A TEXTUAL HISTORY OF
J.R. WYSS'S THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

By

PHILIP HOLDEN

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
1986
To Anne Jones
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank John Seelye for originally drawing my attention to this topic, and my other committee members, John Cech, my chairman, and Alistair Duckworth, for their helpful suggestions for revision and other research.

I would also like to thank Mr. William Black for invaluable moral assistance and intellectual support.
My thesis topic drew surprise, even horror, from my colleagues. Semiotics and Shakespeare were fine; The Swiss Family Robinson was, to say the least, peculiar. I imagined being at a job interview, or before a Ph.D. candidacy committee, and admitting as my major academic asset that I seem to be the only person upon this planet with something approximating a complete knowledge of the textual history of Wyss’s work. After an extensive search through indexes and bibliographies, I have been unable to find a single critical work, or even article, concerning one of the most important children’s books of the last two centuries. Introductions and editors’ commentaries have, almost without fail, proved highly inaccurate, and much of my work has been concerned with the laborious correction of previous mistakes (see Chapter Seven).

However, I think I have had better motives for undertaking this study than a mere desire to prove myself a superior scholar to most of Wyss’s 20th century editors. First, there was the potential the text offered as unexplored territory in the overexplored field of English Literature. Second, and perhaps more important, was the text’s role as a socio-political barometer, measuring changes in morality and educational theory; there is still much work to be done on this subject. Finally, there was the pleasure of reading and writing; The Swiss Family Robinson has only maintained
its position as a best-selling children's book because it is entertaining. I was surprised to discover how popular the novel still is; over half of the people I talked to about it knew the plot, either from childhood reading or from seeing the 1960 Disney movie. If the number of new translations of Wyss's work has declined this century, the educational debate it inspires, and the mythemes it amplifies are still very much with us.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I THE WORK AND ITS ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II PESTALOZZI IN PRACTICE: THE TRANSLATION OF</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARY GODWIN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III YOUNG IMPERIALISTS: THE TRANSLATION OF</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.H.G. KINGSTON</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV TEXT AT WAR WITH TEXT: THE TRANSLATION OF</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRS. H.B. PAULL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V REASON TRIUMPHANT: THE TRANSLATION OF</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HENRY FRITH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI SPECIALIZATION: OTHER 19TH CENTURY EDITIONS.</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII FRAGMENTATION: THE 20TH CENTURY</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII CONCLUSION</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON: A CHRONOLOGICAL</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

A TEXTUAL HISTORY OF J.R. WYSS´S THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

By
Philip Holden
August 1986

Chairman: Dr. John Cech
Major Department: English

The Swiss Family Robinson, by Johann Rudolf Wyss, is one of the most important works in the history of children's literature. It synthesizes the educational ideas of Pestalozzi and Rousseau with the fiction of Defoe to produce a text with fascinating pedagogical possibilities.

The first English translation of The Swiss Family Robinson was made by Mary Godwin, in 1814. Further translations and adaptations appeared throughout the 19th century, the most popular being those of Mrs. H.B. Paull (1868), H. Frith (1878), and W.H.G. Kingston (1879). Other Victorian versions of Wyss´ novel exhibit intriguing variety, but none has achieved lasting popularity.

The 20th century has seen no completely new translations of The Swiss Family Robinson. However, it has seen an increase in the quality of illustration of Wyss´s text, and the making of two films of the book. With many editions
of *The Swiss Family Robinson* still in print, the future of
the work as a children’s classic seems assured.

[Signature]

Dr. John Cech
CHAPTER I
THE WORK AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

The Swiss Family Robinson's genesis exhibits a textual confusion only equaled in complexity by its eventual fate as an English language text. The novel was first published in German in Zurich in 1813, with authorship firmly ascribed to Johann Rudolf Wyss, the Swiss poet; yet even at this early stage, it was the work of three men. Its nominal author had compiled the text from a manuscript\(^1\) left by his deceased father, Johann David Wyss, a pastor at Seeldorf and later at Munster. In the evenings, according to at least one editor of Wyss's novel,\(^2\) the family would gather around the fire and listen to Pastor Wyss's stories; upon his death a manuscript detailing the stories was discovered. The family in The Swiss Family Robinson have no surname; and they represent, despite the myopia of several translators, Wyss the elder, his wife and their four sons. Based on internal evidence in the text, it seems as though the elder Wyss was responsible for much of the content and that his son Johann


\(^{2}\)The most imaginative rendering of this is given in Wyss, trans. Baker, but Baker also mentions the genesis of the manuscript. Further discussion in Chapter VI.
Rudolf gave it its shape and approached the publishers. A second son, completing the family effort, provided woodcuts for the first edition.

The form of *The Swiss Family Robinson* reveals its origins: it is episodic, presumably deriving from the many shorter stories that Wyss the younger strung together. Its genesis is certainly not unique in this respect: *Alice in Wonderland* and *Watership Down* are only two of many popular children's books that derive from children's stories told to a particular child (Lewis 26). However, the dual authorship of the Wyss text complicates matters. The novel does possess a rudimentary thematic unity, a gradual expansion and colonization of the island after shipwreck, but it does not have the dramatic integrity of its famous model, *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe's novel is a drama of election, suffering, and redemption; his protagonist is alternately fearful, surprised, shocked, elated, and repentant. After reading *Robinson Crusoe*, we find that images from it remain imprinted upon the consciousness, among them Crusoe's road-to-Damascus conversion, his planting of the cross, and above all the footprint in the sand. By contrast, if we think back to a childhood reading of *The Swiss Family Robinson* we are struck by the absence of memorable images or events; at best we may recall a few locales, such as the cave or treehouse, and perhaps one or two of the animals that the family discovers. At the end of Wyss's original the family are still on the island, very happy there; a brief postscript
concerning their deliverance is only added in order to explain how the manuscript supposedly came into the author's hands, and thus to maintain an illusion of veracity. The drama of salvation, so essential to Crusoe, is incidental to the Swiss father; he and his boys proceed confidently through what has been called a "prolonged picnic."³

If the form of The Swiss Family Robinson reflects its origins, it also reveals something concerning its purpose. The novel's departure from its model are significant and not solely due to Wyss's lack of merit as a writer; rather, they signal a fundamentally different intention from that of Defoe. Robinson Crusoe is perhaps a sophisticated spiritual autobiography; The Swiss Family Robinson, as one translator expresses it, is a representation of "a complete educational process" (Wyss, trans. Davenport Adams), and that educational process is an innately Swiss one. Close behind the figure of the Swiss father stands the figure of the Swiss educator Heinrich Pestalozzi, and behind him, a little in the distance, the towering form of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Before considering the philosophical background to Wyss's work, however, it is perhaps necessary to summarize the salient features of Wyss's narrative, particularly for those of us who have only encountered the substantially altered

translation of W.H.G. Kingston, or worse still a Disney movie infiltrated by escapees from Treasure Island.

In Wyss's original novel, a Swiss family is shipwrecked on an island near Malaya while on its way to participate in the founding of a colony in the South Seas. There are no survivors of the wreck save the father, mother, and their four sons; the father then narrates the story.

From the first the family shows great resourcefulness, fortitude, and above all, industry. Robinson Crusoe may take a month to build a boat, but the family knock one together in a day. Like Crusoe, they are aided by the fact that the wreck remains intact for some time before breaking up, but they also benefit from an additional piece of good fortune; since the ship has been on its way to found a colony, it contains seedlings, mills, livestock, even a pinnacle—in short, all that is needed to maintain civilization in the wilderness. With such advantages, the Swiss Family put Crusoe to shame: they manufacture tools, clothing, and even a carpet for their cave home. In this, if in nothing else, the greatest Robinsonade certainly improves upon its predecessor.

The narrative of Wyss's novel, as might be expected in the work of a pastor's son, is characterized by a good deal of piety. The boys make trivial departures from the path of virtue, are reprimanded and steered back on course by their father, but suffer none of the deep doubt and automachia which so trouble Crusoe. The father compares the family's
situation on the island to that of Adam and Eve before the Fall, and the family move to a dwelling place that they name "the promised land" (Wyss, trans. Godwin 35). Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the Christianity they practice is revealed in the father's speech after telling his children a parable on their first Sabbath as castaways:

   Human creatures are the colonists of God; we are required to perform the business of probation for a certain period, and sooner or later, we are destined to be taken hence. (Wyss, trans. Godwin 117)

Here we see Crusoe's Covenant of Grace replaced by a Covenant of Works; it seems possible that the colonists may achieve salvation through terrestrial virtue, through the process of colonization itself.

The flora and fauna of the Swiss family's island show unusual, and often implausible variety. Antarctic species such as penguins mingle freely with Australian kangaroos and African ostriches. These animals, when killed (and such is their likely fate, for the family shoots on sight, killing far more frequently than is necessary for food and clothing --Johann Rudolf's grandfather was, after all, an officer in the artillery) are examined in great detail, and form the subject of the father's natural history lectures. The discovery of a high tree becomes a geometry lesson in which the father asks the boys to compute the trunk's diameter from its circumference. Similarly, a simple discovery of sugar cane prompts a discussion of the properties of vacuum:
My poor boy now began to complain of fatigue; the sugar cane galled his shoulders, and he was obliged to shift them often. At last he stopped to take breath. "No," cried he, "I never thought that a few sugar canes could be so heavy. How sincerely I pity the poor negroes who carry heavy loads of them! Yet how glad I will be when my mother and Ernest are tasting them!"

While we were conversing and proceeding onwards, Fritz perceived that from time to time I sucked the end of a sugar cane, and he would needs do the same. It was in vain, however, that he tried: scarcely a drop of sap reached his eager lips.

"What can be the reason," said he, "that though the cane is full of juice, I cannot get out a drop!"

"The reason is," I answered, "that you make use neither of reflection or of your imagination."

"Ah! I recollect now; it is not a question of air...?" (Wyss, trans. Godwin 38-39)

This dialogue continues for another page or so, with the father allowing his child to work out the solution for himself, then amplifying the conclusion. The incident sets the pattern for the rest of the book; every discovery or new happening becomes an excuse to learn. If a child absorbed half the didactic content of Wyss's book, he or she would have a solid grounding in mathematics, history, physics, and natural history.

The family constructs a treehouse and another dwelling in a cave, and gradually comes to control its immediate surroundings. Animals are domesticated and crops sown; ingenious substitution means that the family have every comfort that could reasonably be asked for. At the end of the narrative proper, we are given a picture of the Swiss family tending their crops and livestock and waiting with eagerness for the rescue. The postscript of Wyss's original text
describes the arrival of an English ship, and the prospect of conveying the manuscript to Europe; its presence seems to be an attempt to give the appearance of fact.

In writing his "complete educational course," as the French critic Charles Nodier put it (Wyss, trans. Davenport Adams iv), Wyss was fortunate that his native Switzerland was something of a hotbed of radical educational thought and practice. We have, in the study of literature and philosophy, a tendency to concentrate on great traditions, rather than marginal, minor or transitional ones: thus, Rousseau becomes an important figure in French philosophy, and his disciple Pestalozzi, through his German language writings, a part of the educational tradition of Frobel and the Prussian schools. In fact Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Wyss are part of a tradition of Swiss educational theory of some coherence, which extended to the New World and had considerable influence, through the example of Pestalozzian schools founded at Owenite communities, upon the founding of the United States' public school system. Just like any other work, *The Swiss Family Robinson* did not spring fully-formed from the head of its creator; it is the product of its environment, of Rousseau the theorist and Pestalozzi the practitioner, and a brief exploration of that environment will serve to illuminate Wyss's textual concerns.  

---

4 Gutek documents Pestalozzi's influence upon the American educational system far more copiously than is possible here.
An introduction to Jean-Jacques Rousseau should perhaps take the form of a caveat. Rousseau's educational ideas are often discussed as though he advocated the complete abandonment of the child to the forces of nature (Ellis passim). In fact, his educational classic, Emile, advocates a carefully structured course of study. In order to receive the ideal education Emile is closeted from the world and its vices until he reaches maturity; the only book he is permitted to read during this time is, appropriately, Robinson Crusoe. "God," Rousseau states at the beginning of his novel, "makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil" (1). Emile is brought up in bucolic surroundings, free from "that cruel education . . . that burdens a child with all sorts of restrictions" (52), and comes, through the careful guidance of his tutor, to realize that God is in everyone and everything. Much of Emile's learning comes, however, not from mere interaction with nature through trial and error, but rather from a carefully structured educational program. When bringing up a child, Rousseau comments, the parent/tutor should conceal the mechanisms of guidance, allowing the child to "think he is master, when you are really master" (84). The child's emotional responsiveness should be cultivated at an early age; "there is no original sin," Rousseau writes, "in the human heart" (56), and children should be steered towards a realization of innate qualities through experience. In Emile, perhaps, we see Wyss's Swiss Family in embryo.
Rousseau's *Emile* may not seem radical to the modern reader, who may well share many of its assumptions, but it presented a direct challenge to the traditional 18th century philosophy concerning childcare. Educational practice in the 18th and indeed in much of the 19th century, arose from a concept of the child fundamentally different from Rousseau's. Rousseau believed in the innate innocence, perhaps even the moral superiority of the child; the doctrines of both the Roman Catholic Church and dissenting churches stressed the concept of original sin. Children's education often consisted of sound beatings and memorization of long passages of scripture. "In Adam's fall/ We sinned all" (1), emphasized *The New England Primer*, and such complicity in original sin meant that children were beaten whether or not they had done something wrong. An American mother, writing late in the 17th century, epitomizes Calvinist concerns in education:

> Corn is produced with much labor (as the husbandman well knows) and some land asks much more pains than some other doth to be brought back into tilth; yet all must be plowed and harrowed... Some children (like sour land) are of so tough and morose a disposition that the plough of correction must make long furrows on their back and the harrow of discipline go often over them before they be fit soil to sow the seed of mortality much less of grace in them. But when by prudent nurture they are brought to fit capacity, let the seed of good instruction and exhortation be sown in the spring of their youth, and a plentiful crop may be expected in the harvest of their years. (Bradstreet 285)

In such a climate, *Emile* was revolutionary; indeed Rousseau's thought forms the basis for many contemporary at-
titudes towards children. However, the plan of education outlined in *Emile* was impractical and, for those other than the very rich, prohibitively expensive. A popularization of Rousseau's theories was needed, and this was provided by Rousseau's disciple, Heinrich Pestalozzi.

Heinrich Pestalozzi first read *Emile* while studying at the University of Zurich in 1760, and found it to be a "visionary and highly speculative book" (Pestalozzi xvi). He was so impressed by Rousseau's work that he named his child Jean-Jacques, and brought him up in a manner as similar to Rousseau's prescriptions as possible within a limited financial budget. The experiment was a failure; Jean-Jacques could neither read nor write at the age of 12, and he died soon after of "a falling sickness" (Silber 27), despite his father's emphasis upon physical fitness. However, Pestalozzi continued undeterred, convinced that he had erred in not following Rousseau's principles rigorously enough. In the first half of his career he wrote educational and literary texts, and attempted to promote his ideas to various European monarchs; in the second half of his life he attempted practical applications of those texts through the establishment of model schools and institutes.

Pestalozzi's work influenced *The Swiss Family Robinson* in two ways. The first was literary: in 1781 Pestalozzi published *Leonard and Gertrude*. Part novel, part polemical document, part blueprint for a new society, the book became immensely popular throughout Europe. Pestalozzi begins his
long and rambling work with a description of life in a Swiss village, an observation, he stresses, drawn faithfully from nature (Silber 38). He describes the poverty and injustice endemic in village life, and then shows how political and social improvements can enhance the lot of the village's inhabitants. Before it turns into pure polemic, the book is structured as a novel, and the improvements that the villagers make in their quality of life center around the "new education" (Silber 44), that a peasant woman, Gertrude, provides for her children.

Gertrude's methods are similar to those of Rousseau in *Emile*, but they are adapted to the reduced circumstance in which her family lives. She continually emphasizes the practical, elevating experience above theory and teaching children with materials available in her own household:

> She taught them to count the number of steps from one end of the room to the other, and the two rows of five panes each in one of the windows, afforded her the opportunity to enfold the decimal relations of numbers. She also made them count their threads while spinning, and the number of turns on the wheel, when they wound the yarn on the skein. Above all, in every occupation of life she taught them an accurate and intelligent observation of common objects and the forces of nature. (Silber 44)

Practicality for Pestalozzi, however, does not mean that children should be given a narrow, purely vocational education; rather, there must be a balanced cultivation of all a child's faculties. The environment in *Leonard and Gertrude*, just as in *The Swiss Family Robinson*, provides all the materials that are necessary for a full, natural
education. Pestalozzi's novel continually stresses the practical at the expense of the theoretical, common sense at the expense of book learning. "It is God's will," he concludes later in the work, "that all mean learn their most important lessons in homes" (Silber 46); the function of the parent as educator is enhanced. If Robinson Crusoe provides a model for The Swiss Family Robinson in terms of content and situation, then Leonard and Gertrude provides an equally important model in terms of purpose.

Pestalozzi also influenced the writing of The Swiss Family Robinson in a less direct, but perhaps more profound way. Not content with merely formulating educational theory, Pestalozzi wanted to practice it; his early experiments, however, failed financially. In 1798 he was given another chance: the Swiss government provided him with a poor school for homeless children in Stans, Unterwalden, and apparently unlimited funding.

The Stans experiment began with a poorly-constructed building and 70 disoriented children. Pestalozzi gives a vivid description of his starting conditions in his Letter About My Time in Stans (1799):

Many [children] came with scabies of long standing so that they could hardly walk, many with open sores on their heads, many in rags crawling with vermin, many so thin that one could count all their bones, sallow, stupefied, with fear in their eyes and wrinkles of distrust and anxiety on their brows; some were bold and arrogant, habitual beggars, liars and cheats; others were crushed by their misery, meek but suspicious, frightened and glum. Lazy indolence, lack of practice in the use of faculties and skills were general. Out of 10 children hardly one knew the ABCs. (Silber 112-3)
Undeterred by such unpromising raw material, Pestalozzi began his experiment. He followed an unstructured program, first establishing an atmosphere of love and trust, then emphasizing "training in attentiveness, in carefulness, and ... reliable memory" (Silber 114), before moving on to more formal education. His results were, by all accounts, remarkable, and the children prospered. The Stans experiment was cut short by preparations for war, but it was successful enough to promote great interest throughout Europe in Pestalozzi's methodology.

Pestalozzi went on to teach and to train teachers at his institutes at Burgdorf and Yverdon; disciples from these institutes set up schools of their own. In 1801, he published his most influential work, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*; despite its title, which was given to it by a publisher keen to capitalize upon the success of *Leonard and Gertrude*, it is not a fictional work, but an outline of the Pestalozzian Educational Method. Pestalozzi was, like Rousseau, opposed to rote learning from books; at the same time it is misleading to characterize him as wishing for a total abandonment of formal pedagogical methods to a "natural" education. In *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* he attempts to show how, once we have discovered "the essential laws of Nature" (Pestalozzi 80), we may then build a curriculum upon them: "so our knowledge goes from confusion to definiteness, from definiteness to plainness; and from plainness to perfect clarity" (85). A key element in the
clarifying of the laws of nature was a stress upon the most natural of all relationships, that of parent and child. Pestalozzian education encouraged the participation of parents: schools were established almost as community centers, with the eventual object being the reforming of the whole of society through education. They were the subject of fierce debate and sometimes of attack, their principals often being denounced as atheists. The first Pestalozzian school in the United States, opened in Philadelphia by Joseph Neef in 1804, was closed down amid accusations of atheistic indoctrination. This, then, was the educational environment in which The Swiss Family Robinson was written.

The 1813 text of The Swiss Family Robinson emerges from its background of educational debate as an intriguing mixture of Rousseau, Defoe and Pestalozzi. The Swiss father provides enlightened tutoring along the lines of Emile, but the ingenuity of his methods owes much to Gertrude. A more detailed discussion of the radical education methodology in The Swiss Family Robinson will be given when we consider Mary Godwin's 1818 translation of Wyss's 1813 text. Wyss's novel became popular throughout the continent, particularly in France, and it suffered many alterations or adaptations which turned it from its original purpose. Its author longed to write a sequel but was prevented from doing so by his work as poet and composer; instead, he delegated responsibility to another writer, the Baroness Isabelle de Montolieu.
Montolieu published the first volume of a new five-volume French text in 1824, with Wyss's full approval. She doubled the length of the novel, appending what has become known as the second series to Wyss's original. Montolieu's complete text soon became canonical; it was translated back into German, possibly with Wyss's approval, and became the text upon which all post-1840 English translations are ultimately based. The second series is, however, radically different from Wyss's original novel (which is now called the first series) in terms of both tone and taste: Montolieu comes from a very different philosophical background, and the two halves of her complete work are rather uneasy partners, joined rather clumsily together.

Montolieu's text initially revised Wyss's first series lightly, deleting its postscript. The Baroness then allows the hapless family to remain upon the island for several more years before their rescue. From the outset of the second series, the pace of the narrative quickens. The shipwreck of the first series is transformed by Montolieu into a "deliverance" from an imperfect to a perfect world. One of the first events of the second series is a competition arranged by the father for his children, in sharp contrast to the emphasis placed on cooperative virtues in the first. The competitive aspect of Montolieu's narrative perhaps gives some hints of her philosophical background: when she was writing her edition, in the early 1820s, Pestaloz-
ful experiment. Its replacement was monitorial schooling, and this educational philosophy seems to have had some influence on Montolieu's text.

Monitorial schooling operated through a series of monitors, or more advanced pupils who would pass their knowledge on, as teachers, to the less advanced. It had the dual advantage of inculcating a sense of independence and responsibility in the monitors (in theory, at least) and, more significantly, of educating a large quantity of students at a minimum cost. Monitorial schools operated through competition and incentive: learning was frequently achieved through games which gave a prize of medals, candy or toys to the winner. Pioneered by Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancante, monitoring schools spread throughout Europe and the United States; by 1830, however, the momentum had been lost, possibly due to the beginnings of the public school movement.

Monitorial schools, unlike Pestalozzian establishments, were not the products of a coherent educational philosophy: Montolieu's indebtedness to them is therefore less noticeable or significant than Wyss's to Pestalozzi. Nonetheless, competition occupies a far more prominent place in Montolieu's narrative than it does in Wyss's. The boys are older in the second series, more independent, and more able to spend time in each other's tutelage: the enlightened tutor/father moves further into the background.
The celebratory games at the beginning of the second series provide an important clue to Montolieu's literary model; she is far more Homeric than Rousseauean, far more concerned with the fantastic than with the educational. A huge python crushes and swallows the family's faithful donkey, and is only killed after a struggle of epic proportions. The family is far more colonialist in their attitude, exterminating a whole tribe of monkeys (an incident which has disturbing implications and distresses several translators) and establishes a series of forts and farmhouses over its domain. The action is less unified, less contained; the colony is in the process of expansion, and the narrative focuses upon that expansion at the expense of education.

Montolieu's family are certainly more eager colonizers than their equivalent in the first series; they are also more keen to stress their philosophical independence. Wyss's protagonists twice mention Crusoe as a quasi-mythological predecessor; Montolieu's father dismisses him with the words "The life of Robinson is but a finely wrought fiction" (Wyss, trans. Godwin 331). The Bible, Wyss's book of instruction given by the King as law to his people, is much reduced in stature in Montolieu, the father commenting that he does not think it appropriate to take scripture literally. When discovered by an English ship (after themselves rescuing a female English castaway) the family decides to remain upon the island, only two sons departing;
but the colony's numbers are augmented by new settlers. Montolieu's narrative ends with New Switzerland, as the colony is named, established as a fully-fledged colony with regular shipping ties to Europe.

The text of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, then, is of mixed parentage; it is the product of two disparate philosophies and environments, and it is the work of a pastor, a poet, and a baroness. Later in the century translators would be presented with a dilemma over precedence; there would be debate over whether Montolieu's version of the first series should supersede that of Wyss, or whether the Wyss novel was the primary text. Early in the century, however, publishers and translators were more interested in monetary rather than in these scholastic matters.
CHAPTER II
PESTALOZZI IN PRACTICE: THE TRANSLATION OF MARY GODWIN

Already the tempest had continued six days; on the seventh its fury seemed still increasing; and the morning dawned upon us without a prospect of hope, for we had wandered so far from the right track, and were so forcibly driven towards the south-east, that none on board knew where we were. (1)

This beginning to Mary Godwin's second, and most influential translation of The Swiss Family Robinson in many ways might serve as an autobiographical statement. Mary Jane Clairmont, later Mary Godwin, jumped into history on an April morning in 1801; her life before that date is shrouded in obscurity (Marshall 248). William Godwin, anarchist and philosopher, author of Political Justice, had suffered a decline in fortune after the death of his first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft. Preparing for a quiet life as the father of two girls, Godwin was understandably surprised by Mary Jane's eager introduction of herself to him with the words "Is it possible that I behold the immortal Godwin?" Her flattery seems to have been effective; they were married in November.

Mary Jane's past is intriguing, particularly because of a suggestion of Swiss ancestry that provides a tenuous link with Wyss and the book that she would deliver to the English-speaking world. Her attempt to cover up her past
suggests that both she and her daughters may have been illegitimate; she was, curiously, fluent in French and claimed to have witnessed the French Revolution in her childhood. Her life had indeed been "without prospect of hope" until she met Godwin, yet living under his shadow and that of Mary Wollstonecraft, whose portrait still hung in her husband's study, must have been difficult. How much she was in sympathy with her husband we do not know; certainly many of Godwin's friends found her difficult, if not unpleasant—Charles Lamb referred to her as a "damned infernal bitch" (Marshall 287), and satirized her in his Works as Priscilla Pry (Marshall 288). However, she did have the last laugh upon her detractors; her translation of The Swiss Family Robinson reached a far wider reading public than any of Godwin's works.

The Swiss Family Robinson was produced as a part of the Godwin's larger scheme of the Juvenile Library. William Godwin had a longstanding interest in pedagogy, and in 1805, although penniless, began his library of books for children with 100 pounds borrowed from a friend. The project, which resulted in the publication of such children's classics as the Lambs' Tales From Shakespeare, has often been disparaged as an attempt to cash-in on the expanding middle-class children's book market; in fact, Mary and William Godwin had a sincere philosophical commitment to achieving social change through education. For example, the first volume published by the Library, Godwin's Fables Ancient and Modern.
(published under the pseudonym of Edward Baldwin because of Godwin's still notorious reputation), attempts to convey not only scientific information by methods similar to those of Wyss, but it also attempts to instill moral precepts. One story, "Washing the Blackamoor White" (Marshall 249), directly confronts the issues of racism and slavery; other tales exhibit strong egalitarian impulses. The Juvenile Library was, in fact, investigated by the Privy Council, whose agents found in its publications "every principle possessed by republicans and infidels these days" (Marshall 289) but, puzzlingly, took no further action.

William, Mary and the Lambs each contributed several original works, translations, and collections to the library; but due to poor management it was never a profitable business. In 1814 Mary Godwin translated Wyss's newly-published Zurich text in an abridged form as *The Family Robinson Crusoe*; four years later she made a full translation and gave the book the name by which it has since been known in the English language, *The Swiss Family Robinson*. The novel was the most popular of all the works published by the Juvenile Library. Unfortunately for the Godwins, however, pirated versions soon appeared, and they remained financially dependent upon William's disciple, Shelley.

We know little of Mary Godwin's politics, but her concerns in writing for the Juvenile Library seem to have paralleled her husband's. *The Swiss Family Robinson* would,
at first sight, seem an unlikely text for any writer with radical or Jacobin tendencies to translate. Its piety, for instance, seems in direct contradiction to Godwin's declared atheism. We should not forget, however, that Mary and William were married in a church, and that they strongly disapproved of William's daughter Mary's elopement with Shelley. William moved from the atheism of Political Justice back to organized religion by way of pantheism; by 1806 he could write in a letter that "by God we mean the great invisible principle, acting everywhere, which maintains the life of everything around us" (Marshall 271). Godwin's second marriage would surely have reinforced his movement back towards institutionalized religion; at the same time it is likely that Mary adopted some of his pedagogical ideals. If Wyss's Christianity stamped itself a little too firmly upon the text of The Swiss Family Robinson than either William or Mary would have wished, the family's piety would at least be a strong selling point in a society eager to inculcate Christian virtues in younger readers.

If we negotiate the hurdle of Christianity, or at least push it aside for a moment, we may begin to see some of the principles of Godwin's Political Justice operating within his wife's translation. The society that the family established may not quite be a blueprint for Owen's New Moral World, but it does have some possibilities as an educational model. Like Emile, the Swiss family are set in a "natural" environment, without outside interference; and, like Emile,
they undergo a process of "natural education." By 1814, it would seem, many of the Godwins' frequent disputes over the bringing up of children were finished; to judge by her translation of The Swiss Family Robinson, Mary had espoused William's ideas. William Godwin insisted that each child be allowed to develop at his or her own pace, rather than being prepared, at the very outset of education, for a definite mission in life: "Man," he wrote in Political Justice, "is a species whose excellence lies in his individuality" (556).

Godwin's own children were educated according to a principle of free will; his stepson Charles and son William went to the English public school Charterhouse, but Godwin insisted that they had the right to miss classes, if they so wished, on his behest, emphasizing his belief that the authority of the teacher is derived from the enlightened tutoring of the parent. Godwin's daughters, as well as Mary's, were educated at home, but great stress was laid upon the development of their creative faculties, to the point where Jane, his daughter by his first marriage, would write waspishly of the Godwin household, "If you cannot write an epic poem or novel, that by its originality knocks all other novels on the head, you are a despicable creature, not worth acknowledging" (Marshall 267). We see the same process at work in The Swiss Family Robinson. When the boys kill a turtle there is much debate as to what to do with its shell: Ernest wishes to make a shield of it, Jack to make it into a tiny boat, and Francis to manufacture a tiny house
with it. The father applauds the imagination shown by each boy, and finally asks Fritz his opinion. The boy replies:

Fritz—I thought, father, of cleaning it thoroughly, and fixing it by the side of our river, and keeping it always full of pure water for my mother’s use when she has to wash the linen, or cook our victuals. 
Father—Excellent, excellent, my boy! All honor to the founder of the pure-water tub. This is what I call thinking for the general good. (Wyss, trans. Godwin 147)

Imagination then, is to be applauded but, in particular, imagination put in service of the community rather than withheld for oneself.

A central theme of Godwin’s Political Justice is that human beings are inherently good. Environmental factors, such as poverty and injustice, cause crime and suffering. Punishment, Godwin writes, is unjust because it assumes free will, and most crime arises from necessity; in a famous passage he expresses the opinion that the murderer is no more guilty than the knife he uses (633). Mary Godwin’s Swiss family investigate a natural environment for themselves; the boys learn from their mistakes and through their father’s interpretation of those mistakes, not from any punishment inflicted upon them. At one point Jack nearly drowns in a marsh; he is saved by holding on to the tail of a jackal he has shown kindness to and adopted as a pet. Thus, environment teaches him a lesson: be careful where you walk, but also, more importantly, respect other creatures and they will respect you. When told of the incident, his father amplifies its implications a little, performing the function
of enlightened tutor, but the essential lesson is given by nature.

Political Justice calls for a return to a more natural form of government; self-determination and independence are seen as basic to the nature of humankind. Human beings seek truth and justice through their own rational faculties; one should defer not to rank, but to knowledge. "Government," Godwin argues, "is in all cases evil; it ought to be introduced as sparingly as possible" (556). Systems of government based upon hierarchies and, indeed, the concept of law itself are unjust because they prescribe rules to govern situations rather than reacting to an individual case's merits. In The Swiss Family Robinson we have, of course, the parable on the Sabbath, which seems to contradict Godwinian ethics. Wyss's Swiss father speaks of a Great King who tests the adherence of the inhabitants of his earthly island to a book of law; if they are successful in his test, they are admitted to the Heavenly City. Law and the rule of law, whether temporal or divine, are anti-Godwinian, but it is interesting in this context to note how the boys respond to the parable:

Father—You, Fritz, I see, are thoughtful: Tell me what struck you most in my narration.
Fritz—The goodness of the Great King, and the ingratitude of the colonists, father.
Father—And you, Ernest, what is your thought?
Ernest—For my part, I think they were great fools to have made so bad a calculation... with little pain they might have passed a very agreeable... life in the island and would have been sure of going afterwards to the Heavenly City.
Jack—To the mines, gentlemen, away with you! You have well deserved it.
Francis--For my part I should have liked best to have lived with the men who were dressed in the colours of the rainbow. (Wyss, trans. Godwin 113)

The father's reply to the boys' assertions is not to place one above another, but simply to assert "I perceive that each of you, according to his age and character, has seized the meaning of my parable" (113). Excellence thus arises from individuality, for the father makes it clear that there is no universally truthful way of viewing the parable. A Godwinian solution is thus posited to a non-Godwinian situation; Mary Godwin skillfully adapts the text to satisfy the needs of her own philosophy.

Mary Godwin's interpolations into the Wyss text are designed to promote the virtues of equality and cooperation. In the sugar cane episode mentioned earlier, Godwin makes Fritz not only groan under the weight of the canes, but also pity the "negro" who has to cut cane for a living. This is an addition to the original with a definitely Godwinian bent: we should not forget that a book which later became the vehicle for much racist philosophy (see Chapter V) was very much anti-racist in its first and second English editions. In Mary Godwin's translation the wife has a more prominent role than in most others; she is scarcely a leading protagonist and Mary's view of female emancipation was perhaps a little less radical than that of Mary Wollstonecraft, but she does at least perform useful and essential tasks. After telling the parable, the father comments sadly:
I cannot forgive myself for not having thought of bringing it [the Bible] from the vessel. Should we not be able to go on another voyage, we shall be forever deprived of this divine doctrine. (180)

His wife, however, quickly interrupts:

Have you then forgot my enchanted bag, which I have promised shall furnish everything you can desire? You wish for a Bible: In a minute I will put one into your hands; and heavily do I rejoice in having the power to procure you so great a satisfaction. (180)

This is hardly a conversation between equals, but it is at least a conversation in which the woman displays some irony and control; future translations would very much reduce the status of the Swiss mother until she almost vanishes from sight. Godwin does attempt to clothe Wyss’s text with some pretensions to egalitarian philosophy, even though her material is perhaps too unruly to give the attempt much chance of success.

Despite its apparent simplicity, Mary Godwin’s translation, is, in fact, a multi-layered text in which many of Wyss’s original impulses towards egalitarianism and "natural education" are amplified. In preaching her gospel of self-determination and self-reliance Godwin increases Pestalozzian emphasis with the text. It is likely that she and her husband were familiar with Pestalozzian education, for there was certainly contact between the educational ideas of the Swiss educator and the English Left. Pestalozzian schools were, in fact, established at Owenite communities in England, and also at New Harmony, Indiana, and
Yellow Springs, Ohio. Mary Godwin’s Swiss family live in a community not unlike an Owenite utopia; though the father is an authority figure, he is willing to delegate authority as the boys become older; he is more supportive than repressive. In their natural environment, the boys naturally turn out for the good, and their vices are transformed into virtues on the island: Ernest, initially lazy, becomes an intellectual, and Jack, initially timid, develops into a sensitive and artistic boy. Fritz’s tendency to impetuousity is curbed by the environment, and he becomes a responsible explorer and role model for the other boys. The theme of salutary character development is one theme that persists in most translations of the work, although such development is frequently brought about in very non-Rousseauian ways. Mary Godwin’s work is profoundly didactic; its title page contains the words "forming a clear illustration of the first principles of natural history and many branches of science which apply most immediately to the business of life." It would be a mistake, however, to regard it as a political textbook even to the degree that Emile is one. Godwin’s preface, widely reprinted in the 19th century, perhaps gives us a more comprehensive view. In its pages, she writes, "the useful, the moral and the entertaining so naturally mix with each other that every generous taste is satisfied" (Godwin, preface).

Early editions and revisions of The Swiss Family Robinson were based upon the Godwin text, and many attempted to
focus its didactic content. Several early editions boasted "improved natural history," and corrected Wyss's somewhat eccentric descriptions of birds, fish, animals and plants to make them more consistent with contemporary (and often still inaccurate) knowledge. Whereas this process might at first sight seem desirable, increasing the educational value of the text, it was, in fact, often the first, unwitting step in the marginalization and eventual excision of didactic content. To provide precise and scientific description without disrupting the flow of the narrative, translators would present natural history information in the form of footnotes. The Baldwin and Craddock (Godwin's Juvenile Library) edition of 1834 attempts such a tactic, retaining Godwin's text but amplifying when necessary at the foot of the page. Detail, once relegated to footnotes (and it was a common practice in the improved edition to put the father's explanations of natural phenomena as footnotes from the editor), became ideal material for the abridger's scalpel in the 1840s; many severely mutilated editions were produced, especially at the cheaper end of the library, by less reputable publishers.

Mary Godwin's translation of Wyss's first series has a history of separate publication extending well into the 1840s. Its virtues are strong ones; when Dent, later in the century, came to choose a translation of The Swiss Family Robinson for his standard-setting Everyman Library, he chose Godwin's, with an appended second series, even though much
more modern translations were available. By the middle of the 1830s, however, publishers were coming under increasing pressure to produce a sequel incorporating the second series of the 1824-6 Montolieu text. Various compromises involving postscripts, imprecise translation, or complete revision were devised; what the market cried out for, it would seem, was a complete translation of Montolieu's *The Swiss Family Robinson* in its entirety. Confusion, in fact, persisted for another 30 years, and then, quite suddenly, the three important translations of *The Swiss Family Robinson* appeared within a decade of each other.
CHAPTER III
YOUNG IMPERIALISTS: THE TRANSLATION OF W.H.G. KINGSTON

The translations of Mrs. H.B. Paull, W.H.G. Kingston and Henry Frith reflect the change in bookselling and book production that occurred in the 50 years between Godwin's first edition and Paull's. Paull's translation appeared in 1868, 10 years before those of Frith (1878) and Kingston (1879); all three are clearer, better researched, and textually more coherent than previous Victorian editions. The cost of printed books declined substantially in the second half of the 19th century; by 1847 Simms and McIntyre were publishing their Parlour Library at the cost of one shilling per novel, and that price was at once matched by Routledge's Railway Library (Atlick 299). However, novels in such a price range had standards of printing pared to the bone: they were printed on worn plates, had text cramped to economize on paper, and were frequently pirated from other, more respectable publishing houses which held their copyrights. With increasing literacy there came a demand for clearer texts for libraries, mechanics institutes and public schools, texts that would inform, were easily readable, and which did not disintegrate upon the first reading. It was at this market that the translations of
Paull and Frith were targeted; Kingston, as we shall see, aimed for a slightly different readership.

Literacy in Great Britain and the United States rose steadily from the time of Godwin's translation to that of Paull's, and indeed it continued to rise for much of the rest of the century. In Britain, it is possible that one-half to two-thirds of working class adults could read in the 1830s; furthermore, the Registrar-General's figures indicate a steady rise in literacy from 1830 to 1850 (McCann 41). This rise seems to have taken place before, and not as has commonly been supposed, as a result of the 1870 Education Act, which made free education mandatory, and it was brought about through Sunday School Instruction: the 1851 British census reveals that approximately one-third of all British children of school age did not go to day school. In the United States, the public school movement did not make real gains until the 1830s, and it is likely that literacy had been on the increase for some time. "Yellowbacks" and other cheap editions of books provided the newly literate public with reading material; if they proved to be beyond the means of a working reader, they might be purchased by a reading circle, or borrowed from one of the previously mentioned public institutions. A children's classic such as The Swiss Family Robinson, particularly one that claimed to impart moral instruction, would certainly have been much in demand.
The pressure of increased readership upon publishers and translators of *The Swiss Family Robinson* in the 1840s created two effects: abridgement and the desire for sequels. Abridgement reduced the need for expensive typesetting, and also substantially cut the amount of paper required. The preface to an abridged Simpkins and Marshall edition of Wyss's work (1852) explicitly mentions cost-cutting as a motive for condensation. If the text was being shortened by abridgement, however, it was also being lengthened by sequels: Montolieu's French edition had been completed in 1826, and versions of its second series soon appeared before a reading public eager for more family adventures.

The appearance of Montolieu's edition heralded a period of chaos for English and American translators, publishers and booksellers. Most publishers already had a pirated version based upon Godwin's text on the market, selling well. Godwin's translation of Wyss's first series had included, as we have seen, a postscript describing the arrival of a rescuing ship upon the family's island which then takes their journal back to Europe to be published as Wyss's text. If editors were to add Montolieu's second series to Wyss's first, they would first have to remove the postscript, and thus abandon the rather coy pretense of the novel to fact. Many English and American editors did follow this path, either publishing a second series which ignored the postscript and continued the story, or publishing a
complete, one-volume work combining both series and with the postscript removed. This process introduced some inconsistencies, since Montolieu, in her 1826 edition, had also revised Wyss’s first series to make its style a little more in keeping with the tone of her work. The publication of a second series as a separate volume also created problems because of the presence of the postscript in the first; it was important, the publishers knew, to keep the business of purchasers of the Godwin text.

With great Victorian ingenuity, editors set to work. The simplest solution to their dilemma was prudent pruning of the Montolieu second series so that it would "fit" the Godwin text, its narrative following directly from Godwin’s postscript. The rescuing ship would be blown out to sea with the first series on board and the family would settle down to another few years upon their island, exhibiting surprisingly little disappointment at so narrowly missing being rescued. This solution, however, was much too easy to appeal greatly to Victorian inventiveness, and some publishers produced sequels that owe nothing to Montolieu. Rather than returning to the French text as soon as the rescuing ship has been disposed of, these sequels set off on a voyage of invention and discovery. The Routledge second series of 1851 is one such work; the family sail away from their island, Ernest and his mother are kidnapped by native islanders, rescued, and finally become the revered rulers of a native tribe in a manner that foreshadows Coral Island.
To complicate matters further, Wyss himself had decided to capitalize on the sequel market. Before his death in 1830 he published *Wilis the Pilot*, which follows the adventures of the boys when they leave the island at the end of Montolieu’s narrative. The father is replaced as tutor by the homespun Willis, pilot of their rescuing vessel. Natural history instruction gives way to tutelage in "the more elementary phenomena of the Physical Sciences"(i), and we follow the boys from their island across the world and into their chosen careers. The book is fascinating to a student of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, but less captivating, perhaps, to the general reader. The action is less unified, and the didactic element less carefully married to the text. In the example below the boys are talking to Willis after tying up their boat on an unknown coast for the night:

"Besides," remarked Jack, "the bovine race reproduce themselves more slowly than other animals; if a single sow, according to a calculation made by Vauban, were allowed to live for 11 years, it would produce six millions of pigs. . . . The plants . . . are still more prolific than the animals. Some trees can produce as many of their kind as they have branches, or even leaves. An elm tree, 12 years old, yields sometimes 500,000 pods; and, by the way, Willis, to encourage you in carrying on the war against the mosquitoes, a single stalk of tobacco produces 4,000 seeds."

"The leaves, however, are or more use to me than the seeds," Willis replied. (122)

Despite the pithiness of Willis’ comment, this is hardly stirring stuff.

*Willis the Pilot*, just like *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, never achieved the popularity of its
predecessor. In one matter, however, it was prophetic. At the novel's end, Ernest laments the passing of the New Switzerland he once knew:

It is not, therefore, without regret that we learn that gold has been discovered in a land so highly favoured by nature in other respects; for, if such be the case, then adieu to the peace and the tranquility its inhabitants have hitherto enjoyed. The colony will soon be overrun with Chinamen, American adventurers, and ticket-of-leave convictmen. Farewell to the hospitality and kindliness of the community! (350)

With the coming of Paull's, Kingston's and Frith's translation, much of the hospitality and kindliness of Godwin's family is lost. American adventurers arrive soon enough, although the convictmen do not make their appearance until the 1960 Walt Disney movie. The energy of Kingston's and Frith's boys, and Paull's continual moral upbraiding of characters certainly do shatter the peace and tranquility of the island forever.

Paull's edition should perhaps be studied now if we advance in strictly chronological order, but it is best first to look at the translation of W.H.G. Kingston, published some 10 years later, in 1879. Kingston's edition aimed for and achieved a wider market than either Paull's or Frith's; it is therefore a benchmark against which to measure all other 19th century editions.

W.H.G. Kingston was one of the most prolific of an unusually productive generation of children's writers; he is the author of over 100 books for children. Kingston's novels, if such a word is not etymologically inappropriate,
invariably have the same essential plot and similar protagonists. A group of young boys is by some accident or by plan exposed to a new and exotic environment and has to overcome and control that environment by utilizing the virtue of Western, and more specifically British, civilization. Their explorations and adventures are made even more exciting by the fact that they are contributing to the Victorian edifice of Scientific Knowledge. An example of this occurs in *In the Wilds of Florida: A Tale of Warfare and Hunting*:

Our shipper advised us, however, not to make the attempt. He warned us that the difficulties in the way--cedar swamps, rivers, lakes and marshes, wild beast and savage Indians--would prove insuperable, and that we should probably never again be heard of.

"Consider, my friends, how much we shall add to our stock of scientific knowledge," said Lejoillie, who was not to be turned from his object. (166)

Lejoillie's argument is, unsurprisingly, persuasive, and he and his companions march off to find adventure in the Florida interior.

A central theme of Kingston's books is that the exotic environment is hostile to Europeans. Its influences upon "civilized" whites are potentially dangerous, and it must be firmly controlled. Kingston's boys never lose their Britishness; indeed, they become more British in response to an alien environment. In *Fred Markham in Russia*, Fred and his brother exchange jokes plucked straight from a public school locker room as their train thunders across Siberia:
They did not notice the name of the place, but they suggested it must have been Chudova, which was one of the principle places on the road. "Chew!"
"Oh, oh, Harry!" exclaimed Fred as he heard his brother's audacious pun. (101)

This is, of course, harmless juvenile humor, but it is also an attempt to control the environment through the use of names, a process we shall see represented more strongly in Kingston's edition of The Swiss Family Robinson.

Kingston's patriotism can easily be drawn to much more absured degrees. In his "factual" work How Brittanía Came to Rule the Waves, he invents a history of Phonecen settlement in Britain to establish the nation's nautical pedigree. Undismayed at the lack of historical or archaeological evidence to support his thesis, he develops an elaborate explanation:

The Britons had vessels of large size, but they ... burnt them to prevent their falling into the hands of the adversary. (12)

His thematic concerns throughout his fiction are perhaps best exemplified by another passage from How Brittanía Came to Rule the Waves. The British fleet at the beginning of the first Opium War with China attack Chusan: their military prowess and the implied racial inferiority of the Chinese allow them to capture the town in one day. Soon, however, events take a turn for the worse:

Chusan was held for many months, at the cost of the lives of many soldiers, who suffered from the poisonous exhalations from the paddy-fields, having nothing else to do to employ their minds. (38)
Here we have patriotism, but also the inexorable hostility of the exotic environment. The devil, Kingston implies, will surely find work for idle minds: his Swiss boys are allowed no such luxury.

Kingston's version of The Swiss Family Robinson, an abridged translation of the Montolieu text, reflects many of the concerns of the rest of his fiction. His aim, he declares in a note on the text, is to remove "sententious lectures" and substitute "one or two episodes of my own invention" (ii). He was helped in this task by his wife and his children, who were doubtless more familiar with popular Victorian fiction than with Godwin's 1818 text. The resulting book is one of Kingston's best works: it is readable, fast-moving, and lacking in the grossest manifestations of patriotism and imperialism. When compared to Godwin's text, however, it lacks subtlety, spirituality, and above all Godwin's delightful eccentricity: it is, at least to the adult reader, a little bland.

Kingston's translation is half the length of Montolieu's 1826 text; it would be surprising, therefore, if some richness and depth were not lost. The author's condensation, however, is not uniform: some passages are reproduced seemingly word-for-word from Montolieu, whereas others are completely excised. Religious indoctrination, in contrast to many other 19th century translations, is sharply reduced. The entire parable on the Sabbath, for example is replaced with the words:
"My dear Elizabeth," said I, "this morning we will devote to the service of the Lord. I will endeavour to give the children some serious thoughts. But without books, or the possibility of any of the usual Sunday occupations, we cannot make keep them the whole ... day". (63)

The service the father proposes is over in a second, and his eager young lads are already straining at their tethers, urging their father to make them bows and arrows with which to hunt.

Kingston and Godwin have fundamentally different views concerning the effect of environment upon children, and Kingston makes this change clear from the very beginning of his text. His boys are much less respectful of their surroundings than are Godwin's; they are more inclined to be brutal and to try to take control. In one episode early in the novel Fritz harpoons a turtle (which Godwin mistranslates as "tortoise") while returning on the boat from the wreck. The animal, after a brief chase, runs aground and collapses on the sand. This is Godwin's version of the following action:

Following the rope, I presently saw the tortoise stretched at length on the bottom of the water, where it was ... shallow. I soon found means to put an end to his pain, by cutting off his head with the hatchet, and he bled to death. (144)

This is certainly a violent act, but Godwin's father does at least describe the full horror of what he is doing, and humanely wishes to end the creature's pain. Kingston's version is brutal and short:
The turtle was evidently greatly exhausted and no wonder, since it had been acting the part of a steam tug and had been dragging, at full speed, a couple of heavily laden vessels. Its intention was to escape to land, but I leaped into the water, and wading up to it, dispatched it with my axe. (76)

The change of personal pronoun here distances us from the turtle; furthermore, we do not confront the reality of the creature's death--there are no words such as "pain" and "bled" here, and the turtle's death is just another adventure. Kingston's father seems more removed from his environment, eager to distance himself from participation in it. This theme is apparent throughout the translation.

Kingston's rather breathless and swift narrative deprives him of the full possibilities of devices such as dramatic irony, used so skillfully by Godwin. When the family discover the shark's body, Godwin's Swiss father suggests that the family might "take away with some pieces of his skin, for I have an idea that may in some way be useful to us" (189). We are thus kept in anticipation of its eventual use for some four pages. Kingston, however, is much more to the point:

"You are right . . . Ernest," said I. "Let us try to induce these greedy birds to spare us a bit of the shark's skin; it is extremely rough, and when dry may be used like a file". (90)

We are not kept in suspense here, and Kingston also omits Ernest's charming explanation of why the mouth of the shark is placed under its snout ("with the intention of preventing him from depopulating the sea and land . . . so excessive a
voraciousness of appetite he possesses" (192)). Kingston’s narrative is more straightforward but gives less freedom to creativity.

The Swiss Family Kingston are unashamedly British in all but nominal nationality, and they even converse in received pronunciation. The sucking of sugar canes, Fritz comments, is a "capital plan" (36), but it would be a "horrid bore" (35) if their contents were turned to vinegar. More pernicious, perhaps, is their naming of their surroundings. Listing and naming are the first steps in the process of establishing control over the landscape. Captain John Smith, in his A Description of New England, illustrates this technique:

The herbs and fruits of many sorts and kinds: as alkernes, currents . . . mulberries, vines, raspberries, small nuts & c. . . . Oak is the chief wood: fir, pine, walnut, chestnut, birch, ash, elm, cypress, cedar, mulberry tree, plum tree. . .

Eagles, gripes, diverse sorts of hawks, cranes, geese and brents, cormorants, ducks, sheldrakes, teal, mews . . . and many other sorts, whose names I know not. (27)

Listing and description of species is, of course, a major feature of Wyss’s original The Swiss Family Robinson. The family, however, go beyond Smith; they give names to places and constructions in their environment. The names Godwin’s family gives are arrived at by prolonged debate, suggestions being mooted, discussed and either accepted or rejected. Kingston’s family, with less desire to fit their names to the landscape or to describe their environment in terms that
imply empathy, assign them briefly and without disagreement. Godwin’s names are essentially descriptive: the family’s first home becomes "Tent House" and their second "Falcon’s Nest." In Kingston’s hands these become the very English "Tenthholm" and "Falconhurst." These names, while etymologically inappropriate ("Falconhurst" means "falcon’s clearing," scarcely a suitable name for a treehouse), impose a colonial English, almost manorial presence on the landscape. Kingston’s family are not so much concerned, it seems, in interacting with the exoticism of their environment; rather, they attempt to impose an order upon it.

In such a masculine narrative as Kingston’s, the status of the Swiss mother is inevitably reduced. She all but vanishes from sight after the first few chapters, making brief appearances to be patronized by her husband. When she suggests moving their dwelling place to the trees, the father makes a testy reply:

Ay, little wife . . . so that is your idea of comfort and security, is it? A tree, I do not know how many feet high, on which we may roost like birds? If we had but wings or a balloon, it would, I own, be a capital plan. (50)

The father’s attitude is made even less defensible by the fact that his wife proves ultimately right; when he decides to construct the treehouse, he presents it as his own idea.

The most popular translation of *The Swiss Family Robinson* into the language is not, of course, without merit. Its brevity has the advantage of making the narrative more fast-
paced, as well as the more obvious effect of making it cheaper to buy. Kingston's use of language is also less complex than that of Godwin's, a strong selling point among a newly-literate reading public. At times, Kingston's text even has an elegant conciseness that Godwin's lacks. In the discussion over sugar canes, the translator omits Godwin's longwinded and "sententious" lecture and replaces it with a simple simile:

"Think a little," I replied . . .
"Oh, of course," said he, "it is like trying to suck marrow from a marrowbone without making a hole at the other end". (30)

This is direct, readily comprehensible writing. Unlike most other contemporary translations of the first and second series, Kingston maintains a unity of tone between the two.

Kingston's translation, although 60 years later on the scene than Godwin's, gained great popularity. At the turn of the century it was still being published by Routledge from the original plates that bore the inscription "a new translation," and over half of all modern editions are indebted to it. It was not, however, the first or the most copious translation of Montolieu's complete text available to readers in English; that distinction must go to the translation of Mrs. H.B. Paull.
CHAPTER IV
TEXT AT WAR WITH TEXT: THE TRANSLATION OF MRS. H.B. PAULL

"Boys from 10 and 12 to 14 and 16," writes Mrs. H.B. Paull in her introduction to her translation of The Swiss Family Robinson (1868), "do not use long and pedantic words" (vi). In her edition of Wyss's work she moves, stylistically at least, away from the more ornate Montolieu back to the plain style of the German original, away from French pedantry to Anglo-Saxon common sense. Her intention is, she insists, to produce a translation that avoids the extremes of adaptation and interpolation on the one hand, and an over-literal mimicking of French or German sentences on the other. She aims for a very English compromise, and her edition, like many great English compromises, is a fascinating muddle. Despite her avowed intentions, Paull feels free to interpolate passages and to impose a heavy, presiding morality upon the text. Indeed, Paull seems to have been very much under the influence of her Biblical namesake (her works have such titles as Charity Seeketh Not Her Own), and in her version of The Swiss Family Robinson this influence is continued. Paull's self-division is not between flesh and spirit but between self and text; there is an extent to which she can follow and assimilate Wyss's text; but, when
it becomes too removed from her morality, she has to abandon it, and register her implacable opposition in footnotes.

Footnotes are the most fascinating aspect, possibly the most important aspect, of Paul's translation. Several translators, as we have seen, had used footnotes before Paul, but these were largely factual in nature, designed to convey information regarding natural history and the sciences. There are certainly some informative notes in Paul's translation: when Fritz and his father find an unusual exotic bird, Paul notes avidly that "this singular bird is a native of Canada, called by some naturalists Tetrao tympanum but is is better known by the name rough grouse" (183). Paul's pedantic insistence upon precise categorization kills something of the spontaneous delight we experience in the appearance of the bird, but it is certainly informative. However, some of Paul's footnotes go beyond mere information. When the father and his boys devise a method of propelling a boat by paddle wheels, Paul comments:

This contrivance is often made use of in erecting a vane or weathercock. A very clever instance of this may be seen at the Bow Station on the North London Railway Line. (332)

A little more parochially, Paul comments disparagingly on the Swiss boy's dislikes of oysters:

The Swiss must differ from the English in disliking an edible which the latter consider a luxury. (22)
The effect here is one of enhancing patriotism by comparison. The Swiss family are worthy representatives of European civilization in an uncivilized land, but they are still not quite British: they use a means of propulsion that is an inferior copy of a British idea, and they do not, unlike British families (British families, that is, who could afford to buy Paull's book), have the sophistication to consider oysters a delicacy. There are times, however, when Paull places herself in a far more radical opposition to the text.

An important point to remember when we examine Paull's antagonistic attitude to her text is that she does not consider it sacred. Despite her introduction, in which she claims that "the incidents and events are faithfully preserved unaltered . . . in good simple Saxon English, . . . with one or two necessary but slight exceptions" (vi), she feels free to make major interpolations. Her Swiss family are treated to not one parable on the Sabbath, but two on successive Sabbaths: Paull was obviously concerned about the family's abrupt lapse into impiety after only one week on the island. The second parable is, thematically, a repetition of the first; it concerns a husband and wife who are dying of thirst in an Arabian desert. They are rescued by a fairy who gives the woman a magic cup, from which she drinks and then makes her husband drink. After narrating the story, just as with the previous parable, the father asks the boys for their reactions:
"I think that woman must always have taken care of the magic glass after this," said Frank. 
"And I should love the good fairy always," remarked Jack, "for giving it to me."
"Well, boys," I said, "do you know any good fairy who has given us a talisman?"
"Ah, Papa," said Ernest, "I know who you mean. Mamma is our good fairy, and ---" 
"Let me finish it Ernest!" exclaimed Fritz. 
"The talisman Mamma has found for us is the Bible". (167)

Here Paull has unashamedly altered the text to both stress piety and to add importance to the role of the mother. A ministering angel may not be the ideal in female role models, but the position of Elizabeth in Paull is an improvement upon her invisibility in Kingston. Having made such a radical interpolation in the text, however, Paull sinks back only a few lines later into an expostulation of disapproving non-interference.

After the parable the family have lunch, and the father organizes a tournament for the boys. His rationale for this is simple:

I had no wish to make my hours of instruction too long or tedious; or to give them a distaste for religious teaching, and make them turn a deaf ear to all I had said; on the contrary I had supplied them with enough to think over now, and to make them anxious to hear more on another Sunday. (167)

The father's rationale for Sunday relaxation may seem persuasive to the modern reader, but Paull is clearly troubled by it. Apologetically, she footnotes:

Young readers must remember that when the German story, of which this is a translation, was written, 60 years ago, very few pleasant Sunday stories for children had been written. These boys also were on an uninhabited island, without churches, chapels, Sunday schools, or other pleasant religious services, all of which ought to
make Sundays a happy day for children in England. (167)

Paull’s technique here illustrates the way in which she approaches Wyss’s text; she will leave the incident factually unchanged, but will add a moralizing footnote. Why Paull felt unable to remove or alter the sections of which she did not approve is problematic. Having made an interpolation of two pages in length, she would surely have been inventive enough to excise the father’s comment, or to replace it with a more positive one, yet she chooses to make no alteration. Even when Paull has a strong moral objection to an incident, such as the father’s cruelty in horse breaking, she will not remove it from the text. The result is a narrative that struggles with itself, a narrative that is consciously the work of two authors rather than one. In most translations of The Swiss Family Robinson, the differences between translator and the text the translator is working from are hidden or minimized; in Kingston’s translation the work becomes just another of Kingston’s stories for boys. In Paull’s there is a certain endearing honesty when contradictions are brought suddenly, shockingly into the open.

Footnotes are not the only source of confusion and contradiction in Paull’s text. A further difficulty results from Paull’s suturing of Wyss’s original text to a later German translation of Montolieu. Thus we have Wyss’s first series married to a secondhand version of Montolieu’s second, and Paull joins the two narratives together
skillfully. However, she forgets to omit the explanatory preface at the beginning of Wyss's first series; the result is that we are told that the story is based upon an account brought to Europe by the captain of a Russian ship, who has discovered the family living on the island. The mythical Russian captain, however, does not appear in the narrative, which ends conventionally with the discovery of Jenny, the arrival of the Wolfsons and the departure of the two boys in an English ship with Captain Littlestone. The untidiness of the novel is further enhanced by some mistranslation. For example, in her note, Paull gives "volcano" as Jenny's habitation. The smoke appears to be caused by spray, as Jenny realizes, and the correct translation should surely be that of Clinton Locke and Kingston: "smoking rock." Paull also seems confused as to whether the buffalo the family discover is a water buffalo or an American bison.

Beneath Paull's surface of confusion and contradiction there is a persistent, moralistic tone emphasizing frugality and piety. "We must economize in every way," the father states early in the book (73), and this statement might provide a keynote for the rest of the family's actions. When the boys capture crabs in the brook near the campsite, their father begs them to "throw the little ones back in the water . . . to provide us with an unexpected store suitable for many suppers" (73), and he makes at least three speeches condemning the slaughter of animals merely for sport:
We have no right to kill God's creatures unless they are dangerous wild beasts or those we need for food. (123)

Economy, however, is not the only virtue that the father wishes to inspire in his offspring. He keeps his boys on a much tighter rein than does Kingston's father, and lectures them more sententiously. When Jack hides his lobster so that the jackals do not eat it, his father comments disparagingly, "certainly you take care of what belongs to your self, my boy, but they are happier who care for the wants of others" (25). The tone here is of a master at an English public school. Similarly, the boy's genuine delight on the first Sunday is quickly quashed by their father's moralizing:

"Sunday!" cried Jack, "that is good news. I can use my bow and arrow, take a walk, or be lazy, just as I please."

"That is a very improper speech, my boy." I said. "Sunday is God's day". (102)

Paull's boys may be initially as active as Kingston's, but they are soon checked in their exuberance by more contemplative parents. Her translation is characterized not only by the father's overbearing moralizing, but also by a harsh, unflinching Calvinism.

Paull's family are much more pious than Kingston's, and this piety extends a little further than merely observation of the first two Sundays on the island instead of only one. When Miss Jenny recounts her adventures to the family, she attributes her escape from drowning in shipwreck not to her own ingenuity but to Providence:
Indeed, she assured me that had she not been able to swim when the boat was capsized, nothing could have saved her. Yet most of all was Jenny thankful that God in his infinite mercy not only saved her life, but sent a wounded albatross to be tended and cared for till it was well enough to carry a message to those who could rescue her. (494)

The family exist here in a mechanistic universe in which grace is already preordained; they may discover God’s intentions, but they cannot alter their situation by means of works. The industry of the Swiss Family on their island might hint at the possibility of salvation by works, but Paull quickly crushes such an anti-Protestant notion. On reaching Prospect Hill for the first time, Fritz and his father survey the island and see no signs of habitation. Fritz is a little dismayed, but his father shows no hesitation:

Fritz, God has prepared for us another destiny to the one we intended. He has chosen for us the life of colonists, and our confidence in the heavenly Father has not been misplaced. (33)

Paull’s family cheerfully endure their stay upon the island as part of a Manifest Destiny: their discoveries continually serve to illustrate the goodness of God in all things.

Paull’s translation, then, is concerned with repression and submission, both thematically, and textually: the oppositional quality of the footnotes is perhaps a representation of wider oppositions in Paull’s world view. Her translation, when it escapes from its confusion, however, has many good points. It is probably the most complete
translation of The Swiss Family Robinson available in English, Frith's version excepted, and it is certainly the most accurate rendering of Montolieu. In addition, Paull has a fluent, if rather lecturing prose style that sometimes blossoms into poetic diction. Her descriptions of nature are particularly fine:

While thus conversing we arrived at the rocky source from whence our little river rippled softly with a murmuring sound over the pebbles, forming as it fell a charming cascade. But to reach the Jackal Brook we had to struggle through the high grass with the chain of rocks on our right, and as we emerged from it a beautiful prospect lay before us, very different from anything we had hitherto seen. The face of the shelving, rocky wall presented a sight of wonderful magnificence, resembling greatly a European conservatory. The ledges and cliffs like the shelves of a hothouse were rich in rare and blooming plants; not, however, placed here by the hand of man, but growing in wild luxuriance. (223)

There is some mimetic alliteration here ("little river rippled" and "charming cascade"), and some suggestive figurative language (a "chain" of rocks, rather than a "line," suggesting enclosure). The comparison of the countryside to a conservatory is a subtle one: if we have a conservatory, we must also have a gardener who keeps the conservatory in order. Paull is clearly not a Wordsworth, but she shows a greater appreciation of the possibilities of language than does Kingston.

Allied to Paull's appreciation of language is her tendency to infuse a neutral text with new significances. In the episode involving the cutting of the sugar canes in Paull's translation, Fritz complains of tiredness:
"Patience and courage my boy," I replied. "Do you not recall the fable of Aesop, in which he speaks of a bread basket, so heavy at the commencement of the journey and so light at the end of it? Your burden will diminish in the same manner, for we shall have an occasion to refresh ourselves before we reach home. Give me therefore at once a cane, which shall be to me a pilgrim's staff, as well as a cruse of honey". (39)

Here new religious significance is given to the sugar cane, which is only a "staff" to Kingston, and a "walking stick" to Frith.

Amplification is an endearing trait of Paull's; she will expound at length in footnotes upon the derivation of a German word, upon whether or not it is correct to anglicize the German place names in the text, even upon the precise scientific name of an animal. Still more curious is her rationale for amplification: there are clearly limits to her knowledge of the German language and natural history. Her translation makes haste to explain away the implausible presence of so many supplies upon the wrecked ship, and to give details of an exotic shrub or tree, but it reproduces the highly implausible episode in which the Swiss father captures a crocodile by charming it with his singing. Such unevenness and intriguing details are fascinating to the historian, since they illustrate a potentially fertile conflict and confusion in the text; they are perhaps less appealing to children. Paull's version is the most copious of the four major translations of The Swiss Family Robinson, but it somehow has the air of a book that children, urged on by their doting parents, do not want to but ought to read.
In Paull's version of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, the educational process has become a stasis: "Do I dare?" is continually answered by "Thou shalt not." The positive achievements of the family in constructing their island kingdom become subordinate to victories in self-repression, in their denial of innate selfishness, thoughtlessness, even depravity. Paull's translation, although popular during the 19th century, has faded from prominence in the 20th, and it is easy to see why. Repression is not so appealing in a post-Freudian age. Furthermore, Paull's moralizing and piety restricts action. For the modern editor's or publisher's purposes, Kingston's narrative is more racy and secular; if we need a longer, more poetic narrative, that is best provided by the translation of Henry Frith.
CHAPTER V
REASON TRIUMPHANT: THE TRANSLATION OF HENRY FRITH

The title of one of Henry Frith's more popular books, The Cruise of the Wasp, might, a little uncharitably, describe the writer's literary career. Frith, like Kingston, was a prolific children's writer and attempted, one year before the publication of Kingston's translation, to produce a definitive edition of The Swiss Family Robinson in English. However, his concerns are very different from those of Paull and Kingston; whereas Kingston concentrates upon action in his narrative, and Paull religion, Frith emphasizes reason. His Swiss boys are not quite the young colonists of Kingston; they are more contemplative, perhaps even more xenophobic. Although contemporary with Frith's, Kingston's narrative seems to arise out of a view of the empire as still expanding, pushing vigorously outwards. Frith's text, perhaps, reflects an Empire that, after the Indian mutiny, has realized its own vulnerability. Frith's family venture out from their dwellings rather as the English ventured from their imperial fortresses: circumspectly, even suspiciously, very aware that only their gift of reason separates them from the darkness and savagery outside.
A brief glimpse of some of Frith’s other writings will illuminate his concerns in his translation of Wyss’s work. A modern reader exploring Frith’s translations, novels, and "albums" is struck by their constant xenophobia and racism. At times this seems to arise merely out of ignorance and speculation, and thus is almost amusing. In *Schoolboys the World Over* (1881), Lao, the little Chinese boy, describes beatings at the hand, or perhaps, as we shall see, head, of his father:

But it was not the cane that inspired me with fear so much as his long pigtail, which he often used as a means of correction—in his more angry moments he would seize this almost interminable plat, as hard and as cutting as horsehair. With this he would bring the blood to the surface of my body, and I continually bore the marks on my skin. (101-2)

The physical contortions necessary for the father to carry out such a punishment would seem to make the cane an easier alternative for both child and parent, but Frith is perhaps more concerned with describing the animality of the uncivilized, opium-addicted Chinese. More disturbing is the testimony of Woolly-Head, the little Australian aborigine, later in the same text:

The tribe [I belonged to] was reduced to a few families, and will soon have disappeared altogether; but the aborigines do not mind that, for they know that when all black men are dead they will be born again as white men. (223)

Frith here omits to tell us why the tribe has been reduced to such small numbers, but implies a system of social Darwinism: black people are lower on his evolutionary scale
than white, and are therefore likely to become extinct when faced with superior competition. We perhaps see a similar mechanism operating, albeit subliminally, in the slaughter of the monkeys in *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

If Frith’s works emphasize xenophobia, they also foreground "reason" and inventiveness as a means by which Europeans may overcome the brute strength of savages. In *Escaped from Siberia: The Adventures of Three Distressed Fugitives* (1894), a Russian captive is given a brief respite from suffering by means of European ingenuity:

"These dogs are killing me with thirst," exclaimed the unhappy man. "I am all on fire here," he added, opening his mouth as widely as his lips, so terribly corroded by the acid, would permit.

The man with the violin was seized with an idea. Drawing a small empty bottle from his breast pocket, he made signs to his little pupils to fill it with water. Then, with his request complied with, he let the liquid filter drop by drop into the parched and swollen mouth of the recaptured convict.

The man gazed at him as a grateful beast might have done. "Thank you," was all he said; but he was already revived. (5)

For Frith, Europeans succeed in savage environments because of their superior intelligence and conscience; they must, however, be continually on their guard.

Frith’s edition of *The Swiss Family Robinson* was published in 1878, 10 years after Paull’s but slightly in advance of Kingston’s. Like Paull’s version, it is a translation of a unified first and second series from the German; unlike Paull, however, Frith does not pretend to be attempting to produce a faithful rendering of either the spirit or
the substance of Wyss's 1813 text. Frith's translation, its author claims in his Preface, will be found to contain all the valuable "features of the best successive editions" (iv), taking enlivening additions from Paull, Godwin, and other 19th century translators. "Young readers," Frith further states, "have a distaste for books in which a great mass of information is concentrated in a small space" (iv), and so there are no footnotes or endnotes. Frith aims, he claims, to produce "the standard English edition" (iv), and to some extent he succeeds. His text is fuller, more contemplative than that of Kingston, and much tidier and less moralizing than Paull's.

Frith's boys, even more so than Kingston's, are quite clearly English schoolboys out to have a good time in an exotic environment. The journey of exploration becomes an "excursion" (20), Ernest is mockingly referred to as a "capital shot" (60), and Jack appropriates a snuff-box from the wreck "to collect beetles and insects in" (129), just as any English schoolboy might. Frith is also sturdily Anglo-Saxon in his diction: the gourds growing on their trees, for example, are referred to as wens, and the dog Flora becomes, more prosaically, Bill. His boys are also late 19th century British in a more figurative sense: they attempt to conquer their environment by the application of reason, and it is reason that gives them control over that environment. When the family are abandoned upon the ship by fleeing sailors at the beginning of the book, the father
remains calm, and the ship eventually comes to rest between two rocks. The family is then treated to a little moral lecture upon the significance of their survival:

"My boys," I said, "our companions lost their reason in their precipitancy. They embarked without thinking of us, and have fallen victims in their haste. A greater power has protected us." (44)

For Frith, clearly, reason is a divine gift, and it is humanity's use of this gift that separates civilization from savagery.

Frith's emphasis upon rationality and the intellect results in a text very different from Paull's. The father's scientific explanations are more prolonged and much more precise, but episodes with religious content are truncated. During their first night on the island, the boys are surprised by the sudden descent of night. Paull's father briefly outlines the cause of this phenomenon, that it results from a change in latitude from that of Switzerland. Frith's father, however, is not satisfied with so brusque an explanation:

"That makes me think," I said, "that we are not very far from the equator, or at least that we are between the two tropics. Twilight is produced by the dispersion of the sun's rays in the atmosphere; the more obliquely they fall, the more the refraction extends; the more perpendicular they are, the more quickly they disperse. The country between the tropics, which is directly beneath the zenith, must consequently lose the sunlight very quickly." (19)

Scientific methodology is more useful to Frith's family than a blind faith in Providence; faith is still present, but it
is expressed through confidence in the powers of reason. Jack, early in the book, mocks his father's prayers; in Paull he is condemned as a wicked boy, in Frith merely called "foolish" (21). The family are in the position of curators of the island; the parable on the Sabbath, much shortened, becomes more of a how-to manual giving instructions on the tending of the island colony than a celebration of God's grace. God's name is often avoided by the use of periphrasis ("the divine compassion" (1), "a greater power" (4)), and when the Bible is invoked, it is as a celebration that the family are "still part of the great human family" (99), rather than as a means of direct access to God. Sundays are not named as such, and the family seems more inclined to trust in its own resources than to wait for God to provide.

Frith, in his translation of The Swiss Family Robinson, seems much more concerned with the maintenance of colonialism than does either Paull or Kingston. When Paull's family finds the baby monkey the father is neutral concerning its fate, and after persuasion, allows Jack to keep it, commenting that only time will tell whether his decision is the correct one. Frith's father gives much more explicit instructions:

I am glad to see at once your good feeling and the wisdom of your observations, and I consent to the adoption of your PROTEGE. But you must take care how you bring him up, as he may be an acquisition or otherwise, according to the way in which you train him. (36)
Paull's monkey will, it seems, turns out for good or bad according to Providence; in contrast, Frith's Jack has the capacity to alter and control its destiny. Frith's family have more possibilities to mold their environment than Paull's, and are more concerned to follow European precedent, to resist "going native." They are aided in this by their possession of a copy of *Robinson Crusoe*, a feature of Frith's translation that is strangely reminiscent of *Emile*, and to which they refer with great frequency. Indeed, Defoe's book has a predictive function. Before the discovery of the cavern Fritz does some reading and remarks that the family "may discover some spacious cavern which will serve us as a residence, as one did for Robinson Crusoe" (234). Crusoe's cavern is far from spacious, and serves him mainly as a storehouse, but Frith's boys are excited enough by the idea to begin excavations of their own, which led to the discovery of their extremely spacious cavern.

The family also invoke Crusoe, with less certainty, as a precedent for the building of the treehouse. Frith's Swiss mother, worried about the lack of security at the tent dwelling, proposes a removal to the trees. Her husband belittles her suggestion, but she persists:

You may laugh as much as you please . . . but I am quite sure that amongst the branches of these great trees we could construct a small hut with a ladder leading up to it. Have you not often seen the same thing in Europe? For instance, do you not remember that farmer near our old home, who did much the same thing, and whose hut was called Robinson Crusoe's treehouse? (64)
The appeal here is not only to Crusoe, but also to European civilization. The farmer may not be, in Frith's eyes, the prime representative of European culture (quite why he would wish to build a treehouse in the middle of rural Switzerland is not explained), but he is at least Swiss and therefore civilized.

Civilized people, Frith maintains in his version of The Swiss Family Robinson, must be constantly vigilant to keep their superior status. When the father skins the porcupine, Jack decides to make a coat of mail out of its hide for one of the dogs, and determines to "manufacture a headpiece out of the remainder, which would act as a protection for himself against the savages, should we be so unfortunate as to encounter any." The family are continually wary, prepared for the worst that the environment can throw at them. They are also industrious, always occupied; the devil, Frith, implies, finds work for idle hands. Paull mentions only the frustration of the family's being cooped up for the winter; Frith, in contrast, emphasizes that no time is wasted:

My wife employed herself mending clothes; I wrote out my journal, which Ernest recopied. Fritz and Jack were occupied in teaching little Frank to read, or amused themselves in drawing, as well as they could, any animals that had attracted their attention. (234)

Constant activity maintains the family's civilized status, and Frith is, it seems, more concerned with preservation than discovery.
However, colonial "civilization" is inevitably maintained by an undercurrent of violence, and this Frith acknowledged. His boys and father deal swiftly with the tribe of monkeys who are causing disruption in their domain; the boys express some concern, but are reassured that such destruction is inevitable if the colony is to survive. Slightly more sadistic is the father's slaying of the turtle:

I immediately jumped out in order to recompense the pilot who had guided us so well. With the assistance of the cord I soon reached the animal which, fatigued by swimming, was making up his mind to crawl upon the land, and dealt him a severe blow on the head with my hatchet. But he fought so with his feet that I cut off two of them, and then decapitated him. (129)

The struggle here seems to be prolonged for no apparent reason other than to extend the animal's suffering and therefore, presumably to increase the value of the father's triumph. The more intimate personal pronoun of Godwin returns, as does the irony of the first sentence; Frith, however, is more sardonic, more concerned to build up the status of an opponent than to show compassion.

Frith's text is an attractive, polished work, without Paull's or Godwin's rough edges. It is more comprehensive than Kingston's and, like it, it is a "neutral text," very much like any other Victorian boys' book. Few Victorian boys' books are, however, read by children in the latter half of the 20th century, and Frith's complete *The Swiss Family Robinson* is no exception. It has not achieved the
sanctity or fixedness of Kingston's text, but has rather become something of a mine in which later writers have found much useful material. It is the last of the great, encompassing editions of the 19th century that we shall discuss; later editors would be concerned more with specialization, with tidying up the ragged edges left by the unifying editions.
CHAPTER VI
SPECIALIZATION: OTHER 19TH CENTURY EDITIONS

The zenith of *The Swiss Family Robinson*’s popularity came in the second half of the 19th century. Increased book sales spurred publishers into new ventures in translation and adaptation, and several publishing houses had two or even three editions of Wyss’s work on the market at the same time. Some, like Mary Godolphin’s *The Swiss Family Robinson in Words of One Syllable* (longer names of flora and fauna cause considerable trouble), aimed for a restricted but definite audience; others are tailored to suit the tastes of discriminating parents, increasing the neutral history content for the more humanist household, or enhancing religious elements for the more pious. The violent aspects of the boys’ adventures might be decreased (as in Lovell’s version) for the more sensitive child, or increased (Brayley Hodgetts’ translation) to stiffen the patriotic fiber of the young imperialist. None of the wide range of editions on the market reached the definitive status of those of Godwin (with a supplementary second series by J. Clinton Locke), Paul, Frith or Kingston, although some had pretensions to it. Specialized or slanted as they are, minor Victorian editions of *The Swiss Family Robinson* give the novel’s tex-
tual history great richness, and a substantial proportion of the readers of Wyss's novel have had their vision colored by the powerful shading of Godolphin, Gardiner, Lovell, Brayley Hodgetts and Davenport Adams.

The tailoring of The Swiss Family Robinson to a specialized audience was certainly not new in the second part of the 19th century. An edition published in New York in 1848 of the Godwin/Locke text is described as "improved by the author of Uncle Phillip" (4); some of the improvements are innocuous, such as shorter paragraphing and simplified diction. However, in the sugar cane episode a more sinister improvement has been made; Fritz's exclamation of pity for the negro slaves has been excised. The book was clearly not intended for an abolitionist audience.

Later in the century specialization became a little less subversive. Alfonzo Gardiner's edition of 1887 is one of many boasting improved natural history. Although Gardiner emphasizes his concern for scientific accuracy, his translation itself proceeds in a very haphazard and unscientific way. It is, he comments, based upon the French of "Baroness de Montolien [sic]" (iv), and is "now placed before our young people so corrected . . . that in reading it . . . they will not learn anything which they will afterwards have to unlearn" (iv). But such a commitment causes problems to Gardiner; an island in Malaya would not support half of the species Wyss mentions, and thus strict scientific accuracy would result in a dull book. Gardiner,
however, manages to neatly sidestep the issue, footnoting skillfully:

In the original edition this island was near New Guinea; but an island in tropical America, situated between the mouths of the Amazon and Orinoco, would more fully correspond with the incidents narrated, and their surroundings. (124)

Gardiner here substitutes Wyss’s island with Crusoe’s, and the exchange removes at least some of his difficulties.

Gardiner’s text is much abridged; he leaves out many episodes, most significantly the discovery and rescue of Miss Jenny: romantic interest, presumably, might distract the young naturalist. His narrative moves swiftly, only occasionally held in check by footnotes that go beyond mere scientific objectively. When the boys discover an oyster, Gardiner footnotes frantically:

There are numerous species of oyster found in the shallow seas or river mouths of all temperate and warm climates, but those found on the British coasts are the best. Oysters breed in April or May, and the fry or fertilized eggs, we call spat. This spat adheres to pieces of wood, stone, old oyster shells & c, and the young oysters become fit to eat in about a year and a half. (20)

The device of footnoting enables Gardiner to substantially increase the didactic content of the text without slowing down the plot. Many of the father’s lectures, such as his discussion of the sudden onset of night in the tropics (see page 66 above), are relegated to footnotes, and are joined there by a plethora of scientific or anthropological facts. When the boys confront monkeys in the cooconut trees, Gardiner is quick to footnote that "the name of monkey is not,
strictly speaking, a scientific term" (37), and goes on to discuss the classification of monkeys among "pagan nations" (37). The desire of the family for Bologna sausages prompts Gardiner to footnote that the word is pronounced "bo-lo´-nyâ, not bo-lo-na or bo-log´-na" (48). Such footnoting must eventually irritate even the most humble reader; Gardiner seems more interested in displaying a knowledge of trivia than in using a coherent pedagogical method.

Indeed, the exuberance of Wyss´s material eventually defeats Gardiner. Penguins may be unlikely inhabitants of an island near the mouth of the Orinoco, but to eliminate them would destroy two entertaining episodes. With his avowed desire for scientific accuracy, Gardiner is caught in a quandary; "one species," he assures us, "extends to the warmer regions of Peru" (11). However, by the time the herring school has arrived Gardiner has given up completely. "The herring," he notes despairingly, "is only found in the north temperate regions of the globe." (189)

Yet Gardiner´s narrative is not without charm; it is marked with a persistent, if not deeply spiritual piety, and, as we have seen, by a cheerful national chauvinism. When Frank wants to sow gunpowder like seed, the father gives his usual, amused explanation of why this is impossible, and then ascribes its invention to "Roger Bacon, a monk of Oxford, in England (who lived in the 13th century)" (98). The translation is brief and easy to read;
the footnotes, however, often distract the reader, and Gardiner's attempts at melodrama ("'Lost! I exclaimed, and the cry went like a dagger to my heart" (6)), lack the exuberance and unpretentiousness of Kingston's diction. Gardiner's translation would certainly provide children with some fascinating information regarding natural history, but this dubious improvement in pedagogy is achieved at the expense of a fluid narrative.

In his edition of *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1869), John Lovell employs his children as editors just as Kingston claims he does; his progeny, however, reach very different editorial conclusions. Lovell has no illusions regarding the sanctity of the text; and he refers to Wyss's book as "a good thought taken . . . at second-hand from the storehouse of another's [for Lovell, Defoe's] mind" (x), and emphasizes its "literary inferiority" (x) to *Robinson Crusoe*. He praises Montolieu's translation, in which "she wisely ignored the author and looked only to those whom she aspired to teach and amuse" (xiv), but claims that the story will survive further transformation. Before attempting such a task, Lovell tells us, he asked for comments from his children, who had read a full translation of Montolieu, possibly Paull's. Their comments concerning the lack of compassion that the boys show the animals that they encounter, and the absence of strong displays of filial affection, led Locke to replace what he calls "a certain shallowness and carelessness of reasoning in moral subjects" (xiv). "Errors
in matters of science . . . morality . . . and taste" (xiv), Lovell boasts in his Preface, "have been removed, and the work has, in short, been entirely remodelled" (xiv).

The scale of Lovell's remodelling becomes apparent very quickly to the reader of his translation: his family are fastidious, polite, and almost too good to be true. The mother, who merely feels shy at putting on sailor's clothes in most editions, "naturally [feels] a strong repugnance so to disguise herself" (7) in Lovell's. Indeed, she exhibits a rather delicate sense of etiquette throughout the novel, washing Fritz's face when he is disguised as a savage because she cannot "bear to see him looking like a negro" (329). Such consideration for others, Lovell emphasizes, is also exhibited by the rest of the family. When Fritz and his father make spoons out of gourds from the calabash tree, Fritz remarks that Francis may have trouble using one of them:

And then, thinking of little Francis—"Father," he said, "let us find a little calabash; the spoons we have been making will stretch the little fellow's mouth from ear to ear. I will try and make him a small set of dinner-things for himself." (27)

Lovell's grammar here may be a little shaky, but the morality of his characters most certainly is not.

Lovell's family, like Kingston's and Paull's, are very much aware of their position as God's colonists. The father, Lovell tells us in the introduction, was a man who volunteered to do missionary work when "the light of the
Gospel was being carried into distant lands by a few devoted men" (xv). A short time after landing, Fritz refutes his father's statement that the family is doomed to live alone or perish with a Biblical analogy:

"As to that," cried Fritz gaily, "there are three times as many of us as there were when Adam and Eve began life; who knows but that, like the patriarch of the Bible, we may turn out to be the progenitors of a great and innumerable nation?" (28)

Fritz does not seem to have given much thought to the logistics of progeniture, but the father is much encouraged by his reply. Lovell's universe, and therefore his island, is mechanistic, operating under laws laid down by God that do not require continuous divine intervention. The chance killing of a margay and Ernest's speculation on the subject of why God should allow such destructive creatures to exist provokes a strong reply from the father:

"It is in vain," I replied, "to hazard guesses upon the ultimate purpose which God may have had in view in giving life to the creatures of his hand. Nevertheless, it may be permissible to search for the uses of these creatures in the great scheme of creation. This being so, I may say that in my belief, all these animals which we wrongly, no doubt, look upon as being simply harmful, were created to maintain a certain equilibrium among others." (74)

The universe may be a Strasbourg clock, running slowly down while maintaining momentum; Lovell implies that it is entertaining, if not entirely moral, to speculate upon the purposes of the clockmaker.

Lovell's Swiss boys are surprisingly modern; they are more independent of the father than either Kingston's or
Frith's, and less inclined to do thoughtless violence to animals. The latter quality may be a reflection of the wave of Victorian sentimentality regarding the treatment of animals that led to the paintings of Landseer and, eventually, to the founding of the R.S.P.C.A. When feeding the chickens, the mother remarks "I already love our dumb companions here. Shall I tell you why? It is because I feel that they love me too" (82). Ernest's inability to shoot a bustard is critized, but looking on the bright side, the mother comments that "after all... it was perhaps better to leave the poor things alone to take care of their little ones" (55). Lovell's compassion for animals is perhaps most marked in his reworking of the slaughter of the monkeys, which his children objected to as "worst of all" (xii) and "horrible" (xii). The father sets birdlime as a trap, just as in all previous versions of Wyss' novel, ensnares the apes, and then sets the dogs loose upon them. However, he soon has a change of heart:

On witnessing the distressing terror of these poor creatures our anger subsided. I called the dogs back at once. In spite of all the harm the destructive brutes had done us, we could not help feeling pity for them. (208)

The apes are set free after receiving a sound beating, and do not return to further molest the settlers. Kindness to animals is, to Lovell, not only a sign of good moral character but of good common sense; it preserves God's creatures so that they may function within a Darwinian order.
Lovell's edition is appealing to a modern reader soon tired of the family's incessant slaughter of animals, but it also has several faults. One is the frequent use of non-standard grammar; in an age in which grammar was considered important such a feature can hardly have been a strong selling point. Lovell's translation, like Paul's, also exhibits a marked sloppiness of revision: its author emends some passages, yet neglects to carry his emendation through the text. He adds a passage in which Fritz and his father discover a Bible in the captain's library on the wreck, but then neglects to cut a passage narrating events later the same day, in which the mother, amid general rejoicing, produces a Bible from her "magic bag." Fritz and his father must, we can only assume, have very short memories. A more serious fault in the book is that the boys are a little too nice. They are considerate, polite and respectful, but seem to have less of a good time than Kingston's sturdy lads. Lovell cuts out some of their more violent excesses on hunting expeditions, but he fails to replace the incidents with equally interesting, "morally correct" occurrences. His attempts at scientific accuracy are barely noticeable; if anything the errors are compounded. Ernest, for example, achieves the unlikely distinction of having "brought down" (38) a flying penguin. The ambitions of Lovell's preface are high, but they are not achieved in the book: in making The Swiss Family Robinson tasteful, Lovell effectively neuters it.
"We require," a Buckinghamshire public librarian wrote in 1849, "duplicates over and over again of such works as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, Cook's Voyages, and works of that description; but what we are aiming at is to raise the standard, so as to get [working class people] to read books of practical science and books of a higher description altogether" (Altick 220). If this should prove impossible there was always an alternative: the infusion of a text with practical science or religion. Mundella's Code of 1883 allowed school inspectors to ask children to read not only from standard authors as well as the Bible, but also from "such works as Robinson Crusoe Voyages and Travels" (Altick 222). The market for The Swiss Family Robinson was thus extended to public libraries and schools, where it might be studied as a reader or, more commonly, given as a prize. Gardiner's edition, as we have seen, played to the popular market with an attempt to increase the scientific terminology: W.H. Davenport Adams' version of 1870, written for Nelson, the Bible publishers, adds a healthy dose of religious interpolation, a critical introduction, and more.

Davenport Adams' translation was published a year after Paull's and marked the first venture of Nelson into the increasingly competitive market of Wyss's text. Davenport Adams sets a somber tone from the beginning, translating a long critical introduction by the French critic Charles Nodier and inserting it in the text before his own
introduction. Nodier's introduction is an intriguing docu-
ment in itself, comparing Wyss to Rousseau and discussing
The Swiss Family Robinson in almost proto-anthropological
terms. The serious mood of Davenport Adams's translation is
further enhanced by the presence of quotations from English
literary giants—mainly Shakespeare and Milton—after each
chapter heading. The family now has a surname (Starck), and
there is seemingly unnecessary tampering with the boys' names: Fritz becomes Frederick; Jack, Rudly; and Francis,
Little Fritz. Not content with such minor changes, however,
Davenport Adams insists upon giving a brief character sketch
of each of the boys before approaching the text proper. His
conclusions, after the benevolence of previous translators,
seem a little harsh:

"Little Fritz" was a boy only eight years of age,
very lively but gentle, whose studies had been
retarded by a feeble childhood. He knew nothing
as yet; but being attentive and obedient, would
quickly acquire that degree of instruction proper
for his age and talents. (3)

The translator seems almost apologetic regarding the
manifest ignorance of "Little Fritz," but he also conceals a
didactic message within his character sketch. "Providence,
Davenport Adams urges us, paraphrasing Benjamin Franklin,
"never abandons those who do not abandon themselves" (15).

The Parable on the Sabbath in Davenport Adams' edition
burgeons to 12 pages: it is heavily allegorical, almost
Bunyanesque, describing the "Kingdoms of Plenty and
Possiblity" and of a great King residing in "the Celestial
City" (126). As if this were not already clear enough, the father proceeds to give a two-page exposition to his children, concluding with a remark about death:

[Then] we may hear his gracious voice addressing to us the consolatory words, "Well done ye good and faithful servants: ye have been faithful over a few things, and I will make ye rulers over many things: enter ye into the joy of your Lord (Matt. xxv 21). (127)

The translation is peppered with Biblical references of this sort, and while some scientific facts are brought out, blind faith in scientific methodology is, Davenport Adams assures us through the medium of the father, very dangerous:

"It is very strange," I added, "that natural history, where truth is always palpable, should be the one of all human sciences which man has most disfigured by embellishing it with marvellous circumstances, as if nature was not beautiful and wonderful enough in itself; as if it needed the assistance of our silly imaginations to render it what it really is--grand, magnificent, and ever worthy of admiration. (107)

After a few such withering blasts the boys are unlikely to fall prey to such embellishments of silly imagination as Darwinism.

Religion and correct moral behavior were perhaps two strong selling points for Victorian children's books; imperialism, it seems, was another. E.A. Brayley Hodgetts' edition of 1896 admits in its introduction, and not without some pride, to being "very pig-headed and English" (vi). This translation, Hodgetts assures us, has undergone careful preparation:

I have striven to make [it] as terse and vigorous as possible, and here and there I have ventured to leave out certain sentimental strains which,
However, Germans are not the only race that Brayley Hodgetts considers overly sentimental; they are positively English when compared to the French. Like Frith, Hodgetts goes back to the German original of Wyss for inspiration, but he does not do this because of a concern for textual history. "There is little," he writes, "in common between the French and German languages, and the Teutonic original is more akin to English hearts and minds . . . in thought and feeling" (viii). Hodgetts' translation is thus based upon the original German, and its author even goes so far as to speculate upon Johann David Wyss' hunting activities, and to hazard a guess that "it is not improbable that he would have himself made a capital colonist" (viii).

Hodgetts' edition, despite its differing ancestry, has affinities with Kingston's. The translator's boys are full of boundless energy which, at times, the father feels obliged to check or channel. Hodgetts' father is very certain of his authority, and very quick to put down any obstreperous child. On the wreck Jack makes a cheerfully exuberant suggestion regarding the family's prospective escape, but the father's response is hardly congratulatory:

"Why should we not get hold of some big tubs and paddle ashore? I have often paddled about in god-papa's pond in that way; it's great fun."

"Good advice is accepted gratefully, even out of the mouths of children." (6)
This passage also illustrates another curious aspect of
Hodgetts' translation: its paraphrasing or echoing of Biblical
phrases, presumably to lend more authority to the
diction. Authority, as the father makes clear, is
essential; the father must maintain it and yet, at the same
time, cultivate a sense of pride and self-respect among his
sons. On the Sabbath, he devotes time to a parable but then
allows his children the rest of the day for recreation:

I took care that, after our devotion, the boys
should be allowed to indulge in the perfectly
legitimate and childish enjoyment of the Sabbath.
Nothing was further from my object than to bring
up a family of snuffling hypocrites. I wished
them to look up cheerfully to their creator, and
serve Him without sorrowful mumblings. (134)

One can almost smell the polished wood and carbolic of the
English public school at times in Hodgetts' translation:
the boys construct a "dormitory" for themselves in the salt
cavern, and display throughout the novel the exuberance of
clean minds and sound hearts in healthy bodies.

Hodgetts' translation of The Swiss Family Robinson also
interpolates militaristic images. In the Parable on the
Sabbath the Great King sends "frigates" to Earthland accom-
panied "by a terrible ironclad called The Grave" (96). Jack
remembers his father's time as a chaplain in the army while
musing upon the appropriateness of an outdoor service:

Don't you know that when the soldiers were under
canvas at home, they had no church, and no organ
either, and yet attended divine service? (91)

The intention of these textual interpolations is perhaps to
create a verbal environment in which the military values of
discipline, obedience, and courage may be reflected not only in the plot but in the language itself. Still, Hodgetts’
boys do exhibit less sensitivity and more robustness than
Lovell’s; upon Jack’s killing of a large number of gulls
feeding upon the shark’s carcass, the father remarks that
"gulls are mostly so stupid that whalers have to kill them
to get them out of the way" (65). The family, additionally,
exhibit Swiss chauvinism that Hodgetts’ must wish was
British ethnocentricity. When Ernest brags about his at-
tempt to bring down a bustard, the mother remarks, "If I did
not know all about you, I would take you for a bragging
Gascon, not a Swiss" (61). Similarly, the father comforts
the boys when they are sleeping in hammocks by remarking
that "hardy Swiss boys should be ashamed of complaining of
beds in which sailors managed to sleep comfortably" (57).
Yet the family are admiring of the English; Miss Jenny
writes that she is English on her note sent by albatross,
and her nationality seems to spur Fritz on to even more
furious attempts to find her. The island becomes an English
colony at the end of the novel, with English settlers
planted and two of the boys taken off by an English ship
which is returning to Europe.

The translations of Hodgetts, Lovell, Gardiner, and
Adams all illustrate the variety of texts available to a
London or New York parent in the later 19th century. The
choice is bewildering, and if we can draw assumptions of
sales from the frequency of publications of new editions, it
would seem that the translations of Gardiner and Davenport Adams were the bestsellers among the specialized editions. Editions of each of these translations were published well into the 20th century. They suffered competition not only from each other, but also from a wide variety of anonymous and frequently inferior translations, as well as from the ever-popular versions of Kingston, Godwin/Locke, Frith and Paull. The 19th century ended with a rich variety of texts on the market; the 20th century would see a weeding out of the minor editions, but also an advance beyond the boundaries of the conventional text.
CHAPTER VII
FRAGMENTATION: THE 20TH CENTURY

In terms of textual history of *The Swiss Family Robinson* the 20th century comes as something of a postscript; it is marked by a fragmentation of the text, and no pattern seems to arise from such fragmentation. Though we might expect it, there has not been a precipitous decline in the popularity of Wyss's work. In 1984 there were 11 editions of *The Swiss Family Robinson* in print in England (British Books in Print 6444), and 12 in the United States (Books in Print 5404), and the majority of these were paperbacks with a low profit margin and therefore, presumably, high sales. The number is certainly less than the total number of editions in print at the turn of the century, but it is still healthy enough to indicate that Wyss's text is still being read at a time when most of its contemporary novels have long been out of print. The 20th century is not a postscript because of lack of availability of the text, but rather because of the quantity of new variations of the text. Remarkably, there have been no major translations in the 20th century, and only three substantially altered abridgements.
The century began, as we have seen, with a formidable range of editions fighting each other for prominence. If we can draw conclusions from the frequency of publication, it would seem that Kingston's edition was the most popular, closely followed by those of Paull and Prith, with that of Godwin/Locke lagging a little. These editions were not the only versions to enjoy popularity, however. Cassell published a new edition of Lovell's translation in 1909, and Nelson has kept W.H. Davenport Adams' translation on the market continually, first as part of the New Century Library, and afterwards as one of the Nelson Classics and Nelson School Classics series. There has certainly been an increase in the number of editions which are, like the Nelson Classics, specifically addressed to schools, a continuation of a trend that begins with J.H. Strickney's editing of Paull for a high school readership in 1885.

Many editions of The Swiss Family Robinson of the early 20th century are reprints of older and less successful Victorian editions on worn plates; one such is the edition of Kingston's text published by A.L. Burt of New York in 1919. Despite its brightly-colored cloth binding it is a reprint of a Victorian edition on plates so worn that the type is barely legible. Other later editions were more ambitious: one published in Philadelphia some 10 years later features a Godwin/Locke text "retold by Mabel Holmes, PhD" (i), and has authorship reascribed to David Wyss. Holmes' enticing introduction tells of the adventures of the
Wyss family and of how the pastor came to write the manuscript of his famous Robinsonade. The family, she states, would gather around the fireplace upon cold Swiss winter nights to listen to Papa Wyss' tales:

One winter he had a subject that lasted him for months, for he happened to meet a Russian sea captain who told him how on one of his voyages he had found, on a desert island near New Guinea, a shipwrecked Swiss clergyman and his family. (v)

This may not be the most historically accurate introduction to the work, but it reestablishes a healthy tradition of the work masquerading as autobiography which extends back to Godwin's first translation. More seriously erroneous, however, is Ms. Holmes' assertion that the first translation of the work into English was that of Mrs. H.B. Paull in 1868. Her ignorance is made all the more surprising by the fact that she uses Godwin's text as a basis for her own version. Holmes' edition is, as she writes, somewhat shorter and more simplified; in common with many 20th century editors she excises the slaughter of the monkeys, but leaves much of the text unaltered.

In their enthusiasm to bring the book to new audiences, 20th century translators and editors of The Swiss Family Robinson have proved willing to make the wildest claims on its behalf. Mary Lamberton Becker, in her introduction to the popular Rainbow Classics Schools Edition (Kingston's translation) has obviously done some research. A little knowledge, however, seems to be for her a dangerous thing:
It was first translated into English by William Godwin, afterwards the father-in-law of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Some people think the poet himself may have had a hand in the translation. (11)

This misapprehension concerning the Godwin text's authorship is a common one, and is perhaps made more easily tenable by the fact that the translation was first and always has been published anonymously. Captured by the flow of her rhetoric, however, Becker goes on to give the date of the publication of Kingston's edition as 1849 (a typographic error?), some 30 years too early, and condemns previous editions of *The Swiss Family Robinson* as suffering "from a long line of indifferent illustration" (14). The sparse illustrations of the Rainbow Classic seem indifferent indeed when compared to the rich engravings of editions such as the Nelson version of the previous century.

Illustrations have, however, increased in importance in editions of *The Swiss Family Robinson* this century. The 1913 Hodder and Stoughton edition uses a slightly emended Godwin text but is distinguished by a score of anonymous full-color plates, as well as by beautiful color-washed endpapers. Audrey Clark's abridgement of Frith's text, published by Dent's Illustrated Children's Classics in 1957, features color illustrations by the painter Charles Folkard that have a picturesque 19th century, at times almost Pre-Raphaelite quality. Clark's abridgement, indeed, is perhaps the most accessible reworking of Wyss's novel in this century; its editor simplifies Frith's rather verbose dic-
tion but still preserves the spirit of his text. Her boys speak the every day English of the 50s, rather than seeming to have escaped from Eton locker rooms, and they are substantially less violent. When Turk, the family's dog, tears an ape to pieces, Frith notes that "his jaws were still covered with blood" (36). In contrast, Clark is more interested in the psychology of dog-master relations, and introduces an element of anthropomorphism:

Turk crouched at Fritz's feet as if he understood what was being said to him. His limpid eyes gleamed intelligently, and he glanced from his young master to the monkey, and back again to Fritz. (34)

The Frith text exhibits a rather insouciant violence when the boys set their dogs upon monkeys eating ginseng roots:

Curious to see what they were eating, we let go the dogs, and the apes fled at full speed. They all escaped with the exception of two, which were captured and eaten by the dogs before we could come to their assistance. (285)

Clark's dogs have more restrained appetites, and she summarizes the above passage with the words "we set the dogs upon them, and the monkeys fled at top speed" (181).

Clark omits the Parable on the Sabbath, having the father make a brief reference to Sunday ("It was our first Sunday on the island and my wife produced a Bible from her bag, and we took it in turns to read a passage aloud" (78)), and then go on to talk about more interesting things. The extent to which Clark modernizes the language can best be illustrated by a passage concerning the construction of the treehouse. Frith has:
Meanwhile, I ascended into the tree with Fritz and took all the dimensions necessary to build a commodious residence. (92)

In Clark's hands, this becomes:

Meanwhile Fritz and I climbed the tree to measure the width of the branches and so on, so that we could plan the design. (75)

Anglo-Saxon here replaces Latinate diction; Clark's boys at least speak our language. More subtly, Clark increases the role of Fritz by making him the subject of the sentence's main verb. Clark's boys are similar to Frith's, but they do exhibit more independence from the father.

Other abridgements of this century are Audrey Butler's (of Frith's text, 1970), and G.E. Mitton's (of Godwin/Locke, 1907). Butler's version cuts religious references, stresses filial independence, and completely excises the slaughter of the monkeys, while Mitton's abridgement aims, as so many translations before it, to cut "long-winded sermons and lectures of the pastor, mostly irrelevant to the story" (4). Butler's edition has the advantage of being published in the elegant Collins Schools Series, printed on good quality paper stock; neither revision, however is as thoroughgoing or seemingly thematically unified as Clark's.

A tendency common to all 20th century abridgements is the enhanced centrality of the Swiss boys; long, didactic lectures by the father disappear, and the enlightened tutor fades into the background. With the advent of modernism, and after Freud, we are more suspicious of our own abilities to control or direct. Kingston's father is almost like a
19th century scientist in a laboratory; he controls the experiment of his children's education, and brings them up in strict accordance with his plan. The success of his experiment, moreover, confirms his faith in an ordered universe. In the abridgements of Butler and Clark we see less emphasis put upon the guidance of authority, and more upon independence.

Fragmentation occurs within 20th century texts of The Swiss Family Robinson, yet it is even more apparent in works that take only initial impulses from Wyss's novel. The parallel with science might be extended: in the 19th century Kingston, Frith and Paull wrote grand, encompassing editions, each aiming at being definitive, at unifying all previous editions much as Maxwell's Grant Unifying Theorem sought to bring together all the physical sciences. It was left to the Lovells and the Gardiners of the Victorian literary world to pursue specialization, to flesh out the framework a little. In the 20th century Einsteinean physics has undermined and fragmented the order that the Victorians perceived; Newton's physics are not invalidated, but are left as something of a point of departure. The "straight" texts of The Swiss Family Robinson should perhaps serve us as a departure point, for the 20th century has seen the splintering of Wyss's text's influence into new fields: into satire, into visual media, and ultimately perhaps, into a submerged mytheme within our society.
As the century has drawn on, *The Swiss Family Robinson* has developed its own little family of Swiss Robinsonades. A satirical translation, directed mostly at Harvard undergraduates, was published by Owen Wister in 1922. A more important adaptation, *The Swiss Family Perelman* (1950) has only a loose connection with Wyss’s text; Perelman, the American humorist, in a book assembled from a series of articles in *Holiday* magazine, details his family’s experiences on a world tour. The family has now shrunk from four boys to a very modern one of two parents, a son and a daughter, and the children are certainly not the spiritual heirs of Wyss’s boys:

> When I convinced them that . . . they might do five hours of homework daily even en route, their jubilation was unbounded. They promptly contrived wax effigies of their parents and, puncturing them with pins, intoned a rubric in which the phrase "hole in the head" recurred from time to time. (16)

It is interesting that *The Swiss Family Robinson* has become a target for satire, since satire plays upon the ambiguity of authorial intention; the author says one thing and means another. Satirical "translations" take the process of fragmentation further; the presiding intention of Wyss is removed and the plot is subordinated to a particular, local truth.

Further fragmentation of *The Swiss Family Robinson* occurs in a superficially more faithful medium: that of film and television. Many present-day children know Wyss’s novel through the medium of the Disney movie, and indeed Wyss’s
novel has a respectable history in visual media this century. A 1926 edition of Kingston’s translation, published by Grosset of New York, was designed to be presented in conjunction with the "photoplay" Perils in the Wild, presumably a form of magic lantern show. Two television series have been produced, in 1958\(^1\) and 1975. The 1975 production by C.B.S., reduces the family to a nuclear one of parents Lotte and Karl Robinson, with sons Fred and Ernie (Terrance 338); the boys, in common with their counterparts in other 20th century adaptations, show greater independence. The mytheme of a family survival narrative is reflected in such serials as Lost in Space, a 1960s C.B.S. production in which Jack Robinson, his wife Maureen, and children Judy, Penny and Will are stranded on an unknown planet after having been selected "from more than two million volunteers to begin the conquest of space" (Terrance 38). By far the most prominent representations of The Swiss Family Robinson, however, have been the two film versions, the first by RKO Radio Pictures in 1940, and the second by Walt Disney in 1960.

The RKO production, directed by Edward Ludwig, suffers from a low budget; it was shot in monochrome in a rather small RKO studio tank. The result is, as one reviewer expresses it, "a rather somnolently paced, story-book film"

\(^1\) The only reference I have found to it is in a New York Times review. See page xxx above.
("The Swiss Family Robinson" [RKO] 10). Interesting points for the textual historian are the Swiss mother's almost pyromaniac efforts to light rescue fires, and the boys' frequent lamentation for their lost schoolwork, allied with their continual attempts to persuade the father to build a schooner to take them home. Special effects, if somewhat limited in scale, are used extensively; there are no fewer than three storm sequences. The screenplay maintains considerable fidelity to Wyss, and the family remains its original size.

With the 1960 Walt Disney movie of *The Swiss Family Robinson* we seem to have come full circle. The film was shot on Tobago in the south Caribbean where, if we leave out Selkirk and concentrate upon the flora and fauna, Robinson Crusoe's island is to be found. The color and the tropical vegetation give a lushness lacking in the RKO movie, and the treehouse like that of many 19th century illustrations, is extremely impressive. Disney and his director Bill Anderson do return to the 19th century in more ways than one; they exercise considerable freedom with the text, and this freedom, like the freedom of 19th century editors, has an ideological purpose.

Disney's family (reduced to the Father, Mother, Fritz, Ernest, and Francis) are very concerned with propriety and legality. "The ship is ours," Ernest comments early in the movie, "by maritime law." "Help your mother," the father admonishes the boys continually, and the Swiss mother is,
indeed, in need of help. Many 19th century editions of *The Swiss Family Robinson* would exclude the mother completely: in Disney's, she is foregrounded again and becomes the butt for misogynist humor. She falls into the water, much to the boys' merriment, while leaving the ship, and becomes hysterical about the dangers of living in a treehouse. While the boys and their father are working in the hot sun, she stays beneath a parasol and makes curtains, knits, and worries about her sons' safety. A central theme of the movie is the mother's possessiveness, and her inability to let go of her children.

Ernest and Fritz, again, exhibit more independence in the movie than they do in Wyss's book; they are each around 17 years old, and much of the movie is an account of their voyage of discovery around the island. Disney develops an explicit contrast between the boys: Ernest is the intellectual, Fritz a man of action who is always mouthing such words of wisdom as "there's only one way to find out." The boys have a nascent, if rather puerile sexuality. When making their voyage of discovery they take time out to sunbathe on a beach, and talk about girls:

"Fritz, when we get to New Guinea, do you think there'll be any girls of our age?"
"Ernest, by the time we get to New Guinea we won't care what age they are."

The sexuality soon has a focus; the boys rescue Roberta, an English girl, from the clutches of the pirates. She is initially disguised as a boy, and chastely refuses even to
sleep next to the Swiss lads, remarking "I'm just not sleepy." Fritz and Ernest are ready to write "Bertie" off as a "sissy" until they discover her true sex; she then becomes an object of romantic contention with Fritz's muscular silence winning out over Ernest's intellect.

The pirates are another fascinating aspect of Disney's movie. They are mostly Oriental, with one or two blacks lurking in the background, and speak to each other in a curious jabber. They can, however, understand English if the speaker speaks slowly and shouts. Such monologues as "You send me money. Then you go. So!" are depressingly frequent, and the pirates' leaders make decisions by spitting on one side of a stone and then tossing it in the air. They launch a surprise attack during the island's first public holiday (Pearl Harbor?), and are bombed and incinerated by the Swiss family, who manufacture their own grenades and booby traps. Their ship is eventually blown up by a rescuing English vessel.

A tension exists in the Disney movie, as we have seen, between the family's integrity and the children's desire for independence. The mother complains to the father of her sons' lack of opportunity in the new world:

"What about our sons? What future is there for them?"
"There aren't very many girls around, are there?"
"It's not a matter to joke about. They'll never have a chance to have a family."
The Swiss family, however, is fragmenting, growing smaller, despite all that Disney can do to hold it together. In the 20th century, a rise in the number of single parent families and concern over the status of women make the adventures of a Swiss father and his four sons less appealing. Most adaptations of Wyss' novel in the 20th century, as we have seen, stress a smaller family, and stress the autonomy of the child. Women's roles become more prominent, if not more sympathetically portrayed. Outside the boundaries of conventional adaptation, however, the mytheme of a family survival narrative seems to have become submerged. The Crusoesque, the suffering of the individual castaway, is perhaps more appealing in an age that stresses individualism.
CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

Few texts have remained continuously in print since the beginning of the last century; fewer still have maintained a consistently high level of sales and a high number of editions in print. The Swiss Family Robinson is not unique in its popularity; its sales have been surpassed by Robinson Crusoe and Ivanhoe, but it is perhaps the only book of its time specifically written for children that has maintained high sales well into the latter part of the 20th century. Even its rivals from the 19th century have fallen by the wayside: The Wide, Wide World was out of print for a long time, as most of Alger's novels still are; and even such classics as Masterman Ready have all but vanished from view. The translations that Frith and Kingston made of Wyss's novel are the only works from the great library of children's literature that the two writers produced that are still in print. The Swiss Family Robinson is still so much a part of our canon that we do not recognize its singularity.

It is difficult to know, and perhaps futile to speculate, why The Swiss Family Robinson has maintained a high readership. Its contents are not unusual for a
children's book of the early 19th century, nor are its concerns with didacticism. Wyss's novel was fortunate enough to have an excellent translator introduce it to the English reading public, and fortunate again to have a sequel available just at the time its popularity was rising. However, other texts must have enjoyed similar, or at least equivalent, advantages. Perhaps more important is the book's flexibility as a text: since there was no English original, translators and editors could easily adapt the novel to changing social situations while still claiming fidelity to the original. Robinson Crusoe, however, was much transformed despite having an English original, and Ivanhoe and Treasure Island succeeded without being greatly adapted. We should perhaps accept The Swiss Family Robinson's importance, and then move on from there.

In the introduction to this thesis, I raised the possibility that the text might serve as a literary barometer, measuring changes in society, and the position of children within the family. It is certainly possible to see The Swiss Family Robinson in this light, to see it progressing from an Enlightenment world picture (Godwin), to the extremes of Victorian piety and familial duty (Paull), and then through a granting of greater independence to children (Kingston and Frith), to children's autonomy (Clark and Disney) in the 20th century. Alternatively, it is possible to see the world of the island as a reflection of a society's world picture: we see societal concerns such as
unification, specialization, and fragmentation within the text. We should also not forget the changing audience of Wyss's text in English; it moves from being a text espousing radical educational methodologies in the early 1800s to a best-selling children's book, and finally to the status of a children's classic. We might detect a broad movement in the translators' concerns, but any plotting of such a movement must allow for such interesting aberrations (or, more kindly, variations), of Lovell, Godolphin and Brayley-Hodgetts. It must allow for them as integral parts of a textual history, not merely as adjuncts.

As we saw in the previous chapter, The Swiss Family Robinson has changed in response to changing perceptions of the family. The changes are, of course, selectively mimetic, often reflecting perceptions of how children ought to be, rather than how in actuality they are. The pro-rated number of illegitimate children rose steadily to a peak in the 1860s, then declined until 1940, when it began to rise again (Belsky 32), yet 19th century editions of The Swiss Family Robinson present a coherent, unified family. In the 20th century, as we have seen, a change in the American and English family occurs. It becomes smaller, and more significantly, especially in America, it ceases to function as an economic unit (Belsky 31). There is an extent to which a conventional adaptation of The Swiss Family Robinson can follow this; the number of children may be cut, children given greater independence, and women's roles enhanced.
However, the central theme of the book, education by means of the family, cannot be adapted away. In the last decade the American family has changed more radically than at any time in the last century: the percentage of single parent families has doubled within 10 years (Belsky 33). In such a family environment a story of the educational methodology of a six-member Swiss family is less relevant.

In Disney World, Orlando, Florida, there is a replica of the Swiss Family’s treehouse; tourists ascend into a huge concrete tree, examine the family’s living quarters and ingenious labor-saving devices, and descend down another staircase. At each point of interest there are little plaques with quotations from Kingston’s translation. The scene at Disney World might provide us with a metaphor for the present state of The Swiss Family Robinson as a text. On one level we have the plaques, the fixed texts, the danger of standing still. Wyss’s novel has, as we have seen, never been a fixed text, never a classic in the sense that Ivanhoe or Alice in Wonderland were classics. Its textual variety has given it a unique ability to be a pedagogical tool, to be a transparent, fertile medium in which the editor’s personality or concerns might grow. The most disturbing tendency in the 20th century has been the fixing of Frith’s and, particularly, Kingston’s texts as classic, canonical translations. The Swiss Family Robinson has, perhaps, exhausted its potential for transformation. Yet on another level we have an osmosis with a larger environment,
just as the tourists pass through the tree, the family survival narrative, as a mytheme, merges into the broader environment of the different representative media. The survival narrative still holds much appeal; films and books concerning survival of a nuclear holocaust have multiplied in recent years. However, these narratives do not have the family as their central concern; they may mourn the loss of family ties (Nevill Shute’s *On the Beach* comes to mind), or celebrate new, communal ways of raising children (the B.B.C.’s *Survivors*). As the American and European family becomes more fragmented, a mytheme of family cooperation in survival becomes less relevant, and thus less visible.

The future of *The Swiss Family Robinson* as a children’s classic in the manner of *Ivanhoe* or *Treasure Island* seems assured. The family survival mytheme seems also certain to continue to be recycled, and explored in future children’s literature. Such programs as *Survivors* or *Threads* are, in a sense, descendents of Wyss’s narrative: they provide a reaction, rather than a confirmation, substitute a dystopia for Wyss’s utopia. What has been lost, however, is the middle ground: transformations of the text that are bold, incisive, yet still retain an acknowledged indebtedness to Wyss. A *New Family Robinson* might well find a market; it would be a rewritten version of Wyss’s text expressing the anxieties and challenges of a post-colonial society, foregrounding women and confronting racism. Such a text, in its freedom, would be truer in spirit, if not in letter, to
Wyss' text; it might also have remarkable resemblances to the first of all English translations of *The Swiss Family Robinson*, that of Mary Godwin.
APPENDIX
THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON: A CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

All major translations are listed, as are substantial abridgements. A fuller bibliography is available in Morgan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


----. *How Brittanica Came to Rule the Waves*. London: Gale and Inglis, [c1890].


Smith, John. "A Description of New England:"


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Philip Holden was born in Boston, England, somewhere around February 3, in 1962. He grew up in Newcastle and Poole, Dorset, and studied at University College London, where he became interested in American Literature and the literature of colonialism.

Working for starvation wages organizing children's theater in Kilburn, he happened to pass by his old college one day and see a poster advertising graduate studies at University of Florida. He applied, attracted by the prospect of food, sunshine and academia; this thesis is a result of that application.

Philip Holden plans to teach English in China, the United States of America, and in several other parts of the world.
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

John Cech, Chairman
Associate Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

John Seelye
Graduate Research Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Alistair Duckworth
Professor of English

This thesis was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

August 1986

Madelyn Sockhart
Dean, Graduate School