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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

CHARLES DOVE

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CHILDHOOD AND IDEAS OF CHILDHOOD IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND 1840 - 1860

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CHILDHOOD AND IDEAS OF CHILDHOOD IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

1840 - 1860

BY

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THESIS

for the

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

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Old John with white hair
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk,
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say.
Such were the joys.
When we all girls & boys,
In our youth-time were seen,
On the Echoing Green.

William Blake, "The Echoing Green"

in Songs of Innocence and of Experience:

Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul

1789
Chapter I.

"On the Echoing Green"

An Introduction
It is fitting and proper that one begin an essay concerning Victorian ideas of childhood with a few words from the man who most influenced those ideas, the seventeenth century philosopher John Locke. In his treatise entitled Some Thoughts Concerning Education, first published in 1693, he lays out a firm plan for the education of a child, remarking that once a small child learns to read

"some easy, pleasant book suited to his capacity should be put into his hands, wherein the entertainment that he finds might draw him on and reward his pains in reading, and yet not such as should fill his head with perfectly useless trumpery or lay the principles of vice and folly."

Locke goes on to list various books he considers to be suitable for a child's young mind: Aesop's Fables, Reynard the Fox, and a few others. Locke's influence on the liberal, rational, enlightened mind-set of the eighteenth century is well-known and wide-spread. It extends so far as to influence the writers of literature for children, then an opening and burgeoning market.

Samuel F. Pickering, in his study John Locke and Children's Books in the Eighteenth Century, elucidates:

"If commercial prosperity made the expansion of the book trade possible, the writings of John Locke provided publishers and educators with a wealth of general and particular educational matter. No other Englishman had written so broadly and so reasonably on education. Previous seventeenth-century writers had limited the applicability of their works by appealing to select social classes or particular religious groups."

Several words leap out at one from this passage by Pickering: the first is "wealth" and it suggests that Locke provided the raw material for those writers who wished to become commercially successful, wished to ride the
The second word is "reason" and it explains to some degree the popularity of Locke in eighteenth century with the vast popularity of Reason. There is an implicit connection in Pickering's passage between the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason and the rise of capitalism in the eighteenth century. Certainly Locke's ideology was in the ascendancy in this period, in every mode of discourse from trade to children's books.

But by the nineteenth century Locke's influence had been one of many. His ideology had become one of several vying for superiority and public acceptance. It is also important to realize that what is called Locke's ideology can vary a great deal from what is actually written in his text. The phrase "Locke's ideology" can be loosely defined as those set of ideas associated with the name of John Locke in the popular imagination. Another man whose ideas began to popular in the eighteenth century and continued into the nineteenth is the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau; he exercised a strong influence on certain educators and his ideas of childhood can be seen in the writings of several Victorian writers. In his book Eloisa there appears a long conversation on the nature of education and learning:

Nature would have children be children before they are men. If we attempt to pervert that order, we produce only forward fruit, which has neither maturity or flavor, and will soon decay; we raise young professors and old children. Infancy has a manner of perceiving, thinking and feeling, peculiar to itself. Nothing is more absurd than to think of submitting ours in its stead; and I would as soon expect a child of mine to be five feet high, as to have a mature judgment at ten years old.
Rousseau also remarks on how he differs with Locke, on how Locke has forgotten that the first and most important thing a child should learn is how to receive instruction, "instructing us rather in the things we ought to require of our children, than in the means of obtaining them." Locke and Rousseau, then, differ from square ones: Locke focusing on what a child should be and Rousseau focusing on what a child is.

In 1893, a man named Thomas Davidson wrote a book entitled *Rousseau and Education According to Nature* and in it he remarked that

> With the advent of language, infancy closes, and childhood, in the narrower sense, begins. Tears and cries, having now found a substitute, should be discouraged, and every effort made to free the child from timidity and querulousness. Dangerous weapons and fire should be kept out of his way; but otherwise he should be allowed the utmost freedom, and as little notice as possible taken of his bumps and bruises, which are valuable experiences. He should not be taught anything that he can naturally find out for himself - not even to walk or climb. Having complete freedom, he will get a few contusions, but therewith a great deal of invaluable training. "It is at this second stage," says Rousseau, "that the life of the individual properly begins; it is now that he attains self-consciousness. Memory extends the feeling of identity to all the moments of his existence, he becomes truly one and the same, and consequently already capable of happiness and misery. He must henceforth be considered as a moral being." This is, indeed, a new stage.

It is, I suppose, what this paper is about: the new stage and how the others in the adult world choose to administrate this new stage. The infant ceases to be speechless and acquires a language, a discourse. This discourse is a fundamentally social discourse. There are a multiplicity of historical events and principles at work during this period of a child's life, this advent of language, and I would like to investigate one form of language: children's books, influences on them and their influences on children. In particular,
this essay will deal with a period, the mid-Victorian period, when the expansion of the printing technology of children's books and books in general was altering the course of history and influencing lives of both nations and individuals. Working within each specific text for a child are many influences, voices, and discourses, and each of these discourses can be said to represent an idea of childhood, of how a child should behave, and of how a child should mature. The influences of John Locke, Isaac Watt, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the evangelists, and of fairy tales and other anonymous folk traditions are all strongly present in children's literature. It should be emphasised that these discourses influence a work of literature on two levels: the first level is that of simple subject matter of the text, where the action and setting of a book can be seen to suggest the moral focus of its meaning; the second level is a lower level of language, where, after close investigation, the reader can find many discourses represented. An example of this can be found in Davidson's books: for the most part, he presents a fair, rational summary of Rousseau's ideas, but at one point his emotions burst through the fabric of rationality.

The truth is, Rousseau was so purely a creature of sense and undisciplined impulse that he never, for one moment, rose to a consciousness of any moral life at all. He could not, therefore, take delight in it. Noblesse oblige, the ruling maxim of the unselfish, moral, and social man, was in his replaced by the selfish, undutiful churl and reprobate, Bonheur invite. But, in spite of all this, nay, by reason of it, Rousseau and his theories are most interesting and fruitful objects of study. In days when uncontrolled individualism still has its advocates, it well fully to realise what it means. And this is what Rousseau has told us, in a siren-song of mock-prophetic unction, which readily captivates and lures to destruction vast crowds of thoughtless sentimentalists. He has told us further, in the same tone, how children may be prepared for a life of individualism; and his sense-drunk ravings, in denunciation of all moral
principle, have been, and still are, received as divine oracles by millions of parents and teachers, who have the training of children in their hands. 6

Davidson attempts to hold on to a tone based on the ideology of reason and rationality only to lose it in this passage. He actually takes on the vocabulary and the ideology of an evangelist, accusing Rousseau of being a tempter and a false prophet; the language indicates a disgust with the idea of pleasure without bounds and the words are decidedly biblical, like "mock-prophetic," "destruction," and "divine oracles." There are two aspects, then, of this passage which are important to the essay; the most noticeable is the one discussed below, the strong moral tone, castigating Rousseau and attacking his character, with its emphasis on individualism; the other is the strong concern for the welfare of children, a kind of concern which was not present one hundred years earlier. It is clear from the writing of Davidson that there are a number of discourses on childhood present in Victorian society and that his is in conflict with Rousseau's. Davidson believes in a much more structured education for a child, one which directs the child toward society and away from nature; in this way he is very much a member of the Victorian middle class which, by 1893, was the dominant class in England, with a strong sense of identity and mission.

What had happened in England since, say, the French Revolution, was increased industrialization and the rise of a social group that would later consider itself to be the middle class, a social group that was in the process of developing its own ideology, an ideology of morality, of capitalism, and of enterprise. Pickering remarks:

As eighteenth century commercial prosperity greatly enriched
the middle classes, parents began to envision their children's future in more worldly terms.

Among the changes instituted during the rise of the middle class was a change in the self-awareness of the people, a change in social identity, the identity of self, of man, of woman, and especially of child. One of the institutions that effected this change was the institution of children's literature, an industry that was gaining power and wealth and an industry that retained an ideology culled from several sources. In his classic history Children's Books in England, I. J. Harvey Darton provides a useful warning about the ideology of children's books:

At all times, theory, recognized as such, has come into such books far less intimately than might have been expected. Writers who in their own minds had formed, on purely educational grounds, an idea of what a child's book should be, were seldom carrying out consciously the precepts of this or that philosopher, though often enough they did so unconsciously. In England their principles were usually in part empirical, in part founded upon a mixture of religion and social usage. Still less often is "political" theory (in the Aristotelian sense) to be found visibly at large in the English nursery library. But in the Hanoverian reigns both kinds of underlying principle were to be seen there openly, or were strongly suspected of being there... During that period, writers for children were, educationally, disciples of either Locke or Rousseau. If they followed Locke, it was, as likely as not, without knowing it. That was inevitable, because with his acceptance of facts as the basis of theory, Locke was, typically English, down to the smallest practical detail.

The distinction Harvey Darton makes is a valid and important one: in most instances, the ideology that enters into children's literature does so unconsciously, without the direct intention of the author. Nevertheless, it is present and does represent some kind of mind-set. It is perhaps wise to
temper the statement made above, concerning a change in the people's self-awareness. It is probably wiser to modify it and say that the use of ideology in children's literature reflects an attitude of the authors, a wish to alter the self-awareness of the reading public, concentrating on the self-awareness and identity of children.

Children's literature was often written to appeal to a certain class of people, thereby implicitly reinforcing the identity of that particular class of person. This is something that some writers were acutely aware of. Charlotte Yonge, for instance, raised objections to this. Yonge was one of the most popular writers for children in the second half of the century and has been described, by Harvey Darton, as being "never provincial, like some of the Americans, and never condescending, nor yet ardently polemical." It is in her article "Children's Literature of the Last Century," published in 1869, that she objects to

what may be called class literature. Everyone writes books for someone; books for children, books for servants, books for poor men, poor women, poor boys, and poor girls. It is not enough to say, "Thou shalt not steal," but the merchant must be edified by the tale of a fraudulent banker, the school-boy by hearing how seven cherries were stolen, the servant must be told how the wicked cook hid her mistress' ring in the innocent scullery-maid's box; the poor man has a pig stolen for his benefit, the poor boy a sovereign, the girl a silk handkerchief. Why is not one broad, well-taught principle better than so much application in detail?

This is not to say that Yonge objects to the class system of Victorian society; no, she objects to the compartmentalization of the fiction at the expense of any kind of variety. Like most Victorians she simply takes the class system as a given. Yonge was, in Harvey Darton's words, "an excellent example of a high-principled English Victorian gentlewoman, in a fine sense."
Yonge goes on to say:

We must not be misunderstood. It is well to picture any one class or way of life thoroughly; a vivid scene well painted is sure to be worth having, and real likenesses are generally speaking, useful studies; but it is the endeavour to hold up a mirror to each variety of reader of his or her way of life, as if there were no interest beyond it, and nothing else could be understood or cared for, that we think narrowing and weakening. If it be true that imagination is really needful to give the power of doing as we would be done by, surely it is better to have models set before us not immediately in our range. A good book is a good book to whoever can understand it, and there is often a power of grasping a part of the meaning when there is no power of explanation.

Yonge's discussion of class literature, then, demonstrates two points: first, that the idea was recognized that the literature of the age tended toward division according to class and that the middle class produced the most literature because it constituted the largest market; second, that there were people dissatisfied with this system and wished to alter it. But Yonge was writing in the late 1860s and in way constituted a reaction to the literature of the last century.

Philippe Aries, in his study *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, writes of the evolution of the concept of childhood, beginning with the discovery of the idea of childhood in the Middle Ages. Although the study of his work is France and French social history, we may take a few clues from his book and modify them to fit into English social history. He makes, for instance, the significant remark that "we find the same me, obsessed with educational questions, at the origins of both the modern concept of childhood and the modern concept of schooling." In the book,
Aries essentially traces the beginnings and development of two views of childhood. According to the first, which was widely held, children were creatures to be coddled and childhood was held to last hardly beyond infancy; the second, which expressed the realization of the innocence and the weakness of childhood, and consequently of the duty of adults to safeguard the former and strengthen the latter, was confined for a long time to a small minority of lawyers, priests, and moralists. But for their influence, the child would have remained simply the poupart or bambino, the sweet, funny, little creature with whom people played affectionately.

It could be said that what this essay is about, really, is how that "small minority" gained so much influence in such a short period of time and what the results of that influence were, focusing on children's literature. It is important to not fall into the trap, though, that so many authors become ensnared in: presupposing a single, unified, dominant ideology, one that is monologic and completely in control of itself and others. This concept is patently false. It is foolish and unrealistic to believe that those lawyers, priests, and moralists would concur completely on something as controversial as child rearing. The only agreed, it seems, on the fact that it was extremely important.

Much of this disagreement was reflected in the books that were written to be read to and read by children; but not simply children; almost always they were middle class children, children who possessed the leisure time to read, whose parents had the money to buy the books; the phenomenal explosion of writing for children was generally limited to the middle and upper classes and the ideology, however much it varied, usually stayed within the bounds of rationality, common sense, and the development of capitalism.
The people involved with the production of these books were enlightened and liberal; they were businessmen. Aries calls them

the enlightened bourgeois who admired Greuze and read *Emile* and *Pamela*. But the old ways of life have survived almost until the present day in the lower classes, which have not been subjected for so long a period to the influence of the school. We may even ask ourselves whether, in this respect, there was not a retrogression during the first half of the nineteenth century, under the influence of the demand for child labour in the textile industry. Child labour retained this characteristic of medieval society: the precocity of the entry into adult life. The whole complexion of life was changed by the differences in the educational treatment of the middle class and the lower class child... There is accordingly a remarkable synchronism between the modern age group and the social group: both originated at the same time, in the late eighteenth century, and the same milieu - the middle class.15

Aries, of course, is writing about French culture, not English, and there are some substantial differences: the most noticeable of which is the fact that there was no public education system in England until the mid-nineteenth century. However, this only serves to emphasize the importance of the literature children read. It is on this rising middle class and on its children that this essay will concentrate, on its struggle to create an identity through its ideology, through its technology, and through its educational devices. One differs, though, with Aries on the period he selects. Certainly in France the middle class made itself known as a power during the revolution, but it was not until later that the English middle class began to assert itself as a cohesive social whole, not until the reign of Queen Victoria. It was then, with the advances in the technology of communication such as the railways and the power-driven printing press, that this ideology began to disseminate over a large area, to a greater number of people, help-
ing to create the gap between the working class and the middle class, and helping to create the sense of identity the middle class would have by the end of the nineteenth century.

The ascending middle class utilized many tools to disseminate these attitudes, morals, and ideologies to itself and to others; one of these was children's literature, which plays such an important role in the socializing process. Inside the children's literature of any age, one can find the ideology - or ideologies - of the social group who produced it and the social group who read it. The French philosopher Louis Althusser in his enquiry entitled "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" remarks that

ideology has no history, which emphatically does not mean that there is no history in it (on the contrary, for it is merely the pale, empty and inverted reflection of real history) but that it has no history of its own.16

I interpret this passage as meaning that the ideology of a certain time and place, Victorian England, does not so much have a past as it invents one, using the raw material of texts and documents from the past. Its past actually reflects the present state of affairs more than anything else. That is to say; the use of the ideas of Locke or Rousseau is not necessarily an accurate use, but it is one appropriate to the situation. The past exists on two levels: first, as an influence and, second, as a reflection of the present. Althusser discusses at length the concept of Ideological State Apparatuses which he defines as any system which perpetuates the State's ideology. He lists them as follows: the religious system, the communications system, the educa-
ational system, the political system, the family, the culture, the law. Obviously many of these overlap and the apparatuses that this essay is interested in are those that focus on the child, such as the educational system and the communications system. Althusser’s passage on schools is important to this idea of Ideological State Apparatuses:

What do children learn in school? They go varying distances in their studies, but at any rate they learn to read, to write and to add — i.e. a number of techniques, and a number of other things as well, including elements (which may be rudimentary or on the contrary thoroughgoing) of "scientific" or "literary culture," which are directly useful in the different jobs of production (one instruction for manual workers, another for technicians, a third for engineers, a final one for higher management, etc.). Thus they learn "know-how"... But besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the "rules" of good behavior, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labor, according to the job he is "destined" for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labor and ultimately the rules of order established by class domination."

Like Aries, though, Althusser is writing from a perspective of one steeped in the history of France, and that is quite a different history than that of England. The first and most important point at which French and English history diverge is education: the English, unlike the French, did not have a public education system until the mid-Victorian era; therefore the apparatus of the education system worked in a much less organized way, relying mostly on the literature in the homes to perpetuate the ideology. The second point is one brought up before: that in England there was not a monologic ideology controlling the middle class, but rather there were several similar discourses all vying for position and using the same apparatuses. They did
not constitute a state, but they were several spheres of influence bidding for power in a still open society. However, that society was in the process of closing. In his own dogmatically Marxist way, Althusser is saying something that truly applies to the situation in mid-Victorian England, in terms of the development and strengthening of a new class order and a new technology to perpetuate it.

There was no "state" ideology, then, in England at the time; there was rather a multiplicity of ideologies, all similar but not identical, utilizing the tools available to influence the minds of the people. This is not to imply that all of this went on consciously. As Harvey Darton pointed out, mostly it was unconscious. A writer could even express two contradictory ideologies in the same book. In the second section of this essay the real history of children will be examined, their development in the labour force and in the middle class, and their development in the minds of the adult world as "children." Also in the second section there will be an examination of the development of the printing technology that made books available to a vast number of people. In the third section eight of these books, children's books ranging from Mary Howitt's *Strive and Thrive* to John Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River* will be scrutinized for indications of this socializing process, for the presence of these discourses. In the nineteenth century, people, in Althusser's words, "recognized the effective presence of a new reality: ideology."18
The baby new his earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is press
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I;"

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I" and "me,"
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, In Memoriam A.H.H.

1850
II.

"As thro' the frame that binds him in"

Children and Technology in Victorian England
It is perhaps best to begin with an excerpt from a song often sung by children in nineteenth century England:

Nineteen miles to the Isle of Wight,
Shall I get there by candle light?
Yes, if your fingers go lissom and light,
You'll get there by candle light.
Nineteen long lines being over my down,
The faster I work it'll shorten my score,
But if I do play, it'll stick to a stay,
So high hot little fingers, and twank it away!

This little piece of doggerel was utilized in the "lace schools" to increase the productivity of the children labourers. The lace schools were ironically named for they were in fact small factories producing various textile goods with the labour of children and the only education such children received was in that particular industry. As Ivy Finchbeck remarks in her book on Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution: "This absorption in industrial work was 'a complete bar to anything like education.' Attempts to establish ordinary schools in districts where domestic industries were carried on frequently ended in failure, and most children depended entirely on Sunday Schools for such education as they received." It is clear, then, that when one speaks of children being influenced by the ideology in the literature being written for them that first one must distinguish what groups of children had the time and inclination to actually do the reading, what groups actually knew how to read and could afford to buy the books or join a lend-
ing library like Mudie’s.

It is equally clear that the children of the poor had no time whatsoever to give to light reading or to any of the other aspects of learning and self-education. “In the first decades of the nineteenth century,” write Jane Bingham and Grayce Scholt in their study of *Fifteen Centuries of Children’s Literature*, “80 percent of the English cotton mill workers were children. Such cheap labor was highly desirable to the proprietors, one of whom said that the children were like ‘lively elves . . . whose work seemed to resemble a sport.’ But criticism of such sport existed early.” Since the late eighteenth century conditions for the poor had declined rapidly due to several factors; Bingham and Scholt elucidate this:

Successive Enclosure Acts passed by Parliament in the eighteenth century had caused increased poverty among the rural poor, driving them to the cities in search of employment. But the newly industrialized towns were unable to handle the influx of rural people, whose birthrates had soared during the Napoleonic Wars when there had been great demand for female and child labor. The resulting city slums were wretched. The new city dwellers, those fortunate enough to find work, worked long hours at machinery driven by steam. Both adults and children, many having been recruited like soldiers, were part of the labor force. With no child labor laws in view for half a century, many of the ill-kempt and ill-fed children, especially orphans and foundlings, lived in barracks under grossly inadequate conditions, completely at the mercy of their employers. If poor children were schooled at all, they received only minimal training in reading and writing, usually in the barracks in which they lived.

These children were the disenfranchised of Victorian England; without home and domestic stability, they existed only to work, to produce goods that would be sold to improve the economy. They had no individual identity and even today they are discussed as a corporate whole by historians, with their
individuality drained from them. The industry they worked within took on the role of a parent. Workers, according to R. Ayton's eyewitness account of the Whitehaven mines, were looked upon as "mere machinery, of no worth or importance beyond their horse power. The strength of a man is required in excavating the workings, women can drive the horses, and children can open the doors; and a child or a woman is sacrificed, where a man is not required, as a matter of economy, that makes not the smallest account of human life in its calculations." Lace-making, coal-mining, chimney-sweeping and other sorts of employment totally displaced any sort of family life a poor child might have had and completely devoured any time they would have had for an education. Pinchbeck and Hewitt, in their book on *Children in English Society*, remark that it was not possible, in a system of industry which demanded unremitting toll of all members of a family from extreme youth to premature old age, that children should have anything even approximating to what we now think of as a minimal education.

The relationship between child labour and education was, one might say, mutually exclusive. This was also true in the field of agriculture. Pinchbeck reports that the agricultural worker's education was forced into the contours of the farming year and thus extremely limited:

The knowledge gained by many was so imperfect that it was quickly forgotten, and even those who were able to read and write a little were generally in a state of ignorance with regard to needlework, cooking and domestic economy. Their homes for the most part were too poor to give any training in these matters, and the result was that only field work and the poorest kind of domestic work were open to them. Prevented by ignorance and lack of training from improving their position, the lives of too many children in the agricultural classes proved to be mere repetition of those
of their parents. More than anything else the lack of education was responsible for the continued exploitation of the lack of women and children.

This, then, is one side of the coin: the combination of the new technology and the age-old impoverishment of the lives of the poor helped to widen the crevasse between the poor working class and the rising middle class.

Ronald Fletcher, in his book on *The Family and Marriage*, points out that the industrialization of England also had its effects on the middle class family - albeit they were far less devastating.

The development of factory organization led to a separation of the business establishment from the home. The business establishment was the "undertaking" of the man, and the woman was relegated to domesticity. With increasing wealth and easy availability of labour, there was an extensive employment of domestic servants in the middle class household. Desiring to give their children an education that was not then provided by the state, the middle classes supported and, in supporting, changed and extended the "public school system" (which, as we now know it, was essentially a nineteenth century development) and sent their children to boarding schools to give an education and "finish" befitting the new "leaders of society." In the context of these developments, the husband and father became the central economic provider, the supreme, dominant, authoritative figure of the family. The wife and mother, no longer intimately involved in the business "undertaking," was confined to domestic life, and, with domestic servants, became more and more of a "functionless" member of the household - one ornament amongst others in the pattern of conspicuous consumption - totally subjected to the authority of her husband. She had, with slight qualifications, no rights to property, education, or occupation. Children, too, were expected to be submissive to the authority and dignity of father and home and the respectability of the family station. They were to be obedient, to be "seen not heard."

Among the important aspects of this passage from Fletcher is the emphasis placed on the stereotyped roles found in the middle class families; these
stereotypes had to be perpetuated in some way and one of those ways was through the public discourses, through those apparatuses that Althusser writes of in his essay.

The state apparatus of education was constantly trying to be introduced to the English public, but never succeeding. "Compulsory education," write Bingham and Scholt, "as well as meals for grossly undernourished children, were at first strenously opposed as infringement of the rights of parents. Opponents felt that such assistance would also, along with undermining the family, lower personal initiative." Pinchbeck and Hewitt remark that it was true that the State had largely refrained from interposing in the life and organization of the many families who were able to support themselves and their children. Traditionally both the legal and the social structure of the family in England expressed the principle of paternal domination which religious sanctions had long supported. To propose that the state should restrict the exercise of paternal authority was thus not merely to propose a restriction of parental rights which had long been established at law, but to propose a modification of a family pattern which had been held to be the will of God. Together, traditional interpretations of the significance of both the laws of man and the laws of God for the maintenance of social order proved powerful obstacles in the path of those who wished to legislate for the independent rights of the child.

The State, then, as an authoritative figure, as the dispenser of the dominant ideology, is not really present in Victorian England until the latter half of the century. What existed in its place is the middle class consensus, the status quo, which produced its ideology out of materials present and created during the last century and reproduced it through its various texts and institutions. It is true that there was no State-sponsored education system,
but the system sponsored first by the upper class and then by the middle served the same function, if in a rather less organized way. Bingham and Scholtz remark that

Many children of the well-off were more and more being viewed in the light of Rousseauian principles - especially by the Romantic poets who, like Wordsworth, assumed that the child was in a state of grace coming straight from heaven "trailing clouds of glory." But the education of these children was far from ideal. Training for the professions was expensive and generally of low quality. The public schools had become the dumping grounds for the sons of the gentry and the middle class who had no prospects of going to the universities and were in school only for the social polish before entering the army, going to the colonies, or going into the civil service or business.11

but it was in those public schools which the middle class sent their children to that the ideology, the discourse, was spread; these sons of the gentry and of the middle class were trained to go into the business world and the world of civil service and the mere fact that they were entering into a domain that in the past exclusively belonged to the upper class and the aristocracy was an indication of their increasing power.

There is, then, a conflict growing in the idea of childhood in Victorian England: on one level there is an increased separation of family, a division of mother, father and child in both the lower and upper classes; in the lower classes because of the need to work to survive and in the upper classes because of the wedge driven by the business world into the family, taking the husband away and dividing the labour between the husband and the servants, leaving the wife and child on the outside. On another level there is an increased emphasis on the roles played by each member of the family, especially the middle class family. Patricia Meyer Spacks, in her book on the history
of The Adolescent Idea, remarks that "according to the dominant cultural
myth of Victorian England, society depended on the family: strong father,
noble mother, happy children. The existence of unhappy children outraged
such writers as Dickens partly because of the prevalent assumption that
childhood should be a state of bliss." These roles are reinforced through
public opinion and public opinion is disseminated through the literature,
the ideological apparatuses, of the age. For children, the ideological ap-
paratuses of the age was story books. Philippe Aries writes that

It is as if, to every period of history, there corresponded
a privileged age and a particular division of human life:
"youth" is the privileged age of the seventeenth century,
childhood of the nineteenth, adolescence of the twentieth.
The Publishing Industry and the Reading Public

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the publishing industry expanded at a remarkable rate, almost as remarkable as the doubling of the population from nine million to eighteen million. Richard D. Altick, in his study *The English Common Reader*, comments that

The reservoir from which the reading public was drawn therefore became larger and larger. At the same time, the class structure and the occupational and geographical distribution of the people underwent alterations which affected the availability of reading matter, educational opportunities, the conditions under which reading could be done, and the popular attitude toward the print. The development of the mass reading public, in fact, was completely dependent upon the progress of the social revolution.14

Many of the alterations the mass reading public underwent involved a movement from the rural areas to the urban centers and in these urban centers it became much easier for an industry like the publishing trade to distribute its product and the ideology it contained. The vast growth in population also created a large number of children and adolescents, who provided an expansion of the market for children's literature. Samuel F. Pickering enumerates the many factors that lay behind the creation and rapid expansion of this trade. The commercial prosperity had increased the size of the middle class and contributed to social mobility within Britain itself. As large numbers of people climbed above penury and achieved modest financial security,
they were better able to afford books for their children. Because the future seemed to promise more than laborious poverty, they wanted books which their children could use as educational stepping stones to climb higher in society.  

For two reasons the growth of the marketing of children's literature is inseparable from the growth of the publishing industry in general: the first is that little is actually written about the industry of children's literature and the second is that it is intimately involved with the tastes and preferences of the adults, who bought both their own books and the books for their children.

Because of the immense changes in the economic nature of English society during this period there was created what might be called a temporary opening in the class structure and that allowed some people to move up the social scale, an action which hitherto had been impossible. "The widening of economic opportunity," writes Altick, "afforded by the development of industrial capitalism permitted many thousands to climb the social scale. They quickly acquired the social prejudices characteristic of the class in which they found themselves, among which was a powerful desire to protect their substance and privileges against the encroachments of the class they had lately left."  

What occurs, then, is a form of self-realization, realizing self and identity in terms of class, what constitutes self and identity if one is a member of a particular class. The nineteenth century, according to Altick,

witnessed on every hand a sharpening of class consciousness. To the upper class and especially the older portion of the middle class, everything depended upon preserving the hallowed structure, though cautiously modified here and there to suit new conditions; to the lower class, or at least its more sensitive part, the supreme need was for sweeping social
reconstruction in the direction of democracy. These conflicting aims inevitably bred social tensions which deeply affected the fortunes of the mass reading audience. For, as literacy and interest in reading spread, the "superior orders of society" - a term much in favor in that period - reacted to the phenomenon in terms of their special interests. Once they conceded that it was impossible to prevent the lower ranks from reading, they embarked on a long campaign to insure that through the press the masses of the people would be induced to help preserve the status quo and bulwark the security and prosperity of the particular sort of national life that they, its upper and middle class rulers, cherished. This campaign took many forms.17

One of the forms that campaign took was the strengthening of the ideological apparatuses that gave credence to the ruling class. It was therefore not only for economic reasons that books were printed and sold, but also for ideological reasons. But I do not wish to imply - and I am sure Altick does not either - that these superior orders of society existed as some sort of secret organization for the oppression of the working class; no, for them it was simply a matter of maintaining what they considered the best of way of life they could find, the best of all possible worlds. There was nothing insidious about it; one can see aspects of it in the Victorian impulse to send missionaries. There was a real sense of mission in their attitude and the only fault one can find in it is there denigration of all other ways of living; they did not allow alternatives to creep into their ideology until late in the century, really, with the rise in popularity of both bohemianism and gradualist socialism.

With the vast number of improvements made to the technology of the communications system came a larger distribution of the printed matter that carried, implicitly or explicitly, this ideology. By 1614, the Times was being printed on a steam-driven press which could print more and more ef-
ficiently than a hand-operated one and also by this time a paper making machine, invented by the Frenchman Didot, was in use in England, allowing larger amounts of paper to be made for far less money. Bingham and Scholt write that "by 1820 cloth-bindings were introduced; by the end of the century almost all books were cloth-bound and machine-assembled." But there is a paradox involved when one connects the advancements in technology with the increase in readership: which came first? This is virtually impossible to adduce. Marjorie Plant, in her book on The English Book Trade, remarks that until the beginning of the nineteenth century the printing trade remained at the technological level of Caxton: "There had really been very little incentive to improve the old methods. The general interest in reading cannot be said to have grown in any spectacular way since earliest times." She then goes on to remark that if the need had arisen for improvements due to, say, an increase in demand, an "inventor would probably have arisen with the need." Let us assume for the moment that the reason for this improvement in the first half of the nineteenth century was an increase in the demand for reading matter. What created this need is somewhat obscure, probably involving the growth in the population, in the home education system which taught people to read, and in the middle class, especially the urban industrial middle class who seemed to be the greatest readers - and also a growth in the cities and towns; for, as Altick writes, "printed matter became more easily accessible in the towns and cities, with their coffeehouses and news vendors and free libraries." This increase in printed matter, meant, of course, an increase in the variety of printed matter, the variety of styles, and the variety of subject
As the reading population increased, so did the demand for all types of printed material. Much of the demand was filled by cheap editions of popular novels, tracts, and "catnachery." The latter was the work of James Catnach and successors, printing jobbers who published broadsides, song sheets, sensational stories about royalty, murderers and the like, penny ABC's, ballads, fairy tales, and rhymes for children. Although poorly printed from worn blocks, these products were cheap and widely read. Even though increased mechanization had reduced printing costs, well printed books remained too expensive for the lower classes.

For various reasons, then, there remained a hierarchy of printed matter that corresponded to the class structure. Mechanization somehow did not prevent the more sophisticated forms of printed matter from going down in price. The increased mechanization did allow for an expansion within each specific group of books. The one under discussion here, children's books, became much more varied. Mary Thwaite, in her book *From Primer to Pleasure in Reading*, explains that "the expansion in the market for children's books was accompanied by a discovery that children were not all of one pattern, as it seemed to the publishers of the previous era, but that age, sex, and interests might vary."

The advantages of knowing this were two-fold: first, a writer could appeal to the tastes of one particular group like young girls - as Charlotte Yonge did, for instance; and second, the writer could limit the ideological content to that one group he was appealing to. This simple divided even further the identities of children, telling them what little girls or little boys read and telling them in the books they read what little girls or little boys did in their day to day life. The writers and the publishers also concentrated on particular areas of the market, concentrated on books
that promoted a religious way of life, or a utilitarian, or any other that
enough people subscribed to to make it marketable. But it was not, as Bingham
and Schott point out,

for commercial reasons only, others created children's books
to promote educational or religious beliefs, manners, beh-
avior and morals. The rise of didactic literature, that
is, moral tales and verses intended to instruct, made thou-
ousands of titles. While such writers supposedly followed the
admonitions of Rousseau to allow the child to develop nat-
urally according to his interests, in practice youngsters
were often burdened with the pressure of information.

Fairy tales, as well as other works of the imagination,
were considered a waste of time by many educators and by
some even dangerous. Every activity was turned into a les-
son in geography, mathematics, or other school subject, and
every thought or deed had some moralistic overtone . . .

Well intentioned but relentless, these writers impressed
upon the child the practical side of life, and many of their
themes were humane ones, especially their sermons against
the cruelty of slavery and the mistreatment of animals. 26

With the expansion of the technology and the lowering of costs, new audiences
could be reached, audiences who had in the past relied on other forms of com-
munication, like the sermon or the town meeting. One could say this "opened
up" the communications system, but it did not actually do that. It is im-
portant to realize that all these groups of printing matter were produced
by the same class, the middle class: at best this diversification could only
show the diversity of the interests of the middle class. There remains,
however, a large number of people excluded from this process, existing only
on the receiving end, a number that is perhaps even larger than the number
of people in the middle class itself.

"Obviously," Richard Altick writes, "one cannot read without some leisure
in which to do so. Leisure has never been equitably distributed in any civ-
lized society, but in nineteenth century England it was allotted with particular unevenness. In the middle class, even to some extent in its lower reaches, growing prosperity and the cheapness of labour enabled men and women to hire others for tasks they had hitherto done for themselves. It was not only the distribution of work that kept the lower classes from reading very often, but it was also the distribution of time: the middle class made up most of the reading audience because it possessed the leisure time to read, the leisure time to educate themselves. The expansion of the book trade was largely due to four happenstances: the expansion of the population, the expansion of the technology of publishing, the expansion of the wealth of the middle class, and the expansion, therefore, of their leisure time. Samuel F. Rickering writes:

If commercial prosperity made the expansion of the book trade possible, the writings of John Locke provided the publishers and educators with a wealth of general and particular educational matter. No other Englishman had written so broadly and so reasonably on education. Previous seventeenth century writers had limited the applicability of their works by appealing to select social classes or particular religious groups.

If John Locke broke down divisions and crossed boundaries, then the writers of the next two centuries would erect new divisions and draw new boundaries, all according to their own, new specifications, the specifications of a new ruling class.
I waited in a still, nutbrown hall, pleasant with late flowers and warmed with a delicious wood fire - a place of good influence and peace. (Men and women may sometimes, after great effort, achieve a creditable lie; but the house, which is their temple, cannot say anything save the truth of those who have lived in it.)

A child's cart and a doll lay on the black and white floor, where a rug had been kicked back. I felt that the children had only just hurried away - to hide themselves, most like - in the many turns of the great adzed staircase that climbed statelily out of the hall, or to crouch at gaze behind the lions and roses of the carved gallery above. Then I heard her voice above me, singing as the blind sing - from the soul:

In the pleasant orchard-closes,
And all my early summer came back at the call.
In the pleasant orchard-closes
God bless all our gains say we
But may God bless all our losses
Better suits with our degree.

Rudyard Kipling, "They"

1904
III.

"In the pleasant orchard-closes"

Eight Examples of Children's Literature
It is perhaps inevitable that no author and no book are exactly illustrative of the propositions set down in the last two sections; each author, along with containing aspects of the ideological ideal, contain enough contradictions to confuse the issue. If Mary Howitt's writings for children were to fit into any category, they would fit into the category of evangelical writing. But there is a problem with this, as Gillian Avery explains in her book *Childhood's Pattern*:

Mary Howitt was not an evangelical, she was a Quaker who had discarded the strict practices of the Society of Friends, and was later to become a member of the Roman church. Her unobtrusive talent and quiet style of writing kept her in the background when her more showy contemporaries succeeded in holding public attention.

In Mary Howitt's writing one receives a religious message, but the message comes from outside the norm; she is a dissenter, when she is a Quaker and later when she becomes a Catholic. The message contains a large amount of attention paid to nature and the workings of the natural world and less to the proper way to behave. This is not to say that Howitt's writings are not in any way didactic. The very title of her 1841 short novel for children *Strive and Thrive* is an indication of what kind of ideology Howitt places into her fiction. Like so many Quakers, she strongly adheres to the phil-

Mary Howitt

*Strive and Thrive* (1841) and *A Birthday Gift* (1850)
osophy of burgeoning capitalism.

The story of Strive and Thrive is one of struggling small businessmen and their families. Certainly it was one that the children who read the story could to relate to. Harvey Darton remarks that Mrs. Howitt was in all her writings very much of the market-place; her wares were good, but not much more than what was expected. What matters, however, is that though they may have been manufactured for sale, they were honestly and naturally made. It would be unjust to decry either their sincerity or their valuable appropriateness.

To say that her writings were of the market-place was double edged; they were certainly very commercial and written to sell, which they did, but they also dealt largely with the market-place, as a place where her characters lived out their lives. In Strive and Thrive the characters attempt to keep their small shop from going under and, through great diligence, in the end they succeed. Howitt describes the shop:

The little shop was neat and clean, and cheerful-looking to begin with; there was altogether a happy look about it, even before the goods were put in it; and the physiognomy even of a shop is of some importance. How busy each member of the family was in arranging every thin in its proper place; the neatly tied up packets of gloves, no great quantity of them, we confess; the stockings, the mits, the various woollen wares of divers colors, the crewels, the worsteds, the wool; the compartmented drawers of sewing cotton, white and colored; the buttons, the wire, the thread, the tape, the pins and needles, and all the thousand multifarious articles of the haberdasher's ware. There was a glass case with its small store of cutlery, in one part, and a few dolls, wax and composition, in the other. The shop made no great show after all, but a world of thought and care was expended over it.

That last sentence could be taken for a description of Howitt's prose style, which is somewhat unspectacular but extremely detailed and well researched.
The content of the above passage, as well as the content of the shop, are indicative of the world and the ideology that Howitt's writing contains. The values were the kind found in any middle class ideology: diligence, incessantly hard work, and suffering will bring good in the end. This is reflected in her description of her heroine Margaret Walsingham doing her needlework, not for fun but for money:

Let it not, however, be supposed, that all this was done without exertion and fatigue, both of body and mind. The imparting instruction, even to the quickest and most docile of children, is severe labour; and when to this was added the necessity of assiduously attending to a sedentary and dull occupation, the extent of her praise-worthy efforts and endurance may be understood. Margaret Walsingham was a heroine in the best sense of the word; still her spirits often sank, and she felt bodily exhaustion that almost amounted to illness; but that energy of mind, and that strength of moral principle, which, combined, produce the truest heroism, in the very moment of despondency brought hope, and nerved her for further and even greater exertion.

Howitt's books, essentially written for Victorian teen-agers, indicate a strong sense of the worth ethic, one which combines this energy of mind with this strong moral principle.

A fine example of this middle class morality and work ethic that Howitt has in her writings appears in the story entitled "The Ducat and the Farthing" which is printed in her collection of short pieces called A Birthday Gift. It is a short allegory and the clear distinction made at the beginning is between the two classes: the ducat is most assuredly of the upper class and the farthing is equally of the middle class. At the beginning, after the two have just been minted the ducat derides the poor farthing for being only made of copper and being so worthless. The ducat remarks that it
will travel around the world and see unusual places because it is made of
gold and worth a great deal. At this point a cat remarks to both coins:
"The under must be the uppermost, to make all even." As it turns out, of
course, the gold ducat ends up being owned by a miser who keeps it locked
away in a vault and the little vulgar farthing travels the world over doing
good. The final paragraph of the story is as follows:

Thus the farthing had delighted a child, had procured a beggar bread, had released a prisoner, had saved the life of a
Sultan, and of an Emperor. Therefore it was set in the imperial crown, and is there to this day - if one could only
see that crown!

The message is identical to the one in Strive and Thrive: one works hard and
even the lowly are rewarded. The personification of the coins is significant
because it emphasizes the worldly and capitalistic nature of the allegory;
also, oddly, the coin is utterly helpless and did not really do any of the
things stated above on purpose. Rather, it happened to be the coin that
helped those people to achieve their goals. This is a rather unusual contra-
diction and one that is probably unimportant to the message of the story,
which is the message of almost all of Mary Hewitt's writing. Mary Thwaite
put it best when she said that Mary Hewitt created

poignant little studies of honest and suffering poverty,
for to her earnest spirit the poor were no class apart,
but persons for whom she felt true compassion. Her aim
was to promote goodness, truth, and kindness, as well as
social betterment, and she did it in a pleasant and unob-
trusive way.
To begin with, "elix Summerly" was a pseudonym for Sir Henry Cole, who, in the words of Harvey Barton, was a modest benefactor whose work is much better known than his name or the events of his energetic life. He was born 1808, so that his fullest activity should have been in play at Victoria's accession, and he would have been an honored figure at her Jubilee; but he died in 1882. He on the Record Commission, and, very influentially, on the Committee for the Great Exhibition of 1851. He was one of the founders of the Royal College of Music, the Albert Hall and the South Kensington Museum, and a trusted advisor of that firm Idealist Prince Albert. Among his more intimate friends were Thackeray, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Love Peacock, George Grote and Charles Bullett.

This is all to say that Sir Henry Cole was a respected man and had all the weight of Victorian society behind him; because in the industry of children's literature he waged a campaign of reform, a campaign for the restoration of the fairy tale, for the restoration of the traditional folk tale to the form. The fairy tale had long fallen out of favor, basically because of the latent sexual and violent content of the stories and there tendency toward a state of amorality. Cole's campaign was directed against a specific man, a New Englander who wrote under the pseudonym "Peter Parley" and whose books, according to Cole,

have been addressed after a narrow fashion, almost entirely
to the cultivation of understanding children. The many tales sung or said from time immemorial, which appealed to the other and certainly not less important elements of a little child's mind, its fancy, imagination, sympathies, affections, are almost all gone out of memory, and are scarcely to be obtained. It was through his efforts and the efforts of a few dedicated others that stories like the stories in the collection I have before me came back into fashion, were brought out of obscurity. This is not to say that the stories in this collection - "Little Red Riding Hood," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Jack and the Beanstalk" - in fact, the sense of a moral to the story is just as strong as the kind of story Wilde was attempting to replace. In the first tale, for instance, Little Red Riding Hood is described much like the characters in the stories by Howitt:

She was a handy little maid, and it was her wish to do every thing she could to assist her mother. She was an early riser, getting up as soon as the sun began to shine, in order to make use of the whole daylight for her work, as the family were obliged to put out their lights when they heard the curfew bell toll. She helped her mother in getting ready her father's breakfast before he went to his work. After breakfast she was busy in putting everything tidy and orderly in the house. She would then go on short errands for her mother, sometimes to take her father his meals to him in the forest, when he was too busy to come home; sometimes to inquire after the health of a sick neighbor; and sometimes to see her good grandmother.

In the first two stories there is an emphasis on the hardworking qualities of the heroine, Little Red Riding Hood and Beauty, with a strong accent of the concept of Christian charity and good works. Oddly enough, though, the outright message of these two tales is contradictory: for in the first
heroin trusts the beast-man and is devoured for her kindness while in the second the heroine trusts him and eventually they marry and live happily ever after.

Conversely, the character of Jack in "Jack and the Beanstalk" is used as a negative example:

It was very idle of Jack to spend all his time in fun and frolic; he would not work or do anything useful, by which he might assist his mother in earning money to buy them food and clothing. This was partly owing to the foolish manner in which his mother had brought him up, for she had not courage or sense to make him do anything which was disagreeable to him; she was so foolishly fond of him, that she only thought of the present moment, and as she liked to see him look smiling and happy, she did not consider what would be the consequence, when he became a man, of the idleness in which she now indulged him; or how miserable and unhappy an idle, useless person always becomes.

Partly a criticism of a way of life, partly a criticism of a way of child-rearing this passage reflects a kind of Lockean attitude toward children: that they must be taught, they must be led. And Jack's mother can be seen to be representing a mis-use of Rousseau's ideas, moving away from freedom and toward indulgence.
Little is known about the author of this short novel for children who used the pseudonym "H. A. Fairstar," but several aspects of Victorian society can be deduced from examining the text of the story. The story, interestingly enough, is very similar to Mary Howitt's tale "The Ducat and the Farthing," in so much as it involves the fortunes and misfortunes of an object. Again, one of the most interesting facets of the story is the fact that its narrator, the "doll" of the title, is completely powerless in the world, unable to effect or control the events happening around her. The book is also reminiscent Dickens's David Copperfield and Great Expectations, both of which are memoirs of characters who seem to be totally powerless in the face of the inevitable mechanisms of Victorian society.

It strikes one that in this formula a writer finds the ideal figure for a child to identify with; one who is helpless reflects the predicament that most children are in; and if the writer allows that helpless creature to be propelled through a series of adventures which allow it to witness a number of extraordinary events, then the children can both identify and escape their problem in the same work of fiction. The doll in this story begins, like David Copperfield, with the story of her creator and then goes on to her birth: "The first thing I recollect of myself was a kind of
a pegging, and pushing, and pushing, and scraping, and twisting, and tapping
down at both sides of me, above and below. The human being becomes a sort
of machine, where legs and arms are fitted into sockets. The book, then,
provides through the medium of the then in vogue fairy tale, a reflection
of the social state in which children often found themselves. One of the
most interesting passages in the book is the part where the doll overhears
one of her owners reading.

But the means by which I learned very much of other things
and other thoughts was by hearing the master's little girl
Emmy read aloud to her elder sister. Emmy read all sorts
of pretty books, every word of which I listened to eagerly,
and felt so much interested, and so delighted, and so an-
xious and curious to hear more. She read pretty stories
of little boys and girls, and affectionate mammas and aunts,
and kind old nurses, and birds in the fields and woods, and
flowers in the gardens and hedges; and then such beautiful
fairy tales; and also pretty stories in verse; all of which
gave me great pleasure, and were indeed my earliest education.
There was the lovely book called "Birds and Flowers," by
Mary Howitt; the nice stories about "Willie," by Mrs. Marrett;
the delightful little books of Mrs. Harriot Myrtle - in which
I did so like to hear about old Mr. Dove, the village carpenter,
and little Mary, and the account of May Day, and the Day
in the Woods - and besides other books, there was oh! such a
story book called "The Good-natured Bear!" But I never
heard any stories about dolls, and what they thought, or
what happened to them! This rather disappointed me.1
Mark Lemon

The Enchanted Doll (1849)

Here then is another book about a doll. For Anne Lake Prescott, who wrote the introduction to this book, Mark Lemon was

A mediocre playwright and novelist but an entertaining lecturer and amateur actor who played Falstaff with only a little padding around his ample body. Mark Lemon is chiefly known as the first editor of Punch (one of the founders remarked that good punch needs a lemon.) For almost three decades he guided the journal with sense and with ebullient humor, for he loved a joke; Hans Christian Anderson said after a visit that "Mr. Lemon is most excellent full of comic." Economic injustice stirred his pity and anger - he printed Thomas Hood's famous "Song of the Shirt" after several other publications turned it down - but in most ways Lemon was a respectable middle class Victorian. Perhaps just for that reason he had a sweet way with children and a nostalgia for Faerie.14

In essence Lemon was a middle class Victorian and his story implicitly contains many elements of middle class Victorian morality. The anti-hero of this story which bears a vague resemblance to Faust is one Jacob Pout, a greedy and idle doll-maker. Lemon describes him as "rather lazy and envious."15 The man Pout is envious of is his neighbor, a silversmith named Stubbs, who is "an industrious, good-tempered fellow."16 Although are equally talented at plying their respective trades, it is obvious that Stubbs is the better man because he is more considerate and hard-working than Pout, but Pout is jealous of him because he works in silver and gold. In his envy, Pout never considers the great expense of working in these precious metals.
Jacob Pout never thought of this as he stood idling his time away at the door of his booth, murmuring within himself that he should have been brought up to doll-making, whilst Tony Stubbs never worked upon anything baser than silver. And then, when he saw the alderman of the ward tell down upon Tony's counter twenty pounds for a silver tankard, he nearly choked with envy at his neighbour's good fortune, never thinking how many long days it had cost the honest silversmith to hammer into form the dogs and horsemen which made the cup so valuable. 17

What the moral of the story is is the dangers of getting rich through immoral methods. Pout involves himself with the enchanted doll of the title and causes him nothing but difficulties.

Inserted into the story in several places are short sermons on various subjects, such as greed and illiteracy. It is at this point in the text that Lemon is at his most awkward: these small sermons break the fabric of the story and make the reader uncomfortable, probably because of the jocular tone throughout the majority of the story. Here, for instance, is a brief indictment of the past follies of the human race, coming immediately after a description of a bear fight:

It was the ignorance of the past which made cruelty endurable, and it will be the increase of knowledge in the time to come, teaching us that God is everywhere, which will make the meanest creature of value in the eyes of men, and thus preserve from wanton outrage, or wicked neglect, all things endowed with the consciousness of suffering. Be diligent, therefore, my little friends, to gain and diffuse knowledge, that you may help onward that good time, when kindliness and good will shall inhabit the bosoms of all the human race. 18
Of the works of Margaret Catty Harvey Darton has written:

Margaret Catty's literary work, as Mrs. Ewing said, "was essentially educational and domestic in its aim and its efforts." Her *Fairy Godmothers* (1851) were not merely like the godmothers of traditional fairy-tales in being the vehicle of definite morals; they invented the morals beforehand, and stressed them, with a good deal of verbiage.

Harvey Darton's wry comments on the nature of Catty's fiction are as appropriate today as they were in 1932 when they were made. His remark that her work "is moral rather than tale; more parable than nature" is found to be apt after reading this work.

The four stories of this collection are each written in a formalized, rather archaic style, which presents an obstacle to the modern reader. The purpose of each story is clearly to convey a moral, which is stated outright at the end. The title story, for instance, gives the following moral:

Dear Children! encourage a habit of attention to whatever you undertake, and you may make that habit not only easy, but agreeable; and then, I will venture to promise you, you will like and even love your occupations . . . If you do this, I think you will not feel disposed to quarrel, as the Fairies did, with Ambrosia's gift; for increased knowledge of the world, and your own happy experience, will convince you more and more that no Fairy Gift is so well worth having as, *The Love of Employment.*
This moral is obviously emphasizing, like almost all the others we’ve seen, the value of work, and hard work especially. The stories come very strongly from a tradition of evangelism and religious tractarianism. The next story, entitled “Joachim the Mimic,” gives the message that one should look for the best qualities in those around us. If one does not, one would be committing “a very grave error, and a very misleading one, for if it does nothing else, it deprives us of all the good we should get by a daily habit of contemplating what is worthy of our regard and remembrance.”

Catty does not simply come from the evangelical point of view in her stories; her eye for detail and her scientific accuracy suggests one deeply interested in the workings of the natural world and in natural science. Mary Thwaite remarks that Catty

was an able naturalist and the author of a standard work on British seaweeds among other accomplishments. She had begun to publish tales for children in 1851, and from 1855 to 1871 there appeared her most famous work for them, Parables for Nature, in five series. These are fables interpreting in simple, sometimes poetic fashion, truths of life, but the descriptions of creatures are based on the writer’s accurate knowledge of the minutiae of nature. Mrs. Catty’s caterpillars, star-fish, snowflakes, robins, spruce firs and other living things may interpret duties and meanings in human fashion, but their histories also unveil the fascination of the life of the natural world.

The stories in this collection are of a somewhat earlier variety and do not reflect so much this double-edged view of nature and spirituality, instead they give very simple morals, like “A living faith and trust in the protecting omnipresence of God” and “the Love of God which is otherwise so incredible to human reason.”
John Ruskin

The King of the Golden River (1851)

John Ruskin's little book is more than something of an anomaly in terms of the general trends of the books discussed so far, toward honesty and Christian-style capitalism. Nevertheless it represents a voice, and a strong one that by the end of the century would be looked upon as, in some ways, representing the Victorian intellectual. Diane Johnson, in her preface to the story, explains how it came to be published:

Families and fecundity, it is true, do not play much of a part in John Ruskin's story, as they did not in his life; he used the fairy tale to present a visionary, Christian (and currently rather unfashionable) attitude to property and social responsibility. Although he was only twenty-two in 1841 when he wrote The King of the Golden River (to entertain a little girl acquaintance, Effie Gray, who would eventually and unhappily grow up to be his wife), it contains a rudimentary version of the social theories he would later develop in influential works as *Into This Last*. When the hero of Ruskin's tale, Little Cluck, is rewarded for his virtues, his brothers are punished for their selfish capitalistic orientation. Their goal is short-term profit. They exploit their land and their labor force (Cluck), they dip into capital ("they melted all their gold without asking money to buy more"), they are dishonest in a number of ways, and above all they don't share their wealth. For his love and pity, Cluck is rewarded with the means of productivity, water, and grows rich.26

Therefore, in his roundabout manner, Ruskin is proposing something very similar to what the other children's writers were proposing - and quite different.
On the one hand Ruskin presents this gothic vision, full of imagery of nature, of mountains and streams. But on the other hand, in the actual story he presents in Cluck an exemplary good capitalist and in his brothers Schwartz and Hans exemplary corrupt, unchristian capitalists:

They lived by farming Treasure Valley, and very good farmers they were. They killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the blackbirds, because they pecked the fruit; and killed the hedgehogs, lest they should suck the cows; they poisoned the crickets for eating the crumbs in the kitchen, and smothered the cicadas, which used to sing all summer in the lime trees. They worked their servants without any wages, till they would not work anymore, and then quarreled with them, and turned them out of doors without paying them. It would have been very odd, if such a farm, and such a system of farming, hadn't gotten them very rich; and very rich they did get.
Francis Edward Paget

The Owl of Owltone Edge (1856)

Again, what we encounter here is a book putting forth a religious doctrine, disguised as nonsense for children. According to Mary F. Thwaite, 

The author of this book was "The Rev. F.E. Paget, Rector of Elford," who 

"edited a series called 'The Juvenile Englishman's Library,' published by 

J. Masters, 1941-1847. It was designed to promote Church of England principles."26 This book comes after that and is written in the guise of a wise old owl's advice to the young.

The book is separated into catechisms called "hoots" and tells the readers 

of the "hoots" of the various adventures of the owl and his friends who constitute an allegorical group. The owl is a gruff, lovable figure who says:

As an owl, I abominate children, and not without reason; but even I would not have a child unjustly treated, for I see that though the injustices of childhood may be forgiven, they are engraved indelibly on some tough membrane or muscle of the human heart, from which they can never be obliterated. And who was the author of injustice and the cause of tears?29

The writing in this book presents and indicates a trend in the writing of religious children's literature toward softening the message, combining equal amounts of humor and hellfire. It is a trend that was only in its embryonic stage in the early half of the century, but it would reach its peak in the second half with both the rise in religious toleration and the rise in non-
sense. Again, though, this book expresses the typical prejudices and stances toward the poor and lower classes, who were not reached very often by this type of literature, and who were not often Church of England. The owl remarks that

It is quite a mistake to suppose that the hearts of the poor are to be won by lavish gifts. They may be glad enough of the present, but they will despise the donor. The worst manager among them thinks most of wastefulness in superior. They admire thrift, even if they do not exercise it... yet if they condemn injudicious profusion, they detest stinginess, and the temper which only spends on self: and perhaps the bitterest words they ever speak are against the thriftily. 3
other echoes

Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
Round the corner. Through the first gate.
Into our first world, shall we follow
The deception of the thrush? Into our first world.
There they were, dignified, invisible,
Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves,
In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,
And the bird called, in response to
The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery;
The unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses
Had the look of flowers that are looked at.
There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotea roue, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of a heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird; human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"

In four quartets

1943
IV.

"Other echoes inhabit the garden"

A Conclusion
Perhaps the main objection to my thesis is that what I have said about children's literature and ideas of childhood occurs in every age and every historical period, and furthermore the placing of ideology within the framework of children's literature is inescapable; it must be done. To this I would agree, but my counter would be to simply look at the Victorian literature and scrutinize it for ideology. What does one find? The same concepts repeated over and over, until they are drilled into the child's mind: religion and capitalism are the centers of the orbit, which is hardly elliptical at all. What I would be asking for is a plurality of ideologies represented, ones that represent a wider spectrum of classes. In this country and at this particular point in time, I feel this is happening, to a small degree.

Let us leave, then, with three quotes. First, from John Locke:

Another way to instil sentiments of humanity and to keep them lively in young folks will be to accustom them to civility in their language and deportment towards their inferiors and the meaner sort of people, particularly servants. It is not unusual to observe children in gentlemen's families treat the servants of the house with domineering words, names of contempt and an imperious carriage, as if they were another race and species beneath them. With ill example, the advantage of fortune or their natural vanity inspire this haughtiness, it should be prevented or weeded out and a gentle, courteous, affable carriage towards the lower ranks of men placed in the room of it. No part of their superiority will be hereby lost but the distinction increased and their authority strengthened when love in inferiors is joined to outward respect and an esteem of the person has a share in their submission.  

Next, Jean-Jacques Rousseau:

If nature has given to the brain of children that softness of texture, which renders it proper to receive every impress-
ion, it is not proper for us to imprint names of sovereigns, dates, terms of art, and other insignificant words of no meaning to them while young, nor of any use to them as they grow old; but it is our duty to trace out betimes all those ideas which are relative to the state and condition of humanity, those which relate to their duty and happiness, that they may serve to conduct them through life in a manner agreeable to their being and faculties.2

And last, John Ruskin:

A child should not need to choose between right and wrong. It should not be capable of wrong. It should not conceive of wrong... Obedient as bark to helm, not by sudden strain or effort, but in freedom of its bright course of constant life; true, with an undistinguished, painless, unboastful truth, in a crystalline household world of truth; gentle, through daily entreatings of gentleness, and honourable trusts, and pretty prides of child-fellowship in offices of good; strong, but in bitter and doubtful contest with temptation, but in peace of heart, and armor of habitual right, from which temptation thaws like falling hail; self-commanding, not in sick treatment of mean appetites and covetous thoughts, but in vital joy of unluxurious life, and contentment in narrow possession, wisely esteemed.3
Endnotes

I.


4 Rousseau, p. 44.


6 Davidson, p. 119.

7 Pickering, p. 139.


9 Harvey Darton, p. 297.


11 Harvey Darton, p. 296.

12 Yonge, p. 450.


14 Aries, p. 329.

15 Aries, p. 336.

II.


2 Pinchbeck, p. 235.


4 Quoted in Pinchbeck, p. 243.


6 Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p. 399.

7 Pinchbeck, p. 108.


9 Bingham and Scholt, p. 149.

10 Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p. 360.

11 Bingham and Scholt, p. 151.


13 Aries, p. 33.


15 Pickering, p. 4.
16 Altick, p. 84.
17 Altick, p. 85.
18 Bingham and Scholt, p. 140.
19 Parjorie Plant, The English Book Trade: An Economic History of the
20 Plant, p. 269.
21 Altick, p. 89.
22 Bingham and Scholt, p. 142.
23 Mary F. Thwaite, From Primer to Pleasure in Reading: An Introduction to
the History of Children’s Books in England (London, the Library Association,
24 Bingham and Scholt, p. 142.
25 Altick, p. 85.
26 Pickering, p. 4-5.

III.

1 Gillian Avery, Childhood’s Patterns: A Study of Heroes and Heroines
2 Harvey Darton, p. 251.
3 Mary Howitt, Strive and Thrive: A Tale (London: Darton & Co., 1850),
p. 86-7.
4 Howitt, Strive, p. 66-7.
6 Howitt, Birthday, p. 107
7 Thwaite, p. 143.
8 Harvey Darton, p. 241-2.
Quoted in Harvey Barton, p. 241.


11 Summerly, p. 5.


15 Lemon, p. 5.

16 Lemon, p. 5.

17 Lemon, p. 5-6.


19 Harvey Barton, p. 290-1.

20 Harvey Barton, p. 291.

21 Margaret Catty, The Fairy Godmothers and Other Tales (London: George Bell, 1851), p. 60.

22 Catty, p. 83.

23 Thwaite, p. 185.

24 Catty, p. 123.


27 Ruskin, p. 3.

28 Thwaite, p. 110.


30 Paget, p. 227.
IV.

1. Locke, p. 156.
2. Rousseau, p. 87.
3. Quoted in Harvey Darton, p. 248.
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