

THE ANGEL IN THE NURSERY LIBRARY

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Authority and authorship of course go together. To write for children is to claim authority about children. It is also in some sense to claim authority over children. While the subject of nineteenth-century women writers for children has not been greatly explored, it raises especially interesting issues of authority and therefore of power. Although often in lesser positions of authority in relation to men throughout the century, women here have the upper hand over another class of persons: children. Authorship inevitably generates a base of power, a base from which a woman's image of authority can be developed; and it raises interesting problems concerning the effect of this new space of power on children. Considering the long period in which women's disempowerment during the nineteenth century has been exhaustively chronicled, it is especially interesting that this subject has been so little explored.

Not that the subject of children's literature has been neglected. Since Ariès there has been a good deal of historical work on the child (and thus on the central topic of children's literature) in the West. But, this said, there has been a consistent focus in the study of children's literature and reading on hermeneutics rather than history, reading and response rather than culture and context. While this approach has been undeniably fruitful, it has also had the unfortunate consequence of tending to blank out the large number of women writers for children by giving preference to a male tradition. In recent Victorian studies only a tip of the iceberg has been seen in terms of the huge amount of writing for children of all ages which was actually produced during the period. The focus has been on the small group of texts—mainly by men—that have long been part of modernism's broad reception of Victorian literature, and that have been privileged in the aesthetic canon of the modernists: the Brownings' (father and son) "Pied Piper," the Alice books, Stevenson's *Child's Garden of Verses*, Kipling, Milne, and Barrie at the end of the period. And in our postmodern moment these works (unlike the classical corpora of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold) have held their place in our attention very well. In addition new interest has been aroused in a number of other children's works, one of which, by a female writer, has moved to the head of the class: *Goblin Market*.

On occasions when women writers for children have been discussed, they have been winnowed down from their actual historical abundance by a set of values that preferred the male tradition. Critics as distinguished as Nina Auerbach and U.C. Knoepfelmacher have recently weighed in on the uncanonical area of women writers for children by offering a canon of quality, if not of historical depth. Their choices of women writers for study and anthologising have predictably been based on qualities that one can broadly call aesthetic—although aesthetic in open-ended ways that have challenged too well-wrought ideas of literature in the Leavis/New Critical traditions. (These particular postmodern-friendly qualities have perhaps ensured the survival of this canon when most aesthetic heads have rolled. Fanciful, experimental, anti-didactic, anti-bourgeois: these have certainly been the watchwords of this ongoing aesthetic reception.) Both editors focus on women writing fantasy literature in the period after

1865. At the same time they have pointed out an important cleavage in the body of this high aesthetic children's literature: women writers after Lewis Carroll accept his revolution against an earlier didactic tradition—which he blew away—by attempting to reclaim the tradition, which had been female, for female writers; and they do so by subverting some of the elements of the new tradition of subversive children's literature. Knoepfmacher sees women writers reasserting gender distinctions and moral controls on masculinity undermined by the pre-Peter Pan attempts of male fantasy writers to escape masculinity in childhood.¹ [See endnotes] Auerbach and Knoepfmacher's jointly edited anthology *Forbidden Journeys* places particular stress on the idea that women's resentment of their own childlike roles in society manifested itself as a dislike of male celebration of childhood freedom and fantasy (1, 6, 8).²

This paper will not attempt to challenge the values of subversive fantasy children's literature still obvious in our canon and perpetuated even in thoughtful work that questions it (such as that of Auerbach and Knoepfmacher).³ As someone who has recently argued for the interpretive approach against the excesses of the New Historical/Cultural Studies turn, I am on the whole well pleased that we should wish to make a broad aesthetic judgment from our own modern and/or postmodern horizons. But the cunning passages of history can open imaginations too. By going back and looking at a woman writer for children who does not fit our interest in the male tradition of play and wit, we may see less of the battle of male and female but more of the relation of mother and child. I will focus here on a rather fun case, an egregiously historically specific case. By reading themes of female disempowerment in these women writers, Knoepfmacher and Auerbach argue for a doubling of women's struggles in the literary marketplace as they attempted to reclaim a position in the new male tradition of children's writing. By contrast my emphasis is on the effects of women's empowerment over children by the woman writer who found a role and vocation during the angel in the house period. I am interested in reading the work of the woman children's writer as a representation of her social empowerment rather than of the psychological effects of her gender or of her larger disempowerment in patriarchal society.

In his critical study Knoepfmacher uses a gendered psychology to suggest, interestingly enough, that women were (or are—the category is somewhat transhistorical as it is taken from psychoanalytic work such as that by Chodorow and Jessica Benjamin) unattracted to the compensation of fantasy merger with the lost mother. Unlike males they were never able to (or were forced to) turn away from their mothers (Knoepfmacher 26). In this essay I will build on Knoepfmacher's central insight that women writers, already deeply involved in writing for children before the male tradition of wit became canonical, considered the genre of children's literature their own property and resisted its colonisation by men, not only after 1865 but even within discourses on the child and children's literature in romanticism.⁴

If children's literature was women's own literature, it was a place of their empowerment, an extension of the frequent real empowerment in the home which went along with their disempowerment in the outer world. A successful publishing career also offered the possibility, like women's writing in general, of breaching the ramparts of the separate spheres. I have to disagree with Knoepfmacher when he presumes that even in the family real power resides with the patriarch, and that images of matriarchal power in

children's fiction are only "attributed to the mother in many a fictional construct," a "reversal of actual gender roles" (16). This seems to be a major social error in denying women power in the home under a system of separate spheres. The reality is of course that there is no one system but enormous variety across different class positions—especially striations in the middle class, but also across ethnic, regional, and religious traditions. But the multiple representations of women as powerful in the home—to their men as well as to their children—should be assumed to have at least as many real correlatives. The historian who thinks otherwise, as Bumble would say, needs to learn from experience. This different story of relative empowerment can be read in any of the numerous writers of the didactic tradition, a tradition which is itself seen broadly as fissured into at least rationalist Rousseauist and evangelical moralistic traditions. It would be feasible to look at the work for children of young Mary Wollstonecraft, later wife of the children's bookseller William Godwin, or the work of Maria Edgeworth, or to examine heavily evangelical works such as Mrs Sherwood's *History of the Fairchild Family* (1818) and Maria Charlesworth's *Ministering Children* (1854).⁵

The author I have chosen to look at here is extremely well known. She is a truly major Victorian and modern female, perhaps *the* major one before, and indeed more so after, Woolf; and yet my reader has almost certainly never heard of nor seen her works. She is none other than the angel in the house, *the* angel in the house, Coventry Patmore's historically specific wife—to be accurate his historically specific first wife—Emily Andrews Patmore. I give up here my little perverse crusade to counter the negative literary reception of Patmore's poem *The Angel in the House* by insisting that the angel there was the spirit of love between married folk and that the figure of Honoria can only fit that of oppressed historically specific middle-class women if one sees her upper-class freedom as doing complicated ideological work in disguised form. Nor was Emily Andrews much like her, though Patmore clearly intended to pedestal her with the poem.

The real angel, as Ian Anstruther has portrayed her most recently (and as I have insisted in successfully demanding that she be given her own *Dictionary of National Biography* listing this century), was the intellectual daughter of a Congregational minister who emerged out of that suburban dissenter liberal tradition south of London that produced Robert Browning and Ruskin. She learned Latin and evidently Greek from her minister father, took care of his household when her mother died, met young, more literary and aristocratic Coventry (grandson of a jeweller but son of rather a dandy litterateur) through Laman Blanchard, and with him set up house and a Victorian houseful of six children. Her life was hard: Patmore came from a comfortable family but his father had lost his money in speculation and, when the two fell in love, the son had no Victorian patriarchal palace to offer. They initially survived on the meagre salary an assistant librarian at the British Museum could provide (a post Coventry obtained through the patronage of Milnes). Apparently Emily chose the hard-working young writer of experimental poems and literary and architectural essays for love, and the attraction was especially intellectual. Coventry took her into a world of the top writers of the day who regularly came to her modest table and admired her—not, it should be said, only for her face (the subject of portraits by Millais, a medallion by Woolner, and a poem by Browning), nor just for her domestic ways—but for her brains and critical

thrust. Coventry had also admired these qualities but he admired more her religious seriousness. She was indeed the minister of the family and her influence alone seems to have kept Patmore in the Protestant fold until, after her tragically early death at age thirty-eight in 1862, he followed his more natural aesthetic and mystical road to Rome. Nor is it fair to say, as the archetype of the angel would suggest, that he completely boxed her in; in many ways she exerted more influence on him, pushing him away from the sexual experimentation of his bachelor poems toward the middle-class, Protestant work of the *Angel* period; after her death he was released not only to Rome but to his greatest mystical work on sex and religion in his odes.

Patmore may very well have wanted to pedestal Emily to contain her powerful personal and ideological presence, kicking it, so speak, upstairs into the upper-class nursery. But if so he was not successful; her talents found a way to publish right out of the nursery. She became a recognised author of children's books (one prose, one poetry), and also author of a conduct book for maidservants, *The Servant's Behaviour Book; or Hints on Manners and Dress for Maid Servants in Small Households*. They were all published by the aggressive and respectable firm of Bell and Daldy, a house that specialised in educational and children's work and also published the work of Margaret Gatty in the 1850s, and her daughter Juliana Horatia Ewing in the next generation.⁶ Andrews Patmore is not known as an author because, like Marian Evans, she published under a pseudonym, and because servants' conduct books and real Victorian nursery books are generally not read.⁷ To her readers, and she appears to have had a number,⁸ she was Mrs Motherly. My initial research led me to believe that her books must be bibliographic ghosts; I was perpetually trying to historify and materialise these books while working on her husband. Last summer while returning to both Patmores for the new *DNB*, I found all three works in the new British Library.⁹ And then I found Ian Anstruther was ahead of me: he had found copies of the two children's books in a bookstore and donated them to Boston College, the Patmores' US Valhalla. All are good copies in pristine shape with excellent cloth bindings and good illustrations evidently all by C.S. Lane, though only those in the later *Nursery Tales by Mrs Motherly* acknowledge the work of the female illustrator and portraitist, Clara Lane.¹⁰ Right of translation is reserved.

What is interesting about these works is not so much what they tell us about Victorian children or literature. They are on the didactic end of the didactic to fanciful-aesthetic scale with which we all work. They serve a useful (we would think too pragmatic and morally too heavy) function in moving very little children (age about five) toward British civilisation. Their ideology is so simple even a child cultural historian could do it. Much more interesting is the figure of the author—the mother/litterateur Mrs Patmore/Mrs Motherly—in the text. As the real angel refused to be pedestalled and in fact voted with her pen against the foot-binding role of angeldom so the text suggests that the position of the author/mother is an empowered one. Examined in this way we see that the construction of the parent is of course as in real histories of maternity, always implicitly involved in the construction of the child. Here my approach to the role of the author of children's literature differs from that of Knoepfmacher who stresses rather the way that adults—former children writing children's books—are necessarily involved in “adult reactivation of childhood selves”

(xiv). This position leads Knoepfelmacher, like Auerbach, into psychologising the emotional involvement of these authors in the material of the text; my interest is rather in the social role they play as adults dealing with children as this is encoded and thematised in the text. Knoepfelmacher is certainly right in concluding that male fantasy exerts a powerful pull on the reader (doubtless originating in the ambivalence of the childlike grown male author) away from traditional adult roles: “an adult reader is drawn into a fantasy that remains essentially anti-adult in its regressive hostility to growth and sexual division” (5). I am arguing that women writers’ hostility to this regression is not just the result of a dislike of gender ambivalence, but stems from a wish to preserve the empowered role they play in pre-fantasy literature as adults mentoring children (see Myers 31-59).



Fig.1 Willy; or, the Happy Day. Frontispiece to *Nursery Tales* 1860

The broader subject is of course that of the parent in relation to children which has been an issue of great controversy in the history of childhood. In a work that we now can see as proto-Foucauldian, Ariès asserted in effect that the medieval and to some extent the early modern periods inhabited a different episteme in their conceptions of children, treating them as small adults and thus minimising the role of the biological family in their lives. This bold view, taken from a personal dislike of the bourgeois family structure of our system, has been widely challenged (see Pollock, Jordan, and

Horn). It seems clear, as Ariès suggested, that families were not so different in earlier times from those in the nineteenth century. But I think it is also fair to accept his sense of a new concern with upbringing and education in both the rationalist and evangelical traditions which worked so broadly in recasting ways in which nineteenth-century children were brought up. Both traditions also placed more emphasis on parenting as a responsibility which of course has dovetailed with societal changes that have demanded, as Ariès rightly saw, a much more prolonged period of dependency for middle-class children undergoing much more complicated educational procedures—a process which has been attacked by John Holt as artificially weakening modern children psychologically. It also seems clear that the largest bonus of parental empowerment (at the expense of children's empowerment) was awarded to nineteenth-century women, most often (and of course unevenly) in the middle classes—an empowerment that needs more exploration within the huge discussion of women's disempowerment in the development of separate spheres.¹¹



Fig.2 Alfred and Deighton; or, the Kind Mamma
Nursery Tales (1860)

This empowerment is clearer in the more didactic and explicitly moralistic stories of the prose *Tales* of 1860 than in the *Nursery Poetry* of the previous year. As in much of the work of the time—somewhat before the flights to freedom and nonsense of the great canonical works of Victorian child literature trickled their more fantastical approach down on ordinary nursery literature—these tales seek a palpable hold on their small intended reception group. Their strength is clarity of diction and realism in subject and detail. One could, I suppose, talk of a Pre-Raphaelite mode of meaningful detail when discussing greedy little Freddy's raisins which don't taste so good when he has them all to himself outside in the cold; or the big ditch in which Willy ends up on the happy day he had his way entirely—an occasion which is well rendered in Clara Lane's illustration (fig.1). But one could also speak of a Bunyanesque or Dickensian bluntness of realistic presentation of life's realities—part of that acceptance of life's frequent nastiness, brutality, and shortness that never ceases to impress us in the mid-Victorian other.¹² The final story teaches little Ella not to be selfish by feeling bad when Mamma has to leave her for months because Papa (away all her five years in India making a living) is on the brink of death in a strange land. While there is not Dickens's pathos, there is the realisation of an extreme emotion, of need, and of the need to batten down that feeling. One even thinks a bit of young Lucy Snowe. But of course analogies are less important than identity. The centre of these works seems to reside in the constant push to bring the child to moral self-awareness, a kind of hothouse forcing of the same sort that Dr Arnold was accused of cultivating in older boys. The child becomes Protestant and middle class, and here Andrews Patmore very much embodies the ideologically hegemonic role Nancy Armstrong ascribes to middle-class women, precisely in forcing recognition of the mother.¹³ Mrs Motherly, *nom de plume*, is virtually an intaglio or even *mise en abîme* for what her works do: they do not just act as mother mothering the child, but put a mother, as identified other, in the child's consciousness.

Henceforth the child is not a motherless child; nor is there allowed any continuation of the younger infant's confusion of mother with self as Kleinian object relations or Lacanian thinking have chronicled. The resolution, for all its being forced on the child, is perhaps best described as British in praeter-Winnecottian mode: the child comes first to moral maturity by accepting that fact that there is an other who is good enough out there, but now beyond transitionality. Ella learns that her mother is not herself, that her mother loves her but needs to separate her own interests from Ella's interest in her. Indeed she learns that loving Mamma can mean accepting her loss of her. Heavy stuff; done by forcing recognition rather than—as in the different brutal distancing of what Jim Kincaid has called the “good spanking”—merely forcing a certain kind of conduct. Lost wilful little Willy learns the validity of the motherly point of view by trying and erring all his day long: he endures a kind of Pippa's day where all the focus is on the celebrant's failures not, as in Browning, on those of the non-innocents around. The eponymous kind Mamma shows her boy Alfred why she is truly kind in insisting on rules between himself and young Deighton (Deighton interestingly was Coventry's own middle name; Alfred might be a metonym for their second child, Tennyson, named after their friend): the boys are forced to recognise that kind Mamma has rules for a moral purpose (and even punishments for bad will, not bad deeds), when

their ruleless neighbour Edward falls out of a tree and loses his arm.¹⁴ The kind Mamma as she appears in fig.2 is a figure of more than Austenian sense, admired but distant and apart in her serene moral being. Children here construct the kind Mamma just as she then constructs them: as conscious moral beings. If, as Carolyn Dever has noted, Victorian men tended to create a landscape with only absent or dead mothers (as indeed Andrews Patmore's husband would most memorably portray her in *The Unknown Eros*), Andrews Patmore herself places kind Mamma at the very centre, as does the illustration. Note, to satisfy my quest for a *mise en abîme*, that this mamma reads from a book, perhaps this very one that inscribes her special identity and power.



Fig.3 The Nursery. Frontispiece to *Nursery Poetry* (1859)

Parents generally will recognise how keeping small dependents sometimes allows them to think of themselves differently, as kinds of masters who forget in their performances as parents that they are mere erring mortals themselves. This feeling, given especially to nineteenth-century Protestant sensibility in any case,¹⁵ manifested itself in the poems as something more than mere didactic moral supernality. There is

rather a touch of nursery sublime in the awareness of powers beyond the audience's mere child-human ken. As God asks Job if he can follow him to his ultimate haunts, so the motherly goddess of the nursery unfurls her powers above the highly impressed (because highly impressible) young.

The poems of *Nursery Poetry* are indeed good, more lasting than the tales when judged by our standards of fancifulness and free spiritedness.¹⁶ In writing such poems for children Andrews Patmore was of course following a long tradition of nursery rhymes which began about 1740.¹⁷ Hers, not unusually, are mainly about the animal and village world, but these are seen with intense dramatic awareness of the lives of animals since they are only half humanised/sentimentalised. It is here more than in the prose that there is a genuine feeling of fantasy literature. But as with the stories the moral thrust is to force recognition on the child reader, not only of how animals suffer (the two angels in the nest of "A New Story of Cock Robin and Jenny Wren" are separated by boys with nets who catch poor Robin—bad boys generally come in for a lot of criticism), but also of the necessity of suffering.¹⁸ Cats go out and kill mouseys, cats kill pet squirrels who are then buried beside their tails, old mice die of despair, their daughter killed before their eyes. So there is some of the bright multi-perspectival objectivity of canonical Victorian children's poetry. But we never lose a sense of the sensibility behind this grownup, god-like objectivity. She presides indeed over the title page, in name—Mrs Motherly again—and in Lane's frontispiece which rightly portrays the mother-child relation as an emblem for the whole (fig.3). The first of these poems then frames the rest with antiphonal responses between children's voices and the dominating mother. The fanciful tales are then always about the relation of speaker—generally mother—and a view of the world, so it is explicitly a mother who opens up a way of regarding others in the world. This mother's-eye view may be a bit disguised in the animal stories but is obvious in the morals it reads and the revenge taken on bad boys. Out of mother's control these boys die ("The Kittens" 47) or are bitten by mad dogs ("The Mad Dog" 59). It is clearer when class issues arise: Mother controls the charity that defines difference between herself and the beggar boy, as she does between herself and her other dependents. Thus in a poem called "The Beggar and the Baby":

The little Beggar cries for bread,
And Baby sleeps upon her bed.
So hushabye, Baby, sleep on and be good,
And come, little Beggar-boy, here is some food. (11)

And in "Harry's Shilling" an older boy learns from *Grandmamma* the joy of giving that inscribes his differences in a class structure.

Children are nonetheless mainly written by their difference from adult Mammams who not only have all the answers ("Yes, Dear; it's a white Butterfly" ends the poem "Flying Flowers"), but insist on their moral distance as well. In "The Spider" (fig.4) the child who finds it hard to love the ugly spider is told that Mamma loves *her* even when "she seem'd as wicked as/The Spider on the wall!" (37). Even when child or father is allowed to speak, we feel they are ventriloquised through the differing view of the controlling mother presence.



Fig.4 *The Spider*. *Nursery Poetry* (1859)

Let me end with a more speculative and even controversial suggestion. The reader will conclude that the angel was no angel because she put herself on a pedestal of her own making—as successful women in all kinds of communication industries, including our own, have done every day since the angel was killed. It was certainly a self-seriousness that was directly attacked, and often bitterly satirised, in the male tradition of fantasy literature for children which in this sense wages a war against grown-up women occupying impressive roles within a society of separate spheres as well as against prematurely wise children. Better here merely to notice how the empowerment of a very intelligent person in the nursery library created not only the idea of a superior being—the professional mother—but also an inferior being—the child—who is now constructed (as Ariès classically noted, more generally in relation to the development of the child in the West) as a separate type of human. This opens the way for a garden of fancy-free aesthetic verses with all their bohemian joys, but also to a next generation who would naturally seek to perpetuate their pleasant roles as slaves to Mamma's master in so many forms of bohemianism, aestheticism (Wilde's stories),

escapism (Stevenson's *Garden*), plain vanilla Peter Pan, or fur-clad Venus-mamma's naughty little boy. For women, as working-class and racially or sexually excluded feminists often complain, it created a road to power by extending female middle-class domination. Angels could flee the nursery but bring out with them their sense of power and authority. Yesterday the nursery library, today the world.

Notes

General Editors' Note

AVSJ usually follows the MLA policy of discouraging the use of lengthy notes. However, in this case we have made an exception as John Maynard specifically asked that his informative notes be published to allow "the child specialist to find my contextual argument fully developed. Those wishing to read further in infant literature will also find the requisite background references." We have published the notes as endnotes rather than as footnotes to avoid too much fragmentation in the body of the essay.

¹ Knoepfmacher traces the male challenge to the female didactic tradition to Ruskin's early *The King of the Golden River*, although he accepts Lewis Carroll as the major figure against which the new women's children's literature was recast. In this he is following a well worn modernist reception of children's literature, for instance Darton's overall view of Alice as the spiritual volcano that opened up a new world of creative children's literature. A contemporary surveyor of the broad field such as Styles similarly accepts this modernist premise of relative importance, spending only a dutiful initial chapter on "Devotions and Didacticism."

² One could conjecture that this position is chiefly asserted by Auerbach given her use of female fantasy material elsewhere in her work. Penny Brown offers in her conclusion a similar explanation of women's portrayal of children as reflecting their own sense of their status as women, moving from docile to rebellious in the course of the century (182). Her actual discussions of women's literature seem more often to divide the child in the story from the mother figure, as I do in this essay.

³ The largely unspoken premises of both Knoepfmacher's book and the jointly edited anthology is that the genre only comes of age or is worthy of a critical book or anthology after the revolution into fantasy by male writers. The anthology even includes the modern female fantasist Edith Nesbit whom Noel Coward considered the most bohemian person he had ever met; it excludes not only all the women writers of the extensive didactic traditions from the late eighteenth century until 1865, but even Margaret Gatty, mother of Juliana Horatia Ewing (who is included), a major late writer within the didactic traditions. In his critical study Knoepfmacher begins with Ruskin and continues with Thackeray (the father), MacDonald, and Lewis Carroll at a time when women didactic writers of children's literature were legion. His women subjects Jean Ingelow, Ewing, and the Christina Rossetti of *Sing-Song* (1872) and *Speaking Likenesses* (1874) are all writing after this male intrusion and working within the traditions the males had established. In his condemnation of Summerfield and Carpenter for their imposition of our contemporary values on the past, Knoepfmacher (19) is clear that he wishes to keep a more open mind to A.L. Barbauld, Sarah Trimmer and their successors. But the present is a hard place to evade, unless—as I confess I do here—one takes a parochially historical interest. And even in this I confess that I am probably motivated by contemporary feminist interests to provide a career and its empowerment to the angel in the house—who herself might be perplexed by that part of my discussion.

⁴ Knoepfmacher brilliantly stages the education of Coleridge's son Hartley as a central event: Hartley, a child liberated in his father's "Frost at Midnight" (and in the discussions of his father's male friends) into free fantasy and free imagination in nature, is an attempt, like Dr Frankenstein's fathering, to evade mothers and the authority of their gendered world and to preserve a permanent sexless—hence male

dominated—world. Hartley's weak output, even compared to his sister's interesting *Phantasmion*, suggests the failure of the project. Knoepfelmacher here draws on Plotz (138-39).

⁵ For histories of these traditions see especially Brown who groups the former under the title "The Child of Faith and the latter under "The Child of Reason." See also Grylls (74-110). Grylls notes that the traditions empowered parents in general, an insight I continue below. It is not entirely a female one: of course Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton* (1791) has a founding place in the rationalist tradition though it is interesting how quickly even that male tradition out of Rousseau is appropriated by women. Briggs discusses Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life with Conversations Calculated to Regulate the Affections and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness* (1788) often dismissed as an early work (227-31). But she finds it important in establishing a concern for rational upbringing of children and notes importantly for my topic that it revises Sarah Fielding's *The Governess* (1749) by placing the authority in the hands of the parent figure and adult model figure, Mrs Mason, rather than other children or fellow students. See also Myers, and Brown (16-18).

⁶ Bell and Daldy also published Gatty's well-known *Aunt Judy's Magazine* beginning in 1866. They were London representatives for Macmillan, who began publishing Patmore in 1861 with the anthology *The Children's Garland from the Best Poets* (on which Andrews Patmore probably put in a good deal of work) and then his own poems in *The Angel in the House* series in 1863. Later Patmore would publish his works with the successor firm George Bell and Sons. It would seem that Andrews Patmore led her husband to associations with Bell rather than he did her.

⁷ A recent exception Brian McCuskey's paper "The Kitchen Police: Servants in Middle-Class Transgression" which picked up Andrews Patmore's book on servant behavior as part of a survey of the genre: forthcoming in *Victorian Literature and Culture*.

⁸ Evidence here is hard to come by; the few books left in the world would seem to argue a small sale, but children's books notoriously disappear over time. The prominent publisher, who was willing to take on an additional children's book by her after the first, would argue that she was seriously received as a commercial writer for children. She does not appear in the anthology by Gatty, but those who do are mainly classic writers known for verse for grownups as well, such as Hemans and L.E.L. I have scammed most of the standard surveys and the anthologies of children's tales and verses from the period and later and found no reference to Mrs Motherly and no reprints of her work. A work I was unable to check is *Poetry for the Young* (1883) by an anonymous editor, which appears in the British Library Catalogue but is nowhere available in the United States. She also does not appear in biographies of contemporary women poets, such as Robertson's, but again these are poems for grownups.

⁹ The National Union Catalog lists only the *The Servant's Behaviour Book* under Motherly. The British Library also enters her works only under the pseudonym though her identity is readily known from biographical works and dictionaries of pseudonyms. Ultimately the inattention to her work, including by myself, must have its root in contemporary cultural blinkers that forestall interest in the "angel" as a working and producing individual.

¹⁰ Mrs Motherly is billed as "author of Nursery Poetry." I have subsequently found that there is one other copy of the *Nursery Tales* in the United States. In fact, and to my shame, in NYU's own Fales Library as part of the Valentine Children's Collection. This version has an added fly page before half title commending the earlier volume: "Just published, uniform with 'Nursery Tales,' Nursery Poetry by Mrs Motherly with illustrations by C.S. Lane. 2s.6d; coloured 3s.6d"; it adds: "'It has some of the prettiest pictures we ever saw in a child's book; and is full of bright little verses, which probably the present race of four-year olds will love as well as we used to love 'The Daisy,' and 'Nursery Rhymes!' *Monthly Packet*." The copy is missing one illustration. Despite the advertisement, I have the dates correct. All copies have rose-colored contemporary embossed cloth bindings with stamped gold. The illustrator Miss Clara S. Lane exhibited five figure subjects at the Royal Academy from 1856-59 with titles such as "The

Country.” and “The Town.” She lived in London and was also a portrait painter: See *Dictionary of Victorian Painters*, 2nd ed. (274). The advertisement cited above makes clear that she was the illustrator of both volumes.

¹¹ Galbraith offers interesting evidence from memoirs of the moral authority of working-class mothers as well (13). The empowerment was doubtless developed unevenly; Grylls notes an opposite direction of mothers represented as scatterbrained in the anti-parental literature at the end of the century (for example, *The Way of All Flesh*) in which the father figures as overbearing on child and mother alike (42); and of course mothers are often most distinguished in Victorian fiction, realist as well as fantasy, by their absence: see Dever. For specific studies of literary relations of parents and children see Grylls who summarises the issues I raise here concerning the limits and applicability of Ariès’s thesis more broadly (16-23, 37-39).

¹² Margaret Gatty, who was well known as a warm household figure for editing *Aunt Judy’s Magazine* (see note 6 above), chose fifty-nine of the 111 poems in her volume *The Mother’s Book of Poetry* on the subject of death. See Grylls (40).

¹³ See Armstrong chapter 4. I should note that the foregrounding of the mother in these tales is done in a more sophisticated way than in the earlier versions of the didactic traditions in which these fit. As Brown has noted the works of Barbauld or Trimmer give no real place to a dialogue between a realised child and an instructing adult: “The portrayal of the child’s experience is restricted to the narrator’s external, adult and frequently patronising viewpoint with little or no real attempt to enter the child’s mind, such that the language and activities of the child and the arguments of the text are coloured by adult perceptions” (13). By contrast Andrews Patmore wishes precisely to force on the child a double recognition of his or her relation to the mother. Many of her devices, for instance the contrast between good and bad children, or the use, still present in *Sesame Street* today, of wise and foolish animals as child analogues, do follow quite precisely the didactic traditions. Above all she follows the stress on giving dignity and importance to the female mentor figure, a professionalisation of the woman’s role in childrearing often mistaken for coldness. The male fantasy tradition in effect attacks the dignity of women’s roles in attacking the didactic traditions. Women writers writing after the onslaught of male fantasy literature later in the century still often maintained very positive images of living mammas: Brown finds in works by Ewing, Louisa Molesworth, Elizabeth Sewell, and Charlotte Yonge that “the mother is frequently an idealised creature, calm, lovely, caring, with great moral authority and endowed with an almost religious significance” (99). It would be hard to assign Andrews Patmore to one of the two didactic traditions; the minister’s daughter’s religious concerns are obvious in the intensity of her concern for developing the child’s conscience and in her stress on good and bad behaviour, but in training the child she dwells far less on sinfulness than on the rational consequences of foolish actions.

¹⁴ The violent judgment on poor Edward, so heavy to a postmodern reader, was common in the didactic tradition: Augusta Noble, spoilt neighbouring daughter, is made an even more terrible object lesson in Mary Martha Sherwood’s *The History of the Fairchild Family* (1818) where her excessive vanity is punished by a fiery death as the candle used to light her reflection in the mirror catches her on fire. Writing more than forty years later when idealisation of childhood was much advanced, Andrews Patmore does seem conservative in retaining relatively harsh punishments.

¹⁵ Andrews Patmore was not alone in developing a high and mighty representation of the parent in the nineteenth century. In evangelical works like M.M. Sherwood’s *The Fairchild Family*, the father is made to say, “I stand in the place of God to you, whilst you are a child.” As late as 1894 the Rev. R.F. Horton told children that “parents know *Better* what is good for you” because “God has given them the knowledge of what is best for you.” He also noted that they are above ordinary motivations: they “give all and ask nothing” (qtd Grylls 90, 61-62). Grylls also discusses texts before Butler challenging such assumptions of authority: F.C. Burnand’s *The New History of Sandford and Merton* (1872), Helen

Mathers's *Comin' Thro' the Rye* (1875), Ewing's *We and the World* (1877-78), and F. Anstey's *Vice Versa* (1882) (Grylls 98-109). The fantasy tradition often eliminated or made fun of parental figures.

¹⁶ The same century-long broad trend from didactic to fantasy work was as apparent in poetry addressed to children as in the prose narratives: Lewis Carroll of course parodies and ridicules standard didactic poems by Jane Taylor or Mary Howitt.

¹⁷ Beginning with rhymes in Mary Cooper's *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book* (1744) which were evidently intended to be sung, and already are illustrated. *Mother Goose's Melody: or, Sonnets for the Cradle* appeared around 1760-66. See MacDonald (117-25) and Opie (*Dictionary*) who prefer the later date. On the prehistory of the genre see Opie (*Dictionary* 1-28). In the nineteenth century attention had been called to the genre by James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps's anthology *The Nursery Rhymes of England, Obtained Principally from Oral Tradition* which appeared before mid-century in many revised editions and was reprinted throughout the later half as well. Patmore's own anthology, on which Andrews Patmore presumably worked, set an alternative tradition of offering an anthology for children made up of verses not written specifically for children. It seems a little ironic that Coventry, but not his professional wife in this genre, is later represented in the anthology by Coventry's intellectual mistress, Meynell.

¹⁸ It is a new story of course because it rewrites the double traditional nursery rhymes of Cock Robin's wedding to Jenny Wren and his unfortunate early demise at the hands of the sparrow and his arrow. See Opie (*Dictionary* entries 109-10). These affecting stories go back to the earliest printed collections of the eighteenth century and thence back into folklore, the marriage appearing as early as 1400. Opie lists fifty-two editions of Cock Robin with or without Jenny, and these are only a fraction of the publications of this perennial favorite (*Three Centuries* 32-35).

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