VISION OF COMMUNITY: A FEMINIST RE-READING OF ELIZABETH GOUDGE'S CHILDREN'S NOVELS

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discuss Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s novels as feminist novels. Using criteria developed by feminist literary critics of children’s literature, such as Lissa Paul, Rebecca Trites, and Shirley Foster and Judy Simons, I identify elements in Goudge’s children’s novels that classify them as such and argue subsequently that Goudge’s novels, often considered little more than sentimental novels of place, deserve to be reconsidered. While some critics have appreciated certain values in some of Goudge’s novels in years past, I want to bring Goudge’s novels for children into a contemporary dialogue by exposing the vision of community at their center, which is informed by feminist sensibility.

I observe that little scholarly attention has been paid to Goudge’s writing. I propose that this stems from the fact that Goudge’s writing is informed by a feminine value system and has thus been devalued by a patriarchal hierarchy of literary values. I further propose that there is much to value in Goudge’s children’s novels for a wide range of readers, in particular her vision of community. I argue that there is a place for Goudge’s children’s novels in a feminist canon of children’s literature.

I utilize the methodology of feminist re-reading to uncover the feminine value systems within the narratives—value systems that are embodied in Goudge’s female characters, who play key roles in securing integration in their communities. I assert that the central motif in Goudge’s children’s novels is the healing of communities through a rectification of imbalances in their spiritual, economic and social structures. Further, I demonstrate how Goudge’s girl characters produce a community that becomes a harmonious whole through redemption and forgiveness.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION: MISUNDERSTOOD AND MISPLACED

ELIZABETH GOUDGE

In 1972 critic Madonna Marsden was able to state that

Elizabeth Goudge is a kind of phenomenon among contemporary British writers. She began writing in 1934 and presently has about forty-six titles to her credit, many of which have appeared on best-seller lists. Almost every book has had dual publication in both Great Britain and America, and many have appeared in foreign translations. She has been published in regular editions, gift editions, book club editions, and paperbacks. One of her novels was made into a film. Her short stories have appeared in periodicals ranging from Senior Scholastic to Ladies Home Journal . . .

What is intriguing, however, is that reviewers accord Ms. Goudge less than enthusiastic praise and academicians have totally ignored her, despite her impact on the reading habits of a substantial number of women all over the world. (“Gentle Truths” 68)

In the thirty-three years since Marsden’s article was published, very little has changed. Goudge wrote only one more book, her autobiography The Joy of the Snow in 1974. She died at the age of 84 in 1984. And since Marsden, who was the first to write about Goudge in an academic context, very few others have followed.

If you are one of the few twenty-first-century booklovers who has heard of Elizabeth Goudge, chances are you know either her most famous adult novel Green Dolphin Country, or her Carnegie-medal-winning children’s book The Little White Horse. You might not know that in both her native England and in North America she
was an extremely popular, best-selling novelist during the middle decades of the
twentieth century (Contemporary 463). If you have read either of the aforementioned
books, or for that matter any other of her four dozen published works in varying genres,
you probably had one of two reactions: you loved Goudge's writing for its beautiful
descriptions of homes and the natural world and telling insights into human nature, or
you strongly disliked it for what is often considered its "purple" passages, sentimentality,
and melodrama.

I fall into the first category. I also reject the idea that Goudge's alleged
sentimentality and flowery writing are drawbacks of her work. On the contrary, they are
aspects of her unique style: old-fashioned, perhaps, but not detrimental. In these
assertions, I am in good company. As Goudge's fan I stand in solidarity with the millions
of readers who enjoyed her books throughout much of the twentieth-century (Third Book
106), since the 1934 publication of Island Magic. I am one with the readers who, from
their fervent online testimony, still delight in Goudge's work today. I also share the
tastes of publishers who continue to keep several of her children's and adult works in
print (including Hodder & Stoughton and Penguin Puffin).

Penguin published both Linnets and Valerians and The Little White Horse in
2001, perhaps as a reaction to the public declaration of J. K. Rowling, popular author of
the Harry Potter series. She has stated several times that her "favourite book as a child
was The Little White Horse by Elizabeth Goudge" ("Harry Potter"). On the front cover of
the Penguin edition of The Little White Horse is Rowling's statement: "I absolutely
adored The Little White Horse"; speculation leads me to believe that the publishing
house believed this endorsement would help to sell the book.
Penguin is not the only company to pin its hopes for successful sales of *The Little White Horse* to Rowling. Indeed, so influential is Rowling’s love for this book that Forgan-Smith Entertainment is beginning production of a film version; their early publicity and casting information begins with the statement “J. K. Rowling’s favourite childhood book, *The Little White Horse*, is about to be made into a full-length family feature film,” indicating the extent of Rowling’s influence (“In Association”). Such a prestigious and well-endorsed production should have a better chance of success than the short-lived 1990’s BBC Production *Moonacre*, also based on *The Little White Horse* (“Moonacre”).

In literary circles, I also have the support of critic John Gough behind me. He has positively addressed the uncertainty about Goudge’s critical reception. Simply by virtue of the fact that he is the only critic who has written multiple articles about Elizabeth Goudge, he is, by default, in the position of “leading” Goudgean scholar. He is a staunch defender of her merit:

> Goudge has been criticized for what might appear to be cozy over-sentimentality, and for writing about a world which is alleged to be unreal. But this fundamentally misunderstands her moral vision. Her novels, historical or modern, are always about two worlds—our own everyday world, as it once was, intensely realized, full of the brutal and tender facts of reality, as well as being about another world, of poetry, music, faith, or a child’s vision. Her lasting achievement is to present these two worlds so that they are convincingly part of each other, two aspects of one larger, richer world that transforms and transcends what we take for granted as “ordinary,” limited, flawed, violent,
painless, terrifying, awe-ful, and beautiful. Her achievement is unique and to be treasured. (*Twentieth-Century* 274)

Gough also notes that Goudge’s writing is resonant as deep reading because we can come back to it again and again; in contrast to a “story that is only interesting the first time we read it . . . cannot sustain our personal growth,” and “cannot leave room for us to find more in the story another time,” Goudge’s writing for both children and adults is a rich, deep vein for readers (*Email to the author* 17 Feb. 2005). In 1947, after Goudge was awarded the Carnegie medal, reviewer Eileen Colwell also praised Goudge’s re-readability: “[t]o re-read a book is an acid test of its worth. To read Elizabeth Goudge’s books a second time is an enjoyable and refreshing experience, for the keynote of her work is the joy and beauty of life” (“Elizabeth Goudge” 58).

Perhaps Goudge’s writing has more merit than contemporary literary sensibilities have thus far allowed (John Gough’s praise aside); certainly her writing is deeply touching and meaningful for her readers. Unfortunately for her fans, none of her dozens of adult novels have been granted respectable standing in the literary Academy, and currently Goudge may be in danger of slipping into obscurity. At best, Goudge’s adult work is classified narrowly and restrictively in what have been considered (until recently) the “low” popular genres of women’s romance writing and historical fiction—not least because of the luridly illustrated covers on many paperback editions. Certainly these are not the kinds of books usually considered worthy of serious scholarly attention.

In spite of this problematic categorization of Goudge’s adult writing, her children’s writing, at least, has generally been well-received by critics. Megan Lynn Isaac, another Goudge critic, celebrates Goudge’s children’s writing: “[h]er descriptions
of the rich and wild English countryside and the idiosyncratic and splendidly detailed
inns, cottages, and castles in which her protagonists dwell is [sic] also one of her greatest
strengths. And best of all are her wonderfully memorable characters” (86). Additionally,
Isaac notes of Goudge that in “her day . . . her books for both young and old were greeted
with enthusiasm and accolades” (86). Indeed, Goudge merited “recognition from the
American Library Association and reviews which range from glowing to blazing in
virtually every journal from Horn Book to The New York Times Book Review” (Isaac 87).
But this is not to say that other academics have been anywhere near as enchanted with
Goudge’s delights.

Goudge has her detractors, as Madonna Marsden noted. While Goudge’s admirers
allow that she produced some valuable works of children’s literature, those who object to
her style believe that her “much-criticized lapses into sentimentality and sickly-
sweetness” detract from her stories (Campbell 395). Kate Heberlein’s judgement in the
Dictionary of British Women Writers indicates just how uneasy professional critics are
with Goudge’s writing, chiefly because the troubling prettiness is coupled with
undeniable literary strengths: “[a]lthough all of Goudge’s writing suffers from
sentimentality, excessive description, and didacticism, her novels of place and her
children’s books show great insight into human character—especially the very young and
the very old—and lyrically evoke the English countryside and English legend” (285-6).

Children’s literature critic Marcus Crouch drew a similar conclusion about The
Little White Horse in 1962: although the “book was written with real technical
competence” and “[t]he characters, good and bad, had three-dimensional realism; the
setting, an idealized Devon, was drawn with equal affection and conviction,” the story is
“dressed . . . up in so much sweetness and whimsy that the meaning was almost lost” (Treasure Seekers 101-2). Crouch also felt that criticism of Goudge’s sentimentality was “just” (Treasure Seekers 102).

Perhaps as a result of such dissonant views, Elizabeth Goudge’s writing has received very little serious critical attention. That which does exist, though, for the most part focuses on her children’s writing. Interestingly, The Little White Horse is the object of the majority of critical discussions; certainly no deep scholarly analysis of Goudge’s children’s fiction as a body of work exists. As Isaac notes, “[i]ronically, Elizabeth Goudge’s reputation seems to have suffered the tragedy so many of her characters struggle against; she too has been misplaced and forgotten, at least as an author of children’s literature” (86).

In writing this thesis, I want to both provide a closer look at Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s fiction than has been given to date, and I want to act as her literary defender. As Goudge’s defender, I also intend to act as a feminist literary critic. As Lissa Paul (the influential feminist critic of children’s literature) confirms, some of the major goals of feminist literary criticism are to “[reclaim] authors, especially those whose literary works have been neglected because they were out of sync with the fashions of the times” and to “[offer] re-readings . . . of works that [have] been deemed minor or of little importance” (Reading Otherways 17). This work is common in feminist literary studies today for both women’s and children’s writing; it has its roots in the 1970’s with the visionary critic and poet Adrienne Rich. As Paul chronicles, Rich sparked a literary tradition of re-visioning, which is “the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction” (qtd. in Paul, “Intimations” 68).
I believe that Goudge's children's books do not deserve the canonical disrespect and neglect which they have been accorded; rather, I believe that these texts deserve a careful re-reading in order to explore their significant literary merit. For beneath the seemingly pretty, descriptive, sentimental children's stories lie both serious artistic achievements and a valuable moral vision well worth considering. In taking this position, I hope to take one small step towards protecting this admittedly minor yet wholly delightful author from literary obscurity. While Goudge may never be seen as one of the major children's authors of the twentieth century, she has contributed to children's literature in more significant ways than have been acknowledged to date. Her children's writing does not deserve to be forgotten by readers or by critics.

My analysis takes its inspiration from feminist critics Shirley Foster and Judy Simons's explorations in *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-Readings of "Classic" Stories for Girls*. My goal is the same as theirs: "[i]n drawing on the diversity of current feminist critical practice, the analysis of texts in this study will reveal the ways in which these works both spoke to their age and speak to today's, and should go some way in helping to retrieve them from their neglected and marginalized position" (xi). They examine "classic" children's stories such as *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1868), *What Katy Read* by Susan Coolidge (1872), *Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery (1908) and *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911) as narratives of feminine value which are worthy of inclusion in a feminist canon. I propose that Goudge's children's novels deserve similar treatment and inclusion because they have the capacity to celebrate and communicate feminine values to readers of any age or sex.
The purpose of this research, therefore, is to examine several works of Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s fiction in the light of a feminist re-reading. I will be exploring the reasons why Goudge’s children's novels have been largely neglected by the Academy, as well as identifying why they are worthy of serious study. Close examination of elements within the novels *Smoky House* (1940), *Henrietta’s House* (1942), *The Little White Horse* (1946), *The Valley of Song* (1951), and *Linnets and Valerians* (1964) will help to answer these questions. In particular, examining both Goudge’s development of girl characters and their role in constructing Goudge’s fictional portrayal of community will show how her children’s novels embody themes that resonate for feminist literary critics.

With the above objectives in mind, I have formulated this thesis: at first glance Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s novels appear to be light, frothy works of enchanted realism full of fun and adventure that do not seem to merit scholarly attention by the standards of traditional literary criticism. However, preliminary scrutiny reveals that many of these novels are, in fact, of a high literary quality, and that they contain a vision of community that dovetails with contemporary feminist values. These attributes make it possible to see Goudge’s children’s novels as valuable texts worth serious critical attention, especially in the context of feminist literary studies.

In this exploration, I will first note the existing critical material on Goudge, and next consider individually each of the novels to be included in this examination, noting briefly other relevant works which will not be directly included in this examination. Then I will pull together themes and elements common to all. Before proceeding to the core of my discussion of Goudge, I will provide critical background material to illuminate my readers’ understanding of my discussion. Finally, I will come to my focus: by examining
Goudge’s five children’s novels and excluding other, shorter works of her children’s fiction and her entire body of work for adults, I will achieve a deeper focus on key elements at work within the texts, through which I hope to prove that these books are valuable works of literature permeated with Goudge’s moral vision of the feminine and community.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW: ELIZABETH GOUDE’s NOVELS AND THEIR CRITICAL RECEPTION

In a 1983 letter to John Gough, Goudge sums up both her joy in writing for children and her self-criticism: “I love writing for children and I should like to have written for children only, but I was guilty of writing the kind of children’s books that the grown-ups enjoy more than the children!” In spite of the fact that she won the prestigious Carnegie Medal for The Little White Horse in 1946, Goudge is dismissive almost to the point of derision of her children’s books. She rarely mentions them in her autobiography. At one point she casually mentions that Smoky House was written simply for fun directly after the serious labour of painfully producing her adult novel The Bird in the Tree: “in sheer relief I wrote a light-hearted little children’s book . . . for Nanny who had been toiling in the . . . kitchen” (Joy 262). This nonchalance is lamentable in light of Goudge’s great satisfaction from writing her children’s books: “I have always loved writing for children; I have enjoyed it even more than writing my novels” (Campbell 395).

Perhaps Goudge’s own dismissal of her notable achievements in writing for children shows that she was not immune to the cultural bias that devalued children’s books as little more than second-rate adult writing (an attitude which remains in many spheres to this day). As Foster and Simons note of nineteenth and early twentieth-century women writers for children, “contemporary cultural attitudes to women also contributed to these authors’ self-deprecating views of their own achievements” (20). I would argue that these attitudes were still active while Goudge was writing. Indeed, they may also explain why Goudge’s writing has received so little critical attention to date: as a female writer for women and children she lacks prestige.
To say that little critical attention has been paid to Elizabeth Goudge is an understatement. A thorough search in various University of British Columbia library databases revealed only a few scholarly articles focused on Goudge's writing. Interestingly, however, despite there being so little scholarly work focused on her writing, Goudge merits biographical entries in many reference texts. These include (and not exhaustively), for children: *Something About the Author, Twentieth-Century Children's Writers, The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature, The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature, Dictionary of British Children's Fiction: Books of Recognized Merit, Third Book of Junior Authors, Childhood in Poetry, Authors for Books for Young People*; and for adults: *Contemporary Authors, Current Biography: Who's Who and Why, An Encyclopedia of British Women Writers, Dictionary of British Women Writers, Longman Companion to Twentieth Century Literature, The New Century Handbook of English Literature, Twentieth-Century Romance and Historical Writers,* and the *Oxford Guide to British Women Writers.* Attention from such an extensive number of biographical sources indicates that while neglected critically, Goudge is, in fact, far from unknown; rather, she is a widely recognized author of significant popularity.

However, popularity alone guarantees neither access to canonicity nor standing as a serious artist. Indeed, it may negate both; according to critic John Guillory, "[t]he distinction between serious and popular writing is a condition of canonicity; it belongs to the history of literacy, of the systematic regulation of reading and writing . . . . Thus the generic category of the popular continues to bear the stigma of nonwriting . . . ." (232). So,
while many readers have been and are familiar with Goudge’s writing, only a few literary critics have chosen to study it in an academic context.

The earliest article I found that focused on Goudge’s (adult) writing is Madonna Marsden’s “Gentle Truths for Gentle Readers: The Fiction of Elizabeth Goudge.” This article dates from 1972, during the Second Wave of the women’s movement.4

It is hardly surprising that Goudge’s work be analyzed within the radical feminist literary explorations of the Second Wave women’s movement. Because her novels are so old-fashioned and portray female characters in the traditional feminine roles of wives and mothers without careers, they were an easy target for feminist critics of a radical bent. Thus, it seems almost inevitable that a radical feminist would criticize Goudge’s novels for their apparent support of patriarchal hierarchies. Although Goudge’s children’s novels are not immune from such criticism (as will be revealed), it is significant that Marsden is concerned only with Goudge’s writing for adults.

Marsden has no trouble finding textual evidence for her claim that “the appeal of the novels of Elizabeth Goudge seems to rest in their ability to affirm the rightness of humanity’s artificial constructs” (78). Marsden’s thesis focuses on explaining why Goudge’s writing is so popular. Through an analysis of the character Nadine Eliot in the Damerosehay Trilogy, Marsden develops the idea that Goudge’s female characters uphold a patriarchal society in which a woman’s fulfillment can come only from playing the roles of wife and/or mother, and that this portrayal is apparently attractive to women readers.

Although interesting, Marsden’s argument is severely restricted in its scope by her radicalism. (While this approach was academically fashionable when the article was
published in 1972, feminists are now free to examine literary works less restrictively.)
One drawback of Marsden’s patriarchy-focused thesis is that she seems unable to address
other possibilities outside the stance of her thesis. Further, and more detrimental, is her
undermining and devaluing of the feminine roles of wife and mother that Goudge
respects and reveres.

In stark contrast is John Gough’s 1996 article “Reconsidering Elizabeth
Goudge—Not Just a ‘Romance’ Writer” published in *Bookbird* magazine and focused
primarily on Goudge’s writing for children. This is one of several short articles that
Gough has written about Goudge, most of which focus primarily on *The Little White
Horse*. Gough asserts that Goudge’s work is valuable and suffers from both undue
neglect and inaccurate classification as Romance or Historical Fiction. He maintains that
Goudge offers much more to readers: “what sustains readers’ interest in [her] work is her
intense observation of landscape; the clashing contradictions that contend within each
individual; and the passion with which the story unfolds to its hard-won satisfaction”
(28).

Gough begins his article by stating that Goudge’s work was undeservedly
neglected and still had much to offer readers. The body of the article is composed of
summaries of several books which were originally published for adults but which he
asserts would appeal to modern young adults, including *Island Magic, Green Dolphin
Street, Towers in the Mist*, and *The Middle Window*. Gough then summarizes *The Little
White Horse* and briefly praises its literary virtues, particularly characterization.

More than a decade earlier in 1985, Gough pleaded his case for *The Little White
Horse* as a classic children’s book in *Signal*, a prominent British journal of children’s
literature. Much of “Rediscovering The Little White Horse” consists of plot summary and praise for the book’s characters and “gentle humour” (170). However, Gough then delves more deeply into the book with a mythic interpretation; he proposes a fascinating interpretation of Maria Merryweather as a kind of Robert Gravesian White Goddess (174). The goddess is also present in the mother form as Loveday Minette and in crone form as Miss Heliotrope (174). He concludes that the book is “a delightful paradisal, Mozartian book, which knows the wickedness of the world and the need for bravery and strength of character. It is a formal comedy of great seriousness and happiness, told with wit and love and wisdom” (174).

In The Junior Bookshelf in 1987, Gough had an opportunity to explore one element in The Little White Horse more thoroughly. In “Unicorns and Literature: Elizabeth Goudge’s The Little White Horse,” he begins by defending Goudge’s interpretation of unicorns from Margaret Blount's dismissive criticism. In her book Animal Land: The Creatures of Children’s Fiction, Blount complains that because Goudge’s unicorn does not “provoke awe and perhaps terror,” the book is “rather bland” (111). Gough goes on to discuss how and why Goudge employs the unicorn in The Little White Horse. He asserts that she uses her unicorn as a Christian symbol (in much the way that C. S. Lewis uses Aslan in The Chronicles of Narnia) (115), rather than as a darkly sexual, virgin-bait, pagan symbol. Gough advises readers to discover The Little White Horse for themselves and urges them to appreciate Goudge’s unique interpretation of the unicorn.

Megan Lynn Isaac’s 1997 article “Misplaced: The Fantasies and Fortunes of Elizabeth Goudge” appears to be the most comprehensive treatment of Goudge’s
children’s writing to date. Isaac, too, adopts Gough’s view that Goudge’s writing is undeservedly neglected. This lengthy article, published in the “Forgotten Authors” issue of *The Lion and the Unicorn*, also supports Gough’s claim that Goudge’s work has crossover appeal: much of Goudge’s fiction is suitable for children, teens, and adults. In fact, Isaac speculates that most of Goudge’s writing has gone out of print and out of style because of categorization difficulties. The perfect classification of Goudge’s work, Isaac proposes, is Young Adult; this classification, she acknowledges, did not exist when Goudge was writing (91). Were the novels so classified in libraries, the appropriate readership would be able to access and enjoy much of Goudge’s work.

In the first section of her article, Isaac identifies the strengths of Goudge’s writing, including characterization and description. She then summarizes some of Goudge’s books that were originally written for adults but which Isaac believes would be very successful as Young Adult books. These include *Island Magic, A City of Bells, Towers in the Mist, Green Dolphin Street, The Middle Window, The Dean’s Watch,* and *The Damerosehay Trilogy* (87-93).

In the second section of her article, Isaac responds to Marsden’s 1972 article (in spite of the fact that Marsden did not write about Goudge’s children’s books), and subsequently examines Goudge’s treatment of gender, race, and class in her children’s books. Although Isaac certainly identifies some problematic stereotyping, she nevertheless concludes that “Goudge’s novels unfailingly include all the best aspects of fairy tales . . . . Goudge herself needs to be rediscovered by readers, especially children, and returned to her position of prominence in their hearts and on their bookshelves” (106).
In 2002, Teya Rosenberg took a very different approach to Goudge’s children’s writing. In “Genre and Ideology in Elizabeth Goudge’s *The Little White Horse,*” Rosenberg wonders why neither *The Little White Horse* nor other children’s fiction in a similar genre from various periods, such as works by E. Nesbit and Diana Wynne Jones, are categorized and explored as magic realism. She speculates that “like much of children’s literature, and unlike most works termed magical [sic] realism, Goudge’s work does not have a ‘gritty’ tone or a liberal political stance” (77). However, Rosenberg then demonstrates that *The Little White Horse* is, in fact, political in its own way: “Goudge presents a view of what Victorians perceived as the ideal aspects of medieval society” (84). Further, she argues that it contains elements of both magic and realism. Realism is maintained through “geographical mimeticism” in setting, as well as through “scrupulous attention . . . to . . . mundane details . . . about clothes, food, household arrangements, and social niceties and structures” which “are present throughout the story” (78). More importantly, many interwoven elements create a sense of magic in the text, such as characterization of animals and elements of the supernatural (a ghost and a unicorn) (79-82).

Rosenberg concludes that it is Goudge’s standing as a popular writer for women and children, as opposed to a male writer’s standing as a serious artist, that excludes both her and others like her from serious academic consideration by scholars who specialize in magic realism: “ultimately, children’s literature does not even register as a part of that conversation” (85).

Beyond these critical articles, there is very little other material focused on Elizabeth Goudge. Sylvia Gower, a fervent Goudge fan, wrote *The World of Elizabeth*
Gower’s book is an enthusiastic account of her travels through the English countryside, where she experienced the settings in Goudge’s books. In the sphere of children’s literary studies, many allegedly comprehensive texts (such as Jon Stott’s *Children’s Literature from A to Z*), or broad-ranging introductions to children’s literature (such as John Rowe Townsend’s *Written for Children* and Peter Hunt’s *Blackwell Guide to Children’s Literature* and *An Introduction to Children’s Literature*) make no mention of her. A few others contain only passing mentions, or at most a cursory examination of *The Little White Horse*. For example, in *Treasure Seekers and Borrowers* Marcus Crouch examines *The Little White Horse*, concluding that although “Elizabeth Goudge wrote for children before and after this book . . . here was her most successful contribution, a book on which she lavished all the craft of a phenomenally successful novelist” (102). Later, in *The Nesbit Tradition: The Children’s Novel in England, 1945-1970*, Crouch also sees fit to mention Goudge (most likely because he could hardly ignore her since she won the 1946 Carnegie Medal). Thus, Crouch briefly includes *The Little White Horse* in his “Magic Casements” section. He labels the work a “sentimental romance” while allowing that it is “brilliantly written and extremely readable” (121). All Goudge merits in this analysis is a plot summary.

Perhaps because their aim, ostensibly, is to catalogue rather than criticize, John and Jonathan Cooper treat Goudge rather more kindly in *British Children’s Fiction: 1900-1950*. In the 1940 to 1950 section, the authors note that

Elizabeth Goudge has been occasionally criticized for the heavily moralistic and sentimental nature of her writing, but no one could deny that her work is highly spirited and inventive. She writes about religion and the country life
with passion, and is not afraid to sprinkle her stories with fairy dust to give them a magical dimension. Goudge is especially good at character, even bit players and animals have well-developed personalities, and at exploring complex human emotions. (195)

Shelia Egoff is also benevolent in *Worlds Within: Children's Fantasy from the Middle Ages to Today*. She includes Goudge in the “Enchanted Realism” section. Egoff seems complimentary about *Smoky House* and *The Little White Horse* in her short plot summaries, although she asserts that both books are “outrightly romantic and even sentimental” (139). In this analysis, however, Egoff’s primary motive is not to judge but to categorize different works of fantasy. She has no trouble with these Goudge novels: “[b]oth stories, too, are early examples of enchanted realism; with only a few strokes of the pen to expunge the aura of magic, they would be romantic adventure stories. However, it is the touch of the fantastic, as well as the Devonshire countryside, that makes these stories memorable . . . .” (139). Egoff’s genre classification “enchanted realism” is useful, and, I believe, accurate. Throughout my analysis, I will adopt it to refer to Goudge’s children’s novels.

This exploration of critical material makes clear that the few literary scholars who have examined Goudge’s writing have done so only narrowly. From Marsden’s predictable criticism of seemingly problematic gender stereotypes in Goudge’s old-fashioned adult writing, Gough and Isaac move to a focus on classification difficulties and a defense of what is delightful in her children’s books. Only Rosenberg attempts to look closely and deeply into what is happening in one of Goudge’s children’s novels in her genre criticism. Except for Megan Isaac, these critics, like those who briefly mention
Goudge in their broader investigations of children’s literature, focus primarily on *The Little White Horse*. Goudge’s other children’s novels do not receive significant attention.

While it is easy to understand why *The Little White Horse*, as a Carnegie winner, has received attention, most of Goudge’s other children’s novels also deserve attention. In a nascent effort to address this lack, I will include all five of Goudge’s children’s novels in my analysis. It should be noted, however, that I believe *The Valley of Song*’s forgotten status is justified. As the weakest of Goudge’s children’s novels, it deserves its place in oblivion: Goudge herself calls it “a mixed up, confused book liked by very few children . . . a vanishing failure” (*Joy* 303). I include it not to defend it, but rather because it is one of only five novels Goudge wrote and published specifically for children, and because it contains many of the same elements as her other children’s novels do and adds depth to the discussion of Goudge’s portrayal of community.

In order to provide my readers with a working familiarity with these texts and to set the stage for my analysis, I will begin by summarizing Goudge’s five children’s novels. This is necessary as some of these are now obscure and out of print. I must note in passing, however, that some of these, especially *Smoky House* and *The Valley of Song* are now highly collectable and command high prices.

*Smoky House* (1940), like much of Goudge’s fiction, does not have one central protagonist; rather, a large cast of characters all play important roles in the narrative. These characters include the Treduggick family: Jessamine, Genefer, Michael, Tristram, Jane, Father, their dogs Spot and Sausage, and their donkey Mathilda. Other inhabitants of Faraway village with important roles in the action are the local Squire, the mysterious
Fiddler, and the Parson. As well, there are dozens of nameless villagers, soldiers, and fairies.

The setting is also typical of Goudge. A contained, secure (but vulnerable) home anchors the novel’s setting, and situates the protagonists’ centre; the Treguddicks are as snug as the smallest doll inside a set of Russian wooden stacking toys. Their beloved home, Smoky House Inn, is nestled within the near-perfect Faraway Village, which is in turn surrounded by the beautiful Devon countryside and adjacent to the coast. Further, historical setting, prominent in all of Goudge’s children’s novels, creates a sense of both security and intriguing romance: in Smoky House it is the swashbuckling, post-Napoleonic war era of “Free Trade” (smuggling).

The story begins when a mysterious stranger, the Fiddler, appears one spring evening at the Inn. When the Treguddicks take him in, he hypnotizes them with his music. They realize that he is a deeply sad human being and attempt to heal him. Unfortunately for the family, he is a government spy who has arrived in Faraway with the intention of exposing the smuggling ring in which the entire village, including Mr. Treguddick, is involved. The penalty for smuggling is hanging; therefore, stakes are high. The Treguddicks’ pets (who can speak to each other, but not to humans) discover the stranger’s identity and try to warn the family but cannot. By the time the Treguddick children realize that their father and his friends—and so in essence the welfare of the entire village—are in danger, it is almost too late. However, by using their wits and with help from some friendly fairies (the Good People) and their dog Spot, they avert disaster. Subsequently, the Fiddler experiences an epiphany and turns into a kind and happy person. He is forgiven by the villagers and welcomed into their community to play his
music for their weddings and funerals. The happy ending is completed when the eldest Treguddick, Jessamine, marries the Squire and thereby ensures that Faraway will stay the happiest village in the world forever, in fairy tale style.

Here I will pause to draw attention to some of the literary elements at work in Smoky House. Because such elements are quite consistent in Goudge's other children's novels, I will not do this for each novel, for the sake of brevity. I mentioned the beautiful, rural setting, nestling within it a secure family home. I mentioned the historical setting. As well, it is important to note that an intrusive, omniscient, often overtly didactic narrator presides. Foreshadowing lends a mystery-like feeling to the unfolding of the narrative, in which structure is very tight: apart from Goudge's characteristic flowery descriptions, every detail is important and relates to character and plot. Smoky House, like many of Goudge's books, contains numerous allusions, including the Fiddler as the Pied Piper of Hamelin, the Squire as Robin Hood and fairytale prince, and references to fairy and folk lore. Intertextuality is also more subtle and is apparent in covert references to George Macdonald's children's fantasies. In others of her children's novels, Goudge also subtly blends in hints of Lewis Carroll, Charles Kingsley, and Kenneth Grahame's "Golden Age" fantasies for children.

The themes in Smoky House are many, including the following: one must have faith in what one cannot see; community is an interconnected unit whose overall health depends on the health of all; life has meaning and structure even if one does not believe so; children and animals have true wisdom; forgiveness is important; and, perhaps the most dominant, good triumphs over bad. As we will see, these themes, too, flow through many of Goudge's children's books.
Henrietta’s House (1942) is the third book in the Torminster trilogy (the first book is A City of Bells (1936), which was originally published for adults, and the second is the novella Sister of the Angels (1939), which Goudge wrote for the children who loved Henrietta), and it retains its predecessors’ setting in the small, sleepy cathedral town of Torminster in the early years of the twentieth-century. As is usual for Goudge, this book also features a large cast: the children Henrietta and Hugh Anthony, and the adults Grandmother, Grandfather, Uncle Jocelyn, Aunt Felicity, the Old Man, the Old Gentleman, the Dean, Mrs. Jameson, Bates, and Henrietta’s father Gabriel Ferranti. Although ten-year-old Henrietta’s wish for her own house in which she would be able keep her friends and family close to her is the central spoke in the wheel of the story, Henrietta is not the protagonist (as she was in the novella Sister of the Angels) because other characters’ problems and growth are given equal attention in the narrative.

The story’s central action occurs on one beautiful, hot day in high summer: Hugh Anthony’s birthday. Hugh Anthony has chosen to have a picnic up in the hills at Foxglove Combe to celebrate. Accordingly, he and Henrietta and their various friends and relations set out for the Combe in five separate carriages. However, only one carriage actually reaches its destination; the other four are waylaid and drawn into an enchanted wood. There, each group of characters has an adventure and experiences some kind of psychological revelation and subsequent personal growth. Henrietta herself finds the house she wished for, rather like Goldilocks finds the Three Bears’ house, all furnished and waiting for her (she later learns it is a gift from the Old Gentleman, who has become friends with and patron to her poet father). As evening falls, all twelve of the main characters are reunited at Henrietta’s house to enjoy a birthday feast far more splendid
than the original picnic was intended to be. They each learn that the wishes they made that morning in honour of Hugh Anthony’s birthday have all come true: each wish is tied in with some kind of spiritual growth.

Critic Megan Lynn Isaac notes that although weak structurally (a point with which I disagree), “thematically, Henrietta’s House displays what are perhaps Goudge’s most noteworthy accomplishments in her writing for children, her mastery of the modern fairy-tale motif and her ability to fuse conflicting, even contradictory, systems of magic, mythology, and theology into a single enchanted vision” (88).

The Little White Horse (1946), generally considered Goudge’s most admirable work of children’s fiction, won the Carnegie Medal for that year. One element that makes The Little White Horse unique among Goudge’s children’s novels is its central protagonist: thirteen-year-old Maria Merryweather. Maria’s dog Wiggins, her governess Miss Heliotrope, her friend Robin, her guardian Sir Benjamin Merryweather and his dog Wrolf, his servant Marmaduke Scarlett, the Old Parson and Loveday Minette comprise the important secondary characters.

Setting in The Little White Horse follows the pattern Goudge established in Smoky House: Moonacre Manor is nestled near the fictional village of Silverydew, surrounded by the beautiful Devon countryside, and adjacent to the coast. The action unfolds “in this year of grace 1842” (7), thereby allowing the romance of long dresses, cloaks, and horse-drawn carriages to add an alluring sheen to the story.

The story begins when recently orphaned Maria travels to her new home at Moonacre Manor. Once she has adjusted to her new home and fallen in love with Silverydew, she learns the terrible tale of her ancestor Sir Wrolf’s cruelty to his
neighbour Black William. This age-old rivalry has led to the current problematic situation whereby the Men from the Dark Woods poach from the villagers. Maria takes on the role of the Moon Princess and accepts Old Parson’s challenge that she should right these ancient wrongs. In typical fairytale fashion, heroine Maria obtains help from animals and friends, confronts the villain, succeeds in three tasks, and restores harmony to the land. In addition, Maria has time to play matchmaker and re-kindle the old, but not forgotten, loves of her governess and guardian.

Unfortunately, Goudge’s next published work for children is a major disappointment, and sits uneasily beside her competent mastery in The Little White Horse. The Valley of Song (1951) was one of Goudge’s own favourites of all her dozens of published books, but it was a dismal failure with both critics and most readers (Joy 303), including myself. It went out of print quickly and has settled more firmly into oblivion than Goudge’s other work. It is easy to see why this book was one of her favourites: in it she creates a detailed secondary world which embodies her spiritual beliefs. This book seems to have required more imagination, planning and thought than Goudge’s other children’s books, so it is easy to understand that the author herself would have been more invested in the work. However, The Valley of Song is a boring book. It does something that child readers will not tolerate: it puts the exploration of an adult author’s idea before the plot or even the characters.

The Valley of Song appears to be a self-indulgent excuse for Goudge to explore the concept of her vision of Paradise. As a result, the plot is slow and boring, and the characters are flat, stock, and undeveloped. Further, Goudge’s distinctive description,
usually the delight of her readers, here becomes gratuitous and takes over a disproportionate amount of the text.

The protagonist is Tabitha Silver, whose defining qualities can be summed up thus: she is ten years old, she has red hair, she laughs a lot, and she is passionate about nature. The large cast includes her elderly friend Job, her father Simon the Smith, master builder Mr. Peregrine, his wife Julie, their dog Mignon, and the poor wretch who is redeemed by the Valley of Song, the Ogre/Andrew/Captain Throckmorton. The story is set in the mid-nineteenth century, half in the fictional English shipbuilding town of the Hard, and half in the Valley of Song, which is “Fairyland, or the Garden of Eden, or Arcadia, or the Earthly Paradise, or the Elysian Fields” (55). This description of the magical land is an indication of its patchwork nature—Goudge has fashioned a secondary world from scraps of the fabric of fairy lore, Christianity, and Greek mythology. The result is a confused and muddled jumble of a world.

The story begins when Tabitha learns that the latest project in the Yard, a ship for the East India Company, cannot be completed due to lack of funds. Tabitha is deeply upset and desperately wants the ship to be built because she believes the ship, although only a frame, is already “alive.” Upon this tenuous motivation, Tabitha sets out upon a quest to save the ship. She goes to the Valley of Song, a magical place which only children can enter, to get help. An enormous chunk of the book is concerned with describing and explaining the Valley of Song, and has little connection to Tabitha’s quest. Eventually the action gets moving again, and Tabitha goes to the Valley a number of times with different people (all adults who, by magic, “become” children as they enter) in order to obtain all the materials necessary to build the ship: timber, sail cloth, ropes,
paint, metal for the hull, and a flag. Each time she goes back, the person with her fulfils his own spiritual quest as well as obtaining another piece of building material. The ending is happy, although rather anti-climactic: the ship is built and launched. By the end of the story Tabitha has experienced no real change or growth, but she has learned two important lessons: that a community can achieve perfect happiness when it works cooperatively together towards a common goal, and also that the Valley of Song is accessible to everybody all the time through prayer.

Thankfully, *Linnets and Valerians* (1964), published after a thirteen-year break from children’s books, is a return to all the most delightful qualities in Goudge’s children’s books. She again casts a large crew of characters rather than developing a single protagonist. In this story, the Linnet children, Nan, Robert, Timothy, Jane and their dog Absalom are central, but their Uncle Ambrose and his servant Ezra Oake are important secondary characters, as are the local gentry Lady Alicia Valerian and her son Francis (who is mistakenly believed to be an “idiot”—Daft Davie—until the novel’s conclusion), the family servant Moses, and the witch Emma Cobley. *Linnets and Valerians* contains Goudge’s characteristic secure and multi-faceted setting: the Linnet children are rooted to Uncle Ambrose’s delightful, sprawling vicarage, which is nestled within the village of High Barton in Devon, on the edge of Dartmoor. The main action in *Linnets and Valerians* occurs in the Valerian Manor and on looming Lion Tor, in 1912.

The story begins when the Linnets run away from their grandmother’s house, where they are staying because their mother is dead and their father is away in Egypt. They run away because they are afraid their grandmother will give away their dog and send them all off to separate boarding schools. After a brief, exciting adventure that
results from their impulse, they serendipitously end up at their Uncle Ambrose’s home. He agrees to house and educate them (he is a retired school-master in the grand Dr. Arnold style). They are very happy there, but as they explore their new surroundings they discover that all is not well in the village. Spells cast decades earlier by the witch Emma Copley still hold the Valerian family under their wicked sway, and the Linnet children are threatened as well. However, with the help of Ezra and his white magic, the children restore peace to the village. The result is a perfectly realized happy ending: in the Valerian family, Daft Davie is revealed to be the lost son Francis Valerian, and he comes home; Lady Alicia comes out of seclusion; and her husband’s amnesia lifts so that he can find his way home. In the Linnet family, Father also comes home and is able to stay in England with the children, due to Uncle Ambrose’s financial generosity.

I have thus far considered only Goudge’s full-length novels written specifically for children. She also wrote several shorter children’s works and a non-fiction religious book for children, God So Loved the World: A Life of Christ. The Well of the Star is a retelling of the nativity story from the perspective of a poor shepherd boy. Sister of the Angels is another Christmas book. The protagonist of this novella is effervescent Henrietta Ferranti (of Henrietta’s House). In this story, Henrietta and her father scheme together to do two things: reform a spiritually troubled ex-convict and finish the fresco on the walls of the Cathedral’s subterranean chapel, all in the few weeks before Christmas Eve. Of course they succeed in both, but not before Goudge is able to masterfully expose the tug-of-war of psychological pain that results from the disparity between art and life. This thematic exploration lends Sister of the Angels the darkest tone of all Goudge’s works for children, a tone leavened substantially by a counter-focus on forgiveness.
Goudge was prolific in the Christmas book genre, and produced the picture book *I Saw Three Ships*, which is also set at Christmas time. The young protagonist is contrasted with her two spinster aunts by her faith in an old legend, and she is eventually proven right in her beliefs and rewarded. In *Make-Believe*, Goudge returns to the du Frocq children who so delightfully peopled the pages of Goudge’s first novel (published for adults), *Island Magic*. In *Make-Believe* there is none of the sexual and financial tension that so permeates *Island Magic*. Rather, the children have wonderful adventures while trying to do good and help others.

As previously mentioned, many of Goudge’s short stories and novels published as adult books have immense appeal for young readers. One excellent example of this phenomenon is the novel *Gentian Hill*. The main character, Stella, is ten years old when the novel begins, barely thirteen when it ends. Her friend Zachary is five years older: they are children by modern standards, but would have been considered young adults in the early nineteenth century, when the novel is set. Their relationship and budding romance is well-suited to a young adult audience, and had *Gentian Hill* been published today, it almost certainly would be categorized as “YA.” However, despite the intriguing blurring of childhood and adolescence in this book (and others), it will not be a part of my study.

The inclusion of child characters is one of the most obvious reasons that many of Goudge’s adult books would appeal to young readers: almost all of her adult novels feature central child and dog characters. Also, there is a sense of innocence in her writing which is firmly rooted in Romanticism and further heightened by the fact that she includes no overt sexuality in any of her work. Further, Goudge provides a reassuringly organized world in which every living creature has an important and well-defined role, as
well as a strong, comforting morality. All of Goudge’s books act like the best kind of parent: they are accessible, reassuring and comforting, and they provide clear, reliable, unambiguous guidance. They present something to believe in. Perhaps this explains why excerpts from novels such as *The Castle on the Hill*, *Pilgrim’s Inn*, *The Bird in the Tree*, *A City of Bells*, *Green Dolphin Country*, *Island Magic*, *Towers in the Mist* and more have been anthologized into collections suitable for young readers, such as *At the Sign of the Dolphin* and *A Christmas Book*. While such works are beyond the scope of this review, they are exceedingly valuable for understanding the impact of Goudge’s body of work.

Another fruitful literary investigation I will not engage in is the comparison of Goudge’s writing for children and adults. For example, both *Gentian Hill* and *Smoky House* deal with the same area of Devon in a similar period, and touch on some similar themes. In this analysis, however, I will restrict myself to examination of Goudge’s children’s novels, simply for the sake of brevity and clarity.

One other primary text that illuminates an understanding of Goudge is her autobiography, *The Joy of the Snow*. It was published in 1974, when at seventy-four Goudge had retired from writing fiction. Unfortunately for me and other Goudgean scholars, she discusses her works and writing process very little and her children’s books even less. Although her autobiographical writing is not as relevant to my work as I might have hoped, it is nevertheless valuable: *The Joy of the Snow* is extremely useful in drawing out some of Goudge’s own philosophies and ideas about life and art. Consider, for example, her trademark happy endings and the allegedly escapist nature of her fiction in light of her statement “[i]n our hearts every one of us would like to create a new world, less terrible than this one, a world where there is at least the possibility that things may
work out right” (21). The continually recurring theme of forgiveness, evident in both her children’s and adult fiction, can be illuminated by her comment: “I do not think that love and forgiveness can be separated, since real love by its very nature must forgive. To know oneself forgiven by God and by those we love, [sic] is a most humbling and lovely experience and teaches us the necessity for forgiveness” (284). Such statements are useful in clarifying Goudge’s moral and artistic vision as she herself understood it and will be incorporated throughout my discussion.

By examining Goudge’s children’s novels and considering the information in her autobiography, some commonalities become apparent. I believe I have already drawn sufficient attention to the shared themes that thread their way through them (and through many of her adult books, incidentally). Goudge’s children’s novels are always set in a hazily idealized past, in a beautiful, pastoral English setting. The worlds in her books are those in which order, meaning and goodness reign. Her books all contain a large cast of charming, memorable characters. Child characters are treated with dignity and respect (both by the author and by characters within the narrative) and they solve the problems of the village themselves (with a little magical help). Central conflicts in Goudge’s children’s novels tend to be gently unsettling rather than violently terrifying, and are always fully resolved in a wholly happy ending.

Beyond that, I have discovered that Goudge’s writing is always very descriptive, and she imparts in her style a tone of warmth, eagerness, and earnestness. She makes frequent allusions to Christian, Greek, and Fairy lore, as well as to other authors, especially George Macdonald. Her prose is lively and sparkling; in my opinion, her work is unique and vivid in comparison with many other works of children's literature I have
read from the period during which Goudge’s books were published. In spite of their old-fashioned literary style and historical settings, Goudge’s children’s novels still read as “live” books because of their vivacity.
CHAPTER THREE: ELIZABETH G OUDGE: THE WRITER AND HER CONTEXTS

With a clearer picture of Goudge’s children’s novels in mind, and accepting that they are works of enchanted realism with a historical setting, one might now be wondering how these works fit within the literary scene of their day. Was Goudge following trends or setting them? Was she breaking rules or making them? In fact, by many measures it is a relatively simple task to categorize Goudge’s children’s novels with other, similar works of fantasy and historical fiction of their period.

As critic and historian of children’s literature John Rowe Townsend notes, fantasy is and has been since Victorian times one of the most important genres of children’s literature in England (73, 144). Most of the major “classics” of British children’s literature from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) onwards are works of fantasy, including A. A. Milne’s Winnie-the-Pooh (1926) and J. R. R. Tolkien’s The Hobbit (1937)—two of the works Townsend cites to support his claim that fantasy was some of the most important literature produced in England between the wars (144). Since World War II, “fantasy has maintained its position in English language children’s literature. It has continued to some extent to be a British specialty, but much less so than in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (Townsend 222). In these rather sweeping statements, Townsend seems to be including all varieties and types of fantasy. He also observes that almost all children’s literature, including works of fantasy, was relatively gentle and protective in the first half of the twentieth-century; until approximately the mid-1960’s, children’s books aimed to amuse, excite, or comfort rather than to “tell it like it is” (188). This certainly describes what Goudge does in her children’s novels.
Marcus Crouch, in chronicling children’s books in Britain between 1900 and 1960, also concludes that fantasy literature continued as a strong and important genre during World War II, the period when Goudge began publishing her children’s fantasies (Treasure Seekers 88). In fact, children’s fantasy maintained popularity despite paper shortages and other technical difficulties in publishing (87). Fantasy only gained in strength, quality and output following the war; Crouch cites Mary Norton’s The Magic Bedknob (1943) and Bonfires and Broomsticks (1947), Elizabeth Goudge’s The Little White Horse (1946), Rumer Godden’s The Doll’s House (1947), C. S. Lewis’s The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (1950), and others as outstanding examples of this trend (101-4).

Sheila Egoff echoes both Townsend and Crouch when she observes that “[e]very period has its light and charming fantasies that stand outside the mainstream. In general, however, those of the 1940’s have a sense of children at play, but with play used as a metaphor for experiencing life” (150). Egoff notes that “writers such as Rumer Godden, Eric Linklater, Beverly Nichols, Elizabeth Goudge, and T. H. White are on a very safe psychological ground” (150).

As these critics make clear, Goudge’s works of “enchanted realism” are obviously part of a strong literary trend in British fantasy writing.

In addition, both Crouch and Townsend recognize children’s historical fiction as a major genre: “[i]n Britain... historical fiction has traditionally had high standing among children's books” (Townsend 195). Marcus Crouch feels even more strongly that until the 1960’s “the historical novel [was] the outstanding achievement in children’s literature since the war” (Nesbit 57). Both critics make a distinction between “true” historical
fiction (which focuses on real events and/or people) and a looser form. Townsend uses Jill Paton Walsh’s term “costume novel” (202), while Crouch more tolerantly notes that “in general historical fiction for children has tended to be historical romance. Writers have chosen to interpret periods of history through the lives of invented heroes or heroines acted against the backcloth of historical fact. . . .” (Nesbit 70). Goudge’s children’s novels, set anywhere from more than a hundred to approximately thirty years prior to publication, seem to represent this kind of children’s costume fiction.

While it would be grossly misleading to imply that fantasy and historical fiction were the most or the only active genres within British children’s books during the middle decades of the twentieth century, Goudge’s period of production, both obviously played key roles. It seems clear, then, that Goudge’s children’s novels fit in with broad literary genre patterns of their day.

Critic Karen Patricia Smith is concerned chiefly with examining works of fantasy, and she progresses well beyond Townsend and Crouch’s broad generalizations in her study, *The Fabulous Realm: A Literary-Historical Approach to British Fantasy, 1780-1990*. Smith moves to in-depth analysis and categorization of children’s fantasy produced over a two hundred year period. She names the period of production of fantasy literature for children from 1900-1949 (when Goudge produced most of her children’s fantasies) the “Diversionary Period” (207). Smith hypothesizes that the cheerful escapism evident in the literature of the Diversionary Period is most likely a reaction against a turbulent and violent world, shaken by two world wars in just a few decades (208). She posits that adults involved in writing and publishing children’s literature “strove to create some sense of balance to counteract what was happening” in the world (208). Literature of the
Diversionary Period “illustrates the idea that while literature can be an accurate indicator of what is physically happening . . . in society, it can also follow a trend in direct opposition to the nature of the times” (207). These statements bring to mind the sentiments Goudge voices in her autobiography: “[i]n our hearts every one of us would like to create a new world, less terrible than this one, a world where there is at least the possibility that things may work out right” (21).

Smith identifies several key components in children’s fantasy from the Diversionary Period. First and foremost is the tone of the literature: it is light and entertaining (207). One way authors create this mood is by sending characters “on tour”; they see beautiful (or occasionally terrible) things and experience wonderful adventures to which the average child does not have access (242). Diversionary fantasy often includes a strong secondary world, or if not an actual secondary world, at least a setting physically removed from the “ordinary” world (210). In either case, the setting often has a strong outdoor element. The landscape is fantastic, magical, or at the very least new and unfamiliar (235). This kind of fantasy often features “self-assured heroes and heroines” (212). Perhaps most importantly, Diversionary fantasy is a non-threatening form, encompassing stories “that take up the issue of good versus evil but deliver it to the reader in a relatively light and non-pervasive manner” (263).

To illustrate her theory, Smith draws upon several dozen texts as examples that support the major points outlined above (and other secondary points not touched on here). While she mentions some texts only once, about a dozen are referred to repeatedly throughout the chapter on the Diversionary Period, “Fantasy’s Joyful Flight” (207-70). These include, most notably for our purposes, The Little White Horse by Elizabeth
Goudge, but also (and not exhaustively), *Five Children and It* by E. Nesbit (1902); *Puck of Pook's Hill* by Rudyard Kipling (1906); *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (1908); *The Treasure of the Isle of Mist* by William Tarn (1919); *The Children Who Followed the Piper* by Padraic Colum (1922); *Mary Poppins* by P. L. Travers (1934); *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien (1937); and *A Traveller in Time* by Allison Uttley (1939).

Clearly, according to Smith at least, Elizabeth Goudge’s gentle fantasies are very much of the same order as others of her day. Smith’s definition certainly applies as well to *The Valley of Song* and *Linnets and Valerians*, which still fall within its specifications although they were published after the Diversionary period. Goudge continued to work within the frame of fantasy writing she had used from the outset of her writing for children.

The criteria provided by Townsend, Crouch, Egoff and Smith allow us a straightforward means to categorize Goudge as a writer of her times. And yet, even Smith’s relatively in-depth analysis does not seem to reflect every angle of Goudge’s work. One element that has not so far been touched upon is the pervasiveness of Goudge’s old-fashioned style. As John Gough notes, “[h]er children’s books are old-fashioned, and were Nesbittean nearly half a century after Nesbit stopped writing” (*Email to the author*). She, who was so influenced by major Victorian writers such as George Macdonald (*Joy* 62, 93), seemed in many ways almost to write as a Victorian—a writer from the so-called “Golden Age” of children’s literature.

Critic and literary historian Humphrey Carpenter has named the period which encompasses children’s writing in England from approximately 1860 through 1930 “The Golden Age.” By many specifications, Goudge’s work seems to fit quite comfortably
into this period; in fact, she seems almost to be writing as a writer from the period. In *Secret Gardens: A Study of the Golden Age of Children’s Literature*, Carpenter identifies key elements in texts from this era, beginning with an examination of *The Water Babies* (1863) and concluding with *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926).

A brief summary of Carpenter’s main points suggests how Goudge’s children’s books fit in with this period. The (“classic”) children's books produced during this period are for the most part fantasies (ix); Goudge’s works of enchanted realism resemble some of E. Nesbit’s fantasies from the Golden Age, as Megan Lynn Isaac notes (“Misplaced” 88). The books of the Golden Age are preoccupied with “the search for a mysterious, elusive Good Place” (*Secret Gardens* 13). In fact, the “Arcadian writing for children was quite clearly part of a general tendency towards idyllic, ruralist fantasy among many English authors often pre-[World War I] period” (210). Clearly, Goudge’s rural settings and preoccupation with nature and natural beauty, evident in all five of her children’s novels, parallel this movement. In books of the Golden Age, childhood is presented as “a self-contained state which is ultimately preferable to maturity” (215). In Goudge’s children’s novels it is the children who have wisdom and goodness; the children are the ones who have the ability to generate positive changes and who thus embody the most admirable chronological states within the novels. The great books of the Golden Age are often didactic while also emphasizing pleasure (213); certainly the instructive, omniscient narrator so evident in all of Goudge’s children’s novels is didactic, and yet the books seem to taste more of the honey of pleasure than the gruel of pedagogy. As for pleasure, a comforting world which provides “womblike security” (217) is generally offered as the ideal in children’s books of the Golden Age; not surprisingly, reaching a state of security
is a central focus of Goudge’s children’s novels, as her child characters work to restore harmony to their villages.

One other important element which has not so far been identified in these discussions of fantasy is the influence of Christianity within Goudge’s writing. Like C. S. Lewis, Goudge was devoutly religious, and her beliefs both shaped and shone through her writing. John Gough is aware of Goudge’s Christianity, and the influence of other popular Christian writers upon her and her writing; indeed he proposes that Goudge’s *The Valley of Song* is her response to George Macdonald’s *Lilith* and C. S. Lewis’s *The Great Divorce* (*Email to the author 20 Mar. 2005*). Megan Isaac has also noted such links: “Goudge and C. S. Lewis also share a talent for creating fantastic worlds which allegorically impart a vision of Christian theology. . . . In Goudge, as in Lewis, the stories do not require symbolic explication in order to be enjoyed or understood—the Christian framework merely provides another level of meaning” (108).

Throughout her autobiography, Goudge mentions her father’s spiritual guidance (he eventually became Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford), as well as continually referring to her own faith and spirituality (37, 234-47). Indeed, they are clearly central guiding directions in her life. Christian elements are evident throughout Goudge’s children’s (and adult) novels in the form of Biblical echoes through names for example: Ezra, Absolom, and Moses Glory Alleluja and his monkey Abednego in *Linnets and Valerians*, Job in *The Valley of Song*, and many more. As well, Goudge’s characters regularly attend Sunday church services at the village parish church, which she frequently establishes as its social, geographic, and moral centre. Sometimes Christian references come into the narratives
overtly, but usually when they do they seem to belong to fairyland as much as to the Church of England. Often the Christianity and fairy lore are juxtaposed. For example, in *Smoky House* the flowers on the bedcurtains “com[e] alive to defend the [children’s] unconsciousness. They [form] . . . a beautiful interwoven arbour of living, breathing flowers to keep away bad dreams, hobgoblins and the things that go bump in the night” (45). Immediately following this passage which is so heavily informed by faerie, Christian angels enter the room to extend protection over the younger Treguddick children. In this passage the children’s guardian angels are clearly Christian, but also seem similar to the “Good People” who play such an integral role in the story:

First [Jessamine] saw the oak posts shine like pillars of silver. Then, crowning these pillars, she saw golden suns gleaming. Then, spreading out and up from the silver and the gold, she saw all the colours of the rainbow. At each corner of each bed was standing a great Angel in silver armour, sword in hand, a golden halo behind his head and great rainbow-tinted wings unfurled, and from each Angel there floated out into the room the glorious scent of the lilies of paradise that wreathed his shining head. (45)

Once these Christian elements are revealed, it comes as no surprise to see religious values, however disguised, in Goudge’s writing. These values very often provide a framework in her writing for both children and adults, although Goudge is generally fairly subtle about her beliefs, especially in her children’s novels (although *The Valley of Song* is a glaring exception). Whether Goudge consciously set out to create Christian allegories, as C. S. Lewis did, is unclear. Nevertheless, her children’s novels are
permeated with Christian values and principles, in much the same way as Lewis’s
*Chronicles of Narnia*.

In a useful, straightforward little volume entitled *What Anglicans Believe*, David Edwards sums up some of the central beliefs and values in the Church of England and provides a quick means for readers to understand Goudge’s Anglican principles of faith. (Although it dates from 1974, I would argue that any changes since that time would not be relevant to Goudge's work.) Several components are directly relevant to Goudge’s children’s novels.

Edwards makes numerous other references to the Anglican view of the interconnectedness of humans and the importance of the idea of community in the Church of England. He maintains that “[t]here is no such thing as a solo Christian . . . to be Christians, we have to get together” (75). He also emphasizes that every person is a valuable part of the whole:

*In Anglicanism, lay people matter.* Almost all the clergy have spent a lot of their time among laymen, visiting people in their homes and trying to help people with problems . . . In the Church of England, all who live in the area known as the “parish” are regarded as this Church’s responsibility unless they belong to another religious body; the parish church is their church. (99 emphasis original)

In fact, Goudge’s child characters, at work healing their communities, act as true Christians: “a Christian congregation is meant to set an example to the neighbourhood in reaching and serving members of the community who need help” (120).
At the core of Anglican belief, as well as of Goudge’s children’s novels, is the power of love and forgiveness. Edwards maintains that

\[ \text{the Bible shows that to believe in love is to trust in the power of love. It is to act in the conviction that love will find a way and win through... So many other things seem more powerful than love. Violence often does. Aggressive argument often does. But... you trust love to win through because it is the mightiest force, the most dynamic energy, in the universe. (50 emphasis original)} \]

In *Henrietta’s House* Grandfather confronts the Old Man with this belief: “[a]nd now I’ll tell you something... It’s this. There’s a power even stronger than the evil will in your mind, and that’s the goodwill in mine” (150). This conviction underpins all of Goudge’s children’s novels, where good always triumphs over bad. Thus, the Old Man cannot sustain his evil will when Grandfather brings his goodwill to bear. Rather, the Old Man is converted to good, as are other villains in Goudge’s children’s novels.

An analysis of this nature could go on for some time, and encompass many more elements of Anglican Christianity and the way they connect with Goudge’s children’s novels. However, this brief look at a few core Anglican values is sufficient to show how the course of action that Goudge’s characters pursue, their striving to integrate community, and their peaceful negotiations embody a Christian course of problem solving.

Edwards’s passage also provides another context for interpreting Goudge’s happier-than-happy endings: instead of seeing them as unrealistic, we can view them as allegorical representations of the inevitability of the triumph of Christian love. Goudge
herself makes clear her belief in this powerful phenomenon: “I believe that we are created by love and that sooner or later the persuasion of love will draw us up out of our darkness to stand in its exquisite light and see ourselves at last as we really are . . . . Always the pull of the sun is more powerful than that of the adversary” (Joy 307-8).

Forgiveness is also central to both Christianity and Goudge’s children’s novels. Edwards notes that while Christianity offers forgiveness to all believers, it does not come without reciprocity in Christians’ actions: “[a]ccording to the teachings of Jesus, God’s forgiveness is offered to all . . . . If we love and forgive our fellow men only a little, we shall be forgiven by God only a little; if we are totally unforgiving, we shall be totally unforgiven” (54-5). Goudge’s emphasis on forgiveness in her children’s novels relates directly to Christian philosophy. Indeed, Edwards makes a strong and certain statement about Anglican Christianity that could be a summary of Goudge’s children’s novels: “the patient love of God is stronger than the most powerful evil. For nothing—nothing at all—can defeat God’s purpose, which is always to reach us in healing and forgiveness” (32).

It is now possible to see the many ways in which Elizabeth Goudge is similar to other writers of her era. She produced children’s literature in genres that were not only popular and widespread but also well-respected: fantasy and historical fiction. Further, Goudge’s children’s novels fit in with the “Diversionary” pattern of many fantasies from their period, as Smith observes in The Fabulous Realm. In some ways, however, she also seems to write like a Victorian Golden age writer. Further, Goudge’s children’s novels are infused with Christian values, as are those of authors such as C. S. Lewis and others.

So the question that begs to be asked is why fantasy writers who display the above elements in their works are worthy of critical attention while Goudge is not. And,
in particular, why is C. S. Lewis, whose writing is similar to Goudge’s in many ways, who also wrote for both children and adults and who also published his theological musings, the subject of an immense amount of scholarly attention, while Elizabeth Goudge receives next to none? Or, put another way: if books of a similar style and era, such as *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, are worthy of inclusion in a children’s canon, why aren’t Elizabeth Goudge’s works?
CHAPTER FOUR: EXCLUSION AND ACCEPTANCE

As Shirley Foster and Judy Simons point out in *What Katy Read*:

The issue of cultural status and artistic excellence of "non-canonical" literature continues to pose a vexed question for feminist literary critics. It remains an important task for twentieth-century commentators to rescue devalued texts from conventional critical hierarchies so that questions of literary exclusion and determinants of taste can be addressed with some understanding of their sources. (19)

It is necessary for me to substitute "twenty-first-century" here, but otherwise these critics’ observations describe very accurately my goals for exploring Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s novels.

Although some critics may consider Goudge’s writing disastrously sentimental, descriptive and didactic, one of her children’s novels at least achieved a measure of institutional validation: *The Little White Horse* won the Carnegie Medal (England’s prestigious library association award for Children’s Literature) for the publishing year 1946 (actually awarded in 1947). Thirty years later, in 1977, critics Marcus Crouch and Alec Ellis still seemed to consider *The Little White Horse* a book of excellent literary merit. They deemed it “a ‘moral tale’, an allegory, in which an acceptable lesson is carried through the medium of an enchanting story . . . . It is in fact, in the strictest sense, a good book” (*Chosen* 40 emphasis original). They also agree that while many elements of the novel are delightful, setting and character are immediately and lastingly agreeable (40). However, in their opinions, *The Little White Horse* ultimately qualifies as a “good"
book because the reader “enters into the life of the characters. One shares, in an intensely personal way, in the fortunes of Maria as she sets about her tasks . . . .” (41).

But even winning this prestigious award has not been enough to propel significant scholarly interest in Goudge’s children’s writing, although the award may be the reason that such criticism which does exist focuses primarily on The Little White Horse. Nor has it allowed Goudge’s children’s novels status as texts valuable enough for inclusion in the average Children’s Literature survey course. So what does keep Goudge out of the club? And why, for that matter, are description and sentiment viewed in such a negative light?

The questions I pose are part of a larger debate about canon formation. The canon is that most privileged of all groups of texts: those that are studied and discussed most frequently. Put simply, the canon contains the books that the literary establishment (“the Academy”) considers most valuable and important. In Constructing the Canon of Children’s Literature, scholar Anne Lundin proposes that “[t]he canon’s main function is to position texts in relation to one another— and to exclude more than include . . . . The canon is a political proving ground where its uses shift according to the rhetorical and reading audiences” (xvii).

It would seem, also, that in the study of children’s literature, “the family tree of children’s classics has remained relatively unshaken amid the storms” (Lundin xvii). In other words, the group of books considered important within the study of children’s literature has not changed as significantly as have other literary canons. Perhaps too many scholars in the field are too ready to accept the canon, and too few are willing to challenge its makeup. The problem with this stasis is that some critics, especially
feminists, are increasingly beginning to realize that “[r]ather than an absolute standard of literary value, there are multiple centers of value from which to assess a text” (Lundin 111). My own recognition of these possible centers of value is what urges me to explore Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s novels. Although critic John Gough has praised them—he insists, for example, that “The Little White Horse is a book of classic status, with a style and quality of Kenneth Grahame and a use of fantasy that rivals Alan Garner” (“Rediscovering 168)—they are not validated by the authority of the Academy.

Goudge’s children’s novels have no “status,” I believe, because of a power structure existing within literary studies that has influence, both subtle and obvious, far-reaching enough to discredit her efforts by excluding her texts, and others like them, from the canon. This is the patriarchy of literature, and it privileges certain texts and literary styles above others. Critics John Griffith and Charles Frey note in a discussion of the canon of children’s literature that “the kinds of canonicity accorded in the past to such works as . . . the Narnia books [and others] . . . reflect quite directly just whose taste, whose values, and whose culture has been advanced as authoritative. Such works speak for the values and interests of relatively well-to-do well-educated, whites, males, Christians, Northern Europeans” (23). I believe that the “male” in this system is the most powerful and pervasive component; in this value system, androcentric texts are set apart as the standard, the majors, while others fall short and remain minor.

Such a value system explains why quest-based, secondary world fantasy—very often called “High” or “Epic” fantasy—is often held up as the yardstick of children’s fantasy, while enchanted realism remains a poor second. Although Sheila Egoff does not explicitly state that one is superior to the other, her definitions of “Enchanted Realism”
and "Epic Fantasy" in *Worlds Within* are riddled with value-laden terms. Enchanted realism is clearly the inferior form, as it "stand[s] in stark contrast to epic fantasy. The protagonists are not called upon to participate in great events nor to test themselves against seemingly overwhelming odds. The children of enchanted realism do not change the world . . ." (8). The privileged status of Epic Fantasy is just as clear:

> Writers such as J. R. R. Tolkien, Susan Cooper, Alan Garner, Lloyd Alexander . . . and others have used both the matter and structure of legend to infuse their works with the epic quality of the original—its emotional impact and grand design. Like their prototypes, modern epic fantasies are chiefly concerned with the unending battle between Good and Evil . . . Epic fantasy is dominated by high purpose. (6)

Later in *Worlds Within* Egoff quite clearly posits that works of enchanted realism from the 1940's, including Goudge's *Smoky House* and *The Little White Horse*, are inferior to those of Epic Fantasy: "[w]ith the exception of *The Doll's House*, none of these books are major fantasies. However, they are halfway houses to those stories of the 1960's and 1970's where time and distance from real battles resulted in a highly mythic and symbolic approach to the struggle between good and evil" (150).

The battles, the high purpose of Epic Fantasy, are infused with masculine values and ways of being. These stories validate an androcentric outlook and convey the hegemonic view that "[d]esirable power is power over, domination, not power in reciprocity and sharing. Competition and rivalry lead to winners and losers, and we are to identify with and dream of becoming winners" (Griffith and Frey 23). Because they are informed by masculine values, such stories are worth reading and studying. There is no
shortage of scholarly research on C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Ursula Le Guin or others in this genre. Further, such texts often maintain an important place in university children’s literature courses, sometimes to the exclusion of works of enchanted realism.7

The prominent feminist critic of children’s literature, Lissa Paul, is particularly aware of this value system. She notes:

The tunes . . . of women’s texts are different from the ones established in the canon as being of value. What feminist theory has revealed, especially in reconstructions of a female literary tradition, is that the disproportionate emphasis placed on adventure, power, honour and public success squeezed out feminine values of maternal, domestic voices, ideas of sisterhood and stories about the lives of women. (“Feminist” 108)

I believe the real reason Goudge’s children’s novels are considered minor, flawed, unworthy of serious academic intention, is not that they are sentimental or descriptive, but that they are overtly feminine in their value system and literary structure. In fact, they demonstrate precisely those qualities to which Paul refers: feminine values. Within them are no grand quests, no mighty battles, no glorious conquering of Evil. Thus, they are lacking. However, that literary hierarchy is changing. Paul notes that domestic settings and “homely details have been redeemed by feminist critics. . . as having interest; as being as worthy for critical attention as descriptions of battles” (“Enigma Variations” 151).

Another gender-related possibility may account for some of Goudge’s neglect: the gender of her central characters. Although Goudge always includes both boy and girl characters in her children’s novels, usually the girls have the central roles within the
narratives. Further, in *The Valley of Song* and *The Little White Horse*, girl characters are the clear protagonists. In *Children’s Literature and The Politics of Equality*, critic Pat Pinsent notes that women authors often choose, or perhaps feel compelled, to favour boy protagonists:

Criticism has arisen of the way in which even female authors have often preferred to make their more interesting characters males . . . even among the considerable output of quality children’s fiction written since the second world war, dealing with subjects such as family relationships, some women writers have still chosen to focus on male characters. Lucy Boston’s *The Children of Green Knowe* (1954) and Phillipa Pearce’s *Tom’s Midnight Garden* (1958) . . . are amongst the most notable examples of this emphasis . . . (75)

Although these authors’ choices may now be questioned, one has to wonder: Are these other authors and the aforementioned works considered “major” because their having male protagonists led to a better critical reception?

Such questions and power dynamics, so influential in steering individual scholars and instructors away from “insignificant” works towards acceptable ones whose value will be celebrated by the Academy, are by no means restricted to literary studies focused on works for children. They are equally pervasive in other realms of literary studies (and indeed, I would guess, likely exist in some form in every branch of every academic discipline). In *The Canon and the Common Reader*, Carey Kaplan and Ellen Rose chronicle both their own struggle to win a place for Doris Lessing’s fiction in the traditional academic canon and the larger struggle that feminist literary critics have been waging against the Academy for decades. Kaplan and Rose note that when they began
teaching, it would have been professional suicide to teach one of Lessing's novels, whereas now inclusion of her work is commonplace. While Kaplan and Rose initially feared the Academy's rejection of one of their favourite authors on the grounds that she could never be viewed as being as important as Shakespeare, Dickens or Hemingway, they felt that Lessing's work was worth studying because it shed light on the human, and specifically female, modern condition (xiii-xix). They persevered and were successful in securing women's writing a respectable place in the Academy. I am not certain that the study of children's literature has progressed quite so far. My exploration and support of Goudge, here, is intended to help move the academic world of children's literature one step closer toward the success that Kaplan and Rose experienced.

Kaplan and Rose may not have been fighting only the Academy. Interestingly, the initial efforts of feminist literary critics were often just as damning of what they found in literature as was the patriarchal value system they claimed to be fighting. Early literary feminists were often preoccupied with identifying and exploding gender stereotypes (Madonna Marsden's article about female characters' upholding of patriarchal values in Goudge's adult novels provides a perfect example): "[i]n the mid 1970's there was a fairy-tale fashion for 'active' heroines (of the masculine sort, understood as preferable)" (Paul, Reading Otherways 39).

In children's literature, these values were often played out by privileging female heroes "in drag"; feminists did not seem to realize that they were still dominated by male values (Paul, "Feminist" 106). Where would Goudge's gentle, old-fashioned stories, replete with their rather domesticated female characters, fit in such a climate of literary
studies? Nowhere. This brand of feminism was as incapable of celebrating Goudge’s contributions to literature (as Marsden’s article shows) as was the patriarchal Academy.

Fortunately, feminists now study literature differently. The focus is not such a narrow one on gender stereotypes; rather, a wider scope is available, through which feminist scholars can illuminate any number of elements within the literature that may hold value for female readers. By 1990, Kaplan and Rose were able to state that “feminist theorizing about literature differs substantially from “masculinist” theorizing, most dramatically by empowering the (common) reader and affirming connections between writers and readers, texts and contexts” (13). Indeed, such a wide scope of study is now embraced that scholars such as Janice Radway are able to examine women’s response to and reading of popular romance writing (Kaplan and Rose 37), a topic of cultural and textual studies that would have been impossible to imagine in a traditional academic situation.

While radical feminists might regard Goudge’s children’s novels as almost anti-feminist, chiefly because of her portrayal of traditional female roles, now it is acceptable to interpret these novels as a celebration of femininity. Feminist literary studies have moved beyond the days when women clamoured to see female characters who were little more than girls or women in drag (such as the character Angharad, who was masculinized to “Harry” in both name and behaviour in Robin McKinley's The Blue Sword). Now we can be confident enough to celebrate more traditional female societal contributions, such as domesticity and nurturing, community and cooperation. We can legitimately study Goudge’s works as feminine writing because as a popular writer, she deserves to be taken seriously; she has been able to impart meaning to so many readers.
Feminist literary critics place a high value on examining texts that have “become popular by offering to readers constructions that appeal to their psychological and social needs” (Lundin 112); I believe that Goudge’s children’s novels do offer such constructions.

Almost twenty years ago, Lissa Paul noted that “both women’s literature and children’s literature are devalued and regarded as marginal or peripheral by the literary and educational communities,” but that “[f]eminist critics are beginning to change that” (“Enigma Variations” 149). While feminist critics have made a great deal of progress in the past few decades, the Academy is still resistant to feminist literary activities, which often remain in a separate “camp.” Thus, I must note that while my methodology of analysis is legitimate within feminist literary studies, it still may not be considered so within the larger Academy. Critic James Winders laments the hegemonic resistance to feminist literary studies and explains it by recognizing that “to take feminist arguments seriously would be to say farewell to the canon that has been the heart, soul, and viscera of the field of intellectual history” (12).

Critic John Guillory feels strongly that feminist literary studies should not disrupt the established literary hierarchy. In discussing canonicity, he implies that examining a work of literature’s unity or discontinuity (a traditional literary practice) is more credible than reading the values in works or looking for contemporary values within them (233). He dismisses feminist literary scholar Jane Tompkins’s remark that “[her] own embrace of the conventional led [her] to value everything that criticism had taught [her] to despise,” by insisting that “[t]he reversion to moralism is determined by the equation of text-selection with value-selection. For this reason much of what passes for political analysis of historically canonical works is nothing more than the passing of moral
judgment on them” (Guillory 233). Guillory rejects the idea that “the evaluation of popular writing by women can be subjected to a canonical reversal simply by revealing the values expressed in these works” (233).

I like to believe that Guillory and others of a similar mind are becoming a minority. Certainly contemporary critics are opening up canonicity in many different inclusionary ways. According to critic Richard Rorty, for example, another way to decide which works of literature deserve attention, inclusion and praise is their ability to inspire hope. If my own response to Goudge’s children’s novels is an accurate reflection of the hope they are capable of inspiring, then the novels are eminently deserving of critical attention and canonical status. Rorty posits that we should not discard the hope shared by . . . [Harold] Bloom, and Matthew Arnold—the hope for a religion of literature, in which works of the secular imagination replace Scripture as the principal source of inspiration and hope for each new generation. We should cheerfully admit that canons are temporary, and touchstones replaceable. But this should not lead us to discard the idea of greatness. We should see great works of literature as great because they have inspired many readers, not as having inspired many readers because they are great. (152)

Clearly, then, by many measures it is easy to see that now the time is right to offer an inclusionary re-reading of Goudge’s children’s novels—one that will show their value as feminist children’s novels.
CHAPTER FIVE: RE-EVALUATING GOUDEGE’S CHILDREN’S NOVELS

It will be clear from the following discussion that my first step in re-reading Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s novels is to reject the patriarchal, androcentric view of literature and of women writers of children’s books that “relegate[s] their work to the bottom of the literary hierarchy” (Foster and Simons 20). Although I have mentioned it numerous times, I do not accept the view that Goudge’s writing is flawed by sentimentality, didacticism and description (with the notable exception of The Valley of Song). Instead, I intend to celebrate the richness nestled within it.

And I won’t stop there. I will also willingly (willfully) put aside other critics’ interpretations of Goudge’s work. Marsden’s beliefs about female support of the patriarchy will be replaced by my own belief that Goudge’s girl characters embody a powerful, well-balanced blend of both masculinity and femininity. I will read The Little White Horse as a novel about integration, rather than as an embodiment of Graves’s archetypes, as Gough interpreted it to be. And although I agree with Megan Lynn Isaac’s conclusion that Goudge’s children’s novels “unfailingly include all the best aspects of fairy tales,” this idea will not be central to my own discussion. Nor will Gough and Isaac’s preoccupation with the impact of classification difficulties upon the critical and popular reception of Goudge’s writing. And in spite of the fact that setting and place are extremely important in Goudge’s children’s novels, often the first elements that critics mention, I will not read them as novels of place. I will even ignore my own earlier assertions about the Christian values that permeate Goudge’s children’s writing; instead, I intend to show how some of these very values can be interpreted as feminist.
Unfettered, I am now free to offer my own interpretation of the dynamics at work in Goudge’s children’s novels. But before I delve into just what those are, I will first explain why I believe it is important to do so.

I believe Goudge’s children’s novels shed valuable light on the female human condition. They are, according to feminist critic Roberta Seelinger Trites’s definition, “feminist children’s novel[s]” because they are books in which “the main character[s] are] empowered regardless of gender” (4). And I propose that Goudge’s children’s novels are feminist, as well, because they are girl-centered and they embody truth about “the reality of being female” (Pinsent 84). Goudge’s children’s novels, therefore, provide a rich vein for feminist scholars to mine. Also, readers who explore these novels, be they children or adults, will glean valuable wisdom about being female in this world through identification with female characters. Thus, I see Goudge’s children’s novels as powerful agents capable of positively influencing the stories that girls tell about themselves, to themselves.

While I am aware that there are elements in the texts which are problematic, specifically stereotypes of class and race, and some would say gender, I take Foster and Simons’ view (when discussing *The Wide, Wide World*) that “[n]evertheless, the emphasis on female influence which pervades the narrative . . . suggests a validation of womanly authority and self-determination, encouraging contemporary readers to exploit such influences in their own interests” (50). This feminist quality overrides all others, and speaks out as the most powerful component in Goudge’s children’s novels.

Thus, I believe that readers can glean from Goudge’s children’s novels a feminine value system that embraces forgiveness and tolerance instead of vengeance, and that
celebrates community and cooperation instead of a ruthless pursuit of individualism. As a result, they will be exposed to some of the values most important to contemporary feminists, as well as to positive and viable modeling of problem-solving and femininity. *That is* why these books are worth reading and studying.

By examining Goudge’s children’s novels, I am asserting that it is important for girl and woman readers to find alternatives to the heroic quest, to experience that it is acceptable to value communities rather than kingdoms (Paul, “Feminist” 102). I am celebrating a way of looking at the world that is as valid and relevant today as it was when Goudge wrote her children’s novels many decades ago. At that time, her portrayal of girls who are capable of domesticity and nurturing as well as adventures, and her advocacy of problem-solving techniques that centre around cooperation, forgiveness and integration rather than attack, conquest and dominance was valuable in a world ripped apart by World War II (the war that critic Teya Rosenberg believes to be extremely influential in shaping the fused realistic and fantastic children’s literature that Goudge and others produced in England in the 1940’s and 1950’s (“Influence” 80)).

Today, girls in Western society are growing up to inherit more power as women than at any other time in known history. Almost all will have careers, and many will also have families. Certainly Goudge’s portrayal of feminine roles, problem solving and integration of community will help them negotiate their way through their work and family life, as well as the complicated balance between the two. These values and ways of being are as pertinent today as they were when Goudge wrote her children’s novels; as Lissa Paul notes, “the quickening of academic interest in women’s and children’s
literature testifies that something in their stories is in touch with the temper of our time” ("Enigma Variations" 153). This is certainly true of Goudge’s children’s novels.

Because these works are so rich in feminine values, and such powerful voices for girl and woman readers, I believe it is important to explore them and to show that they are worthy of canonical status. But which canon? At the end of her lengthy exploration of canon formation in children’s literature, Anne Lundin concludes that it would be better to “consider many canons, not just one . . . . If we as professionals engaged in a literature of childhood could resist the language of “best” and instead contextualize and revitalize titles in a dynamic relationship with each other, we could uphold standards of a different kind and effect a transformative rewriting and rereading of children’s literature” (146). With Lundin’s suggestion in mind, I hope to show the richness in these texts to other interested readers, to persuade feminist literary critics that there is much alive and worth studying in them, and to start a new conversation about Goudge among scholars. Perhaps this will, as well, result in a new readership—a new possibility for girls and women to enjoy Goudge’s work.
CHAPTER SIX: GOULDGE’S GIRLS: FEMININE HEROES

*The Little White Horse* and *Linnets and Valerians* portray an extremely valuable and very contemporary blend of masculinity and femininity that celebrates Maria and Nan as well-rounded individuals. Not all of Goudge’s girl characters embody this balance: Jessamine and Henrietta are more domestic than adventurous, and Tabitha is more adventurous than domestic. Nan and Maria, although in very different ways, are powerful and integral characters because their femininity allows them to put into action events that ultimately result in the harmonious integration of their communities. Their agency is one of the elements that makes Goudge’s children’s novels feminist novels.

I believe that in Nan and Maria, as in all of Goudge’s girls, “feminized spiritual values are encoded in the heroine” (Foster and Simons 82); these characters embody the values played out in the plot resolutions that result in their communities’ successful integration. As well, I adopt feminist critic Rebecca Trites’s ideas about gender roles by asserting that Goudge’s girls, particularly Nan and Maria, “transcend gender roles . . . to embrace and celebrate certain characteristics traditionally linked to femininity” (5). Goudge allows her “feminist protagonists [to] recognize and rely on traits that gave their literary foremothers strength: compassion, interconnectedness, and communication,” which Trites considers more powerful than the early radical feminist rejection of traditional femininity (5).

I do not agree with Megan Isaac’s view that Goudge’s portrayal of girl characters is a “failure of imagination” that “limits . . . her creation of female heroines” (104). Further, I believe that to view them as such is to stop short of deeper and more valuable speculation about their pivotal roles in the texts. Goudge clearly positions girls as
powerful, rather than limited, figures in her children’s novels. In *Smoky House*, for example, the dog Sausage is surprised and pleased to realize that “the girls’ company [is] not so dull after all,” and that they “can rise to a dangerous situation better than you would expect” (125). Sausage’s validation of female power and societal contributions is especially powerful, as Goudge positions dogs as the wisest figures in *Smoky House*: “children, of course, are much more sensible than grown-ups; and dogs more sensible than children” (19).

Clearly, a deeper reading of her children’s novels will show that Goudge’s girl characters are one of the most successful elements in *Linnets and Valerians* and *The Little White Horse*, and strong contributors to these works as feminist children’s novels. I applaud the qualities in Nan and Maria that have traditionally been considered feminine, and wish to show how they are valuable. In doing this I act as a feminist, according to Trites’s assertion that one of the main goals of feminism is “to foster societal respect for . . . choices” that women (and girls) make, regardless of whether those choices encompass behaviours that have been traditionally considered feminine or masculine (2).

Goudge chooses girls to do most of the true transforming work in the novels. That Goudge creates stories in which children act as agents of change is not particularly surprising: active child characters abound in children’s literature and are characteristic of much children’s literature. But what about girls?

The Victorian influence may again be at work, this time by inspiring Goudge’s portrayal of her girl characters. As critic Edith Honig notes in *Breaking the Angelic Image*, successful girl characters in Victorian children’s fantasy (for example Alice of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and many of E. Nesbit’s girl characters) are often
much more powerful than the passive, domesticated “angels in the house” that they may first appear to be. These girls may be domesticated and well-mannered, but they are also “as assertive, adventurous, independent . . . as any male hero . . . .” (69). However, in Victorian society girls were expected to “remain pure and uplift the baser instincts of man. This attitude presumes the moral superiority of the female, crediting her with more self-control, higher, more religious instincts, and more common sense capability” (Honig 67). Goudge seems to have similar Victorian societal expectations for her girl characters; they are the ones who must lead the way down the path of virtue. They also share other characteristics with their fictional foremothers: they fuse domesticity and adventure.

Throughout her children’s novels, Goudge tends to respect and value girl characters over boys. For example, when describing the Treguddick children (albeit physically) in *Smoky House*, the narrator says of Tristram and Michael that “there was nothing out of the ordinary about them. They were just boys” (14). This seems to sum up Goudge’s attitude towards boys and girls. Although at first glance she seems to privilege boys with more activity and freedom, it is the girls she shows as truly powerful and influential. While allowing that “Goudge respects the courage and intelligence of her female protagonists as much as that of her male protagonists,” Megan Isaac laments that Goudge “routinely fails to imagine as broad a range of possible futures for her girls as her boys” (101). I believe that Goudge goes beyond an equal respect for her characters: she actually relies upon her girl characters in a fundamental way; they are capable of much more than the boys. Further, I believe that what Goudge puts forth about the characters’ futures is less important than what occurs during the action of the story. This is what holds the key to understanding Goudge’s complex treatment of girl characters.
Throughout *Linnets and Valerians* and *The Little White Horse*, Nan and Maria play key roles in changing and improving their communities. Goudge’s portrayal of girl characters who embody a balance of masculinity and femininity creates a strength that infuses them with the capacity to be powerful agents of positive change. Nan and Maria are what Trites calls “[s]uccessful feminist characters” because “they adopt the best traits of both genders to strengthen themselves personally and within their communities” (25). This balanced portrait certainly has much to offer as a model to girls today, many of whom will grow up to try to become “superwomen,” balancing both careers and family, both adventure and domesticity.

Goudge’s portrayal of balanced girl characters also brings her children’s novels into even more relevance within a feminist dialogue. As Pinsent notes, contemporary feminists value a balanced gender portrait; if female characters are portrayed as “too much like males, we are not really finding a place for the female but rather expecting women to become surrogate males . . . . We need equality in the full sense for all the qualities which have been regarded as traditionally female” (77). Pinsent also warns against books that portray females only “in subservient or limited roles” because they “can be disempowering to female readers” (77).

Such limited gender treatment seems to be what Megan Isaac believes Goudge guilty of when she proposes that Goudge's treatment of gender is problematic and stereotyped (99). Isaac maintains that in *Linnets and Valerians* Nan not only imagines herself solely as a wife and mother, but that her role in restoring the Valerian family to health and harmony “lack[s] much of the heart-pounding excitement of the boys’ experiences’ (100). Isaac’s statement not only fundamentally disrespects feminine
societal contributions, by asserting that Nan’s role as caregiver is less valuable, but it also fundamentally misreads the plot of this novel. Without Nan’s involvement in the Valerians’ lives, there would be no story and no satisfying resolution.

An exploration of Nan and Maria’s roles using Lissa Paul’s questions to shape the inquiry, namely “Whose story is this?” (9) and “Who acts? Who is acted upon?” (10), reveals that Nan and Maria are far from being passive, stereotypically weak female characters. Instead, they are powerful agents of positive change, capable of re-shaping their communities.

Although Linnets and Valerians involves many characters in a fundamental way, I believe that the only answer to “Whose story is this?” is that this is Nan’s story. Nan is the character who, through integrating her femininity and masculinity, is able to enact positive change in her community. Goudge herself positions Nan as the most powerful and capable of the Linnet children. The boys’ adventures (with the exception of Robert’s theft of the pony, which brings the children to Uncle Ambrose’s house) are merely superficial titillations in comparison with Nan’s pivotal actions.

First and foremost, Nan is the family caregiver: she is the glue that holds her motherless family together. She provides nurturing, mediation and moral direction to her siblings. She watches out for her “delicate” brother Timothy, and she mothers little Betsy. She fixes the messes into which Robert perpetually gets the children. During their first exploration of High Barton, for example, Nan is the one who preempts a disagreement between her siblings and allows the day to proceed smoothly and sweetly. She also, that same day, models empathy and consideration for her siblings when she is the only one of them to recognize that “it would be nice to send a postcard to Grandmama” to apologize
for running away and to admit that they “behaved badly” (42). On their first visit to Sunday church in High Barton, Nan leads “her little flock round to the west door” (122). She is the central spoke in her family’s wheel. Although perhaps less exciting, how could Nan’s role possibly be seen as inferior to her brothers’, when they merely go romping through the woods? She is powerful; she is accorded a position in the household that sets her apart from her siblings. She is integral and indispensable.

Nan is introduced as having “a domesticated turn of mind” from the outset of the narrative (7). She worries about and looks after the children’s clothes (11). She helps with planning and preparing food for her household. For example, she steps in to help Ezra: “Nan saw [Ezra’s] worry. ‘Hard-boiled eggs and lettuce, Ezra,’ she [says]. ‘I’ll boil the eggs. And then strawberries and cream’” (183). She also takes care of the mending for the whole family, and because of this Uncle Ambrose gives Nan her own private parlour, saying, “‘you are the lady of the house. Every mistress of a household has her parlour. . .’ Dropping her workbasket and darning on the floor, she [turns] to him impulsively and he [bends] down and [permits] her to hug him briefly” (107). Through his recognition of her importance, Goudge not only emphasizes Nan’s character and the centrality and value of Nan’s position through her own space, but also uses Nan’s parlour to move forward the action of the plot.

Indeed, it is while darning in her parlour that Nan finds Emma Copley’s book of spells, thus beginning the chain of events that results in the restoration of the Valerian family to wholeness. Thus, her gentle domesticity and identity as caregiver are what lead Nan to act positively to help the Valerians—something that no one else in High Barton has been willing or able to do. This is Nan’s story.
By asking “Who acts? Who is acted upon?” we see that Nan acts. Although she seems to be defined by domesticity, Nan is not restricted to the domestic sphere; she is not simply an “angel in the house.” She certainly moves outside of the home, first by participating in an early exploration of High Barton with her siblings and later when she hikes up Lion Tor alone to search for the missing Betsy; Nan’s nurturing, here, leads to her action. And Nan, along with her siblings, accompanies Ezra on the dangerous journey up the mountain to retrieve the wax figures in order to reverse Emma Cobley’s spells. Although she works cooperatively with others, she is the catalyst and her actions are the ones that heal the community.

Nan can participate in these activities because she is brave as well as caring and nurturing. Goudge provides Nan with courage, an attribute which is traditionally considered masculine. This courage is evident at the outset of Linnets and Valerians, when Nan is the only one brave enough to confront Uncle Ambrose: “Robert was usually the family spokesman, but his tongue was sticking to the roof of his mouth and it was Nan who replied, ‘Please, sir, four children and a dog’” (17). Then, because Nan is “the bravest” of all the Linnet children, she is able to confess to Uncle Ambrose their theft of his pony and groceries (most of which they have eaten); even though this action reduces her to tears, she does “not take her eyes from the elderly gentleman's face or flinch” (18). Similarly, Nan is the only one of the Linnet children who has sufficient courage to approach Lady Alicia’s servant, who initially seems threatening: “[h]e had a curved knife in one hand and stood a little crouched, as though ready to spring at them” (62). Once Ezra informs the children that “[t]hat’s only Moses Glory Glory Alleluja” Nan “walk[s]
bravely forward” because as well as being brave, she is kindhearted: “a child who would not have liked to hurt the feelings of the devil himself” (62).

This courage is essential to Nan. Without it, she would not have been able to meet Daft Davie. When he approaches, “big and strong,” she “trembling . . . [stands] her ground” (82) and becomes friends with him, a relationship that eventually contributes to Davie’s reunion with his family. Without courage, Nan would not have been able to bring herself to read Emma Cobley’s book of spells, the first of her important actions that eventually results in her healing of the Valerian family and High Barton village. Even when “her instinct was to drop the book as though it was a snake . . . Nan sat down in the armchair with shaking knees, but nevertheless she opened the book and began to read” (109-110). Neither would Nan have been able to question Uncle Ambrose about Emma Cobley and Lady Alicia, nor tell Ezra about the book of spells, had she lacked courage.

The inseparable domesticity, caring, moral courage and quiet bravery in Nan are what provide many of the interesting plot twists, and eventually the satisfying resolution, in *Linnets and Valerians*. And Goudge herself seems to respect both Nan’s feminine and masculine attributes and contributions equally. She portrays Nan as acting and other characters as acted upon: their actions result from Nan’s initiation.

Maria Merryweather, in *The Little White Horse*, also displays an effective blend of masculine and feminine qualities, and like Nan, she embodies the feminized spiritual values so integral within the story. But unlike *Linnets and Valerians*, *The Little White Horse* occasions very little debate about “[w]hose story this is,” for Maria is the clear protagonist.
From the beginning of the story, Goudge informs readers that Maria possesses both feminine and masculine traits, juxtaposing them: “Maria, though decidedly vain and much too inquisitive, was possessed of the fine qualities of honour and courage . . .” (13). Initially Maria seems to be more stereotypically feminine, her preoccupation with attire and her vanity being her foremost attributes (8). She is also dramatically affected by the charms of a pretty room: “She went in, latched the door behind her . . . leaned back against [it] and gazed and gazed, with her lips parted and her usually pale face glowing like a pink rose, and her eyes like stars. No pen could possibly do justice to the exquisite charm and beauty of Maria’s room” (24). Even when Goudge seems to be painting a picture of stereotyped femininity, she actually emphasizes the importance of feminine space, as she does with Nan’s parlour. By providing her girl characters with their own space, Goudge in some ways responds to the feminist discussion about “a room of one’s own” as a powerful centre for nurturing creativity and strength.

Not only feminine, Maria is also domestic. She engages in the middle class homely pursuits considered suitable for girls of her period: she plays the harpsichord very well (39), and she sews—a most domesticated pursuit (78). Maria is able to settle comfortably into the domestic realm after her “mystery and adventure” in the “out-of-doors Moonacre” (77). Inside, she is pleased to discover that far from feeling trapped indoors, “when she and Miss Heliotrope [are] seated before the log fire in the cool parlour, the west window wide open to the rose-garden, all feeling of restlessness [leaves] her and a lovely feeling of peace [takes] its place” (77).

Maria retains and cultivates her femininity in spite of the fact that throughout the narrative male characters judge femininity to be problematic. A battle between the sexes
ranges throughout *The Little White Horse*, and Moonacre Manor is described as “an anti-feminine bachelor household,” because Sir Benjamin dislikes females “as a general rule” (28). Indeed, Maria and Miss Heliotrope are “the first members of the fair sex to set foot in [Moonacre Manor] for twenty years” (28). The cook Marmaduke Scarlett hovers on the edges of misogyny; although he is fond of Maria, he states that “if there is one thing in this universe for which [he] ha[s] not the slightest partiality it is a female” (87). Perhaps not surprisingly, then, Maria is several times admonished for possessing the feminine qualities of vanity, which is “of the devil,” and “excessive female curiosity” which Old Parson tells her she should “nip . . . in the bud” (63).

It is well that Maria does not curb her curiosity, as it is one of several key qualities that propel her into the masculinized sphere of adventure and it helps her to restore Silverydew to harmony. Whereas Nan’s positive feminine characteristic of nurturing propels her to act in *Linnets and Valerians*, Maria’s less positively received feminine curiosity propels her actions in *The Little White Horse*, actions that eventually result in the re-integration of her community.

However, Maria is in full control of her curiosity. She can curb it when she knows it will impede her success: “Maria choked down her curiosity, for Robin had always hated being asked questions, and if she asked too many he would disappear, and she did not want him to disappear just yet” (74). When social situations require feminine decorum or tact, Maria puts off her curiosity until the situation is more favourable. For example, when Old Parson plays Maria a song after telling her a story, she refrains from interrupting him although “quite a hundred [questions] were burning the tip of her
tongue” (117). Goudge implies that Maria's self-control is so strong because she has “sense” (162).

Maria’s curiosity is evident throughout the narrative in her constant questioning. A kind of interior monologue composed of Maria’s questions, is common throughout the narrative of The Little White Horse. For example, as soon as she sees the pink geraniums that eventually become an important clue in the story, Maria begins questioning: “[i]n what window did they stand?” (50), she asks herself, followed quickly by another question: “[w]as there a little room over the tunnel?” (51). Goudge’s use of questioning even in narration shows how curious Maria is. As well, questions comprise much of Maria’s dialogue.

At key turning points in the plot Maria’s curiosity compels her to action that has significant consequences. For example, during a sedate outing with Miss Heliotrope, Maria decides that she “must go to the top of [Paradise Hill]” because she “must see those beech-trees, and the old grey stones” (133 emphasis original). This decision results in another encounter with the Men from the Dark Woods, after which Maria hardens her resolve to reform them. As well, Maria’s trip up the hill springboards her into one of the most important relationships in the story: Maria and Robin’s. Their encounter on Paradise Hill, the direct result of Maria’s curiosity, deepens and strengthens their friendship.

During this encounter with the Men, Maria works with Robin to rescue the Merryweather lambs from them. This, too, is precipitated by her curiosity. When she hears a “the frightened baaing of the sheep,” Maria’s need to both find out what the cause of the sound is and to help the lambs compels her action (137). This passage, as well, highlights how different Maria’s capacity to nurture is from Nan’s. Maria is less
nurturing to humans, perhaps because she lacks siblings and has never been “in charge” of others.

However, Maria’s interactions with her various pets clearly show her ability to nurture. This episode in which she rescues the lambs perhaps epitomizes Maria’s successful fusion of gender roles. First, she confronts the Black Men of the Woods even though she is “absolutely terrified” (138) Maria shouts to them “Put those lambs down, I tell you! They’re my lambs. Put them down! . . . You dare hurt my lambs! You dare!” (138). With her courage and with her friend Robin’s help, she is able to rescue the lambs and soothe them: “[s]he held out her hands to them and made comforting noises, and they and their mothers crowded round her. . . . she stroked their heads as though they were her children” (139).

The courage Maria exhibits in this scene is typical of her, and sets the tone for her actions throughout the rest of the story. She frequently encounters intimidating situations, and she is always afraid, perhaps because she is a girl whose gender training has programmed her to be fearful, perhaps simply because the situations are genuinely frightening. However, while Maria is always afraid, she always confronts the situation as needed. Within this emotional milieu, Maria is the one “who acts,” not least because she is obligated by birthright to do so.

Because she has the courage to face them, the adult men whose behaviour has to date been so problematic are acted upon by Maria. She persuades Sir Benjamin to give up Paradise Hill. She faces Monsieur Cocq de Noir and eventually causes him to change his ways. She is able to effect this action although she is afraid. For example, preparing for her final confrontation with Monsieur Cocq de Noir, Maria “[finds] herself riding with
one arm raised to protect her face and her mouth suddenly dry with fear” (209), but she is able to continue, and she eventually achieves the necessary reconciliation with him. Although she receives help from others at every point of her adventure, it is Maria who acts and who ultimately enacts change for Silverydew.

Goudge’s decision to place girl characters in central roles in her stories of rollicking adventure is no accident. In this way, Goudge is able to foreground feminist approaches to problem solving. She uses girl characters to effect change and put into motion events that eventually result in the achievement of harmonious communities, showing how powerful girls and women can be when they fuse masculine and feminine traits and behaviour. Both Nan and Maria embody the traditionally masculine quality of bravery, which lends them strength and assertiveness. But, equally importantly, they also embody traditionally feminine qualities, as well as an appreciation of and involvement in domesticity. Nan’s caregiving and Maria’s curiosity propel these powerful girl characters to rectify problematic situations in their communities—situations that chafe against the girls’ moral vision. Nan and Maria are feminist characters, according to Trites’s criteria, because they demonstrate distinguishing feminist characteristics: their balanced masculinity and femininity allow their “recognition of [their] agency,” thereby leading to a “sort of transcendence” which “tak[es] the form of a triumph over whatever system or stricture” that represses their communities (7).

I argue that Goudge’s portrayal of girl characters is not a “failure of imagination which limits Goudge in her creation of female heroines” (Isaac 104). Rather, this portrayal is an essential part of her vision of healing and community. It is critical to understand girl characters’ roles in Goudge’s children’s novels because far from being
passive entities who are acted upon, girls like Nan and Maria are powerful and effective agents of positive change who act in order to play crucial and indispensable roles in harmonizing and integrating their communities.
In *Linnets and Valerians* Goudge creates a powerful metaphor for community by using bees—a metaphor that represents well the ideas about community, and the feminine contributions to community, that emerge in her children’s novels. The bees that live in Uncle Ambrose’s garden play an integral role in the story’s action. They have the capacity to both inspire and protect. They command respect and adulation; Ezra, who believes the bees saved his life, insists that “[i]f you’re good to the bees the bees they’ll be good to you. But you must mind your manners with ’em. They like a bit o’ courtesy” (51). Certainly the same is true of a community. When members treat one another with respect and courtesy, the community can protect and guide its members. Treated well, working in as much harmony as a beehive, a community can “extend . . . protection over [its] domain” just as Ezra says the bees can over the Linnets (131). Ezra’s description of the beautiful, efficient harmony of the hive might easily be read as Goudge’s own vision of community:

A lost bee will die o’ loneliness . . . . ‘Tis a regular city in there with ’ouses an’ streets an’ nurseries, an’ thousands o’ larders, for the ’oney an’ bee bread, all built o’ sweet-smellin’ wax. There be workers an’ nurses for the children, guards at the gate an’ ladies-in-waitin’ for the royal family. At the ’eart of it all be the queen on ’er throne an’ the princesses in their cradles singin’ the song o’ the queens. There’s nothin’ more wonderful in all the world . . . than a beehive. (185-6)
Throughout *Linnets and Valerians*, the bees even protect the Linnet children from danger: "There's dangers if you don't keep your wits about you," said Ezra. "But... you won't come to no real 'arm now I've told the bees to look after you’" (51).

As well, the hive functions as an important symbol of feminine power in the community: the Queen bee is at the heart of the hive and the one who integrates all those who live within the hive. The community of the bees, with the Queen presiding over it, functions as a harmonious community should—to protect, nurture and integrate its members. Indeed, the bees have the final judgement call about whether the community is fully integrated and harmonious. The last line of *Linnets and Valerians* reads “[d]eep inside the hives the bees could be heard singing” (233), indicating the finality and certainty of High Barton’s newfound peace.

The ideas of community and femininity, here contained within the bee metaphor, are central ones in Goudge’s children’s novels. As I made clear in Chapter Six, Goudge’s girl characters’ striving to implement feminine value systems, including tolerance, cooperation and interconnectedness, is at the center of Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s novels. Feminine value systems are also at the core of Goudge’s portrayal of community, for it is the girl children who help to make communities whole. But before we explore the many aspects of community, a quick exploration of what Goudge was attempting to accomplish overall with her children’s novels will help to clarify her treatment of community within them.

In “Today and Tomorrow,” a short article Goudge contributed to the journal *Junior Bookshelf* not long after receiving the Carnegie medal, she states that she believes the best loved and most enduring stories for children are fairy stories (53). Perhaps due to
fairy stories' power to give "joy and comfort to young and old" (54), Goudge was deeply inspired by this form of narrative, and she seemed to be striving to convey a sense of what she called the "otherness" she found within fairy stories. This "otherness" of fairy stories enables "our conviction that there were worlds beyond the confines of our everyday one . . . and . . . when the need for forgetfulness becomes imperative, we remember the old way of escape and in turning back to it again recapture something of the old faith to our comfort" (54). What is interesting is that Goudge believed that through an essence of "otherness," fantasy provides a special kind of escape, recovery and consolation (Goudge implies these ideas, without using these terms, echoing Tolkien's famous essay "On Fairy Stories"). I believe Goudge creates her own kind of fantastic "otherness" in her children's novels: her harmonious communities.

Although she wrote novels of enchanted realism, Goudge's awareness of the effects of fairy tales, and her striving to achieve them, in some ways positions her in the centuries-old tradition of women involved in the form. In the article "Feminism and Fairy Tales," The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales states that beginning in the seventeenth century, "women were drawn to a genre which allowed them to explore alternative realities" and to "create an ideal world that could exist only within the imagination" (156). This pursuit sounds rather like Goudge's striving for "otherness." Women's shaping and sharing of such tales is considered a feminist pursuit, not least because "rather than recount[ing] the outward journey toward adventure and success, women's fairy tales often depict the internal voyage characterized by an interest in establishing firm familial bonds" (157). This pattern shares similarities with Goudge's female characters' journey into interdependence.
Modern fantasists, as well, make a regular practice of using children's fantasy to explore an unattainable, ideal "otherness." Jane Yolen, a renowned writer of modern fairy tales and children's fantasy, writes:

Life Actual tells us that the world is not perfectly ordered; it is, in fact, most often immoral or anyway amoral. Endings are as often unhappy as happy. Issues are seldom clear-cut. . . . Families are torn asunder and there is no mending them. . . . That is Life Actual. But Life in Truth tells us something else. It tells us of the world as it should be. It holds certain values to be important. It makes issues clear. . . . And so the fantasy tale, the "I that is not I," becomes a rehearsal for the reader for life as it should be lived. (64)

Fantasy provides writers with a natural outlet to explore life as they believe it should be; they attempt to "recapture something of the old faith." For Goudge, her children's novels provide an outlet to envision a harmonious community.

In some ways, this is a kind of utopian writing. Certainly, to regard Goudge's narratives with their portrayal of community as utopian rather than realistic is more productive. While all of her books and stories have happy endings, it is only in her children's fantasy that Goudge foregrounds the harmonious integration of community. She, like many other utopian writers for children

[p]ropose[s] to teach the young reader about governance, the possibility of improving society, the role of the individual and the limits of freedom . . . . Some utopian writing for children and young adults offers an idealized, pastoral vision that evokes an Edenic image of the ostensibly unspoiled state of childhood itself. Other texts aimed at a young audience raise questions about
political organization and the ideal society, focusing on the built rather than the natural environment. (Hintz and Ostry 1-2)

Goudge’s children’s novels include all three of these aspects of utopian writing for children: the child-agency, the pastoral and the political. However, before we can assess how she does so, we must establish what Goudge’s “ideal society,” what I call her vision of community, looks like.

It is useful to first consider conventional definitions of the word. The Oxford Online English Dictionary contains many definitions of “community.” Quite simply, a community can be “a body of [people] living in the same locality” or “the people of a . . . district as a whole.” More broadly, community can be “life in association with others” or “a body of people organized into a . . . social unity.” A community might be a “body of those having common or equal rights or rank . . . .” Community can be “the quality of appertaining to or being held by all in common,” or “quality in common; commonness, agreement, identity.” The dictionary goes on to include many more nuances and subtleties in other definitions of community.

How do these definitions help us begin to understand Goudge’s definition of community? While her definition seems to be informed by the ones listed above, she also specifies her vision of community to make it very much her own. Goudge seems to locate her ideal community in a small, rural, English village or town in which all of the inhabitants work productively, happily and cooperatively together. Here, almost everyone is kindhearted, good and trustworthy. The few bad people are generally converted to good or, if irredeemable, gently flushed out. No one is lazy. No children go hungry. Further, the natural beauty of a place, she implies, has the capacity to inspire human
happiness within the community. However, true fulfillment can be achieved only through hard work and cooperation. It is imperative to note that Goudge seems to view all members of a community as interconnected; their actions affect one another, and no one person's individual happiness is allowed to supercede the group's well-being.

And if any one of these elements swings out of balance, it is up to the children of the community to rectify the situation: “[i]n Goudge’s children’s novels the protagonists do not . . . change or modify their beliefs, instead they work to create a world which fulfills them” (Isaac 99). As Goudge herself makes clear in Smoky House, a main task of the children is to “put out a guiding hand and lead the village out of the occasional difficulties that even in Faraway sometimes arose, back into the peace and prosperity that were its natural element” (19). The children are the only ones capable of accomplishing this because, as the narrator states, they “are much more sensible than grown-ups . . . . If you don’t believe this you’ve only got to look out on the world as it is now, managed by grown-ups. It’s difficult to see how they could have made a worse mess of it than they have done” (19). Neither are the “grown-ups” unaware of the children’s influence, as Lady Alicia makes clear in Linnets and Valerians. She tells Uncle Ambrose that “these children . . . are wreaking havoc with my habits” (218). He concurs, but also points out that both he and Lady Alicia can “feel the benefit” of the children’s attention (218).

It is clear from the above quote that Goudge sees “peace and prosperity” as natural elements and prized values in the communities within her children’s novels. The above attitude leads us to examine one of the central questions Lissa Paul uses to guide her critical feminist inquiries: “How are value systems determined?” (Reading Otherways 16). Examining the elements that Goudge employs to create community through this
question will lead us towards understanding how she sets up values in her children’s novels. In Chapter Two, I gave a brief overview of each novel, but now it is time to look more closely at specific elements.

Two elements work together in her children’s novels to create Goudge’s portrayal of an ideal community: a particular kind of location for the actions, and a particular set of human traits in the characters. The first element of Goudge’s ideal community is the setting: a beautiful village nestled in nature and physical beauty. The physical beauty of the place seems to symbolize both the inherent goodness in the community and its potential for perfection. Significantly, the setting in Goudge’s children’s novels is almost always Spring (except in Henrietta’s House, which takes place in high summer); clearly the season indicates hope, rebirth and renewal. This Romantic assertion that nature and beauty play key roles in human happiness is only one component of Goudge’s vision of an ideal village, but it is a significant one. Although the village may not be quite perfect, it and its inhabitants have a head start towards reaching their potential because they are surrounded by beauty.

*The Little White Horse* provides an excellent example of this element in Goudge’s portrait of community. Here, Goudge creates Silverydew as a beautiful village:

There was not such another village . . . in the whole of the West Country. The whitewashed cob cottages were thatched with golden straw and set in neat gardens bright with spring flowers. A stream ran down one side of the village street, and each cottage had its own little stone bridge . . . . Behind the cottages were orchards, where the thickening buds were crowded together on the trees.
The cottages all looked prosperous and well cared for, and besides the flowers the gardens had beehives in them and fruit bushes and herb-beds.

Goudge’s description is idealized, not realistic. Although the portrait may seem like a sentimental watercolour fit only for the top of a chocolate box, each idealized element shows her vision of community, her values about community. That houses are well-kept and charming is a comment not only on their beauty, but also on the comfort and shelter they provide for every villager. That the gardens and orchards are full implies both economic stability and self-sufficiency.

Similarly, Goudge’s other children’s novels also contain descriptions of the beauty in or around the village near the outset of the story. In *The Valley of Song*, the Hard is established as beautiful:

It was built upon the slope of a hill looking down upon one of the loveliest rivers in England . . . . The streets of lovely old cottages, with diamond-paned windows and crinkled rose-red roofs, all converged upon the Yard . . . . All the streets had their special feeling, caught from the trade of those who lived there . . . . There were swans on the river, and flocks of seagulls were always wheeling and crying over it. Beyond the river were the marshes, streaked with bright colour, and beyond those the glorious Forest. (9-12)

The beauty of the place affects Tabitha positively and this, Goudge implies, is what gives her the visionary power to try both to save the ship and to enter the Valley of Song.

The natural (and cultivated) beauty Goudge describes in such detail is not extraneous, not merely cosmetic or stylistic decoration. Rather, beauty in nature functions
within the text to parallel a happy community. In the first chapter of Smoky House, for example, Goudge dedicates several pages to describing the physical beauty within and surrounding the village. One short passage should give the feel: “[a] network of lovely lanes wound about the village and in and out of the round green hills. They were very beautiful. Their steep banks were cool with shining ferns and bright and fragrant with flowers; primroses and white violets, periwinkles and pink campion . . .” (11).

In this, the first of her children’s novels, she explicitly spells out the relationship between natural beauty and the characters’ traits, notably the villagers’ state of mind: “In the village of Faraway everyone was happy . . . for Faraway is set in . . . a part of the world so beautiful that the people who live in it are always happy; and as happy people are always kind you could live in the village all your life long and never hear an angry voice or the sound of weeping” (10). In this passage, Goudge makes overt what is implied in many of her other children’s novels: natural beauty is an important contributor to happiness in a village community, but it is not the only, nor the most important one.

The second element in Goudge’s portrait of an ideal community, the villagers, is equally important. These villagers—good, happy people—are key components of the communities Goudge portrays in her children’s novels. Again The Little White Horse provides the clearest example. In Silverydew the people are all clean and happy, representing Goudge’s ideal for human contentment:

And the people looked as happy and prosperous as their homes. The children were sturdy as little ponies, healthy and happy, their mothers and fathers strong-looking and serene, the old people as rosy-cheeked and smiling as the children. And their clothes were bright as their gardens, the dresses sprigged
with flowers, the bonnets tied with bright ribbons; the colours of the men's well-worn Sunday coats, bottle-green, hyacinth or plum-colour, rather beautified than dimmed by age. (56)

These smiling, healthy villagers want for nothing; they are aware of their state of fulfillment and satisfied by it. Significantly, they are not shown as rich (they have "well-worn Sunday coats," for example). Because Goudge values their hard-working practicality above riches, their clothes are improved rather than diminished by age. The villagers themselves are content with their lot, and do not aim for richness. This too is a symbolic portrait, not realistic.

One important clue Goudge uses to indicate "otherness" in these communities is a threshold. In each of her children's novels characters enter the community through some kind of doorway, which symbolizes entry into another world, removed from reality. In *Linnets and Valerians* the Linnet children pass "over an old stone bridge" and then "through an open gate in a stone wall" (14). In *The Valley of Song* the valley itself is accessible only through a hidden portal. In *Henrietta's House* each group of characters passes through "two tall grey stone gateposts" (71). In *Smoky House* hills, lanes, and the ocean surround Faraway like borders protecting a foreign land. And in *The Little White Horse* Goudge focuses heavily on the way in to Silverydew: Maria and Miss Heliotrope are intrigued by the "door of weathered oak set in the rock, so old that it was of the same colour as the stone and hardly distinguishable from it" (16). Once through this immense gate, which "clos[es] behind them as noiselessly as it had opened, shutting out the moonlight," they are in a magical land (16). Sir Benjamin makes this clear when he says "Silverydew is not in the outer world, it's in our world" (55).
Through the physical description of Silverydew, Goudge establishes her value systems: the village is a place of beauty, bounty, and near self-sufficiency. She thus communicates the elements she believes are important as a support system for a community. By moving on to the villagers and showing their satisfaction, she is able to show what the members of the community must contribute in order to function as a harmonious group: serenity, good cheer, and humble satisfaction with their lot. There is only one thing that Goudge's villagers generally strive for. It is not a yearning for grander houses, fancier food, or more elaborate clothing; they wish only for an assurance of safety and security.

This almost-idyllic portrait must certainly speak to readers of what Goudge believes is important in a community and answers in part Lissa Paul's inquiry, "How are value systems determined?" Goudge draws attention to the important role these elements play in community through Maria's observation in *The Little White Horse*:

"[r]emembering some ugly things that she had seen in London—tumbledown houses and ragged children and poor barefoot beggars—Maria said to herself: ‘This is how it ought to be. This is how it always *must* be in Silverydew. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do to keep Silverydew always like this’" (56). In this assertion lies the heart of *The Little White Horse*. Every action Maria takes, every plot twist, is related to the goal of keeping "Silverydew always like this." Maria does not value riches for herself, nor even the protection of her family assets (in fact, part of the healing process she engages in for Silverydew involves loss of property to her family). Rather, she places the highest value on the health and well-being of the community, and so she directs her attention and energy towards improving and maintaining this.
Although Goudge initially establishes the communities in her children's novels to be almost perfect, there is always a problem, something that mars the perfection. This problem can take several forms, such as an imbalance in the community's spiritual, economic, or social state. It is important to note that Goudge does not focus on a situation with major problems, such as intense poverty or gross abuse of power by an authority figure: her problems are smaller and less threatening, perhaps because she is intent on creating that secure world of "otherness." The conflict within Goudge's children's novels arises from the imperfection marring the community's potential harmony, and the resolution from its integration.

In *Henrietta's House*, the spiritual imbalance in the members of Torminster's church community is the focus. All of the characters have what appear to be minor problems; however, each character's problem also affects (either potentially or actually) other members of the group, thereby magnifying in scope. The most pressing problem seems to be the Dean's: although he is the most powerful figure in the Cathedral community and should present an impeccable example to others, he is the very reverse of an embodiment of Christian virtues. He is arrogant, miserly, pretentious, and self-satisfied: this is highly problematic since his influential position, his personality, and his state of mind have the potential to negatively affect the entire community.

While the Dean directly affects Torminster, up in the hills lives an Old Man who indirectly mars the well-being of the community through maliciousness. The toadstools, wolfsbane and nightshade he grows mar the natural beauty of the countryside surrounding Torminster, while his cruelty affects the spiritual state of the village below. He is cruel and vindictive, and practices Black Magic with wax figures.
The seemingly more minor problems are those of Henrietta, Mrs. Jameson and Grandfather. Henrietta is distressed by how spread out her family and friends are, and she longs to be able to draw them together and keep them close to her. She laments that she "love[s] so many people that [she] get[s] quite tired running from one to the other to see if they are getting on all right" (35). Henrietta decides that what she needs "is a house of [her] own where [she] can collect them all together under one roof now and then, and sit down comfortably and love them in peace and quiet" (35). As well, Mrs. Jameson has been unhappy and "a little bit peculiar in her head because her husband had been eaten by cannibals" (62). And Grandfather, who is the very embodiment of Christian virtues and as such suffers very few problems, nevertheless longs to know whether a local legend about his beloved Cathedral's founding is true. He has faith that the legend is true, but naysayers make him uneasy, and he longs for assurance.

On Hugh Anthony's birthday outing, each character (except the Old Man) makes a wish that these conditions will be remedied. They all undergo spiritual tests and tribulations—cleverly disguised by Goudge as adventures—and in the end their wishes are granted. At the conclusion of Henrietta's House, it seems clear that all will be well in Tormminster, as now the Dean is humble, generous, and empathetic. His reform appears complete when he offers to invest in the Old Man's new enterprises. These new enterprises, producing mushrooms and candles, also represent the Old Man's new embrace of goodness and his rejection of his harmful former production of toadstools and Black Magic wax figures.

Even more satisfying for the reader is the assurance that Henrietta does indeed receive her house. Here, Henrietta is able to provide the ultimate integration for her small
community: a sanctuary to draw them all together. This harmonious state, one satisfying and fulfilling for them all, is symbolized by the birthday feast in the house that provides the culmination of the story. It is an assurance that the characters’ spiritual reformation will be permanent. The house itself is not only a “room of her own.” Presided over by Henrietta, the house also holds a deeper integrating function: it is a feminine sanctuary of healing, where “everyone who came to stay in it, no matter how tired and gloomy and bad-tempered they were when they arrived, always went away again refreshed and happy and full of laughter” (249). The house symbolizes Henrietta’s own capacity to nurture her small community and to draw them together.

Another important element Goudge portrays as essential to achieving a harmonious community is economic stability. A community is unbalanced and incapable of reaching its full potential if its economy is troubled. Further, such an economic imbalance can lead to desperate deeds, for example the poaching by the Men from the Dark Woods in The Little White Horse. Therefore, maintenance of economic stability to preserve or create a harmonious community is extremely important. This is very clear in both The Valley of Song and Smoky House. While economic inequality is merely problematic in The Little White Horse, it actually has the capacity to threaten a whole way of life in these other two texts. Girl characters are often instrumental in righting the imbalance.

In The Valley of Song, Tabitha is dismayed when the funding for the latest shipbuilding project in the Hard falls through and she learns that the skeleton of the ship will be dismantled. She is concerned for the spirit of the ship because she is convinced that it is already alive. However, an insightful reader understands that cessation of work
upon the ship will have terrible economic ramifications for the village whose single
dustry is shipbuilding. Unlike the more resigned adults, Tabitha refuses to accept the
ship’s fate. Instead, she convinces her elderly friend Job to help her in the fight to save it:
“You and I are going up at once to see Mr. Peregrine. Our ship can’t be broken up” (25).
The master builder agrees to re-commence work on the condition that Tabitha procures
the timber, sail-cloth, copper, ropes, paint, gilding and money that will allow the ship to
be built (30). Although this is a seemingly insurmountable challenge for a mere girl,
Tabitha nonetheless fulfills Mr. Peregrine’s condition.

Accordingly, Tabitha leads several members of the community into the Valley of
Song, where they have adventures, and each person procures one of the building
materials necessary to the completion of the ship. When these tasks are complete, the
people of the Hard pull together to build the ship, achieving a perfect harmony of
cooperation: “[t]he Hard had always been a cheerful town, filled with happy people doing
work they loved, but it had never been so gloriously happy as in the weeks that followed”
(234). Even though they are working harder than they ever have, the villagers are happier
than ever because their dedication and cooperation bring about not only a balanced
economic state, but also a spiritual one that resembles the Valley of Song: “for the time
being [they’re] all inside the Earthly Paradise. . . . The Workshop has enlarged itself to
take in the Hard” (235). The Workshop can be seen as the community restored.

In *The Valley of Song* the Hard is not only a beautiful but also a well-organized
town where every person has a job to do. However, it is also a single-resource town. Each
job directly or indirectly supports the Hard’s shipbuilding industry, contributing to both
happy people and a busy, prosperous community. While Tabitha’s concern for the ship
on which work has been ordered to stop stems from her spiritual empathy towards the
ship, it is clear that what is truly being threatened is not only the ship, but also the Hard’s
economic prosperity. Thus, when Tabitha involves some of the villagers in her attempts
to save the ship, their success is key to bringing the community to an economically viable
and thus harmonious state: “[a]s with the smugglers of Faraway in Smoky House, the hard
work of the citizens in The Valley of Song enriches the community. The artisans, who
usually only labor for wages, are rewarded in this story with a share of their product”
(Isaac 98).

In Smoky House, the potential destruction of economic stability is also central.
Smuggling, or free-trading, is the driving economic force behind Faraway’s middle-class
comfort and security in Smoky House. When the Fiddler brings in the Red Coats to break
up the smuggling ring, the village’s prosperity is seriously threatened. So central is this
element in Smoky House that all of the action in the story stems from the Treguddick
children’s attempts to foil these enemies of free-trading. The Treguddick children become
immersed in returning Faraway to its harmonious state, which has been jeopardized by
the Fiddler.

This focus on the economic status of the community might suggest that Goudge
had a particularly radical political ideology, but she did not. The restoration of economic
balance in Goudge’s children’s novels does not involve social upheaval, especially not
upheaval of the old order. Although she seems committed to portraying economic
equality within the communities of these novels, she does not usually imply that any kind
of dramatic leveling of social hierarchies is desirable. On the contrary, Goudge shows the
ideal community as one with a member of the aristocracy (or some kind of patriarch) at
its head—not unlike the queen bee in the hives in *Linnets and Valerians*. Granted, this aristocrat must be kind, wise and generous, but Goudge never expects the gentry to move out of their manor houses in order to convert these luxurious homes into more practical and socialistic edifices such as orphanages, almshouses, or cooperative housing. Rather, she implies that economic fairness can best be maintained with a monied individual (or class) presiding over the community.

Goudge is extremely attentive to portraying her “aristocrats” as kind patriarchs (or, in Maria’s case, matriarchs) who preside benevolently over the community. Rather than allowing their desires or greed to eclipse the villagers’ needs, aristocrats are more likely to forgo their own desires for the greater good of the community. This is evident when Sir Benjamin cheerfully gives up Paradise Hill to the Church (at Maria’s command) in *The Little White Horse* (159), and when the Squire in *Smoky House* steals from the rich to help the poor, rather like Robin Hood. The portrait Goudge paints of the ruling classes in her children’s novels is not simply an idealized interpretation of a class whose actions have often historically been less than ethical and benevolent. Rather, this portrait establishes one of the most important and prevalent themes in her children’s novels: that the wishes of one person (or group) must not eclipse the greater good of the larger community, regardless of whether that person holds the key social position in the community. By also creating situations in the novels where this is initially the case, and then working to remedy them, Goudge makes her point clear.

While *The Little White Horse* focuses to a lesser degree on the economic imbalance in Silverydew, far more important in this text is the *reason* behind this imbalance. Goudge exposes the imbalance in Silverydew relatively early in the narrative.
When Maria’s guardian, Sir Benjamin, gives her permission to explore anywhere around Moonacre Manor, Silverydew, and the valley, he warns her about one unsafe place, and hints at the negative effect it has on the Silverydew villagers:

I would rather you did not go to Merryweather Bay, and I'll tell you why. The fishermen down there are a very rough lot. They are not on good terms with the village people, or with us at the manor. It’s a great nuisance, because they refuse to sell us their fish, and a little fresh fish would be welcome now and then . . . So avoid Merryweather Bay, my dear . . . (47)

With this warning, Sir Benjamin introduces the problem that affects the entire community. This is Maria’s first hint about the theft, poaching, cruelty to animals, and physical and psychological intimidation of the villagers, all of which are “a curse to the whole neighbourhood” (114). Later, when Old Parson introduces Maria to the village children, they confirm that their lives are marred by this group’s exclusive pursuit of its own desires. One little girl, aptly named Prudence, explains the situation to Maria:

It’s the Men from the Dark Woods . . . . They live in the pine-wood, you know, and they are very wicked. They won’t let people go to Merryweather Bay, though it isn’t really their bay. And they set cruel traps for the wild animals, and they steal our chickens and ducks and geese. And they steal the honey from the hives, too, and fruit from the orchards. We are happy in Silverydew, but we can’t be perfectly happy because of Them. But no one knows how to stop them from being wicked. (95)

Thus, the Men are the only element that restricts Silverydew from fulfilling its ultimate potential as a perfectly “happy” village or harmonious community. According to
her earlier assertion that “this is how it must always be in Silverydew” (56), Maria is now morally obligated to rectify the situation. She is also spiritually obligated, as she is the current incarnation of the Merryweather Moon Princess. Returning the community to a state of harmonious balance, something that has not been possible for centuries, thus becomes the driving conflict in *The Little White Horse*.

Another example of this kind of self-centered pursuit of individual wants over the common good is the poaching of the Men from the Dark Woods in *The Little White Horse*. Here, however, Goudge paints a picture with more grey tones than black and white. The Men’s actions have their roots centuries before, when Maria’s ancestor, Sir Wrolf Merryweather, and William Cocq de Noir’s ancestor, Sir William, clashed over land, women, and alleged murder (100-109). The ancient wrongs have festered over the years and come to a head in Maria’s day. Therefore, Monsieur Cocq de Noir’s current actions result directly from Sir Wrolf Merryweather’s theft of Cocq de Noir’s ancestral land in the pine forest (103). His current situation, in which he is forced to glean sustenance only from Merryweather Bay, is untenable and through no fault of his own (192-3). So, Cocq de Noir is not simply being evil for the sake of it, but rather because he has, to some degree, been forced into a difficult situation with no hope of resolution. Nevertheless, regardless of its origins, the poaching remains harmful to the villagers. It is an example of an unacceptable situation where one group pursues its own desires without due concern for others in the community.

The resolution of this particular conflict seems complex, due to the convoluted details of the age-old, almost mythical, feud between two families. Maria obviously plays a key role in this resolution, not least because she must overcome the family failing of
pride by eventually marrying a man of peasant rather than noble heritage. While this may seem like nothing more than a conventional fairy-tale constraint, it is actually an important part of Goudge's vision of community: the union of peasant and noble ensures a balanced social structure. Goudge also employs a similar strategy in *Smoky House*, which ends with the innkeeper's daughter, Jessamine, marrying the Squire. In *Linnets and Valerians* Nan, the daughter of a soldier turned farmer, marries the local lord of the manor Francis Valerian. Clearly, Goudge is concerned with integrating community, but not at the expense of disrupting the social hierarchy. Jessamine and Nan's marriages create a new, balanced social order, while Maria's union with Robin re-establishes the old one. The female hero's marriage is the key to securing a harmonious community.

Indeed, although Maria enjoys a happy marriage and eventually inherits a peaceful realm, the resolution of *The Little White Horse* is not really concerned with Maria's future. Rather, Goudge emphasizes that the community reaps the rewards:

Monsieur Cocq de Noir kept his promise, as Maria had known he would, and he and his men sold their fish to the valley people and traded with them for the things that they wanted, and did not poach or steal any more . . . . And the children of Silverydew could go and play on the shore at Merryweather Bay, and the men . . . played with them, and helped them collect sea-shells to take as gifts to the Lady on Paradise Hill. (236-7)

By helping to correct the imbalances she finds in Silverydew, Maria is a key figure in achieving the integration of her community; she has even superceded her original goal to keep Silverydew "always like this." Her feminine value system is realized through Maria's actions.
In *Linnets and Valerians*, there are no Men from the Dark Woods disturbing the social state of an entire village. Rather, one woman’s actions have negatively affected one family with results perhaps less far reaching than the Men’s, but with consequences far more serious for the Valerian family directly and High Barton indirectly. Emma Cobley’s magic has completely crippled the Valerians; with no gentry to watch over the little village of High Barton negative elements have crept in, thus making the village far less than perfect. For example, treacherous traps from poaching riddle the woods between High Barton and Lion Tor. In fact, it is a place where the Linnet children are in danger after dark (101).

Nan sums up the forces of good and evil at work in the village. When she realizes that the good is stronger “she [is] no longer afraid” that “the spells in Emma Cobley’s book might be wicked,” or that “Emma Cobley herself, and Frederick the cat, and perhaps old Tom Biddle across the way was not all he should be,” because ranged against them was the goodness of Uncle Ambrose, Ezra, Moses Glory Glory Alleluja, Daft Davie, and Lady Alicia, and the wholesomeness of the animals, Rob-Roy, Absolom, Abednego, Andromache and her kittens, and of course, Hector and the bees, and good spirits whom she could not see, but of whom she was aware at this moment, holding over in the dark a sort of umbrella of safety. (118)

High Barton has existed in this state for years; there are many good forces, but no one from the good side has been able to counter the effects of the evil. Uncle Ambrose, High Barton’s vicar, exerts a degree of control and power over Emma Cobley and her factions: “his deep fierce gaze met Emma Cobley’s bright stiletto glance. For a full minute they
fought with their eyes only and then Emma dropped a charming old-fashioned curtsy. Uncle Ambrose bowed and replaced his hat and she turned away with immense dignity” (176). However, even he does not possess the power to reverse her earlier mischief and establish harmony in the village. This is the Linnet children’s task, which Nan recognizes: “[d]on’t you realize that we have started on a big adventure? Today something very exciting has begun to happen. We’re going to do something very important here” (102).

So, in this story Emma Cobley’s wish to capture Hugo Valerian as a husband and her subsequent vengeance when she fails to do so are portrayed not sympathetically, but rather as the worst kind of destructive selfishness. Emma’s actions affect many people around her, and mar the village peace as well. Thus, by putting her own desires before anyone else’s, first in love and then in revenge, Emma negatively impacts her community, causing the breakup of the Valerian family, Lady Alicia’s self-imposed seclusion, Daft Davie’s muteness and exclusion from the community, and a general atmosphere of low-grade malevolence in High Barton. By creating a great domino chain reaction, Goudge shows how destructive it can be for a community when one person or group insists on pursuing individual desires at the expense of others. Nan, the feminine centre of the narrative, is the agent of change who plays an important part in healing her community and returning it to harmony.

Another example of how problematic the pursuit of one person’s desires at the expense of the group’s welfare can be involves the Fiddler’s actions in Smoky House. Although he is legitimately doing his job (as a spy for the British Government), it is solely his actions which threaten the community in Faraway. Further, the narrator makes
clear that it is because the Fiddler is so embittered and unable to achieve happiness that he relishes destroying other people’s happiness. Thus, in doing his job, he finds a way to legitimize his destructive urges. His desire is to make happy people as unhappy as he is; his pursuit of this desire is what threatens the peace in Faraway.

A problematic situation, such as the one the Fiddler produces with his selfish and destructive urges or Emma Cobley produces in her desire for vengeance, is not allowed to fester in Goudge’s children’s novels. Rather, Goudge moves towards a state of communal harmony which shows all members of the community as interconnected. Because of this interconnection, a community can function harmoniously only when it is well-integrated.

From correcting imbalances in order to restore economic stability, spiritual balance and social fairness, Goudge moves towards integration, which her girl characters play key roles in securing. In doing so, Goudge outlines a method of healing which endorses interdependence over individualism, forgiveness and practical solutions over vengeance. In this way, Goudge ensures that problems in the community are not simply given a quick fix. Instead, a state of wholeness and harmony is created when feminine value systems are implemented by girl characters.

According to Lissa Paul, this method of problem solving is essentially feminine:

If I ask “Who fights for honour?” and “Who suffers?” I see a story that works almost as a paradigm for Carol Gilligan’s In a Different Voice. Gilligan’s thesis is that men define justice as rule of law, while women define it by what causes the least pain or most benefit to all people. For women, justice doesn’t have to do with property rights but with human compassion . . . . (Reading Otherways 61-2 emphasis original)
I feel that Paul’s question “Who fights for honour?” implicitly accepts a masculine value system, that it is not sufficiently feminine in focus. It resonates with echoes of the quest tradition. I would rather ask “Who strives for integrity?” The answer is: the members of Goudge’s fictional communities, led by her girl characters. Once they have paved the way towards correcting the imbalance in the community, Goudge makes clear that they work on another element necessary to forming a harmonious community: the spiritual reform of characters who previously jeopardized the community’s well-being, leading to its subsequent integration. After members of the community secure the reform of the “villain,” he or she is integrated into the community and then able to participate meaningfully in it, which not only restores but also deepens its harmony.

In this way, Goudge asserts that every member of a community must be positively integrated into the group in order for the community to function at its maximum harmony. This is one of the ways in which Goudge shows that people are interconnected, and that their actions affect one another reciprocally.

This kind of spiritual reform is evident in each of Goudge’s children’s novels. In *Henrietta’s House*, the Dean moves from being a proud, selfish, greedy snob to the humble, philanthropic humanist suited to his position. In *The Valley of Song*, Captain Throckmorton initially appears as an ogre, but by the end of the story he has, with Tabitha’s help, overcome his spiritual demons and is able to participate in the community by acting as the Captain of *The White Swan*. At the end of *The Little White Horse*, the Men from the Dark Woods become integrated into Silverydew’s community after Maria resolves the injustices that have been festering between the Merryweathers and the Cocq de Noirs for generations. Here, Goudge symbolizes their reform with the Men’s
attendance at a grand banquet: "[t]hey ate and drank and laughed and sang songs, and when at last the men rode away singing into the sunset, there was not a crumb of food or a drop of anything to drink left upon the table; nor was a drop of hatred in any heart nor a crumb of bitterness in any mind" (233). At the end of *Linnets and Valerians*, Emma Cobley and her equally troublesome cohort Tom Biddle become "quite nice old people" (237). In this case, their reform is largely due to Lady Alicia’s ability to "[forgive] Emma from the bottom of her heart" (237).

Forgiveness often plays a crucial role in the conversion and integration in Goudge’s children’s novels. In *Smoky House*, heavy emphasis falls on the role forgiveness plays in securing integration. Whereas in her other children’s novels Goudge may sum up a character’s conversion, forgiveness and subsequent integration in a few sentences (or as in *Linnets and Valerians* in a short epilogue), in *Smoky House* she dedicates several chapters to the process. The Fiddler’s redemption begins when the Squire publicly shames the Fiddler for his actions, which results in a change in the villain "as though another man, unknown to them, was struggling painfully to come alive, like a butterfly coming out of a chrysalis" (159). The villagers incarcerate the Fiddler in the stable, where the animals play a significant role in his reform. Sausage the dog and Mathilda the donkey together help the Fiddler come to the crucial realization that "[he] was angry with fate that had sent [him] sorrow. [He] could not be revenged on fate but [he] could be revenged on the world about [him] . . . Yet . . . [he] only injured innocent lives and turned [him]self into a hard and bitter man" (170). Once the Fiddler has seen his errors, he fiddles his sad life story in musical form, finally resolving that he will "never be cruel again, for he had come back to what he had been" (179).
It is this song-story that finally persuades the Faraway villagers not to punish the Fiddler by keeping him their prisoner permanently, even when the voice of reason and compassion, embodied by the Squire, has failed to do so. Once they sympathize with his suffering, they are moved to forgiveness: “the smugglers heard and understood, and their hearts ached because the Fiddler had felt grief and bitterness beyond anything they themselves had ever known. At heart they were good and kind men and . . . they forgave him all his sins against them” (185-6). Their forgiveness is as important as the Fiddler’s own change of attitude; one is meaningless without the other.

In *Smoky House*, integration is not simply absorption, as it is, for example, in *Henrietta’s House* and *The Little White Horse*. Here, the Fiddler does not passively allow the villagers to draw him into their life. Rather, he actively reciprocates their kindness by adding something of great value to their community: music. His music is a unique contribution to life in Faraway, for he is the only member of the community capable of providing it. Thus, while he initially disrupts and threatens the peace of the community, as the story closes Goudge shows how he adds to it significantly: “by night he played his fiddle a great deal up there in the Church tower and the villagers grew quite accustomed to hearing the glorious music showering down on them out of a starlit sky. It was like the music of heaven itself, they thought, the voice of eternity speaking in time, and whenever they heard it their hearts sang for joy” (218). His music provides the ultimate harmony of community. The sadness of the Fiddler’s music is what initially drew the Treguddicks to him. By the end of the story the joy in the Fiddler’s music symbolizes the villagers’ forgiveness and the Fiddler’s redemption.
The thematic and structural patterns at work in Goudge’s children’s novels can be summarized briefly. Conflict is created when one or more elements (spiritual, economic, and/or social) of an otherwise harmonious community (a small, rural, beautiful English village and its good, happy inhabitants) are threatened. Child characters identify the trouble in the community and set out to rectify it, even when their elders have been unaware of or unable to change the situation. Once the children have solved the problem, the community is healed and made harmonious by the process of forgiveness, redemption, and integration. The most important realization to draw out, here, is the emphasis Goudge places on values which fit well with feminist values: interdependence over individualism, and forgiveness and healing over vengeance.

I have already begun to delve into Goudge’s preoccupation with forgiveness and its important role in contributing to a community’s integration. Recognizing this element in Goudge’s children’s novels is crucial to understanding them as narratives of a feminine value system. Characters’ commitment to forgiveness in Goudge’s children’s novels provides an answer to my own question, based on Lissa Paul’s model: “How is integrity striven for?” Integrity is never achieved through force or vengeance—those masculine resolutions. Instead, forgiveness, modeled by female characters, heals and integrates the community.

The forgiveness in Goudge’s children’s novels makes them stand out among fantasies; often in children’s fantasy (especially High Fantasy), characters are focused on defeating or destroying, not forgiving, their enemy. For example, the protagonists’ goal in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is to kill the White Witch, in order to free Narnia from her evil grasp. In contrast, no “good” character ever attempts to harm any “bad”
character in Goudge’s children’s novels. In *Henrietta’s House*, Goudge shows that the Dean can and should be reformed, rather than overthrown or forcibly removed from office. Similarly, Henrietta plays a key role in the Old Man’s reform. In *Smoky House* the worst punishment the villagers of Faraway contemplate for the Fiddler is permanent incarceration; they never plan to kill him or harm him. In this novel the Treguddicks’ dog, Spot, makes Goudge’s beliefs about forgiveness explicit: “[n]o vengeance! . . . Forgive him, Mathilda, forgive him. It’s possible that your forgiveness may melt his cruel heart” (63). In the end, all the characters in *Smoky House* forgive the Fiddler for his deeds against them. In *Linnets and Valerians*, the villagers never persecute Emma Cobley as a witch. Indeed, the Valerian family neither punishes nor retaliates against Emma. The community is integrated through forgiveness.

Of Goudge’s novels, *The Little White Horse* provides the fullest example of Goudge’s treatment of forgiveness as a guiding principle in the narrative and the feminine force at work to secure that forgiveness. While Isaac believes that “[m]uch of Maria’s task involves restoring economic justice” (99), Maria’s true role as Moon Princess is to restore harmony to the people of Silverydew—and forgiveness is a key part of this restoration. Only by enacting forgiveness can Maria break the Merryweathers, the Cocq de Noirs and the Silverydew villages out of their centuries-old pattern of anger and vengeance. In beginning her journey towards forgiveness, Maria acknowledges that her family is partially to blame for the current situation in Silverydew. She is also clear from the outset that her goal is to flush out the evil from the Black Men and Silverydew, not the Men themselves: “before we drive out the wickedness of the Men from the Dark
Woods, we’ve got to give Paradise Hill back to God. Sir Wrolf stole it, you know”’ (149). She has begun to forgive them before she even has contact with them.

Goudge shows Maria’s commitment to forgiveness when Maria approaches the Men peacefully, instead of on the offensive. After sneaking into his castle and interrupting his dinner, Maria begins her exchange with Monsieur Cocq de Noir with a plea to his kindness: “[p]lease may I have some fish?” (191). When he obliges, she feels brave enough to continue, which she does with exquisite politeness: “I have long desired the pleasure of your acquaintance” (192). She follows this promising beginning by conceding her own family’s wrongdoing before she begins to try to bargain with him to change his ways: “My ancestor, Sir Wrolf, was very wicked to try to take Black William’s land away from him” (192).

However, Maria’s resolve to negotiate reasonably dissolves when Monsieur Cocq de Noir responds to her with hostility. Her resolve to work toward forgiveness is challenged. She loses her temper and comes close to jeopardizing her success completely. Although she is unsuccessful in her first meeting with Monsieur Cocq de Noir, she accepts his conditions for a truce, and bravely returns to face him again once she has met those conditions. In spite of Maria’s momentary loss of temper, she remains committed to following a forgiving and peaceful course of negotiations with Monsieur Cocq de Noir. Instead of resorting to a violent, masculine solution (for instance, if she had united all the villagers of Silverydew against Monsieur Cocq de Noir and his Men, the villagers could certainly have defeated their enemy), Maria continues to rely on forgiveness and kindness. Maria’s actions make evident feminine value systems, which stand in sharp contrast to a “heroic” masculine value system.
Just as important as Goudge's focus on forgiveness is her emphasis on interdependence. Goudge's children's novels are not tales of individual maturation or self-individuation. Rather than employing such androcentric models of growth, Goudge portrays a feminist model of interdependence; the glory at the end of her children's novels comes not from celebrating the individual accomplishments of the one who has succeeded in fixing the problem, but rather from the holistic integration of the community, often symbolized by marriage. Thus, emphasis is on the group as opposed to the individual. In Goudge's children's novels, female protagonists come to know who they are not through individuation but through their connection with community.

Goudge's focus on interdependence is apparent both in the way the characters work together to resolve the problems in the community, and in the symbolic marriages at the end of several of the books. If her children's novels show the process of integrating a community so that it reaches a state of complete harmony, it would seem logical that her characters work together in a cooperative manner, relying upon one another more than on their individual capabilities.

Cooperation among characters is central in all of Goudge's children's books. Never does one character achieve success alone. In Henrietta's House, the plot lines are so crisscrossed and interconnected that it seems difficult enough to separate them; while this structure could be considered a flaw in the work, I believe it is part of Goudge's vision of interconnection. Nobody acts in isolation; every action reverberates through the community to affect all its members. An example of this interdependence occurs in this text when the separate efforts of several characters, most notably through Henrietta's
kindness and Grandfather's loving persuasion, finally combine to help the Old Man
reform.

Perhaps Linnets and Valerians provides the clearest example of this cooperation
among characters. Here, the Linnet children help, in their own ways, to restore the
Valerian family. Betsy is the first to have an impact; she brings Lady Alicia out of
seclusion and into social contact with the Linnet family. Next, Nan meets Daft Davie and
becomes friends with him. Although it will be some time before she realizes that he is
Lady Alicia's lost son, Francis Valerian, this meeting is an essential first step. Timothy
recognizes similarities between a painting on the wall of Daft Davie's cave and a
needlework picture in Lady Alicia's boudoir, thereby making one of the first connections
that Daft Davie is Francis.

When the Linnet children become aware of the Valerian family's unhappy fate
they are distressed. Nan, in particular, longs to help rectify the sad situation once she has
discovered Emma Cobrely's book of black magic spells, as well as love letters from Emma
to Hugo Valerian, and it is she who begins to dig deeper into the mystery of the
Valerians. Although Nan instigates much of the main action throughout, she never
attempts to solve any problems or engage in any adventures alone. Indeed, she involves
Uncle Ambrose and his wise old servant, Ezra Oake, throughout her entire process of
discovery and healing.

This focus on interdependence rather than independence is particularly clear
during the reversal of Emma's spells. With Ezra's help, the Linnet children are able to
find the wax voodoo figures Emma used to incapacitate the Valerians. Then, together,
they all work to reverse Emma's spells. While Ezra’s knowledge of white magic is the most crucial component in this reversal, the children’s energy is also important:

"Pins, come you out! Do no more 'arms,
Spell, unwind to good from evil.
Now all good spirits work your charms,
Save the sinner from the devil!"

And while he spoke all the pins came out as smoothly as though they had been stuck in butter, and Ezra handed the little figure to Nan. “I’ll say the next verse, maid,” he said, “an’ when I finish an’ clap me ’ands, throw it in the fire.” . . . Robert picked [the figures] all up and stood them in a row . . . . So they roared out the rhymes and burnt the seven little figures, and the flames were like rainbows leaping up the chimney. (206-9)

Here, all the Linnet children work together with Ezra during this crucial turning point in the story. Additionally, Nan includes Uncle Ambrose in her discovery that Daft Davie is actually Francis Valerian, and trusts in his ability to engineer the reunion between Lady Alicia and her son with the tact and delicacy the situation requires.

While the Linnet children reap some rewards from their actions, the ultimate result of the children’s action is that the Linnets, Valerians and villagers “worked hard to make that toast” of happy ever after “come true and it did come true. High Barton became the happiest village in the whole of Devonshire, with no more ill-wishing, poaching, pin-sticking, quarrelling, or anything that anyone could take exception to” (243). Goudge’s focus is not on the Linnet children and their benefits, but rather on the whole village. Her use of hyperbole—High Barton is “the happiest village in the whole of
Devonshire”—clearly indicates that Goudge is creating “otherness” through an idealized, harmoniously integrated community.

In *Smoky House*, as well, Goudge positions the Treguddick children as equal partners in the venture of saving the Free Traders and integrating the community of Faraway. When the crisis is upon them, the Treguddicks are model cooperators, working well with one another, their pets, and the Free Traders alike. They even enlist the help of the Good People, without whose magic all would have been lost. No one person or group is able to achieve success alone in *Smoky House*; a positive resolution is contingent upon the interaction of many characters.

In *The Little White Horse*, Maria seems a more traditional kind of fairytale heroine, who might be expected to act more independently. However, while Goudge accords Maria primary position in the action, through which fairy tale conventions are evident, she also clearly shows Maria as part of a team, unable to succeed without help and cooperation from those around her. As in fairy tales, Maria has several animal helpers: Periwinkle the horse, Serena the hare, Wiggins the dog, and Wrolf the dog/lion. More than this, however, members of her family and household are integral to her success: while Miss Heliotrope nurtures Maria’s mind and the Old Parson her soul, Marmaduke Scarlett feeds her body, and Loveday Minette attends to her attire. These are important emotional and physical contributions to Maria’s well-being; without them she would have been the weaker. Most important in this book, though, is Maria’s friend Robin the shepherd. Without him, she cannot succeed:
“Robin,” she said, “how did you know that you and I together had to drive out the wickedness of the Men from the Dark Woods? The very first day I saw you here, you said we’d have to do it. How did you know?”

“It was because of Serena,” said Robin. “No one before has ever been able to save anything from those men, but you and I saved Serena. I knew then that we could save the whole valley.” (149)

While an obvious interpretation of this collaboration is the male and female integrating as a strong and successful whole, it seems more important to note Goudge’s reluctance to set up a character who stands up to evil alone. Instead, she shows that by working together, people can achieve greater success—especially in matters of building community. Accordingly, both Robin and the animal helpers accompany Maria throughout her gentle campaign to convince Monsieur Cocq de Noir to co-exist peacefully with the Silverydew villagers.

Because interdependence is such an important theme in her children’s novels, Goudge emphasizes it at the end of each story. Often, it is symbolized with a marriage, but Goudge’s other scenarios of harmonic resolution also command attention. For example, in The Valley of Song the Hard’s collective effort in and ownership of The White Swan and its launch provides the culmination of interdependence. In Henrietta’s House, the “house” itself represents a special place where Henrietta’s friends and family can gather together, away from the fray of hectic daily life.

However, in Smoky House, Linnets and Valerians and The Little White Horse, the marriages at the end of the stories function to both secure integration and to promote interdependence. Goudge uses marriage in much the same way other authors do in
literature of re-integration of communities, such as Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* and Jane Austen’s *Emma*. While early feminist critics might view these marriages as a relinquishing of female strength and independence, or evidence of gender stereotyping, contemporary feminist readers may see them as a symbol of interdependence. Marriage is often a common feature of romance and comedy, signifying the continuation of life and restoration of social fabric.

Goudge, too, uses marriage to signal that harmony in the community has been achieved, and to promise that harmony will be permanent. The joining together of two of the story’s characters in marriage symbolically shows their integration with one another, and again turns the focus away from individuation and individualism. Thus, in *Linnets and Valerians* the narrator assures readers that Nan and Francis Valerian marry. In this way, Nan is able to strengthen and maintain the bonds of familial community: “Nan lived at the manor, but as a day never passed without all the people at the vicarage visiting the manor, or all the people at the manor visiting the vicarage, there was no real parting” (244-5).

Maria and Robin’s marriage, one of three marriages at the end of *The Little White Horse*, plays an even more crucial role, for here the marriage is part of the fabric of fairytale narrative. The “princess” Maria's marriage to the peasant Robin is the last and most important act in undoing the generations-old imbalance in Silverydew's community: “only when she humbles herself to love a poor man will she do it” (115). Because Maria is a “princess” (actually a noblewoman), her actions affect not just herself, but all of the people under her care. Thus, Robin’s mother, Loveday Minette, warns Maria and her husband-to-be: “you must never quarrel. If you do, you will wreck not only your own
happiness but the happiness of the whole valley” (148 emphasis original). Rather than being Maria’s reward for accomplishing her task, as the hero at the end of the fairy tale is given the princess and the kingdom, Maria’s marriage to Robin provides “a sign that there was now undying friendship between the Men from the Dark Woods and the Merryweathers” (235). By fulfilling the last part of the age-old prophecy, Maria’s marriage is the last and most important component in the integration of the community in Silverydew and the valley surrounding it.

The other two marriages, which Maria brings to fruition through her matchmaking, work together with Maria’s own to end the battle of the sexes which has been raging at Moonacre Manor. This elimination of this unhealthy opposition of male and female energy is perhaps another element of integration at the end of The Little White Horse: Robin is “the brave soul” and Maria is “the pure spirit of their family motto, and one in heart, merry and loving, they [inherit] the kingdom together” (237).

Marriage, as Goudge portrays it, is not a vehicle of female subjugation, but rather the ultimate means to achieve and retain integration of community. The role of Goudge’s female characters in marriage, therefore, is an active and powerful one. They are agents of integration and help to hold their families and communities together with potent bonds: the culmination of their improvement of and involvement in community in Goudge’s children’s novels.

The Merryweather family motto, “[t]he brave soul and the pure spirit shall with a merry and a loving heart inherit the kingdom together” (The Little White Horse 42-3), perhaps provides a satisfactory closing to this discussion of Goudge’s portrayal of community. The implication that it takes many elements to contribute to a kingdom—or a
harmonious community—is clear. Nan and Maria, those “brave” souls, and the “pure” feminine value system they share with Goudge’s other girl characters provide the necessary qualities to maximize a community’s potential. “Merriness” is achieved when spiritual, economic and social justice are achieved in a near-perfect community. “Loving hearts” then secure forgiveness, redemption and integration. This work is at the core of Goudge’s children’s novels. Through it she promotes her vision of community, which shares so much with feminist visions of harmony.

What Goudge offers to “the feminist reader . . . is an exercise in immersing herself or himself within a community of women” (Trites 98). Of course, not all of Goudge’s characters are female, but central girl characters such as Nan and Maria play a key role in implementing a feminine value system in the narrative and in their communities. Goudge’s girl characters show the importance of interconnectedness by their commitment to securing integration for their communities. Roberta Trites asserts that feminist authors “[confirm] the importance of interrelationships” (98). Because she does this in her writing, we can locate Elizabeth Goudge’s work within contemporary feminist discourse. Like other feminist authors, Goudge “establish[es] a relationship that creates another community: one with [her] readers” (Trites 98). The feminist values so central in Goudge’s children’s novels draw together her readers into their own community.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION: ELIZABETH GOURGE’S PLACE IN THE CANON

Elizabeth Goudge was an extremely popular writer for both children and adults throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. While her writing for adults met with mixed criticism, a few of her novels for children garnered popularity and received critical praise as well as institutional validation, notably in the form of the Carnegie Medal awarded to The Little White Horse. However, neither her popularity nor her early critical reception has resulted in significant scholarly attention to Elizabeth Goudge’s writing.

While The Little White Horse may have marginal canonical acceptance, I believe that it is important to establish a secure place for Goudge’s children’s novels in a feminist canon of children’s literature. Smoky House, Henrietta’s House, The Little White Horse and Linnets and Valerians are narratives that offer readers a celebration and validation of femininity: they deserve both popular and scholarly attention. These works are just as valuable as the other “classics” that Shirley Foster and Judy Simons explore in What Katy Read.

As well, Goudge’s children’s novels deserve more serious recognition by the larger Academy. Goudge’s works of “enchanted realism” share genre similarities with other works of fantasy and historical fiction of her day, and so they deserve the same critical attention as books such as The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and The Children of Green Knowe. Goudge was working within a form that was mainstream during her day, and employed literary and narrative strategies similar to other fantasy writers for children, as Karen Patricia Smith’s analysis of fantasy in the “Diversionary Period” of the twentieth century clearly shows.
Since she shares many similarities with other writers of her time and genre, I wondered why Goudge received so little critical attention, and why an author such as C. S. Lewis, whose work has much in common with Goudge’s, received so much. What I discovered is that a patriarchy of literary values relegates Goudge’s children’s novels to the “bottom of the literary hierarchy” (Foster and Simons 20) because they are shaped by a feminine value system. This patriarchy simultaneously values fantasy shaped by a masculine value system, such as “high fantasy,” and thus secures for these works a central place within the Academy.

However, feminist literary critics have taken issue with this value system. Lissa Paul notes that it is now finally acceptable within literary studies to value communities rather than kingdoms (“Feminist” 102). As well, we can celebrate characters who embody traditional feminine qualities, rather than accepting masculine characteristics as superior and privileging female heroes “in drag” (Paul, “Feminist” 106).

This analysis has shown that it is time to reject the patriarchal literary values that have produced the common canon and instead, as Anne Lundin posits, implement many canons that value many different kinds of literature (111). I place Goudge’s children’s novels within a feminist canon, because Goudge’s portrayal of community constitutes her children’s novels as feminist ones. Smoky House, Henrietta’s House, The Little White Horse, The Valley of Song and Linnets and Valerians are feminine narratives of integration. In these novels, Goudge foregrounds feminist characters, girls who fuse masculinity and femininity and thus become agents of positive change. They work to rectify imbalances in their communities’ spiritual, economic and social structures. Once
this is achieved, Goudge’s girl characters integrate their communities into harmonious wholes through redemption and forgiveness.

Goudge’s children’s novels provide her readers with the experience that Trites identifies as central to feminist novels in *Waking Sleeping Beauty*, “[r]eaders of these novels experience not only the communities that [the characters] cherish... they also experience a bond with the community of feminist writers. Readers of feminist children’s novels thus participate actively in a vital feminist community” (99). Because of their ability to build this connection, Goudge’s children’s novels deserve to be explored and valued. While these novels contain much of value for young readers—especially girls who can learn a great deal from “Goudge’s girls” and their actions and values, there is also much of value for feminist literary critics and scholars. I have only just begun to explore its rich depths.

At the end of this exploration, I find great satisfaction in being able to proclaim that Elizabeth Goudge’s children’s novels also deserve a place in a very different canon: the paracanon. Critic Catharine Stimpson uses this term in her article “Reading for Love: Canons, Paracanons, and Whistling Jo March.” While discussing the phenomenon of canonicity in general, Stimpson questions the allegedly objective criteria that govern canon formation and suggests that we might instead consider a work of literature’s worth by “its capacity to inspire love” (958). She posits that the “paracanon asks that we systematically expand our theoretical investigations of ‘the good’ to include ‘the lovable’” (958). Put simply, “[t]exts are paracanonical if some people have loved and do love them” (958); “[t]he principle of inclusion is the ability to inspire any reader’s love” (965).
Stimpson’s example of a paracanonical text is *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. Mine, obviously, are *Linnets and Valerians, The Little White Horse, Smoky House* and *Henrietta’s House* by Elizabeth Goudge. I am not alone in my love of these books: critics, writers and readers at large attest to their affection for Goudge’s children’s novels. I have had the privilege, during the course of my research, to correspond with critics John Gough and Megan Lynn Isaac about our mutual love of Goudge’s writing. The influential J. K. Rowling “absolutely adored *The Little White Horse*” (*The Little White Horse* front cover). We four are just a few Goudge lovers; as I mentioned in Chapter One, I have discovered several websites dedicated to praising Goudge. Clearly, Goudge’s children’s novels can inspire readers’ love.

In doing so, they “beautifully enhance the relationship between a text . . . and a specific community of readers” (959). My intellectually stimulating and personally fulfilling exchanges with John Gough and other Goudge lovers fill me with the warmth of participating in a literary community. I am one of “a number of loving readers” (959) who together can keep Goudge’s children’s novels alive in our hearts.

I hope, as well, that the forthcoming movie adaptation of *The Little White Horse* draws attention to Goudge’s writing and increases the “number of loving readers” who enjoy her books. Goudge herself recognized the capacity of film to garner exposure: she notes that “the publicity of the film” *Green Dolphin Country* allowed that book both to be “sold all over the world” and to “re-[animate] past books as well as [cast] a rosy glow over” her other books (*Joy* 276). The movie adaptation of *Green Dolphin Country* was possibly the single factor that propelled Goudge into fame; perhaps the movie version of *The Little White Horse* will be as powerful in rejuvenating interest in Goudge’s writing
for both children and adults. Imagine it: re-prints of her children’s works, re-issues of adult works as young adult editions, and perhaps even new and numerous scholarly articles. I feel that I have moved forward critical inquiry into Goudge’s writing for children; I hope others will join in new literary explorations of many and varied aspects of Elizabeth Goudge’s writing.
Notes

1 A Google search of “Elizabeth Goudge” reveals enthusiastic reviews on several booksellers’ sites (especially the American and British Amazons) and mentions in many websites. There are also several fan sites on the Web dedicated exclusively to Goudge, including: www.mv.com/users/ang/goudge.html; www.gnooks.com/discussion/elizabeth*goudge.html, and groups.yahoo.com/group/ElizabethGoudge.

2 John Gough is a professor of Education at Deakin University in Australia. He has a graduate diploma in children’s literature. His publications are many and varied; as well as his articles about Elizabeth Goudge, Gough has published dozens of other reviews and articles on such diverse topics as C.S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, issues in mathematics education and the act of re-reading. His publication history is available at http://www.research.deakin.edu.au/custom/fac_edu/member_pubs.php?person_code=goughjo

3 See Appendix B for printouts of search results.

4 This was a period of critical enquiry characterized by a dissatisfaction with traditional gender roles and hierarchies. This particular kind of textual exploration was part of the larger movement of feminist literary criticism. Literary historian William Harmon classifies the movement as a mode of literary discussion and exploration that “[grew] out of the women’s movement following the Second World War” and was initially inspired and informed by the “founding works, Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* and Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics*” (207). Harmon concisely summarizes feminist criticism’s main goals, which include “recovering neglected works by women authors through the ages and creating a canon of women’s writing,” as well as the “exploration of the construction of gender and identity, the role of women in culture and society, and the possibilities of women’s creative expression” (207).

5 Prior to the publication of this article in 1996, Goudge’s children’s novels were out of print. According to the website www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/authors/Elizabeth_Goudge.html, in 1996 Hodder reissued several of Goudge’s children’s novels in both hardcover and paperback. These included *Henrietta’s House*, *The Little White Horse*, and *Linnets and Valerians*. However, Penguin Puffin’s 2001 paperback publication of *The Little White Horse* and *Linnets and Valerians* in the United Kingdom and North America, the former complete with J. K. Rowling’s ringing endorsement (“I absolutely adored *The Little White Horse*”), will more likely have had a greater capacity to reach more readers. Indeed, Rowling is well aware of her influence on both publishers and readers, and in an interview with Amazon pleads with publishers to re-issue several other of her childhood favourites “so other people can read them” (“J. K. Rowling’s Interview”).

6 At least in British Columbia institutions: see Appendix C for a sample of course outlines.

7 At least in British Columbia institutions; high fantasy texts outnumber those of enchanted realism. See Appendix C for a selection of course outlines.

8 If the morality here seems tenuous or ambiguous, it is less so than it at first appears. In regional fiction of England’s West Country, tales empathizing with smugglers or Free Traders are common. In *The West Country as a Literary Invention*, critic Simon Trezise explains that “[i]n the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the West was a region where wrecking and smuggling were sometimes an attractive alternative to poverty wages. The West Country became one of several regions in Britain notorious for smuggling…. A thriving ‘free trade’ existed between the southern coasts of the West and the Channel Islands until 1807; smuggling between the West Country and the coast of France occurred during and after the Napoleonic Wars. Most of the writers investigated in this book, from Hawker to Hardy, are consistently sympathetic to smugglers. Smuggling began to decline from the 1840’s onwards, but it continued to thrive as a subject in West Country fiction” (23). Further, Trezise notes that “[i]t was the more romantic side of smuggling that usually appealed to writers and readers of West Country fictions. When the State is a tyrant, some forms of crime seem legitimate” (24-5).
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---. "Feminist Criticism: From Sex-Role Stereotyping to Subjectivity."

---. "Intimations of Imitations: Mimesis, Fractal Geometry and Children’s Literature."
*Literature for Children: Contemporary Criticism.* Ed. Peter Hunt. London:


Pinsent, Pat. *Children's Literature and the Politics of Equality.* London: David Fulton,
1997.

Rich, Adrienne. "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision." *On Lies, Secrets, and
Paul.]


Appendix A

ELIZABETH GOUDGE’S COMPLETE WORKS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
(* signifies a work originally published for children)


The Ikon on the Wall and Other Stories. London: Duckworth; New York: Coward McCann, 1943.

Green Dolphin Country. London: Hodder, 1944; as Green Dolphin Street, New York: Coward McCann, 1944.


ANTHOLOGIES and OMNIBUS EDITIONS:

*The Elizabeth Goudge Reader.* Ed. Rose Dobbs. New York: Coward McCann, 1946;


BOOKS EDITED by Goudge:


ELIZABETH GOUDEE'S WRITING FOR CHILDREN: ALPHABETICAL


ELIZABETH GOUDGE’S WRITING FOR CHILDREN: CHRONOLOGICAL


The Well of the Star. New York: Coward McCann, 1940.


Appendix B
The search: Elizabeth Goudge


1. Title: Genre and Ideology in Elizabeth Goudge's The Little White Horse
   Author: Rosenberg, Teya
   Source: Children's-Literature-Association-Quarterly (CLAQ). 2002 Summer; 27(2): 77-87
   AN: 2003030083
   WEBLH: http://elink.library.ubc.ca:9003/sfx_local?MLAB&id=pmid:&id=&issn=0885-0429&isbn=&volume=27&issue=2&page=77&pages=77-87&date=2002&title=Children%27s%20Literature%20Association-Quarterly%20%28CLAQ%29&atitle=Genre%20and%20Ideology%20in%20Elizabeth%20Goudge%20The%20Little%20White%20Horse&aulast=Rosenberg&pid=%3Cauthor%3ERosenberg%2c%20Teya%3C%2Fauthor%3E%3CAN%3E2003030083%3C%2FAN%3E%3CDT%3Ejournal%20article%3C%2FDT%3E

2. Title: Misplaced: The Fantasies and Fortunes of Elizabeth Goudge
   Author: Isaac, Megan-Lynn
   AN: 1997061766
   WEBLH: http://elink.library.ubc.ca:9003/sfx_local?MLAB&id=pmid:&id=&issn=0147-2593&isbn=&volume=21&issue=1&page=86&pages=86-111&date=1997&title=Lion%27%20and%20the%20Unicorn%20%20A%20Critical%20Journal%20of%20Children%27%20Literature%20%28L%26%29%20%29&atitle=Misplaced%3a%20The%20Fantasies%20and%20Fortunes%20of%20Elizabeth%20Goudge&aulast=Isaac&pid=%3Cauthor%3EIsaac%2c%20Megan%20Lynn%3C%2Fauthor%3E%3CAN%3E1997061766%3C%2FAN%3E%3CDT%3Ebook%20article%3C%2FDT%3E

3. Title: Sin-Eating
   Author: Kvideland, Karin
   AN: 1985003076
   WEBLH: http://elink.library.ubc.ca:9003/sfx_local?MLAB&id=pmid:&id=&issn=&volume=&issue=&pages=&date=1984&title=&atitle=Sin-Eating&aulast=Kvideland&pid=%3Cauthor%3EKvideland%2c%20Karin%3C%2Fauthor%3E%3CAN%3E1985003076%3C%2FAN%3E%3CDT%3Ebook%20%20article%3C%2FDT%3E

4. Title: Gentle Truths for the Gentle Readers: The Fiction of Elizabeth Goudge
   Author: Marsden, Modonna
1. The grown-up charms of classic children's books. By: Slung, Michele. Victoria, May96, Vol. 10 Issue 5, p44, 1p, 1c; (AN 9604243364)


Searching: University of British Columbia Library
Search Request: Subject Browse = Goudge, Elizabeth
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The search: C. S. Lewis

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#1 | elizabeth 4


1 TI: Paradise Lost: Potential Long-Term Sequelae of Early Maternal Death in Two Exceptionally Creative People in History
AU: Erba, Annalisa-Carla
DAI No.: DA3106386. Degree Granting Institution: Rutgers U, New Brunswick, 2003
AN: 2004900768
WEBLH: [link]

2 TI: Joy Davidman, Laundress?
AU: Christopher, Joe-R.
AN: 2004871638
WEBLH: [link]

3 TI: 'Myself': Allusions in The Horse and His Boy
AU: Hinten, Marvin-D.
AN: 2004871637
WEBLH: [link]

4 TI: The Enigmatic Veil: A Study of the Use of a Veil in C. S. Lewis's Till We Have Faces and Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'The Minister's Black Veil'
AU: Jordan, Pamela-L.

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<td>Nov2004</td>
<td>Vol. 48 Issue 11, p80, 1p</td>
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College of New Caledonia

English 215 - Course Outline
Children’s Literature
Fall 2003

Instructor:
Office hours: TBA
Office No: 1-330

Course Description

We will look at a representative sampling of children’s literature. The course will be based on the assumption that children’s literature is of the same caliber as adult literature and is read, responded to and valued by readers in the same way. This quotation from Charlotte Zolotow illustrates the philosophical approach of the course: “There are many qualities that go into a good book – feeling, genuine emotion, integrity of purpose, an out-of-ordinary look at ordinary things. Sometimes a writer may use humor, sometimes fantasy, sometimes reality, but a good children’s book always leaves the child closer to understanding himself and other people, closer to some universal motif of which cats and dogs and trees, earth, ocean, sky and human beings are all a part.” This course will provide a survey of children’s literature from fairy tales to realistic fiction for preteens. This course will be organized around a series of topics and illustrative texts for each topic will be assigned.

Textbooks:

Only Connect
The Blue Fairy Book
Charlotte’s Web
The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
Owls In The Family
Irish Red
The White Mountains
A Wrinkle In Time
A Blossom Promise
Anastasia Ask Your Analyst
Number The Stars
Underground To Canada

Week 3-5 Fantasy – Charlotte’s Web, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
Week 6-7 Realistic Animal Stories -- Irish Red, Owls In The Family
Week 8-9 Science Fiction -- The White Mountains, A Wrinkle In Time
Week 10-11 Realistic Fiction – A Blossom Promise, Anastasia
Week 12-13 Historical Fiction - Number The Stars, Underground to Canada

Evaluation
English 112 001/003
Introduction to Children's Literature
Summer 2004

Douglas College

Instructor: [Blank]
Office: 3318
Phone: [Blank]
E-mail: [Blank]

Office Hours: Tu/W 2-3
or by appointment

Texts

Hallett and Karasek, eds. Folk and Fairy Tales 3rd ed. (Broadview)*
Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Broadview)*
Burnett, The Secret Garden (Bantam)
Ransome, Swallows and Amazons (Red Fox)
Le Guin, A Wizard of Earthsea (Puffin)
Rowling, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (Raincoast)
Naidoo, The Other Side of Truth (HarperTrophy)
English 112 Supplemental Readings (Coursepack)

*These editions are required; for other texts, students may use another edition.
Recommended: a college writer's handbook and a good dictionary.

Course Description

English 112 introduces students to significant works of literature specifically intended for children, and to some of their traditional sources such as folk and fairy tales. The course provides a historical survey, though hardly an exhaustive one, from nineteenth-century to contemporary works. We will consider such issues as the relationship between fantasy and reality; children's freedom and power; and literature's dual purpose of instruction and delight. Because this is a course in children's literature, we will pay particular attention to how the texts construct and speak to their intended audience.

Course Objectives and Student Obligations

English 112 aims to develop students' skills as critical readers, thinkers and writers through the careful analysis of literature. The course introduces students to literary concepts such as genre, mode, plot, characterization and theme, and to literary devices like symbol, image, figurative language, and irony. In exams and essays, students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of how these literary elements work in particular texts, and to connect the texts to the themes we have discussed. The essays for this course require an arguable thesis, coherent development of the thesis claim and support with textual evidence. Substantial class time will be devoted to instruction in writing critical essays and to editing your work, but note that English 102 is not a course
ENGL 220 - Children's Literature

Credits: 3

Course Description:
This course examines the place and purpose of children's literature in our society. Various subgenres are explored as students learn to analyze, evaluate and present representative works of children's literature.

Status: Active

Date Last Revised: March 2001

Course Outline Author: 
Author's Qualifications: Ph. D.

Date Authored: March 2001

Co Requisites: None

Prerequisites: Any two of ENGL 100, 105, 111, or 112.

Course Length: 45 hours

Location(s): Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John

Tuition Cost: $71.50 / Credit

* Please note: All NEW students to the college are subject to a one-time Application Fee of $25.

Transfer Credit: Refer to BCCAT Website: bccat.kwantlen.bc.ca

Program(s) Related To: Academic
Associate of Arts Diploma
Associate of Arts Degree

Delivery Format: Classes

Required Texts:
- Phoebe Gilman, Something from Nothing
- Michael Kusugak, Northern Lights
- Robin Muller, Mollie Whuppie and the Giant
- Maxine Trottier, The Tiny Kit of Eddie Wing
- L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Green Gables
- Antoine de Saint Exupery, The Little Prince
- C.S. Lewis, The Lion, The Witch and the Philosopher's Stone
- Welwyn Katz, Come Like Shadows
- Monica Hughes, Invitation to the Game
- Patricia MacLachlan, Sarah, Plain and Tall
- Carol Matas, Lisa
- William Bell, No Signature

**Date First Offered:** January 1996

**Weekly Instructional Allocation:** Hrs/Wk: 6, #wks: 8

**Course Objectives:**

Students will gain an overview of the complexity, diversity and richness of Children’s Literature. They will learn to both assess and appreciate most genres in Children’s Literature, as well as different types of Children’s Literature, including picture books, chapter books and novels. They will further develop their analytical, critical and writing skills.

**Grading Method:** Letters

**Grading Weight:** Assignments 60%

Final Exam 20%

Participation 10%

Option: Oral Report 10%

**Topics Covered:**

Students will study different genres and types of writing for children from the nineteenth and twentieth century, with an emphasis on current Canadian writings for children.

- Introduction to Children’s Literature; history of children’s picture books, introduction to picture book art.

- Phoebe Gilman - Something from Nothing.
- Michael Kusugak - Northern Lights.
- Robin Muller - Mollie Whuppie and the Giant
- Maxine Trottier - The Tiny Kite of Eddie Wing
- L.M. Montgomery - Anne of Green Gables
- Antoine de Saint Exupery - The Little Prince
- C.C Lewis - The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
- J.K. Rowling - Harry Potter and The Philosopher’s Stone
- Welwyn Katz - Come Like Shadows
- Monica Hughes - Invitation to the Game

Midterm
- Patricia MacLachlan - Sarah, Plain and Tall
- Carol Matas - Lisa
- William Bell - No Signature

Catch up and Review

Final Exam

© 2003 Northern Lights College
A recent trend in Children’s Literature has been the expression of historical events from a child’s perspective. With a view to evaluating the effect of this trend, we will look at modern young adult novels depicting children’s fictional lives during known historical events. What is the purpose behind these recreations of childhoods of the past? How valid is a twenty-first century articulation of historical events? Are the texts useful as educational tools, or is the historic element merely an exotic setting for a modern adventure tale? For each text, the answers will be different. We will be able to ask these questions not only of ourselves, but of a local author of children’s who will visit the class for guest lectures if logistics permit.

**PREREQUISITES:** Credit or standing in two 100-division English courses and two 200-division English courses, one of which must be Engl. 204 or 205.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**
- Duncan, Sandy Frances: *Gold Rush Orphan*
- Drinkwater, Carol: *My Story. The Hunger. The Diary of Phyllis McCormack, Ireland 1845-1847*
- Gavin, Jamila: *The Wheel of Surya*
- Lowry, Lois: *Number the Stars*
- Martell, Suzanne: *The King’s Daughter*
- Maynard, Joyce: *The Usual Rules*
- Napoli, Donna Jo: *Breath*
- Ruby, Lois: *Steal Away Home*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
- 10% Participation/attendance
- 16% Mid-term examination
- 24% Critical summaries
- 20% Seminar presentation and written report (6-8 pages)
- 30% Term paper (12-15 pages)

[SEMINARS WILL BE HELD THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASSES]
The organizing theme for our examination of literature written for children in English will be fantasy. In particular, I am interested in the dynamics of the social power relations between adults and children, seeing child characters and child readers as a colonial people. Children's literature has always been written for children by adults, often with the intent of encouraging children to accept their dependent position in the adult social system (we may be seeing the beginnings of change in this now that the internet allows children to publish their own stories on-line). Instead of focusing on works whose moral message is clearly that children should be passive and dependent on adult authority, however, I have chosen texts which seem to give children power over adults and to reward them for action and independence. We will explore the genre of fantasy, examining ways in which the offer of power in a situation or a world which breaks the rules of reality may actually re-enforce the status quo rather than fomenting rebellion. Although the works I have chosen are fiction and aimed mainly at an eight- to twelve-year-old audience, students who are interested in poetry or drama written for children or who are interested in picture books/other works for a younger readership may pursue that interest as part of their course work, provided they fall within the fantasy genre.

Goals of the Course: 1/ to explore a particular genre of children's literature, 2/ to develop some ideas about the ideological underpinnings and purposes of both fantasy and children's literature, 3/ to allow students to develop course work to suit their own interests and abilities.

PREREQUISITES: Credit or standing in two 100-division English courses and two 200-division English courses, one of which must be Engl. 204 or 205.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
- Carroll, Lewis: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
- MacDonald, George: The Princess and the Goblin
- Wrede, Patricia C.: Dealing with Dragons
- Nesbit, E.: Five Children and It
- Stewart, Mary: The Little Broomstick
- Dahl, Roald: Matilda
- Rowling, J. K.: Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
- Cooper, Susan: The Dark is Rising
- Rushdie, Salman: Haroun and the Sea of Stories
- Pullman, Philip: The Golden Compass

REQUIRED TEXTS:
- Broadview
- Penguin
- Raincoast
- Hodder & Stoughton
- Penguin
- Raincoast
- Simon & Schuster
- Penguin
- Ballantine

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Students in this class will individually select what kinds of work they wish to do, when they will hand it in, and how much each element will be worth (within certain restrictions and guidelines). Students will select from among components below, including at least one essay and the reading journal/exam. I will give a detailed explanation of the evaluation system in the first class; it will also be available on WebCT.

Evaluation Agreement Elements:
* final exam, 20-45%
* reading journal, 20-45%
* participation, 10-25%
* research essay (c. 2500-3000 words), 20-40%
* non-research essay (c. 2000-2500 words), 15-30%
* creative project, 15-25%
* survey project, 10-25%
* short seminar, 10-20%
* storytelling, 5-10%
* annotated bibliography, 10-20%
* lesson plans, 10-20%

[Seminars will be held the first week of classes]
Why are Harry Potter books so popular with their ostensible audience, children, but also with adults? In this course we will try to find some answers to this question by examining the use of fairy-tale and mythic elements in a number of "classical" books written for children over the last century and a half. We will situate these works in the changing context of sequels, new editions, and film adaptations in our attempt to understand both their continuing appeal and the marketing strategies designed to foster that appreciation. Not surprisingly, we will also have to grapple with what is meant in the English literary tradition by "children's literature" and what a book for a child might actually be.

PREREQUISITES: Credit or standing in two 100-division English courses and two 200-division English courses, one of which must be Engl. 204 or 205.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
- Hallet & Karasek, eds.
- Carroll, Lewis
- Travers, P. L.
- Baum, Frank L.
- Lewis, C. S.
- Tolkien, J. R. R.
- Rowling, J. K.

Course Requirements:
- 20% Essay one (6-8 pages)
- 35% Essay two (8-10 pages)
- 20% Oral presentation
- 15% Mid-term quiz
- 10% Participation


1/28/2005
Censorship, in various forms, has developed concurrently with the progression of societies around the globe. In modern Western society, one target of vehement attacks by censors has been (and is) the genre of children's literature. Through an exploration of the ideological nature of children's literature, and of the socio-political nature of censorship, this course will discuss whether or not any degree of censorship is acceptable and, if so, in what form? The texts we will study are produced in various countries of Europe and North America; the one criterion which binds the texts into a cohesive corps for consideration is that they all have been censored or challenged within the cultures that produced them. Through considering such controversial issues as race and gender prejudices, moral and ethical proscription, and pedagogical ideologies, we will better understand the degree to which factions within our own society attempt to control the production and dissemination of children's fiction, and thus the ideological status quo. Discussion surrounding these issues will be augmented through a visit by a local children's author, if logistics permit.

**PREREQUISITES:** Credit or standing in two 100-division English courses and two 200-division English courses, one of which must be Engl. 204 or 205.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

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<td>Are you there God? It's Me, Margaret</td>
<td>Yearling</td>
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<td>Buffie, Margaret</td>
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<td>Pilkey, Dav</td>
<td>Captain Underpants and the Wrath of the Wicked Wedgie Woman</td>
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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- **10%** Participation
- **16%** Mid-term examination
- **24%** Critical summaries
- **20%** Seminar presentation and written report
- **30%** Term paper (3500 words)

**SEMINARS WILL BE HELD THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASSES**
ENGL 468A  

**Children's Literature (3 credits)**

Instructor:  
Section: 001  
Term: 1

Students in this section will read historical materials as well as full-length works of fiction. We will start the course with literature written for children, notably early texts, chiefly from the 17th Century and after. We will move on to consider several "classics" of the 19th and early 20th centuries as a means to considering developments in children's fiction and changing attitudes toward children and their books. Students enrolling in this course should be familiar with fairy tales (e.g., those of the Brothers Grimm and of Hans Christian Andersen) and animal fables (e.g., Aesop's).

**Reading List**


- Montgomery, L.M. *Anne of Green Gables* [1908] New Canadian Library.

http://www.english.ubc.ca/courses/winter2004/468A-001.htm  
1/28/2005
• Barrie, J.M. *Peter Pan* [1911] Puffin Classics.


• Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* [1997].
ENGL 468A   Children's Literature (3 credits)

Instructor:
Section: 002
Term: 1

'Worlds of Possibility' in Childhood Reading

In *The Child That Books Built: A Memoir of Childhood and Reading*, Francis Spufford tells his readers, "The books you read as a child brought you sights you hadn't seen yourself, scents you hadn't smelled, sounds you hadn't heard. They introduced you to people you hadn't met, and helped you to sample ways of being that would never have occurred to you. And the result was, if not an 'intellectual and rational being,' then somebody who was enriched by the knowledge that their particular life only occupied one little space in a much bigger world of possibilities."

In this section of the course, we will consider the ways in which an array of classic and contemporary books for children open up various worlds of possibility ranging from the comic to the gothic to the tragic. In studying and comparing the workings of narratives (and illustrations) variously fantastic and realistic, historical and current, we will explore the ways in which writers stimulate empathy and imagination in younger readers.

Reading list:

- Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Puffin)
- Ellis, *Parvana's Journey* (Groundwood)
- Funke, *The Thief Lord* (Scholastic)
- Gaiman, *Coraline* (HarperCollins)
- Horvath, *The Canning Season* (Groundwood)
- Itimaera, *The Whale Rider* (Raincoast)
- Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* (NCL)
- Pullman, *Clockwork; or All Wound Up* (Scholastic)
Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (Raincoast)

**Optional background reading:**

Students interested in reading around the topic of childhood reading may find the following books of interest:

- Manguel, Alberto. *A History of Reading*
- Manguel, Alberto. *Reading Pictures: A History of Love and Hate*
- Spufford, Francis. *The Child That Books Built: A Memoir of Childhood and Reading*
- Tremblay, Michel. *Birth of a Bookworm*

**Course requirements:**

- a critical summary
- an in-class essay/midterm
- a term paper
- a final examination
ENGL 468A    Children's Literature (3 credits)

Instructor:  
Section: 003  
Term: 2

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students in this section will read literature written for children, starting with early texts, chiefly from the 17th Century and after. We will concentrate on several "classics" of the 19th and early 20th centuries as a means to considering developments in children's fiction and changing attitudes toward children and their books. Students enrolling in this course should be familiar with fairy tales (e.g., those of the Brothers Grimm and of Hans Christian Andersen) and animal fables (e.g., Aesop's).

Reading List

- Wyss, J.D. Swiss Family Robinson. [1812] Puffin Classics.
- Baum, L. Frank. The Wizard of Oz [1900] (Del Rey Ballantine)
- Holm, Anne. I Am David. [1963] (Mammoth)
- Pullman, Phillip. *The Golden Compass* [1995] (Del Rey/Ballantine)
- Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* [1997] (Raincoast)

Additional reading that may be assigned once the course is underway:
ENGL 468A  
*Children's Literature (3 credits)*

Instructor:  
Section: 004  
Term: 2

**Children's Literature and Children's Rights**

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by all but two members of the UN General Assembly, asserts in detail and in the language of the law, that children the world over have an array of rights to peace, protection, literacy, privacy, and a clean environment. Ironically, the UN and other world bodies governed by adults routinely report on the violation of children's rights.

In this section of the course, we will consider the ways in which an array of classic and contemporary books for children address the idea of and the routine violation of children's rights. In studying narrative and verse ranging in tone from the comic to the ironic to the tragic, and in comparing stories and illustrations that are variously fantastic and realistic, historical and current, we will explore the ways in which writers past and present engage with the question: "Do children have rights, and if they do, just how fully are these rights respected by the adults who govern their lives?"

**Reading list:**

- Ellis, *Mud City* (Groundwood)  
- Funke, *Inkheart* (Scholastic)  
- Hesse, *Aleutian Sparrow* (Simon & Schuster)  
- Lowry, *The Giver* (Laurel)  
- Montgomery, *Emily of New Moon* (NCL)  
- Pullman, *The Subtle Knife* (Dell)  
- Richler, *Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang* (McClelland)  
- Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Raincoast)

[http://www.english.ubc.ca/courses/winter2004/468a-004.htm](http://www.english.ubc.ca/courses/winter2004/468a-004.htm)
- Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (Pantheon)

**Optional background reading:**

Students interested in reading around the topic of children's rights may find the following sources of interest:


**Course requirements:**

- a critical summary
- an in-class essay/midterm
- a term paper
- a final examination
ENGL 468A  
*Children's Literature (3 credits)*

**Instructor:**

**section: 005**  
**Term: 1**

From John Newbery's eighteenth-century publishing revolution through to the Harry Potter phenomenon, children's literature has been the focus of both fascination and controversy. This section will take an approach grounded in cultural studies theory, examining the production and reception of texts written for or appropriated by an audience of children, with consideration given to issues of age and gender in attempts to define this audience. We will examine how various texts fit and/or question various conventions of children's fiction: the adventure/quest; the school story; the *bildungsroman* and "coming of age" story; the "crossover" text aimed at children and appropriated by adults, or vice versa. I will set one film as a text as part of a discussion of how children's fiction is part of the broader realm of children's culture. Evaluation will be based on a class mark (5%: general participation, submission on time of assigned work, attendance), required WebCT exercises (5%), a short mid-term essay (20%), a major term paper requiring research (40%) and a final examination (30%).

**Tentative Core Text List:**

*Any editions may be used as long as they are unabridged. Since this is a tentative list, it might be best at this point to borrow books for preliminary reading and only buy them when the final list is set later this spring.*

- Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*
- Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*
- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*
- J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*
- Philip Pullman, *The Golden Compass*
- Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*
- Another novel and a film will be set.
- A course pack of critical/theoretical readings and short tales will be available from the bookstore; other material will be put on reserve in the Koerner library and linked to the Materials page of the WebCT board.

http://www.english.ubc.ca/courses/winter2004/468a-005.htm  
1/28/2005
ENGL 468A  Children's Literature (3 credits)

Instructor:
Section: 006 (Changed from 902)
Term: 2

"I imagine every one will judge it reasonable, that... children, when little, should look upon their parents as their lords, their absolute governors, and as such stand in awe of them; and that when they come to riper years, they should look on them as their best, as their only sure friends, and as such love and reverence them...." (John Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, 1693)

In an enormously popular and influential treatise that eventually became something of a handbook for parents, John Locke—philosopher and bachelor—presents a decidedly optimistic model of evolving parent-child relations. But many children have found their feelings towards their parents far more complicated and ambivalent than Locke suggests here. In this course, we will read texts dating from the late 17th to the early 21st century that explore the relationship between the child and the world of adult responsibilities and grapple with children's attempts at understanding their parents. Most of the texts are aimed at a primary readership of 10-14 years, though the last of the novels was written for an adult readership.

Texts:

- Custom course packet including selections from John Locke and William Fleetwood, various eighteenth-century texts for children, and fairy tales.
- Frances Hodgson Burnett, A Little Princess
- Madeleine L'Engle, A Wrinkle in Time
- Kenneth Oppel, Silverwing
- J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
- Philip Pullman, The Subtle Knife
- Salman Rushdie, Haroun and the Sea of Stories
- Mark Haddon, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time

Course Requirements: an in-class essay, a response journal, a term paper, and a final exam.
ENGL 468A       Children's Literature (3 credits)

Instructor: 
Section: 901
Term: 1

This course will focus primarily on children's fantasy, examining various texts which too often, as Tolkien suggests, "are relegated to the playroom, like old fashioned furniture, primarily because the adults do not want it, and do not mind if it is misused." Beginning with the fairy tales of Perrault, the Grim brothers, Andersen and Wilde, the course will trace the roots of children's fantasy, moving finally to a careful analysis of seminal works in the modern British and North American tradition.

Texts:

- Hallett & Karasek, Folk and Fairy Tales (3rd edition)
- Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
- Milne, Winnie the Pooh
- Rushdie, Haroun & the Sea of Stories
- New, Vanilla Gorilla
- Rowling, Harry Potter & the Philosopher's Stone
- Montgomery, Anne of Green Gables
- Dahl, Charlie & the Chocolate Factory
- Pullman, The Golden Compass
- Travers, Mary Poppins

http://www.english.ubc.ca/courses/winter2004/468a-901.htm  1/28/2005