THE FAERIE QUEENE AND THE FEMALE EXPLORER: ILLUSTRATED WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (1880-1900)

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ENG4970: Honors Thesis Project

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April 30, 2020
Project Purpose

Creating the Faerie Queene and Female Explorer sites has afforded me a unique opportunity to present a study about Victorian representations of women and girls in texts for children. Strikingly, digital exhibits offer a way of presenting scholarship that suits and enhances the interdisciplinary scope of my project, which draws from Victorian Studies, Children's Literature, and Art History. The goal of this project is that it reads like you are walking through a museum. Using Omeka as a digital platform, I have tailored a project with a multitude of resources beyond the written text, such as hyperlinks to relevant texts, illustrations, and historical information. The pages of these digital exhibits feature illustrations integral to my argument, and many of these illustrations reflect the impressive digital collection at UF’s Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature.

There is much to see and explore in these exhibits—Victorian gender politics, the Golden Age of Children's Literature, Aestheticist and Arts & Crafts illustration. Echoing the artistic beliefs of Walter Crane, the design of these sites aspires to mirror the content of my project with appropriate visual cues. These sister sites are not simply linked with the click of a button, but are symbolically connected through the visual rhetoric of their header images. Like the prominent nineteenth-century artists and illustrators at the heart of this project, I look to the past for inspiration by modeling the placement of these header images after Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam* (c. 1512). The Faerie Queene stretches her arm to the right, and the Female Explorer to the left—these sisters reach their hands out to one another. The Faerie Queene and the Female Explorer never meet hands, yet they are inextricably linked in ways that speak to the metaphorical space between womanhood and girlhood. At the same time, however, this connection reflects their shared illustrated representation.
Although these sites work in tandem to produce a comparative reading of Victorian representations of women and girls, each has its own bibliography at the end of this paper. I highly recommend reading this thesis project in its digital format on Omeka. Below, I have outlined how the layout of this document correlates to the components of the Omeka site. Additionally, I have placed hyperlinks to the Introduction, Exhibits, and Pages, so you can easily access the project on Omeka.

Format

I. Exhibit

Description of the exhibit displayed on "Browse Exhibits."

PAGE

Section (within a page)
THE FAERIE QUEENE

Introduction

This series of exhibits traces the portrayal of young women as "Faerie Queene" figures in children's literature composed during the late Victorian Era. Works of this study include Pictures of the Past, for Little People (1887), Queen Summer (1891), Christmas-Tree Land (1884), and The Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria (1892). Calling the nineteenth-century female characters of these texts "Faerie Queenes" suggests their capacity to wield magic and their connection to traditional aristocratic ideals, both qualities that bestow a degree of agency not otherwise available to typical Victorian women in the real world. These Faerie Queenes also evoke Edmund Spenser's famous Elizabethan Era poem of the same name, The Faerie Queene (1590). Spencer’s poem and the aforementioned works of children's literature appeared in print during two different but parallel eras of England’s history: the reigns of Elizabeth I and Victoria, England's most notable queens. The significance of these two historical queens influenced how authors and illustrators portrayed fictional queens as rulers who exercised their authority.

Alluding to The Faerie Queene also serves to recall the Middle Ages as a period that inspired later authors and illustrators of the late-nineteenth century Arts & Crafts and Aestheticist movements. In a similar fashion, illustrations produced during the Golden Age of Children's Literature drew significantly from folklore and fairy tales, which in turn, preserved stories that would have been otherwise lost. In the first half of the nineteenth century, English art remained concentrated on the subjects of everyday life and the importance of moral behavior. The rise of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, named for their admiration of art preceding the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael, revitalized the British art world in the mid-century.¹ John

¹ Robert de La Sizeranne. The Pre-Raphaelites (Parkstone International, 2008), 8.
Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood rebelled against the Royal Academy to birth an artistic vision that transgressed Victorian aesthetic and social boundaries, revealing insights such as "unconventional beauty in conventional ugliness" or "masculine strength in conventional femininity." Inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite's inclination to depict biblical, Arthurian, and Shakespearean scenes, the authors and illustrators of the congruent Arts & Crafts and Aestheticist movements explored Arthurian romance and medieval themes, writing about and illustrating kings, queens, and fantastical beings.

These art movements rejected a modern turn to industrialization and mass-production in favor of emphasizing the subject of individuality, preserved through the dignity of labor in meticulous, personally hand-drawn illustrations. Infusing Greek, Roman, and medieval iconography, the Arts & Crafts and Aestheticist movements visually appealed to the past through their subject matter, as well as their artistic approach. Yet I want to suggest that, while illustrators in the late Victorian Era anchored the past in the present through their art form, they still confronted contemporary concerns through their gender politics, as Aestheticist and Arts & Crafts representations of female characters grappled with Victorian gender constructs that determined social norms for women of the age.

A principal work of this exhibit considers to what extent the Faerie Queene demonstrates exceptional agency for Victorian female characters. Typical Victorian female characters either

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adhere to idealistic gender norms that produce underdeveloped characters or feature so little in the narrative that their presence borders on nonexistence. For instance, Charles Dickens depicts the young Lucie Manette as "the golden thread" that binds her small family together in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), praising her angelic femininity. Lucie embodies the conflated roles of daughter, wife, caretaker, and mother, all positions which tie Lucie to the different men in her life: Dr. Manette, Charles Darnay, and Sydney Carton. She personifies the passive woman, a foil to the violent, unbridled Madame Defarge, whose monstrous capacity to act through revolutionary rebellion reads as a cautionary tale against female independence.

The commanding nature of the Faerie Queene as either royalty or magician disrupts this familiar Victorian trope of the passive woman, since queens and fairies serve no particular man on whom they depend. Even though these Faerie Queenes dodge the fate of growing into lackluster female stereotypes, they still maintain ambivalent and difficult relationships with traditional values of femininity such as marriage, motherhood, and domesticity depicted in narrative text and illustrative representation. By exploring the textual narratives and figurative illustrations of the Faerie Queene in *Queen Summer, Christmas-Tree Land,* and *The Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria,* we will see how traditional Victorian depictions of passive,

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4 Charles Dickens. *A Tale of Two Cities,* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1906), 246, [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044086820743](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044086820743); Charles Dickens openly criticized Pre-Raphaelite John Everett Millais' painting, *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1850), as blasphemous; the famous author mockingly reviewing a Pre-Raphaelite Exhibition, writing, "You will have the goodness to discharge from your minds all Post-Raphael ideas, all religious aspirations, all elevating thoughts; all tender, awful, sorrowful, ennobling, sacred, graceful, or beautiful associations; and to prepare yourselves, as befits such a subject—Pre-Raphaelly considered—for the lowest depths of what is mean, odious, repulsive, and revolting." (Andres, *The Pre-Raphaelite Art of the Victorian Novel,* 9; Charles Dickens, “Old Lamps for New Ones,” *Household Words* 1, no. 12 (June 15, 1850): 265–67.
diffident women are paradoxically reified and deconstructed by textual narrative and, intriguingly, challenged by illustrative representation.

I. Queen Victoria

Queen of the United Kingdom from 1837 to 1901, Victoria emerged as an icon of an age dominated by print culture, industrialization and imperial expansion. Take a tour through children's book, *Pictures of the Past, for Little People* (1887) and learn how Victoria's image evolved during the 19th century through personal sketches, periodicals, picture books, and biography.

**VICTORIA THE ICON**

*A Royal Biography for Girls & Boys*

*Pictures of the Past, for Little People* (1887), written by Harry Koizumi or "Uncle Harry," commemorates Queen Victoria on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee, the fiftieth year of her life-long reign (1837-1901). Koizumi, who grew up near the Royal Family’s Windsor Castle, highlights his personal connection to England's mighty monarchs, as he introduces *Pictures of the Past* by reminiscing about his sightings of George IV, William IV, Queen Adelaide, and the young Victoria, once she became Queen of the United Kingdom. He speaks of his intention to "rejoice heartily that our good Queen has been spared for so many years, and has been enabled to live so happy and useful a life among us." By memorializing key historical moments in British history and personal anecdotes about the iconic Queen, as well as using visual rhetoric of the Arts & Crafts Movement, Koizumi authors an eye-catching royal biography for children.

**Fact vs. Fiction**

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Perhaps with a perspective better befitting fairy tales than biography, Koizumi chronicles Victoria's life in a way that skirts over controversies that surfaced in Victoria's childhood and early years as monarch. In Koizumi's vignette, "Accession to the Throne," for example, he paints an exemplary image of the Queen’s Christian piety, imparting that the new Queen's first act, when visited by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain, was to pray with them for a prosperous reign adding that everyone in Victoria's Council "was pleased with her manner and behavior." This picture-perfect story of a princess turned Queen elides the drama and subterfuge engaged by Victoria's relations, including her uncle, the Duke of Cumberland; her mother, the Duchess of Kent; and her ill-suited comptroller, Sir John Conroy. Whereas Koizumi does not recount these misfortunes for his child audience, Lytton Strachey, author of Eminent Victorians (1918), reveals both Victoria's unpopular moments, such as the Lady Flora Hastings scandal and 1839 Bedchamber Crisis, as well as her triumphs, flaws, and strengths.

Koizumi fails to mention the principal thorns in Victoria's side in the forms of her mother and erstwhile advisor Conroy, both of whom expected to carry on at Buckingham as if it were Kensington. Under their instruction and care at Kensington, Victoria endured the oppressive Kensington System, a set of rules deployed and devised to protect the princess from "unsuitable" personal influences. Only permitted to walk down the stairs holding someone's hand, forced to sleep in the same bedroom as her mother, and almost never interacting with other children, Victoria grew up relatively isolated, which accounted for her extreme affection for Dash, her beloved King Charles Spaniel. Koizumi depicts the transition from childhood home to royal palace with ease, stating, "The Princess now took rank before her mother; but for all that, she

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6 Ibid., 26.
8 Ibid.
treated her beloved parent with the same reverence and affection as she did before. She was still a loving and obedient daughter; and did not allow her mother to feel any difference. She felt that she was her daughter still, and that she was in duty bound to love and honour her as much as ever.9 At the expense of recounting Victoria's resentment towards her mother and Conroy, Koizumi illustrates a world in which Victoria holds the utmost respect and affection for her mother, so that British children might follow in their monarch's example.

Victoria's tempestuous relationship with her mother, exacerbated by Victoria's unhappy memories at Kensington, remained ambivalent at best. According to Strachey, "[t]he Duchess of Kent, still surrounded by all the galling appearances of filial consideration, remained in Buckingham Palace a discarded figure, powerless and inconsolable."10 Meanwhile, although Victoria banished Conroy from Court in 1837, he continued to manage the household of the Duchess. Rumors circulated that the Duke of Cumberland, who would gain the throne if Victoria should die without an heir, wished to remove England's young Queen; yet Victoria remained resolute, refusing to believe gossip, especially when heard from Frances Conroy, the daughter-in-law of the Queen's unbearable enemy, Sir John Conroy.11

**The Jubilee Effect**

Although Koizumi's anecdotes meander from the truth or fail to capture the complexity of Victoria's personality and politics at times, *Pictures of the Past* reflects the significant and immense pride expressed by the British public during the Golden Jubilee. By the time the 1887 Jubilee arrived, Victoria’s early strife had likely slipped the minds of the Victorian public—

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11 Deirdre Murphy, *The Young Victoria* (Yale University Press, 2019), 91.
many of whom might not have been alive to hear of the blunders during Victoria's first years as Queen. The allegedly stubborn and self-determined Queen Victoria had more than proven herself after 50 years of rule over what was assumed the world's most powerful Empire. *Pictures of the Past* is only one example of the many printed sources dedicated to Victoria's memorialization. In 1887, *Punch*, a weekly British magazine of satire and humor, published a special three-volume edition on the Queen’s reign called *Mr. Punch's Victorian Era* and in 1886 the "Almanack" illuminated "the history of the Queen's reign and the political, social, military, scientific, and technological accomplishments of the Victorian Era."\(^\text{12}\) Thus, the iconography of Queen Victoria is inextricably linked to discourses of progress and innovation. Despite *Punch*'s tendency to thrust Victoria’s image forward for political satire, the magazine participated in the Jubilee fever and dispensed with its regular mocking tone to praise the "Royal Lady" whom the publication ultimately championed.\(^\text{13}\)

**Queen of Print Culture**

Juvenile biographies like Koizumi’s depicted Queen Victoria in a manner that fictionalized and mythologized her, so that she could stand alongside other fictional females in fantasy or exalted heroes in medieval tales, such as when *Punch* compared her "with all the great queens of the past from Cleopatra to Elizabeth."\(^\text{14}\) In *Pictures of the Past* especially, Koizumi brings the mythos of Victoria alive with sumptuous aesthetic references to the Arts & Crafts movement. This movement, which centered on glorifying earlier artistic eras, pointed Victorians to an aestheticized revision of historical events and mythical tales. Just as famous characters in

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\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., 56.

\(^\text{14}\) This comparison of Victorian with the great queens of history comes from *Punch's Diamond Jubilee* publication in the poem, "The Queen!!!(No. 44); Ibid., 56-57.
children's literature filled the imaginations of British children, so did the fictionalized Queen Victoria, whose illustrated personas ranged from Shakespeare's Queen of the Fairies, Titiana, to the "Grandmother of Europe." Sir John Tenniel, one of the many illustrators of Victoria in *Punch*, would later illustrate Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Just as representations of Britain's most recognized monarch and fictional female character—Victoria and Alice—were developed and proliferated by the same artistic hand, in turn, representations of Queen Victoria, who was "one of the most painted, sculpted, drawn, caricatured, and photographed people of her day," influenced the representation of many female figures in children's literature.  

**VICTORIA THE ARTIST**

*Watercolor Facsimile*

Princess Victoria herself produces the most striking image of *Pictures of the Past*: a facsimile watercolor drawing from 1831. The facsimile watercolor, highlighted on the cover, accompanies the book's title page, while underneath the drawing, the caption humbly reads, "A sketch by the Queen when Princess Victoria." The watercolor displays a simple, cozy domestic scene of a woman reading outside her doorstep. She wears a cloth bonnet, a pink shawl, an olive green dress, and oval-shaped spectacles. The chosen muted sand-colored background, with faint traces of pencil that outline shrubbery and a window, highlights the vibrant and contrasting green and pink of the main subject's clothing. Special attention is also paid to the lighting, reflected in the shadow cast by the chair and in the many folds of the woman's dress. Victoria's art itself

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15 Ibid., 47, 54.
embodies genre painting, highly popular among Victorians for its commitment to capturing everyday life and disdained by Bohemian circles such as the Pre-Raphaelites for its mundanity.\(^\text{17}\) Despite lacking the flair of youthful revolutionary artists or the grandeur of masters exhibited in the Academy, Victoria's art, as it is placed in *Pictures of the Past*, builds the image of Victoria as an artist in spirit, even though she wears a crown atop her head.

**Picture books: Low to High Art**

Including an illustration by Queen Victoria in *Pictures of the Past* also serves to indirectly baptize her as a participant in the Arts & Crafts Movement. The painting demonstrates that Victoria was not a queen of idleness but one of industry—a theme explored in *Victoria the Educator*. Since the text frames Queen Victoria as a role model for young children, referencing her participation in the visual arts had the potential to inspire young people to take up paper, paint, and brush to produce beautiful art. Likewise, Aestheticist techniques apparent in other picture books—such as ones illustrated by Randolph Caldecott, Walter Crane, and Kate Greenaway—groomed children in the latter half of the nineteenth century to readily form artistic opinions, underscoring how children's literature did not abstain from the larger cultural and artistic debates in the "adult" world.\(^\text{18}\) *Victoria the Critic* details exactly how during her childhood, Victoria's cross-pollination of artistic education in romantic ballet, Italian opera, and melodrama trained the princess as a tastemaker. Victoria, however, as heir to the throne, is an exception to the rule, as she accessed a trove of art and theatre not available to the everyday child. Caldecott, Crane, and Greenaway picture books catered to a middle-class or bourgeois


audience, allowing high culture to permeate into children's literature, or what was deemed low culture. Recognizing Victoria's own artistic preoccupations and how other picture books incorporated artistic principles of the zeitgeist, *Pictures of the Past* bridges history and art to both educate and inspire Victorian children.

**VICTORIA THE CRITIC**

**A Royal Arts Education**

The aforementioned watercolor facsimile only provides a glimpse of Victoria's involvement in the arts and pales in comparison to the access Victoria had to other cultivated pursuits: romantic ballet, Italian opera, and melodrama. Yet the facsimile watercolor in *Pictures of the Past* represents the often-overlooked history of Victoria's participation in the arts, and in this engagement with the arts exists a cross-pollination of writing, drawing, and theatre that encapsulates exactly how Victorian art translated across various forms, such as plays, novels, art, sculpture, and even picture books.

Despite Victoria's resentment about a childhood where she was placed under lock and key by the orders of her mother and Sir John Conroy, she benefitted from an upbringing rich in performance, as she began theatergoing before entering her teens. Princess Victoria did not merely watch these performances, but she engaged with them in a way that speaks to the ability of children and teenagers to form valid critiques. She evaluated both the artistry of costume and mis en scène in addition to a performer's individual flair, if present. Reflections of Victoria's theatre visits feature in her journal as well as her sketches.

**Victoria's Sketches**

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19 Ibid.
In her sketchbooks Victoria idolizes Marie Taglioni, a dancer that catapulted ballet from the Baroque to the Romantic era. Victoria describes Taglioni's sylphlike dancing "as if she flew into the air, so gracefully and lightly." Victoria's artistic sensibilities shine through in her sketchbook where she captures the fine details of costumes or performers' expressions as if on the stage in real time. Victoria's sketch from July 13, 1834 displays Taglioni from La Sylphide (1832), her hair garnished with flower adornments that match the embroidery on her tulle skirt, which is sketched ever so lightly and purposefully with highlighting and shading so that the delicate, translucent nature of the fabric emerges on the page. At times, Victoria strives to portray intense emotion rather than intricacy, which results in organically sketched lines that render the actors' staging, body language, and individual facial expressions. This style emerges, for instance, when Victoria draws scenes from the melodrama The Miller and His Men (1813), expressing heroine Claudine's despair and vulnerability during her abduction, while conveying hero Lothair's resolve and courage in his daring rescue of Claudine from villain Grindoff. Similar sketches of other performances capture the movement of the scene with depictions of the actors' foot placements, draping of their costumes' fabric, or elements of the stage itself. We also see how Victoria's progress as an artist evolves, such as when she blends colors from her limited watercolor box to clothe Luigi Lablache, an Italian opera singer, in the rich and resplendent purple robe he wore for his performance as the Doge in Marino Faliero (1835).

Victoria Plays the Part

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22 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 60-61.
25 Ibid., 70-71.
The young and star-struck Victoria not only exercised her obsession by drawing the performances, copying out the playbills in her diaries, and recounting favorite plots, but she partially lived it. Along with her governess Lezhen, Victoria recreated the ballets on stage with her dolls: they fashioned the appropriate costumes with rosettes, silk, and beads and arranged the miniature Dutch dolls to reflect Victoria's most treasured ballet stories.\(^{26}\) Eclipsing her admiration for ballerina Marie Taglioni, Victoria's affection for Giulia Grisi inspired her to incorporate a wreath of white flowers into her hair for a ball, similar to the one worn by the famous opera singer in *I Puritani* (1835).\(^{27}\) Victoria's zealous enthusiasm was echoed by British novelist William Makepeace Thackeray and French novelist Victor Hugo, who also praised Marie Taglioni, while French poet Théophile Gautier celebrated Giulia Grisi.\(^{28}\) Not only are Victoria's opinions thus apparently anchored in good taste, but her imaginative play and sense of style shows how her response to art transcends the pages of her sketchbook and informs her expression of self, beginning at a young age.

**A Truthful Critic**

Victoria did not allow her girlhood fancy to squash her budding critical tone, even for artists like Taglioni and Grisi, whom she idolized immensely. Reviewing a performance of *I Puritani*, she writes, "Grisi was in perfect voice and sang and acted beautifully; but I must say that she shows her many fatigues in her face, and she is certainly much thinner than when she arrived."\(^{29}\) Despite Victoria's obstinate and passionate temper, both biographer Lytton Strachey and author Harry Koizumi report the Queen's inclination to always tell the truth from an early

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 48-49.  
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 69.  
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 52, 68.  
\(^{29}\) Rowell, *Queen Victoria Goes to the Theatre*, 13.
age, which lends itself as a good quality for both a critic and monarch. When she saw Charles Kemble in an 1836 performance of The Separation, she does not restrain herself, saying, "Kemble whines so much and drawls the words in such a slow peculiar manner; his actions too (to me) are overdone and affected." She hones in on Kemble's retrograde speech and exaggerated body movements, two elements that clash with regards to pace and intensity. The young Victoria proves herself a loyal admirer of those she loves with ardent flattery, yet a formidable critic of whomever she dislikes. Her decided tone of writing in her reviews display the well-known authoritative tone she carried as Queen of England.

**VICTORIA THE EDUCATOR**

**The Arts & Crafts Movement**

Influence from the Arts & Crafts Movement also makes its mark on the front cover of Pictures of the Past, whose title appears penned amongst blooming rhododendrons and roses splashed with watercolor. This decorative feature on the cover imitates the naturalistic style of the Trellis wallpaper (1862) designed by William Morris. One of the leaders of the Arts & Crafts Movement in Great Britain, Morris purportedly loathed modern civilization. His art, poetry and design, sought "to produce beautiful things" in the world. Natural and medieval art

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31 Rowell, *Queen Victoria Goes to the Theatre*, 15-16.


served as the heart of Morris's designs, since he applied a "stylistic treatment of natural forms he found in medieval sources." Much like the flat forms of Pre-Raphaelite art, Morris's designs utilize simple outlines and intense colors rather than perspective and illusion.

A Cooperative Childhood

Harry Koizumi's *Pictures of the Past* not only addresses the Arts & Crafts Movement visually, but he also incorporates integral Arts & Crafts philosophies about industry and cooperation, which Victoria and Albert infused into their own children's education. In "The Royal Children's Cottage," Koizumi celebrates the practical, useful education the Queen's children received at Osborne House. Although staunch gender roles emerge in the children's education, as the boys learn to build in a carpenter's shop and the girls bake desserts in the kitchen, Koizumi describes these tasks in a way that instead focuses on the labor involved. For example, the boys help Albert build a fortress, even making the bricks themselves. All the children enjoy the flower gardens and vegetable patch, and they are directed in their employment under the careful watch of the gardener. Osborne House sounds like a thriving utopia, exactly the kind that embraces hard work and partnership.

William Morris strived towards building the Elysium of workshops in his firm, Morris & Co. The firm dabbled in a multitude of decorative arts: stained glass, painted tiles, embroidery, cabinet-work and more, and Morris’s workshop at Merton Abbey in 1881 was a haven for carpet weaving and tapestry looms. Morris valued work ethic so greatly that he printed his own cotton

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34 Ibid., 214.

stuffs, wove his own textiles, and dyed his own wools.\textsuperscript{36} In addition to rejecting mass production through craftsmanship, Morris believed in the power of collaboration modeled after medieval guilds.\textsuperscript{37} The collective craftsmanship of Victoria and Albert's children aligns closely to Morris's values, for the children do not merely dedicate themselves to the principles of cooking or building, but also to the processes of molding bricks from raw material that would form a building or gathering vegetables that would be added to a recipe. By having their children embrace the humbler origins of cuisine and architecture, Victoria and Albert adhere to key elements of the Arts & Crafts Movement by directly participating as individuals, creating through labor, and recognizing craftsmanship.

**The Great Exhibition**

The same appreciation for craftsmanship could be said of the Great Exhibition of 1851, when Victoria and Albert promoted individualized and globalized industry on an unprecedented scale, which Uncle Harry recounts in "The Palace of Glass" vignette.\textsuperscript{38} The vignette cites Albert as the inspiration for the Exhibition in 1850. At first, the Prince Consort's idea seems almost too grand, as no building large enough existed to house inventions from around the globe. To remedy the situation, Albert enlists Mr. Joseph Paxton, who designs a Palace of Glass to be completed in the following year. Koizumi praises the architectural immensity of the building, as it covered 20 acres and was more than three stories tall, but he also lists the raw materials used to

\textsuperscript{36} Lewis F. Day, “William Morris,” 4-5.

\textsuperscript{37} Hart, “The Designs of William Morris,” 214.

\textsuperscript{38} Although some of William Morris's ideologies surface in Pictures of the Past, the seventeen-year-old Morris in 1851 vehemently opposed the Great Exhibition, calling it "wonderfully ugly." He believed it posed more harm than good to England's traditional design (Lewis F. Day, “William Morris,” in Great Masters of Decorative Art, The Art Annuals (London: H. Virtue and Company, Limited, 1900), 1, [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/iau.31858014772663](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/iau.31858014772663)).
construct the palace, including 4,000 tons of iron and 17 acres of glass, which required 600 tons of sand and 3,000 tons of coal for fire.³⁹

While the public in attendance at the Glass Palace may have been more dazzled by the printing press or the Kohinoor Diamond, the Exhibition still paid heed to more traditional practices and industries, like the carpets on display, "one worked by the needles of London ladies, made of Berlin wool."⁴⁰ Despite all the greatness splashed across the page when Koizumi breaks down the technological marvels present at the Exhibition, he recognizes the efforts of the British women artisans who created the carpets, even pointing to the needles in the hands of these London ladies. In this way, Victoria and Albert championed industry through both progressive and traditional perspectives, which suggested the Queen’s role as an unofficial patron of the Arts & Crafts Movement. Just as Koizumi ties the children's education back to workmanship, he does the same with the Great Exhibition, which unites the progress of Great Britain with the origins of Pre-Industrialization.

II. Queen Summer

From the imagination of Victorian illustrator and designer Walter Crane, Queen Summer embodies more than a powerful monarch that saves her kingdom from errant, competing knights, the Lily and the Rose. Discover how Queen Summer (1891) derives its anachronistic, yet potently Victorian image that combines medieval iconography, the Renaissance, and Greek mythology to reflect Pre-Raphaelitism, Aestheticism, and the Arts & Crafts Movement from the 19th century.

PLOT SUMMARY

Queen Summer, or the Tourney of the Lily and the Rose (1891)

³⁹ Koizumi, Pictures of the Past, 59.
⁴⁰ Ibid., 61.
The central plot of *Queen Summer*—the competition between a Lily and a Rose to win the favor of a reigning queen—is reminiscent of medieval jousting narratives. In this lavish book of Walter Crane's illustrations and rhyming iambic-tetrameter verse, Queen Summer, a seasonal entity of nature's kingdom, reigns over anthropomorphized flowers, angels, and even humans. Holding her court in the green gardens of the earth, Queen Summer enjoys the cool breeze, soft music from Eros' lute and the woodland dove's song, and the sun-woven rays that beautify her home. All appears tranquil until rumors circulate "of how the Lily flouts the Rose" amongst Queen Summer's silken clad knights and ladies.\(^4\) The Lily and the Rose, both knights, vie for Queen Summer's hand "to win the crown of all the year."\(^5\) The rivals decide to face one another in a joust, where Queen Summer, observing from her throne between banners red and white, will decide which knight is in the right.\(^6\) While the Rose enters on a fiery steed with crimson pennon and glittering spine, the Lily stands his ground, accompanied by his milk-white horse and clad in flashing silver armor.\(^7\) The lances of the Lily and the Rose clash, prompting them to call for respective aid, which escalates into a civil war. The court of Queen Summer witnesses the stormy spectacle: The Rose Order of Knights, comprised of Damask to Gloire-de-Dijon, charge at the Lanced Lilies, until Queen Summer rises from her throne to intervene before all comes to destruction.\(^8\) Seeing the knights sprawled across the floor with petals and thorns in disarray, Queen Summer takes neither the Lily nor the Rose for a husband. Instead, she proclaims to all her subjects to embrace one another, especially former enemies Lily and Rose, effectively


\(^5\) Ibid., 8.

\(^6\) Ibid., 12.

\(^7\) Ibid., 14-15.

\(^8\) Ibid., 20-22.
ushering in peace, and establishes her authority as a ruler. In the tale’s conclusion, the wounded flowers heal and gather below the moonlight for a dance to celebrate their newfound unity.

**AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR**

**Walter Crane (1845–1915)**

Born in 1845 in Liverpool, Walter Crane experienced a relatively happy childhood with a middle-class upbringing. Over the course of the century, he would become one of the most prominent illustrators, painters, and designers of the Victorian Era.46 In 1859, Crane began training for his career as an artist under an apprenticeship with wood engraver W.J. Linton, from whom Crane learned the craft of a draughtsman on wood, a necessary skill for book illustration.47 Crane first found real success when he illustrated toy books and yellow backs for Edmund Evans, an English wood engraver and color printer, between 1863 and 1875, a decade in which Crane established himself as a talented illustrator for children's literature.48 *Queen Summer or the Tourney of the Lily and the Rose*, published in 1891, was the second work of a series of flower books created by Crane, and it differed from his earlier *Flora's Feast* (1889) in that its forty color illustrations "were framed and included the text written on scroll placards" to evoke the stylized elements of a medieval tome.49

During this period of growing artistic recognition, Crane also contributed important art to the Socialist movement, publishing designs for the cause from 1896 until his death in 1915. Crane's own views pertaining to decorative art reflected those of William Morris, who believed that art should remember its roots in handicraft with regards to material and use, but also that art and social conditions were intertwined. Echoing John Ruskin's stance on mass production, Crane

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47 Ibid., 16.
48 Ibid., 39.
49 Ibid., 137-38.
believed that if industrialization prevailed in pumping out cheaply made products, corporate
greed would triumph at the expense of a public trapped in perpetual poverty and in slavery to the
machine.\textsuperscript{50} Even though Walter Crane is most recognized for his captivating designs and
illustrations from the beginning of his notable career, his achievements continued throughout the
remainder of his life, as his talent transcended print culture to catalyze reform through socialism
and the Arts & Crafts Movement.

**ILLUSTRATION STYLE**

At first glance, Walter Crane’s 1891 picture book, *Queen Summer, Or, The Tourney of the Lily & the Rose*, hardly resembles a Victorian text. The visual elements of Crane's picture book, which borrow heavily from the Middle Ages, initially appear at odds with the Victorian Era. And yet, precisely because of the book’s nostalgic appeal to past narrative and visual conventions, it demonstrates clear attention to Walter Crane's doctrines concerning the role of the decorative arts in literature.

**Format**

*Queen Summer, or, The Tourney of the Lily & the Rose* features 40 illustrations in color, achieved through color lithography. The title page, hand-written text, end papers, and cover are also color lithographed. *Queen Summer* is quarto-sized book, whose pages are "printed on one side of double leaves folded once in the Japanese style."\textsuperscript{51}

**Lettering**

In Walter Crane's *Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New* (1896), which is based on his lectures given to the Society of Arts in 1889, Crane cites a "respect for form and

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 143-45.
lettering" as "one of the most unmistakable indications of a good decorative sense." According to Crane, not only does lettering characterize the ornamental style of an illustrated book, but also it is "the unit or primal element from which [a decorative illustrator] starts." In *Queen Summer*, Crane's Gothic script on the title page and Carolingian style script in the framed placards situate his readers in the narrative environment of the Middle Ages.

**Endpapers, Covers & Title Page**

Crane encouraged illustrators to fashion endpapers, tailpieces, headers, and borders in a manner that built the narrative structure of the book and influenced the visual thinking of the reader.

The endpaper of *Queen Summer* visually imbues the significance of the Lily and the Rose in the narrative world, signaled by the white lily-and-rose print on a field of orange.

The cover and back cover comprise elements paramount to a medieval joust: triangular pennant banners and lances. The iconography of the Lily and the Rose figure into the heraldry as well, adorned with fantastical creatures like a hybrid rose-lion and a lily-horse.

The title page displays the title of the picture book in rich gothic lettering, accompanied by the words "penned and portrayed by Walter Crane." The tapestried floral background reflects the two subjects of the illustration: a medieval page and dame, one a Rose, the other a Lily. This man and woman arrange the very same flowers that spill out of the vase to form the illustration's background. On this patterned vase, Crane has inscribed the Roman numerals MDCCCXCI, which is 1891, the publication year of *Queen Summer*.

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53 Ibid., 268-69.
Decorative Art & Narrative Form

Crane points to his own work in the designs to his *Faerie Queene* (1897) as an example of how to successfully meld decorative art with narrative form: "the full-page designs are all treated as panels of figure design, or pictures, and are enclosed in fanciful borders, in which subsidiary incidents of characters of the poem are introduced or suggested, somewhat on the plan of mediæval tapestries." 55

A Case Study: The Illuminated Manuscript in *Queen Summer*

The medieval themes in *Queen Summer* become apparent with the depiction of a tourney, knights, and a fair queen, but it also turns out that other facets of the text refer to an underlying medieval history. Significantly, Crane visually depicts this plot according to the conventions of the medieval illuminated manuscript, a handwritten pre-modern text accompanied by rich colored illustrations literally illuminated by gold leaf.

Crane’s decision to imitate an illuminated manuscript is evident from his very title page, which announces that he deliberately penned & portrayed the verbal and visual content of his book. This title-page statement therefore suggests the authenticity of his labor and its resemblance to that of pre-modern authors: the audience is assured, that is, that he invested as much energy in producing his book as medieval monks once did in producing and copying richly illustrated texts before the advent of the printing press.

To be sure, *Queen Summer* incorporates elements of medieval manuscripts such as "small painted scenes (called miniatures), intricate borders, ornate chapter letters, and even elaborate

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full-page paintings. Significantly, however, it just as often inverts or otherwise improvises on these medieval conventions as it directly imitates them. For instance, although traditional illuminated manuscripts are characterized by a predominance of verbal text accompanied by smaller illustrations, Crane’s own book features large illustrations that are in effect paired with small placards of handwritten text. In this way, Crane converts the illuminated manuscript into a format suitable for the picture book with the borders acting as panels that enclose the illustration and text. In doing so, he renders these borders as gutter spaces otherwise lacking in medieval illuminated manuscripts.

Crane reinvents the medieval convention of gold-leaf illumination—whose reproduction in a picture book would be prohibitively costly and impractical—by splashing hints of golden color on his characters’ silk dresses in order to mimic the shiny effect of earlier manuscripts. To this end, then, Crane's text recalls the style of medieval sources that inspired it, even as it adapts some of their techniques for the purposes of a mass-produced late-nineteenth-century picture book.

If not for the constraints of producing for a mass market, Crane himself would have wished to replicate the practices of medieval bookmaking: "Even in these days, however, books have been entirely produced by hand, and for that matter, if beauty were the sole object, we could not do better than follow the methods of the scribe, illuminator, and miniaturist of the Middle Ages."  

THE FEMALE IN ART

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If Crane's text blurs what we imagine as strictly Victorian, then the representation of Queen Summer does the same. Queen Summer is a central figure to the text, but the more subtle details of her depiction can get lost in the sea of flowers, trees, knights, court members, celestial beings, and penned words on the page. By picking apart the anachronistic elements of her representation, we can determine how Queen Summer challenges and adheres to conventions of the nineteenth-century woman.

**Goddess: Aphrodite vs. Hera**

Readers first meet Queen Summer elegantly poised on her throne and fanned by angels with a lily scepter in one hand and a crystal ball in the other. Queen Summer's flowing golden locks and tilted pensive expression look as if painted by Renaissance artist Sandro Boticelli himself. Crane’s illustrated depiction of Queen Summer distinctly alludes to neoclassical Greek gods such as Aphrodite or Hera. When Queen Summer advances toward the battlefield to address her subjects after the joust between the Lily and the Rose, she holds a peacock feather, the symbol of Hera, the goddess of marriage in her hand. Although this symbol may have simply been a sign of the aesthete's preoccupation with peacock feathers, considering the peacock feather as a symbol of Hera in Queen Summer's image accurately reflects her characterization. Since Hera often embodies the concept of unity, the illustrative peacock feather ornament in Crane’s work anticipates Queen Summer's speech about peace in the kingdom and cooperation amongst her subjects.

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58 *The Birth of Venus*, created by Sandro Botticelli in the 1480s, falls in the era before Raphael, thus rendering it a painting admired by the Pre-Raphaelites.
The text also explicitly identifies a beautiful figure playing the lute in Crane's illustration as Eros, often claimed as Aphrodite's son.\textsuperscript{60} Clothed in pink-hued rose petals indicative of his allegiance to his mother Aphrodite, Eros strums a lute to the tune of a pair of woodland doves while admiring a rosebush. These Hellenic allusions are further embedded in the text’s narrative. The Lily and Rose knights competing for Queen Summer’s hand themselves reflect references to Hera and Aphrodite: Hera's flower is the lily and Aphrodite's is the rose.\textsuperscript{61}

**The Pre-Raphaelite vs. Parisian Model**

While the Pre-Raphaelites mainly painted medieval figures, some of the PRB artists like Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones also portrayed Venus in their paintings. Rossetti painted *Astarte Syriaca* in 1877, using Jane Morris, wife of William Morris, as the model for Venus, evoking the typical emblematic sensuality of female subjects in Pre-Raphaelite art.\textsuperscript{62} However, the figure of Venus, the Roman incarnation of Aphrodite, did not appear as frequently in nineteenth-century British art as it did in France, particularly the Paris Salon of 1863 called "The Salon of Venuses" by Théophile Gautier. Works exhibited in “The Salon of Venuses” included Alexandre Cabanel's *The Birth of Venus*, Paul Baudry's *The Pearl and the Wave*, and Amaury-Duval's *Birth of Venus*. While Venus foremost embodied love, she also represented

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\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{61} It is said that Hera's breast milk created the milk-white lily. (Arthur Bernard Cook, *Zeus: A Study in Ancient Religion* (The University Press, 1914), 624.) In the *Iliad*, Aphrodite protects the body of Trojan hero Hector with rose oil, and roses also figure into the tale of Aphrodite and her lover Adonis. (Monica S. Cyrino, *Aphrodite* (Routledge, 2012), 63.)
\textsuperscript{62} Pre-Raphaelite female models broke from the Victorian feminine ideal that celebrated delicate, demure features, an oval face, and flaxen colored hair. The Pre-Raphaelites wished to express unconventional beauty, using models such as Jane Morris, known for "her columnar neck, thick lips, heavy mantle of hair, well-defined jawline and brow." The "Jane Morris" look eventually became the beauty standard for Aestheticism, whose influence can be found in Queen Summer with her long, flowing, reddish hair and strong facial features, including nose, jawline, and long neck. (Susan P. Casteras, “Pre-Raphaelite Challenges to Victorian Canons of Beauty,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (1992): 13, 30-32).
female sexuality and productivity. As the ideal beauty, Venus often caused anxiety for the male creators who took up the challenge to paint her and wished to demonstrate their mastery over the female body.63

Since Queen Summer is not a nude like the French paintings of Venus or as sexualized as Rossetti's rendition, her illustration by Crane centers on Aphrodite's embodied powers and representative affiliations. By embracing Aphrodite and Hera in her image, Queen Summer ultimately represents a woman of love, pleasure, beauty, and sensuality, while simultaneously appealing to themes of motherhood, family, marriage, and stability. These paradoxes more closely align with the reality of womanhood as opposed to the ideal Victorian mother, or the female image that male artists constructed in Pre-Raphaelite Art Movement and French Salon.

**GENDER ROLES**

**Victorian Domesticity**

Queen Summer's realm consists of a natural landscape simultaneously wild and cultivated, the former that connects to the celebrated domestic sphere in Victorian England. Traditionally speaking, even though men existed as the undisputable heads of the household, women managed the home and raised the family, which secured the home as a space of femininity. The garden also existed as a domestic and secure space for women in the Victorian Era. The male and female division between public and private was encouraged by domestic economy literature, which cited the household as where "the fruits of man's labour are ultimately

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enjoyed, there that the woman finds her chief sphere of duty, as the helpmate of man."\textsuperscript{64} The public sphere became synonymous with men and their right to be aggressive, forceful, and pursue business.\textsuperscript{65}

However, scholars Judith Page and Elise Smith overturn this strict notion of garden as private domestic realm to address the complexities inherent in the garden of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, because humans create gardens from pockets of wilderness, these groomed spaces exist as a female emblem of domesticity. On the other hand, the transformation of natural landscape into a manicured lawn or pristine flowerbed speaks to the narrative of conquest, a heavily masculinized practice in which men claim supposedly unexplored territory that is often personified as feminine. Page and Smith conclude that "the garden is a key place where the constraints of patriarchy simultaneously assert themselves and are challenged."\textsuperscript{66} Under the surface, then, the garden is the site of a power struggle between male and female authority, expressed in \textit{Queen Summer} when the female protagonist must quell male dissent.\textsuperscript{67}

\textbf{The Garden in \textit{Queen Summer}}

In the case of Crane’s \textit{Queen Summer}, the garden can still appear as a place of limitation. Indeed, in Crane’s depiction, the exclusive association of women with the domestic sphere of the

\textsuperscript{65} Loeb, \textit{Consuming Angels}, 19.
\textsuperscript{67} Similar to how the icon of the garden addresses masculinity and femininity, Kathy Psomiades argues that aestheticism often evokes "a public masculine space of achievement, and a private feminine space of art and sex." Although Aestheticist art often relegates its female muses to mere art objects, Queen Summer actively participates in her narrative and establishes her power publicly in front of her subjects. (Kathy Alexis Psomiades, “Whose Body? Christina Rossetti and Aestheticist Femininity,” in \textit{Women and British Aestheticism}, ed. Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 109.)
garden conforms to many conventional narratives for Victorian women. John Ruskin's *Of Queen's Gardens* (1864), along with Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House* (1854-1862) most famously situated the cultural creation of the Angel in the House within the feminized sphere of gardens. Patmore opens his poem by describing "[t]he cloud whose bosom, cygnet-soft, [a] couch for nuptial Juno," which invokes the Roman counterpart for Hera, whose influence appears in the depiction of Queen Summer. Juno's immediate association with nature additionally fashions her as a Queen of the skies, much like Queen Summer presides over her forest realm.

Patmore even draws extra attention to Juno's role as a goddess of marriage by calling her "nuptial Juno." Patmore likens the beauty and delicacy of women to nature, while also further entrenching them within the gardenlike domestic sphere where women can feel like queens: "So may my happy skill disclose / New fairness even in her fair heart; / Until that churl shall nowhere be / Who bends not, awed, before the throne / Of her affecting majesty." In so doing, he suggests that if women only act a certain way, they can garner the respect of any man, which nevertheless shows that the domestic sphere can only provide the illusion of power for women. With a woman's virtue, darkness and evil flies away as "The nuptial contrasts are the poles / On which the heavenly spheres revolve," asserting that society ultimately revolves around marriage, as if it is the guiding force to construct domesticity and follows the world's natural order. Even

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68 If the garden is a site of conflict between male and female authority, then it exists in both the public and private sphere. Interestingly enough, although the Knights and Queen Summer both exist in the garden setting, these male and female characters never appear in the same bound illustration. Queen Summer never "enters" the bound illustrations containing the Lily and the Rose, as if this separation mimics the respective male and female spaces.


70 Ibid., lines 51-55.

71 Ibid., lines 61-64.
with its subversive plot elements, *Queen Summer* inadvertently reinforces male hierarchical superiority in the public sphere by demonstrating that women rule only within the domestic home and garden sphere.\(^{72}\)

**VICTORIA & SUMMER**

**Queen & Woman**

Since Queen Summer's representation as a celestial being frames her as non-human, it indirectly demonstrates that only fictional or mythological women could evade narrow cultural and social labels. Queen Summer, however, is not purely myth, as she provokes parallels with another queenly woman of the Victorian period: none other than Queen Victoria herself. Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, shared a relationship that upset the natural order of the roles of the sexes during the nineteenth century.\(^{73}\) As a woman, Victoria’s position as a sovereign rendered Albert inferior as mere consort. They experienced a tumultuous marriage at times, incited by problems such as Albert's dislike of Baroness Lezhen, his jealousy of Lord Melbourne, or the matter of settling his income and political position.\(^{74}\) Besides the royal couple's inverted roles, their contrasting personalities—Victoria, exuberantly social, and Albert, reserved and industrious—fueled discord.\(^{75}\) Despite marital conflicts created by position and

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\(^{72}\) Then again, although poets like Patmore may have emphasized the significance of a domestic’s queen’s need to be “awed,” Queen Summer still remains single, a status that does not affect the balance of the kingdom. In this sense, Crane's narrative undercuts the passivity of women, as Queen Summer chooses independence over marriage, an action that upends Victorian middle-class domesticity.


\(^{74}\) David Duff, *Victoria and Albert*. (New York, 1972), 21, [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015004273119](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015004273119).

\(^{75}\) Stanley Weintraub, *Albert [Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha] (1819–1861), Prince Consort, Consort of Queen Victoria* (Oxford University Press, 2012),
personality, "no doubts can be entertained about the depth of Victoria's passion for her husband." The couple managed to reassert Albert's given male authority in other ways: for instance, he acted as the patriarch of the household and determined the children's education and care. Ironically, to outsiders, Victoria and Albert modeled a domestic felicity that could be achieved during the period.

Queen Victoria was far from the typical woman of the period due to her status as Queen of England, but she serves as an example that women amounted to more than a singular caricature. Within her private life, Victoria embodied a series of paradoxes. Victoria's incessant perceived passion and love for Albert reflects the characteristics of an Aphrodite, while the traits of Hera can be seen reflected in the representation of Victoria in her more dutiful, maternal role. Nevertheless, she did not allow the ideals of the time to determine how she acted—she rejected the role of the warm, doting mother lauded by the century. Queen Victoria could not be singled out by one title (queen, mother, wife, daughter, etc.), as she owned them all. As Queen Summer rejects neither the Hera nor Aphrodite self, nor the Lily and the Rose, she carves her own mutable personality and image, therefore, embodying the contradictory lifestyle of Queen Victoria.

III. **Princess Auréole**

Princess Auréole, featured in Mrs. Molesworth's Christmas-Tree Land (1884), must confront a cruel prince and the heads of state to save her kingdom. A friend and protector of animals,

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77 Ibid.
Auréole musters courage equal to any knight instead of appearing as another damsel in distress in this tale.

**PLOT SUMMARY**

*Christmas-Tree Land (1884)*

In *Christmas-Tree Land*, siblings Maia and Rollo must live at the castle of their cousin, Lady Venelda, a strict, elderly woman. When the children first set sights on their new home, Maia exclaims, "It is a land of Christmas trees!" Maia and Rollo have quite romantic and imaginative dispositions, freely discussing fairies, gnomes, and wood-spirits, in contrast to Lady Venelda's otherwise stifling austerity. Lady Venelda, though not of cruel character, carries herself in a dignified manner, speaks with a cold voice, and values virtues like punctuality and veneration of her ancestors. Maia and Rollo, however, escape the castle's coldness by embarking on entrancing adventures, led by a friendly physician. The brother and sister meet woodland creatures and two forest children named Silva and Waldo, yet it is Godmother, a fairy with gentle blue eyes and a warm smile, who most captivates them. Godmother tells stories to the children, including "The Story of a King's Daughter."

"The Story of a King's Daughter" traces the narrative of Auréole, an unselfish and tenderhearted princess. Although Auréole has grown up with all the luxury she could ever want and has never faced personal adversity, she readily empathizes with the sufferings of others, especially animals. Every morning, Auréole visits and tends to her animals she has rescued: an injured fawn, rescued snared wood-pigeons, a fallen thrush, a maimed swallow, and a lame rabbit. Although Auréole encourages the animals to return to the forest, they wish to roam freely by her side.

Auréole's father, the King, wishes for his daughter to marry Prince Halbert, the next heir to the throne, since the laws of the land prevent women from ruling. Auréole consents to the marriage, remembering Halbert as a "bright merry boy." When the betrothed couple meets after many years, Halbert appears handsome and devoted to Auréole, yet his true character soon eclipses Auréole's first impression. While Auréole spends time with her animals, she overhears a piteous whine followed by a harsh voice. Auréole discovers that Halbert has maimed a poor little dog and thereafter bids Halbert farewell forever, imploring her father to break off the engagement.

Hot-tempered Halbert unwillingly leaves and, afterwards, Auréole and her father learn that Halbert's violence has only increased. When Aureole's father dies a year later, Halbert comes to claim the throne, but he suddenly goes missing. Coincidentally, on the night of her father's death, Auréole has a foreboding dream: she finds herself in the woods and throws herself in front of her animals to protect them from a terrible monster. The monster transforms into Prince Halbert, and he cries out of grief and forgiveness, but Auréole wakes from her dream before discovering anything else.

Though attendants comb through every inch of land in search of Halbert, they refuse to enter the enchanted forest, a mysterious place from whence no one has ever returned. Despite Auréole's disdain for Halbert's character, she pities the missing prince. The heads of nation convene to appoint Auréole as queen and overturn the centuries-old law preventing female rule. Yet Auréole tells the council she must go on a journey and that she will only accept the throne if it proves unsuccessful out of obligation to her people.

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79 Ibid., 82.
Auréole sets off for the enchanted forest accompanied by her animal friends. She stumbles upon Halbert, who wears a worn, emaciated face and tattered clothes. As a punishment for his wickedness towards animals, the prince must roam as a beastly monster for 23 hours a day until he can carry 12 animals out of the forest. Auréole and her animals agree to help, just as her dream foretold. As a result of Auréole's valiant actions, Halbert rules the kingdom benevolently and Auréole spends the remainder of her days in bliss with her animals.

**AUTHOR**

**Mary Louisa Molesworth (1839-1921)**

Mary Louisa Stewart, known as Mrs. Molesworth, was born in 1839 in Rotterdam, Netherlands, to parents of Scottish descent. Not much is known about her childhood, except that she grew up in a strict Calvinistic family. She became engaged to Major Richard Molesworth at age 16 before he left for the Crimean War, and afterwards the couple had five children. Mrs. Molesworth eventually divorced her husband in 1879 and moved to Normandy with her children. When she returned to England, she lived at Lower Sloane Street, "where she held quite a salon and is said to have known most of the intellectuals and aesthetes of her day." Molesworth was friends with Algernon Charles Swinburne, an English decadent poet who admired Molesworth's ability to "draw a life-like child" in her novels such as *The Cuckoo Clock* (1877) and *Adventures of Her Baby* (1881). Walter Crane, one of the most prominent illustrators for children's books and an acquaintance of Mrs. Molesworth, illustrated many of her stories, including *Tell Me A

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Story (1882) and Christmas-Tree Land (1884). Molesworth especially appreciated Crane's commitment to reading everything that he would illustrate.  

A prolific writer, Mrs. Molesworth wrote over a hundred books between 1870 and 1911, through many do not remain in print. In 1887, Edward Salmon, a critic of children's literature, called Mrs. Molesworth "the best story-teller for children England has yet known." Her most exceptional stories are those that explore female identity and employ the dream vision, a technique used by English authors from Chaucer to Carroll. Christmas-Tree Land, the focus of this exhibit, uses a dream vision to whisk protagonists Maia and Rollo away on adventures through the forest. Although Mrs. Molesworth is an often-overlooked author, Children's Literature scholar Anita Moss regards Mrs. Molesworth as a significant writer "to the molding and making of the traditions of British children's literature, influencing subsequent writers from E. Nesbitt to C. S. Lewis."  

ILLUSTRATOR

Walter Crane (see earlier)

ILLUSTRATION VS. TEXT

Illustrated Auréole

In "The Story of a King's Daughter," Crane’s illustration of Auréole evokes the figure of the Greek goddess of the hunt, Artemis. Crane has portrayed a visual connection between Greek

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81 Jane Cooper and Peter Faulkner, reviewer, “Mrs. Molesworth,” JWMS 15, no. 3 (Winter 2003): 43.
82 Laski, "Mrs. Molesworth," 59.
85 Ibid., 105.
gods and royal characters in other books he illustrated, which combines aestheticist practices in depicting Greek mythology with Pre-Raphaelite tendencies to replicate medieval figures. In the first illustration of Auréole, she is depicted placing one hand on a fawn, which fondly gazes at her, while a dove perches on the princess's shoulder. The placement of the fawn next to Auréole parallels one of the animals sacred to Artemis—the stag. Sparrows and doves flit around her, and a rabbit is also shown admiring the princess. The illustration highlights Auréole's strong bond to the Animal Kingdom, as if they are her true subjects and worthy of her protection, as shown on the illustration where the princess swaddles her scared animal friends when confronted by a monster. Although the caption mentions that "Auréole could not help shivering," Crane's illustration displays Auréole as a protector. While the animals appear in disarray—a dog at the princess's knees, a deer at her side, a rabbit in her arms, and doves flapping around—Auréole sits at the base of a tree, waiting for the monster to approach. The animals look to Auréole, while she faces the monster, underscoring that the animals place their complete trust in the princess and see her as a figure of strength.

Textural Auréole

While Auréole's bravery stands out in Crane's illustration, Mrs. Molesworth, the author of Christmas-Tree Land, writes about Auréole in a manner that more closely aligns with tropes typical of Victorian woman, even if Auréole’s actions destabilize institutions like marriage and patrilineal succession. When telling the story to the children, Mrs. Molesworth’s narrator, Godmother, defines Auréole in terms of her relationship to a male character by merely calling

88 Molesworth, Christmas-Tree Land, 108.
Through Mrs. Molesworth’s story title and Godmother's word choice, we immediately associate Auréole with a male figure in order to validate the reading of her story. Maia, one of the girls listening, notices right away and interrupts, "Why don't you say a princess, dear godmother?" Maia thus brings our attention to how Godmother, perhaps without even realizing it, shortchanges the princess's importance by addressing her as a king's daughter, as if she is not important for being who she is, and only for her association to the King. Grandmother simply declares that she prefers "a king's daughter" and proceeds in describing Auréole as "very beautiful and very sweet and good."

Godmother's physical description of Auréole also constructs her as the Victorian feminine ideal. Auréole is described as "tall and slender, with golden fair curls about her face, which gave her a childlike, innocent look, as if she were younger than her real age." Auréole's light-colored hair not only speaks to the Victorian preference for fair-haired women over brunettes, but her "childlike, innocent look" also signals her purity. Having Victorian women maintain their "asexuality and child-like simplicity" was paramount in order to "nurture purity and dependence." Viewing women as children made them inherently dependent on others, requiring a husband to protect them. In Godmother's characterization of Auréole, she draws from the feminine virtues of sacrifice and empathy, since "with [Auréole's] years her tenderness and sympathy for suffering seemed to grow deeper and stronger."

Such self-sacrifice trained

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90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 79-80.
94 While Auréole does conform to the stereotype of sacrificial woman when she saves Halbert, her act of rescue also points to her independence and strong will, since she would prefer to live.
women to assist the needy and develop their skills as moral guides for the household. Likewise, Auréole's commitment to rehabilitating injured animals foregrounds her role as a peacekeeper of the Kingdom when Halbert disappears.

Mrs. Molesworth also frequently alludes to these common nineteenth-century stereotypes about the "fairer sex" in her textural depiction of Auréole, as if she must make comments on crying, shivering, and fainting in order to ensure that her female protagonist does not appear too radical in disposition from the Victorian ideal of the demure woman. That is not to say that we should discount Auréole's bravery, for she succeeds in returning unharmed from the supposedly evil forest, but we should recognize how words can alter the essence of female protagonists into unfounded stereotypes. Based on Crane's illustration of Auréole's confrontation with the monster, she looks stable compared to the trembling animals, but Mrs. Molesworth's words portray a different scene. In the text, Auréole's imagination takes over her and nearly causes her to faint. Yet given the risks Auréole has already taken, it seems unlikely that she would faint now, especially when being unconscious would place her in the most peril and leave her animals vulnerable. Calling attention to Victorian female fragility reinforces the home as the designated sphere for women, where they could properly practice gentleness and nurturing, whereas the public sphere, represented by the forest beyond the Kingdom's borders, presents distress. While the textual Auréole follows the stereotype of the fainting Victorian woman with a delicate constitution, the illustrated Auréole remains undaunted as the monster approaches.

**AURÉOLE'S AGENCY**

**Herself first**

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95 Loeb, *Consuming Angels*, 19.
96 Ibid.
Despite Auréole's imminent marriage, she retains her independence throughout the story, mainly because she rejects Prince Halbert. As a friend and defender of animals, she prioritizes an injured innocent dog, over her engagement to the prince. Auréole's decision to remain unmarried only further strengthens her comparison with Artemis in Crane's illustrations, since Artemis never married and evaded the pursuit of male gods such as Alpheius in Greek mythology. The animal that Auréole saves, a dog, constitutes one of the animals sacred to Artemis.\textsuperscript{97} As the "Mistress of Beasts, Lady of all Wild Things, and A Lion Unto Women," the titles ascribed to Artemis neatly reflect Auréole's connection to animals and the bravery she exemplifies as a female ruler.\textsuperscript{98} After discovering Halbert striking a dog, Auréole immediately dismisses him as a prospective husband and stands her ground on the matter against her father because "it would kill her to be the wife of such a man."\textsuperscript{99} Although Auréole's father remains skeptical of his daughter's judgment, he changes his mind after learning that Halbert was "more feared and disliked in his own home from the increasing violence of his temper."\textsuperscript{100} Before meeting Halbert, Auréole herself had been enchanted with the prospect of marriage, but in her rejection of Halbert, she places her personal values over what others wish for her, including her father.

A Capable Leader

After Auréole turns Halbert away, others still see her as a capable leader even without a husband by her side. Following Auréole's father's death, Halbert inherits the throne; however, his accession to the throne fails when he goes missing in the enchanted forest. After much deliberation, the heads of the nation offer Auréole the crown, "declaring that they preferred to

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 88.
overthrow the laws of the country, though they had existed for many centuries, and to make her, at the point of the sword if necessary, their queen, rather than accept as sovereign any of those who had no right to it, or an infant who would but be a name and no reality.\textsuperscript{101} That Auréole represents a rational, secure leader as opposed to the mercurial, cruel Halbert certainly challenges nineteenth-century gender roles that construed women as passive, emotional beings and men as agential, logical beings.\textsuperscript{102} Auréole has already proven she cares about the lives of others by saving innocent animals and she has made choices that place her happiness above that of a man, such as when she disregarded her father's wish for her to be married. Halbert, however, credits Auréole's motives for these decisions as irrationality by mocking "her absurdity and exaggeration" and convincing himself "that no man could be happy with so fanciful and unreasonable a wife."\textsuperscript{103} Ironically, it is Halbert who exhibits temper and tactlessness and Auréole who maintains sound judgment. Therefore, it is not surprising that Auréole is respected enough that the heads of nation would abandon their laws for security.

Auréole humbly refuses the crown, but she considers stepping into the role if it would save the misery of the people. Even though Auréole downplays her own abilities when she states, "A king's daughter am I, but no queen. I feel no fitness for the task of ruling," her concern points more towards a wish to preserve the natural line of succession, for she "could never rest satisfied

\textsuperscript{101} Mrs Molesworth, \textit{Christmas-Tree Land}, 96.
\textsuperscript{102} These nineteenth-century arguments credited female reproductive physiology as the reason for women's inferior cognitive abilities and exacerbated emotions. The female brain and nervous system were believed to limit higher mental processes, which governed rationality, which in turn, caused lower mental processes (emotion) to appear more apparent (Stephanie A. Shields, “Passionate Men, Emotional Women: Psychology Constructs Gender Difference in the Late 19th Century,” \textit{History of Psychology} 10, no. 2 (2007): 96, \url{https://doi.org/10.1037/1093-4510.10.2.92}.)
\textsuperscript{103} Molesworth, \textit{Christmas-Tree Land}, 85.
that [she] was where [she] had a right to be.”

Auréole thinks over her decision for a day and returns to the deputies with a proposal: she will set out on a journey, and if she fails, she will return their queen.

A Damsel Not in Distress

Instead of greedily snatching up the crown, Auréole searches for the missing Halbert in the enchanted forest—a task that no one else in the kingdom could muster the courage to fulfill. The enchanted forest incites fear due to the shrieks heard from inside the vast expanse of trees or anxiety about the magician that allegedly lures his victims into the woods through tricks; however, Auréole finds the forest the opposite of expectations, believing the forest's wizard kind and hospitable due to the warm fire, fresh milk, and cakes provided for her in his home.

Auréole successfully locates Halbert, who has been cursed and transformed into a monster that roams the forest 23 out of 24 hours of the day. As a result of the enchantment that imprisons Halbert in the body of a ferocious monster, the prince realizes his mistakes and repents, as he would rather die than injure another animal. He admits to Auréole, "Your pity and courage are my only hope. For I am doomed to continue this awful life—for hundreds of years perhaps—till twelve dumb animals mount on my back and let me carry them out of this forest.”

Halbert’s request for Auréole to save him transforms him into a typical damsel in distress, while Auréole takes up the role of a brave knight. At various instances, Auréole has misgivings about the plan to save Halbert, for Halbert in monster form frightens her and the animals more than she had anticipated. Despite these moments that highlight Auréole's trepidation, she courageously follows through with her quest.

104 Ibid., 96.
105 Ibid., 106.
Strikingly, Molesworth does not simply invert the gender roles of the knight and damsel; in this story, Knight Auréole does not ultimately marry her metaphorical "princess." Instead, Auréole spends many years with her pets, much like Artemis did when roaming the mountains and forests of Acadia before choosing to reside with the other Olympians at Mount Olympus.\textsuperscript{106} It is rumored, however, that Auréole finally agrees to be Halbert's wife once she finds him truly worthy. Significantly, the people admire and respect "the noble and unselfish courage of Auréole in braving the dangers of the enchanted forest itself."\textsuperscript{107} Therefore, Auréole's legacy rests not with whom she married, but rather the selfless deeds she completed.

**IV. Fairy Bellaria**

In *The Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria* (1892), King Ruggero, a cruel conqueror, offers Fairy Bellaria the chance to save her kingdom from utter destruction. See how Fairy Bellaria, an intellectual soldier, empowers herself and engages in combat through wit and song.

**PLOT SUMMARY**

*The Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria* (1892)

The wise and crafty Fairy Bellaria meets her future husband, a king, when she trespasses his garden to eat some fruit. As has long been understood, anyone who enters the garden without this king's permission is to be beheaded. Caught in the act, Fairy Bellaria must correctly answer a question, which will be judged fairly by a council, or she will face death. When the council convenes, the King asks Bellaria, "How many hairs have I on my head?"\textsuperscript{108} She responds, "Just so many as I have on mine, which is thirty thousand, lacking one. And if thou doubtest it, pull...


\textsuperscript{107} Molesworth, *Christmas-Tree Land*, 112.

\textsuperscript{108} Charles Godfrey Leland, *The Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1892), 2,  \url{http://hdl.handle.net.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/2027/coo.31924091208813}.
out a hair, and I will pull out one of mine, and so on until all are gone." \[^{109}\] Astonished to hear Bellaria's wisdom, the King not only spares her, but expresses a wish for the fairy to marry him.

The King and Queen Fairy Bellaria live happily together and have a son as "beautiful as the sun, moon, and stars." \[^{110}\] All is peaceful until trouble stirs from a rival kingdom. King Ruggero, a cruel, powerful man with more might than Bellaria's husband, commands a great army. Ruggero is bent on conquering King and Queen Bellaria, yet he has sworn an oath to never harm anyone capable of outwitting him. Hearing of Queen Bellaria's sagacity, Ruggero offers to leave her kingdom in peace if she can answer 100 riddles.

Bellaria accepts Ruggero's challenge, yet only on one condition: Ruggero must stake his life against hers. Ruggero agrees, since he believes Bellaria will fail. Until the final riddle, the book comprises the questions and answers to the riddles Fairy Bellaria solves. The riddles themselves stand out, since Bellaria sings the answers in rhyming couplets and the answers are portrayed by Leland's illustrations.

After 99 riddles "over which the shrewdest man living must have taken time" have been answered swiftly by Queen Bellaria, the final one remains. \[^{111}\] Ruggero, still convinced that Fairy Bellaria will die, asks, "What was it that my mother, when dying, when no one was near, told me in secret, which secret I have guarded all my life?" \[^{112}\] Bellaria triumphantly responds:

When thy mother died there was another present invisibly, and that was I. She bade thee beware of the fairy Bellaria, who, unless thou shouldst refrain from cruel war and oppression, would prove thy bane and death. I am Bellaria, who was made Queen for thy punishment. And as to answering thy riddles, O weak and wicked King, know that I read them every one in thy mind before they were uttered. \[^{113}\]
A furious Ruggero advances to slay Queen Bellaria, yet seized by dizziness, he falls on his sword and pierces his greedy heart. While the council of wise men and Bellaria's husband witness the death of King Ruggero, Fairy Bellaria disappears, never to be seen again.

**AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR**

**Charles G. Leland (1824–1903)**

The author and illustrator of *The Hundred Riddles*, Charles Godfrey Leland was born in 1824 in Philadelphia.\(^{114}\) Leland spent his childhood confined to bed with afflictions and enjoyed escaping to "fairy-land" by reading a large collection of fairy tales and adventure stories.\(^{115}\) As a young man, he attended Princeton University, where he excelled in Latin, English, and Natural Philosophy, yet proved so inept at mathematics that he finished nearly last in the class.\(^{116}\) Within his lifetime, he participated in the Arts & Crafts Movement, writing about his "labour for many years in introducing Industrial Art as a branch of education in schools." Although Leland was an American folklorist, author, and illustrator, he spent more than 20 years in England and Continental Europe.\(^{117}\)

**THE GARDEN**

Fairy Bellaria's trespass into the King's wonderful garden demonstrates the garden as a space of tension between masculine and feminine, a point reflected in the critical analyses of scholars Judith Page and Elise Smith. Although the garden scene in *The Hundred Riddles of Bellaria* is brief, it also evokes the cultural creations of the Angel in the House and the Fallen Woman.

\(^{116}\) Ibid., 117.
\(^{117}\) Ibid., iv.
The Angel in the House

Although Bellaria's omniscience sets her apart, she still marries and has children like the typical Victorian woman. Author Charles G. Leland places focus on Bellaria's intelligence in the first sentence of *The Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria*, yet the following sentence explains, "She fell in love with a king and would marry him." This shift from independent fairy woman to married queen within the span of a sentence suggests that marriage domesticates all-too-powerful women. In Mrs. Ellis's *The Daughters of England* (1845), Ellis emphasizes that women should "be content to be inferior to men—inferior in mental power, in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength." Fairy Bellaria, however, outstrips the mortal King in mental abilities, owing to her magical powers. However, by Victorian standards, once Fairy Bellaria marries the King, she becomes his property, which legally classifies her as inferior to her husband. Marriage, then, in *The Hundred Riddles* provides a means of taming Bellaria, so at least she will appear at most, equal to her husband.

The garden then functions as the intermediary in Bellaria's transformation from maid to wife. While gardens usually appear as feminine havens, this garden clearly falls under the masculine jurisdiction of the King. After the King finds Bellaria in his garden, Leland makes a point of saying that it was "[t]here the King caught her, and, thinking she was a woman, said that she must die, unless she answered the question which he should put her." Since the King mistakes Bellaria for a woman, her status as a fairy fails to protect her from the laws of the

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120 Leland, *The Hundred Riddles*, 2.
Bellaria, armed with her fairy intellect, escapes death as punishment, and the King, impressed with Bellaria's wisdom, decides to marry her. As an alternative fate to death, marriage appears a favorable outcome. The garden in *Fairy Bellaria*, then, is a site that promotes ideal femininity by yoking Fairy Bellaria to marriage.¹²²

**The Fallen Woman**

The King's marvelous garden presents certain temptations, as it is "full of all kinds of fruit."¹²³ Indeed, Fairy Bellaria eats this forbidden fruit and the King catches her, evoking the narrative of Eve's infamous sin when she stole from the Tree of Knowledge. Women have been compared to Eve for centuries, as she represents "women's licentiousness, pride, seduction, disobedience, temptation, and spiritual weakness."¹²⁴ Just as Eve's sinful actions caused her exile from the Garden of Eden, the Victorian figure of the Fallen Woman's sexual misconduct spelled out imminent ruin and death. Christina Rossetti, an English poet, captures the downward spiral of the Fallen Woman after her initial sexual transgression in *Goblin Market* (1861). In the poem, sisters Laura and Lizzie often pass by goblin merchants selling irresistibly ripe and sweet fruit like melons, raspberries, peaches, plums, and dewberries. Lizzie warns Laura that she "should not peep at goblin men," yet Laura cannot squash her personal desire for the forbidden goblin

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¹²¹ Here we see how Bellaria's status wavers between woman and fairy, much like Queen Summer's blurred configuration a goddess, woman, and monarch.

¹²² Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House* (1858) idolizes female virtue with compliments that call modesty a woman's "sweetest grace" or cite her greatest pleasure as "her power to charm" (Canto IV). All this flattery, however, directs women to serve their husbands, which Patmore claims is their greatest pleasure (Canto IX). I want to suggest that this male-gaze driven femininity equates to the garden in the sense that it is a feminine space ultimately subject to male desire.

¹²³ Leland, *The Hundred Riddles*, 1.

fruit. At the Goblin Market, Laura trades a "precious golden lock" of hair for a taste of the goods on sale, thus symbolizing the loss of female virtue and the act of prostitution. After Laura's sexual transaction, the goblin men never return, yet her insatiable desire for the fruit remains. Her hair turns gray and she wastes away in decay, thus embodying the demise of the Victorian Fallen Woman. Likewise, undertones of the transgressive behavior of Eve and the Fallen Woman exist in Fairy Bellaria when she defies boundaries and steals from the King's Garden.

As noted, Eve's curiosity surfaces as sin in the Bible and collective consciousness of humankind afterwards; however, in The Hundred Riddles of the Fairy Bellaria, Bellaria finds no punishment. She uses precisely what Eve searched for—knowledge—to escape death. Ironically, Bellaria possesses knowledge of all things without any magical fruit, and she puts it to good use. That Bellaria finds reward for answering Ruggero's question validates woman's wisdom, whereas Eve's story only incited fear into generations of men, and even pious women, about the female temptress. The story of Eve and the Tree of Knowledge also frames the ambitious acquisition of knowledge by women as deviant, which is often represented in dangerous fantastical women that pose threats to men, such as witches and sirens. Bellaria dodges being vilified as a witch as a result of her impressive intellect and cements herself as a hero by the end of her tale.

SAGE & SOLDIER

Author and illustrator Charles G. Leland does not feature many illustrations of Bellaria, a Faerie Queene in the most literal sense, but Bellaria does stand out for one particular reason: her wisdom. While most of the Faerie Queenees express their agency through their right to the throne, duties as a monarch, or goodness of character, Leland highlights Bellaria's intelligence from the

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125 Christina Georgina Rossetti, Goblin Market (Blue Sky Press, 1905), 11.
126 Ibid., 15.
Leland also never describes Fairy Bellaria's physical appearance or refers to her as attractive, beautiful, or fair. All emphasis is placed on Bellaria's mental and innate strengths: cleverness, wisdom, and authoritativeness.

**Bellaria vs. Ruggero**

When cruel, evil King Ruggero arrives with a great army to take over Bellaria's kingdom, the fairy and contender king engage in a war of wits. Although King Ruggero has the power to attack, he has sworn an oath "never to harm any one who could outwit him." Even though Bellaria has married a king, her intelligence does not become subsumed by a masculine figure that outranks her. Instead of her husband going to war against Ruggero, Bellaria assumes the role of "active, progressive, defensive" monarch—the precise adjectives John Ruskin assigns to men in "Of Queen's Gardens." When Bellaria accepts King Ruggero's proposal, she boldly states, "Life for life—thine against mine—for naught else will I answer thy riddles." Bellaria's words show that she places herself on equal measure with her male opponent, since "life for life" confirms that she will put just as much as Ruggero will at stake to protect the ones she loves.

**War Strategy**

Throughout Bellaria's responses to the riddles, she exercises agency and authority that will carry her to victory. Since Bellaria also sings the answers to the riddles in the form of poetry, her voice defines the narrative of *The Hundred Riddles* instead of a third-person narrator.

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128 Ibid., 2-3.


130 Leland, *The Hundred Riddles*, 3.
form the majority of the narrative. For instance, Bellaria, confident and teasing, adds to the end of a riddle, "And to thee, King, I must confess such riddles are not hard to guess."¹³¹ In part because of his own frustration and admiration, Ruggero says to Bellaria, "Never was a woman born who was crafty as thou."¹³² Ruggero’s use of the descriptor "crafty" undercuts Bellaria's remarkable progress by suggesting she achieves through deceit rather than her own merit.

Simply because Bellaria emasculates her opponent, Ruggero lashes out by "othering" her intelligence. When Bellaria mockingly adds that Ruggero could never before guess the shell riddle, he accuses her of being an evil spirit or witch.¹³³ Concerning how a woman should use her talent, Ruskin specifies that "the woman's power is for rule, not for battle," offering insight as to why female Queens appear in Victorian literature, yet they rarely engage in warfare.¹³⁴ Thus, Bellaria dismantles Victorian gender roles in a unique way, especially since she not only contends with an outside king to protect the home, but she also hears of no complaints from her husband. The text mentions that King Ruggero is far more powerful than the other King; with her defeat of Ruggero, Bellaria substantiates that she is far more powerful than her own husband. John Ruskin writes that a woman should be "wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side," yet Bellaria outshines her husband

¹³¹ Ibid., 7.
¹³² Ibid., 12.
¹³³ This riddle asks: "What was that thing which thou has often seen, which first gave shelter, then food, then joy, and then light?" (Leland, The Hundred Riddles, 82-83).
¹³⁴ John Ruskin, “Of Queen’s Gardens," 1615–16; Laurence Housman's The House of Joy features a story called "The White King" that portrays a Queen that strategically engages in warfare, unlike other fictional queens that opt for peace and more closely play by the rules outlined for woman's power in Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens." The Queen allows various kings to gift her their conquered lands, yet she chooses none of her suitors. Housman portrays her as an evil character, showing how Victorian standards permeate the story to denigrate women that usurp male power.
intellectually.\textsuperscript{135} Leland portrays an equitable marriage, so that the male and female halves within the union maintain their individual traits rather than substituting the ideals for each gender to make up Bellaria and the King's personalities.

**ROYAL COMBAT**

For the final riddle, Ruggero asks Bellaria what his mother told him before she died. To Ruggero's shock, Bellaria reveals that she had been secretly present at the precise moment that his mother had predicted her son's downfall at the hands of Fairy Bellaria if he continued his cruel and oppressive ways. She proudly says to Ruggero, "I am Bellaria, who was made Queen for thy punishment. And as to answering thy riddles, O weak and wicked King, know that I read them ever one in thy mind before they were uttered."\textsuperscript{136} Leland clearly depicts Bellaria's ambition when he illustrates this episode, showing Fairy Bellaria with her wand in hand and half-turned as she glares at Ruggero. A singular mission of destruction has guided all of Bellaria's actions, yet by the end of the story she has not converted into a sinister woman that meets her demise, but rather, she remains a woman capable of possessing both extreme power and love of the people.

The final showdown also provokes the most conflict of the 100 riddles, since Ruggero violates the terms of his agreement with Bellaria. Enraged at Bellaria's response, he attempts to deliver death to the fairy, yet dizziness takes over him and he falls on his sword, never to rise again as prophesized by his own mother. Afterwards, Fairy Bellaria vanishes for good, only to supposedly appear to her husband and son. On the one hand, Bellaria's disappearance reads as if she becomes another powerful female character erased by death, as not to pose danger to society.

\textsuperscript{135} John Ruskin, "Of Queen's Gardens," 1616.

On the other hand, her disappearance shows that Bellaria has no concrete ties. Everyone would have likely heralded her a hero, so her disappearance more likely coincides with some personal, mysterious agenda. By not wrapping up *The Hundred Riddles of Fairy Bellaria* with a neat "happily ever after," Leland demonstrates that Bellaria floats in and out of people's lives as she wishes, an act which carries substantial agency for a female character, especially a queen.

**THE FEMALE EXPLORER**

**Introduction**

The Female Explorer exercises her agency by intruding upon masculine spheres: she adventures across wild landscapes, advances down educational paths, travels for leisure, and competes in physically demanding sports. When the Female Explorer transgresses boundaries imposed by Victorian femininity through these activities, she liberates herself in other ways as well. She helps dismantle the British patriarchal system of values that operate on the assumption that weak women are necessary for the existence of strong men. Most nineteenth-century adventure fiction endorses male authority, such as when the male hero's cultural superiority dominates "uncivilized" peoples or his physical prowess prevails against inhospitable environments. In adventure fiction narratives, these dichotomies between the modern and the primitive, or man and nature, endow men dominance reflective of gender constructs in Victorian England. Just as colonized subjects or a tamed wilderness prop up the god complex of the male hero, ideal femininity allows masculinity to assume its allegedly natural role as the victor.

Although the nineteenth century spun tales of the "Angel in the House" to promote an unattainable femininity, not all women abided by such standards, opting for lives of unprecedented exploration, illuminating education, extended travels, and thrilling sport. Multi-
faceted Female Explorers appear in the guise of Polly from *The Queen of the Pirate Isle* (1886), Anne from *Little Queen Anne and Her Majesty's Letters* (1886), and Doris from *The Bear's Kingdom: A Fairy Tale* (1897). In these stories, Polly and her doll shake up the masculine romance adventure, Anne challenges preconceptions of women's education, and Doris embarks on a quest unaccomplished by any mortal.

Because fictional girls like Polly, Anne, and Doris occupy what scholar Sally Mitchell calls a "provisional free space" of girlhood, this phase that teeters between childhood and adulthood permits fictional girls more freedom.\(^{137}\) The Female Explorer and its counterpart, the Faerie Queene, are the two sides—the girl and the woman—of the agential illustrated female in the late nineteenth century. As opposed to the Female Explorer, the Faerie Queene must assert her agency within the confines of womanhood, sometimes grappling with Victorian expectations that permeate the fantastical realms of their respective narratives. Whereas Faerie Queene characters find independence anchored in their exceptional magical powers or authority as monarchs, the Female Explorer derives her agency from the lack of rules that restrain her: she runs amok with boys her age, travels where she wishes, and sets her sights on Herculean goals. The illustrated depictions of these characters best demonstrate the difference between what I call Illustrated Women and Illustrated Girls, named so for their pictorial representation in the Golden Age of children's literature.\(^{138}\) Styles from the Pre-Raphaelite, Aestheticist, and Arts & Crafts movements pervade illustrations of the Faerie Queene. These artistic movements separate her


\(^{138}\) "Illustrated women" is the web address for the Faerie Queene in Children's Literature site, and "Illustrated girls" for the Female Explorer in Children's Literature.
from the traditional Victorian feminine, yet they also reinforce the woman as an art object. Illustrations of the Female Explorer, however, do away with the modeled pose of the Faerie Queene. Instead, they highlight the Female Explorer's dimensionality through action and movement, as representative of her girlhood freedom.

At times these Female Explorers must grapple with stigma faced by real female travelers, intellects, and athletes, yet at other moments, they evade criticism found in the real world. Regardless of any obstacles these girls and women faced on the page or in the world, they embodied the nerve and courage that aided in gaining greater gender equality. By the end of the century when *The Queen of the Pirate Isle*, *Little Queen Anne*, and *The Bear's Kingdom* were published, real women still faced prejudice for participating in masculine activities, yet they made considerable gains in sports—finally allowed to hunt alongside men—and in travel—permitted to journey without a chaperone. For her free-spirited, independent, athletic nature, the Female Explorer also emerges as a proto-New Woman figure. As a cultural icon of the Victorian *Fin de siècle*, the New Woman bridges the women's liberation movement from the Victorian to the Edwardian, as she demanded female emancipation in the workplace and liberation from the home. Similar to how Female Explorers shed feminine ideals to transgress masculine spheres of exploration and sports, the New Woman sought education and employment as alternatives to motherhood and marriage.139

Female Explorers like Polly, Anne, and Doris reveal how women were not only capable of exploration, higher forms of education, travel, and sports, but that they could also excel in those supposedly masculine arenas. As a cultural product near the turn of the century, the Female

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Explorer, with her pluck and resolve, perhaps inspired girls of the 1890s to launch Great Britain into the modern age. Without a doubt, the Female Explorer anticipates the molting of Victorian morals by the twentieth century that, in turn, transformed into progress for the nation's women.

I. Pirate Polly

In *The Queen of the Pirate Isle* (1886), Polly and her friends embark on swashbuckling adventures through the California foothills. Discover how Polly, both a tomboy and female Robinson Crusoe, liberates herself through imaginative play and spirited exploration.

**PLOT SUMMARY**

*The Queen of the Pirate Isle* (1886)

Polly is a nine-year old girl with a budding imagination, who readily expresses herself in front of her family and friends. She most likes to play-act, pretending to be characters she has created: a Schoolmistress, Preacher, and Proud Lady. One of her characters, the "Pirate Queen" surfaces when Polly, her cousin Hickory, and Chinese page Wan Lee pretend to sail on a ship. In Polly, Wan Lee, and Hickory's first excursion, all runs smoothly until a hurricane knocks the trio off course, shipwrecking them on an island. Hickory and Wan Lee become pirates, but they notably anoint Polly their Queen. Instead of remaining in the confines of the nursery, the three children continue to adventure outdoors into the California foothills, a mile away from a mining settlement, so they can establish their independence beyond the family threshold. They stumble upon a neighbor boy named Patsey, who joins in their exploration.

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140 Wan Lee is both a companion to Polly and a family servant; he performs tasks like brushing shoes and running errands, but also bears the brunt of orientalist jokes directed towards his Eastern dress and physical appearance.

141 Just as Polly parts from the domestic sphere to break with Victorian norms, the geographical setting in California achieves a similar distancing from Victorian standards. In the United States, Victorian practices were mainly confined to the trans-Atlantic culture of the Northeast. (Jane H.
First, the quartet venture to the forbidden Slumgullion, a mudpool formed from gold washing, and they coat their shoes in mud, letting them harden in the sun for ample protection. All the while, Polly's doll Lady Mary tags along in the adventure, despite the danger ahead. Already in a rebellious revel, the children fancy wandering into the mysterious mining tunnels. Although the tunnels are far away, Polly, Lady Mary, Hickory, Wan Lee, and Patsey daringly slide down a hill to reach them. In the thrill of the slide, not only does Lady Mary lose her hair, but the troop’s dare-devilish activity causes debris to fall onto a group of unsuspecting miners taking a lunchbreak.

At the cave's entrance, the four explorers become full of fear as they sense spirits lurking. Wan Lee attempts to ward off any specters with firecrackers. Polly, meanwhile, settles the boys for the night only to realize that Lady Mary's hair has gone missing. Luckily, Wan Lee spots the doll's hair caught on a big quartz stone, but Polly begs Wan Lee to stay, as she worries the spirits might turn malevolent in the absence of his exorcising powers. The following morning, the rested adventurers wake to find themselves traveling in a mining car through caverns studded with quartz and mica. The children meet a band of miners, the Red Rovers, whose leader welcomes them to the "Pirate's Cave" and indulges Polly by addressing her as Pirate Queen. To Polly's shock and relief, the lead miner produces a mess of blonde hair belonging to Lady Mary, which had caught on the Outcrop rock, unlocking the entrance to a secret cave with a stash of treasures from the Red Rovers of the past. Polly returns home in the end, her parents only knowing of Lady Mary's discovery and none of the Pirate Queen escapades.

Author

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Bret Harte, *The Queen of the Pirate Isle* (Chatto and Windus, 1886), 45.
Bret Harte (1836–1902)

Francis Brett Harte, later known as "Bret Harte" after beginning his career as an author in California, was born in Albany on 25 August 1836. Since his father was a scholar and Professor of Greek at Albany College, the American writer, poet, and humorist grew up surrounded by literature. Harte moved to San Francisco in 1854 and lived there for nearly two decades. He worked a hodgepodge of jobs, variously employed as a private tutor; schoolmaster; express messenger for Wells, Fargo & Company; drug store clerk; and additionally was rumored to have been a miner himself. It is not difficult to see how Harte integrated his eclectic experiences into *The Queen of the Pirate Isle* (1886), which capitalizes on stunning descriptions of the California foothills and plays up the dangers and adventure to be found in the American West, especially the thrills of mining during the gold rush.

From his experience as a schoolmaster, Harte observed how California children possessed an "elflike precocity" of forwardness and abundant energy, which drastically differed from the culture, breeding, and discipline of British children. These quintessential American qualities emerge in the boisterous, inventive child characters in *The Queen of the Pirate Isle*, which accounts for Polly's predilection for exploring.

Chinese American characters also often feature in Harte's work, usually as minor characters, much like Wan Lee in *Queen of the Pirate Isle*, who bears the same name as Harte's protagonist stoned to death in a racist riot in "Wan Lee, the Pagan." One of Harte's most well-

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146 Ibid., 29.
147 Ibid., 111.
known poems, "The Heathen Chinee," officially known as "Plain Language from Truthful James" (1870), criticized anti-Chinese sentiment and turned into a national sensation.\textsuperscript{148} After living in California, Harte took his literary career to the east coast of the United States until moving to Europe where he spent the remainder of his life and continued writing, residing in Crefeld, Glasgow, and London.\textsuperscript{149}

**ILLUSTRATOR**

Kate Greenaway (1846–1901)

Kate Greenaway, an illustrator of picture books, Christmas cards, and valentines, was born in London on 17 March 1846. Her first public work appeared in 1868 and in the following years Greenaway created illustrations for *The People's Magazine* and Kronheim & Co., which specialized in biblical prints. She experienced her first major success after one of her valentines sold at least 25,000 copies.\textsuperscript{150}

Greenaway eventually formed a partnership with Edmund Evans, who helped her establish her own voice as an illustrator.\textsuperscript{151} In 1878, Evans published Greenaway's *Under the Window*, a book of nursery rhymes composed by Greenaway that also featured illustrations emblematic of the Arts & Crafts Movement due to their soft green and yellow tints and fashionable motifs including blue china, sunflowers, and Queen Anne style architecture.\textsuperscript{152}


\textsuperscript{149} Merwin, *The Life of Bret Harte*, 253, 266.


\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 34.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 34, 39; Anne Lundin. "In A Different Place: Feminist Aesthetics and the Picture Book," 50.
Beginning in 1880, Evans agreed to return Greenaway’s original drawings and gave her half of the profits from her artwork, per Greenaway's request.\footnote{Spielman and Layard, “Kate Greenaway, a Biographical Sketch,” 39.}

*Under the Window* established Kate Greenaway as a household name in Great Britain, as well as in Europe and America. Whereas in her freelance work, Greenaway despised illustrating the ideas of others, *Under the Window* allegedly allowed her to translate "her own literary thoughts" into pictorial representations. Kate Greenaway was both a friend and competitor of Randolph Caldecott, the English illustrator for whom the Caldecott Medal was named, but she only met Walter Crane once, who said, "her treatment of quaint early nineteenth-century costume, prim gardens, and the child-like spirit of her designs in an old-world atmosphere, though touched with conscious modern 'æstheticism,' captivated the public in a remarkable way."\footnote{Ibid., 40-42.} She also formed a close friendship with John Ruskin, as the two corresponded and paid one another visits until Ruskin's death in 1900. Ruskin readily criticized Greenaway's *The Language of Flowers* (1885), an illustrated guide to the meanings of hundreds of plants and flowers, but he praised the mastery of illustration in *The Queen of the Pirate Isle* (1886) and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (1888), a picture book set to Robert Browning's poem in which a peculiar Piper passes through a town and disappears with all its children.\footnote{Ibid., 47.}

**EXPLORING GENDER**

**The Tomboy in American Literature**

As she participates in make-believe and real adventures with her boy companions, Polly evinces the traits of both the Female Explorer and the tomboy from American literary tradition. Although the term has earlier origins, the “tomboy” emerged as a literary trope in mid-nineteenth

\footnote{Spielman and Layard, “Kate Greenaway, a Biographical Sketch,” 39.}
\footnote{Ibid., 40-42.}
\footnote{Ibid., 47.}
century American fiction. The Queen of the Pirate Isle, which was published in 1886, falls in the middle of what is commonly called the “golden era” of literary tomboyism that spanned from the end of the Civil War to the middle of the Great Depression. In simplest terms a “tomboy” is a girl who act like a boy, which often means she plays sports or prefers math and science to literature and history. In the 1860s and 70s, tomboyism as both a cultural and literary concept flourished in the United States. Gender-bending female characters came into print, such as Jo March of Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women (1868), and autobiographies of real American women spread anecdotes of American girls climbing trees and receiving skinned knees. Polly in The Queen of the Pirate Isle reflects aspects of both these examples: she possesses the imaginative, transgressive play of Jo March in her creation of fictional personas and she embraces the fun of outdoor rough-and-tumble play that was being recognized as typical for many real American girls. The Female Explorer, in these contexts, is merely another face of the tomboy.

Explorer of Identities

Before Polly becomes a Female Explorer in the most conventional sense of the term—that is, before she embarks on a pirate ship adventure with her friends—she reveals herself to be an explorer of characters. She pretends to be a Beggar Child, a Schoolmistress, a Preacher, an

157 Ibid.
158 Scholars Lynne Yamaguchi and Karen Barber have stated that defining to what extent a girl transgresses into boy’s territory in order to be classified as a “tomboy” differs for every individual, especially given circumstances such as time period in history, geographic location, etc. For instance, an urban girl doing farmwork would seem tomboyish, but for a country girl, it would be normal (Abate, Tomboys, xv-xvi).
159 Ibid., 25-26.
Indian Maiden, and a Proud Lady.\textsuperscript{160} Polly throws herself into these performances, as she is given to staying in a particular character role anywhere from a few days to several weeks. Alcott’s famous tomboy character, Jo March, linked “femininity with confinement, submission, and restraint, and masculinity with independence, adventure, and excitement.”\textsuperscript{161} Polly may not explicitly condemn femininity in the boisterous tone of Jo March, but in Polly’s exploration of imaginary personas she refuses to align herself with what scholar Michel Ann Abate has called the “disempowered status of feminine women.”\textsuperscript{162} When Polly plays at being a schoolmistress she rejects the feminine virtue of docility by being “unnecessarily severe” and as a preacher, she gender-bends in the most explicit way, as the text uses the masculine possessive pronoun “his” to refer to Preacher Polly: she is “singularly personal in his remarks.”\textsuperscript{163} Varlé’s Self-Instructor (1831) cites indelicacy and impudence as the culprits of female indiscretion, adding that “[a] forward girl always alarms me.”\textsuperscript{164} Although we do not hear Polly's opinionated, forward remarks, it is not difficult to imagine the comments that might spew from Polly's wild imagination. Sharing her thoughts without reservation as a male character, Polly’s performances underscore the ways in which she transgresses boundaries imposed by gender through make-believe play.\textsuperscript{165}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{160} Polly's characters are all original with the exception of the Indian maiden—a character inspired by James Fenimore Cooper's novels on frontier and Native American life (Harte, \textit{The Queen of the Pirate Isle}, 10).
\item \textsuperscript{161} Michelle Ann Abate, \textit{Tomboys: A Literary and Cultural History}, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Harte, \textit{The Queen of the Pirate Isle}, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Charles Varlé, \textit{Moral Encyclopaedia, Or, Varlé’s Self-Instructor, No. 3, in Literature, Duties of Life, and Rules of Good Breeding: Interspersed with Popular Quotations, Mottos, Maxims, and Adages, in Latin and Other Languages : Also with the French Words Generally Met with in Newspapers, and Works of Taste and Fancy, Faithfully Translated} (M’Elrath & Bangs, 1831), 135.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler's groundbreaking work on gender performance argues that our "bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the
Even when Polly’s family disapproves or fails to understand her characters, her will to reinvent or resurrect personas never ceases. The most daring of Polly’s creations is the Proud Lady, “a being whose excessive and unreasonable haughtiness [is] so pronounced as to give her features the expression of extreme nausea, caus[ing] her mother so much alarm that it had to be abandoned.”

Polly’s performance as the Proud Lady tests the physical limits of what is acceptable for a girl. Polly's "expression of extreme nausea" concerns her mother precisely because it signals distressing behavior that might overexert girls and women. Instead of pointing to the harmful effects of women's constricting dress, Victorian medicine attributed fatigue with female biological weakness, which caused physicians to prescribe rest. Polly, then, challenges the growing cult of invalidism that curbed female physical activity, which stems from medical discourse. As a result of her mother’s reaction, Polly “kills off” the Proud Lady. However, although Polly often discards characters by metaphorical death, they manage to make subsequent reappearances, which illustrates Polly’s stubbornness in relation to her mother's opinion of what constitutes unbecoming behavior for a young girl.

By persisting with her craft by playing these improper characters, Polly demonstrates the ability of the Female Explorer to prevail and successfully break outside the barriers of femininity, crossing over into masculine spheres of independence and adventure so esteemed by Jo March and other literary tomboys.

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Ibid., 11.

Ibid., 11.


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Ibid.
Prostitution & Acting

Although Polly healthily expresses herself and creates characters to escape the everyday world, her acting points to nineteenth-century concerns of "[t]he modern girl's participation in the vulgar spectacle of cosmetics and dress." These visual forms of female expression that drew attention to oneself through make-up and *demi-monde* fashion raised anxieties due to their association with prostitution. The Victorians connected the female actor with the figure of the prostitute, since she performed in the public sphere and was believed to abide by inappropriate sexual conduct.

These moral concerns of the "girl of the period" and her vitiated, exaggerated taste are outlined in an 1868 edition of the *Saturday Review*, a weekly London newspaper. In this article, Eliza Lynn Linton blames the *demi-monde* style of dress—influenced by déclassé French women known for their promiscuity and extravagance—for tarnishing the morally upright girl of the past, and spawning a generation of girls fluent in "slang, bold talk, and fastness." Linton writes, "The girl of a period is a creature who dyes her hair and paints her face, as the first articles of her personal religion; whose sole idea of life is plenty of fun and luxury." Polly, then, embraces attitude of "the girl of the period," disregarding an austere girlhood that resulted in repression. Instead, Polly affirms her agential sense of self through her acting, whether she

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171 Although Eliza Lynn Linton was the first paid female journalist in Great Britain, many of her pieces embodied an anti-feminism stance.

spouts the brazen remarks of the Preacher, or contorts her face to achieve the arrogant countenance of the Proud Lady.

Linton also decries the lack of cleanliness in the "girl of the period," stating that "[i]f a sensible fashion lifts the gown out of the mud, she raises hers midway to her knee." In The Queen of the Pirate Isle, Polly and her friends adopt the remiss attitude of the "girl of the period." They disobey their parents and wade through the Slugmillion, a pool of mud "formed of the water and finely powdered earth that was carried off by the sluice boxes during gold washing." Whereas cleanliness imposed restrictions upon feminine girls, dirtying oneself in the mud liberated the "girls of the period" and the American tomboy. Likewise, author Bret Harte suggests how rebellion sets the child free from the parental figure when he notes that jumping in the mud was "the first real step towards independence" for Polly and her friends. As a consequence of entering the forbidden Slugmillion, the band of pirate children "recognized the impossibility of ever again crossing (unwashed) the family threshold." Coating their feet in mud creates a physical barrier indicative of the desire to establish one's selfhood distinctly from the family unit, just as the "girl of the period" built her image through her contrarian personality.

ILLUSTRATING IMAGINATION

Just as Polly’s imagination transgresses nineteenth-century gender constructs, Kate Greenaway’s illustrations exist without conventional borders. Instead of plate illustrations, which are full-page illustrations separated from the text pages, the illustrations of Polly appear as cut illustrations, which reside on text pages. These imagetexts do not have defined borders, except

173 Ibid.
175 Harte, The Queen of the Pirate Isle, 26-27.
for the gutter or margin and text that surround them. Therefore, they capture Polly's inventive flair by transgressing the printed text, indenting the alignment whenever an illustration appears.

Out of Polly’s characters mentioned by Bret Harte, Greenaway illustrates the Beggar Child, the Severe Schoolmistress, the Indian Maiden, and the Proud Lady. These characters appear alongside the text, as if Polly’s imagination surfaces when it pleases, and intrudes upon the text itself. For instance, Greenaway depicts the Proud Lady with a snide air of superiority, characterized by a blue 1880s-style princess line dress with frills and a feather adorning her hair; With her head held high, Polly uses the parasol in her hand to force the printed text to the right of the page.177 Likewise, in the Indian Maiden illustration, the spear in Polly’s hand juts out into the paragraph to again shift the text aside.178 These illustrations confer upon Polly a degree of metatextual agency, her actions reaching beyond the confines of the narrative world by affecting the print layout of the illustrated chapter book.

The lack of borders and backgrounds of the illustrations imbue a sense of escapism from the real world, allowing the reader to enter more easily into Polly’s imagination. Refusing to portray these characters against the backdrop of the domestic sphere reinforces the magic of Polly’s make believe, especially in emphasizing how her creative imagination distances her from the monotony of constrained femininity. As the characters float in and out of the borders of the picture book, readers enter into the whimsical world of Polly’s mind. Most importantly, the unbound nature of these illustrations reflects Polly’s ability to forget the constraints of the outside world that limit her through traditional gender roles.

**VICTORIAN CRUSOE**

**The Robinsonade**

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177 Harte, *The Queen of the Pirate Isle*, 12.
178 Ibid., 11.
When Polly receives her new title as the Pirate Queen, she and her friends partake in a Robinsonade, most commonly known as narratives that imitate Daniel Defoe's extremely popular novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and feature tropes such as the "castaway" or "desert island." Because the *Robinson Crusoe* adventure appealed to children and parents for its work ethic and morals, it became a celebrated nursery book. The *Queen of the Pirate Isle*, though not an outright Robinsonade, contains elements that parallel the nineteenth-century imperialistic imitators of Defoe. While traversing the seas of the nursery floor, a West Indian Hurricane shipwrecks Polly, her cousin Hickory, and Wan Lee on a Desert Island in the closet. These child castaways make do with the supplies they have, constructing a tent from tablecloth and surviving off a candle, a matchbox, and two peppermint lozenges.

**Empire in the Robinsonade & The Queen of the Pirate Isle**

Nineteenth-century readers praised the “action, power, and expansion” in *Crusoe* that reflected Great Britain’s own endeavors related to Empire, while ignoring the introspection and inner torment of Crusoe. Written by authors like Frederick Marryat and R. M. Ballantyne, nineteenth-century Robinsonades suited the tastes of boys and transformed *Robinson Crusoe* into

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180 The nineteenth-century Robinsonades, like Ballantyne’s fiction, adhere more closely to quest fiction and popular romance in order to revere Britishishness at the expense of presenting Crusoe’s “continual struggle against madness and despair” that makes the Robinsonade moving in the first place. Although Polly does not deal with madness, she exhibits the conflicting introspection experienced by Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. For example, after Polly’s doll’s hair goes missing, she reflects while the boys sleep: “She felt very lonely, but was not quite afraid; she felt very melancholy, but was not entirely sad” (Harte, *The Queen of the Pirate Isle*, 39-40). In the boys’ absence, she often places herself in grave imaginary situations, such as growing weary from begging in the streets or becoming a lone widow of six dead children. Since Polly’s make-believe situations explore darker issues such as poverty and death, adventure does not become synonymous with the illusion of excitement found in the nineteenth-century Robinsonades that fail to address the psychological effects of exploration.

an empire builder. In so doing, writers of the Robinsonade also spun tales of cultural superiority that justified the conquest of other peoples and lands.\textsuperscript{182} Although the author of \textit{The Queen of the Pirate Isle} is American, American beliefs concerning imperialism formed at the end of the nineteenth century mirrored British imperialist ideologies, such as orientalism.

A message of Western cultural superiority found in the nineteenth-century British Robinsonades comes to the fore through the orientalist depiction of the character Wan Lee. As a Chinese page, Wan Lee is immediately placed in a servile relationship below the other children; thus, the positioning of white characters against non-white characters confers authority to white characters, as commonly seen in nineteenth-century adventure romances and Robinsonades.\textsuperscript{183}

Harte also highlights Wan Lee’s inferiority when he refers to him as a “little Chinaman, substituting ‘l’s’ for ‘r’s’ in his usual fashion.”\textsuperscript{184} The stereotyping of Wan Lee never ceases in both the text and illustration, as he stands out compared to the other children with his “Chinaman’s pigtail,” darker skin, and traditional garb.\textsuperscript{185} Furthermore, when Wan Lee tries to ward off evil spirits, an asterisked footnote states, “The Chinese pray devoutly to the Evil Spirits \textit{not} to injure them.”\textsuperscript{186} Through a Westernized lens, Harte both misrepresents and makes fun of Chinese culture. Sprinkling the text and image with common orientalist tropes about the

\textsuperscript{182} Although these nineteenth-century Robinsonades were geared toward boys and “evolved into a distinctly masculine story type,” girls did read them (Ibid.)

\textsuperscript{183} In \textit{Queen of the Pirate Isle}, the orientalist depiction of Wan Lee also grants relative agency to Polly, a white girl. At the expense of misrepresenting and culturally debasing non-white men, white women could experience relative agency when positioned against imperial subjects as opposed to men at home. In other words, they could be paradoxically seen as inferior by gender, yet superior by race.

\textsuperscript{184} Harte, \textit{The Queen of the Pirate Isle}, 16.

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 33.

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 34.
“Oriental” as irrational, depraved, and childlike exoticizes Polly’s adventures, mirroring the shift in the nineteenth-century Robinsonades that glorified imperial expansion.\(^{187}\)

**A Female Crusoe**

Yet *The Queen of the Pirate Isle* differs from traditional Robinsonades due to the female protagonist that disrupts the traditionally masculine genre. Placing women or girls, such as Polly, in adventure fiction does not allow for the neat binaries of colonists and colonized, or men and women, to thrive without interfering with one another.\(^{188}\) Scholar Lee Anne M. Richardson summarizes this paradoxical power structure at home and abroad: "Because white women are of the powerful and 'superior' race, they share certain assumptions and privileges of authority; because women are not fully empowered, they share certain hallmarks of subjugation.\(^{189}\)"

When Polly goes on her second Pirate Queen adventure with Hickory, Wan Lee, and Patsey, readers see her assume the roles of an authoritative mother as much as daring tomboy. Polly’s motherly characterization surfaces as a strength rather than a detriment, making her the most prepared explorer. This is shown when she has the “parental foresight” to gather supplies, build a fire, and find shelter.\(^{190}\) Even though Polly must carry her doll, Lady Mary, around as if it were her own child, it never prevents her from participating with the boys. When Polly does fret over her doll’s lost hair, she cries out for a moment in frustration, but she persists in adventure alongside the others. Later, she finds out that her doll’s presence as part of the journey was invaluable, as Lady Mary’s hair caught on a rock called the “outcrop” and opened the entrance to the secret cave, which the Red Rovers had been attempting to accomplish for a long time.

\(^{189}\) Ibid., 6.
\(^{190}\) Harte, 36.
Having a traditionally feminine object like a doll make the adventure a success validates the place of girls like Polly in the masculine genre of the Robinsonade and adventure story. Moreover, Polly embraces the sporty audacity of the American tomboy, while defying Victorian anxieties surrounding girls and exercise. Because the Victorians believed that excessive exertion and physical activity would damage a woman’s reproductive system, most girls were disallowed from participating in athletics. Through Polly’s escapades with the boys that include sliding down a cliff, she hardly opts to follow the sedate and restful lifestyle prescribed for Victorian women.¹⁹¹ Thus, Polly’s trials and triumphs in exploration grant her agency not available to her in the real world, underscoring how girls could participate in adventures and develop work ethic and selfhood as well as any male Crusoe.

II. Adventurer Anne

In Little Queen Anne and Her Majesty's Letters (1886), Walter Crane permits Anne to wander down educational and global avenues. In this carefully crafted world of learning and enjoyment, Anne's night at the ball addresses how female travel epitomized the genteel pursuit of leisure, yet how it also catapulted traveling women into serious spheres of education, science, and exploration.

**PLOT SUMMARY**

Little Queen Anne and Her Majesty’s Letters (1886)

The Little Queen Anne depicted by Walter Crane is the poster child for late-nineteenth century bourgeois childhood and leisure culture: she wears a fashionable white and turquoise dress with a plant-based pattern in the naturalistic style of William Morris, surrounds herself

with sunflowers in a red-brick Georgian-style dollhouse, and plays badminton and fetch with her caramel colored Shar-Pei.\textsuperscript{192} However, Queen Anne escapes her traditional English countryside estate life when she receives an invitation to a ball. Instead of affording Anne a night of dancing with gentlemen and obligatory conversation within insufferable social circles, the ball becomes the means by which Anne can become an explorer as she metaphorically travels through the evening to discover new ideas and meet guests from around the globe.

Aided by her Fairy Godmother, Anne trades in her frock for a resplendent Athena costume, which sets the tone for her night of learning and arts. Transported to the ball in a carriage, Little Queen Anne first meets fairytale characters and then her hosts, the three personified R's—that is, reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic. Crane personifies the Three R’s with clever illustrative touches: a cloak of numbers with a blackboard slate, a lined cursive smock with quill nib sandals, and Roman regalia fashioned from book spines and pages.\textsuperscript{193}

As a participant in this magical ball, Anne's lessons never cease. She listens to an old gentleman tell "his story" and goes for a round dance with Professor Geography, before conversing with foreign ambassadors in Italian, French, German, and more. After all the excitement of her studies, Anne rests for a while and enjoys the company of Miss Muffet, only to be interrupted by Dr. Grammar. Though Anne tires of all the attention, she becomes entranced by the Three Sisters, accomplished in music, poetry, and art. Anne listens to them speak in all languages until Mrs. Grundy declares it is time for bed. With his luminous lamp, Signor Science accompanies Little Queen Anne to her sleeping car, until she wakes in the garden, dreaming of her time spent at the unusual ball.

\textsuperscript{192} Walter Crane, \textit{Little Queen Anne, and Her Majesty's Letters} (London: Marcus Ward & Co, 1886), 2, \url{https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00053741/00001/3j?search=little+queen+anne}. \textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 12.
Walter Crane (1845–1915)

Born in 1845 in Liverpool, Walter Crane experienced a relatively happy childhood with a middle-class upbringing. Over the course of the century, he would become one of the most prominent illustrators, painters, and designers of the Victorian Era. In 1859, Crane began training for his career as an artist under an apprenticeship with wood engraver W.J. Linton, from whom Crane learned the craft of a draughtsman on wood, a necessary skill for book illustration. Crane first found real success when he illustrated toy books and yellow backs for Edmund Evans, an English wood engraver and color printer, between 1863 and 1875, a decade in which Crane established himself as a talented illustrator for children's literature. Queen Summer or the Tourney of the Lily and the Rose, published in 1891, was the second work of a series of flower books created by Crane, and it differed from his earlier Flora's Feast (1889) in that its forty color illustrations "were framed and included the text written on scroll placards" to evoke the stylized elements of a medieval tome.

During this period of growing artistic recognition, Crane also contributed important art to the Socialist movement, publishing designs for the cause from 1896 until his death in 1915. Crane's own views pertaining to decorative art reflected those of William Morris, who believed that art should remember its roots in handicraft with regards to material and use, but also that art and social conditions were intertwined. Echoing John Ruskin's stance on mass production, Crane believed that if industrialization prevailed in pumping out cheaply made products, corporate greed would triumph at the expense of a public trapped in perpetual poverty and in slavery to the

195 Ibid., 39.  
196 Ibid., 137-38.
machine.\textsuperscript{197} Even though Walter Crane is most recognized for his captivating designs and illustrations from the beginning of his notable career, his achievements continued throughout the remainder of his life, as his talent transcended print culture to catalyze reform through socialism and the Arts & Crafts Movement.

*Little Queen Anne* (1886) reflects Crane's talent for applying the decorative arts to narrative form. With appropriate visual cues, Walter Crane takes both Anne and his readers on an immersive educational journey. On the cover, a crane, a signature symbol of the illustrator himself, carries a letter—the very same one that Anne will receive. The endpapers feature an orange lily print, as well as one of Mother Goose's nursery rhymes, "Queen Anne." Similar to *Queen Summer*, the text of this picture book is cleverly placed on floating papers and note cards to reiterate the theme of education; at other instances, the text is inscribed on floating lanterns to suit the setting of the ball. As a result of Crane's flair for design, the paratext and text are not distinct elements, yet rather a single entity guiding the story.

**ANNE & ATHENA**

**Athena the Aesthete**

In her everyday life, it appears Little Queen Anne has the taste of a cultured aesthete and the spirit of an adventurer, which foregrounds her as the explorer of knowledge and travel she will become. Before Queen Anne gets a letter of invitation to the ball from the three real Royal R’s we find her “sitting as usual in the sun” in the English countryside.\textsuperscript{198} Her aesthetic sensibilities also surface through her dress, emblematic of 1880s girls' fashion: the sash tied in a bow at the back and pleated skirts qualifies the outfit as a "Kate Greenaway" dress, a looser

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 143-145.

\textsuperscript{198} Crane, *Little Queen Anne*, 2.
empire waist dress favored by Aesthetes that allowed young girls to move more freely.\textsuperscript{199} Anne changes for the ball, yet even when swapping out her 1880s fashion for a costume, she pays heed to Hellenic symbolism potent in the Aesthetic Movement: Anne takes “a leaf out of her Fairy Godmother’s fashion book,” which displays an image of Athena.\textsuperscript{200}

Dressed for the costume ball, Anne wears golden-tinged peplos, sandals, a green and gold cloak, and a war helmet, while carrying a lance and shield.\textsuperscript{201} Sacred animals to Athena adorn her outfit as well: a golden owl sits atop the war helmet and a snake flashes across the shield.\textsuperscript{202} An owl also appears earlier in the picture book when Queen Anne writes at her desk. Crane adorns his protagonist in Greek clothing and symbols of a powerful goddess so that Anne escapes not only Victorian dress, but also the moral and social codes that restricted women. Since Queen Anne dresses as Athena, “goddess of reason in war and peace alike, intelligent activity, arts and literature,” the young girl, too, embodies these qualities of the esteemed Greek goddess.\textsuperscript{203} As Athena’s double, Anne visually signals that she deserves to participate in the artistic and academic spheres that await her at the ball.

\textbf{WOMEN IN CLASSICS}

\textbf{Classical Education}

Scholar Isobel Hurst notes that “fictional representations of girls studying the classics tend to stress the difficulties encountered by educated women rather than their achievements.”\textsuperscript{204}

\textsuperscript{200} Crane, \textit{Little Queen Anne}, 6.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
Queen Anne undergoes quite the opposite experience endured by other fictional girls in Victorian literature. After Anne greets the Three R’s—arithmetic, writing, and reading, she launches herself into an interactive educational experience. Anne receives a reading programme, engages in writing exercises, and is quickly offered a slate of refreshment (in the form of a literal slate), as Crane creates visual and textual puns to transform dull school exercises into fascinating festivities.\(^{205}\)

Anne then proceeds to meet a wide range of guests who directly engage her in their areas of expertise. An old gentleman with round spectacles, long red draping robes, and a scroll of parchment wishes to tell “His story” to Anne. He appears to be teaching her about warfare, signaled by the warring men on the parchment and objects situated next to the History gentleman—a scythe and hourglass. Professor Geography also participates in this scene, wishing Anne to join him for a round dance, while he gestures to a world globe that displays the Americas.\(^{206}\) At the end of the night, Signor Science, a great magician, leads her out of the ball, guided by his lamp.\(^{207}\) In the depiction of Signor Science, Crane melds science of past and present, shown through a magician’s hat that conjures occult sciences like alchemy, astrology, and natural magic, whereas coils wrapped at the waist, a belt of magnets, and the light bulb in the Signor’s hand reflect modern scientific principles like electromagnetism. The personified subjects of History, Geography, and Science evoke the stereotype of the elderly male scholar, a figure synonymous with a higher education that predominantly excluded women.

Yet Anne is not excluded. Her participation bucks the conventions of her time. After all, during the nineteenth-century, gender largely determined which subjects parents deemed suitable

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\(^{206}\) Ibid, 16.

\(^{207}\) Ibid., 23.
for their children, as Latin or mathematics could influence a boy’s eligibility for university, but the same subjects had no use for a girl whose prospects depended on beauty. Subjects such as History, Geography, and Science were often imagined as more masculine subjects. For Victorian families with the social status and wealth to provide an education for their children, classical studies were reserved for boys while girls were left to engage in modern languages, music, and art—all considered genteel leisure pursuits emblematic of the female aristocracy. Similar gendered divisions for education were found in the middle classes: middle-class boys studied academics and played sports, while middle-class girls read, sewed, danced, and practiced etiquette at home. In Queen Anne’s interactions with the personified male subjects of Arithmetic, Reading, Writing, History, Geography, and Science, however, none of the men discourage the young girl from learning. She enters each “lesson” with dedication and ease, showing how girls could participate in the same subjects reserved for boys.

Anne’s connection to Athena, the Greek goddess of intellect, supplies an argument for how readers should view the role of classical education in women’s lives during the Victorian Era. Due to her status as a goddess with masculine traits of intellect and strategy, Athena evokes the anomaly of a woman described as “exceptional” because she happens to possess a masculine nature. Although women were predominantly excluded from classical circles, the female classicist emerged as a figure of empowerment and ambition for women in the form of exceptional female scholars such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning and George Eliot. However, although empowering to a young girl, Crane’s allusions to Athena and representation of Anne as

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208 Hurst, *Victorian Women Writers and the Classics*, 53.
a future classist scholar also mirrors gendered stereotypes about how “an exceptional woman may study Latin and Greek to a high standard, but only if her intellect is so powerful that it may be described as ‘masculine.’” These conclusions that separate accomplished women from the everyday woman only serve to reinforce male cultural and intellectual superiority, so that not all women believe themselves capable of learning.

**THE FEMALE TRAVELER**

**Travel & Education**

Travel became a means of enlightenment and “provided education, entertainment, physical exercise, and an escape route for a wide range of women throughout the eighteenth century.” The Grand Tour, for instance, offered a culturally expansive education for the socio-political elite, exposing them to the finest cosmopolitan circles in the continent. Accessing the *crème de la crème* of Paris, Rome, and Naples, however, generally required that the traveler was not only male, but had the right connections and enough financial support. Little Queen Anne's metaphorical travels on the night of the ball very much replicate the experiences of the Grand Tour traveler. She mingles with worldly ambassadors, whom hail from Europe, Africa, and Asia. She expands her horizons when listening to esteemed educators like the professors of History and Geography. She delves into the culturally rich environment of the intellectual elite when she immerses herself in the poetry, art, and music of the Three Sisters. In the fictional milieu Walter Crane has built for Anne, he exemplifies how nineteenth-century women, too, could benefit culturally, intellectually, and socially from their travels.

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211 Ibid., 5.
In this regard, Anne's educational lessons vis-à-vis her ballroom travels closely mirror the accounts of Princess Helena Koltzoff-Massalsky, also known as Countess Dora d'Istria, of W. H. Davenport Adams' *Celebrated Women Travelers of the Nineteenth Century*, originally published in 1882. Born in 1829 in Bucharest, Princess Helena received such a thorough education that she composed a translation of the *Iliad* and religiously read English, German, and French literary masterpieces before she reached adulthood. Her instructor, Mons. Papadopoulos, noted that Helena's "genius could not submit to the restraint of ordinary rules."²¹⁴ Praised for her intellect and self-culture, Princess Helena traveled to Germany and Italy in her youth, where "she was able to survey, as from a watch-tower, the course of great political events, and she found herself mixing continually with the most celebrated savants and statesman of the age."²¹⁵ Just like Princess Helena, little Queen Anne exposes herself to languages and literature, and she is equally received respectfully by important diplomatic figures. In the illustration accompanying her travels, Queen Anne sits atop a stack of books, and in the crowd of ambassadors, three hold out placards that state “Parlate italiano,” “Sprechen sie Deutsch,” and “Parlez vous francais,” which translate to *Do you speak Italian / German / French?*.²¹⁶ The ambassadors invite Anne to speak in their native languages, encouraging a young girl to participate in speaking other languages and by extension, travel.

**Travel & Leisure**

When Victorian bourgeois women, both married and single, traveled in the 1850s and 1860s, their narratives addressed how female travel occupied an ambiguous position in society.

²¹⁴ Dora d'Istria was also a mountaineer. In 1860, she ascended the Mönch in Switzerland. Female Mountaineers will be discussed in further detail in *Victorian Sports*; W. H. Davenport Adams, *Celebrated Women Travellers of the Nineteenth Century*, 8th. ed. (London: 1903), 17-18, [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015064797544](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015064797544).

²¹⁵ Ibid., 18.

²¹⁶ Crane, *Little Queen Anne*, 17.
For the Victorian domestic woman, the home connoted a site of both work and leisure, since unpaid domestic work often blended with leisurely activities under the same roof. For men, a clearly defined barrier existed between work and leisure, as they left the domestic sphere to go to their paid work in the public sphere. Due to these defined male boundaries, male travel constituted leisure, since the male traveler journeyed as a respite from his work. In turn, female travel in the Victorian Era was largely perceived as pleasurable over utilitarian, yet it ultimately remained undefined, because women's work was not comparable to that of a man. 217

Scholar Barbara Korte investigates how the ambiguous nature of women's travel surfaces in travel literature accounts published by English Woman's Journal, a monthly woman's magazine in circulation from 1858 to 1864.218 Interestingly, the magazine never explicitly refers to women's travel as "leisure." Accounts that described women traveling to attend conferences or study woman's work in other countries suggest female travel as a mode for work or education. Such travel illustrates how women keenly noted the opportunities present for women abroad as opposed to their situation at home.219 Travel for pleasure and privilege stands out in Elizabeth Eiloart's "A Stroll through Hamburgh" (1863), where Eiolart paints a picturesque image of her

219 In "A Stroll through Boulogne," the anonymous female writer notes the paid jobs women hold in France, such as fisherwomen porters and shop owners. Marriages in France could also stipulate that a husband and wife's goods remained separate. ("A Stroll through Boulogne." English Woman's Journal 3 (July 1859): 340-43. quoted in Korte, “Travel Writing in ‘The English Woman’s Journal’ (1858-1864): An Area of Leisure in the Context of Women’s Work,” 162).
strolls through Hamburg, yet as an unchaperoned single woman, she illuminates the importance of pleasure as a means for a woman to exercise her free will.

When travel to the continent began to shift away from an exclusively male endeavor, these changes unearthed anxieties that domestic duties did not fulfill women, since they sought adventures elsewhere.\textsuperscript{220} Likely intended to quell worries about the emergence of unfeminine women, published accounts praised female travelers for how they exemplified domestic values abroad. While domestic praise of this type might have worked to reaffirm the ideal feminine and the Angel in the House, it also offers a more holistic picture of how real women wielded their domestic skills in the public sphere. In "Lady Travellers" (1845), Elizabeth Rigby asserts that from their prior experience in the domestic sphere, women already possess "the four cardinal virtues of travelling—activity, punctuality, courage and independence," which helps "her to achieve so much abroad."\textsuperscript{221} Instead of solely seeing domesticity as a means of catering to one's husband, Rigby shows how these savvy women reinvented what they had learned in the private sphere and applied it to the real world through travel.

\textit{Little Queen Anne} alludes to the ambiguous relationship between work and leisure for women just as well. At the beginning of the story, Anne sits outside her home and plays with her toys, yet this atmosphere seamlessly transitions into Anne's imaginative travels through the ball. First, a footman delivers the invitation to Anne while she is still outside, and then we see her composing a response at her writing desk. Between this moment and Anne's departure for the ball in her carriage, she consults with her Fairy Godmother and changes into her Athena

Anne's imagination thus spills over from the home to the ball. Anne's night at the ball also speaks to the varied perceptions and experiences of female travel. At first glance, the ball appears a leisurely pursuit. When Anne greets her hosts, for example, she peruses the ball's program, takes a turn in dancing, and enjoys some refreshments. Yet, the illustrative details and prose, both packed with puns, situate the ball as a venue for learning: the ball's program promotes reading, the dancing allows for an exercise in writing, and the slate of refreshment encourages learning of mathematics.

Most importantly, Queen Anne's night at the ball reinforces the merits of female travel, as all the guests happily accept her as she is. She faces no backlash in her decision to attend the ball and needs no permission from anyone, as she scribbles her acceptance at her writing desk without hesitation. Anne does not have to contend with maternal or marital duties that barred or dissuaded many real Victorian women from traveling, and she exercises considerable agency in her travel narrative, as she has no singular chaperone or instructor guide her through the night, except perhaps for the owl perched on her helmet. She embodies the contemporary woman traveler of her age, who has only recently begun to travel alone in the "nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, increasingly unchaperoned by fathers, husbands or brothers."  

**Travel & Academia**


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223 Ibid., 12-15.

1893, an issue of *Punch* mockingly asked about the possibility of "[a] lady an explorer? a traveller in skirts?" and advised that women “stay and mind the babies, or hem our ragged shirts,” as “they musn’t, can’t, and shan’t be geographic.” Because masculinity and exploration were inseparable, "a traveller in skirts," although clearly a female traveler, was a preposterous notion for the editors of *Punch*. Besides ridiculing the ambitions of female travelers, *Punch* suggested that women should occupy their time with more suitable pursuits like caring for their children or mending the shirts of their husbands. The second piece of advice, in particular, stings, given that it implies that these aspirational women should set aside their dreams to wait at home for their husbands, the ones outside in the world doing the real exploring and traveling.

The admittance of 22 women to the RGS in 1893 sparked such a great debate that the existing members convened for a meeting and voted 147–105 against the motion to make women eligible RGS members. The newly inducted women remained RGS members, yet what was called "The Lady Question" would not be resolved until 1913 when women were finally granted admittance as Fellows. During this two-decade span, women continued to fight for their rights to be recognized in the RGS and contribute meaningful addresses, research, and textbooks to the field. In the debate, it is clear that the stereotype of the leisurely female traveler tarnished the reputation of female geographic academics. For example, when the RGS rejected South African writer and traveler, Mrs. Raffalovich, she responded, "I am a sincere traveller not merely a pleasure loving tourist." Many male members had also expressed concern that a female

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226 RGS Correspondence file 93, Box 1 quoted in Morag Bell and Cheryl McEwan, “The Admission of Women Fellows to the Royal Geographical Society, 1892-1914; the Controversy
presence would transform a serious society into a social club. The women finally welcomed to the RGS in 1913 possessed accomplishments that decidedly set them apart from the leisurely tourist. For instance, female members like Mary Hall had crossed the entire continent of Africa, and Charlotte Cameron circumnavigated the globe twice.\(^{227}\)

At a time when the RGS had not yet considered the possibility of admitting women—that is, in 1886—Walter Crane illustrated *Little Queen Anne* in a manner that treats Anne's travel in a positive light. By incorporating constant reminders of education through allusions to classical figures and male scholars, Crane distances Anne from the prejudice of the female leisure traveler. Unlike the men who balked at the decision to admit women to the RGS in 1893, the male professors and ambassadors do not laugh at Anne's academic participation. Therefore, Anne's dreams reflect the ambitions of young girls and women to be taken seriously in their educational pursuits involving travel.

**GENDERED SCHOLARS**

**Stodgy Men, Inspirational Women**

Crane grants his female protagonist access to education not available to many, and he also represents both male and female academic figures as role models for Anne. Although the male scholars outnumber female intellectuals, Crane suggests that Anne prefers the dynamic, intuitive intelligence of the women educators to the elderly, prescribed approaches of the male teachers. Although Anne partakes in all educational experiences, her reluctance is apparent when she meets six foreign ambassadors, all of whom are male. When they try speaking to Anne, Crane’s illustration depicts her as resigned compared to her behavior towards other guests, as her

\(^{227}\) Bell and McEwan, “The Admission of Women Fellows to the Royal Geographical Society, 1892-1914; the Controversy and the Outcome,” 301-303.
elbow rests on her lap and she stares at the placards. She may be focused on reading the various languages written on the placards hovering in front of her face, but these foreign ambassadors hardly make an impression compared to Anne’s enthusiastic response to a group of women known as the Three Sisters.

On a two-page spread, Walter Crane situates the Three Sisters to the left and Anne on the right, as she gazes at the intellectual splendor of these women. The Sisters embody the arts—representing excellence in music, poetry, and art—and they additionally “speak in all languages,” showing that they intellectually excel even more so than the ambassadors. Queen Anne’s body language demonstrates extreme admiration for the Three Sisters, since she rests both elbows on her knee and her chin upon her hands, which are clasped in delight. The narrative states that “[Anne] finds them so interesting that she forgets how time goes.” Anne respects and learns from the personified men, but the interaction between Anne and the Three Sisters illuminates the importance of female role models for girls within intellectual spheres. The Three Sisters not only eclipse the men on an academic level, but they inspire Anne in a way that makes a lasting impression on her, speaking to the impact of a gripping education on all girls and women.

III. Daredevil Doris

In *The Bear's Kingdom* (1897), a girl named Doris can only escape the clutches of the Bear King by completing three tasks. In her quest, Doris proves her worth and exemplifies how real female

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228 Crane, *Little Queen Anne*, 17.
229 Ibid., 20-21.
230 Ibid., 21.
231 After meeting the ambassadors, Crane writes that Anne "prefers a chat with Miss Muffet" (18). Even though Anne has access to accomplished individuals, she still pays respect to women like Miss Muffet, which is important as it validates women's conversation in the drawing room or domestic sphere. In other words, she is not an intellectual snob that shuns her own gender.
daredevils defied odds to climb insurmountable mountains and play physically demanding sports in the Victorian Era.

**PLOT SUMMARY**

*The Bear's Kingdom: A Fairy Tale (1897)*

Doris, an adolescent girl, plays with dolls and argues with her brothers just like an ordinary middle-class child—that is, until she gets into a scrape with a pack of disgruntled bears. Before Doris' peculiar adventure begins in the Bear's Kingdom, we learn of her life at home. Doris faces relentless teasing and taunting from her two brothers, both of whom threaten local animals with making them a part of the brothers’ taxidermy projects. Unable to stand the cruelty of her brothers, Doris intervenes to save these innocent animals at her own expense. Even though Doris has been saving her money to purchase new clothes for her dolls, she selflessly gives her brothers a shilling for a bat and a penknife for some swallows in order to set them free.

One day Doris wanders through the forest to pick some heavenly honeysuckle, only to discover that she has trespassed in the Bear King’s Garden. She pleads for the bears to forgive her, but it's too late—she is dragged to court where she faces an army of irate bears and their leader, King Bruin, all of whom resent man's encroachment upon their environment. To avoid the punishment of either death or transformation into a bear, Doris is charged with completing three tasks: she must catch an eel, steal a griffin's egg, and recover magic dew from a wizard's cave.

Fairly certain that Doris will fail, as no mortal has ever succeeded, the Bear King smugly sets Doris to her challenges. With no clue how to "catch the slimy spotted eel, that never yet was trapped by man," Doris luckily runs into a swallow, the father to the very same nestlings she had
saved from the grip of her tyrant brothers. Under the papa swallow's guidance, Doris finds a
glass frying pan designed to trap the eel, which Doris does to the fury and shock of the Bear
King. In the second task, Doris befriends a benevolent spider who grants her access to a
mountain path that leads to the nest of the griffin, a creature that is an enemy to the spider's
ancestors. With the encouragement of the spider and her own resolve to succeed, Doris returns in
one piece to fry up the Bear King's griffin egg omelet. For the final task, a bat visits Doris to
prepare her to reach the magician's cave: Doris must pass through a daunting earth-mole tunnel;
sneak by a ferocious, snoozing lion; run through a gate of flaming fire and rushing water; and
avoid falling under the spell of the garden. Despite the extreme physical effort required, Doris
endures the third task, and subsequently escapes the Bear's Kingdom with her life to return home
to her family.

AUTHOR

Eva C. Rogers

Rogers wrote juvenile fantasy and science-fiction stories at the end of the nineteenth
century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The Bear's Kingdom (1897) featured as a part
of the Red Nursery Series, published by the Sunday School Union. Other books in the Red
Nursery Series include a reprinting of Alice in Wonderland (1909) and The Little Runaways
(1899).

Besides The Bear's Kingdom, Rogers' known works comprise The Magic Mist and Other
Dartmoor Legends (1900) and A Tale of Four Foxes (1900). In a review of The Magic Mist,
an excerpt from the London Times states, "A more ambitious book is The Magic Mist ... It is not

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233 R. Reginald, Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, A Checklist, 1700-1974, ed. Douglas
Menville and Mary A. Burgess, vol. 1 (Wildside Press LLC, 2010), 448.
exactly unsuitable for children, but we should judge that it was aimed principally at their elders. It is a collection of tales elaborated from Dartmoor legends, and shows some imagination and poetic feeling. This book is handsome and well illustrated by Charles Eldred and P.B. Hickling.\textsuperscript{234} Although it appears Rogers published few works, it is clear from the praise by the \textit{Times} that she engaged with themes common to canonical works of the Golden Age. She narratively draws inspiration from fairy tales, engages a child and adult readership, and pairs the plot with visually appealing illustrations.

Rogers' \textit{The Bear's Kingdom} owes much to Carroll's \textit{Alice in Wonderland} (1865). After Alice stumbles down the rabbit hole, she is befriended by the Mad Hatter, befuddled by the Cheshire Cat, and nearly beheaded by the Queen of Hearts. Doris arguably follows in the footsteps of Alice. She mistakenly wanders into a peculiar land, where talking animals give advice, eels swim in treetops, and an irate Bear King forces her to embark on a quest.

\textbf{ILLUSTRATOR}

\textbf{J. R. Sinclair}

Sinclair, the illustrator of \textit{The Bear's Kingdom} (1897), produced work for other books in \textit{The Red Nursery Series}, named so for its vivid red covers. He illustrated \textit{All the Prettiest Nursery Rhymes} (1896), which highlights popular children's verses like "Little Miss Muffet" and "The Queen of Hearts." Sinclair signed his illustrations "JRS" in the bottom right or left corner.

Besides \textit{The Bear's Kingdom}, Sinclair designed and illustrated \textit{Victoria Toy Book} (1897), which demonstrates magnificent color illustrations, as opposed to the use of strictly black-and-white illustrations in \textit{The Bear's Kingdom}. As a tribute to Queen Victoria's Jubilee, Sinclair's \textit{Victoria Toy Book} compares the Victorians of 1837 to the Victorians of the day, with the

\textsuperscript{234} \textit{Literature, Issues 142-167} (London: The Times, 1900), 512.
illustrations highlighting the evolution that has taken place since Victoria's accession to the throne, particularly in Victorian fashion, customs, and technology.

Sinclair also illustrated for H. G. Wells, known for his works of science fiction like *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). Sinclair illustrated Wells' *Floor Games* (1911), which sketches out games for young children in a light-hearted manner. In chapters titled "The Game of the Wonderful Islands" and "Of the Building of Cities," Wells encourages children to infuse imaginative play into their everyday lives.

As seen through his illustrative contributions to a variety of texts, it is evident that J. R. Sinclair had a knack for visually depicting both fantastical and realistic subjects. His dynamically composed illustrations for *The Bear's Kingdom* truly animate Doris as a Female Explorer, along with the friends she makes, the hostile foes she confronts, and the extraordinary landscapes she traverses.

**QUEST FOR SELFHOOD**

**Women Denied and Demonized**

Doris’s adventure allows her to establish and exercise her agency in a unique way from other female characters in *The Faerie Queene in Children's Literature*, the sister site to *The Female Explorer*. Characters like Queen Summer or Princess Auréole display their courage and exercise good judgment to save their kingdom from rash men. Rather than taking action to save another human being, Doris completes these tasks to save her own life, an act with the most potential to establish her selfhood and evolve as an individual. Before Doris’s scrape with the bears that launch her into adventure, she repeatedly saves the lives of animals, like nestlings, from her insensitive brothers. When Doris accomplishes the tasks to save herself, she receives assistance from the animals she once helped. Yet she physically does the tasks herself,
demonstrating her independence as a hero figure. Doris requires no one to rescue her, for she knows that only she can rescue herself.

Although Doris, a girl, stars at the forefront of her own adventure tale, she must grapple with obstacles common to women that pushed against Victorian social boundaries that speak to the scarcity of female explorers in the period’s literature. When Doris faces the Bear King and his imposing court, his booming words immediately draw attention to the degree of the exclusion of women from adventure. The King cries out, “Is it not enough...that the creature known as 'Man' should hunt and kill us; is it not enough that he should rob us of our food and steal our young? shall he then also dare to follow and molest us in the privacy of our woodland retreat,—to enter our kingdom, and go unpunished?”235 The King uses the word “Man” to refer to humans in general, yet his message underscores the precise physical and violent actions in which men, not women, could participate. No individual should engage in conquering other beings, whether human or nonhuman, but the Bear never even considers that a woman or girl could pose a threat to his kingdom. Throughout the narrative, the Bear King continues to underestimate Doris. Although the Bear King rightly renounces man’s environmental greed, which parallels British imperial expansion, a young girl ironically receives all the punishment meant for the male perpetrators who have transgressed the Bear's Kingdom. Doris has only stolen honeysuckle, yet she must answer for these horrendous crimes that the Bear King himself has stated is exclusive to men.236

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236 Although women did not participate in British imperialism in the same way as men did, they were still complicit in Empire. Elizabeth Gaskell's novel, *Cranford* (1853) exemplifies how imperialism and orientalism figures into the domestic sphere, even in a small town. One character, Matilda Jenkyns, sells tea, while the other ladies of Cranford benefit from products such as Indian muslin.
The Bear King & Masculinity

Male prejudice towards audacious women manifests itself in the Bear King's attitude towards Doris: first, he underestimates her and expects failure; then he demonizes her as a witch; and finally exhibits bitter rage at her success, even though he gets what he wants out of the tasks. After Doris passes the first task by catching an eel in a frying pan, the Bear King's arrogance shields him from noticing the proof of Doris's success, the eel, that lays on the table, and he begins to mockingly laugh at her. When he realizes his mistake, the King launches into a rage, saying to Doris, “You must be a witch.” The Bear King’s conclusion that Doris is a witch mirrors the preconceptions men have held concerning powerful women for centuries—that is, women that can defy men must be witches or have evil powers. Rather than acknowledging Doris’s cleverness or capability, the Bear calls her a “witch” to slight her accomplishment. He likewise accuses Doris of being a magician, or at least being in league with one, after the second task.

What Rogers makes apparent is how the Bear King feels threatened by Doris’s success, illustrated in the scene where the King sees Doris deliver in the second task: "He started back in astonishment, glaring wildly at Doris; while an expression of alarm and abject fear crept over his surly features: then he observed that Doris was watching him, and tried to hide his consternation from her." The Bear King is not only surprised, but his alarm and fear caused by Doris’s triumph reveal a deep insecurity about how an inexperienced girl might escape punishment and, even worse, undermine his absolute power as king, especially given that no man has ever thwarted him before. As an explorer figure, Doris shows how women must face extra prejudice,

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237 Rogers, *The Bear's Kingdom*, 60.
238 Ibid., 77.
as they are not only constantly underestimated due to gender bias, but they also must contend with male resentment if they do succeed.

**The Shero: A Villain**

As heroic as Rogers presents Doris, her position as a “witch” or cunning woman always constitutes a part of the Bear King’s perspective about her, so that Doris cannot be seen as the strong masculine hero of adventure fiction that audiences applaud. Anxieties surrounding liberated, adventurous women and girls often manifest in the creation of villainous fictional women, which accounts for why few female explorers, adventurers, or heroes exist in Victorian literature. The typical Victorian adventure novel celebrates the "authoritarian, culturally dominant male," whose superiority stems from the inferiority of the native populations he encounters or conquers in these narratives.239 When women of the late nineteenth century demanded equal rights for education, employment, and citizenship, they upset the foundation of patriarchal power—that is, the pure, simple, weak natures of women that endow men with the powers of "tutelage, supervision, and protection."240 If the patriarchal status quo crumbles and women become active, men must be passive, which precisely underlies why female explorers must be scarce, as their existence in fiction implies incapable and submissive men in the British imagination.241

In order for Doris not to appear too convincing as the male adventure hero, Rogers checks Doris's explorer prowess by writing scenes where Doris faints, cries, or doubts herself.242

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240 Ibid.
241 Ibid.
242 Real female explorers and sportswomen in the Victorian period often had to either play up their feminine side when participating in masculine pursuits or demonstrate that femininity and, exploring or sport, could be compatible.
This gendered editorializing nevertheless betrays itself in depictions of Doris’s perseverance. Before embarking on her quest, Doris underscores the futility of crying after realizing it solves nothing, but despite this early epiphany, we find references to Doris’s fraught emotional state, characterized by words like “in a fever of anxiety,” “giving way at last to tears,” “with a cry of fear,” and even an episode where Doris actually faints. If Doris clings to her feminine sensibilities, she cannot rob all the glory from male explorers, whose authority depends on the ideals of masculinity. Male authority, however, falls under fire in the presence of a woman—explorer or not—seeking advancement for herself and her gender.

**ILLUSTRATING ACTION**

**The Victorians & Physical Exercise**

The three tasks require extreme physical exertion on Doris’s part: she captures an eel, climbs a mountain, passes through a tunnel, sneaks by a sleeping lion, and runs through a flaming gate of fire and rushing water. Because Doris exerts herself physically as an explorer, she breaks from norms that constricted Victorian women to leisure and rest. Of the numerous arguments against exercise for Victorian women, one stipulated that the "body contained only a limited and fixed amount of energy," so girls entering puberty should reserve their energy to help develop their reproductive organs and rest their minds to avoid "nervousness, feebleness, and even sterility." Doris, most likely an adolescent girl, hardly rests when she climbs trees, scales mountains, or crawls through tunnels in the Bear's Kingdom. If Doris attempted these pursuits in

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243 Rogers, *The Bear's Kingdom*, 56, 61, 75.
her everyday life, she would likely be scolded for endangering her womanhood, so her quest in another world, though life-threatening, liberates Doris from the monotony of Victorian prudence.

The Aesthetics of Physical Challenges

J. R. Sinclair’s illustrations best capture the physicality involved in Doris’s quest and draws attention to the athleticism required of Doris, which differs greatly from the fixed placement of other women subjects in The Faerie Queene that render them Pre-Raphaelite art objects. On the cover and frontispiece illustration, Doris runs furiously from the bears that pursue her, her speed characterized by swooping lines and dust clouds that stream behind her heels. When Doris tries to capture the eel, Sinclair composes the scenes as an illusion that makes Doris appear to jump boldly across the page; her body pops out from the bushes and her hand reaches across the illustration. Her streaming hair and dress ribbons suggest airborne movement.246 Likewise, danger is suggested in the later illustrations when Doris steals the griffin’s egg. The twisted, rugged mountains and lines cutting across the skies capture extreme weather conditions like wind and altitude and Doris’s hair and dress are depicted blowing behind her.247 Sinclair also employs extreme contrast in the shading of the flaming fire gate illustration to produce the dangerous heat, brightness, and fumes that Doris must surmount.248 The illustrations, therefore, potently enhance Doris’s agency, for she nearly always appears to be moving. Her body refuses to be frozen on the page, which articulates Doris’s freedom to move about, but also suggests the control she holds over her body.

Action in Art vs. Everyday Life

[247] Ibid., 71.
[248] Ibid., 96.
The freedom of movement expressed in Sinclair's illustrations of Doris was generally not experienced by women in Great Britain, but such freedom be realized for women who travelled abroad. For example, Isabella Bird’s travels to Hawaii marked the islands as a “space away from England’s social restrictions” due to the opportunities for vigorous exercise there. While in Hawaii, Bird enjoyed horseback riding, a sport which Victorian conduct books warned would produce coarse voices, undesirable complexions, and unwomanly muscles in women. Bird broke with Victorian norms, even abandoning sidesaddle for safety reasons, which provided her with complete access to Hawaii’s natural splendor. Bird’s experience with physical activity, much like Doris’s, proves that exercise invigorates women and liberates them from confinement perpetuated by gender constructs.

**VICTORIAN SPORTS**

**Hunting and Fishing**

Not all Victorian women remained completely confined or sedentary because of the standards that aimed to limit female participation in athletics or outdoor activities. The Victorian landed classes dedicated themselves to pursuits such as fox-hunting, shooting, and game fishing—the latter pertaining to Doris's first task when she catches the eel. The eel in *The Bear's Kingdom* is no ordinary one, as it thrives in a topsy-turvy environment in the treetops with other fish. In Doris's earliest attempt to catch the slimy creature, she musters all strength to

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249 Bird suffered many health problems, beginning in her childhood. She had a tumor at the base of her spine removed through surgery and suffered chronic back aches throughout her thirties and neuralgia. Victorian medicine she took such as bromide, laudanum, and chlorodyne did not relieve her symptoms. During the nineteenth century, doctors would prescribe exercise for male patients with aches. Bird traveled to the Sandwich Islands, where she discovered that strenuous activity and physical activity benefitted her greatly (McKenzie, *The Right Sort of Woman*, 13-14, 24).

250 Ibid., 25-27.

clamber up a tree, only for the eel to jump away, leaving Doris "panting and breathless." Certainly involving more effort than fishing lazily by the river, catching the eel constitutes a cross between fishing and hunting.

In the late 1850s, it finally became more acceptable for women to hunt, though men still disapproved and disliked women participating in the field at the same time. Since Victorians saw hunting as a means of developing manhood and near the end of the century, as a training ground for men to form their English character and exercise power as a "governing race," the Victorian woman's entrance into the sport of hunting disrupted the masculine ideologies associated with the sport. In order to enter the masculine world of sport, Victorian women had to "project an image of moderation and becoming femininity," so that the guise of nineteenth-century gender norms remained in place.

Despite the rules in place, late-nineteenth century publications such as Womanhood demonstrate that Victorian women did participate in competitive, thrilling sport. Womanhood, a periodical published between 1898 and 1907, spanned topics from women's intellectual and political interests to health and beauty culture. In 1899, it began running a "Womens Sports" section that reported on the activities of middle and upper class sportswomen, revealing participation in a variety of sports: archery, lawn tennis, swimming, hunting, shooting, field

253 Lady Brooke, the Countess of Warwick, had no reservations about showing her enthusiasm for hunting, as she participated openly in fashionable hunts in Leicestershire and Ireland. Shooting, however, was inappropriate for women, as it was extremely unfeminine. (Horn, Pleasures & Pastimes, 106-107, 112).
254 Just like the masculine values of hunting, modern sports have a close and important history with the British boys' public school, depending on "specifically Victorian images of masculinity," such as "physical prowess, gentlemanly conduct, moral manliness and character-training." (Jennifer Hargreaves, "Nature and Culture: Introducing Victorian and Edwardian Sports for Women," in Sporting Females (London: Routledge, 1994), 43.)
hockey, water polo, etc.\textsuperscript{256} A woman's role in sports, however, straddled two sides: it could both confirm her ornamental, leisurely position in society or reflect her strength and stamina not seen in everyday life.

Hunting demonstrates these opposing roles women occupied in sports. Women who rode by the side of men during a hunt conformed to stereotypes surrounding the "ideal lady's nature," as stated by Lady Greville, a nineteenth-century British society hostess and philanthropist.\textsuperscript{257} While the men in these hunts proved their masculine might and resilience, women were commended for their charm, frankness, beauty, and modesty. Many sportswomen, however, embraced a headstrong attitude towards hunting, as they bravely galloped across ditches and raced recklessly through fields. In the 1902 season, hunting women like the Duchess of Sutherland and the Honorable Violet Monckton proved their courage after skillfully dodging what could have been harmful falls. When high speed chases occurred in the hunt, female riders often led the pack, illuminating their talent as horsewomen. Although the majority of women did not partake in sports as much or on equal terms as men, these accounts show how some women did push the envelope of Victorian gender roles in order to amount to more than a decorative spectator.\textsuperscript{258}

\textbf{Masculinity & Mountaineering}

Like the adventures of the fictional Doris and real Isabella Bird Bishop, British women mountaineers also transgressed the boundaries of femininity in the Victorian Era. The idolization of nature in the Romantic Era provoked a British fascination with mountain climbing, which

\textsuperscript{256} Ibid., 146-47.
\textsuperscript{258} Parratt, "Athletic Womanhood," 146-47.
became an activity for wealthy British men eager to prove their masculinity. Regardless of the gender of its participants, mountaineering received public backlash, which was sparked by the Matterhorn Accident of 1865 that closed the "Golden Age" of mountaineering. Victorians debated the ethics of mountaineering due to the mortal danger it posed. Even Charles Dickens voiced his opinion, sneering at the need for men to confirm their own masculinity by climbing mountains, especially when the working class placed themselves in danger on a daily basis for the sake of having an industrialized nation. To many, it appeared unseemly that British men in their prime should risk falling to their deaths in the Swiss Alps, merely for personal glory or the thrill of testing one's physical and mental limits.

New Heights for Women

Male mountaineers not only had to contend with public concerns surrounding their sport, but they also failed to keep mountaineering a purely masculine activity when women entered the scene. Debates on a woman’s participation in sports went hand in hand with her dress, and female mountain climbers risked their reputation as well-bred women to join climbs up popular precipices of the era. Lucy Walker, a British mountaineer, was the first woman to reach the summit of the Matterhorn in 1871. The notable American female mountaineer, Marguerite "Meta" Brevoort, ascended the Alps numerable times in the 1860s and 1870s. Simultaneously

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260 The Matterhorn Accident occurred when four men died during the descent. Three of them were British, including Charles Hudson and Lord Francis Douglas. (Michael S. Reidy, “Mountaineering, Masculinity, and the Male Body in Mid-Victorian Britain,” *Osiris* 30, no. 1 (2015): 159.)
rivals and role models for one another, Walker and Brevoort exhibited how competitive drive fueled sportswomen's goals.

Just as Victorian Society saw no value in women travelers, they viewed female mountain climbers as engaging a foolish pastime—an opinion that extended to the Alpine Club, whose members’ reactions to women’s achievements in mountain climbing varied from ambivalence to bitter opposition.264 This range of emotion similarly surfaces in the Bear King’s responses to Doris’s success: surprise, hostility, mockery, and denial. When women began climbing to high altitudes with success, male mountaineers reacted by demarcating climbing zones that excluded women. Instead of welcoming the competition from the opposite gender, these "male alpinists attempted to invent an all-male upper zone that could be distinguished from the supposedly demasculinized glaciers and valleys.”265

When female mountain climbers crossed over into a sphere designated to prove one’s masculinity, their efforts disrupted the values associated with that sport, similar to how Doris’s involvement in a quest dismantles the masculine adventure story. Women did not need to demonstrate their masculinity by climbing, but rather, their equality, for “female mountaineers proved they were just as capable and determined as their male comrades.”266 In The Bear’s Kingdom, Doris proves herself more capable than any other mortal, for no one else has completed the tasks besides her. For instance, the spider tells Doris, “No mortal has ever yet scaled [the griffin’s nest], though many have tried to do so.”267 Thus, Doris’s unprecedented accomplishments stand out, as the animals call attention to the rigor of these physically demanding challenges. Doris represents the quintessential female explorer, for she literally

264 McKenzie, The Right Sort of Woman, 111.
266 McKenzie, The Right Sort of Woman, 112.
267 Rogers, The Bear’s Kingdom, 62.
climbs to unmatched heights and faces similar reactions to her achievements as real world female explorers.


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