Using Humor As A Method to Promote Propaganda with Dizzy Don No. 8

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Canadian Comics, Humor, Propaganda, The funny comics with Dizzy Don, World War Two  sahra.alikouzeh

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Introduction

This post will focus on Manny Easson’s eighth comic issue, titled “The Mystery of the Million Dollar Baby”, apart of Bell Features, Great Canadian White Collection. The Great Canadian White Collection is a series of comic books published between the years 1941 to 1946. Due to the importation banning of American comics, this revolutionized an era titled the “Canadian Golden Age of Comics”. (Bell) Issued during World War two, the method of using humor in texts was a popular choice by authors as it not only provided reader’s a mere moment of distraction from the stressful times occurring, but to also allow readers to explore an alternative escapist reality. This post will also discuss the use of the main character, Dizzy Don, who is the protagonist of this comic book intended for children, and some of the influential effects this text has. Understanding how hard the toll of the war was on the Canadians at home, the easygoing nature of the comic book genre can be seen as a stress-reliever suitable for all.

Through the use of humor, authors also took the time to incorporate their own messages within their text to sway the reader’s perspective.

**Canadianization**

Dating back to the moment in World War 2 where Canada joined the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, Canada provided an indispensable amount of contribution to the generation of British air power. Despite the eventual success due to the tag teaming by both the Canadian air force and the British, Canada made sure to enforce the continued national identification of their personnel. The reason being that national identification allowed for the increase of Canadian political independence. Despite the mixed review received from Britain about the separation, many Canadians embraced the newfound “Canadianization” (Johnston, 2015) Going ahead with this bold move, it was one that was successful as Canadians celebrated, ensuring the importance of their national identity. National identity also increased the amount of Canadians distancing themselves from those whom were seen as non-Canadian. This distance led to the emergence of the anti-immigration perspective.
In order to feel patriotic there is the aspect of appreciating one’s culture and then there is also the put down of other cultures, as a form of whom is to be regarded as superior. The Nazi’s are mocked in this panel due to the faux imitation of their accents. Mocking is a sign of discrediting intelligence and belittling the culture and foreign language being spoken. It provokes this feeling of alienation, humiliation, and disrespect to those of the mocked heritage. This displays how some Canadians felt about German foreigners and their own air of superiority.

**Germanophobia**

During the time of World War 2 as many soldiers were abroad fighting, Germans in Canada were suspicious of their fellow Canadians. There were many posters and propaganda alike, floating around in promotion of hailing Canadians at war, while at the same degrading the Germans. The method of spreading information through mediums such as texts and the media, allowed the importance of these immigrants’ presence to go unacknowledged and ignored. Instead German immigrant’s
importance was replaced with the title of an “enemy alien” (Bassler, 1990) Those with German descent in Canada began to see him or herself as unwanted, to their Canadian neighbors. In comic books there was the mockery of German accents, creation of the German characters as evil and made to look angry, all endorsing these negative stereotypes.


There is a clear binary present as the happy American family is depicted and immediately right after, there is the aggressive German Nazi’s. By illustrating this family as those whom would sacrifice their life in order to save their kin, “The ambassador and his wife huddle around Adorable in an effort to save her life” (Easson, 1943) displays the good North American family image. Something the North American readers would be proud of to relate too. Meanwhile, representing the Germans as those opposing this happy lifestyle, with adjectives such as “merciless” when drawn as attackers.
Humor and Propaganda

Propaganda is the aggressive dissemination of a distinct point of view for a specific purpose. Using persuasive techniques, images, wording and messages to manipulate targeted audiences. By having them assume the propagandist’s perspective is the correct vantage point of view that should be adopted, believed and acted on. (McRann, 2009) Humor allows writers and artists of all kinds to attain a method of expression. Texts embedded within comedic expressions can have large impacts on its audiences, winning over hearts, wars and minds. Humor was used as an approach during the war to construct a national identity, decoding the importance of humor, especially to children during the time of war. Wartime cartoonists were big on getting children involved in the war efforts through their drawings. (Penniston-Bird & Summerfield, 2001) These cartoonists would embrace the gender roles by drawing little boys as soldiers while also promoting the theme of national identity to little girls as well, reminding them to remain patriotic and not make
Dizzy Don is introduced as a comedic radio host, who leads the adventures in many of The Funny Comic book issues alongside his pal Canary Byrd. As the main protagonist in this children’s comic book series, his comments and actions are depicted clearly in the story, including his sentiments. Canary Byrd starts off his interaction with Dizzy on the radio saying: “**Say Dizzy – when our grocer told you that domestic sardines are 15 cents and imported 25 cents which did you take?**” and Dizzy’s response: “**Domestic, why should I pay their way over?**” (Easson, 1943) Being introduced as a comedian aids the harsh message of how Dizzy feels about foreigners from abroad coming into his homeland. Although the banter can be taken lightly due to Dizzy’s stature as a comedian, the context of the racist message is still present right at the beginning of the story. This also displays clear patriotism, as the support for domestic products over imported is not even something to be questioned by Dizzy.
Humor, especially the sort that is a medium for social and political commentary, plays an important role in the community of a wartime nation. Furthermore, understanding the intention behind a text can be problematic as it reveals discovery on the social impact of the audience. (Penniston-Bird, & Summerfield, 2001) This comic uses the method of humor to promote anti-immigration sentiments, due to the light hearted stance the genre takes, in which the audience is expected to put their guard down. This creates a dimmer focus on the serious aspect of the topic when being discussed, resulting in non-consequential results from its readers. Unknowingly, this targeted audience does not realize the influence Bell Features authors’ texts have on their daily interactions and perspectives, as it creates racist stereotypes and promotes exclusion of those whom are of German descent. This aids explanation as to why there was the continuous racist endorsement; especially as many German Canadians during the war were put under a lot of scrutiny. Putting this in a children’s book allows these ideologies to also exploit the future generation and further these thoughts. Through the use of the main character Dizzy Don and his interactions, he was used as a platform to spread anti-immigration sentiments embedded within humorous texts.

**Works Cited**

- Penniston-Bird. C. Summerfield. P. “Hey! You’re Dead! The multiple uses of
The front cover

The Land of my Fathers

© April 1, 2014  (Constructor, Children's Books and War  Dylan Day

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The Land of my Fathers is a collection of stories, poems, songs, and paintings compiled by Morris and Lewis Jones. It was compiled as a gift book for children in which all the proceeds go to the National Fund for Welsh Troops. The book was published by Hodder and Stoughton in Britain in 1915; one year after war was declared but the first year that there was an exclusively Welsh army. All the works included in the book were created by British artists and feature themes of bravery and patriotism that are meant to boost the morale of the Welsh people who at this time were seeing their friends and family conscripted to fight in the war and not returning, as well as, watching their country be destroyed. The Land of my Fathers is a gift book of 128 pages filled with short stories, poems, sheet music (includes a melody and piano accompaniment), as well as, full colour paintings printed on high quality glossy art paper. Along with the edition found in Ryerson’s
Children’s Literature Archive the editor of the anthology W. Lewis Jones in his preface describes a second edition created at the same time although the text was completely in Welsh instead of English. Some of the texts that were originally written in Welsh were translated to English to be included in the English edition of the book and some of the texts that were originally written in Welsh were translated to English to be included in the English edition of the book. *The Land of my Fathers* showcases the work of forty-three different authors and nineteen different illustrators who were all British and Welsh. The book is an octavo size which means it is made up many sections of paper folded into sixteen pages and then bound together. The book attempts to connect with the patriot in each person, through the stories included in the anthology so that the person reading it feels compelled to assist in the war efforts by donating money. Since children are the most likely to receive gifts and are the easiest to influence it seems that marketing this book towards children would be the most effective at both raising money and boosting morale.

![The Investiture of the Prince of Wales by Christopher Williams](image)

**Context**

Knowing what life in Britain and Wales was like in the years leading up to World War One greatly contributes to the understanding for the need of a book like *The Land of My Fathers* and shines light on why the government would be looking for extra ways of raising money to fund the war. It is also important in understanding the book. In this part of the exhibit I will go over some of the context that led to the publishing of this book so that the reader can imagine what life was like for people reading the book for the first time in 1915 as well as, the effect the book would have had on them based on the events taking place in Britain leading up to the publication of this book. The years leading up to 1914 and the start of The Great War saw tremendous change for Britain. The population was growing fast. This meant that the existing infrastructure was no longer efficient in caring for the
English people, and their economic wellbeing. Therefore a need for England to expand their infrastructure arose. The result of this need was England’s industrial revolution (Gregory, Henneberg, 1). The building of factories provided England’s growing population with well-paying jobs and enough manufactured goods needed to take care of England’s large population.

With Factories now operational and producing mass quantities of many different goods, England was in need of a way to transport these goods across the country as well as, to other nations for trading purposes. As a result England began building railroads, as trains are the easiest and most affordable way to transport goods across the country as well as transport goods to ports to be loaded on to ships to trade with other countries. The Factories and railroads that were built were essential in fighting The Great War. The Factories provided a place for weapons and ammunition to be manufactured, and the railroads were necessary in quickly deploying troops and sending goods to the front lines. Although these expenses proved to be very useful during the war it was a huge financial strain in the years leading up to The Great War and as a result took a huge toll on England’s ability to finance the war (Murray). The financial strain that England was under meant that alternative fund raising methods were needed, publishers Hodder and Stoughton with British parliament member Lloyd George and his wife Margret Lloyd George decided publishing a gift book would be an effective way of raising funds for the newly created Welsh Corps.

Click here to listen to The Land of my Fathers the Welsh national anthem. Words and music included in the anthology

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kUnCwV3AYE

Production

Margret George is the chairman of the committee of this book as well as, author of the foreword. Margret Lloyd George was the wife of Lloyd George, a Welsh member of the British Parliament. In 1915 when The Land of My Fathers was published Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He held this position from 1908 until 1915 when he elected as the British Prime Minister. George was Prime Minister of England from 1916 until 1922. During the time he spent as Prime Minister he led the British Empire to victory in World War One, rebuilt Britain and helped in reshaping Europe post World War One. In 1915 as Chancellor of the Exchequer he saw the importance of an authentically Welsh army and succeeded in the formation of the Welsh Corps
38th Division Emblem

The thirty-eighth division was the first exclusively Welsh division of the British army, and were authentically Welsh right down to their uniforms that were locally made and featured a unique Welsh emblem (Baker). The creation of a Welsh army was important to Lloyd George because it helped to solidify the importance of Wales in the political environment, and was also an attempt to increase recruiting efforts by appealing to the Welsh people’s sense of nationality.

The thirty-eighth division fought in France, and suffered great loss while defending the country (Baker). By the end of the war the number of Welsh soldiers who died reached forty thousand. Along with the devastation felt from watching friends and family conscripted to war only to die the Welsh people were also suffering from watching their country side be destroyed (Davies). With the Welsh people experiencing so much death and destruction it is no surprise that Welsh people had lost their sense of nationality which had been one of their proudest attributes. During this time it was impossible to walk through a town in Wales without being the target of pro-war propaganda, and recruiting efforts (Barlow). With morale for the war so low and the government in need of funds there arose need to find alternative way to raise funds and nurture the spirit of the people at home. Publishers Hodder and Stoughton stated that while the army was fighting in France it was their duty to “boost morale and preserve unity on the home front.” Thus will the help of Margret Lloyd George The Land of my Fathers was created (Attenborough).

The theme of children’s books and war is very present in The Land of my Fathers. The publishers had two goals in creating this book. The first goal was to raise money for the newly created Welsh corps and the other objective was to boost morale, and change public opinion about the war at home (Attenborough). Creating a children’s gift
book is an effective way to fulfill both of these objectives. This was done by creating an anthology that included stories, poems, songs, and paintings that are about patriotism, and bravery. Including all of these works in an anthology for children is a good idea because in times of financial strain people are more likely to buy a gift for a child than anyone else, thus resulting in more sales of the book and more money raised. In 1915 with all the pro war propaganda everyone is looking for a way to help the war efforts, and would thus be compelled to buy this book knowing that all of the proceeds are going to the national fund for Welsh troops. The publishers were hoping that the children or their parents would read the book and feel a sense of national pride due to the tales of bravery and want to do more to help the war efforts. The foreword written by Margret Lloyd George states that any reader who is moved to donate a separate contribution to the National Fund for Welsh Troops would be acknowledged by Mrs. George. Since most children do not have any money of their own, she was hoping that parents would read it with their kids and after reading the stimulating tales about bravery and the beautiful Welsh countryside that they would feel inclined to donate more money to help the troops and do their part to help the war effort. She then writes “I commend this book to every Welshman the world over” to appeal to the Welsh people’s sense of unity and nationality. This book features beautiful stories, paintings, and songs that are used as pro war propaganda and are included in this anthology for their ability to appeal to the patriot in each reader instead of for their artistic merit. Nevertheless the book is a fascinating piece of literature and history. Hopefully the contextual background will place you in a similar mind frame as those reading it in 1915 and a sense of patriotism and bravery will boil inside you the same way it boiled in the children reading it in 1915.

Works Cited

The Glass Walls of *Anne's House of Dreams*

© March 30, 2014  📝 2014, Children's Books and War  🌟 Anne of Green Gables, First World War, Lucy Maud Montgomery    🔄 amy.driedger

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**Introduction**

On March 11, 1919, Lucy Maud Montgomery wrote in her journal, “I began work on my tenth novel today. It is to be another ‘Anne’ story – and I fervently hope the last –
dealing with her sons and daughters during the years of war. That will end Anne – and properly. For she belongs in the green untroubled pastures and still waters of the world before the war.” (Tector 72).

Montgomery was not talking about Anne’s House of Dreams, but this quote sums up her thoughts on writing about her red-headed creation, Anne Shirley.

In looking at a book published during the war that’s content has nothing to do with the war opens the path for where to look and what to follow to connect this book to children’s books and war. There’s a focus on the context surrounding our author, Lucy Maud Montgomery. I am interested in the decision made by Montgomery to produce another Anne story during the Great War.

It’s important to look to the past, as we hear so often, because the past can teach us a lot about where we are going and can, hopefully, help us learn from past mistakes. Children learn about the past through reading stories portraying times that cannot be lived through ever again. There will also be a look at how important this war and how it was portrayed or not portrayed has affected the identity of Canada.

**Summary of Anne’s House of Dreams**

In the beginning of our story, the newlyweds move to a town called Four Winds Point because Gilbert decided to take over his uncle’s medical practice. Anne makes herself at home, quickly becoming fond of her mysterious and tortured neighbour, Leslie Moore. Leslie’s story is one of tragic circumstances – she lost her father and brother early in her life and was forced by her mother to marry a man at the age of 16. The man whom she married, Dick Moore, went on a voyage out to sea and went missing. As Leslie was beginning to feel free of her ties to him, he was rescued and
brought back with severe brain damage.

As the book goes on, Anne and Leslie become closer to each other, as Anne goes through losing an infant and Leslie begins to fall for Owen Ford, a man boarding with her. As the two fall deeper in love, the realization that Leslie is trapped within a loveless marriage hits them both and Owen leaves her.

Gilbert is fixated on helping Dick Moore and believes he can perform a surgery to fix his damaged brain. The surgery is a success and “Dick” realizes he is George, the real Dick Moore’s cousin. In light of this realization, Leslie is free from the bonds of her marriage, Owen returns, and the two become engaged. Throughout the story, Anne and Gilbert’s family grows and, reaching into reader’s nostalgia, names her children after important people in her life.

A free online version of this book can be found here.

Production & Reception

What do you get when you add another, arguably, “escapist” novel to a best-selling series that thrives because of the protagonist’s vivid imagination? Well, another best-seller, of course! As shown in The Globe’s “Books of the Day” article, high praise was given to Montgomery “nine years after the original Anne of Green Gables” came out (Garvin). John Garvin, the reviewer, goes on to boast about the old friends/characters being reason enough to read the new addition to
Anne Shirley: A Reflection of Montgomery’s Self-Fantasy?

As Anne’s House of Dreams’ content has nothing to do with the war, a lot of digging into Lucy Maud Montgomery’s life had to be done to see the connections between the characters and storyline created and why this was an important book for children during the war.

On September 27, 2008, in an article in the Globe and Mail, Kate Macdonald Butler, Montgomery’s grandchild, admitted that her grandmother had, in fact, committed suicide, in an attempt to open the discussion on depression and to help take away the stigma of this illness. (Cowger 188) Within this article, there is claim to Anne Shirley being, at least sort of, an autobiographical character, and as such, she is looked at differently in light of the new information that was given on Montgomery from her grand daughter and about her depression. (Cowger 188) There are quite a few similarities between Montgomery and her creation. Montgomery’s upbringing was similar to Anne, her mother died and her father couldn’t take care of her, so she was raised by her grandparents. (Cowger 189)

Cowger goes on to explain how the longer the story of Anne goes on, the more disenchanted she becomes (196). This is most evident, arguably, in Anne’s House of Dreams, as the storylines and subplots focus on depression, deaths, suicides, and unfulfilled lives. For example, even before the time period in the book, Leslie’s father kills himself (Montgomery 72). Further on, as was previously mentioned, Anne’s first child dies as an infant and even when she repairs her broken heart, she is laced with a seemingly new “grim shape of fear [that] shadows and darkens her vision” (Montgomery 165).

As presumptuous as it may seem to say Montgomery was projecting herself into Anne, that also didn’t stop and hasn’t stopped her fan base. In reality, the fact that reviews and profiles of her in newspapers gave the same qualities they found in Anne, to Montgomery – wholesome, modest, youthful, rural environment – helped her become one of, if not the most, renown authors in Canadian literature (Hammill 652). If you think about it, Anne Shirley has more fame or more of a namesake than
Lucy Maud Montgomery but Montgomery’s name has stuck because of the association with Anne’s name (Hammill 652). As a child, I always wanted to go to Anne’s house in Prince Edward Island, not Montgomery’s and when you enter Prince Edward Island, some of the licence plates read “Home of Anne of Green Gables”, with no mention of Montgomery.

**A More Personal Look at The Production of Anne’s House of Dreams**

The question must come up after finding out so much about Montgomery’s thoughts and perceptions about the world in general – again, why write just another Anne story? Something to remember is that nostalgia was very important to young and old Canadians, alike. Anne was a familiar, charming character, and to see her in a world where war still didn’t exist was comforting and, some would argue, needed.

All the same, Montgomery wanted to write about things deeper than another story about the ongoing life of her beloved and idealistic heroine, Anne. She longed to write about current events and give more than just an escape. She felt constrained by her novels about Anne because, as much as she knew what she wanted to write about, she felt trapped by her audience and publishers, knowing they wanted more Anne (Tector 72). Later on, Montgomery would fulfill the need she felt, when she wrote *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921), a book in which she could write about war within the world of Anne, but separate from Anne. So, during the war years, she continued to write nostalgically.

A seemingly unimportant task, such as writing about the same red-head going through the same emotions, finding more kindred spirits, becomes one of the most important tools for humans trying to cope during a traumatic time, such as the first world war (Cook). “The Great War was Canada’s coming-of-age event.” For the nation, to take part in these four years changed the country, as a whole, as it did for the rest of the world, as well (Cook).

**Canada Finds Its Own Identity**

It has been said that the first world war was the time when Canada really grew into its own country, choosing to fight not under but alongside Britain, and demanding to be recognized as a separate country – a country that had a significant impact on the
results of the first world war.

Canada’s decisive role in the last 100 days of the war alone, and the innumerable contributions and sacrifices made at home were the divisions caused by conscription, the persecution of ethnic minorities and political dissenters, the manipulation of the voting system, and nearly a quarter million Canadians killed or wounded and countless others psychologically scarred for the rest of their lives (Blake 166).

At the time of the inter-war years, no other author had the same amount of power as Montgomery had then and as she has still, a century later (Hammill 653). Montgomery is partially responsible for exporting Canadian literature and culture about the world and during the war this could be seen through the popularity of her novels (Hammill 653).

**Conclusion**

Montgomery played a pivotal role in shaping our Canadian identity. Her impact may not, yet, be realized, but she has helped shape our culture, which can be seen through the memorable characters she creates, such as Anne, who has the ability to change her world through the power of the word, as she is a well-known bookworm and loves to write (Tector 82). Although *Anne’s House of Dreams* was seemingly “just another Anne book”, the series remained an important staple in the lives of Canadian children because it offered a safe escape to a familiar land. Montgomery is a fascinating woman, who struggled with her own demons but put them on the shelf, or rather, wrote through them, creating story lines and characters that resonated with a hungry audience. The book’s production is important to look at, as well as the context surrounding the production, to see what was in demand during the first world war. Montgomery, always faithful to her audience, gave what was asked and used her skills to create a sense of nostalgia that was high in demand.

**Further Viewing**

*Anne of Green Gables: The Continuing Story*. This film re-imagined what Anne’s world would have been like if the war was present in the last books in Montgomery’s series.

**Works Cited**


Works Consulted


**Pressures of the White Feather in L.M.**
Introduction

One popular title under the theme of Children's Books and War is *Rilla of Ingleside*. The novel was written by Lucy Maud Montgomery and was published in 1921, after the Great War had ended. Although Montgomery had not written this novel specifically for children, by the 1920s all her books were being marketed for children and they became equally popular for children and adults alike (Rubio, *Gift of Wings* 289).

This particular copy is located in the Children's Literature Archive at Ryerson University and was published by Grosset and Dunlap. It does not have the illustrated cover or the frontispiece of the first edition however, there are decorated end pages illustrated by Sheldon. Although this reprint was published in New York, there is a sticker in the book which reads, “711 The Old Corner Book Store, Inc. Boston, – Mass.” indicating that this copy was likely sold by the historic book store. There is also a name, “Jennifer Bevan,” written in pencil, indicating a former owner of this copy.

The novel follows the maturation of Rilla, a native of idyllic Prince Edward Island at the time when WWI shakes Canadian men and women into action. This is one of the few enduring titles of war fiction and it contains a cultural memory of the trauma and horrors Canadian men endured. Through Rilla’s older brothers, Jem and Walter Blythe, aspects of what Anglo-Canadian men faced can be discerned, allowing readers an understanding of WWI.
Summary

This coming-of-age novel opens with the news of the war breaking out in 1914. The 35 chapters focus on Anne and Gilbert’s youngest child, Bertha Marilla Blythe. Rilla is impetuous and oblivious, ready to take part in adult activities. But when WWI occurs, her brothers, friends and beau go off to war and Rilla has to grow up in ways she had not expected. The novel also shows the struggle young men (and their loved ones) had with the ugliness and death associated with war through the characters of Jem and Walter Blythe. These men also had to grow up too fast. They had to kill men like themselves and were unable to forget the aftermath of battles or worse, they never made it back from the battlefields. Through Rilla’s brothers readers understand the desire to fight as well as the desire to avoid the fighting and that the men that returned home were not the same as those who initially left.

Production and Reception

As a novel published after the war had ended, written by the author of the beloved “Anne” and focusing on Anne’s youngest child, this book did not sell as much as Anne of Green Gables did. By 1924 it had only sold 12,000 copies. This could be due to the fact that Montgomery did not give the US much credit in her novel. There are letters from her American publisher Stokes, griping that she had not “taffied up” America enough in her novel (Russell). To this Montgomery stressed that she had written about Canada and the war. Another reason for the poor sales could be that after the Great War came the Great Depression (Mitchell 144) and economic instability led to a decrease in book sales. It should be mentioned that Rilla of Ingleside went on to have various reprints, editions and translations published and that Montgomery
herself expected the lesser sales.

**Gender Pressure in the Great War**

When England called upon Canada, the Anglo-Canadian communities rose up to the challenge. Many young men were anxious to go fight in the war, afraid they would miss out on the fun because the war was not expected to last long. Young women took up the jobs their brothers, fathers and friends left behind so that the country continued to run on a day-to-day basis while the men were away. This arrangement was suitable, at the start. However, many men were killed or maimed. They went missing or taken hostage and the war continued for 4 bitter years.

In this time Lucy Maud Montgomery saw the men in her Leaskdale community off to join the battles, along with her half-brother Hugh Carlyle Montgomery. Like Anne and her daughter Rilla, Montgomery had her ear out for any news of the men she knew, dreading to read a familiar name in the list of those killed in action (Waterston, *Magic Island* 105). Meanwhile on the battle fields, the men who were unlucky enough to be of age to fight were trying to survive. The pressure to fight and return victorious was strong and works such as *Rilla of Ingleside* is a way of holding broken spirits together in cultural memory.

**The Leaskdale Boys**

Montgomery had extensive material to use for this novel stemming from the letters of the young men from her community and from her brother. Robert Brooks, Morley Shier and Goldwin Lapp were from families within the Leaskdale community who were known to Montgomery, or rather Mrs. Macdonald the wife of their minister. There were many reasons for young men to join the war. Appeal of a man’s moral sense through religious analogy of good and evil, a sense of patriotism or of principle, a sense of disgust over stories of atrocities committed against others and for the fun of an adventure were the most common. There was also recruitment through pressure. Whatever their reasons, the Leaskdale boys joined the war
through the 256th Royal Air Force Squadron (Brooks), 116th battalion of the 3rd Division of Canadian Corps (Shier) and the 20th Canadian Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (Lapp) and their letters provided a broad understanding of the war. Yet the tragic details of their service also provided poignant moments in Montgomery’s novel.

In the stories of these young men readers can see Jem Blythe. He joins up right away and fights hard. He goes missing for some agonizing months and when he returns home, he has a limp. A character named for Montgomery's half-brother Carl loses an eye (Waterston, Magic Island 108). The loss is similar to that actually sustained by Carl, who had returned from Vimy Ridge without part of his leg. In her novel Rainbow Valley, Walter, then a boy, has a premonition of the war (Carvert 20). He says “Jem will want to go – it will be such an adventure – but I won’t. Only I’ll have to…” Before news of Walter’s death reaches the Blythes, Dog Monday howls inconsolably. This detail was replicated from the story of the Lapp's dog howling all night prior to the telegraph of George Lapp’s death. The novel does not detail actual battles and trench warfare. There is no detailed account in that regard. Yet Montgomery fully conveyed the anguish and dread, the myriad of emotions war generates and the little details that tell the story.

**The Piper in Flanders Fields**

Montgomery was once presented to the Governor General, Earl Grey (Rubio, Gift of Wings 136). At this meeting, she would have also been introduced to John McCrae, as he was also attending the event. It is unclear if they interacted beyond this however McCrae was the type of man Montgomery held in high regard. Born in Guelph, McCrae’s family was originally from Scotland and they were devout
Presbyterians and his background was a point of connection between the two. John McCrae would have rated himself as soldier first, doctor second and writer third (Granfield 23).

Although he had retired from the military in 1904, he offered himself either as a soldier or doctor for the purposes of the war when the news broke. McCrae was a well-respected surgeon, moving up the ranks over the course of WWI. May 3, 1915, McCrae’s friend Lt. Alexis Helmer was a casualty of war. His death was the inspiration for “In Flanders Fields” which McCrae wrote the very next day. Yet the poem was not published until Dec. 8, 1915, by the British periodical Punch. After which, it exploded across the globe.
Regardless of how much she might have known of McCrae when they met, after the publication of his poem Montgomery would have gained knowledge of his background. McCrae then became the inspiration for her character Water Blythe. In
the novel, Walter writes a poem titled “The Piper” which brought him fame similar to McCrae’s “In Flanders Fields.” Walter’s poem was never published in *Rilla of Ingleside*, although it is later published in *The Blythes Are Quoted*. McCrae inspires patriotism and an emotional link to the fallen soldiers, as well as referencing to eternal sleep or death through the symbolism of poppies (Waterston, *Magic Island* 103).

However, Walter’s poem held a slightly different connotation. For Walter the piper’s call was answered by the young Canadians who joined the war front, yet the piper is mysterious and the call is dark and seductive. This piper is referenced in *Rainbow Valley*. He came in a vision to Walter, where the children followed the piper away from home. The piper inspires courage and his mythical call (the war rhetoric) is met by many young men over the course of WWI (Rubio, *Gift of Wings* 285). Yet the piper is also a reference to the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* who led children to their death. Likewise, Walter’s piper is leading these men to their death on battlefields far from home.

Walter’s poem is much darker and fanciful compared to McCrae’s. Perhaps it is because Walter is known to have a sensitive soul and was terrified of joining the war and seeing death’s ugliness for himself. Yet it also shows Montgomery’s own confusion over the war, for as much as the war horrified her with its brutality, she also agreed it was the necessary means to triumph over evil (Rubio, *Gift of Wings* 286). The duality of the piper creates a rift and obscures Montgomery’s message. Where McCrae writes a call to arms, Walter writes a warning.

**The White Feather Brigade**

Walter Blythe had faced typhoid prior to the call of war in 1914 and it wasn’t until 1915 that Walter felt strong enough to join the war efforts. However, while he was regaining his strength and pursuing further education at Redmond College, Walter was continuously pressured to join the war. It was there that he was anonymously given a white feather, a symbol of cowardice.
it is believed that this symbolism originates from cockfighting. Birds with white feathers were looked upon unfavourably. People believed the bird would likely lose the fight. However, the white feather also indicated that the bird was not a purebred. By the time WWI began, many people, especially those who were educated, would connect a white feather with cowardice. This is due to literature such as *The Four Feathers* by A. E. W. Mason (Duffy).

In Britain, Admiral Charles Fitzgerald initiated an “Organisation of the White Feather,” which urged British women to present feathers to able bodied men in hopes of pressuring them into recruitment offices. As popularity grew for this practice, it spread across the oceans. This led to a number of problems as the white feather campaign grew out of hand. By shaming men with these feathers, these female propagandists threatened the ideals of masculinity. The receivers of these feathers did not wish to be looked down upon. They questioned whether they were truly men and these doubts would usually lead them to recruitment houses and battlefields.

Feathers were handed out without thought or sensitivity. They were handed to men who worked for the government, men who were in poor health, men who had returned home on leaves and, most troubling were the feathers handed to boys who were not old enough to join. Some problems were fixed, such as armbands in England that denoted a man was working for his “King and Country” (Hart 2). Other problems were ignored because the need for men in the trenches was great. Enlisting soldiers had to fill out a form called an Attestation Paper (Grandfield), which confirms under oath that the facts given on the form are true; a practice which became a neglected formality as the war went on. Every able body counted, regardless of age or health.

*A New World*

Montgomery recorded a legitimate fear in her journal on June 17, 1916: “Our old
world is passed away forever – and I fear that those of us who have lived half our span therein will never feel wholly at home in the new.” (Montgomery, Selected Journals 186). The white feathers may have made men question their masculinity and measure it by the willingness to fight in war but it was the war that reshaped gender identities. It allowed women to surpass the stigma of the “weaker sex” and the end of WWI did not mean that the women reverted back to their old positions easily. The surviving men came home broken and racked with guilt and often unable to cope with returning to their old lives. Yet Montgomery attempted to hold on to the “old world” in her closing chapter in Rilla of Ingleside. With the return of her beau, Ken Ford, Rilla reverted back to her lisp, a habit she had outgrown during the war. Many feminist critics have railed at this show of retrogression in Rilla’s character. However, the years before writing this novel had been especially hard on Montgomery with a number of deaths, a miscarriage, her husband Ewan’s mental illness and most especially her beloved Frede’s passing. It is to Frede whom she dedicated Rilla and it is likely Montgomery’s yearning for days gone that she has Rilla slip into old habits.

Conclusion

Deep in the roots of this novel there is propaganda present. It’s in the way the women take up the gendered identities of men when a country is left to them. It is
in the way young boys like Shirley Blythe want to join in the war. It’s especially in the way Jem and Walter Blythe join silently, with or without facing the shame of the dreadful White Feather and in the way men such as these two fought bravely despite fears and reservations. Montgomery and McCrae bring to mind unspeakable horrors faced and survived. And keep alive a cultural memory of Anglo-Canadians fighting a war for their country and their families.

“Now they remain to us forever young Who with such splendour gave their youth away.”
—Sheard

Epigraph in Rilla of Ingleside

Visit the catalogue record of Rilla of Ingleside at the Children’s Literature Archive here.
Read an online copy of Rilla of Ingleside on Project Gutenberg here.

Bibliography


**Content & Context of World War I: Ideology,**
Gender, and Ruth Fielding

© March 29, 2014  2014, Children's Books and War  100th Anniversary of World War One, Children's Literature, Edward Stratemeyer, First World War, Ruth Fielding, series fiction, Women in war, women's fiction, World War 1, WWI  Kira Metcalfe

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Introduction

By 1917 America dissolved any illusions of neutrality, and joined World War One (1914-1917) (Knock). Alice B. Emerson’s *Ruth Fielding At College* (1917) was published in the United States that same year. The subject matter and plot have no relation to the war. However, the ways in which the early 20th century was shaped by the Great War are mirrored in the text. The novel entertains many ideological parallels between its narrative content and its historical context. *Ruth Fielding at College*‘s production history displays this well. As the product of the Edward Stratemeyer syndicate, the text shows that relationships such as author/reader, institution/student, and even nation/soldier were shifting at an increasing rate.

Throughout the text one sees gender, ideology, and power come together in the socio-economic structures experienced by the characters. This is notable considering that the Ruth Fielding series as a whole is marketed for young
girls. Confoundingly, the concepts present in both content, and the history, all appear to not only be in transition, but rest upon a threshold. With this in mind the text could be easily seen as a potential response to the war efforts. However, if one is speaking of the actual impact of *Ruth Fielding at College* current gleanings need to be set aside.

*Ruth Fielding At College*

The 11th volume in the Ruth Fielding series, *Ruth Fielding At College*, or, *The Missing Examination Papers* continues the tale of orphaned filmmaker Ruth Fielding. Before arriving at Ardmore college for her freshman year, a lost girl named “Maggie” washes ashore at Ruth’s home. Little does Ruth know this is the same girl, Margaret Altooff, who went missing from Ardmore the year before—along with an Egyptian vase containing examination papers. After a hazing ritual “Maggie” had run away, causing the school’s sorority to close its doors.

The copy of the text located in Ryerson University’s Children’s Literature Archive is presented in Hardcover with a printed illustration on its front (fig. 1). Preceding the narrative is an illustrated page by R. Emmett Owen (Johnson “Alice B. Emerson” 119) (fig. 2). The illustration depicts a poignant moment in the text, where Ruth is caught in a storm. This eventually leads to the revelation of Maggie’s identity and discovery of the missing exam papers. Although the next page states that the novel is illustrated it is otherwise not; nor is the artist credited other than his signature on the illustration itself. A list of the Ruth Fielding volumes to date follows the title page. Several pages at the end of the book are dedicated to various advertisements for series books published by the publisher responsible for most of the Ruth Fielding series, Cupples & Leon.

**The Literary Syndicate and The Single Author**

A literary syndicate produces books through a group of writers, usually under a pseudonym. Those writers are paid a flat rate for each series/book they write (Herbert 189-190). The establishment of the literary syndicate coincides with other “efficiency” seekers of the early 20th century, such as Henry T. Ford and his factory assembly line (Stoneley 91). The Edward Stratemeyer literary syndicate produced the Ruth Fielding series under the pseudonym Alice B. Emerson. Between 1913 and 1934 a total of thirty volumes were commissioned for the series (Johnson “Alice B. Emerson” 119).

Edward Stratemeyer has become synonymous with children’s series literature
He operated under at least eight pseudonyms at a time, quickly producing staggering amounts of written work (xvi). After ghostwriting for the late Horatio Alger, Stratemeyer officially established his Literary Syndicate in 1905 (xviii, xx). For Stratemeyer’s syndicate he would develop the concept of a series, along with chapter outlines for the syndicate writers to complete (xxviii). The completed chapters would be reviewed to see if they were up to Stratemeyer’s high standards (xxviii). Once a writer became part of the syndicate they would usually go on to write many Stratemeyer series books (xxi, xxviii). However, contracts signed by authors forced them to not only use pseudonyms, but also remain completely anonymous (xxviii).

The presumption of a single author remains largely unquestioned in spite of producers like the Stratemeyer Literary Syndicate. It is obvious that, simply from the system of the syndicate, many more “authors” are involved. Also, the person most responsible for the content is often left unacknowledged. Fan mail was addressed to “Alice B. Emerson,” while the “real” author W.B. Foster is only attributed to the series as a result of Stratemeyer’s records (Stratemeyer Syndicate; Johnson “Appendix D – Series Contributors” 307). Little to no other information is available about Foster himself.

Series Books and Advertising Literature

Throughout his long career Stratemeyer did not go without his detractors. Notably the Chief Scout Librarian of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), Franklin K. Mathiews expressed caution. There was great concern about what was produced by the syndicate. Primarily the works were not in line with what children should be reading (Johnson “Introduction: The People Behind the Books” xxiv). In other words, series
books were essentially frivolous and fruitless (xxiv-xxv). Other adults, and parents alike, questioned the effect of series fiction on adolescents. This barely dented the influence Stratemeyer, and other series fiction producers, had already established (Baxter Introduction 10).

The acknowledgement of series fiction’s apparent place in literature could be seen in its marketing. In 1917 Ruth Fielding At College, the newest volume in the Ruth Fielding series, is announced in a New York Tribune Article (“Choice Gleanings From the Publisher’s Spring Catalogues” 9). On the same page of the article is an advertisement for an arguably different “type” of book. My Unknown Chum’s advertisement (fig. 3) mimics what Mathiews would prefer to any Stratemeyer series book (Johnson “Introduction: The People Behind the Books” xxiv). The advertisement even references soldiers, stating that the book “Should be the Chum of Every Soldier—Officer or Private” (My Unknown Chum by Henry Garrity). This reference points to the purveyance of war at the time, and how service was the measure of society. Another smaller advertisement is for a book titled Woman (fig. 4). Although the book appears to be progressive, its exampled reception maintains a downgrading of women’s abilities. The advertisement states, “No woman could have written such a book” (Woman by Vance Thomas). This thinking falls in line with the use of female pseudonyms for series fiction, as it was a lesser form of fiction. In the process, women are solidified in their respective place; that is, until effects of World War I.

American Women during WWI

American women made themselves a part of the war effort, even during the years leading up to 1914. The demographics consisted of high school educated, lower middle class women. (Hamilton-Honey “Two Miles Forward, One Mile Back” 135-139). From the Red Cross to car factories, women made their mark (159, 150). Ruth herself went on to work for the Red Cross in subsequent volumes of the series (167). The war had women enter many other areas of the otherwise male-dominated workforce (166). The opportunities of contention from their male counterparts made women increasingly aware of their position in the world.
A symptom of these “gender wars,” the Great War became just as politically charged on the home front as the actual battlefield. At the time government authority figures both helped and hindered the progress of women’s involvement in the war. Positions of power were held both by male detractors as well as champions of women’s active role. The tug-of-war that ensued results in a transitional mentality within women’s rights. Women found themselves in a peculiar place; a place where there was an opportunity to hold a potential position of power. On the other hand, even this potential meant that women were viewed as attempting to take the place of men. Literally, “their presence became an open threat.”

**Power Plays**

The character Ruth Fielding shows that the early 20th century heroine is just as much in transition as the girl reading their exploits. Ruth and her friends have access to a level of education that was still scarce for women at the time. Simultaneously the same pressures, stresses, and taboos remained. Like the women of her time Ruth never attempts to take on the male role. Ruth maintains a primarily passive personality. It begs the question, whether or not these attributes make Ruth simply another cog in the wheel, or a liberator. After all, despite Ruth’s passivity she is referred to as a “dynamic figure of command.” More importantly Ruth exemplifies an ability to adapt. She was not always well off and successful; rather she always rose to the occasion. As Hamilton-Honey states, “Women were not always simply ‘placeholders,’ nor did they always see their work that way.” Women were essentially forced to “pick their battles.” Therefore, through the text much of the framework of many conditional freedoms experienced by young women is constructed. Women’s roles and “place” become increasingly apparent once shifted by the war.

**Gender and Authority**

Much of what occurs around Ruth and her friends is a result of being stuck in this sort
of transitional state. The different sides of the transition are illustrated in a variety of ways. First, in how Rebecca Franye, one of Ruth’s classmates, is positioned through Ardmore’s social and academic circles. Both girls’ assumptions or evaluations of college and college life are problematic. Ruth was enchanted by the concept of college and Ardmore prior to attending. Ardmore becomes elevated as a sort of exotic wish fulfilment for Ruth—almost a “touristic experience” (Stoneley 94). In this case Rebecca, who is more worried about how she is perceived by classmates than her studies, contrasts Ruth’s personality. Rebecca’s expectations of school as only being for the wealthy are not the case. Rather than being ostracized for being poor, her fear, she is shunned for not following the rules (95-97).

According to Ruth Fielding at College, there is no good outcome from pretending to be part of a class you are not (97). The novel perpetuates the “knowing of one’s place,” which is one side of the threshold experienced by women in the early 20th century. Ruth herself is quite aware of both the freedoms and downfalls of being a girl, a woman, in early 20th century America. She expresses disdain for those who perform to be someone other than who they are. In this respect Ruth Fielding could be the ideal transitional female adolescent (Baxter “Teen Reading at the Turn of the Century” 140). She achieves this in relation to Rebecca and Maggie; both contrastingly, but also conditionally. The relationship is conditional because, without the contrast, Ruth’s ideality would not necessarily be as apparent (Baxter Introduction 19).

**Institution and Power Structures**

How the characters of this text are treated, and seen as transitional characters, is a
result of the systems they are placed into. Therefore, apart from gender role’s, the text aligns itself with these other transitional sentiments of the early 20th century. This is accomplished through the framework of power plays, consequences, and the submission to a higher authority. *Ruth Fielding At College* employs power and authority in two ways, and displays the transition between the two. Instantly the reader is shown how power structures can operate through the consequences of corruption and displaying the extremes of authority. In the text a failed sorority hazing leads to missed opportunities. Now both new and old students are not able to become part of a sorority due to its consequential dismantling. Misunderstandings and hardships surrounding this situation, and one sees it carry over into the next school year.

However, a second exercise of authority takes its place, that was arguably always present: the senior class. The removal of the sorority makes the presence more apparent. Throughout the remainder of the text the “regular” politics and dynamics of the college are framed as appropriate and justified. Initially one sees rejection and hostility on part of the “freshies” forced to wear specified coloured hats by the seniors (Emerson 39). Despite this initial rebellion the freshmen eventually obey the rule. The exercise of power is justified as a means of unifying each student-body class. These overarching sentiments of class distinctions can be seen as an affect of World War I, and the adjacent acceleration of industry (Hamilton-Honey “Running the Gamut and the Gauntlet” 181; Baxter Introduction 16). Ardmore, in this respect, represents a “social-industrial matrix” through the tension that arises within its hierarchy; made increasingly visible by the transition from the old “regime” (Stoneley 93). Transitional roles in *Ruth Fielding at College*, which consist of the positioned individual, positions the reader to make the most of their given situation (Baxter Introduction 13). It is through transitional states that the narrative of *Ruth Fielding At College* presents its contemporary and future readers with the ideology that became apparent with the advent of World War I.

**Categories and the Growth of Industrialization**

The relationship between exercises of power, agency and authority in the real world were experiencing a transition—Ruth Fielding is a product of that. These are notions that mirror themselves not only from the text itself, but through the producer, and the consumer. For one, the novel was increasingly seen as a commodity (Stoneley 104). Syndicate writing shows these changes in the book market throughout the 20th century (Baxter Introduction 13, “Teen Reading at the Turn of the Century”
It was “not uncommon” to work in movies at the time (Hamilton-Honey “Taking Advantage of New Markets” 205). Movies, and technology subsequently provided a “pull” for series fiction’s younger audiences (Stoneley 90). The content of material being published reflects an ever-changing world. Notions of consumerism, and nationalism meet artistic freedom, and escapism. Whether pertaining to the production of a book or the receiving of education, the goal becomes more about enabling a student body—a force—a body of work as a whole, than the work of one student or one writer. The individual soldier makes way for the nation, and the individual student does so for the institution’s hierarchy. Triumphant the literary syndicate takes over for the single author.

**Conclusion: Submission or Omission?**

Another well-known girls’ series fiction brand, the American Girl series, was eventually styled into dolls that reflected different battles or moments in American history (Silvey 408). Along with Ruth Fielding one sees the establishment of series books as playing a prominent historic role in the formation of patriotism and ideology in America. The reader is not only positioned in the shift of a book’s production, but through it. The system and the person, the creator and the reader, the soldier and the country are in the process of converging—an affect exacerbated by *Ruth Fielding At College* in the climate of War.

In considering the power structures presented in the text, their subversive nature comes into question. When situated with the rest of the series, *Ruth Fielding At College* is a subversive text insofar as it represents another step closer, a transition, to gender equality (Hamilton-Honey “Taking Advantage of New Markets” 221). However, as a stand-alone novel the volume provides a snapshot for how women were still greatly operating “within patriarchal boundaries” at the turn of the 20th century (182). Therefore, the text will never become completely subversive. Series fiction was used as a means to define a problem and then provide the “possible solution” (Baxter Introduction 11). Instead it leaves readers and characters caught in a liminal space.

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**Knightly Soldiers and Fair Ladies; Una and The Red Cross Knight in WWI**

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UNA AND THE RED CROSS KNIGHT AND OTHER TALES FROM SPENSER'S FAERY QUEENE

by

N. G. Royde-Smith

ILLUSTRATED BY T. H. Robinson

LONDON
J. M. DENT & CO. 1905

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
Introduction
The story Una and the Red Cross Knight was written by N.G. Royde-Smith, first published in 1914. As the title suggests, this was not an original work by Royde-Smith, but a retelling of the original tale written by Edmund Spenser in the 16th century, as a part of a larger collective epic titled The Faery Queene. With her own retelling, Royde-Smith made the creative decision to translate much of Spenser’s original writings, making it more accessible for the child reader of her time period. Not wishing to compromise the integrity of the original work, there are many portions of the original text to be found within Una and the Red Cross Knight, interwoven with her own translations of Spenser’s poetry. This results in a blending of literary styles, resulting in the juxtaposition of the original poetry, while giving the reader more understandable prose to grasp a hold of.

This exhibit will examine the book within the context of World War 1; how it was intended for children of the time period and its overall link with British Nationalism and propaganda of the time. Although it is rarely thought of, Children’s Literature as a category can say much about the time period and country that it was produced in; it is often an example of the values which were considered most important at the time, and, therefore of the utmost important to convey to the child. Although this book was first published in 1905, it would be reprinted four times, up to 1927, which gives evidence that this particular book was considered to be ideal for children.

Taking Place in a medieval land where fairies and witches abound, Una and the Red Cross Knight tells the story of a knight who requests an adventure from Queen Glorianna, ruler of Faery Land. Granting this, she instructs the young man to travel with Princess Una; a maiden who’s land and family have been seized by a vicious dragon. As they journey together much befalls them, as they face the conniving of witches and wizards who wish to do them harm for no other purpose than the hatred of goodness. Eventually, they overcome their many obstacles, where the Red Cross Knight defeats the dragon after a grueling battle, and the two marry, spending many happy days together. After much celebration the Red Cross Knight returns to the court of Glorianna to finish his service, promising to return on its completion.

**Gender Roles**

When a state is in a trying time, such as a depression or war, we see an emergence of more conservative values within the culture. World War I was no different in this; With Una and the Red Cross Knight originally being penned in the 15th century, it shouldn’t be surprising that every traditional gender roles are implicitly encouraged.
throughout the text, making it an appropriate tome for the time period. What should be paid attention to, however, is the context within which this text was produced and repeatedly reprinted; in a country with a positive notion of propaganda and a conscious effort to indoctrinate the next generation with acceptable values.

The Red Cross Knight himself is proven to be a noble youth, actively seeking to serve his kingdom and more than ready to risk his life for his queen and the maiden he has been pledged to. Yet justice is also a master he fervently serves, making him a knight from a magical medieval kingdom that would have made a perfect soldier for a few centuries after his initial creation. Even within the first image that we view the Knight, he stands nobly tall, sword held straight to his side as a creature of evil cowers before him.
A knight for the just, he never fails to vanquish evil wherever he see’s it, proving no
beast too ferocious or magician too clever. Going above and beyond his called for duty is second nature to the medieval hero, who on more than one occasion chooses to right the wrongs done by others, and to seek justice for those who cannot do so for themselves. It is, he feels, his responsibility to involve himself in the problems of others. Indeed, it is these acts that elevate the knight and ultimately make him a man. It is not hard to see where such qualities and ideas of virtue would be appealing in a time of war. Beyond just appearing in children’s books these same virtues would come to be often espoused in propaganda of the time, with the Knight himself even used in some of these images.

Yet it is not just makings of a good soldier that is explored within the book. The role of women is also subtly played to within Una and the Red Cross Knight. The first female character to be introduced in the story is Queen Glorianna herself, who is described as beautiful and wise, and a great ruler of her kingdom. The other two most prominent female characters then become princess Una and the witch Duessa. Both are alike in beauty and charm, yet cannot be more different in every other way. Modest and in mourning for the state of her kingdom, Una’s beauty, while present, is more subdued than the glamorous Duessa (whose very name means falsehood). Yet she herself is a pleasant companion for the Red Cross Knight, along with being persevering and loyal. Even when the two are separated by the deceitful Duessa, she pursues her companion dauntlessly, enduring many hardships along the way.
Duess's abundance of beauty, in turn, proves to be almost as dangerous as her black
magic, as she uses it to enchant all around her, to the point of believing her wholly innocent. Within the abundant artwork of the novel, she appears far more adorned than her modest counterpart, with more detailed dresses and her well styled with netting and adornments. Even her facial features differ, sometimes showing a cool expression. It is only later revealed that her beauty is an illusion, which she has used to manipulate and cause chaos for those around her.
Together, these women display traits that are both desired and considered
dangerous within the female individual. Much like the qualities that were praised within propaganda for men at the time, these were exemplified within propaganda aimed at the female demographic. A good wartime woman was loyal to both her family and country, proving herself more than willing to make sacrifices for both. She was resourceful, modest, and loving of her husband, waiting for him to return but encouraging him to the front lines. In this, a good woman came to represent the homestead as a place of safety and domestic comfort, for which its protection merited war.

Yet the female form also came to embody the very soul of the nation (along with many others, such as Mother Russia) itself. Britania was the most popular of these personifications, often displayed as a tall and beautiful woman, and royally dressed. A dual character, she could be seen alternately leading the charge into battle, or standing watch to her country, the implication of which that it was in need of defending.

A New Kind of Story Telling

World War 1 was a shock to much of the world, leaving citizens of the west questioning the merit of a war that had started by the assassination of an unknown Archduke. Politicians and others in power were very aware of this fact, and the possible ramifications that could result from a reluctant public and army. Understanding this became created an imperative to change the metanarrative of this new and grand war; rather than have it about powers in far off lands, it would
become a tale of righting the wrongs of other nations, as the duty of the just and the brave. This threat was not a distant one, but one that, unless stopped, would bring disaster to England’s door. In spite of much of England being industrialized, it was the small and dwindling number of countryside villages which became representative of England, symbolizing the simplicity and beauty of family life. (This was also linked to the frequent personification of the country as the woman Britania.) These ideals would be linked to Saint George, slayer of dragons and tangible symbol of these ideas. Although propaganda usually featured the modern soldier, it became common for it also feature the saint himself, recalling the past and the very role of a modern knight in shining armor. In this, the frequent reprinting (four times between 1911 and 1927) of the Royde-Smith’s book was an understandable parallel. These messages were found to be so appropriate that the book would be found on numerous lists of good gift books for children and necessary stock for libraries for years during and after the war. Beyond centering on this favourite saint (which Royde-Smith makes a deliberate point of stating in her introduction) the story itself offers parallels for the metanarrative being created about the war at the time. Much like the brave soldiers of Britain, the Red Cross Knight selflessly fights for his sovereign lord and country, while rescuing those who are in need. There is no complexity in these tasks, with the just character’s being obviously righteous and the acting agents of goodness, while their counterparts are of simple evil, and can only be stopped by the intervening forces of brave knights of the realm. Upon completion of this task, the Red Cross Knight receives glory and praise, with the chance to finally return to his homestead and enjoy time with his princess. A true hero, he has rid the world of one last dragon, and would be ready at a moment’s notice to return to the service of his kingdom if the need were to arise.
Background

This book is based on the original epic poem of British poet Edmund Spenser, titled The Faery Queene, the first half of which was published in 1590 (Spenser would die before having a chance to finish what would have been the largest epic of its time). As was common for many writers of the time, the first book, although centering on the exploits of the Red Cross Knight, was made in homage to Queen Elizabeth, represented by the fair and wise Queen Glorianna of the Fairy Realm, while the villains within the story represented her political foes, ranging from the Spanish to Queen Mary of Scotland; Even in the 16th century these stories had a very strong tie with politics and war, making Royde-Smith’s decision to rewrite and update the tale of Una and her Knight in time for the first World War all the more interesting of a coincidence.

This would be the first work published by Naomi Gwladys Royde-Smith (or N.G. Royde-Smith was far as scholars can tell, this pen name was the creation of Naomi herself, as a combination of her father’s and married name). In this lengthy opening, Royde-Smith emphasizes the text’s role as a work of childrens’ literature, stating the language may be difficult for the younger reader, but, if time is taken over the verses written by Spenser, they would have little trouble. Spenser is reaffirmed as a great British author, “in between Chaucer and Shakespeare”, along with a small biography detailing his life before and after being a writer under the favour of Queen Elizabeth. In this, she explains the allegorical nature of the stories, as well as going to detail of the conflict between the protestants and Catholics during that
time period. Although feelings about this conflict have lessened since then, the sense of nationalism that this would have evoked in the early 20th century would have still been strong.

The many beautiful illustrations to be found within the text were created by Thomas Heath Robinson of the Robinson brothers. Although the least known of the two today, he was highly regarded as a black and white illustrator in the early 20th century.

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A Women’s Role in the War Effort in Russell Braddon’s *Woman in Arms: the story of Nancy Wake*

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Traditional war heroes of past literature have often been associated with the memories and images of brave and strapping young men, ready to do battle on the field with other brave and strapping young men. Russell Braddon’s *Woman in Arms: the story of Nancy Wake*, abridged junior edition published in 1963, turns the traditional ideal of a war hero on its heels and introduces us to the life story of one of the most decorated servicewomen serving the Allies’ in the Second World War.

The physical edition of Russell Braddon’s book is found in the Children’s Literature Archive Collection at Ryerson University, published in London by Collins in 1963 (originally published in 1956). Its genre falls into several categories, including non-fiction, biography and history (WW2). There are only a few images in this book, including a map of France and scans of photographs of Nancy and her friends, allies and fellow servicemen. In relation to the greater topic of *Children’s Books and War*, it is important to look at the influence Wake’s story had on those reading the novel.
when it was published, and those reading it today. Looking at Wake’s influence as a celebrated heroine of World War Two, and by looking at resources such as newspaper clippings and historical accounts, the authority of women in the war effort will develop as a crucial approach to the theme of *Children’s Books and War*.

In order to stipulate the books contents into the larger umbrella theme of children’s books in war, it is important to understand its context and specifics about certain aspects of the war, pertaining to the events described. By looking at certain ideological such as gender and sexuality, understanding the context and the meaning of the book becomes important as we can begin to understand the books intentions on its audience. By asking questions about gender roles, masculinity, and issues surrounding power and authority, we can begin to understand this books critical role in the discussion of its position in the theme of children’s books in war.

**Background to French Resistance in The Second World War**

World War II as a war fought between the Axis Powers and the Allies (Britain, the Soviet Union and the USA), after Germany had disregarded accordance’s with the Treaty of Versailles, invading Poland and other Eastern European nations. Germany refuses to leave Poland and Britain declares war in September 1939. In 1940, 3/5 of France fell to Germany in rapid succession, while the rest of France was established as a neutral state with its government at Vichy (Wright, 2013). The Vichy Government was a pro-German puppet to administer unoccupied France and the colonies. The Maquis, with whom Wake worked with closely with for years, was the underground patriotic movement in France from 1939-1945 (Hoad 2003).

**Description of the Text as a Physical Object**

This Junior Edition of *Women in Arms: the story of Nancy Wake* is a small book that fits roughly in the size of your hand. The book itself is short (192 pages) and has 14 illustrations throughout, including maps, photographs of family, membership cars, and photographs of the real characters discussed in the book. The sources of the photographs are unknown as there are no captions describing such, and no extra
The book follows the true story of a native New Zealander participating in the French Resistance movements and eventually joining the Special Operations Executive (a branch of the British Army), during the Second World War in Europe. With her work on the resistance front and as a British Agent, Wake, also known as the White Mouse as she ran laps around the Gestapo, became one of Churchill’s most highly decorated special agents (Willscher, 2011). The story starts off with a more than brief introduction into Wake’s emigration to France and her marriage to Henri, a wealthy industrialist from Marseille at the breakout of World War Two. With the occupation of France by the Nazis, Wake learns to drive a truck and becomes a courier of first messages, then later soldiers (Ward, 2000). She next gets involved with the movement of helping wounded or deserter soldiers exit France. Her fiery personality and natural ability to sweet-talk anyone and everyone within a 20-mile radius of her propelled her success and popularity amongst those involved in the resistance movement.

Throughout this time she is arrested and questioned and ultimately released, weaving a web of intricate and detailed lies. Once she became a well-known enemy of the Gestapo, she had to make an exit from Marseille to avoid capture. Travelling from Spain and eventually to London, she becomes involved as a British Agent working with the Special Operation Executive. After
parachuting into Auvergne, central France, to organize the Maquis and its Resistance preparation for D-Day, Wake led thousands of men into guerrilla style warfare while inflicting severe damage on German troops and facilities. A year after Wake had left France, she learnt, her husband had been tortured and killed by the Germans, after refusing to give information on where she might be. (Ward, 2000). As Braddon concludes in the last chapter of his book, Wake remained in Paris until 1947, returned to the Australia of her youth, dabbling in politics of the Commonwealth Liberal Party, and eventually returning to Britain in the fifties, where she remained - completely unaffected by her high military awards from the United States, Britain and France (Braddon). Not included in the book because of its publishing date, but Nancy Wake died on August 7 2011 in a London Hospital, at the age of 98.

“I’m glad I was there. I’m glad I did what I did. I hate war and violence but, if they come, then I don’t see why we women should just wave our men a proud good-bye and then knit them balaclavas.” - Nancy Wake, Final Chapter in Braddon’s Book.

A Typical Children’s Book?

Within the larger context of children’s books and war, Nancy Wake is a representation of a different take on a book for children about the Second World War, because of its lack of traditional characteristic’s children’s books generally have, such as colourful pictures, larger text, and a bright and vivid welcoming front cover. The fact that this book has virtually none of those characteristics allows it to become one of its own and stands out from what is commonly referred to as the children’s books.

Published Archival Text on Braddon’s Book

Published by The Times in London, England is an advertisement (see left) for a conference put on by “The Society of Women Writers and Journalists”, in which Russell Braddon was slated to present at. This speaks volumes of the novel’s response by women, as being chosen to speak at such an event becomes an important connection into discovering the books likability, as a woman’s story told by a man.

Russell Braddon wrote this book in 1963, almost a decade after it was originally published in 1956 (See advertisement on the right). The book was published in a
time when the world was in the middle of an inter-war period, with an almost imminent daily threat of war, between the continuation tensions of the Cold War and Vietnam on the brink of a civil war. The early sixties was also a time where gender roles and specifically the traditional role of a woman, was a continually discussed hot topic. The publication of this book and the story that it tells, become as I believe, a triumph for women in the discussion about “gender roles in war”, as it tells a story embracing a heroine, and showcases the strong willed and successful life of a female resistance fighter.

Production by Braddon & His Interest in Historical Biographies

The production of the novel was not something out of the sort for Braddon, as his specialty was in writing non-fiction and even more specifically non-fiction and war. His first novel was the retelling of his own story as a prisoner of war during World War Two by the Japanese (Starck 2009). Braddon himself met with almost every one of the characters Wake mentions in her story, travelling all over Paris, Nice, Marseile and London, who, as he describes, pieced together her story for me and brought back for me what they had known of her (Braddon 2009).

Russell Braddon’s retelling of Nancy Wake’s heroic experiences in The Second World War is a story written in an inter-war period, for children and young readers with an appetite for a different and new perspective besides that of the traditional male soldier story. New research has found that children’s books are dominated by male central characters, creating a gender disparity sending a message to children that,
women and girls occupy a less important role in society than men or boys” (Flood 2011). Braddon’s novel confirms the importance of erasing this message, and aims to provide a more inclusionary one to send to young readers. A Woman in Arms‘ crucial connection to the overriding theme of children’s books in war, familiarizes readers with the ever growing discussion regarding gender roles, by examining the expansive role of women in war time from all walks of life.

“My war was full of laughter and people I loved”

-Nancy Wake (Braddon 2009)

Works Cited


Little Women: Representing Femininity In A Time Of War

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Little Women: A Story For Girls: Representing Femininity In A Time Of War

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INTRODUCTION

Little Women: A Story For Girls by Louisa May Alcott is an illustrated novel that tells the story of the maturation of four young sisters into womanhood, intended for young adult females living in Edwardian society. This particular edition of the novel was published in 1912 in London, England, by The Religious Tract Society, a Christian
publisher which specialized in publishing children’s books and magazines. This edition of the novel features illustrations by Harold Copping, along with a preface by editor Flora Klickmann. The critical approach of this exhibit will examine how the novel was used as a pedagogical tool to implement moral values and gender norms for young women growing up in Edwardian society in 1912 in London. *Little Women: A Story For Girls* exemplifies how femininity was presented to young women during the time of the Civil War, along with how Christian moral values were promoted through children’s literature. Additionally, by incorporating the Civil War as a situation of adversity, Alcott creates a sense of empowerment for young women by promoting more independent roles (although they were confined to the passive roles in the domestic space).

**SUMMARY**

This edition of *Little Women* gives attention to aesthetic detail, as this novel was marketed as gifts to be given to young, upper middle class Edwardian women, often given at Christmastime. This aesthetic aspect is highlighted in this edition as it is a novel bound in hardcover in white cloth (Fig.1), and is published in a larger size compared to most illustrated novels at the time (approximately 7×9 inches).

The luxurious aspect of the novel is further visible as it bears gold gilt edging lining the top portion of the pages of the novel (Fig.1), along with a tissue paper separator to protect the illustrations. As well,
This novel was also marketed as a luxury item, as it was sold for a higher price than most children’s novels, evident in the advertisement for this specific edition of the novel (Fig. 2), published in 1912 in the *Atheneum*, a well-respected journal at the time (The Religious Tract Society).

Furthermore, the spine of the book also bears an illustration of a young woman, along with gold font (Fig. 3). In this way, the pale white colour that the novel was originally intended when published, paired with the gold gilt edging, symbolize an association with purity and naivety (similar to the colours that are used to publish luxury Bibles at the time). Since the publisher of the novel was Christian, the outer appearance of the novel was meant to symbolize the purity that young females are expected to display and uphold in Edwardian society.

Additionally, an illustration of a portrait of a young lady is displayed in a round gold frame on the front cover of the novel. This portrait depicts this young female with downcast eyes, which further alludes to the idea of preserving a young woman’s purity and obedience through this novel. As well, featuring a life-like portrait on the cover of the novel symbolizes how The Religious Tract Society wanted to frame this image as an ideal portrait of womanhood, depicting a female who was chaste and obedient, and one that Edwardian young women should aspire to emulate.

Throughout the novel, the text is accompanied with eight coloured plates reproduced from original watercolour drawings by Harold Copping, which are printed on white paper and display captions from the novel. These illustrations by Copping...
Fig. 4. One of eight water-colour illustrations by Copping, featured in the novel. Image taken by Tanya Tan.

Fig. 5. The Girl’s Own & Woman’s Magazine, a publication intended for young Edwardian women, also published by The Religious Tract Society and edited by Flora Klickmann. Image taken from Antique Pattern Library.

depict realistic, life-like images of the characters, which provide for a more relatable aspect for the readers (Fig.4).

PRODUCTION

The publisher of this edition of the novel, The Religious Tract Society, founded in 1799 (Delaney 28), was a Christian publisher in Britain, specializing in children’s literature with a Christian context, often with underlying morals of obedience to their stories. For example, a novel entitled, *Divine and Moral Stories For Children* by Isaac Watts (Watts) outlines moral rules to abide by for children. The Religious Tract Society was also the publisher of *The Girl’s Own and Women’s Magazine* (Fig.5), which later became titled *The Girls Own Paper*. As well, The Religious Tract Society also published a corresponding magazine for boys, entitled *The Boy’s Own Paper* (St. Andrews Special Collections). As well, *The Girls Own Paper* was considered as a source that constructed womanhood in Edwardian society (Delaney 29) as content themes focused on domesticating women and confining them to household chores. Additionally, *The Girls Own Paper* was “instrumental in establishing the girls’ story, celebrating family and home as a genre” (Simons 145). For example, *The Girls Own Paper* featured articles based in the domestic space, such as how to crochet and prepare meals along with being obedient and kind, while *The Boys Own Paper* published articles related to adventure and outdoor exploration themes. This is instrumental in
revealing how Edwardian society enforced gender expectations separately for girlhood and boyhood through children’s literature (Simons 143).

As well, the illustrator, Harold Copping, also illustrated other children’s novels at the time, such as *A Night In the Woods* by James Weston (Weston) along with several other Christian children’s novels published by The Religious Tract Society, such as *Scenes In The Life Of Our Lord* and *The Gospel In The Old Testament*, two publications also advertised in the *Atheneum* (The Religious Tract Society). Copping was largely known for his life-like, Biblical illustrations. For example, his illustrations were featured in *The Women Of The Bible*, which was also published by The Religious Tract Society, and depict portraits of feminine characters from the Bible (The Spectator).

Additionally, the editor of this edition of the novel is Flora Klickmann, an English writer and editor of books for young women, which often featured domesticated themes such as sewing and crocheting (Fig. 6). Klickmann also served as editor of *The Girl’s Own Paper*, also published by The Religious Tract Society. Flora Klickmann outlines in the preface that this novel is a positive teaching tool for young women by portraying them in a domestic space along with stressing the importance of family life. For example, Klickmann states in the preface of the novel that “the secret of the book’s longevity lies in the fact that it deals with some of the greatest of life’s fundamentals—the everyday happenings in a normal home, the love of parents and children, the strength of home ties, the ‘give and take’ of family life, and all the hundred-and-one things that crowd childhood’s days” (Klickmann 3). In this way, it is evident that Klickmann promotes this idea that young women should be domesticated, obedient and docile, and that happenings in the home, as portrayed in the novel, were fundamental to the development of young women in particular.

As well, along with morals and obedience to their parents, Edwardian children were being conditioned by adults using children’s literature as a pedagogy tool, teaching
them to behave a certain way based on their gender. Children were also being taught through children's literature what was acceptable in society in terms of behaving according to gender roles. For example, females were taught to be domesticated and aspire to marriage, while young males were taught to be adventurous and valiant. This is especially evident in *The Girls Own Paper* and *The Boys Own Paper*, as they were marketed to separate audiences based on gender (St. Andrews Special Collections).

**RECEPTION**

The reception of this edition of this novel was also received positively by critics at the time. For example, in The Religious Tract Society’s advertisement in *The Atheneum* (Fig.2), a statement from a review by *The Atheneum* is featured, stating “the type and brilliant illustrations commend this sumptuous edition” (The Religious Tract Society). A statement by *The Standard* commending Copping’s illustrations and the novel’s message is also featured in this advertisement to further promote this edition of the novel as a positive novel to give to young women.

Further, in terms of the reception of this edition of the novel, The Religious Tract Society aimed to garner a similar response to the previous edition of the novel, which is expressed in the review from *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, published in 1869. This review expresses that the novel was received positively, and seen as a novel suitable not only for young women, but for adults as well. As well, this review shows how the novel was regarded as having a positive underlying message about girls growing up and coming of age (“A Review of Little Women”). Additionally, a similar reception of the novel is evident in a review published in *The Nation* in 1868, expressing that the novel was an agreeable story for young girls as healthy women, and paints a portrait of what a young lady should look like in Edwardian society (A Review Of Little Women: or, Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy”). The Religious Tract Society aspired for a similar reception of their edition in 1912, which was promoted to frame the story in a Christian light, and as a novel which promoted positive role models for young women.

**UNDERLYING CHRISTIAN MORAL VALUES**

This edition of *Little Women: A Story For Girls* by Louise May Alcott was a novel used as a pedagogy tool to instill moral values in young women as well as present expected behavior of gender roles to children. In the novel, young women are presented as domesticated, as demonstrated by the March sisters, who all contribute to the well
being of their household by completing chores and being obedient young females.

Furthermore, it is evident that the story of *Little Women: A Story For Girls* is one that was viewed as setting a positive and proper example of how young women should behave in Edwardian society. In the novel, Alcott depicts four female characters who not only abide by society’s expectations by being obedient and respectful, and also demonstrate Christian moral values of selflessness and kindness. Additionally, as the March sisters mature into young ladies, their mother, Marmee, teaches them certain Christian values such as being compassionate and generous. For example, during Christmastime, Marmee explains that they will be selflessly donating their Christmas breakfast to their neighbouring family who are less fortunate than they are. In this way, by instilling these moral values in the novel, it is used as a pedagogical tool in order to teach children through literature of how a young lady should act in society and what moral values should be instilled upon her.

Additionally, as The Religious Tract Society was a publisher of Christian books for children, it is evident that the preface by Flora Klickmann frames the story with a Christian moral perspective. Klickmann expresses in the preface that this is an agreeable story for all ages because of the Christian values it promotes through its story. It is therefore evident that by adding this preface by Klickmann, The Religious Tract Society believes that *Little Women: A Story For Girls* is a beneficial pedagogical tool to teach young women Christian values such as chastity, obedience, charity and kindness, as well as promoting gender role expectations for young females living in Edwardian society in England.

**THE CIVIL WAR: PURPOSED AS A SITUATION OF ADVERSITY FOR YOUNG WOMEN**

Further, incorporating the Civil War into the novel was instrumental in creating a backdrop for Alcott to promote strong and more independent young females. Although the Civil War took place in America, the hardships of war are presented to Edwardian young women living in England as a teaching tool about the importance of family life despite being placed in a situation of adversity. Alcott uses the Civil War in order to promote independence for young women, as they were left at the home front while the men were away at war.

Alcott promotes this sense of independence in the character of Jo, the oldest March sister, who demonstrates a strong sense of responsibility to provide for her family. With the incorporation of the Civil War into the novel, Alcott is able to remove the role of the father being present in the household, and therefore creates a
stronger sense of independence for young females to take on roles of responsibility at the home front. For example, young women were most often associated with the domestic space, and although older women (such as their mother, Marmee) were employed in workplaces such as factories, younger women were often confined to household chores and the keeping of the domestic space. This is an example of how the incorporation of the Civil War enriches the storyline of the novel, since with the Marches’ father away at war, the female characters in the novel were given more roles of responsibility.

**ALCOTT: EMPOWERING YOUNG FEMALES WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF EDWARDIAN SOCIETY**

In *Little Women: A Story For Girls*, Alcott empowers young women to strive for independence within the constraints of their expected gender roles. For example, Alcott illustrates a sense of empowerment with the character of Jo, as she actively finds independence through writing (Simons 147). Through writing, Jo is able to escape the mundaneness of day-to-day life and being confined to the domestic space with her sisters while their father is away at war and their mother constantly working to provide for their family. In this way, the novel teaches young women the importance of being independent, as although the character of Jo was confined to the household performing domestic tasks with her sisters, she also found other ways to be independent and to earn income for her family. For example, Jo was able to earn additional income for her family through her writing of short stories, along with cutting and selling her hair (Fig.7). In this way, through the character of Jo, who “became an emblem of independent girlhood for generations of readers,” (Simons 147) Alcott finds a way to create a sense of empowerment for young women without overstepping the boundaries and expectations that were placed on young women during that time period by Edwardian society.
In this way, it is evident that *Little Women: A Story For Girls* was used as a pedagogical tool to allow adults to condition children on what was acceptable behavior for young women living in Edwardian society in England. As well, the novel’s underlying Christian values were seen as acceptable in demonstrating positive role models to create good women for the future. *Little Women* is also a critique of the society during 1912, as it is evident that young women were viewed a certain way, often confined to domestic roles at the home front while the males were away at war. In addition to outlining the ideal portrait of a young lady in Edwardian society, Alcott also found a way to promote a sense of empowerment for young females within the gender norm constraints of 19th century society by creating independent young female characters.

**WORKS CITED**


Through the Eyes of a Child During 1918: Hilaire Belloc’s Cautionary Tales for Children

© March 28, 2014   ☑ 2014, Children's Books and War   🐦 B.T.B., Basil Temple
Blackwood, Cautionary Tales, Cautionary Tales for Children, Child Behaviour, Death, Duckworth & Co., First World War, Hilaire Belloc, Morbidity, Victorian Ideals, World War 1   👤 carmen.jimenez

Cautionary Tales for Children, by Hilaire Belloc

There is an abundant amount of literary texts published during the 19th century that addresses society’s expectations of appropriate child behaviour. Many of these beliefs were gender specific, focusing on the expectancy of what constitutes as obedient behaviour for young boys and girls (Frost 27). However, in response to these advisory texts, Hilaire Belloc’s Cautionary Tales for Children satirizes this style of writing and the messages they tend to convey. As there have been three separately published editions at various time periods, this exhibit will particularly examine Duckworth and Company’s 1918 edition, published in
In relevancy to the theme of war, Duckworth and Company had published *Cautionary Tales for Children* towards the closing of the First World War (1918) possibly to provide a form of post-war relief for children. The following research intends to explore Belloc’s purpose for parodying cautionary texts for children by comparing it to conventional Victorian advisory children’s literature. The reason for republication during the end of the First World War will be further researched to provide clarification and understanding as to how child audiences of 1918 would receive this particular edition. Additionally, the following exhibit will explore how the theme of war is conveyed through the partnership of Blackwood’s illustrations and Belloc’s verses.

**Hilaire Belloc, 1870-1953**

Hilaire Belloc was an English writer, who had written a wide selection of biographies, essays, novels, travel books, poetry and children’s books (Lingen). Less known for his serious literary pieces, Belloc was better known as a children’s writer whose main focus was to produce works that opposed the culture of didacticism (Lingen). The Herald reports that Belloc’s children’s books were so successful that upon the production of *More Beasts for Worse Children*, there had been “heavy advanced orders” of the text, causing an inability to produce enough supplies (26). Belloc’s work in children’s literature aimed to satirize early 19th century writers who focussed on instructional texts for appropriate child behaviour; he did this by creating extremes of unnaturally obedient children and mischievous children, who would consequently suffer an ill fate due to their disobedience (Lingen).
Content Topics, Verses & Illustrations

Many of the sketched illustrations provided by Blackwood congregate to a common theme of ‘consequential death;’ meaning, that due to specific circumstances, these characters experience a morbid fate. Provided with some insight from Ian Cooke, a Lead Curator for International and Political Studies at The British Library, this close examination will explore how a child from 1918 may interpret the text.

Contrast of Victorian Expectations of Child Behaviour

When it came to the behaviour of children, obedience and dutifulness was a major expectation among parents and guardians (Frost 11). Ginger S. Frost explains that it was assumed by most parents that females were morally superior in comparison to males, which enabled them to escape their way out of trouble. It appears that Belloc had written “Matilda” in parody of this belief. Although the plots of each tale are extreme, the duality of word and image make it clear that Belloc believed that female superiority is inadequate, and that anybody who commits wrongful decisions will be prosecuted (fig. 1).

Given the context of the poem, Blackwood’s illustration emits a sense of morbidity; that these are the ashes of a young girl who had burned to death because she had lied on numerous occasions, and thus could not be trusted by the townspeople. Although the sketch does not include typical images of gore – as some of the other illustrations do – the context of the poem enhances the gruesomeness of the tale.

Straightforward Illustrations of Morbidity

Blackwood alternates from indirect sketches of morbidity to unequivocal...
The closing verses of “Jim” work effectively with the illustration to produce a skin-crawling feeling. Belloc’s narrator states,

“No just imagine how it feels / When first your toes and then your heels, / And then by gradual degrees, / Your shins and ankles, calves and knees, / Are slowly eaten, bit by bit.”

The partnership of Blackwood’s sketch and Belloc’s set of verses offers additional gruesomeness to the poem, as the duality of word and image work together to produce an enhanced experience of death and violence (fig. 3). Although it may be clear to a child of 1918 that this is a tale of exaggeration and humour, this particular
Cautionary Tales for Children

Published by Eveleigh Nash.

Book.

image reinforces the idea that this text functions as a means of leisure.

Analysis of Images in Relation to War & Reception of a 1918 Child Reader

It is clear that beneath the purpose of providing a parody of Victorian cautionary tales, these images represent underlying themes of death and morbidity as well as a commentary to Victorian ideals. The way in which Belloc produces his poetic verses, he creates an upbeat tempo that eliminates the sorrowful ways in which these characters die. This strategy of pairing poems and playful illustrations of death helps lighten the morbid themes, thus amplifying the notion that this text intended to be humorous.

During the time of its republication in 1918, the closing of the First World War was also in motion. As many lives had been lost to the war, it is sound to predict that the republication of Belloc’s text was to demonstrate that the Victorian era is now over. As mentioned before, Belloc had written this text to satirize the Victorian ideals of child behaviour. Therefore, in republication of this text, clarifies an end to the old world.

Moreover, as child audiences were the target for the original text, the republication was no different. Blackwood’s original illustrations were created in 1907, in which Cooke states that prior to the war, the use of morbidity for children’s humour was common (The British Library). Yet Cooke states that during the war, children, “experienced the loss of parents and other adults in their families as fathers and uncles joining the armed forces…” (The British Library). Thus, children may have been desensitized to concepts of death, violence and morbidity. Therefore, with the republication of this title, children of 1918 may have been able to identify with these images, and interpret them with humour.
Eleven years after its first publication by Eveleigh Nash, *Cautionary Tales for Children* was republished by Duckworth and Company in 1918. Although there are no sufficient articles that clearly discuss the production and reception of this particular edition, there are few speculations that this edition was a commemoration for Belloc’s son who had died in 1918, as well as for Blackwood, who had died 1907. However, given the time of its republication, the First World War was concluding. It appears that many journalists and newspaper companies were focused on the outcomes of the war rather than publishing reviews on literary works. Even during this time, most of Belloc’s published works appeared in newspapers, where he offered his conclusions on the war rather than the recent republication of his text (fig. 4).

Walter Barnes does, however, provide some reception on Belloc’s text *New Cautionary Tales* which follows closely to the structure and style of *Cautionary Tales for Children*. Calling it a “Child’s book of necessary nonsense,” Barnes claims that *New Cautionary Tales* was Belloc’s:

> Latest offering to the gaiety of the children of the nations […] No one since Edward Lear surpasses Belloc in the palatable mixture of sense and puckishness, of high spirits of nonchalant handling
of intractable rhymes and meters. These are cautionary rhymes, but often set spinning with the ‘reverse English’ on them so that the Jane and Ann Taylor-ish morals are neatly and completely laugh out of court (303).

Although Barnes discusses the more recent text, I found that his review can be interpreted as a ‘secondary reception’ as its formulation had been inspired and structured according to Cautionary Tales for Children. Both texts share the same style of presenting virtuous lessons through poetic verses, while also ridiculing those who enforce didacticism (Lingen). However, direct reception for Cautionary Tales for Children remains unfound possibly due to the excitement of war ending.

The decision for Duckworth and Company to republish Belloc’s work appears to be an attempt to comment on the closing of the First World War. Duckworth and Company may have felt that with the closing of the war brought forth a time children needed to escape from the traumatic events and be enlightened with moralistic, yet humorous literary material. Cautionary Tales for Children presents illustrations and ideas of morbidity that children of this time could identify with, without having sorrowful feelings.

Carol Fox claims that, “literature is one of the most powerful media for communicating to children what war is, what it is like, what it means and what its consequences are, thus the project is not so much an ideological or moral enterprise as a literary one” (126). Thus, in the decision to republish this text, Duckworth and Company may have felt that a fun, playful piece of literature may assist children in healing from the war, and possibly answering any questions they may have of it. Therefore, the text fulfills two purposes – to parody the cautionary texts that were commonly distributed, but to also function as a response to the effects of war, by providing education as well as leisure to children.

**Outcomes of Duckworth and Company’s 1918 Republication**

The end of the First World War had marked the closing of a chapter within the
United Kingdom. Thus, Duckworth and Company’s means for republication expresses society’s outgrowth for orthodoxly modes of cautionary texts for children. The societal movement away from these ideals demonstrate the aspiration for a new beginning; which would mean an end to the period of instructional texts for children. The republication of Cautionary Tales for Children assisted the transformation within the society and its environment.

Conclusion: How Would a Child of 1918 Receive This Text?

A common experience of the First World War entailed death of male figures within a typical family household in the United Kingdom. Thus, given the effects of the war, children of 1918 may have had a sense of identification with the morbid concepts. Albeit the exaggeration and hilarity in Belloc’s prose, it is due to children’s close experience with death, that they are able to recognize these concepts and interpret them in a comical way. Thus, as a result, the children become desensitized to these normally, alarming topics.

While a juvenile audience from the Victorian era may express unease, children of 1918 had most likely approached the text with an understanding of Belloc’s intent – to pair the customary form of didacticism with playful verses and illustrations that mocked this form. With its republication in 1918, the child reader may have used this text as an instrument of leisure as it illustratively presented ideas that they could identify from their life experiences of the war.

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Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures: Film as a Distraction during WW1

Introduction

*Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures Or, Helping the Dormitory Fund* is a 208-paged juvenile novel situated in Ryerson’s CLA Collection. It was written by W. Bert Foster under the pseudonym Alice B. Emerson and published by the Cupples & Leon Company in New York, 1916. There is one illustration by W. Rogers on the frontispiece of a filming scene in chapter nineteen.

One of Ruth’s main passions in the novel *Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures* is, as the title suggests, film. As the book was published in 1916, cinema in the United States was still relatively in its early stages of development. This meant that cinema was a new and popular topic which the American people wanted to know more about. In
this way, Ruth’s discovery of film coincides with the country’s discovery of film. *Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures* is associated with the Great War. The characters in the novel are not directly involved in or affected by the war since the United States did not join World War 1 until a year after the book was published. However, in association with the war, moving pictures acted as a distraction for people. This worked in several ways, including, but not limited to, the theatre environment, movies for the purpose of entertainment or escapism, and the glamour of movie-making.

**Summary**

*Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures* follows Ruth and her two best friends, twins Tom and Helen Cameron. At the outset of the novel, the trio spots a moving picture company filming a scene. When the main actress falls into the river, Ruth and her friends save the actress and bring her to Ruth’s non-biological Aunt Alvirah to recover at their home, the Red Mill. When Tom shows interest in the actress, Ruth feels a tinge of jealousy, demonstrating the possibility of a romantic future between the two. Even though this is the ninth book in the series, it was not all that difficult to tell what the relationships between the characters were like because the author gives a brief summary of each of the previous books in the third chapter.

Upon meeting the producer, Mr. Hammond, Ruth divulges that she plans to write a moving picture script and Mr. Hammond agrees to read it. An inspired Ruth secretly begins writing her scenario “Curiosity.” Ruth and Helen return to the all girls school, Briarwood Hall, for their final year. Ruth sends her finished scenario off to Mr. Hammond. While at dinner, the West Dormitory, housing all of Ruth’s and Helen’s possessions, burns down. With an expired insurance on the building, there is no money available to rebuild it. The girls each contribute what they can but it is still not enough. Ruth wants to come up with a plan where all the girls can contribute equally since money is not expendable for everyone. When Mr. Hammond replies, impressed with Ruth’s work, he sends her money and tells her he is going to start
The girls of Briarwood Hall film a scene.

Production and Reception

Edward Stratemeyer started a company known as the Stratemeyer Syndicate in which he and hired writers wrote more than 800 books [for children] under 65 pseudonyms (McDowell). While Stratemeyer is a writer, he did not pen the Ruth Fielding series. The Ruth Fielding series was one of the series he produced. In a process detailed in an interview with newspaper Newark Sunday Call (Lawrence), Stratemeyer plotted the novels, gave the outlines to hired writers and edited the manuscript he received from them before sending it to publishers; therefore, playing a huge role in the creation and production of the Ruth Fielding series.

In an advertisement from a New York based magazine, promoting a department store, Ruth Fielding is listed with other girl-specific book series set at low, accessible prices. The fact that this book is listed in an ad for Christmas gift ideas gives a thorough idea of how the book was received and consumed by its audience.

The popularity of the Stratemeyer Syndicate books created much tension. It sparked debate on quality fiction versus literary merit (Soderbergh). Tensions also arose between what early 20th century girls wanted to read versus what their elders, specifically the librarians, thought the girls should be reading. Books with traditional cultural values (i.e. care-taking) and religious behavior were acceptable
and promoted by librarians while series books were viewed as immoral and negatively influential (Hamilton-Honey). Despite being discouraged by many adults at the time, the series still soared in popularity and in sales. This speaks volumes about how girls at the time viewed Ruth and how they were interested in, if not inspired by, her path of self-discovery outside of the home.

**Working Girls**

The Girl Scouts were created in 1912. While there were women trying to keep girls traditional, there was also this entity teaching young girls that they could, if they wanted to, become more than a housewife. The message being promoted here to young girls is different than what they were likely hearing at home, at school, or in society (Revzin). The creation of the girls scouts (which today promotes well-roundedness in girls) around the time of the novel’s publishing date delineates the shift in some attitudes of girlhood.

Around the 1910s, there was also a shift in cultural attitudes toward moving pictures. To keep it relevant, it has been suggested that girl’s books series encouraged young girls to attend movies during that time (Inness). Ruth Fielding decides early on in the book that she wants to become a moving picture writer. Her interest in and pursuit of a career as a moving picture writer would have inevitably influenced many young girls in the world. Ruth unknowingly and unintentionally represented a business not entirely closed to women.

Furthermore, during America’s active war years (1917-1918), women contributed to the war effort. As men were conscripted and went off to war, women were encouraged to “do their bit” and pick up where the men left off, including anything from factory work to farming (Kim). While *Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures* was published a year before the war at a time when girls were being scrutinized for participating in work in the public sphere, it is interesting to see how only a year later women were being thrust into all sorts of fields outside of domestic work due to the war.

**Overview of Film History**

The history of film is long and complex. It includes many facets such as sound, color, lighting, cinematic technique, editing, and longevity. As such, this will be a very brief overview. No one inventor is credited with the creation of cinema. George Eastman, Thomas Edison, and the Lumière Brothers are noted as early contributors. However, many others have contributed to film’s progression. The first motion picture
camera was invented in the 1890’s. Within a few years, practical systems for recording and reproducing motion using a single camera came about. Then, short silent films (usually scenes from a stage play or of everyday life) were projected on a screen before a paying (albeit informal) audience. By 1900, filmmakers began using basic editing techniques and film narratives. Around 1910, silent cinema was accompanied by a musical background. Technicolor did not come till much later in the 1930’s (Jacobs). World War 1 marked a transition in the film industry: short one-reel programs transformed into feature films. Theaters became larger and more expensive. Moreover, while war halted the growth of the film industry in other countries, the United States’ late entry into the war allowed the industry to grow exponentially.
Theatre Environment

Theatres have always involved a shared space with low lighting where everyone is in attendance for the same purpose: to watch the action occurring on screen. The Nickelodeon (1905) located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was the first theatre in the United States. The creators, Harry Davis and John P. Harris, moved about 100 seats and a projector into an empty store. Attendees were charged five cents (or, a nickel – the origin of its name). The success of this endeavor saw nickelodeon theatres pop up all over the country.

As I began mentioning earlier, a cultural shift occurs in the 1910s. The shift occurs in the idea that moving pictures were only for the working class as they were cheap and unintelligent in content. However, it became seen as something the upper classes could also enjoy as movies became longer and more varied in content and theatres became more luxurious. With advance tickets and reserved seating, these theatres, also known as movie palaces, became sort of replicas of opera houses (Jacobs). They had live orchestras, sloped seating and comfortable chairs. Venues served upward 2,500-6,000 people.

The darkness of the theatre environment suggests a place to hide away for a few hours. Depending on genre, films could move entire audiences to laughter or to tears. Shared experience brought the citizens of the country together in much the same way war propaganda attempted too. Ruth and her friends share the experience of attending the premiere of their film together to watch their work come to fruition. Emotions (nervousness, anxiousness, excitement) run high but are soothed in the darkness.

Movies for Entertainment or Escapism

Regardless of genre, films offered audiences the chance to be figuratively transported to another world, enthralling them with make-believe. While viewing a film, people could escape or be entertained in a few ways. A person could temporarily forget routine, mundane life and live vicariously though the character on screen. The characters on screen would be a part of an exaggerated adventure that everyday people would not or could not take part in. The rise of feature films and the increase in popularity of lengthier films may have suggested that people not only wanted to be entertained for a longer amount of time but that they also enjoyed the escape offered to them in that fixed setting. While Ruth’s second scenario is written in hopes that it will raise money for her school, her first scenario is
written purely for the purpose of entertainment.

**Glamour of Celebrity**

The 1910s saw a rise in interest in the people starring in moving pictures. Certain faces and names became guaranteed to attract audiences (Jacobs). Thus, the glamour of moving-making and those involved in it was born. The creation of this “star system” (where a face equals movie ticket sales) suggests widespread adoration, if not obsession. What follows is the desire to know everything about that person through reading magazines or newspapers, and listening to radio interviews. The idea of a recognizable person, or rather, a celebrity, gave people something else to focus on and something else to speak about. Much like in the novel when Ruth and her friends fish actress Hazel Gray out of a river, not one of them can resist ogling in their own way. Tom thinks she’s beautiful and adores her instantly. Helen wants to be her. Ruth wants to know how she became an actress and question her about the process of becoming a writer.

**Conclusion**

*Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures* follows Ruth as she pursues and achieves her dream of becoming a moving picture writer. This positively influences and encourages other young readers of the series to do the same. As Ruth is discovering cinema in the mid-1910s, so is the rest of the country. At the same time, World War 1 is occurring outside the borders of the United States but remained a constant threat. One of the ways in which Americans distracted themselves from this grim and scary reality was to attend movie screenings. The idea of film as a distraction during the Great War worked in several ways: people could hide away together in dark, semi-intimate rooms, people could become swept away by the stories on screen, or people could become obsessed with the real lives of movie stars.

Link to CLA

Link to online version of book

Work Cited:


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