to the refrain, "My name is Mina and I love the night" (1). These words, amongst the first that Mina writes in her journal, sever her from the everyday landscape of childhood as she sees darkness not as the unknown nor as a threatening environment, but rather as a canvas of imaginative potential. It is the darkness, or rather the moonlight, which triggers the start of her reflective journal writing:

I tug the curtain open. There's a full moon in the middle of the sky. It bathes the world in its silvery light. It shines on Falconer Road and on the houses and the trees beyond, and on the city roofs and spires and on the distant mountains and moors. It shines into the room and onto me. (1)

Here, Mina makes herself and her immediate environment a unified focal point of the natural landscape. Mina is placed in a position of importance within the natural world, evoking a connection with the Arcadian and its celebration of the precious child of nature; yet the text also offers a contemporary reinterpretation of the natural / manmade binary. Mina is able to move between the urban and natural landscape with ease, seeming to escape the boundaries that previously constrained her. She lives on Falconer Road, a name instantly evocating airiness and a human relation to the wild, and the resonance of bird imagery is important to the novel. Her grandfather lives on Crow Road, his death realising the associations of carrion and of death latent in this name. Mina is bequeathed his house, and during a visit with her mother, the two of them come across a family of owls: "There were owls, creatures of dreams and the night, living in her house!" (148). The figure of the owl plays a vital role in Mina's imaginary, functioning as a metaphor with multiple layers of meaning. On one level it expresses her relation to language: "Words should wander and meander. They should fly like owls" (10); at another level it is symbolic of wisdom: "They're the symbol of seeing hidden, secret things" (148); and finally being allied with the power of imagination (148). The owl provides Mina with a means to elaborate her figurative reading of the literal world around her. It binds the human environment of her grandfather's house to the natural landscape around it, the bird flying freely between the two worlds through

the broken window (149). Mina yearns to exercise a similar form of independence and, as befits an individual who often seeks permission from the figures of authority around her, she writes directly to the owl and pleads for help: "Lend me the heart/ to leap like you / into the astonishing night" (151). The owl provides Mina with a connection between the figurative natural world of her imagination and her actual environment. Its presence in the house functions not as a transgression but rather as an expression of permitted difference. Its presence is allowed, and facilitated by the humans around it. Mina's grandfather indirectly furnishes the owls with a home, whilst Mina herself makes their ingress safe: "[She] knocked away more of the glass above the sill, making the opening wider and safe for the birds... She imagined leaping, like the birds did, like Icarus did in the story from long ago. She imagined her wings spreading as she swooped over the city" (149-50). The invocation of Icarus here, on the surface a message which supports Mina's difference, actually functions to undermine her. She is only able to behave as she wishes within a controlled and defined context; to fly like Icarus, a symbol of man's over-ambition, is to transgress beyond her licence and invite retribution.

These agencies of circumscription can be found located within the landscape about Mina, whether in the admonishment provided by her former teachers, or within Mina herself. Most comfortable with the first person perspective, Mina engages directly with her surroundings and articulates that experience in an unmediated, often naive and affecting style. The rare moments when she transfers to a third person perspective are startlingly abrupt, often recognised and remarked upon by Mina herself, and tending to symbolise moments of personal reflection: "We .. *No. Not* we. Not I. Third Person, Mina. She. They" (220). It is intriguing to note an allusion here to Samuel Beckett's *Not I* (1972); a starkly



staged piece of theatre which has several striking similarities with *My Name is Mina*. Mina and 'She', the figure in *Not I*, speak in a mode of oblique confession, the apparent incoherence a form of psychological defence. This invocation of *Not I* also exemplifies one of the defining characteristics of the third golden age of children's literature, a concern for the adult reader's perspective and an awareness of references that may be, perhaps, beyond a normal childish frame of reference. In a moment where Mina decides to cheer herself up by writing "all the words for joy and loveliness" (127), this concern for the adult perspective reoccurs. Her language ranges from childish immediacy - "skylark Mum blackbird owl moon tree park" - through to more cultural allusions in fields ranging from authors to religion. She names the majority of the authors by their surname first - "Sendak ... Rosen ... Hughes ... Oxenbury" (128) - before writing their forenames: " Maurice ... Shirley ... Helen ... Michael ..." (128-29). Alongside this she references some of their most famous creations: "Max ... Dogger" (128). It is an extraordinarily rich series of references full of nods towards children's literature as a sector and by invoking these names, Mina places her own writing alongside theirs in a process of near self-canonisation. She has developed a canonical mode of existence despite being expelled and repelled from the canonical structures of childhood, and mainstream education.

*My Name is Mina* makes repeated reference to Grace (148-49), who proves to be an elderly lady who has seen Mina in her tree, and one day stops to talk to her (104). The two form a nascent friendship, around their shared concern to free Persephone from the Underworld and hurry the arrival of spring (108). Mina, alluding Grace's name with joy, implicitly realises the value of friendship and personal contact. It is significant that she recognises this value in relation to an adult; Grace's friendship also legitimises Mina's highly

developed imaginative faculties and thus, indirectly, normalises her transgressive status. In the presence of Grace, Mina becomes acceptable to society and able to share in the cultural bond of conversation; Mina is no longer the lonely and isolated transgressive (cf. Jenks).

In moving between first and third person narration, Mina begins to drive her own emotional growth. This process is manifest in her wish to be her own "big sister" (60); to extend a kind of adult comfort and reassurance towards her younger, more confused self:

Did I really believe that the tunnel would lead to the Underworld? Did I really think that I could bring Dad home again? ... Sometimes I wish I could go back there as if I was a big sister and hug myself and say, "Don't worry, Mina. I promise that things will get better and you will feel stronger." (60)

These figurative moments of adulthood within Mina's narrative represent both her movement towards autonomy and self-realisation and the loss of her childish self, her difference. Her transgressive self gradually mutates into an approved and socially validated form of otherness that is, in fact, not different at all. This transformative process begins with the Glibbertysnark episode, involving a piece of creative writing Mina produces during the SATS exam at her school. As a result of her unconventional work, Mina is "TAKEN OUT OF SCHOOL!" (163); a result with which, as her use of exuberant and heartfelt capitals makes clear, she is "VERY VERY / VERY PLEASED" (163). For some critics, the Glibbertysnark passage is little more than a piece of impenetrable nonsense (Trites "Ontology..." 104), but it actually provides a resonant insight into the thematics of space within *My Name is Mina*.

Mina's creativity in this passage, and its figurative use of landscape in particular, express her own sense of agency and pursuit of personal liberation.

Upon first reading, the Glibbertysnark passage is a rather opaque piece of text, written in a non-standard form of English with little regard for conventional structure and standardised spelling. The text begins to assume shape and meaning upon being read aloud, however, itself a significant transgression of the silent exam conditions under which it was written. The opening, "In thi biginin..."<sup>9</sup> (161), launches the passage with a sense of solemnity and gravitas through its invocation of the biblical text: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (*King James Bible*, John 1:1). The heightened and formalised rhetoric of this opening is also markedly self-conscious; it concerns the word, and creation. For Rosemary Ross Johnston, the representation and invocation of a Christian mythos is a central concern in Almond's work (15), stamping the "imprint of the fantastic and the inexplicable on the conventional everyday ... [through] a connected togetherness of figurative, other-worldly thinking" (15). The result is a text both "spiritual [and] supernatural", informed by a "semiotics of Christian symbology" (15). The Glibbertysnark passage, however, does not exhibit this kind of "mystical realism" (15) so much as a form of realistic mysticism. Mina is able to formulate a creation myth and, reflexively, through the display of her linguistic and imaginative abilities, to install herself at the centre of that myth. She is the object of awe and veneration for both the glibbertysnark and the reader.

---

<sup>9</sup> [*in the beginning*]

The glibbertysnark itself is a less definite entity. It is initially located beneath ground: "In thi biginin glibbertysnark woz doon in the woositinimana"<sup>10</sup> (161). The environment is dark, and populated by insects: "...dun thar in the dokniss; An the crippey cralies crippin unda the path doon thair"<sup>11</sup> (161). The sense of place in this initial section is characterised by its negation of conventional society, but also articulates an affinity between the glibbertysnark and Mina; both are most comfortable in these unusual marginal spaces. This kinship with Mina identifies the glibbertysnark as a non-threatening and ultimately friendly being who shares Mina's sense of otherness; the glibbertysnark is unable to cope with being seen and prefers to be disregarded: it is "... two riddish a thang for hoyin. So giv it not a thowt"<sup>12</sup> (121). It is only by escaping from oppressive attention that the glibbertysnark gains a sense of its empowerment and ultimately escapes the limits of its underground world. It is able to "raze oot the woositinimana an to the blewniss wi the burds an clouds an clouds"<sup>13</sup> (121). With this final action it disappears into a landscape most reminiscent of a nursery rhyme: "Til the coos cum bak acros the flisterin feeld unda the mistrictacular moooooon. Flap! An ther rite now its endid. Pop!"<sup>14</sup> (162). The ending is as impactful and direct as the opening, this time evoking the particularly distinct rhetoric of a nursery rhyme. Nursery rhymes circulate by oral transmission from adult to child, acquiring a self-perpetuating timelessness in the re-telling, so that the nursery rhyme perpetually re-establishes its fictive relevance. The Glibbertysnark, then, ends by relaying this childish frame of reference; the creationist overtones of the beginning have shrunk to a rhetorical form of juvenilia. The text locates itself within an adult frame of reference, but ultimately reverts to Mina's own perspective;

---

<sup>10</sup> [*in the beginning, glibbertysnark was down in the woositinimana*]

<sup>11</sup> [*down there in the darkness; and the creepy crawlies creeping under the path down there*]

<sup>12</sup> [*...too reddish a thing for noticing. So give it not a thought*]

<sup>13</sup> [*rise out of the woositinimana and to the blueness with the birds and clouds and clouds*]

<sup>14</sup> [*Til the cows come back across the flistering field under the mistrictacular moon. Flap! And there right now it's ended. Pop!*].

whilst its landscape is that of a creation myth, at the centre of this myth is Mina's own much more circumscribed frame of reference. It illustrates the way in which the child's perspective, while not marginalised within contemporary children's literature, is increasingly framed by a more capacious adult perspective conscious of the adult reader.

In the glibbertysnark passage Mina also develops a thinly veiled spatial metaphor for her own self-assertion. She locates much of the passage within the school itself, elements of this immediate landscape being refashioned into a fictional space she can control through her use of language. This fantasy of control is articulated in defiance of the practical environment of the school and the stress of the SATS exams. So Mina integrates the school into the passage, running the "words for scullery and hedteechery"<sup>15</sup> together with "gosts an goolys an the sats an orl will be wel wel wel"<sup>16</sup> (162); and through this conjunction, imaginatively vanquishes them. The emphatic repetition of the "wel wel wel" underscores this ironised optimism, by allowing the 'wel' to be read on a number of levels. Is it a water well, a dark depth like that from which the Glibbertysnark emerges? Or does it play instead on the idea of health and vitality through 'wellness' ? This is left somewhat open to interpretation as the movement of the passage soars towards rural idyllicism, the sky populated by Mina's beloved birds and the landscape thus made safe and inhabitable.

For Edward Relph, an understanding of a place's identity comes through understanding the relationship between a particular environment and a person: "it is not just the identity *of* a place, but also the identity that a person or group has *with* that place" (45). He argues that the relationship is itself a spatial one, concerning "whether they are experiencing it as an insider or as an outsider" (45); an individual may be able to experience

---

<sup>15</sup> [*the words for schoolery and headteachery*]

<sup>16</sup> [*ghosts and ghoulies and the sats and all will be well well well*]

"vicarious insideness" and have an experience "of deeply felt involvement" despite never having visited the place in question (52). Mina's relation to landscape depends upon the recognition of such connections, even in the face of apparent difference (52); she is able to read and find emotional support in both her immediate landscape and fictional correlates of it thanks to her imaginative and linguistic facility. The Glibbertysnark passage describes the liberation of an unknown creature from confinement, prefiguring and precipitating Mina's liberation from the oppression of mainstream education, a moment of supreme joy for her. This sense of freedom is itself expressed in a lovingly rendered passage describing Mina's walk home from school with her mother. It is perhaps the most conventional usage of syntax and grammar in the entire novel, given over to her ecstatic immersion in bucolic perfection and vivid colours: "We sighed at its deliciousness ... beautiful green lawn ... It was lovely and warm ... the sky was heavenly blue..." (170). This sense of freedom, however, is unsustainable; it is in fact a state of mind that the text directly and progressively undermines. Mina's freedom is transgressive, and the price of this freedom is loneliness and isolation (Jenks 6). Only her personal growth towards re-integration, marked by her attempt to make friends, can mitigate this loneliness. The friendship itself marks the end of her transgressive status; her assimilation of a more conventional model of childhood, and the consequent suppression of her preternatural autonomy, signify an assent towards the dominant cultural expectations for children. By presenting Mina's transgression as having a fixed duration, the text conforms to one of Julian Wolfrey's key conventions on transgression: "(b) a movement or motion, a passage of some kind, and therefore implicitly [possessing] a duration or temporality" (3). Transgression can only be a transitional phase, leading to a cultural reconciliation in which Mina is re-assimilated to an adult-sanctioned norm of childhood; one requiring that children, as participants in the social contract. At do

not exist in lonely isolation but as part of society. At this point, I turn to the work of Roberta Seelinger Trites and find a clear point of connection in her discussion around the role of power in the *entwickslungroman*. The *entwickslungsroman*, that is to say a novel "of development" which ends "before the protagonist reaches adulthood." (*Disturbing* 14), shows development and change but within a relatively truncated time span (14) and ends before the protagonist becomes an adult (14). Though the *entwickslungsroman* is, both conceptually and within the work of Trites, indelibly linked to adolescent literature (18) I yoke the idea here to *My Name Is Mina* for deliberate reasons. This is a text which questions authority, power and repression and yet denies the opportunity for those who question such binaries to succeed. Mina ultimately comes to perpetuate the "Symbolic Order" (69) which she has sought so determinedly to escape.

One of Mina's key literary influences, and a touchstone for her behaviour and attitudes, is the poet William Blake. Her motto, "written on paper and pinned above [her] bed" (18), is two lines from Blake's poem "The Schoolboy": "How can a bird that is born for joy / Sit in a cage and sing?" (18). First published as part of *Songs of Innocence* (1789) "The Schoolboy" adopts the perspective of a schoolboy alienated from conventional school education, and asks for a reconsideration of this educational approach. It refrains from expressing "the disillusioned adult's recollections" (W. H. Stevenson, 63) of childhood experience and instead allows Blake's "visionary-imagination" (Clark and Worrall 1) to argue for the benefits of a free and self-directed education. Blake himself experienced such an education, preserving the child's "innocence and youthful joy" (Keynes 154), and his legitimising adult perspective provides support for Mina's own alternative education. This legitimisation is backed by Mina's parents, who equally approve of Blake as a pedagogical

and life influence. Mina invokes them to assure herself of the appropriateness of her allegiance: "I think [Blake] was very sane. So does my mum, so did my dad. I will write with William Blake in mind" (18).

If society constitutes the centre giving civilised form to space, an organising principle to which the majority of people cleave, then the marginalised space beyond its borders is the formlessness of a primitive and wild landscape. *My Name is Mina* attempts to reconceive that landscape, embracing it as an expression of coherence rather than just of negative difference. The wilderness is presented as a unified, enduring space that will last beyond the reach of humanity:

When our gardens and fields and farms and woods have turned wild, when the park at the end of Falconer Road has turned into a wilderness, when our cities are in ruins, the birds will go on flying and singing and making their nests and laying their eggs and raising their young. (65)

This quote refigures the wild as an obliquely familiar and reassuring space despite its apparent otherness. The birds continue to enact their anthropomorphic behaviours and so a facsimile of human life and values persists even in the absence of humans. This paradoxical effect has resonances with the figure of Blake and the improbable assimilation of his radical work. For a poet who confronts us with an "impenetrable kernel of meaning at the centre of a vast linguistic and pictorial architecture" (Eaves 5), Blake is a strangely familiar and conventional cultural presence. He is integrated into the National Curriculum, inspirational



extracts from his work abound on social media,<sup>17</sup> and "*The Tyger* is the most anthologized poem in English" (207). Such a cultural integration of the poet would seem to be in extreme tension with the wild difference of Blake and his writing, yet this incorporation does occur and thus Blake's nominal difference is culturally overridden. By the end of the novel, Mina undergoes a similar transformation. She has grown up, and her difference has become understood as a part of the carnival of her adolescence: "I keep on looking. I know that the girl I see in the bathroom mirror will evolve and grow... yes, I do feel poised. And I'm also happy to wait, and to be a baby in those times I need to be a baby" (126). Here, the rupture with the previous golden ages of children's literature is complete; childhood has become characterised as part of a fluid continuum of personal growth rather than a discrete Arcadian state. The primitive aspects of childhood, its wild and unknown landscapes, are contained within the frame of a conventional adult retrospection. Difference is indulged because it is circumscribed, and ultimately succeeded by adult structures of authority and control. Mina can be different, because she is fated to lose that difference.

Towards the end of the book Mina's mother takes her on an "educational walk with educational content" (267). Inspired by Paul Klee, the abstract artist, she tells Mina that "drawing [is] taking a line for a walk" (267). Mina extrapolates from the idea: "'So if drawing is like walking, ' I say, 'Then walking is like drawing'" (267). She goes on to reframe this aesthetic in terms of language, conceiving of a kinship between walking and her own creative practice: "Maybe writing's like walking as well" (268). This ultimately results in the walk being characterised as a performative piece of text: "I imagine each step as a syllable, and I breathe the words as I step along. / Each word is a step a-long the way to I don't know where" (268). This sequence, one of the last in the novel, marks Mina's level of personal

---

<sup>17</sup> <https://twitter.com/hashtag/williamblake?f=tweets&vertical=default&src=hash>

growth. She finally acknowledges the rationale for her younger actions (270) before the arrival at her father's grave, the unconscious destination of their excursion (276), which, with its connotations of finality, offers Mina the opportunity to emotionally relinquish her prior difference. The episode is unusual in that it diverges from Mina's previous narrow interactions with landscape; instead she walks through a wide section of her local community, whilst engaging in complex self-reflection. Walking has become an act driven by purpose and direction, a cipher for Mina's newly formed sense of selfhood: "The walker does not wander aimlessly or in a socially disruptive fashion. The wanderer returns continually along paths that have already been walked. This ensures connection and stability and ... the intention to return" (Urry 202). She is able to move purposely and constructively through her personal history in order to understand its relevance to her present self. In ending this walk at the grave of her father, the childish and adult perspectives embedded within the text make themselves visible. In confronting, Mina is able to reconcile her difference with the real, the primitive with the civilised, and rationalise her place within society and life. She passes her insight on to the reader: "Hold your head and know that you are extraordinary / Remind yourself that you are dust / Remind yourself that you are a star. / Stand beneath a streetlamp / Dance and glitter in a shaft of light" (283). Perry Nodelman argues that children's literature holds out an element of empowering knowledge for the reader to discover (*The Hidden Child* 269-270). Mina's knowledge of self has come at the expense of her unorthodox childhood and the loss of her formerly transgressive self; perhaps the lesson she gives to readers is not one of childhood emancipation but a pointed warning about the nature of adulthood for, in recognising the increasingly aetnormative bent of children's literature, *My Name Is Mina* has also become subservient towards such.

This chapter has analysed the representation of space and place within two contemporary middle grade novels, *Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens and *My Name is Mina* by David Almond, and argued that these texts function as key expressions of a purposed third golden age of children's literature. I recognised the common motifs of transgression across both texts and how the represented child therein is, in many senses, not immediately recognisable as a child any more. To paraphrase Sally Mitchell and the title of her study into girlhood, this new 'New Girl' is a figure which oscillates between childish and adult characteristics according to circumstance, and so comes to cultivate a neutral state which exists somewhere in-between. This neutral state of identity is not stable, however; Mina is required to adapt towards dominant cultural behaviours and adult-sanctioned ideas of childhood, whilst Hazel and Daisy, at the end of their story, remain schoolgirls whose contribution towards solving the case is relatively unacknowledged. In other words, the carnivalesque performance of liberty and transgression has ended and the status quo has reasserted itself.

This chapter has also provided the opportunity to discuss the figurative representation of landscape within this period of children's literature, and the notable shift from that which came before it. Both *Murder Most Unladylike* and *My Name is Mina* encourage a consideration of the relationship between landscape and girlhood on a more metaphorical level. Hazel and Daisy's exploitation of opportunities embedded in their immediate landscape is also an escape from the bounds of childhood and gendered limits. Mina's imaginative faculties allow her to read her landscape in an idiom of personal support and empowerment, repurposing it to provide an emotional scaffold lacking within her own life. Figurative space also informs the idea of transgression, which itself exists in a self-aware

relation to the boundaries it transgresses; an individual cannot transgress without knowing the rules. The transgressive act can therefore become an acknowledgement of both societal norms and the individual's place within society. This chapter has focused on the final part of that sequence and attempted to explain how the girl's location within society is figured in this literature. I have argued for an increasing flexibility in accommodating the transgressive girl, and in doing so uncovered an increasingly prominent adult presence within children's literature.

# Conclusion

I began this thesis with the intention to exploit the metaphor provided, perhaps quite unconsciously, by Roger Lancelyn Green when he spoke of an "attempt to chart some of the more or less definite islands off a portion of the mainland of our more generally recognized literary heritage" (Green 60). I have suggested that the representation of landscape within children's literature functions as something analogous to the human - daemon relationship depicted in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* series (1995 - 2000), and that by analysing the representation of space and place within a text, it is possible to understand both notions of the 'girl' and 'girlhood'. I argued that, by recognising these patterns of representation, it was thus possible to reframe the relationship between the Golden Age and children's literature and ultimately recognise a sequence of more or less contiguous golden ages.

An intriguing, and unlooked for, outcome of this approach has been a recognition of the increasingly aetnormative bent, namely a concern for the adult norm, of children's literature. This does not manifest itself in terms of a represented, participatory role for adults within children's literature but rather as an increasing consciousness of the adult perspective as a tangible force within the text. Whilst childhood itself of course remains an inherent phase of human development, the frame of reference within which that experience is understood has itself become an increasingly adult-oriented construct. The relevance of a distinctly childish perspective has been progressively, and perhaps permanently, eroded. From the perspective of spatial critique, children's literature today

seems to face the problem of either acquiescing to or resisting the increasing appropriation of child-centred values by both adult authors and readers.

In the introduction to this thesis I acknowledged the vibrant and interdisciplinary range of scholarship that formed a theoretical grounding for its findings, and I have sought to make my own contribution to that research context. I have shown the benefits of adopting a case study approach which has allowed the teasing out of a series of reflections, refractions and relationships between a wide range of texts, and the portability of this research into external and non-academic contexts. Case study methods also vitally allowed the opportunity to consider these texts as objects of interest in their own right, independent of the critical discourse surrounding the author. Whilst these are obvious benefits of my approach, I also acknowledge its intrinsic limitations. I have not provided any distinctly sociological or educational perspective, despite highlighting the relative lack of such research in my literature review. However I do offer, in response to those absences, an approach with clear potential for adaptation by future scholars in those particular areas. A further constraint upon this research is the specificity that comes with its methodology. My findings have been based upon a consideration of both school stories, and stories of schooling; such an approach inevitably neglects the idea of the 'girl' as depicted in other genres within children's literature, such as fantasy, romance or science-fiction. This does however leave the opportunity open to be exploited by future researchers in such areas. Within its limits, however, this thesis has shown how the girl and the associated idea of girlhood can be understood through a consideration of space and place. and how spatial critique can help towards clarifying some of those characteristics of the girls who live on the "more or less definite islands" (Green 60) of children's literature.

# Works Cited

Aapola, Sinikka, et al. *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power, and Social Change*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Abrahamson, Richard F., and Robert Stewart. "Movable Books - A New Golden Age." *Language Arts*, vol. 59, issue 4, 1982, pp. 342-347.

Bullen, Elizabeth and Elizabeth Parsons. "Risk and Resilience, Knowledge and Imagination: The Enlightenment of David Almond's Skellig." *Children's Literature*, vol. 37, 2007, pp. 127-44.

Adams, Richard. *Watership Down*. Rex Collings, 1972.

Akbar, Arifa. "Here's Hoping This 'Moment' for Children's Fiction leads to a Golden Age: Week In Books." *The Independent*. 2016. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/a-golden-moment-for-childrens-fiction-week-in-books-column-a6838916.html>>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2016.

Alderson, Brian. "How To Get Your Ph.D in Children's Literature" *Horn Book Magazine*, vol. 52, no. 4, 1997, pp. 107-117. Rpt. in *Children's Literature: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies: Volume II : Education and Theory*. Ed. Peter Hunt. Routledge, 2006. pp. 427-41.

Almond, David. *Half a Creature from the Sea*. Walker, 2014.

—. *My Name is Mina*. Hodder, 2010.

—. "The Necessary Wilderness." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2011, pp. 107-17.

—. *Skellig*. Hodder, 1998.

—. *A Song for Ella Grey*. Hodder, 2015.

Ang, Susan. *The Widening World of Children's Literature*. Macmillan, 2000.

Auchmuty, Rosemary. "Enid Blyton and the School Story." *NCRCL Papers 2: Enid Blyton: A Celebration and Reappraisal*, edited by Nicholas Tucker and Kimberley Reynolds, National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, 1997, pp. 79-95.

—. *The World of Girls: Appeal of the Girls' School Story*. The Woman's Press, 1992.

—. *A World of Women: Growing Up in the Girls' School Story*. The Women's Press, 1999.

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas, Beacon Press, 1964.

Bagnall, Norma. *Sea Sources? Bibliographic and Resource Material of Children's Literature of the Sea*. Texas A&M University, 1981.

Barrie, J. M. *Peter Pan and Wendy*. 1911. Wordsworth Editions, 2009.

Beauvais, Clémentine . "Next of Kin 'The Child' and 'The Adult' in children's literature theory today and tomorrow." *The Edinburgh Companion to Children's Literature*, edited by Clémentine Beauvais and Maria Nikolajeva, Edinburgh University Press, 2017, pp. 265 - 273.

—. *Mighty Child : Time and Power in Children's Literature*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015.



Beauvais, Clémentine and Maria Nikolajeva, editors. *The Edinburgh Companion to Children's Literature*. Edinburgh University Press, 2017.

Beckett, Samuel. *Not I*. Faber & Faber, 1973.

Blake, William. "Songs of Innocence: The Schoolboy. 1789." <<http://www.online-literature.com/blake/630/>>. Accessed 5 Dec. 2016.

Blyton, Enid. *Claudine at St Clare's*. 1944. Dragon, 1975.

—. *The Early Years at Malory Towers: The First Three Malory Towers Books in One Bumper Volume*. Egmont Press, 2013.

—. *Fifth Formers at St Clare's*. 1945. Dragon, 1975.

—. *Last Term at Malory Towers*. 1951. Dragon, 1955.

—. *The Naughtiest Girl Again*. 1942. Hodder, 2014.

—. *The O'Sullivan Twins*. 1942. Dragon, 1975.

—. *Second Form at St Clare's*. 1944. Dragon, 1975.

—. *Summer Term at St Clare's*. 1943. Dragon, 1975.

—. *The Twins at St Clare's*. 1941. Dragon, 1975.

Boëthius, Ulf. "'Us Is Near Bein' Wild Things Ourselves': Procreation and Sexuality in The Secret Garden." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1997, pp. 188-95.

*The Book of the Camp Fire Girls*. George H. Doran, 1913.

Brazil, Angela. *For the Sake of the School*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1915.

—. *The Fortunes of Philippa*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1906.

—. *The Girls of St Cyprians*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1914.

—. *The Luckiest Girl in the School*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1916.

—. *The Manor House School*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1910.

—. *My Own Schooldays*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1925.

—. *The Mystery of the Moated Grange*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1942.

—. *A Patriotic Schoolgirl*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1918.

—. *The School by the Loch*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1946.

—. *The School by the Sea*. Blackie and Son Ltd, 1914.

—. *The School in the Forest*. 1944. Armada, 1970.

Briggs, Julia, et al., editors. *Popular Children's Literature in Britain*. Routledge, 2008.

Bullen, Elizabeth and Elizabeth Parsons. "Risk and Resilience, Knowledge and Imagination:

The Enlightenment of David Almond's *Skellig*." *Children's Literature*, vol. 37, 2007, pp. 127-44.

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*. 1911. Bookprint, 1991.

Butler, Charles. *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of*

Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper. The Scarecrow Press, 2006.

Cadogan, Mary and Patricia Craig. *Women and Children first: The Fiction of Two World*

Wars. Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1978.

—. *You're a brick, Angela! A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839 to 1975*. Victor Gollancz

Ltd, 1976.

Carlson, Patricia. *Literature and Lore of the Sea*. Rodopi Press, 1986.

"Carnegie Medal: Patrick Ness in Running for Third Time." 2016

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-35815369>>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2016.

Carpenter, Humphrey. *Secret Gardens: The Golden Age of Children's Literature*. Allen and

Unwin, 1985.

Carroll, Jane Suzanne. *Landscape in Children's Literature*. Routledge, 2011.

—. "Spatiality in Fantasy for Children." *The Edinburgh Companion to Children's Literature*,

edited by Clémentine Beauvais and Maria Nikolajeva, Edinburgh University Press,

2017, pp. 55-69.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Macmillan, 1865.

Chainani, Soman. *The School for Good and Evil*. HarperCollins, 2013.

Chambers, Aidan. *Alive and Flourishing: A Personal View of Teenage Literature*. Thimble

Press, 1995.

Chaston, Joel D. "Cultivating the Gardens of Golden Age Children's Literature" *Children's*

*Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2001, pp. 2-3.

- Chlebek, Diana. "The Image of the River as Narrative and Thematic Device in British Children's Fiction." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 1989, pp. 55-58.
- Clark, Steve and David Worrall, editors. *Blake in the Nineties*. Macmillan, 1999.
- Cockin, Katherine, editor. *The Literary North*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Coetzee, Liesel. "Empowering Girls? The Portrayal of Anne and George in Enid Blyton's Famous Five Series." *English Academy Review*, vol. 28, no.1, 2011, pp. 85-98.
- Colás, Santiago. "Telling True Stories, or the Immanent Ethics of Material Spirit (and Spiritual Matter) in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." *Discourse*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2005, pp. 34-66.
- Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic, 2008.
- Craig, Amanda. "The Three Golden Ages of Children's Fiction: The Third Golden Age of Children's Literature". 2013. <[http://www.amandacraig.com/pages/journalism\\_01/journalism\\_01\\_item.asp?journalism\\_01ID=192](http://www.amandacraig.com/pages/journalism_01/journalism_01_item.asp?journalism_01ID=192)>. Accessed 5 Apr. 2016.
- . "Why This Is a Golden Age for Children's Literature: 'Children's Books Are One of the Most Important Forms of Writing We Have'" 2015.<<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/why-this-is-a-golden-age-for-childrens-literature-childrens-books-are-one-of-the-most-important-10340568.html>>. Accessed 22 May. 2017.
- Crown, Sarah. "A Life in Writing: David Almond." *The Guardian*, 21 August 2010. <<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2010/aug/21/david-almond-skellig-writing-books>>. Accessed 4 Feb. 2016.

Cunningham, Barry. "The Greatest Stories Ever Told." *The Guardian*, 31 March 2005.

<<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/mar/31/booksforchildrenandteenagers.comment>> Accessed 24 Aug. 2016.

Cutter-Mackenzie, Amy, et al., editors. *Experiencing Environment and Place through Children's Literature*. Routledge, 2011.

Dahl, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.

Dalrymple, Nolan. "Birdmen from the Depths of the Earth: Radical Landscape in the Fiction of David Almond." *David Almond*, edited by Rosemary Ross Johnston. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 100-123.

—. "Navigating Borderlands of Fiction, Magic and Childhood: Finding David Almond."

*Bookbird: An International Journal of Children's Literature*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2010, pp. 1-4.

—. "North-East Childhood: Representations of the North-East of England in the work of Robert Westall." *The Literary North*, edited by Katherine Cockin. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 175-88.

—. *North-East Childhoods: Regional Identity in Children's Novels of the North East of England*. Newcastle University, 2009.

Denscombe, Martyn. *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2003.

Doughty, Terri and Dawn Thompson, *Knowing Their Place? Identity and Space in Children's Literature*. Cambridge Scholars, 2011.

Eaves, Morris, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Evans, Gwyneth. "The Girl in the Garden: Variations on a Feminine Pastoral." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1994, pp. 20-24.

Eyre, Charlotte. "Said Campaigns for More Children's Book Reviews." *The Bookseller*. 2016. <<http://www.thebookseller.com/news/author-campaigns-more-childrens-book-reviews-321274>>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2016.

Ferrall, Charles and Anna Jackson. *Juvenile Literature and British Society, 1850-1950: The Age of Adolescence*. Routledge, 2012.

Fine, Anne. "Enid Blyton - 'Why did we love her so?'" *NCRCL Papers 2: Enid Blyton: A Celebration and Reappraisal*, edited by Nicholas Tucker and Kimberley Reynolds. London: National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, 1997, pp. 1-16.

Flynn, Richard. "Introduction: Disputing the Role of Agency in Children's Literature and Culture." *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2016, pp. 248-53.

—. "What Are We Talking about when We Talk about Agency?" *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2016, pp. 254-65.

Foster Damon, S. A. *Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*. University Press of New England, 1988.

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

Freeman, Gillian. *The Schoolgirl Ethic: The Life and Work of Angela Brazil*. Allen Lane, 1976.

Frith, Gill. "The time of your life': The Meaning of the School Story." *Language, Gender and Childhood*, edited by Carolyn Steedman, Cathy Urwin and Valerie Walkerdine. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985, pp. 118-33.

Gavin, Adrienne and Christopher Routledge. *Mystery in Children's Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Gosling, Ju. "The Critics of Girl's School Stories." 1998 <<http://www.ju90.co.uk/194.htm>>. Accessed 1 Jan. 2016.

Gosling, Juliet. *Virtual Worlds of Girls: Exploring the 20th Century British Genre of Girls' School Stories*. University of Kent, 1998.

Goudge, Elizabeth. *The Little White Horse*. University of London Press, 1946.

Grahame, Kenneth. *The Wind in the Willows*. Methuen, 1908.

Green, Roger Lancelyn. "The Golden Age of Children's Books." *Essays and Studies*, vol. 15, 1962, pp. 59-73.

Greenwell, Amanda M. "The Language of Pictures': Visual Representation and Spectatorship in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 42, no. 1&2, 2010, pp. 99-120.

Grenby, M. O. *The Child Reader, 1800-1840*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Grenby, M. O. and Andrew Immel, editors. *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Gubar, Marah. *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. Oxford Scholarship, 2009.

—. "The Hermeneutics of Recuperation : What a Kinship-Model Approach To Children's Agency Could Do for Children's Literature And Childhood Studies" *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2016, pp. 291-310.

Gunther, Adrien. "The Secret Garden Revisited." *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 25, no. 3, 1994, pp. 159-68.

Hahn, Daniel, editor. *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Hazard, Paul. *Books, Children and Men*. Horn Books, 1932.

Hayot, Eric. "Against Periodization; or On Institutional Time. " *New Literary History*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2011, pp. 739-756.

"Historic England. Great Maytham Hall." 1986. <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000221>>. Accessed 27 Jun. 2017.

Honeyman, Susan E. "Childhood Bound: In Gardens, Maps and Pictures." *Mosaic*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2001, pp. 117-32.

Hughes, Shirley. *Dogger*. The Bodley Head, 1977.

Hughes, Thomas. *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Macmillan, 1857.



Humphrey, Judith. "Subversion and Resistance in the Girls' School Story." *The Sands of Time.*

*Children's Literature: Culture, Politics and Identity*, edited by Jenny Plastow and Margot Hillel. University of Hertfordshire, 2008. pp. 25-28.

Hunt, Peter. "How Not to Read a Children's Book." *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 26, no. 4, 1995, pp. 231-40.

—. editor. *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, Routledge, 2004.

—. *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford University Press, 1994.

—. "Unstable Metaphors: Symbolic Spaces and Specific Places." *Space and Place in Children's Literature, 1789 to the Present*, edited by Marie Sachiko Cecire, et al. Ashgate, 2015, pp. 23-38.

Hyams, Edward. *The English Garden*. Thames and Hudson, 1964.

Jackson, Tina. "J. K. Rowling Interview - Harry Potter in the 21st Century." 2016.

<<http://www.bigissue.com/features/interviews/6860/jk-rowling-interview-harry-potter-in-the-21st-century>>. Accessed 16 Sept. 2016.

Jefferson, Ann. "The Case of Peter Pan or the Impossibility of Children's Literature by Jacqueline Rose." *Poetics Today*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1985, pp. 794-96.

Jenks, Chris. *Transgression*. Routledge, 2003.

Jensen, Kelly. "Opinion: Do We Honor Girls' Stories? The Double Standard of YA Lit." 2015.

<<http://www.slj.com/2015/11/opinion/opinion-do-we-honor-girls-stories-the-double-standard-of-ya-lit/>>. Accessed 20 Mar. 2017.

Keeling, Kara K. and Scott T. Pollard, editors. *Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature*. Routledge, 2012.

Keynes, Geoffrey, editor. *William Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Oxford University Press, 1967.

Kingsley, Charles. *The Water Babies*. Macmillan, 1863.

Knuth, Rebecca. *Children's Literature and British Identity : Imagining a People and a Nation*. Scarecrow Press, 2012.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, Bettina and Anja Müller, editors. *Canon Constitution and Canon Change in Children's Literature*. Routledge, 2016.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, Bettina and Jörg Meibauer. "Maps in Picturebooks: Cognitive Status and Narrative Functions." *Nordic Journal of Childlit Aesthetics*, vol. 6, 2015, <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3402/blft.v6.26970>> Accessed 30 Jul. 2017.

Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. *The Last Taboo: Women and Body Hair*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Lewis, C. S. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Geoffrey Bles, 1950.

Lundin, Anne. *Constructing the Canon of Children's Literature*. Routledge, 2004.

Lydgate, John. *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*. 1426. Early Text Society, 1973.

Magorian, Michelle. *Goodnight Mister Tom*. 1981. Puffin, 2011.

—. *A Little Love Song*. 1991. Egmont, 2013.

McCulloch, Fiona. *Children's Literature in Context*. A&C Black, 2011.

- Meade, L. T. *Betty Vivian: A Story of Haddo Court School*. Cassell And Co., 1891.  
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25510/25510-h/25510-h.htm>>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2017.
- . *A Sweet Girl Graduate*. Cassell And Co., 1891. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4989/4989-h/4989-h.htm>>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2017.
- . *A World of Girls: The Story of a School*. Cassell And Co., 1886. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25870/25870-h/25870-h.htm>>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2017.
- Meigs, Cornelia, et al. *A Critical History of Children's Literature: A Survey of Children's Books in English*, prepared in four parts under the editorship of Cornelia Meigs, Revised Edition. Macmillan, 1969.
- Mitchell, Sally. *The New Girl: Girls' culture in England, 1880-1915*. Columbia University Press, 1995.
- Moran, Mary Jeanette. "Nancy's Ancestors: the Mystery of Imaginative Female Power in *The Secret Garden* and *A Little Princess*." *Mystery in Children's Literature: From the Rational to the Supernatural*, edited by Adrienne Gavin and Christopher Routledge, Ashgate, 2001, pp. 32-45.
- Moretti, Franco. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review*, vol. 1, 2000, pp. 54-68.
- Mulligan, Andy. *Ribblestrop*. Simon and Schuster, 2009.
- Nel, Philip and Lissa Paul, editors. *Keywords for Children's Literature*. New York University Press, 2011.

Nesbit, E. *The Railway Children*. Wells, 1906.

"Nielsen Book's UK Children's Summit 2016 at the London Book Fair." 2015.

<<http://www.nielsenbookscan.co.uk/uploads/press/1Nielsen%20Book's%20UK%20Children's%20Summit%202016.pdf>>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2016.

Nikolajeva, Maria. *Children's Literature Comes of Age: Towards a New Aesthetic*. Garland Publishing, 1996.

—. "Exit Children's Literature?" *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1998, pp. 221-36.

—. "Memory of the Present: Empathy and Identity in Young Adult Fiction." *Narrative Works*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2014, <<https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NW/article/view/22784/26461>>. Accessed 15 . Sept. 2016.

—. *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature For Young Readers*. Routledge, 2010.

—. "Theory, Post-Theory, and Aetonormative Theory" *Neohelicon*, XXXVI, 1, 2009, pp 13-24.

Nodelman, Perry. *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature*. John Hopkins University Press, 2008.

—. "The Hidden Child in the Hidden Adult." *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2016, pp. 266-77.

—. "Versions of the Savage in Almond's Novels." *David Almond*, edited by Rosemary Ross Johnston. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 31-49.

Oswell, David. *The Agency of Children*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

- Parsons, Linda. "'Otherways' into the Garden: Re-visioning the Feminine in The Secret Garden." *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2002. pp. 247-68.
- Pearson, Lucy. *The Making of Modern Children's Literature in Britain*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Pham Dinh, Rose May. "Wartime Womanhood in Michelle Magorian's World War Two Novels for the Young." *Revue Lisa / Lisa e-journal*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2008, pp. 174-99.
- Philips, Deborah. "Mapping Literary Britain: Tourist Guides to Literary Landscapes 1951 - 2007." *Tourist Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2011, pp.21-35.
- Pinsent, Pat. "Theories of Genre and Gender: Change and Continuity in the School Story." *Modern Children's Literature: An Introduction*, edited by Kimberley Reynolds. Palgrave, 2005, pp. 8-22.
- Price, Danielle. "Cultivating Mary: The Victorian Secret Garden." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2001, pp. 4-14.
- Pullman, Philip. *The Amber Spyglass*. Scholastic, 2000.
- . *Northern Lights*. Scholastic, 1995.
- . *The Subtle Knife*. Scholastic, 1997.
- Rabinovitch, Dina. "The Greatest Stories Ever Told." *The Guardian*. 2005.  
 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/mar/31/booksforchildrenandteenagers.comment>>. Accessed 24 Aug. 2016.

- Rankin, Jennifer. "'Golden Age' of UK Children's Books Bucks Falling Sales and Print Runs."  
The Guardian. 2015. <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/may/08/golden-age-of-uk-childrens-books-bucks-falling-sales-and-print-runs>>. Accessed 30 Aug. 2016.
- Ransome, Arthur. *Swallows and Amazons*. Jonathan Cape, 1930.
- Ray, Sheila. *The Blyton Phenomenon: The Controversy Surrounding the World's Most Successful Children's Writer*. Andre Deutsch, 1982.
- Relph, Edward. *Place and Placelessness*. Pion Unlimited, 1976.
- Rentschler, Carrie, and Claudia Mitchell. *Girlhood and the Politics of Place*. Berghahn Books, 2016.
- Reynolds, Kimberley. *Children's Literature in the 1890s and 1990s*. Northcote House, 1994.
- . *Left Out: The Forgotten Tradition of Radical Publishing for Children in Britain 1910-1949*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- . editor. *Modern Children's Literature: An Introduction*. Palgrave, 2005.
- Rodgers, Beth. *Adolescent Girlhood and Literary Culture at the Fin de Siècle : Daughters of Today*. Palgrave, 2016.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan: or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. 1984. Macmillan, 1992.
- Ross Johnston, Rosemary, editor. *David Almond*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Rowe Townsend, John. "The History of Children's Books: No 5. 'The Second Golden Age.'" Vol. 108. 1998. <<http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/108/childrens-books/articles/othe>

r-articles/the-history-of-children%E2%80%99s-books-no5-the-second-gol>. Accessed 6 Apr. 2016.

Rowling, J. K., *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Bloomsbury, 1998.

—. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Bloomsbury, 1997.

Roxburgh, Stephen D. "'Our First World' Form and Meaning in *The Secret Garden*."

*Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1979, pp. 120-30.

Rudd, David. "Children's Literature and the Return to *Rose*." *Children's Literature*

*Association Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 5, 2010, pp. 290-310.

—. *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children's Literature*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

—. "Enid Blyton and the Paradox of Children's Literature." *NCRCL Papers 2: Enid Blyton: A*

*Celebration & Reappraisal*, edited by Nicholas Tucker and Kimberley Reynolds.

National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, 1997, pp. 17-29.

—. *Reading the Child in Children's Literature: An Heretical Approach*. Palgrave Macmillan,

2013.

Russell Williams, Imogen. "Are You Really Sure You Want To Play?" *Times Literary*

*Supplement*. <<https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/public/childrens-fiction-golden-age/>>. Accessed 18 Apr. 2017.

Rowe Townsend, John. "The History of Children's Books: No 5. 'The Second Golden Age.'"

Vol. 108. 1998. <<http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/108/childrens-books/articles/other-articles/the-history-of-children%E2%80%99s-books-no5-the-second-gol>>. Accessed 6

Apr. 2016.

Sachiko Cecire, Marie, et al., editors. *Space and Place in Children's Literature, 1789 to the Present*. Ashgate, 2015.

Sahm, Danielle. "Contrary to Expectations: Exploring Blake's Contraries in David Almond's *Skellig*." *Children's Literature*, vol. 10, 2010, pp. 115-32.

Schwebel, Sara L. "The Limits of Agency for Children's Literature Scholars." *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2016, pp. 278-90.

Schulman, V. M. "'The Books We All Read': The Golden Age of Children's Book Illustration and American Soldiers in the Great War." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2017, pp. 204-230.

Silver, Anna Krugovoy. "Domesticating Brontë's Moors: Motherhood in *The Secret Garden*." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1997, pp. 193-203.

Simons, Judy. "Angela Brazil and the Making of the Girls' School Story." *Popular Children's Literature in Britain*, edited by Julia Briggs, et al. Routledge, 2008, pp. 165-184.

Sue Sims, et al., editors. *The Encyclopaedia of Girls' School Stories*. Ashgate, 2000.

Slater, Katherine. "Putting Down Routes: Translocal Place in *The Secret Garden*." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2015, pp. 3-23.

Smith, Michelle. "'Girls! Girls, Everywhere!' Angela Brazil's Edwardian School Stories." *Childhood in Edwardian Fiction*, edited by Adrienne E Gavin and Andrew F Humphries. Palgrave, 2008, pp. 143-158.



Sorby, Angela. "Golden Age." *Keywords for Children's Literature*, edited by Philip Nel and Lissa Paul. New York University Press, 2011, pp. 96-100.

Stevens, Robin. *Arsenic for Tea*. Penguin, 2015.

—. *First Class Murder*. Penguin, 2015.

—. *Jolly Foul Play*. Penguin, 2016.

—. *Mistletoe and Murder*. Penguin, 2016.

—. *Murder Most Unladylike*. Penguin, 2014.

Stevenson, Laura C. "Literary Ladders in the Golden Age of Children's Books" *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 119, no. 3, 2011, pp. 428-444.

Stevenson, W. H., editor. *Blake: The Complete Works*. Hamlyn, 1989.

Sundmark, Björn. "'Language Is about Becoming in the World': Interview With David Almond." *IBBY*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2015, pp. 65-67.

—. "'A Serious Game' Mapping Moominland." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2014, pp. 162-81.

Suvantola, Jaakko. *Tourist's Experience of Place*. Ashgate, 2002.

Tandoi, Eve. "Unruly Girls and Unruly Language: Typography and Play in David Almond's *My Name is Mina*." *Barnboken - Journal of Children's Literature Research*, 2014.  
<<http://www.barnboken.net/index.php/clr/article/view/183>>. Accessed 8 Apr. 2017.

Thacker, Deborah. "Disdain or Ignorance? Literary Theory and the Absence of Children's Literature." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1-17.

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

“The Enid Blyton Society: First Term at Malory Towers” 2016.

<<http://www.enidblytonsociety.co.uk/book->

[details.php?id=253&title=First+Term+at+Malory+Towers%23reprints% 20](http://www.enidblytonsociety.co.uk/book-details.php?id=253&title=First+Term+at+Malory+Towers%23reprints%20)>. Accessed 23 Jun. 2016.

Thwaite, Anne. *Beyond the Secret Garden: The Life of Frances Hodgson Burnett*. Pan Macmillan, 2014.

Tinkler, Penny. *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England 1920-1950*. Taylor & Francis, 1995.

Toshatzidis, Savas L. *John Searle’s Philosophy of Language: Force, Meaning and Mind*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Trites, Roberta Seelinger. *Disturbing the Universe : Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*. University of Iowa, 2000.

—. *Literary Conceptualizations of Growth: Metaphors and Cognition in Adolescent Literature*. John Benjamins, 2014.

—. “Ontology, Epistemology and Values: Philosophy and Science in David Almond’s *Skellig* and *My Name Is Mina*.” *David Almond*, edited by Rosemary Ross Johnston. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 50-66.

Tucker, Nicholas and Kimberley Reynolds., editors. *NCRCL Papers 2: Enid Blyton: A Celebration & Reappraisal*. National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature, 1997.

Turchi, Peter. *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer*. Trinity University Press, 2004.

UNESCO. "Index Translationum: Top 50 Most Translated Authors." 2015.

<<http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatexp.aspx?crit1L=5&nTyp=min&topN=50>>.

Accessed 6 Jul. 2015.

Urry, John. *Consuming Places*. Routledge, 1995.

Wolfreys, Julian. *Transgression*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.