THE GIFT IMPOSSIBLE

Representations of child removal in Australian children's literature, 1841-1941

Submitted by

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

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Dated

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Abstract

Many in the twenty-first century have become aware of, and incensed at, the child-removal policies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet child removal in Australia has been practised from the time of colonisation, using policies that were brought to Australia from England and modified for colonial society. What is less understood is that child removal has become normalised due, in no small way, to its perpetuation in the social consciousness through the pages of children's books. Australian authors have inducted their young readership into an adult ideology informed by the beliefs and practices of their own childhood, including their childhood reading. This thesis explores the use of the child-removal theme in one hundred years of Australian children's literature from its inception in 1841 and the role of children's literature in promoting the acceptance, or non-questioning, of removal. This will be done by first reviewing Australia's child-removal practices and how they were influenced by English child-rescue organisations, then analysing representations of ideal parenting models implicit in the literature and the way in which failure to reach such ideals led to, and justified, child removal. Finally, an analysis of literary instances of removal will be undertaken. Child removal in the literature knew no racial barriers and was presented as being inherent in Australian society, be it white or Indigenous. It will be argued that the way in which children's literature dealt with Indigenous issues created an environment in which Indigenous parenting was devalued, making child removal a logical conclusion. A broad range of Australian children's literature will be examined, from that produced by English-born colonists, to the quickly developing oeuvre produced by (white) Australian-born writers.

Introduction

"In terms of having a direction in life, how do you know where you're going if you don't know where you've come from?" (Confidential evidence 136, Victoria.[1] Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*. p. 11.)

The Rudd Government's apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008, followed by the 2009 apology to the Forgotten Australians, brought to the forefront of public consciousness the inhumane practice of forcible child removal. Prior to the apologies Australians were confronted with deeply personal stories of removal in the 1997 report, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, the 2001 *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record - Report on Child Migration*, and the 2004 *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or Out-of-Home Care as Children*. The epigraph above is indicative of the depth of feeling experienced by those who have been removed, who have been denied the family genealogy which underpins human identity. The removal of children from family and community has long been carried out in England and it is therefore no surprise that the practice should have continued in Australia. However, through reporting of the enquiries contemporary Australians became increasingly aware that from the earliest days of European occupation Indigenous children were removed from family and community, many of the British and Maltese children sent to Australia under child-migration schemes were often surreptitiously removed from family and sent to institutions that meted out abuse, and that institutionalised Australian children suffered similarly under child welfare practices designed to deal with the orphaned, the destitute and the unfortunate (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC]; Australian Senate *Lost Innocents; Forgotten Australians*). These events have been ably chronicled by removed children, social researchers and historians. However, the prevalence of child removal as a theme in Australian children's literature since the first children's book, *A Mother's Offering to Her Children* by Charlotte Barton in 1841, is less widely known.

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[1] Confidential evidence 136, Victoria: a man adopted into a non-Indigenous family at three months of age; still grieving that he was unable to meet his birth mother before she died.

The practice of child removal was one aspect of British policy imported to Australia. The focus of this thesis is on the way in which this practice was represented, and arguably reified, in Australian children's literature. The thesis takes its title from Ethel Turner's *Mother's Little Girl* (1904), a book that highlights the emotional conflict involved in relinquishing a child, and which had, as one of its working titles, "The Gift Impossible". The little girl of the book is the newborn sixth child of Ellice and Ted Waller, who, although well educated, find themselves in reduced circumstances caused by drought and unemployment. Ellice's sister, Alice and her husband Wilf, have property and money but are childless. They offer one hundred pounds for the baby. Turner started the writing process in July 1903 with the working title of "The Child That Was Lost", to be changed five months later to "Renunciation". By April 1904 the title had changed again to "The Gift Impossible". This was the title that Turner preferred, and under which it was first serialised in May in Adelaide's *The Register*, five months prior to the publication of the book. A subsequent serialisation in the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus* ran from 26 July 1904 to 17 January 1905 also under Turner's favoured title. However, the book was published in October 1904 by Ward Lock with the title *Mother's Little Girl*; a choice Turner dismissed as "vulgar & namby-pamby" (Turner *Diaries, 1903-1910*, 23 Sept 1904). In changing the name to "Mother's Little Girl", an action that also perplexed the *Sydney Morning Herald* ("Ethel Turner's Latest" 8), the relinquished child is aligned with her birth family, perhaps softening the child-removal theme by giving an indication to the reader of the book's outcome. "The Gift Impossible" reflects the unimaginable act Ellice is being asked to perform. The baby as gift foregrounds the intention to establish Alice and Wilf as an ideal family (that of a married couple with a child) and minimizes the focus on the child's removal because of her parents' financial misfortunes. Ethel Turner did give the title of "A Renunciation" to Chapter IX, a brief chapter in which Ellice makes the momentous decision to sell her baby.

The decision by Alice and Wilf to offer money for baby Sylvia is predicated on their belief that she was being wrongly parented. From the early colonial years non-Indigenous children considered to be delinquent or neglected were seen to be victims of parents who were deemed unworthy or incapable of raising children to the standards believed suitable for potential citizens of the country. Children in need of care and protection in the embryonic colonies were seen to be a threat to society and hence requiring "rescu[ing], sav[ing] and civilis[ing]" (Cunningham *Children of the Poor* 97; Rose 124-25; Swain "The State and the Child" 57; Jaggs 2). It was the threat of the child, the child as potential delinquent and threat to state welfare, which mobilised governments into action, until, as sociologist Nikolas Rose

claims, childhood became "the most intensively governed sector of personal existence" (123). Aboriginal families were subject to more intense surveillance. The removal of Indigenous children was justified by the belief that they were badly parented and living in impoverished conditions (Mellor and Haebich 53). Indigenous children were also removed from family and community based on the premise that the forced removal of mixed-race Indigenous children would lead to their integration within the non-Indigenous population (HREOC 27, 29; Mellor and Haebich 248).

Child-removal was chronicled and actively advocated in English child-rescue literature, such as *Night and Day* and the *Young Helpers' League Magazine* published by Thomas Barnardo, founder of Dr. Barnardo's Homes, and *The Child's Guardian* and the *Children's League of Pity Paper* published by Reverend Benjamin Waugh, Secretary of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. This literature circulated widely in the colonies and inspired local child-rescue societies to produce similar promotional material (Swain and Hillel 120). While magazines were initially published for an adult audience with the aim of soliciting financial and moral support, later publications were specifically directed towards children. In his introduction to the first edition of his *Children's Hour from the Children's Home* (1889), Wesleyan child rescuer, Thomas Bowman Stephenson, rationalised the production of the magazines as providing a "link between the children who have lost their father and mother, or who have been cruelly neglected or ill-used by their parents, and the children who have always been loved and cared for" (qtd. in Swain and Hillel 31) so that the privileged child reader could be reminded both of the inequalities of life and social class, and their obligations to the less fortunate children to whom Stephenson referred. While accounts of child removal were designed to obtain donations to the child-rescue movement, they also directed the reader to desired models of behaviour. Historian Shurlee Swain has argued that the reader's attitudes were reshaped by a literature that reconstituted "the everyday phenomenon of the street child as an object of pity and a victim of vice and neglect, a threat to and the embodiment of the future of nation, race and Empire" ("The Value of the Vignette" 4). By the end of the nineteenth century, changing views of childhood opened a space in which an idealised child, once reformed, could become the saviour of the neglectful parent (Swain "The State and the Child" 63); the innocent child, seen as "other" to the adult, has potential to offer adult redemption (Hillel "The Innocent Child in Literature" 42). The child as redeemer is a strong theme in Australian children's literature. The redemptive child represents childhood innocence and demonstrates a view that "childhood is, and should be, a time of

happiness, uncorrupted by the experiences of the adult world" (Hillel "The Innocent Child in Literature" 42).

Literary critic Sharyn Pearce argues that "children's texts have customarily been marginalised in cultural production and literary discourse" ("Reading Race [Review]" 401), however, the use of children's literature as an historical resource should not be undervalued. Authors writing for all ages and genres wield powerful authority over their readers, acculturating children into contemporary beliefs and ideals. Literary critic Peter Hunt describes the persuasive role children's literature asserts over readers as being "a mode rooted in an imbalance of power that leads to the inevitable manipulation of the text by, and/or within ideology" (15). Within literature for young readers various types of childhoods are presented to manipulate the reader into accepted social thinking, portraying "society as it wishes to be seen, in its positive aspects, and as it wishes its readers to perceive it, in its negative aspects" (15).

The manipulative ability of the author cannot be underestimated. As a range of scholars has shown, adult ideology was profoundly influential in immersing the child reader into the social mores and beliefs of their time (Knowles and Malmkjær 43; Hollindale 32; McGillis *The Nimble Reader* 17-18; Hillel "Race and Redemption" 580; K. Reynolds "Introduction" 3; Stephens *Language* 1-8). Eminent critic and historian of children's literature, Maurice Saxby, argues for the significance of authorial influence: "Children's books, as with other forms of literature, mirror the outlook, philosophies and values of the society that produces them" (*Books* 77). However, it should also be remembered that every child's background directs a different reading of each book (Hollindale 24-27). Children's authors exercise their power to shape their young readers by the use of language; within the realm of literature, language is a subtle and effective tool that reflexively directs the child reader (Knowles and Malmkjær 43-44). Such manipulation is not necessarily benign, as the themes of race and empire permeate early children's literature to such an extent that they are unconsciously absorbed. How would the child reader have accepted the idea of child removal? In the absence of the child's voice that is open to conjecture. Critic Clifton Fadiman claims: "The child reader is an automatic selecting mechanism. What he is not emotionally ready to absorb, his mental system quietly rejects" (Fadiman xv). Saxby, however, argues that what is not consciously assimilated by a child reader is retained for later use: "Psychological insights come unbidden, but thick and fast, during childhood. They are not necessarily articulated, but are tucked away for future reference" (*Books* 77).

Much has been written about the way the child understands the books that they read (or that are read to them). There is general agreement that the child is actively involved in the process of critiquing the text. Literary critics Evelyn Arizpe and Morag Styles argue the importance of "text-to-life connections" to gain an understanding of historical childhood reading practices within the home: texts that use "everyday conversational language" (8) and include "ordinary familiar experiences" guide the child reader to "make connections between their lives and what they read" (Arizpe and Styles 8). For this reason children's literature is a valuable historical resource because of the powerful influence the writer exerts over the child reader. Education scholar Margery Hourihan has argued that stories are "the most potent means by which perceptions, values and attitudes are transmitted from one generation to the next" (1). Literature for children is, however, a resource that has not always been seen as a possible source by historians interested in child removal.

Literary scholar Clare Bradford has argued that ideologies are transferred from author to reader in a subliminal manner and are accepted as they "embody ideas and concepts naturalised within a culture" (*Reading Race* 3 see also; "Representing Indigeneity"; "Fading to Black"; *Unsettling Narratives*). Bradford claims these readings perpetuate racist attitudes through generations of child readers, as children's literature developed into the thriving genre it is today. Accessibility to books gradually increased from colonial times with the introduction of free and secular education and broader access to mechanics' institutes and libraries. While children occasionally read adult books, the converse is also true; many adults also read, and enjoyed, children's literature. One example is *Lone Hand* editor Bertram Stevens, who in a letter to Ethel Turner wrote that he intended his children to read all of Turner's books and that both he and his wife had read them all (Stevens). This is indicative of the broad appeal of children's literature and of the pervasiveness of themes.

Literary critic and historian, Brenda Niall, provides an historical background and close reading of a range of Australian children's texts in *Seven Little Billabongs* and *Australia Through the Looking Glass* while Maurice Saxby gives a broad historical context in *Books in the Life of a Child, A History of Australian Children's Literature, 1841-1941* and *Offered to Children*. These works give a good entree into the use of children's literature as a source for exploring child removal, but literary scholars Clare Bradford, Margot Hillel, and Shurlee Swain pay specific attention to the topic of child removal in Australian children's literature. Bradford focuses on the removal of the Aboriginal child, arguing that given the paucity of Aboriginal children within the texts, the importance of their removal from family should be emphasised ("Fading to Black" 17). However, Bradford's focus on the Indigenous child

ignores a large proportion of child removal literature. Hillel and Swain expand the topic to examine the removal of non-Indigenous children as well, however, their focus was primarily on the literature published by the very organisations that were integral to the child-rescue movement. This thesis broadens the previous focus to examine ways in which literature written for Australian children incorporated the theme.

Historian Anna Haebich argues that the family is often described as the bedrock of Australian society: "the building block of the nation and its emotional heartland" (13), in which:

> bonds between parents and children have been considered sacrosanct and the experience of growing up within the circle of the family an inviolable right to be disrupted only through strictly controlled legal processes to protect the "best interests" of the child. (13; see also Swain "The State and the Child" 63)

However, the "best interests of the child" was a term that was interpreted subjectively by legislators, inspectors, child-savers and society alike. Whether practised by government, independent institutions, or "well-meaning" individuals, child removal was regulated by legislation, but it was legislation that placed the interests of nation and empire above any examination of the morality of the decision or the repercussions that might be experienced by the child.

The understanding of childhood as a distinct and separate stage of life only occurred after the fifteenth century. Prior to that childhood was by definition short, and more aligned with being lacking in adult qualities (Cunningham *Children and Childhood* 23; Kociumbas xii). There had long been concern about the use of the child as a provider of labour, but public awareness heightened with the Industrial Revolution as it migrated from within the family to the factory, making it more visible. A shift in governmental thought due to the pressures imposed by opponents of child labour led to increasing regulation of the practice. While child labour was not eradicated, it became moderated: children under nine were banned from working in factories and children under fourteen were restricted to working an eight-hour day (Cunningham *Children and Childhood* 142; *Children of the Poor* 164).

The Romantic Movement is often understood as a direct response to the Industrial Revolution which had brought the issue of child labour to such prominence. Through the Romantic Movement children and childhood came to be seen in a different light, as

something to be sanctified and protected. Nineteenth-century notions of childhood became sentimentalised, with the child taking a central place within the family, and it became more important for the child to enjoy recreation and be educated than to be put to work (Coveney 29; Cunningham *Children of the Poor* 74; Pinchbeck and Hewitt 2; Plotz 65; A. Richardson 169-70). This understanding was reflected in the literature for both adults and children of the time. In *Oliver Twist*, for example, "Dickens's childhood heroes did much to fix in the public mind the idea of a child as both pitiable and 'fresh from God', as the embodiment of a force of innate goodness which could rescue embittered adults" (qtd. in Cunningham *Children of the Poor* 74). To Evangelicals children were "messengers of God", who were to be protected and their souls saved (Cunningham *Children and Childhood* 41). Childhood came to be understood as the "best time of life" (Cunningham *Children and Childhood* 41). It was during the mid-nineteenth century that literature specifically written for children became more prolific and influential in the life of the child.

Many authors used the growing market for children's literature as a medium for inculcating children with the values of imperialism. Literature emanating from Britain was shaped by the nation's experiences as an imperial power, although the impact of this is a matter of dispute. Literary critic M. Daphne Kutzer and historian Patrick Brantlinger argue imperialism was an omnipresent part of British colonial life (Kutzer 11-24; Brantlinger x, 3, 8). Kutzer claims manifestations of empire were everywhere yet were so entrenched within the culture they were virtually ignored (xiv). However, historian Andrew Thompson argues that imperialism had minimal impact on the early colonists (and therefore on early children's literature); although it was an intrinsic part of life and society, the Empire's centre was fluid, influencing, and influenced by, its colonies (xiv, 4-5). Historians Bernard Porter and Catherine Hall agree with the all-encompassing nature of imperialism, but suggest it was easily modified by the circumstances of a new environment and new society (Porter 23-30; Hall *Civilising Subjects* 8-20).

As "'representatives' of the imperial power" (Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths 5) the writers of early Australian children's literature acculturated children into the imperial ideal (Hillel "Race and Redemption" 580). The imperial influence is evident in the racism, chauvinism and sexism that characterises early Australian writing for children. Literary critics Ashcroft *et al*, in *The Empire Writes Back,* argue that early Australian texts could never be considered Indigenous as landscape, custom and language are presented in terms of "otherness" (5). This also applies to texts produced "under imperial licence", that is, by Australian-born writers who had been educated under the English system, or who had

received assistance from the imperial system (Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths 5). In the early post-Federation era writers promoted imperial sensibilities with the use of imperial language, and it was some time before an "effective post-colonial voice" became increasingly dominant, and the level of imperial power diminished (Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths 7).

Just as theories of imperialism can contribute to an understanding of Australian children's literature, so an analysis of this literature can help to demonstrate the pervasive influence of imperialism. Patrick Brantlinger argues that: "Imperialism, understood as an evolving but pervasive set of attitudes and ideas toward the rest of the world, influenced all aspects of Victorian and Edwardian culture" (8). Citing children's literature critic J. D. Stahl, Daphne Kutzer argues that "children's literature [is] one of the most forceful means of acculturation [and] reflects the cultural aims of imperial policy" (xv). Using examples from British children's literature she demonstrates that such texts "reflect imperialism and empire as a normal part of the world and often encourage child readers to accept the values of imperialism" (Kutzer xiii). Her underlying thesis is that classic British children's literature from the late nineteenth-century to World War II presented an imperialism aimed at indoctrinating children. Publishing houses were also complicit in perpetuating imperialism to the reading public, their ideals transposed to the colonies and to Australian nineteenth-century children's literature.

Australia's book publishing industry was, from its beginnings, dominated by the partnership of David Angus and George Robertson in the Angus & Robertson book-selling, and later publishing, business (Alison 27). Angus & Robertson enjoyed successful publishing during the "heady years of the 1890s" (Alison 32), aided by the colonial manufacturing industry's growth in the printing field (Arnold "Printing" 104). However, the publishing industry was, from early on, stifled by overseas publishers who enjoyed a stronghold on the Australian reading public. Book exports to Australia more than doubled from the late nineteenth century to World War I, and tripled between World War I and World War II. Exports only ebbed during wartime, indeed the effects of World War II caused a dramatic reduction in book publication to such a degree that the press predicted a "book famine" (Lyons 401); uncharacteristically book publication maintained a reasonably steady pace during the Great Depression (Lyons 19). Australians in the book trade took an active part in this monopoly forging partnerships that benefitted Australian publishers and authors alike. Australian publishers often sent their books to their English partners for publication, so that they could concentrate on the easier and more economical areas of importation and retail (Nile and Walker 8), booksellers could put forward Australian written titles to their British

counterparts, and authors could take advantage of the ability to make their names known to a broader audience (Lyons 24). However, Australian publishing businesses did grow and by the turn of the century Angus and Robertson overtook overseas publishers in producing children's books (Scutter 300).

Australian publishing houses had more than their British counterparts to contend with in the early years of the twentieth century. World War I disrupted the production of all genres of Australian literature as prices for materials increased and lead was acquisitioned for the production of munitions, causing a stark increase in retail prices. This occurred at a time when Australian publishers became cautious about publishing first-time Australian authors. Literary critic Richard Nile and historian David Walker argue that by the end of the war Australian publishers were "producing fewer titles in reduced print runs for first editions, but with an increase of proven sellers" at this time (6).

The dominance of British publishers in Australia meant that books had to be written with a view to the British child reader as much, if not more, than the local child (Niall and O'Neill 2) constraining the opportunities for the emergence of a national voice. These constraints affected all genres of Australian literature, much to the chagrin of writer Vance Palmer who, in 1922, bemoaned the fact that "The Australian novel struggles painfully under the handicap of having to address itself primarily to a public overseas" (qtd. in Nile and Walker 8).

The reliance on the British publishing industry meant that the children of Australia's early free settlers read the same books as their English cousins. The serialisation of novels in newspapers and magazines took children's stories to a wide-ranging audience of both children and adults (Arnold "Newspapers" 255). Readers throughout the colony, but particularly those in rural areas, relied heavily on daily and weekly newspapers to keep them both informed and entertained (Arnold "Newspapers" 263); children were not ignored, with the inclusion of children's pages and comic strips, and serialised novels by Australian children's authors which were often read by children and adults alike. The broad nature and variety of reading material, some of it illustrated, directed towards children meant that all child readers were catered for.
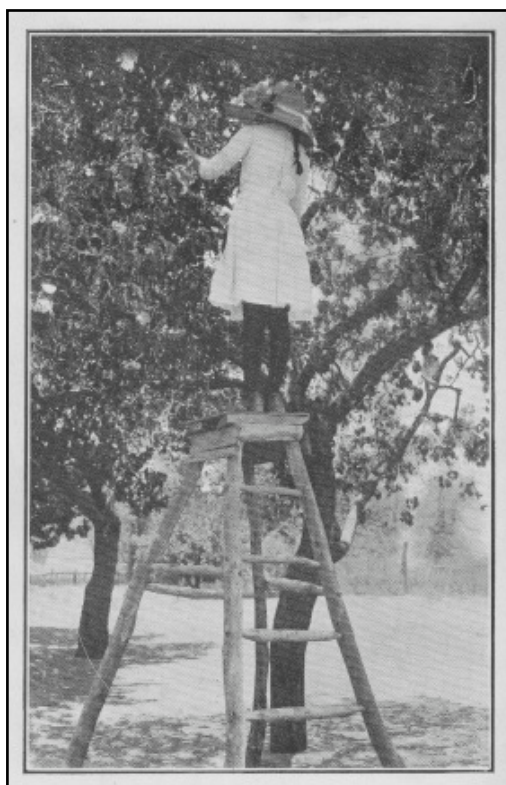
Figure 1: "Gem picking apricots in Gran's garden"
(Constance Mackness. *Gem of the Flat.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1914. p. 35.)

An analysis of children's texts must also consider any images contained therein, and, where appropriate, such analysis will be undertaken in this thesis. Far from being "merely decoration[s] to accompany the written text" (Anstey and Bull viii) literary theorists Michèle Anstey and Geoff Bull argue that images in children's books "are often used in powerful social situations, such as religious settings, schools, libraries or family settings, [therefore] the messages they contain can be seen as accepted and endorsed by society" (190). Figure 1 is a photograph from Constance Mackness's *Gem of the Flat* (1914). It depicts a scene of life familiar to many Australian children, implying the reader would be a child, probably female. The fact that the copy of the book used for this thesis was originally awarded as Scripture Prize to a young female student at a rural Victorian primary school provides some evidence of this. Further, in the context of child removal, the illustration offers an idealised childhood. The child is faceless, allowing the reader's own image to be transposed to the illustration. This photographic image demonstrates that photographs offer real children/people in real situations, giving authenticity to the book and its themes, and constitute another method of authorial manipulation of the child reader.

Australian children's literature evolved from its beginnings in 1841 with *A Mother's Offering to her Children* written under the pseudonym of A Lady Long Resident in New South Wales (Charlotte Barton), and was greatly influenced by English writers and the links

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to England that permeated much of Australian society until the mid-twentieth century. Children's literature, as defined by historian F. J. Harvey Darton, encompasses books that give "spontaneous pleasure" to children, including books of a didactic tone, without being principally teaching books (1). There were very few dedicated children's books prior to the seventeenth century, but by the mid-eighteenth century children's literature became an adjunctive sub-category of English literature (1). Early children's literature was Puritan in nature, moralistic in tone, religious, guiding the child reader to a moral life and the uncertainty of salvation (Saxby *History* 14; Darton 2-3). Fables and fairy tales, again with a moralistic tone, provided much for the child's imagination and stemmed from the oral tradition of storytelling. Far from being the domain of the upper classes, children's literature became mainstream with the publication of chapbooks, which saw the children's book travel from village to village and home to home by way of the pedlar (Darton 68), and the serialisation of stories in newspapers and religious tracts. It is generally accepted that by the 1890s children's fiction took on a distinctive character. Brenda Niall argues that at this time "local writers displaced the hastily-scribbling travellers and the stay-at-home romancers" (1), and that books authored in the first half of the century, although different, are "antecedents" of the literature of the latter half of the 1800s (1). Niall categorises colonial children's literature into four groups: settlers' novels in which "moral earnestness and a commitment to emigration" dominates (2); adventure stories, within which a young hero, inquisitive, adventurous and hardy, quintessentially the outdoors boy who could turn his hand to anything, is faced with "colonial perils" and "any number of unpleasant tests"; novels with a "religious impulse" that focus on religious conversion and moral superiority; and, the semi-documentary which documents early colonial experiences veiled in fictional form (3). Each of these categories is represented in the books examined here.

The implied readership for the children's texts examined in this thesis is white, parented children who read of the fictional children as "models demonstrating the attitudes, values, and moral codes appropriate to the children of colonizers" (Bradford "Representing Indigeneity" 90). These books exposed the colonial child to a specifically Australian manifestation of British imperial ideals. "In an age which desires to propagate imperialist sentiments", literary critic Peter Hollindale argues, "children will be an army of incipient colonizing pioneers" (26). In the Australian colonial context, while white child characters were generally portrayed along gendered lines, the Indigenous child was commonly constructed as "Other" and threatening (Saxby *Offered* 23), able, if removed from Aboriginal

influences early enough, to be Christianised and assimilated into white society, though never considered as equal to the white child.

Australia's first children's book focuses on difference and otherness, reflecting colonial cultural experience as much as British Imperial influence. While English books of the same era have evolved from their moralistic and didactic beginnings, Charlotte Barton, in a new and strange land with an uncertain future, styled her work on the Puritan formula. Rosemary Wighton, who wrote the introduction to the facsimile edition of Barton's book, claims it to be a conservative work, comparing it to English books published around the same time by Charles Dickens, Edward Lear and Captain Frederick Marryat (Barton xi), while literary critic Dinny Culican-Ward describes it as a mix of "didacticism and delight" (18), and Brenda Niall as "not a failed novel, but a kind of documentary" (58).

Figure 2: Charlotte Barton.
(Marcie Muir. *Charlotte Barton: Australia's First Children's Author*.
Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1980.)

Charlotte Barton (1796-1867) was first acknowledged as the author of *A Mother's Offering* by Marcie Muir in her 1980 book *Charlotte Barton: Australia's First Children's Author*.[2] Barton's book, believed to be her one and only, differs from many of the works that followed in that she used the area's geography and events that had currency rather than those

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[2] See Marcie Muir's book *Charlotte Barton: Australia's First Children's Author* for a thorough account of the rigorous investigation to find the book's true author and a comprehensive biography of Charlotte Barton.

of the past (Culican-Ward 20), and as such was able to bring awareness and familiarity to an audience living in the otherness and harshness of a new colony.

Barton's style is by no means original, but is representative of the Rousseau style that originated in France and quickly influenced authors in Britain (Saxby *History* 27; Hammill 514; Culican-Ward 12, 15). The children's books that followed on from Barton's iconic work initially continued the tradition of didactism and morality indicative of the style of Victorian literature (Hammill 514). However, by the end of the nineteenth century, Australian writers had embraced the models of children's literature then being expounded by English writers, that is, the adventure novel, fairy story and domestic novel, and while at first strictly following the English model, worked towards making them uniquely Australian.

The timeframe for this thesis is the first hundred years of Australian children's literature, beginning with Barton's work, and finishing one hundred years later in 1941 with Pixie O'Harris's *Fortunes of Poppy Treloar* and Irene Cheyne's *Annette of River Bend*. This period is also covered in Maurice Saxby's seminal history, *Offered to Children: A History of Australian Children's Literature, 1841-1941* (1998). Saxby's work is wide-ranging, arguing that children's literature reflects the changing relationship between the settlers and the land, which is initially depicted as alien but over time becomes familiar and, if not comforting, then an "unpredictable friend" (*Offered* 22). This thesis employs a similar methodology to Saxby in order to analyse attitudes to child removal. The list of children's books with a child-removal theme included in this thesis is not exhaustive, but is indicative of the pervasiveness of the topic within a range of genres, including adventure stories, poems, religious stories, domestic stories and autobiographies. Children's books with a child removal theme have been published in every decade between 1841 and 1941, with the bulk being written between 1890 and 1920, the period during which Australian publishers became increasingly prominent. Many were given to children as reward books, for scholarly or religious excellence. Society's understanding of child removal is that it is the Aboriginal child who is more readily removed, their Otherness making them worthy of re-homing. However, the converse is in fact the case with many more white children being removed and this is reflected in children's literature in which the vast majority of books with the theme involve the removal of a white child bought, stolen, abandoned or relinquished. The prevalence of white child removal demonstrates the general invisibility of Indigenous people in children's books.

At this point it would be advantageous to clarify some of the child removal terms that will be used in this thesis. The term "relinquishment" denotes that the parent/s has authority

over the child's removal. "Abandoned" again indicates parental authority at play, although the outcome, that is, with whom the child will be re-homed, is not guaranteed. "Removal" indicates the child is taken from her birth family unknowingly, or against the wishes of the parent. It is a term that has become distinct from that of "stolen", even though they are ultimately the same; both labels elicit emotive responses from the reader. Within the media, and in discussions relating to the removal of white and Indigenous children, the term "remove" has become synonymous with permission being granted, and "stolen" permission denied, although, as historian Naomi Parry argues, consent does not always equate to legitimate consent (1-21). The end result is the same – a child removed from family and community and placed in an alien and often unfriendly environment. The term "stolen" was initially applied to Indigenous Australians. However, the *Bringing Them Home Report* provoked a backlash from people who considered themselves "the white stolen generation", and who also felt they "deserved equal recognition and access to services as a result of their childhood experiences" (Australian Senate *Forgotten Australians* 3). A white child is also stolen from family, extended family and community, and is also often raised in an alien environment so at odds with the child's birth environment as to cause psychological distress. A change of social status leading to different social expectations can have a similarly profound effect, as can a change of environment.

Depictions of Indigenous child removal make up around one third of the books examined; without exception these child characters were removed and stolen due to the perceived inability of families and communities to successfully raise a child, and to society's widespread notion of the irredeemability of the Aborigine. The Aboriginal child may be removed under the guise of failed parenting but at the core is the belief that Aboriginal children must be "civilised" and that this is best achieved by immersion in a white community. While instances of Indigenous child removal are fewer than white child removal, it is a theme that runs through most of the century with some books being continuously republished into the twenty-first century. One such book is Jeannie Gunn's *The Little Black Princess* which was published in various editions, serialised in *The Bulletin*, re-worked for inclusion in *The School Paper*, published in Braille and underwent numerous translations, not to mention numerous reprints, from its initial publication in 1905 to 2010, all indicating the book's popularity through succeeding generations.

This thesis commences with an historical overview of child removal in Australia. The colonies, faced with a sub-class of children who were problematic in their seeming need for welfare, were influenced by the methodology and legislation that had been put into place in

England. The removal of Aboriginal people, child and adult, was practised in Australia from the time Europeans first set foot on Australian soil, and was predicated initially on the need for mediators, translators, trackers, and manual and domestic workers. Non-Indigenous child removal was justified under the guise of social control, personal improvement and financial gain. All forms of child removal were influenced by child-rescue organisations which in turn normalised the practice to the degree that it became so entrenched in Australia's psyche it was easily transposed into Australian children's literature from its inception.

Chapter Two focuses on the family unit and in particular the mother's role in maintaining and reinforcing social norms, arguing that child removal was seen as justified when families failed to perform this role. By positioning the child as the nation's future, heavy burdens were placed on families to raise children to acceptable standards. While early definitions of "family" incorporated whole households, by the twentieth century "family" became synonymous with mother, father and child/children, each individual expected to adhere to the role dictated by society. It is generally accepted that it is the mother who provides the care and nurturing of children, yet motherhood suffers the contradictions of being considered innate and also contingent on class and race. Mothers who are considered to fail, those who fall outside these divisions, are at risk of also being considered unsuitable to raise children and therefore have their children removed.

This is contrasted in Chapter Three with the role of the father whose patriarchal authority gives him powerful influence over his children. The main qualification for fatherhood is the ability to provide for the family, predicated on his high social standing and willingness to work. The flawed father could redeem himself by adhering to these criteria, however the failed father, one who is abusive or alcoholic, and therefore unworthy of redemption, faced the removal of his children. Yet this is not a predictable scenario as even the failed father still maintained a degree of authority over his family, relinquishing his children on his own terms.

The perceived failure of parents therefore led to the assumption that children should be removed. It is an assumption underpinned by removal policies of charities and governments. As the population of colonial Australia grew it became obvious that children, the future of the nation, needed to be raised in a manner dictated by socially accepted mores. Those who did not were considered to be badly parented; the only option – removal from the negative influence of family. Chapter Four focuses on justifications and instances of child

removal and explores how children's literature came to promote the acceptance, or non-questioning, of such practices.

For Aboriginal children the issue is further complicated by race as an expression of Imperialism that is also used in the literature to normalise child-removal, an issue that will be explored in Chapter Five. In light of the fact that Australia's Aborigines were seen to be irredeemable, it became imperative that the best course of action was to remove the Aboriginal child from family and community. Whiteness was all-important, and the slightest degree of whiteness in an Aboriginal child gave justification for removal as she would be considered more suitable to white sensitivities and more able to be "civilised".

Central to the thesis is the important role children's literature has in shaping societal attitudes. By examining the child-removal theme in such literature, the thesis will expand upon previous research to provide an alternative insight to this historical practice by arguing that literature designed to be read to, or by, white children, whether religious tract literature, fiction, non-fiction or memoirs, normalised child removal, justifying it by an implicit reference to the racism, paternalism and sexism which the child reader was assumed to share. The Conclusion will attempt to explain why this is so, and why Australian children's literature has been so influential in propagating the child-removal theme from the nineteenth century, encouraging the child reader to unquestioningly accept the practice and ensuring its survival into the twenty-first century.

Chapter 1 – History of Child Removal

"…the fact is *you must spend the money on these children* … Shall it be by-and-by in the shape of rates and taxes for the support of police, magistrates, justices, houses of detention, convict prisons, and to maintain the existence of hundreds of degraded lives? or shall it be now…in the form of donations in encouragement of preventive institutions like our own…" (T.J. Barnardo. "An Alternative. Which?" *Night and Day*. p. 113.)

On 15 September 2007 three-year-old Qian Xun Xue was left by her father at Melbourne's Southern Cross Railway Station.[3] The worldwide media coverage that followed whipped the public into a frenzy, leading to numerous offers to adopt the child (AAP). What became increasingly noticeable was that many people felt that Qian Xun, who became known by the Anglicised moniker of Pumpkin, could only benefit from complete removal from family and community, despite the fact that it was quickly established she had extended family eager to care for her. Whilst twenty-first century legislation allows for child removal as a last resort, and apologies are made for the removal practices of the past, it is a practice that remains firmly lodged in the popular imagination. This chapter will explore Australia's child-removal practices and how they were influenced by English child-rescue organisations. It will provide the background information that is necessary to understand the ways in which the naturalisation of child removal in early children's literature helped to embed the practice in the Australian psyche.

Children have changed hands in various ways throughout history. Historian Hugh Cunningham writes that "the history of abandonment points up the fact that there were constantly being born large numbers of children whom parents were unable or unwilling to rear, and that families would hand over these children to other agencies where they were available" (*Children and Childhood* 125). However, facilities for the abandoned child were not always available; in its first seventeen years, the London Foundling Hospital selectively admitted abandoned children, leaving many needy children without support. Alternatives had to be found (*Children and Childhood* 125). The Foundling Hospital, and later similar

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[3] Qian Xun Xue's mother had been murdered by the child's father.

institutions, was founded in reaction to the prevalence with which children were abandoned; many were discarded and left to die from exposure, others were fortunate enough to be "rescued by the kindness of strangers" (Boswell 49). Historian John Boswell points to the Christian Church as both a cause and a beneficiary of child abandonment. By "insist[ing] more rigidly than any other moral system on the absolute necessity of procreative purpose in all human sexual acts" it was complicit in creating an excess of children, but as the provider of "humane" methods of infant abandonment it benefitted from the admiration accorded to "strangers" who offered such children succour (Boswell 430).

Beginning in the sixteenth century, the English Government introduced a Poor Law which attempted to address the problem of orphaned and destitute children by utilising the services of other poor women to care for them (Hendrick 41). In 1834 the English Poor Law system underwent a major upheaval during which administration moved from the parishes to Government with the Poor Law Amendment Act (Hendrick 41; Jaggs 10; Dickey 26). Condemning the old system as one that "helped to perpetuate pauperism and to create nurseries for crime" (Hendrick 41) the new Poor Law authorities set out to prepare needy children for their future as potential citizens. It was felt that the needy child should be groomed for an independent future through schooling, religious education and instilling a strong work ethic. However, historian and sociologist Harry Hendrick argues that in reality the new system differed little from the old (41). Children were to be institutionalised within a workhouse environment that became increasingly crowded and unable to cope with basic necessities, let alone provide the training that individuals who were beginning to build an expertise in child care had identified as essential.

There were many reasons why a child might be in need of care other than that provided by biological parents. An orphaned child was occasionally taken in by relatives or neighbours, however, in an era in which families could be large, this might not be practicable. The destitute or abandoned child presented another problem. Her background of impoverishment and often abuse meant that she became problematic for extended family or neighbours. She was also at risk of being irredeemable Swain and Hillel 24) and thus, a threat to society and nation (Farrar 114-16). The chapter's epigraph is the closing remarks made at a "large and influential" meeting by Thomas Barnardo in 1879, addressing the question of whether neglected children should be saved rather than left to become liabilities to society as criminals later ("An Alternative. Which?" 113). Social reformers agonised over a solution to this ongoing problem.

There was no shortage of child-rescue organisations in England during the nineteenth century, but the cohort was spearheaded by a core group of four: Dr. Barnardo's Homes, the National Children's Home, the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Swain and Hillel 3). Their success hinged on the entrepreneurial leadership of their founders, respectively, Thomas Barnardo, Thomas Bowman Stephenson, Benjamin Waugh and Edward de Montjoie Rudolf, coupled with a strong focus on the use of the written word to elicit moral and monetary support (Swain and Hillel 17-19).

Many of Britain's child rescuers were influenced by German, Johann Wichern, who in 1833 founded the Rauhe Haus, "family"-based institutionalised care for vulnerable children. The Rauhe Haus, and Wichern's Inner Mission, an evangelical movement based on the principles of civilising the "heathen" and charitable works, became influential in the work of Britain's child rescuers, who sought to apply the civilising mission in the domestic environment (Swain and Hillel 8, 67; Stephenson "The Family System" 1-2). Wichern was concerned that Christian missionaries focussed on bettering the overseas needy, to the detriment of the domestic need: "relief of all kinds of spiritual and temporal misery [would be gained] by works of faith and charity" within the domestic sphere (Swain and Hillel 8, 67; Hurst 326; Ramsland 38-39).

Wichern also expounded the placement of children into "family" situations, although the term family came to mean anything from gender-segregated houses of twelve children in a community of one hundred, as favoured by Wichern, to twenty children housed in communities of up to three hundred, later preferred by Thomas Bowman Stephenson, who claimed to have bettered the Wichern model ("The Family System" 2). A central concept of this style of housing was that of attaining self-sufficiency, by using the children to perform manual and domestic duties that would also prepare them for a suitable life after institutionalisation. In using this model of housing needy children, the child rescuers were also fulfilling the requirement to justify child removal by arguing their placement into family style accommodation bettered the situation the child was removed from (Swain and Hillel 33). In England, social reformer Mary Carpenter was pivotal in the move towards family-style accommodation for needy and delinquent children. Her premise was based on the threefold belief that: children require love; children should be treated as children, not adults; and children belonged in families (Cunningham *Children of the Poor* 112; *Children and Childhood* 148) In 1851 a conference on juvenile delinquency was organised in Birmingham by Mary Carpenter and lawyer Matthew Davenport Hill, both advocates of reformatory

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schooling (Ramsland 38). The conference was to have a profound impact on contemporary social opinion (Ramsland 38) advancing the argument that Britain's needy children were equally deserving of salvation as those of the colonies:

> The soul of the little ragged urchin in the streets is as precious in the sight of God as that of a Hindoo or a Hottentot … Do not let us, then, leave the heathen abroad uncared for, but let us, likewise endeavour to reclaim the heathen perishing at home, and who are living in darkness as profound, and in habits as debased as in the darkest places of the heathen world. (qtd. in Hall *Civilising Subjects* 372)

Carpenter was central in the movement towards integrating the work of philanthropists and Christian missionaries in child rescue at home as "'Little heathens' were not really different under the skin" (Hall *Civilising Subjects* 373). Indeed, far from equating the neglected child with overseas races, British parents were considered to be worse. Barnardo used race to great effect in his literature, arguing that "neglectful parents … were worse than foreign savages only in that they were the products of Christian civilisation rather than having been 'discovered' by it" (Swain and Hillel 80).

Most legislation for the betterment of children was predicated on the dual belief of the child as victim and child as threat, and therefore a risk not only to themselves, but also to society (Hendrick 7, 9). Many believed that the child's perceived neglect, irredeemability and lost childhood would be perpetuated in society and future generations. The evangelicals believed that the neglected child was riddled with heathenism and could only be successfully rescued if shown a moral and Christian way (Hendrick 8). Hendrick argues there is basically no difference in child as victim and child as threat. Both can be expressed in relation to the child's body and mind: the body and mind of the child considered victim exhibits the same devastating characteristics as that of the child considered threat. It is society's understanding of a child's circumstances that decree whether the label attached to the child is that of "victim" or "threat" (Hendrick 11-13).

Early twentieth-century legislation was guided by the idea that:

> there is little or no difference in character and needs between the neglected and the delinquent child. It is often a mere accident whether he is brought before the court because he is wandering or beyond control or because he has committed some offence. Neglect

leads to delinquency and delinquency is often the direct outcome of neglect. (Departmental Committee on the Treatment of Young Offenders, 1927 qtd. in Hendrick 9)

Therefore, the neglected child and delinquent child could be housed together in approved schools that were an amalgam of earlier reformatory and industrial schools (Hendrick 9-10).

Legislation to control children was heavily influenced by the way in which childhood was understood (Cunningham *Children and Childhood* 137-40; Hendrick 1-17). The term "childhood" is a social construction that while being subject to a degree of flexibility over the centuries, remains firmly ensconced in the public psyche. There are debates as to the degree to which childhood was acknowledged as a "separate stage of human existence" from ancient times through to the middle ages (Cunningham *Children and Childhood* 25). However, it is also recognised that by the beginning of the time with which this thesis is concerned, the mid-nineteenth century, family and familial experiences became of paramount importance in a child's life. Writers who employed the term "children of the poor" assumed a shared understanding of the definitions of "childhood" and "the poor". Cunningham claims the term evoked "fear or sympathy": children should be feared if they were "dirty/disorderly" and a threat to society; and sympathised with as the poor child was seen to have been denied contemporary perceptions of a "proper childhood" (*Children of the Poor* 4). Cunningham also argues that "the child was 'the other' for which one yearned" (*Children of the Poor* 3). Childhood became the antithesis of adulthood:

The more adults and adult society seemed bleak, urbanized and alienated, the more childhood came to be seen as properly a garden, enclosing within the safety of its walls a way of life which was in touch with nature and which preserved the rude virtues of earlier periods of the history of mankind. (*Children of the Poor* 3)

The new concern about children and childhood is reflected in the writings of the Romantics who wrote with a moral sensibility and responsibility for the plight of the working child in an increasingly industrialised England. Poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote of the labouring child's lost childhood and innocence:

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time:

> Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen
>
> Like a snowball, in the rime.["] (Barrett Browning 37-40)

Death is all around, but the labouring child has a stoic maturity that yearns for an early death rather than a harsh, lingering life:

> ["]It is good when it happens," say the children,
>
> "That we die before our time". (Barrett Browning 51-52)

Writers such as Barrett Browning reflected the Romantic views of childhood that came to permeate the wider population. Society's attitudes towards literature at this time also changed from "the old interest of the 'silver fork' school of novelists" (Ackroyd 489). Peter Ackroyd argues that "a novel was thought more important if it faced the reality of its period full on" (489), and this is something that the novels of Charles Dickens, did. Dickens was widely read both in England and the colonies, and influenced many other writers, including Ethel Turner. Turner noted in her diary entry of 5 September 1894, while reading David Copperfield: "I think I read all my Dickens too young and am only fully appreciating it now" (*Diaries, 1889-1902*). This was written at the start of Turner's writing career, in the same year her influential debut novel, *Seven Little Australians* was first published.

Social historian Linda A. Pollock argues that during the upheaval of nineteenth-century industrialisation and social unrest in England, it would have been hard for parents' attitudes towards children to remain unchanged (110). Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century, children were regarded as having a "new status and added respect" (Hopkins 315). Childhood was increasingly perceived as being a "separate stage of life" that had "the power to mould and determine the life of the adult" (Cunningham *Children of the Poor* 3). With a change in attitudes towards the way children were perceived came a change in the way they were expected to fit in to society. In England, children had long been relied on as a source of labour in agrarian communities. However, with the shift to city living came a larger proportion of children on the streets. Some were able to forge an income to supplement family wages as street sweepers and flower sellers, for example. Others spilled out onto city streets to escape the restrictions of slum dwellings, large families or neglectful parents. This increased visibility presented a problem for many in society who felt children should be clean, industrious and Christian and that parents were failing in their duty to prepare their offspring for future life as good citizens.

It was concerns such as these that led to an increased focus on policy initiatives to deal with the "children of the poor". Shurlee Swain *et al* argue that "the understandings of children and childhood developed by child rescuers were highly influential in structuring" these policy changes (Swain, Hillel and Sweeney 1). Child rescue focused attention on the supposedly malleable child, breaking up families perceived as inadequate and placing the children in institutions now reconstituted as "homes". Removal could be temporary in cases where families were able to be rehabilitated, but the focus was always to be on the long term interest of the child. The chapters that follow will demonstrate how children's literature was complicit in this transformation, often depicting the labouring child as being in need of rescue.

The British child-rescue movement had its origins in the Evangelical movement and drew direct parallels with its overseas missionary work (Swain and Hillel 11-12). At the turn of the nineteenth century Christianity was a powerful force as the majority of the population either attended church services or had been influenced by the Sunday School system (Thorne 6). This is contrary to contemporary thought that the lower classes were by nature heathen. Their status protected them "from the temptations to which their betters succumbed", and that reward for acquiescence of their submissive status would come in the form of salvation "in the life to come" (Thorne 34). This demonstrates the powerful, if resigned, religiosity of the poor.

Within the Christian Churches, the evangelical movement's push into missionary work brought to the masses tales and images of strange lands and strange peoples that mesmerised many. Like Wichern, English child rescuers sought to redirect this interest to the domestic sphere. At a time when the primary focus of missionaries was on the overseas heathen, they constituted local communities as just as, if not more, deserving of care. This concern was not restricted to the overcrowded cities: "No part of the country could have been more remote from the center of operations, and certainly none was more hopelessly heathen and lost than Western Lancashire" (Nightingale 19; see also Thorne 2). In fact it was felt that rural communities in particular fell outside the borders of industrialisation and civilisation. As a commercial traveller observed: "The instant we get near the borders of the manufacturing parts of Lancashire, we meet a fresh race of beings" (E. P. Thompson 219; see also Thorne 2).

Such campaigns brought many to recognise that the needy at home were just as deserving of the evangelicals' attention as those on the periphery. At an 1852 meeting Reverend Stanford voiced his disappointment with society's neglect for the distress in their own communities, claiming they would "drop a tear for the distant heathen, and neglect the

heathen in the next street" (qtd. in Hall *Civilising Subjects* 372). The tide began to turn when in 1851 activists such as Mary Carpenter brought to the forefront of society's conscience the increasing numbers of juvenile outcasts in Birmingham (Hall *Civilising Subjects* 372).

Religious historian Hilary Carey contends that the evangelicals "made fervent missionaries, living out lives dominated by religion and personal sacrifice" (Carey 12). Those who turned to child rescue believed that they "were called to the work by God, or God speaking through the voice of a child" (Swain and Hillel 7). This belief underpinned the movement's response to the problem of street children and the neglected child: the child was capable of redemption through the power of Christian teaching. The child rescue movement was spearheaded by Christian men who believed in the power of the gospel to "bring salvation to the urban poor" (Swain and Hillel 23). For such men, the child was of primary importance, the best hope for an improved lower class and also a means of teaching the better placed child the inconsistencies of life (Swain and Hillel 31). Evangelicals had a strong belief in the role of home and hearth in leading a virtuous life, and evangelical women took on active roles within Church, community and family (Carey 12). The ragged, hungry waif was the interface of charitable work and was depicted in child-rescue literature, an emotive reminder of child neglect, and a call to action to evangelicals, philanthropists and well-meaning citizens.

Early child rescuers readily understood the power of the written word in the promotion of their cause, relying on publications such as the *Children's Advocate*, *Church of England Messenger*, *Highways and Hedges*, *In Our Midst*, *Night and Day* and *Our Waifs and Strays* to elicit support. Some writers of articles continued themes of child rescue and child neglect into book form, thus reaching a broader audience. Central to the publications' philosophy was the belief that early removal of children brought maximum redemptive benefit. In "Heredity Versus Environment", for example, in a tone which reflects the Romantic views of childhood, Barnardo despairs that children living in London's slums were at risk of losing the "grace and beauty of childhood" and urges early rescue:

> There is no inherent tendency in any boy or girl, no matter how
> descended, or how surrounded, which may not be eradicated, or at
> least subjugated, under favourable conditions. In other words, in the
> fierce contest between Heredity and Environment I firmly believe
> that, all other things being equal, Environment is the more potent
> force of the two. ("Heredity Versus Environment" 176)

Thomas Bowman Stephenson shared these views, writing in *Highways and Hedges*: "the first step towards civilisation was to put off the old clothing, and to be introduced to the bath!" ("Lights and Shadows" 5). In *The Children's Advocate* Stephenson is more illustrative:

> The great problem of modern education is – how the children may be
> snatched from the vicious influence of their natural associations, and
> surrounded with such ennobling and purifying influences as will
> mould their character according to the divine ideal of what children
> and men should be. ("Our Work" 1)

The influence of child-rescue literature cannot be underestimated in its power to direct public sentiment.

The ease with which child removal became integrated into society's consciousness can be understood in light of the relationship between child-rescue organisations and nineteenth-century authors. There was a two-way dialogue between the child-rescue movement and the writers producing children's literature. While the writers found material from the child-rescue organisations, the child rescuers perpetuated the "easily recognised stereotypes" in their promotional literature (Swain and Hillel 7). Thomas Barnardo's conviction that removing children from their "awful environment" was essential to their health, wellbeing and future as citizen ("Bitter Cry" 79-80), was replicated in numerous stories in the child rescue literature. "One Waif" recounts the consequences of leaving a vulnerable child in the care of an abusive parent and ends with the child being killed by her drunken father ("One Waif" 186-88). "Found Dead" tells the story of Carrots, a street boy who worked tirelessly, only to have his meagre wages taken by his alcoholic mother or, in the event that he had no money, receiving a beating. Carrots was refused entry to the children's home due to overcrowding, and was found dead the next day ("Found Dead" 1-2). Poor Carrots' tale was used to implore the reader to urgently assist Barnardo's homes; to ignore the plea would result in tragic, but avoidable, consequences.

Child-rescue literature openly preyed on the sympathy of the reader and compared the plight of the neglected child to the much-loved child at home:

> With blue cold hands, and stockingless feet,
> Wander'd a child in the cheerless street.
> Children were many who, housed and fed,
> Lovingly nestled, dreaming in bed,

> Caroll'd their joy in a land of bliss,
>
> Without a thought or a care of this;
>
> They were warm in humanity's fold,
>
> But this little child was out in the cold. ("Out in the Cold" 262)

Another poem advocates that street children be seen as little ones in danger of being lost but who could be saved:

> Only a newsboy, under a light
>
> Of the lamp-post plying his trade in vain;
>
> Men are too busy to stop tonight,
>
> Hurrying home through the sleet and rain.
>
> Never since dark a paper sold:
>
> Where shall he sleep, or how be fed?
>
> He thinks as he shivers there in the cold,
>
> While happy children are safe abed. ("Nobody's Child" 44)

Thomas Barnardo was particularly adept at word pictures designed to elicit support:

> Cowering, shivering, lurching along, no shoes or stockings on either
>
> foot, and with one poor wounded limb bound up in a dirty rag, his
>
> clothes in tatters, and his intelligent eyes blood-shot from exposure to
>
> the weather and from want, a poor young lad met me face to face in a
>
> narrow street. ("Winter Experiences" 5)

Despite the street-child's neglected, dirty state, he demonstrates potential in his "intelligent eyes". Barnardo continues:

> Conjoined to the quick precocity so soon gained in the streets of
>
> London, there was withal an honesty and simplicity about the lad that
>
> from the first won my heart. ("Winter Experiences" 5)

Here again his "honesty and simplicity" are the child's redeeming factors which overcome his less than ideal background: "But, alas! his mother was dead, and his father a wretched drunkard" ("Winter Experiences" 5). The boy agrees to go with Barnardo and progresses well.

The redemptive theme that runs through many stories published in the child-rescue literature carries over into books published by authors who have written for both genres. One

such writer is popular English children's author Hesba Stretton. Her books were influenced by the plight of the street child, a cause close to her heart. In an article extolling the aims of the London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Stretton wrote: "no class denotes itself with such constant self-sacrifice to its children as the honest and working poor, but the idle and drunken poor seem to lose their natural affection, and to hate and oppress these miserable little creatures, who owe their wretched being to them" ("London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children" 89-90). The street child, although dirty and ragged, had some redeeming factors, such as being pure of heart and hard working, which would make her worthy of salvation. In Stretton's most popular book, *Jessica's First Prayer*, even though Jessica was becoming "a little thinner, and certainly more ragged" (*Jessica* 8) she is pious and virtuous:

> A thin and meagre face belonged to the eyes, which was half hidden
> by a mass of matted hair hanging over the forehead, and down the
> neck; the only covering which the head or neck had, for a tattered
> frock, scarcely fastened together with broken strings, was slipping
> down over the shivering shoulders of the little girl. (*Jessica* 8)

As this thesis will demonstrate, the influence of child-rescue literature of this sort spread beyond Britain, to infiltrate literature written for Australian children as well ("The Value of the Vignette" 4-11).

The Australian colonies reproduced many of the social problems that were causing concern in Britain. Children who were poor or neglected, or who in other ways "fell through the cracks" became increasingly visible on city streets. While some of these children were homeless, others came from families but were considered at risk due to perceived neglect. The colonial governments looked to England for ways to ameliorate the situation.

The refusal of the Australian colonies to reproduce the Poor Law motivated philanthropic residents to set up institutions designed to fill the gap (Swain "Religion" 29; "Women and Philanthropy" 155). Although colonial governments helped to finance these systems, they distanced themselves from having an active voice in the delivery of welfare (Swain "Women and Philanthropy" 155). However, voluntary provision proved inadequate in relation to children, compelling colonial governments to take a more active role. Historian Nell Musgrove's unpublished thesis provides a succinct overview of the development of institutional care in Victoria. She argues that both state and voluntary organisations were behind the initial legislation for children, the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864*

which, drawing on the ideas of English reformer Mary Carpenter, established a system of industrial and reformatory schools run by both state and voluntary organisations to house and reform children judged to be neglected (Victoria 1854). However, the new institutions were inundated with children and quickly became overcrowded and harbours for infectious disease (McCallum, D. 30). From the end of the 1870s the industrial schools were replaced by boarding-out schemes which, it was believed, "would encourage the working classes to be 'better parents' because the penalty for recalcitrance might be a complete and permanent separation from their children" (McCallum, D. 31).

Beginning in the 1880s, the operations of state children's departments were challenged by local child rescuers who legitimated their intervention and the active removal of children by emphasising the child as the future of the nation. However, they argued the salvation of the children was dependent on ties with their families of origin being cut. In most of the colonies, child rescuers were often hampered by state-run departments who claimed their services addressed the needs of its citizens. In Victoria, though, child rescuers worked closely with the state and by the beginning of the twentieth century, eleven child rescuers were licensed to remove children and take them before the courts (Swain and Hillel 90).

Australian child rescuers also used literature to galvanise support for their cause. They relied heavily on that published by the British movement, reprinting select stories in magazines and newspapers. Swain and Hillel claim that "by situating the child as future of the nation its advocates drew attention to the risk of national degeneration while simultaneously asserting the potential for change" (90). Child rescuers argued that slums were not suitable for children to live in and to allow them to do so would perpetuate moral degradation. Children were thus portrayed as victims of their environment, and of the family (Swain and Hillel 90; Scott and Swain 11-32). Such literature preyed on the fear of the reader. To do nothing would be to condone the degradation of the population as a whole; the child was thus situated as both a victim, and a threat (Swain and Hillel 70).

Removal, as an essential precursor to reformation and assimilation, had a long history in Australia. Explorers and settlers relied on an Indigenous workforce to meet the demand for language translation and, later, manual labour in a settler society that needed to export "products extracted from a vast hinterland" (Haebich 67). The use of Indigenous workers, adults and children, also allowed for the opportunity for the colonists to improve their social status at little cost. The Dutch were the first Europeans to capture Aborigines in 1623, using them as a means of navigation and information (Yarwood and Knowling 25; Mulvaney 12).

Governor Phillip resorted to this practice in order to engage in two-way communication with the Indigenous inhabitants and gain an understanding of their language and culture. His hope was that the captive would become mediator; "no [other] endeavour to persuade them to come among us having succeeded" (Holden 62-63). The story of Bennelong, the adult male captured in December 1789, is well known, but he was not the first Indigenous person to live amongst the Europeans. Earlier that year a nine- or ten-year old Aboriginal boy, Nanbaree, was found with his family; his mother and sister were dead, he and his father suffered from smallpox. After his father died, Nanbaree was adopted by Mr White, surgeon-general of the settlement, nursed back to health, and retained as a mediator for the new colony (Collins 53-54; Stanner 184; Tench 147-48, 58-59, 76-77; Yarwood and Knowling 43). A fourteen- to fifteen-year-old girl, Abaroo, was also taken captive and placed into the family of Sydney Cove chaplain Richard Johnson (Tench 148; Reynolds 165; van Toorn 24; Woolmington 21), who later wrote of his pride in her reading skills, and his hope that she would come to embrace Christianity (van Toorn 24). These early removals were predicated on the European belief that the Aboriginal child would be better off in a white community, indeed that the child would acknowledge this by expressing a preference for such a life. As Watkin Tench wrote:

> Nanbaree, all this while, though he continued to interrogate his
> countrymen, and to interpret on both sides, shewed [sic] little desire
> to return to their society, and stuck very close to his new friends.
> (Tench 177)

Settlers were quick to realise that Indigenous child-removal practices could fill a need for cheap labour; domestic servants and station workers were sought from colonisation through to the early twentieth century (HREOC 22; H. Reynolds 169). Governments and missionaries removed Indigenous children to "inculcate European values and work habits" (Ramsland 1986 quoted by Mason 31; also HREOC 22).

There is little evidence that removal delivered to the child the family life which had been promised.

Figure 3: *Mathinna* **by Thomas Bock.**
Watercolour, circa 1842.
(Archives Office of Tasmania. Teaching Aids Centre, Photographic Prints.
3 June 2010. <http://catalogue.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/item/?id=AB713-1-6995>)

This is a portrait of a seven year-old Aboriginal girl who was taken into the household of Sir John and Lady Franklin in Tasmania when she was six. Removed from her birth family, Mathinna was dressed in European fashion and educated with the Franklins' daughter. In the portrait, Mathinna is posed as a European child might be, a symbol of European colonisation: she is westernised and isolated as she returns the colonial gaze. However, shortly after the portrait was painted the Franklins returned to Europe, leaving Mathinna, "sobbing and broken hearted" (H. Reynolds 174; Fenton 380) in a Convict Orphan School. Robbed of any semblance of family life for a second time, Mathinna returned to her Indigenous community, by now removed to Oyster Cove, and what was considered the "habits of the rest" (Bonwick 383; see also Fenton 380; Haebich 124-5). However, by now she was also alienated from her own community due to her acculturation into western society. Mathinna moved from being a curiosity flaunted in colonial society, to rejection and re-immersion into a society from which she was forcibly alienated. It was Mathinna's curiosity value that ensured she was educated and housed at Government House. As soon as her worth as an item of interest and difference waned, she was discarded. Various methods were tried, with varying degrees of success, to manipulate the Aboriginal population into being acceptable to European sensibilities all premised on the argument that the more "white" an Aborigine was, the more readily she would fit into European society. Again it was the supposedly malleable children who were

seen as holding the greatest potential for assimilation. Aborigines were dressed in western-style clothing, converted to Christianity and taught English. In the literature some were depicted as being happy with their new, European persona, others, usually those firmly ensconced in their traditional lifestyle, were portrayed as being ungrateful when they divested themselves of the foreign clothing.

Despite such early failures child removal continued to be advocated. *The South Australian Register* published a long letter from Mathew B. Hale, Archdeacon of Adelaide on 28 August 1850, presenting plans for an institution at Port Lincoln to segregate Aboriginal children and to steer them into "habits of industry and a more settled mode of life" ("Prospectus" 3). Removed from Adelaide the children would be less likely to be tempted to revert to their native ways. In addition the "wilder and more daring" Port Lincoln natives ("Prospectus" 5) would act as a deterrent to potential escapees. Hale claims that there are degrees of Aboriginality and therefore degrees of redemption; the wilder the Aboriginal child, the greater the difficulty in removing Indigeneity. In reality, to be "part white" meant that all Indigeneity was lost (Ellinghaus 376). Yet, as historian Katherine Ellinghaus argues, the work of various Australian Governments to strip Australia's Aborigines of their Indigeneity did not automatically provide access to the privileges of whiteness (376; see also Bradford "Fading to Black" 17; *Reading Race* 3, 11-13).

Continued acceptance of child removal in some circumstances even today has its origins in this long historical precedent. However, the power of the precedent derived from the degree to which it was absorbed into more popular cultural forms. The focus of this thesis is on one such cultural form: literature produced for children. The perpetuation of stereotypes and racist views reinforced the way children saw, and acted within, the world. The fixed gendering of roles within the family has led to its perpetuation through the generations, and stills hold fast for many in the twenty-first century. Similarly, racist depictions within the literature reinforced to the child reader racist attitudes. The infantilising of Aboriginal mothers[4] depicts them as being incapable, or unwilling, to care for their children, therefore giving justification for their removal. By showing how the works which Australians read in their childhood, both incorporated, disseminated and naturalised justifications for child removal developed by nineteenth-century child rescuers, this thesis will help to explain the

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[4] The issue of the infantilising of Aborigines will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

widespread acceptance of practices which, in retrospect, have been condemned as counterproductive and inhumane. The following chapters explore how, from its beginnings in 1841, Australian children's literature has played an active role in perpetuating each generation's acceptance and advocacy of child removal to the point at which it is an accepted practice.

Chapter 2 - Maternal Responsibilities

"… I couldn't unbelong if I tried". (Constance Mackness. *Gem of the Flat*. p. 241)

One of the key contributions of the child rescue movement was to position the child as the future of the nation. The responsibility of parents was to bring up the future citizen, and if they were in danger of failing the state had an obligation to intervene. Such intervention generally took the form of removal and replacement into an environment deemed more suitable, either an institution or another family, one that was more able to provide for and raise the child to the accepted standard. Not only did state organisations intervene, but society as a whole was firmly of the opinion that a child believed to be raised outside acceptable standards should be removed. This belief has been perpetuated in literature, and in particular children's literature, such as Constance Mackness's *Gem of the Flat,* said to be based on Mackness's childhood (Bonnin "Mackness, Constance" <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mackness-constance-7402/text12871>). Gem is orphaned and has been left with her grandfather, Gran Gold-Eyes, who, it will be seen, is feminised in order to take over the role of mother. However after some years her grandmother, Mrs Mackay, an inveterate child-remover, approaches Gran Gold-Eyes with a view to removing her. When Gran Gold-Eyes leaves the decision to Gem she declines, citing the importance of family ties and loyalty:

> "It is very good of you to want me, Grandmother, and I will try to
> love you and be a bit your girl too; but my father and mother both
> gave me to Gran; we have been mates always and we just belong to
> one another now ...". (241)

Family responsibilities in this construction are a two-way relationship implying that not only are parents responsible for their child's wellbeing, but that it is the child's responsibility to uphold her place within the family. The epigraph to the chapter highlights that belonging to one another cements the parent/child relationship; Gem later chides her grandfather for making her decide: "He should have said no at once to such a proposal" (242-3).

If the capacity of parents provided the basis on which their right to retain custody of their children was be judged, it is important to identify the standards against which they were to be measured. These standards were strictly delineated along lines of gender, race and class, although there were also contradictions that made complete adherence nearly impossible to

achieve and which allowed for opportunities of child removal to occur. One example is the good mother/bad mother dichotomy which is central to the legitimation of child removal; psychologist Paula Caplan argues that the good mother/bad mother myth is perpetuated throughout society, as "every society needs scapegoated groups if the people in power want to maintain their power" (240). It is a dualistic theory that gives legitimacy to child removal: if a mother is unable, or unwilling, to wholeheartedly care for a child, she must endure having the child removed and placed into an appropriate situation, with an appropriately "good" mother. Church and state institutions reinforced the middle-class white woman as ideal mother, encouraging her to remain focussed on home, hearth and the breeding of babies (Yeo "Virgin Mothers" 40-41). Unlike the working- or upper-classes she was able to devote her whole life to maintaining a Christian, vigilant and stable home environment (Yeo "Virgin Mothers" 40). Motherhood redefined as the privilege of class and race was often denied to birth mothers. Placing a child in a previously childless household gives her into the care of another woman and removes her from the "bad mother". This chapter will examine the models of mothering implicit in children's literature in order to gain some understanding of the circumstances in which child removal would be considered justified.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the term family was considered to incorporate a household "including its diverse dependants, such as servants, apprentices, and co-resident relatives" (Tadmor 19). Samuel Johnson, in his seminal English Dictionary similarly defined the term as "those who live in the same house" (qtd. in Tadmor 19). Over time the definition narrowed but in Australia the inclusion of servants as part of the household survived to late nineteenth century (Gilding 3). Historian Naomi Tadmor argues that while many contemporary historians acknowledge the broader interpretation of the term, their focus of study concentrates on the "nuclear family relationships" (19) rather than of "co-residence and authority" (20). The accepted definition of a white European, middle-class, Christian unit comprising mother, father and child or children, all of whom have clearly defined roles within the unit, still carries through to the twenty-first century (Gilding 1-2). We have only to look at contemporary child-rearing literature, such as books by popular psychologist Steve Biddulph, to see that strict delineation of parental roles is still being advocated to Australian parents. Mothers are situated on the periphery of their sons' lives, confined to mothering rather than parenting, but are central to the raising of daughters, as stereotypical roles for females are passed down from generation to generation. This would suggest there are still two distinct and separate roles for parents: father as breadwinner who can enjoy fun and games, and mother as primary carer and educator.

In line with the broader definitions, in late nineteenth-century Australian children's literature outdoor workers were sometimes considered surrogate family members: stockmen, gardeners and odd-jobbers. Almost exclusively male, these workers remain on the periphery of the family unit, forming the extended family, privileged to dispense care and small doses of wisdom. However, despite fulfilling all aspects of this role, Aboriginal workers were never considered part of the family, their perceived Otherness positioning them as not to be trusted. Non-Indigenous station workers on "Elsey", Jeannie and Aeneas Gunn's Northern Territory property, are foregrounded in both *The Little Black Princess* (1905)*,* and *We of the Never Never* (1908); they are given privileged status. Elsey's Aboriginal workers however, are portrayed as eternally childlike, treated as much as oddities as reliable workers. They are unable to be rewarded as reliable workers by inclusion into the family as they were considered to be morally bereft, therefore unable to dispense wisdom and discipline (Bradford "Representing Indigeneity" 91); when Gunn published *We of the Never Never* she sent copies to her non-Indigenous workers, some of whom replied stating that no hurt had been taken from her representations of them (Gunn *Letters;* McLennan; T. H. Pearce). Gunn's Aboriginal workers are rendered voiceless; they were not sought out for similar authentication.

Of course, inclusion of servants as family is generally limited to middle-class families as the lower classes were without employees. It was children who performed this work in lower-class families. For some middle class or upwardly-aspiring lower class, the lack of servants could be overcome by removing a child from a less fortunate family. The child would then be used as a means of labour underwriting the social status of the removing family. In Tarella Quin's *Freckles* (1910), a young Aboriginal child called Widgee was stolen to be trained as a cattle boy:

> He came on a pack horse – just a baby in a little raggedy dress. He
> was with a drove of cattle, for the drover had stolen him from his
> people miles and miles away up in Queensland, and brought him
> down hidden in a pack. (*Freckles* 114)

But during the harsh times of drought, in which the majority of the cattle died, Widgee was easily discarded:

> Widgee was left behind with [the remaining cattle] when the drover
> cleared out. Yes, the skeletons of them there cattle are along that road
> now. It's just a track of bones. (*Freckles* 114)

The implication is that Widgee should be grateful that he did not succumb to the drought and that he is now in a new home with Dick Templeton and his motherless nephew, Len (the "Freckles" of the book's title). Freckles had never far to look for a devoted slave if Widgee were within "cooee"; Widgee was "very amiable, and had also few words" (*Freckles* 96), demonstrating the expectations of an Indigenous worker on the property. He was expected to know his place – on the outskirts of the family – he should be seen but not heard, worthy attributes for the subservient party in a friendship. Freckles did express sympathy for Widgee's unfortunate background: "'Poor Widgee', he said softly, 'I will like him more than ever now.'" (*Freckles* 114), but he was quickly told by the station worker just how Widgee should be viewed:

> "You're a rum 'un!" he remarked, "there ain't no call for you to cut
> up rough over Widgee. He's a deal better off with Mr Dick than
> capering about in them savage dances with gum-leaves atween his
> toes and his body smeared with copi. Widgee's all right". (*Freckles*
> 114)

The perception was that Widgee was much better off working on the station than living a life of degradation in his own community.

Although a pivotal role within the family, understandings of motherhood are contradictory. On the one hand it is understood to be innate, and yet it is also conditional with class and race being clear boundary markers. It is also a mantle much sought after by childless women. It is accepted that it is the mother who is determined to raise children, provide nurturing, good deeds and kind words; what Clare Bradford describes as the "feminine work of educating the young" (*Reading Race* 83). Motherhood was generally understood to be synonymous with femininity - an innate state, rather than being a skill to be acquired by male or female, which positions women as primary care-giver. It is an unrealistic expectation of innate mothering that is part of the "Good Mother Myth" and that, according to Caplan, "set[s] standards that no human being could ever match" (239). The "good" mother conforms to society's ideal of being entirely and selflessly focussed on the nurturing of children, whilst at the same time being passive and unobtrusive (Beere 16; Wiley 93).

Early Australian children's literature contains many depictions of skills in mothering as being innate. As an exemplar of the good mother, Mrs Clifford, in Lillian M. Pyke's *Camp Kiddies: a Story of Life on Railway Construction* (1919), is both passive and unselfish. The Clifford family with four children move from Melbourne to a Queensland railway camp so that Mrs

Clifford will have a chance of recuperating from the pressures of raising a young family. Although initially unable to cope with raising a family, she has potential and is given a second chance to regain her mothering abilities; the alternative would be for her children to be removed. While the ill mother is not always constructed as "bad", in this instance her illness means her mothering abilities might be impaired, as might her ability to be a role model to her daughter which would perpetuate a cycle of bad mothering.

On undertaking a long expedition, the family become lost; Mrs Clifford is suitably unobtrusive, suggesting her "correct" role within the family:

> "I've felt for some time we were on the wrong track," said Mother;
> "but, as I hadn't anything better to suggest, I didn't say anything".
> (*Camp Kiddies* 173)

This excerpt illustrates the concept of passivisation as argued by J. P. Thompson and outlined by literary critics Murray Knowles and Kirsten Malmkjær (60). Passivisation places the emphasis of a sentence on the "entity to which something is done, rather than on the doer of the action" (60), effectively demoting the agent/doer. In the above quote, Mrs Clifford is initially foregrounded however, her second comment highlights her inactivity, and hence, passivity. Both mark her as the ideal mother. Her actions allow her husband to express his masculinity by protecting the vulnerable family during the night spent lost in the bush. Her suitability as good mother is further enhanced by her demonstration of what literary critic E. Ann Kaplan calls the "maternal sacrifice paradigm" with her willingness to forego sustenance in favour of her children:

> "Plenty to eat," said Mother; "some buns and a loaf of bread left, half
> a pound of butter and a tin of jam. Baby will have to have condensed
> milk; but he's a sport, too, aren't you pet?" and Mother kissed him to
> hide her face, which was not quite so cheery as her words.
>
> "There's not very much tea," said Daisy, thoughtfully, peeping into
> the basket.
>
> "Enough for tea and breakfast," answered Mother. "As long as I get
> my cup of tea, I don't mind a bit". (*Camp Kiddies* 173-4)

Again, the author uses passivisation to depict Mrs Clifford as an ideal Australian mother. The focus is on what she can do to feed her family, denying herself. She is mild and caring, yet

prepared for all exigencies, indicative of a true pioneering spirit and being able to make do in an alien environment. The ability to provide food for her family is another marker of the good mother; the inability to do so would lead to a family that fails to thrive and would situate her as a bad mother

Another example of the mutual exclusivity of the Good Mother/Bad Mother categories is that of Aboriginal mothers who, due to race, are considered "natural" mothers yet, again due to race and lack of education are considered not fit to raise children. "Natural" in this context means being of nature, and therefore having an instinctive ability to mother, not that the Indigenous mothers have innately good mothering skills. It is an argument that was promulgated in early twentieth-century Australian society that still prioritises Indigenous child removal over family empowerment. The Indigenous mother never reaches the heights of "goodness", her perceived association with the natural world, including her animalism, maintains her in the realm of Otherness. Her connection with nature distances her from white society, and hence denies her any mothering ability. Charlotte Barton clearly demonstrates the perceived linkage between nature and lack of mothering skills. Aboriginal mother, Nanny, has a son, George, whom she is attempting to wean by biting his arm. The European family are horrified:

> Lucy: "Mamma, that is just what pussy does, when she wishes to
> wean her kittens."

> Mrs. S.: "It reminded me of a cat Lucy; and I felt quite disgusted with
> Nanny." (211)

Nanny's association with animals shows she is not fit to raise a child and this statement, in which Lucy is shown as being knowledgeable about both animals and mothering, privileges a white child over an Aboriginal mother. Mrs Saville continues: "but upon the whole her children bore evident signs of her affection and care" (211). She thus softens the harshness of her initial claim, indicating that while Nanny's intentions were to be commended, her abilities let her down. The child reader is thus directed towards an understanding that Aboriginal children are at risk if left with their birth mothers.

Nanny is an "unnatural Aboriginal mother" (Bradford "Fading to Black" 16) who, when Jane takes Sally to replace her dead child, is seen to encourage her child to leave her family. Bradford uses the term "unnatural" mother to differentiate the Aboriginal mother who pushes her child away and the "good white mother" who not only keeps her children with her,

but also embraces Aboriginal children, whom she considers to be neglected. Early on in the section titled "History of Nanny and her Children", the Aboriginal mother becomes the focus of the narrative: "The mother of the poor little black girl, who has lately met with so dreadful a death, was called Nanny" (198). As a form of "differentiation" (Knowles and Malmkjær 57-58), her failure to ensure her child's safety aligns the Aborigines with bad characteristics, and the white mother with good characteristics. The name Nanny denotes only temporary responsibility for her child; the name situates her as being a temporary and therefore bad mother (Bradford "Representing Indigeneity" 92-3). Nanny is doubly penalized: she is single and Indigenous, her Indigeneity believed to render her incapable of receiving education on mothering that, were she white, would allow her to keep her children. The only option is to have her children removed, and both Sally and George, who was earlier taken away and sent to school, are denied to her.

Reverend Herbert Pitts, an English cleric who in his eight years in Western Australia worked with children in Indigenous communities, further guides the reader to the belief that Indigenous mothering is based on animalism, rather than femininity in *Children of Wild Australia* (1914)*,* a book specifically aimed at the child reader by means of an introductory letter to "My Dear Boys and Girls" (*Children* 7). The letter immediately unites the child reader with the white, Christian ideology of Pitts, differentiating between Indigenous and white culture, and making the claim that:

> There is no country in the world where babies and older children are spoiled quite so much as they are in wild Australia. They are never corrected or chastised by either father or mother, and they do just exactly as they like. (*Children* 19)

On the face of it this seems an innocuous statement, one that would initially appeal to the child reader. However, accompanied by alienating language, the intent is to situate the Aboriginal family as being different to every other Indigenous culture. The parent who is unwilling, or unable, to dispense punishment in order to maintain parental control, as Pitts claims Aboriginal parents are, is considered ineffectual, as in the early nineteenth century it was still generally understood that discipline was required to counter unruliness and maintain a well-ordered home environment. (The use of corporal punishment to discipline children, although in common use, began to be opposed by parents from about the mid-nineteenth century (Davidoff *et al*. 148-9)).

Concerns about the mothering abilities of Aboriginal women are also expressed in Mary Durack's *Chunuma* (1936). Daisy is a young Aboriginal mother to Chunuma and is portrayed as immature and child-like: "Daisy puckered up her pretty child face ..." (12). Her immaturity and lack of parenting skills are thus written on her body. Considering her son as a burden, she is portrayed as actively distancing herself from his upbringing: "Me don't want 'im!" (12). Far from being the sole instance of bad mothering, Durack suggests that Daisy's attitude is indicative of Aboriginal women: "nobody wanted the piccaninny, for piccaninnies in the abstract were 'nuisances'" (9). While *Chunuma* illustrates the bad mother, it also highlights degrees of badness. Ideally, Chunuma should be removed from his bad mother and re-homed with a good, white mother. However, in the absence of an alternative white mother he is left with Daisy, his birth mother, who is partially redeemed by her experiences raising baby animals, believed by Durack to make her more suitable to raise Indigenous children. However, the constant metaphorical comparisons of Indigenous pregnancy and family life to nature and animals, culminating in the inference that a mother (cat) be "subjected to painless extinction" rather than give birth to further offspring (9), demonstrates to the child reader the commonly held belief at the time that Aboriginal mothers should not be allowed to have large families, and that the children they do have are at risk. To remove them offers the Indigenous child the chance of a "pseudo-white" life, although she is denied the chance to be completely white due to her Indigeneity.

While accepting that mothering is an innate state, Ellen Campbell's autobiographical children's book, *An Australian Childhood* (1892), illustrates the need for a girl to continually hone her mothering skills. Three-year-old Aboriginal boy Tommy is bought for "one and ninepence and a nobbler"[5] by Father because "this little fellow took my fancy", and is placed into the care of his young daughters who are thrilled at "a new, live doll" (32):

> "Mother, let us take care of him; let us make his clothes, and feed,
> and wash him;"
>
> "and teach him when he is old enough," added Mary, looking
> forward into futurity. (32)

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[5] A nobbler is a colonial word meaning a small glass of spirits. (*The Macquarie Dictionary*).

As a toy, he enables the girls to practise their innate mothering skills; his expendability (due to his race) allows for mistakes to be made in childhood, therefore minimising the likelihood of future bad mothering. Mary is also "looking forward into futurity"; already she recognises the practical requirements of child-rearing and with her sister enthusiastically sets about mothering the small child. Their enthusiasm, rather than mothering skills, is mitigated by Mother's call to "do it properly", which is further reinforced by her cry of "Trop de zèle[6], my children", as to display enthusiasm rather than skill indicates a less than competent mother, who would fall into the bad-mother category and could render them unsuitable to raise children. Mother allows her daughters to care for the child:

> "Very well, girls; you may try. Only, remember, you must treat him
> with more consideration than you usually give to your pets. It mustn't
> be a feast one day, and a famine the next; if you undertake him you
> must do it properly." (32)

Mother's plea for them to "do it properly" implies that to practise on a black child is acceptable and that any mistakes made are therefore not of any consequence. The underlying theme here is one of racism and animalism (which will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter), which portrays Aborigines as animals through the use of language and appearance, begging the question as to whether the children would be allowed to practice their mothering skills in such a way with a white child. However, it does demonstrate the importance of a daughter's apprenticeship into the world of motherhood.

Ethel Turner's book, *Mother's Little Girl*, also illustrates a young girl's innate mothering skills requiring continual reinforcement, as well as highlighting the far-reaching effect of child removal on siblings as well as parents. The illustration below shows Ruth tenderly practising mothering skills on her now six-year-old sister, a right that had been denied her by Sylvia's removal as a baby. Ellice oversees Ruth's careful ministrations that display mothering skills depicted as being innate:

> She stooped over the bed, the soft brown veil of her hair hiding
> Sylvia a moment. Then she stood straight again, to show she had

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[6] "Too much enthusiasm".

fastened the gay pink sleeve ties around the child's arms. She gave

her mother a joyous kiss. (*Mother's Little Girl* 228)

Figure 4: "She fastened the pink sleeve ties around the child's arms."
(Ethel Turner. *Mother's Little Girl.* London: Ward, Lock, 1904. p. 228
Illustrator: A.J. Johnson)

The Good Mother/Bad Mother myths are a dualistic conundrum. Women are considered naturally good mothers, yet also require education by experts before being considered capable of mothering (Caplan 240). This can be seen in Ethel Turner's *Three Little Maids* (1900), acknowledged by Turner as "a true and authentic account of her early life" (Poole 11)[7], where she lists a number of instructional books on the raising of children that mothers within the text should use:

"Human Buds, and our responsibilities in the grafting of them";

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[7] Philippa Poole, Turner's grand-daughter and compiler of *The Diaries of Ethel Turner*, admits that "with true literary licence [Turner] does occasionally veer away from the historically accurate" (Philippa Poole, ed., *The Diaries of Ethel Turner*. Sydney: Landsdowne, 1998.)

"Souls and minds of children . . . or . . . children, their souls and minds";

"Our responsibilities to the young";

"On the training and education of our boys";

"Kindergarten studies";

"The youth's physical manual";

"Recreation for the young";

"The care of the child in sickness and in health".

(Three Little Maids 60, 63, 65, 173)

All of these titles appear to be fictional; an exhaustive search of English and Australian library catalogues has failed to produce even similar titles. Instructional books on mothering written at the turn of the century were predominately authored by men, and demonstrate the depth of information mothers at the time were expected to utilise for the physical and emotional care of children. The inclusion of these titles within Turner's book foregrounds the importance placed on raising children in a prescribed manner that encompasses their physical, psychological and spiritual needs, but also again highlights the conundrum in which innate mothering is overridden by the need to educate mothers. While mothering is considered a gendered role, the role of educating the mother was very much a male-dominated occupation. Even Turner's fictional mother was apparently unable to function correctly without male instruction.

Ethel Turner's fictional titles presume that mothering is not intuitive and that it is the privilege of the middle-classes, as the working classes would have limited opportunity to access such works. These titles are included in *Three Little Maids* to instruct Mrs Wise, mother to five boys, as to the correct way to raise them. She is challenged by her twelve-year-old son whose own moral superiority indicates that he is not being correctly mothered. Mrs Wise feels overwhelmed and ashamed to search bookshops for books on child rearing and raising moral children; any confidence in her mothering abilities has been eroded by society's (and her son's) expectations. Her name, whilst indicating wisdom regarding mothering, negates the inherent mothering abilities expected of her and denotes her astuteness in accessing mothering information from written sources, and is clear instruction to the reader of

the need for innate mothering skills to be enhanced and properly guided by societally-endorsed instruction.

Although Ethel Turner writes of the good mother/bad mother dichotomy in this book, she does not follow through with the removal of a child. Psychologists might explain this as the autobiographer's need to write a more appropriate life story; an autobiography is the chance to write our own story as we lived, or would like to have lived it. Interestingly, Turner herself was nearly removed from her family, as her diary entry for 9 July 1923 reveals:

> … to Killara. Mother very bad or had been & just had morphia –
> grew better after a time. Likes to talk of the past. Told me how Tom
> Turner had offered her £1000 to let him & his wife have Ethel to
> bring up instead of letting her come to Australia. Said he would bring
> her up like a little Queen. He was very wealthy – roll top desks in
> Coventry. Odd to wonder now if Mother had thought 2 children were
> enough to bring over the seas. (Turner *Diaries, 1911-1923, 1928;* see
> also Poole 262; Yarwood 26)

Philippa Poole argues that Turner must have long been aware of her uncle's proposition, and that this knowledge influenced her writing of *Three Little Maids,* in which Alf is removed from his siblings and raised by a rich uncle in Germany (262). Turner's further use of the child removal theme in *Mother's Little Girl* demonstrates the profound effect child removal, or at least the possibility of it, had on her.

A mother who fails is a woman who challenges the good mother ideal by neglecting, or who is perceived to be neglecting, her mothering duties and ignoring the mothering abilities that are assumed to be within her. She is seen to be dictating the downfall of the family, and society in general, as illustrated by Thomas Barnardo in an article titled "Motherless – with a mother!" (1891), where he writes of Tom, a street Arab he has rescued:

> There is nothing sweeter and more ennobling in a man's life than the
> influence of a good mother; and . . . there is no influence more
> debasing, more demoralizing, than that of a mother of bad moral
> character. ("Motherless" 147)

It highlights the importance of a good mother in a child's life. Tom's working-class mother is positioned as a "nonentity, a mere cipher in Tom's life" ("Motherless" 147), her innate mothering skills impaired by her "bad moral character". It was believed immoral lower-class

mothers bred the criminal classes, and their lack of morality extinguished any innate mothering abilities. It was therefore preferable for her to be absent from Tom's life:

> … even leading the existence of a street-arab, he had actually more chance of escaping moral contamination than he would have had if his mother had sought to exercise any active superintendence over his career? ("Motherless" 147)

She is diametrically opposite the good mother and therefore her child must be removed.

The unrealistic expectations placed on mothers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and the sometimes harsh consequences involved if mothers do not meet them, means there is a gap that needs to be filled in a child's life, but which has the potential to be filled by alternative forms of mothering. Conditionality allowed for exceptions to traditional understandings of motherhood, that is, non-mothers: middle-class single women, servants, and even in some cases men. In the absence of an authentic, good mother, alternative mothers could be used, as long as they fulfil all requirements of the ideal mother. Feminist philosopher Sara Ruddick argues that the work of mothering is not gender specific, despite "the practices and cultural representations of mothering [being] strongly affected by, and often taken to epitomize, prevailing norms of feminity [sic]" (41). Men can be "mothers" and in doing so challenge established notions of women and mothering. However, examples of male mothers in nineteenth-century Australian children's literature are scarce; instead male parents share the role with female surrogate mothers. One example is Gran Gold-Eyes in Constance Mackness's *Gem of the Flat*, who initially raises Gem alone with the help of Mrs Wood who receives "a few shillings a week for minding Gem, making her clothes and washing them" (11). Mackness gives Gem an independence and freedom that would be advantageous for girls growing up in the years preceding World War I in which women well-skilled in domestic duties would be able to effectively cope while their menfolk were at war:

> But, except in the matter of sewing and washing, Gem was long since emancipated from her rule. Grandfather and child "batched it" in the old house on Marshall's Flat. Gem was housemaid and housekeeper, but Gran was a king among cooks and gardeners. (11-12)

The feminisation of Gran Gold-Eyes (both in skill and physical attribute), aligns him more closely with the feminine role of mothering that is his responsibility. Were he not vested with feminine traits, the need for Gem to be removed and placed with a "real" mother becomes a

priority. As Gem matures she becomes "wife" to Gran: "Gem was a wilful little woman, with a love of her own way and a belief in her own ideas. Full of ambitions and aspirations herself, she lectured the old man at times on his shirt-sleeved, collarless contentment" (12). Gran is, however, feminised in order to fit the role of surrogate mother. Gran Gold-Eyes, so named because of Gem's baby name for him coupled with his "luck in 'spotting' the precious metal" (10), can never be the ideal substitute mother, and struggles to combine the duality of his role as care-giver: "Gran did not indulge in embraces" (67). Gem resorts to gaining information on being a lady from "novels and from a book on etiquette which she had persuaded Gran to buy her, she was storing up a fund of peculiar information about the way ladies spoke and acted" (13).

In the absence of an appropriate mother, older women, middle-class widows and unmarried women, who have the monetary means to raise a child in return for companionship and entertainment, but who nonetheless set high standards for other mothers, can be suitable substitute mothers. Widows and spinsters could either be dependent on relatives or independent of them. Historian Penny Russell argues that spinsters relied on family for financial support in exchange for practical care, for example, as household support for motherless young women (41). Those of financial means were empowered by also offering pecuniary support, not to mention the care of a child within her home. Of course, this could entail a degree of power over both the supported/removed child and her family, to the degree that some benefactors ensured access to the child's birth family was severely restricted. In *Gem of the Flat* Mrs Mackay is a substitute mother who, after alienating her own daughter, persuades her sister to let her take her six-year-old niece Felicia. She kept the child in luxury, isolated from her family, and when Felicia married, her sister Ida was then sought. Mrs Mackay expected the highest standards of her staff as well as her adopted companion. Gem was also actively sought by the rich old lady who felt that it was inappropriate for Gem to be raised by her Grandfather: "I want the child, though I have never seen her. If you care for her, think of all I can do for her, and give her to me" (Mackness 240). In allowing Gem to reject the offer from Mrs Mackay, Mackness valorises Gem's loyalty and her relationship with her grandfather which is more important than the selfishness of wealth without love offered by Mrs Mackay, an offer clearly not in the best interests of her grandchild.

As antagonist to the mother myth, the deliberately childless woman was seen to be a threat to society; she was masculinised and othered as she was considered unable to fulfil her role as child bearer. On the other hand, primarily single women reified motherhood and then claimed the status for themselves while condemning poor mothers who failed to live up to

their high standards. Historian Eileen Janes Yeo argues that in the mid-nineteenth century Western world there was concern over single childless women who, by the end of the century, were decried as "biological deviants and even traitors to the national race" by the eugenic movement ("Constructing and Contesting" 14). Single women were highly visible and regarded as "surplus, superfluous or redundant" ("Constructing and Contesting" 14). To counter this attack, many single women worked to manipulate motherhood to their own ends by becoming either what Yeo terms "public" or "private" mothers ("Constructing and Contesting" 14). Public (or social) mothering was easily accomplished by the Catholic single woman, who could join a religious order and perform charitable works for the poor. Age was no barrier to middle-class single women assisting motherless families, as social and cultural historians Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue "celibate young adults" provided practical and material support for motherless families (329). Married women without children, under the auspices of philanthropy, also reified motherhood (Swain "Religion" 155-61). The caring professions, teaching and nursing, also provided avenues for "social mothers" to give themselves legitimacy and educate authentic mothers to impossibly high standards.

The theme of social mothering can be found in children's books, an example of which is those of Mary Agnes Finn, an Australian author who integrated her Catholic background with the educative role of writer, as the editor of *The Australian Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart,* (*The Annals*), the monthly publication for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Finn's articles, and later children's books, re-homed motherless children with childless women. The single females in her articles are strong characters with a moral superiority and unshakeable faith, indefatigably helping anyone in need, whether they are of the faith or not. Protestant families were often portrayed as being spiritually vacuous and therefore in need of salvation. In her article "One Christmas Eve: a story for children", published in 1898 (published two years later as a chapter of her book *A Broken Rosary and Other Stories*), Finn paints a picture of seasonal happiness, a time considered by many to be of great family importance: "wherever one turned were seen groups of happy parents, and still happier children" ("One Christmas Eve" 7). Set at Circular Quay, Sydney, a young widow and her five-year-old son disembark a ship from England. The woman, gravely ill, stumbles but is helped by an unknown lady, Mrs Lester, who was "rich – she had everything this world could give her; but her magnificent home was childless" ("One Christmas Eve" 8). Five year-old Willie's Christ-like appearance suggests he has been divinely sent; he is innately good, an ideal child for any parent, a "beautiful boy" with "fair cheek[s]" and "dark blue eyes" ("One

Christmas Eve" 8). His child-like innocence shows that he has been well cared for by his mother but as a poor widow, she accepts that she is not the appropriate person to raise a son:

> Years before, when she was little more than a child, her only brother,
> a good deal older than herself, had gone to Australia in the hope of
> making his fortune. True, it was many a long year since she had
> heard of him, but a rumour had reached her that he had married, and
> become a wealthy man. Therefore she determined to seek him out for
> her boy's sake. ("One Christmas Eve" 10)

However, when this search fails Willie's dying mother plays the part of a self-sacrificial mother who, as an expression of her love for her child, allows him to seek out another family (Kaplan 79). As the dying woman lies in hospital, Willie finds his way to the nearby church and to Mrs Lester, who is visiting the nativity scene. The meeting is portrayed as divinely orchestrated: "the Divine Infant told her that there were many homeless little ones whose lonely hearts she could gladden at this joyous Christmas-tide" ("One Christmas Eve" 8). Willie approaches Mrs Lester:

> Then a little, soft hand was laid on one of hers – She started up! Had
> she been dreaming? … and yet here was a lovely boy, so like the
> Divine Infant of her dream that she was almost startled! ("One
> Christmas Eve" 9)

It seemed right that she should take the child:

> "What is your name, little one?" the lady asked as she rose from her
> knees.
>
> "Willie," answered the child as he wonderingly gazed at her; "and
> I'm *so* tired and *so* sleepy."
>
> "Then you must come home with me," and she took his little hand in
> hers, for surely God had given this homeless child to her keeping?
> ("One Christmas Eve" 9)

Willie has effectively orchestrated his own removal and a safe and secure future, playing a redemptive role in the life of his new family as well, with Mrs Lester, every year, seeking:

as many as her house will hold, and from Christmas Eve to the
Epiphany they are her guests. For that period at least they are made
bright and happy, for she never forgets the consoling dream
vouchsafed her one memorable Christmas Eve, nor the marvellous
way in which the child she now so dearly loves, was given to her
care. ("One Christmas Eve" 11)

For some women, traditional forms of public, or social, mothering were insufficient as
society venerated the role of motherhood. Therefore they became creative in the way they
brought children into their lives. Yeo argues that women "made interesting experiments with
adoption of various kinds" ("Constructing and Contesting" 16).

It was Felicia's amiability and beauty that had first made Aunt
Mackay wish to adopt her. Even as a baby, the child had been pretty
and gracious, and when she was six and Aunt Mackay closed her
door and her heart on the daughter who would not be ruled in the
matter of love, Felicia's mother received the first urgent entreaty for
her eldest-born. (180)

Mrs Mackay follows Felicia's removal by adopting various nieces and granddaughters,
however, she acknowledges the enormity of the task and the unrealistic expectations of
motherhood:

"I am too old to stand anybody so young for a full three-sixty-five
days a year, but I can send you to boarding-school and have you for
the week-ends and holidays." (238)

This apparent rejection of Felicia by stating that her mothering duties will only be addressed
on a part-time basis, contradicts accepted modes of mothering in which mothers should be
willing to sacrifice their own lives for that of their off-spring. Mrs Mackay's failure to accept
the strains of motherhood negates her continual need for a child in her life. Mackness, herself
a school headmistress, appears to be arguing that although school has an important role in a
child's life, it is no substitute for family; school children should also spend time with their
families during their formative years.

As single childless women themselves, Mackness and Finn perform the role of social
manipulator by educating their readers into the acceptability of social mothering, and the
normalising of child-removal to meet that end. Mary Agnes Finn enjoyed a sixty-three year

association with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. She was editor of *The Annals* for many years and continued as contributor, "writing serials and short stories of great interest that made her name a household word in Catholic homes throughout Australia and beyond" (Editor 34). The Editorial of *The Annals*, written after her death in 1949 at age ninety, describes her as "The apostolate of the pen, whose influence no one can estimate, had been hers, to edify and imbue her readers with the spirit of Christ and His Church with solid Catholic principles shown in practical living in her stories" (34). Constance Mackness's background as founding principal of Presbyterian Ladies' College, Pymble, and principal of Presbyterian Girls' College, Warwick, a position she held for over forty years, gave her an insight into girlhood and femininity of the middle- and upper-classes in the early years of the twentieth century. Both authors are well grounded in Christian principles that give authority and legitimacy to their written work and the themes within.

The need for appropriate parental care can also be filled by boarding schools which have the potential to become substitute parents. In situations where a mother has failed, or is unavailable, boarding school is a respectable form of alternative care that doesn't necessarily disrupt family life. School also provided the means by which a mother could release her son to the world. The influence of the mother on her son, and how she can hold back his becoming a man, is analysed by historian Martin Crotty who, in *Making the Australian Male* (2001), argues that "boys must be removed from their mothers to allow them to escape femininity and acquire manliness" (114), and part of this process is the education of sons. Penny Russell argues that for middle class boys "school were seen as a place to form useful associations for later life, as well as the necessary background for success in a chosen profession" (147). This is in direct contrast to schooling for girls which focussed more on character development and feminine accomplishments than literacy and numeracy (145). School also shifted the educative dynamic within the family from mother to son, to son to mother, as he exercised his "sense of authority within his family" (147). To deny this process denies a son's right to maturity and undermines his future right to authoritative fatherhood. This can be seen in Robert Richardson's *A Perilous Errand* (1876), in which Mrs Harvey, a wealthy widow, chooses to educate her son Walter at home. She later leaves him in the care of Reverend Cecil and his wife so that she can minister to her sick sister. Mrs Harvey has shown herself to be a bad mother. She selfishly wants to keep her son with her, rather than allowing him to go to school, so provides a home education which isolates him from his peers. She also abandons him so that she is free to care for another. It is, however, indicative of her social class, but also of E. Ann Kaplan's theory of the construction of motherhood

which makes mothering fulfilling in itself, the rejection of which situates the mother as being perceived to be bad (194). Boys were often sent away to receive their schooling (which Mrs Harvey later does) so home schooling, without even the benefit of a governess, would have been considered lacking. The abandonment, however, proves to be to Walter's benefit as Reverend Cecil allows him to receive the scholastic and religious education he was sorely lacking. The dualism here is that although taking the only option available to her by relinquishing her son into an improved social environment whereby Walter is at liberty to progress to manhood, Mrs Harvey is still a bad mother.

Within Australian children's literature, some childless women, such as Mary Grant Bruce's housekeeper Brownie in the Billabong series, became surrogate mothers to their employer's children, which reinforces the notion of the incompleteness of the childless family and its unsuitability that has been perpetuated into early twentieth century. Brownie is a substitute for Norah's dead mother, a responsible position, as a young girl needs more than just a male influence; she needs a motherly role model. In Mary Grant Bruce's *Anderson's Jo* (1927), Mrs Collins is a woman who knows her role in a domestic unit headed by farmer, John Anderson. Jo is a six-year-old girl, relinquished by her dying mother into Anderson's care. When Anderson decides to keep Jo in his home, temporarily at first, he directs Mrs Collins into the surrogate mother role employing rationalisation techniques, by first acknowledging the increased workload she would have to bear:

> "I'm afraid it's frightfully rough on you, Mrs. Collins," he floundered
> to a finish. "All very well for me, but I know the trouble falls on you.
> But I'll see that it's for as short a time as possible."

Then by highlighting Jo's good points, particularly her loyalty to her birth-mother, intimating that would be transferred to her surrogate mother:

> "It won't be difficult to get the youngster adopted: she's a good-
> looking kid, with plenty of brains. And a fighter, too; you could see
> she'd fight tooth and claw for the poor mother."

Offering job-sharing arrangements:

> "I'll take her off your hands as much as possible if you won't mind
> doing what I can't do, for the present."

And finally, and most effectively, appealing to Mrs Collins' sense of feminine, and therefore maternal, duty:

"A man's pretty helpless with a six-year-old". (*Anderson's Jo* 45-46)

Mrs Collins finds it difficult to resist this persuasive argument, indicating the inevitability of the event's outcome, and her intention to fall-in with expectations regarding her mothering role, that is, that she would take care of the nurturing and practicalities whilst Mr Anderson took the role of decision maker.

By mid-twentieth century, Australian children's literature included not only female servants who took on the role of surrogate mother but also male servants, who are also able to perform the role. At a time when many young men were at war and more women were entering the workforce than ever before, previously accepted gendered roles modified into roles born out of necessity. This can be seen in *Annette of River Bend* (1941) by Irene Cheyne who wrote for the Victorian School Paper and was a member of the Catholic Writers' Movement. Bill Bluitt runs the Lucky Pineapple Café, owned by Annette's father:

> "Bill", [Annette] said, screwing up her nose as if she found the
> question a rather difficult one, "is the only sort of mother I ever really
> had. Everybody says that. Why, I'd never have been taught to say a
> prayer at all ... or ... or any sort of manners only for Bill!". (14)

Bill also ensures Annette receives a "proper" education away from the negative influences of her home environment, living with her severe father at the Marine Store sandwiched between the café and Lauriston, a boarding house for single gentlemen. Bill steers Annette away from the undisciplined life of the café towards the inevitable reality of an education more suited to her age. The fact that Bill has become surrogate mother, despite "Old Mrs Harrison, their housekeeper and cook" (2), is telling. Mrs Harrison, apart from being aged, is tainted by the domestic atmosphere in which Annette's plight is "little better than that of an unwanted puppy, sheltered and fed on sufferance" (4). She is obviously unwilling or unable to give Annette the maternal support needed, therefore Annette moves emotionally, if not physically, from her home at the Marine Store, to Bill's at the café.

In order for families to continue to function smoothly, bereaved fathers, or indeed husbands, actively sought out younger girls in order to fill, or be groomed to fill the void left by a mother. Davidoff and Hall argue that in families in which the father-daughter relationship was particularly strong, the daughter would be expected to provide nursing,

nurturing or domestic responsibilities in the event of the mother's death or incapacity. Some widowed fathers would groom a daughter to take over the household, including the care of younger siblings, and these daughters also became the "emotional focus for her father" (Davidoff and Hall 346-48). As discussed earlier, Mary Grant Bruce's *Anderson's Jo* includes this theme. In another example, Captain Warden, in Emilia Marryat Norris's[8] *The Early Start in Life* (1867), becomes enamoured with his sixteen-year-old orphaned neighbour, Maggie. Warden is horrified that Maggie, her siblings and their servants, plan to go to Australia to make a new life for themselves. He argues that Maggie, at least, should be left behind in his care: "Maggie, my dear, will you come and live with me, and take care of me in my old age?" (10). The implication is that Maggie, raised as a middle-class child, would find life in the colonies harsh and that she should remain in England ensconced in middle-class society. Maggie, however, is aware of her family responsibilities as surrogate mother to her three brothers. She has been groomed as sacrificial mother; she is "handy, clever, … merry-hearted Maggie, whom her mother had been used to call, in fun, her maid-of-all-work" (4). She has all the requisites for taking over mothering duties for the newly bereaved family and after migrating to Australia she matures into Margaret. In an example of potential child removal that closely resembles that of Ethel Turner, it is assumed that Maggie's innate mothering skills, coupled with her late-mother's instruction, will stand her in good stead.

An example of the grooming of a daughter for the role of "wife" can also be found in Tarella Quin's book for young adults, *A Desert Rose* (1914), in which nine-year-old Betty is sent from the bush to school in Melbourne, after her mother left the family as she was unable to cope with bush life. By re-homing nine-year-old Betty, the now smaller family can more easily function without the concern for providing alternative maternal care for her. Betty only returns home after ten years; as a nineteen-year-old, she is now ready to look after herself, and to be a suitable wife to her future husband, a role her mother was unable to fulfil. In an interesting paradox, Betty's brother Jim remains on the property, becoming a "big half-educated, uncityfied brother" (*A Desert Rose* 15). Contrary to earlier trends in which sons were sent to school and daughters received an education in housekeeping and basic reading and writing in the home, Betty mirrors Quin's own mode of education as she was sent away

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[8] Emilia Marryat Norris, daughter of British adventure author Captain Frederick Marryat, included Australian content in two of her books, although it is doubtful she ever visited Australia (Author record, Emillia Marryat Norris. *Austlit* 1 June 2012. <www.austlit.edu.au>).

from the family properties in Ferntree Gully, Victoria and far-western New South Wales to school in Adelaide (Author record, Tarella Quin. *Austlit*. 1 June 2012. <www.austlit.edu.au>). Writing in the early 1900s, Quin's influences were the depression of the 1890s and the drought of 1895 to 1903. It was a time when properties, particularly those heavily grazed by animals, required hard work to maintain a modicum of output. Whilst lower-class farms required sons to remain on the land in order to provide much needed labour, middle-class families were generally resilient enough to continue sending their children to either Church or smaller privately run schools (Barcan 193; Macintyre 129). Betty's brother represents the trope of the Australian country male, strong and hardworking, at home in the bush, whilst Betty, after her education in Melbourne, away from the influences of the bush, has become the girl every man wants for a wife, and able to perpetuate society's expectations as wife and mother.

The ideology of keeping women in domesticity was transferred to the colonies where women battled the harsh elements and servants alike; Australian children's literature indoctrinated the female reader into the gendered expectations of the day. Sharyn Pearce argues that in colonial family novels girls are required to "remain within the household walls" ("Proper Little Ladies" 118). Ellen Campbell's *An Australian Childhood* is an autobiographical account of her youth spent in Carcoar, a small outback New South Wales town (Niall and O'Neill 73; Lees and Macintyre 84; Saxby *Offered* 30; Saxby *History* 61). Campbell writes of the response to the family's male cook "having ... temporary lapse[s], in connection with whisky" (28), a frequent occurrence in the Campbell household and in the domestic sphere generally (P. Russell 174). The mother of Campbell's family returns to the kitchen environment; she is at ease in her "natural" environment, which would suggest her reversion to accepted gendered stereotype.

Some middle-class women, however, had better management skills to compensate for a lack of manual skills. Ethel Turner enjoyed a privileged life sheltered from domestic labour, so felt ill prepared when the washerwoman did not arrive:

> . . . the clothes were all in soak, we did not know what to do,- at last
> we 3 set to & did a copper full, - Mother washed we rinsed & pegged
> out. My first washing! (*Diaries, 1889-1902* 12 Mar 1891)

Turner's diary entry illustrates the classed and gendered stereotyping of Australian women and how that is represented in her fictional works that "brought Australian children's fiction into the mainstream of Anglo-American domestic realism" (Niall and O'Neill 95) and

depicted the "lives and manners of middle-class Australians" (Niall 25). H. M. Saxby claims Turner "understood thoroughly the ways of children, especially in their relationships with adults and with one another" (*History* 78), however, they are the children of the middle-classes.

The dualism of innate mothering and the need for education is a concept that still resonates in twenty-first century society. Many current child-rearing practices are predicated on women instinctively knowing what to do while educational tomes on child rearing available during the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries still perpetuate the dualistic expectations of motherhood. Doctor Benjamin Spock's bible, *Baby and Child Care* (1968), starts his advice with the words "Trust Yourself. You know more than you think you do" (3) and continues with the advice to "trust your own instincts and follow the directions that your doctor gives you" (3). Penelope Leach's *Baby and Child* (1979) continues the theme by advocating loving the child, and everything else will fall into place. The more recent book by Pinky McKay is euphemistically titled *Parenting by Heart: Unlock your intuition and nurture with confidence* (2001). Although these books and others like them, are generally directed towards parents, it is mothers who are within the authors' sights as they are considered in need of education. The underlying principle in these texts is that should a mother veer from the path of continual nurturing and caring, however minutely, she is branded "bad" mother; "Bad Mother Myths allow us to take mothers' neutral or bad behaviour . . . or even mothers' good behaviour, and transform it into further proof that mothers are bad" (Caplan 239). The continuing perpetuation of stereotypical parental models and the unrealistic expectations placed on mothers who, if unable to uphold them, are at risk of having child/ren removed. They are patterns that have become established in children's literature and persist in contemporary parenting manuals.

Within children's literature normative definitions of family have emerged that are closely aligned with historical definitions. Sharyn Pearce argues that depictions of the colonial family were "white men and women, boys and girls of superior social status and refined breeding" and that "women and girls were not to be polluted by contacts with the lower social strata and inferior races, members of which interacted with them only on an employer-servant level" ("Proper Little Ladies" 123). Mother is portrayed as providing care and nurturing and in her absence, or in the event that she is a bad mother, a substitute or surrogate can be found in the form of childless woman, servant or worker. Males can also take on the role of mother, although they are restricted by their masculinity and must rely on a domestic servant to provide the nurturing aspects. The role of the father is constructed as less

complex. The key qualification is his ability to provide for the family. The demands of fatherhood, as portrayed in historical children's literature, provide the subject matter for the next chapter.

Chapter 3 – Patriarchal Families

"You'd like to stay here with me, Anne," he said, "you'd like to have this for your home and me for your father. You don't want to go back." (Ethel Turner. *St. Tom and the Dragon*. p. 61.)

While the previous chapter explored the complexities of motherhood and its portrayal within children's literature, the rigorous gendering of parental roles necessitates a separate examination of the construction of fathers. In the nineteenth-century, the household was underpinned by the male's role within it. As historian John Tosh argues: "To form a household, to exercise authority over dependants and to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining and protecting them – these things set the seal on a man's gender identity" (108). Literary critics Trev Broughton and Helen Rogers note that William Blackstone, in the mid-eighteenth century, first described the premise of fatherhood as being based on the family's acceptance of the "empire of the father" in which father held "absolute legal power" (1). They argue it is a construction that continued to the nineteenth century, when "home and family" began to become "annexed to the moral dominion of the mother" (1). Within the "empire of the father" fathers had ultimate authority over their children, as they were charged with making the decisions relating to the care and welfare of children that were then enacted by mothers. A father's effectiveness was predicated on a sound work ethic and high social standing, features that could redeem even a man absent or neglectful of his children. On the other hand, a failed father, abusive or alcoholic, risked having his children removed. The epigraph to this chapter illustrates the overarching belief in male superiority and patriarchy. It is spoken by Mr Warner in Ethel Turner's *St. Tom and the Dragon* (1918), a book that explores the role of alcohol in the ruination of family life, indicative of Turner's strong social conscience. Gayden Godwin is an educated Englishman; he is also alcoholic and abusive towards his daughter, Anne. Godwin's home in Lower Rockton is signposted by the "Drink Warner's Whiskey" sign that rises above. Warner's Whiskey is owned by Mr Warner of Upper Rockton – the analogy of the place names cannot be lost on the child reader as it signals the great social divide in which derelict housing can be found in Lower Rockton, and schools and better housing in Upper Rockton. Warner is keen to provide a home for Anne. He is the antithesis of her father; wealthy, social and a powerful influence in Upper and Lower Rockton:

> Almost everyone in court admired and envied him immensely; he
> seemed as much above all the soil and stain of the place as a god; his

clothes were of the quietest, merely very well cut; his hat, a mere
grey wideawake[9]; yet he seemed to exhale an air of motor-cars, of
mansions, of exclusive womenkind. Hardly anyone resented him;
hardly any one dreamed of holding him responsible for this eternal
panorama of outraged human nature: just Godwin, perhaps, who had
better brains than the rest. (*St. Tom* 76)

As he stands in court as a witness to Anne's abuse at the trial of her father, he is portrayed as
being a person of authority; moneyed, yet his attire gives him an air of calmness and piety. In
short, he is portrayed as being the ideal father figure, despite the fact that the source of his
wealth – whisky manufacture – is Godwin's downfall. On the other hand, Godwin, for all his
education, is constructed as weak and unable to use enough self-restraint to resist the
temptation of drink.

Warner places great faith in the legal system removing Anne from her alcoholic father
and placing her into his care:

He could hardly wait for the moment when the law would give her to
him. He had no doubt that it would so give her: the law was
something he had an infinite respect for; the law acted now purely in
the interests of the child. The days when it did not do so were dead,
with Dickens who had helped to kill them. (*St. Tom* 62)

However, Anne is returned into the care of her father by the magistrate who states "I have no
jurisdiction over the custody of the child" (*St. Tom* 81), giving ultimate authority to the
abusive father and reinforcing a patriarchal ideal that the child is the property of the father.
This is supported by the magistrate's earlier remark: "all his sympathies were with the poor
little student of Greek; yet it was his business to deal with facts, not with sentiment" (*St. Tom*
79), which reflects a change in society's thinking from regarding the child as potential
labourer to being future adult and future citizen. Anne's obvious good education means she is
worthy of removal from her father, however, the magistrate is obliged to adhere to the
boundaries of his profession.

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[9] A wideawake hat, also known as a Quaker hat, has a low crown and wide brim.

Concern for the child as future and society's influence on them has continued through to the twentieth century, indicating the primary importance of parenting. In the early twentieth century, at a time when religion was central in the lives of many women, some children's authors replicated religion's powerful influence in setting acceptable parental boundaries. Parents unable to raise children in such a manner had their child/ren removed. A deeply spiritual woman, Ethel Turner wrote in her diary of her clear intent in writing the book *St. Tom and the Dragon*: *"*Really started new book - my story that is to make at least an effort to help kill drink. Am going at it heart & soul – 'St Tom & the Dragon' or Letters of Flame or some such title" (*Diaries, 1911-1923, 1928*).

Not only was Turner influenced by the social conscience of Dickens' novels, but by the lingering force of paternalistic attitudes that were well entrenched in society during Dickens' time. Although by the early years of Turner's life notions of fatherhood as a "symbol of divine authority" were being challenged, leaving many puzzled as to fatherhood's actual purpose (17), mothers were now repositioned as primarily responsible for the care and nurture of children (Cunningham *Children and Childhood* 64-65; Kociumbas 62). Confusion reigned as to whether fathers should exert discipline to "protect children from danger, specifically from infidelity and spiritual error" (Broughton and Rogers 18) or take on a more nurturing and caring role. This confusion is centred on the premise that fatherhood was a "*sensibility* [author's emphasis] to be learned from experience with children" (Broughton and Rogers 16) as well as an innate state, a paradox that parallels the dichotomy between innate and learned mothering.

Australian children's literature imposes a construction of fatherhood and masculinity onto the male and female child reader that reflects the cultural norms of the day (Stephens "A Page" 38). Literary critic Ingrid Johnston's empirical research shows that even in twenty-first century Canada "boys, as insiders to the issue of masculinity, appear to have internalized many of the stereotypes of masculinity that appear in the books they read" (147), an argument that could effectively be applied to other post-colonial communities. One father at the centre of family life, and evocative of the ideal, can be found in Ellen Campbell's autobiographical book, *An Australian Childhood.* Her father, John, is representative of the ideal middle-class man; as a magistrate and property owner he is a man of social standing, well read, the dispenser of discipline and a man who understands the gendered divisions of parenting:

> "Give the child some medicine, my dear," quoth father, who put great
>
> faith in mother's powers as a doctress …

"I'm *quite* well, father," I said with natural eagerness; but the edict

had gone forth, and had to be obeyed. I silently resolved to do my

Gilpin in solitude for the future. (9-10)

He is also a man whose word must be obeyed. Here, young Ellen (Nell in the book) reads under the bed covers but wakes "look[ing] rather heavy about the eyes" (10). Nell's nocturnal reading is spurred on by her father who "had offered a shilling to the first child who should repeat 'John Gilpin' to him, from start to finish, without a mistake" (8). Another ideal paternal character, although one initially without a child, is Mr Samuel Heriot in Irene Cheyne's *Annette of River Bend* (1941). Annette's father is severe: "His usual attitude towards his small daughter was one of bleak severity" (4), and she grows up in a patriarchal environment, developing a rough-and-ready attitude and language. Motherless Annette considers Bill as a replacement: "Haven't got a mother ... only Bill," (12). However, this situation is not ideal, so when she is sent to boarding school a childless couple, Mr and Mrs Heriot, are paid to take her during the holidays. They are suffering financially due to the depression and are keen to earn some money by looking after her, although again, it is a form of part-time parenting that negates the ideal of continual family care. The initial arrangement is for a couple of years, but Annette wheedles her way into Mr Heriot's affections and she becomes a permanent part of the family:

"Do you still want a daughter … both of you?" she asked rather

shyly.

"We've got one, haven't we?" returned Mrs Heriot.

"Well, *I* thought so", said the Dragon [Mr Heriot]. (229)

The nickname given to him by Annette indicates she considers him a challenge, someone to overcome, but despite the name he is an ideal father; his stern exterior belies a softer side. He is a man who has "known ups and downs, bush tracks and made roads; and [who has] learned to take the rough with the smooth, as it were" (170). Given that "the depression has hit them a bit" (92) this could indicate that he travelled the bush in search of work (as many did).

Examples can also be found in early Australian children's literature of flawed and failed fathers, the difference between the two grounded in their ability to be redeemed or replaced. Flawed fathers are unable or unwilling to care for family in the accepted mode; children can be removed, but if the fathers change their ways, the child can be returned and the family made complete. In Ethel Turner's *Mother's Little Girl* (1904), Ted Waller is an

example of a flawed father who is unable to financially support his family of six so must suffer the agony of having his newborn daughter removed into a more appropriate family, that of his wealthy, but childless, in-laws. Ted is, as the book's chapter title describes him, "A Commonplace Man" (*Mother's Little Girl* 26): "a man of middle height, of a very ordinary cast of countenance, and very ordinary build of figure" (*Mother's Little Girl* 26); he was "steady, painstaking; no one found fault with him" (*Mother's Little Girl* 27). He was also "dogged with ill-luck" (*Mother's Little Girl* 27) whereby his employment was frequently disrupted by the flow-on effects of drought and government economics, and his new-found position offered a paltry salary. Failure to earn enough to support a family, particularly a large one, means Ted, in the view of Turner, is failing in his duty as a father. Ted returns home from accepting his new position to a letter from his wife's sister, and an offer to buy his daughter.

Poverty is the underpinning reason for Alice's offer of one hundred pounds to buy Ellice and Ted's baby:

> "I enclose a little cheque that if you agree you may find useful for
> buying a few things for the other children, and taking you away for a
> trip in the country: I am sure your health must need a change."
> (*Mother's Little Girl* 43)

The condescending tone of Alice's letter highlights her assumption that the couple's poverty left them unable to provide for their family. Its aftermath demonstrates the cultural divide between the two families; Alice believes that "she had managed that paragraph and difficult matter most delicately" (*Mother's Little Girl* 43). Ted, however, feels quite differently: "there came a dull flush of anger over the father's face; it mounted to his forehead and spread behind his ears" (*Mother's Little Girl* 43). There is no condemnation in the book of the idea of exchanging a child for money, rather Alice's action is seen as benefiting both child and nation. As Margot Hillel has argued, poor or overburdened parents like Ellice and Ted were a risk to vulnerable children, and hence to the future of the nation ("Race and Redemption" 588).

Figure 5: "She wants to buy - my baby!"
(Ethel Turner. *Mother's Little Girl.* London: Ward, Lock, [1921-2]. p. 48.
Illustrator: J. Macfarlane.)

The illustration above, by J. Macfarlane, who also illustrated many of Mary Grant Bruce's books, does not appear in the 1904 first edition of *Mother's Little Girl,* but in a later edition. Macfarlane depicts a mother protective of her newborn child as she faces her husband, thinking he has betrayed her and their family, and demonstrates the horror she feels at the prospect of relinquishing her baby. This is also reflected in the look on the face of the child next to her. The father looks weak and ineffectual, belying the strength he expresses in his reaction to the letter. The lack of adornment in the room suggests Ted is a poor provider. Nonetheless, Ted's immediate response to Alice's letter is to reject the offer: "Does she think we're *stones* because we're poor?" (*Mother's Little Girl* 44), to which his wife Ellice replies: "'Oh, I thought,' she sobbed, 'I feared – I thought – oh, darling, forgive me, I thought that even you would think I ought to give my poor little baby up.'" (*Mother's Little Girl* 44). It is Ellice, not Ted, who accepts the proposal after she receives another letter from her sister:

> You will not give her to me – you say if I had ever been a mother, I
> could not have asked such a thing! You, with six to fill your heart
> and arms, dare say that to me! Can you not see it is just because I
> never have been a mother that I do ask? (*Mother's Little Girl* 77)

Ellice makes a decision:

> Ellie dropped the letter and leaned passionately over the child in the
> cradle.
>
> "Little baby, I am going to give you up," she said, and her tears
> rained down on its unconscious face. (*Mother's Little Girl* 79)

The baby is sold. Alice and her husband Wilf are everything the Wallers are not; they appear to be the ideal family according to early twentieth-century norms. However, Alice and Wilf live on a property with his two brothers, who become a trio of fathers to Sylvia who is shared between the three men. Sylvia is depicted as a commodity; Wilf equates her purchase with that of horses: "He even asked was the sum large enough. 'I've just given that for a young horse,' he said; 'will it be considered enough for a young woman?'" (*Mother's Little Girl* 59).

After five years, Ted is able to redeem his situation through hard work and a commitment to owning a family home. He and Ellice have left the cramped confines of the "terrace prisons" (*Mother's Little Girl* 100) and are living on half an acre where "here blew a wind that came virgin-fresh from a mile of sheer bush land" (*Mother's Little Girl* 98), suggesting a new home and a new life in a "brand new suburb" (*Mother's Little Girl* 99), and living the Australian dream of home ownership. To get to this point, Ted re-enters the civil service on a good wage. He works hard to save for their new home until:

> there was one more home, one more asset for Australia. Here would
> grow up a little band of citizens, endowed with responsibilities and
> love of property, striking far deeper roots into the soil than would the
> plants, shifted hither and thither continuously. (*Mother's Little Girl*
> 110-11)

Turner is establishing the importance of intergenerational stability and aligning property, safety and Australia, a combination that forms a trope which constructs a particular form of security for children. Turner also emphasises the importance of the father as provider and the redemptive ability of hard work to improve the family's circumstances.

Once he has been down, Ted understands the need to help others: "You've always got to leave yourself ten bob or so, to help a fellow who's come a cropper" (*Mother's Little Girl* 188). Not only is he able to improve his circumstances, he is prepared to help others as well through an investment of money and also time:

"We're not wasting our time when we're playing with the children, and going these long bush walks with them, and making them the healthy, jolly, honest-hearted kids they've a right to be". (*Mother's Little Girl* 191-92)

By placing the children in the natural world they are being returned to a "state of innocence" (Hillel "When the Voices" 42), an innocence that was denied them when their sister was taken from them. Ted has successfully improved his family's circumstances and Sylvia is returned to them. Although written some thirty years after Turner's book, the construction of the flawed father continued, as can be found in Bessie Marchant's[10] *Waifs of Woollamoo* (1938). This story is centred on a single father, Captain Brandreth (Cap), a middle-class man who, like Ted Waller, also finds himself and family in reduced financial circumstances. He becomes a physically absent father but still has an emotional presence in the family. His core group of waifs comprise Meg, Cap's orphaned niece; Lionel, whose single father died leaving Lionel with Cap; and Dot, believed to be orphaned and initially cared for by a washerwoman, but taken in by Cap when the washerwoman died. Financial insecurity means that he is unable to send the children to school – the goldfields beckon and Cap prepares to leave the children behind. His absence is constructed as being essential due to necessity, while the absence of other fathers who also respond to lure of the goldfields, is based on material greed. The Trents and the Bonhams are financially secure but see the goldfields as a means to increase their wealth. The two families approach Cap to care for their children while they are away. While the families are searching for gold, the children discuss the greed that must have driven their parents to leave them behind. Cicely Trent remarks: "What a great name for kindness Cap must have, Meg, for all the folks to want to trust their children to him" (44). Meg argues that Cap only went away because he had "seen poverty in front of him" (44), as opposed to the other families who went to increase their fortunes. Here Marchant is drawing upon reports during the gold rush of families left behind to fend for themselves, frequently in squalid conditions, when fathers were seduced by the lure of gold. Lionel also comments on the adults' decision to leave their children behind while they search

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[10] Bessie Marchant wrote prolifically for boys and girls but is best known as "the girl's Henty". Marchant located many of her books overseas, yet never left England, instead using information gleaned from the Bodleian Library, the *Geographical Magazine,* and letters from her readers in various countries (Author record, Bessie Marchant. *Austlit* 1 June 2012. <www.austlit.edu.au>).

for gold: "It is bad enough when men go crazy and leave everything, to go off on the chance of getting rich in a hurry, but what the women want to go for passes me" (28). Lionel's comment implies that men are the breadwinners, women the homemakers who should be content with their lot, and not aim for betterment. His comment is firmly directed at the women who have left their children, but although Meg replies: "That is because you are not a woman and don't know what the inside of a woman's mind is like" (28-29), she does not criticise his comment, implying agreement. Instead she renames herself "Mother Meg" (39), and immediately embraces the parentless situation, filling the need for a maternal figure.

Captain Brandreth has proven his worth as a kind and moral man and therefore ideal father. He relishes the idea of incorporating more children into his family; "The more the merrier" (27), leaving all of the children in the care of young Meg, however his large family needs a mother. While on the goldfields, Cap becomes ill and is nursed back to health by Sister Bertha who, it is found, is actually Dot's mother (152). She had left Dot in the care of someone and as penance she was to lead a life of homelessness. Although now the ideal father, the family is made whole again as Cap finds a wife, and mother to his children, a continuation of the trope of the idealised two-parent family.

In contrast to the flawed father, who has the option of improving his situation and hence that of his family, failed fathers are depicted as being irredeemable. Fathers fail in different ways to mothers. They can be absent due to work commitments or doing great deeds for their country. The mother cannot be absent as she is seen to neglect her family, who must be her sole focus. In Pixie O'Harris's *Fortunes of Poppy Treloar* (1941), Poppy's birth mother is blamed for leaving her with strangers even though her father, who is in the secret service "at the beck and call of his country and his Government" (185), does not want a child, finding having a small child a burden. Saxby claims the book is "incredibly contrived" and "unbelievable" and argues that O'Harris's first book after her initial works of fairy stories and illustrations was to help set the tone of "stereotyped children's book[s]" in Australia (*History* 166). The book does reflect accepted ideas of fatherhood as well as reflecting contemporary society, as many child readers in the World War II years would have been similarly fatherless at that time.

Another failing in fathers is ill health. The ideal male enjoys robust physical and mental health, and this is particularly included in literature at times of national importance, such as war. Lillian M. Pyke's *Jack of St. Virgil's,* published in 1917, is a story of adventure and heroism. In what Saxby describes as a "melodramatic chain of circumstances" (*History*

166), Jack's father is an adventurer, discovering the interior of New Guinea. He takes his wife with him, leaving their young son in the care of Alice, a nurse. Alice abducts Jack and he becomes lost to his parents, a loss that causes his father to suffer a nervous breakdown. He is denied the child for whom it was his duty to provide, protect and educate (Broughton and Rogers 4) leaving him childless and without paternal authority. Not only is he now a failed father, but he is a failed man as well.

Obvious failings, such as alcoholism or abusiveness, are near impossible to redeem and position the father as permanently failed. Such fathers are depicted as a danger to child, family and society; their children must be removed, or conversely, they must be removed from the family. Gayden Godwin, in Ethel Turner's *St. Tom and the Dragon,* is private-school educated and had a middle-class upbringing which gives him a degree of authority over Anne, however, it is an authority that is negated by his alcoholism and repeated incidents of abuse.

Figure 6: "--- four dog's chains fastened together, one and free each . . . "
(Ethel Turner. *St. Tom and the Dragon*. London: Ward, Lock, 1918. p. 192.
Illustrator: Harold Copping.)

Godwin attempts to assert his authority over Anne by keeping her in the home to be educated for as long as possible, and isolating her from the staff and students of the state school, as she might become "defiled" (*St. Tom* 12). The illustration above shows Anne tied with a chain, looking vulnerable in a bare room. There are cooking implements, but no food.

The upturned saucepan and Anne clutching her arm signals an accident. The vectors of the illustration highlight the abuse, leading the viewer's eye along the dog chains, up the figure of Anne and across to the face of Mrs Warner, emphasising the look of vulnerability and innocence on the child's face and the motherly concern on the woman's. Mrs Warner is thus constructed as "saviour" and the contrast in Anne's appearance and surroundings to that of Mrs Warner, also clearly indicates Anne's vulnerability and signals to the child reader the necessity for her removal; not to do so could be fatal.

Being the dutiful daughter expected of her, Anne refuses to lay blame with her father, although her response seems, in part, to echo that of an abused wife who blames herself for the abuse:

> "I ran away and Daddie is 'fraid I might do it again when he's away a long time on Saturdays. But it's a very long chain; it was a dreadful lot of money, four dogs' chains fastened together, one and free each. But he likes me to be able to get all about the rooms and play and do my work and things. You nearly forget 'bout it sometimes. But it went and got tangled up in a knot when I spilt the saucepan …". (*St. Tom* 190)

The child is made complicit in her own captivity and made to sympathise with her father about the expense of the chains. In addition, the vulnerability of the child – and thus the need to remove her – is highlighted in this passage by the deliberate ploy on the part of the author of infantilising Anne's speech. Yet, despite his failings as a father, Godwin is still allowed to exert his authority by giving her away (albeit bad naturedly), rather than facing further disgrace by having her removed:

> "Take her away, my boy. Take her to your unnameable [sic] Warner, whose memory she still cherishes as she might a white rose. The high gods must be possessed of a wondrous sense of humour. Tell your unnameable friend I give her to him with her own love – and my immortal hatred". (*St. Tom* 228)

Godwin is depicted as deserving of having Anne removed and placed into the more suitable Warner family. As with Sylvia, in *Mother's Little Girl,* Turner considers the placement of a child from one family into another to be a gift, and this is highlighted in the title given to the chapter in which Anne is offered to Warner: "The Gift". This would suggest that the

relinquishing family should treat the removal as right and the best thing for both families. The removal of Anne is made permanent by Godwin's death, under the wheels of Warner's dray (*St. Tom* 233) – now Warner exerts his own authority.

Godwin is situated in opposition to Warner who is potential father to Anne. Godwin is quick to blame everyone except himself for his misfortunes, laying the blame for his alcoholism on the greed of the distiller himself:

> "A fine figure of a man, am I not? Made in the image of the Creator, with additions by Stephen Warner, Esq. When you get to the Judgment Seat, Mr. Warner, and the Almighty says 'Mr. Warner, why did you make these additions to My handiwork?' you will have to answer, 'I made them, Lord God of Hosts, not because I thought they improved Thy handiwork, but because I wanted my wife to have a diamond necklace and a big house and a motor-car'." (207)

Godwin's assertion that he is "Made in the image of the Creator" suggests he has been following a pre-ordained pathway, the interruption of which has been caused by Warner, whom he considers as existing in a moral and spiritual vacuum. It is a point not lost on Warner who remembers Godwin's words as he contemplates his past selling whisky, and his future involvement in the immoral community he is part of, and for which he feels responsible. The Warners vow to atone and convert the distillery from brewing whisky to produce only beer and industrial alcohol (207). They also open a shop, the "Homely Food Depot", to provide basic meals for Lower Rockton's needy: "This first of the depots set out to supply one hundred dinners a day, but in a month there were at least a thousand clamouring to be allowed to buy" (*St. Tom* 206). This is the form of work that the British Women's Co-operative Guild often performed, when they "supported poor people's stores which provided cooked food to compensate for the utterly inadequate cooking facilities in the poorest dwellings" (Yeo "Constructing and Contesting" 13), and which demonstrates Warner's new-found social awareness; he is compelled to act by Anne and her plight. However, while providing ready-cooked meals gives short-term help, it is not effective long-term as people still rely on virtual handouts and are not educated in ways of improving their situation. Warner's paternalistic sense of responsibility chooses to provide this form of support, rather than investing in capital works, ensuring that the lower-classes remain beholden to him. In her vulnerability and her circumstances, Anne has thus acted as a redemptive figure for the Warners, leading them to the path of charity and compassion.

There is another player forming a tripartite of males in Anne's life. Tom St. Clair is a sixteen-year-old who heroically rescues Anne from her father and delivers her to Warner. Tom is the archetypal Australian hero who answers the call to adventure as outlined by mythologist Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (41-48). He is also representative of "Young Australia" the metaphor used to describe developing nationalism and its upcoming youth (Turner *St. Tom* 125). This was important in 1918 when Australia was welcoming back its own national heroes. Too young to have served in the war he is a role model to the boy reader of someone emulating Australia's war heroes. He is fair-haired, intelligent, well read, athletic and handsome, all the qualities of an Australian hero.

Figure 7: "- Down with a hideous crashing and tearing, the monstrous thing fell to earth".
(Ethel Turner. *St. Tom and the Dragon.* London: Ward, Lock, 1918. p. 160.
Illustrator: Harold Copping.)

In the illustration above Tom is presented as David to the Goliath of the whisky manufacturer, a child hero in his schoolboy uniform and cap; he is dwarfed by the advertising sign as he brandishes his weapon, a small screwdriver, with which to slay the dragon. While Tom in effect is working to deliver Anne to a man who manufactures whisky and who is therefore largely responsible for the downfall of some in the district, he cannot deny Warner's other, more benign influence, investing time and money in the community. He has become

what young boys are encouraged to be in their reading material: heroic, adventurous and saviours. Anne needs to be saved from an abusive father and placed into the embrace of an ideal one. However, the biggest obstacle to Tom's claim to fatherhood is his age, hence the need to deliver Anne to someone more appropriate: Warner. A familiar device used in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century children's books is providing "young male protagonists a role model, in the form of an older man who can instruct them in the behaviour appropriate to their class, race and gender" (S. Pearce "Proper Little Ladies" 115). Tom demonstrates self belief by choosing his own role model – Warner, a man he likens to King Alfred: "'Always liked that Johnnie someway,' said Tom, 'when I was a little chap at school in England I used to sit next to him in chapel, he was sculpted in stone at the end of every fourth pew. … First day I saw you, Mr Warner, I thought of him at once'" (*St. Tom* 39-40). It was a decision that was to be proven to be right as Warner saves Anne, "A child with a frenzied face, and bleeding shoulders and bleeding arms" (*St. Tom* 45), when she climbs up the cliff, away from her abusive father, hoisted the last few feet by Warner. It was an act of heroism that was to be replicated by Tom as he not only rescues Anne but the whole community of Rockton from the ravages of alcohol.

Children's literature has long influenced the child reader; and the representations of fathers in the literature are indicative of the expectations society has placed on men which have guided the reader into accepted ways of thinking. It is an influence that has continued through to the twentieth century, by which time confusion over the role of fathers appears to have been reconciled to being innate and having authority over the family, as can be seen in contemporary child-rearing literature. Psychologist Steve Biddulph's books *Manhood* (1994), (republished in 2010 as *The New Manhood*), and *Raising Boys* (2008) suggest to Australian parents that men have a "talent" for disciplining (4), and should be the parent that does physical activities (*Manhood* 119; *New Manhood* 165-66); mothers, who can "raise boys well, but not alone", should find males to provide these things for their sons (*Manhood* 116; *Raising Boys* 73, 77, 81). This is backed up by images that show Dad sitting reading the newspaper, helping to build sandcastles or in a rough-and-tumble while Mum, in her role as passive monitor of her son's activities, looks on, relegated to the role of encouraging her son to do housework (see Figure 8 below) (*Manhood* 123-4; *New Manhood* 170; *Raising Boys* 105).

Figure 8: "Dads can do this, uncles, friends, even mums (though mums don't enjoy it quite as much)".
(Steve Biddulph. *Raising Boys: Why Boys Are Different - and How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-Balanced*
***Men*. 3rd ed. Sydney: Finch, 2008. p. 73.)**

Biddulph is promoting innate fathering encapsulated by his ultimate authority into the twenty-first century, however, paternal authority need not be experienced in a physical sense; the absent father has a powerful influence over a child or family. His absence is indicative of the uncertainty of his tangible role. Biddulph, and many other twenty-first century writers of books and articles on fathering, are perpetuating nineteenth-century stereotypical beliefs to new generations of parents.

Representations of the ideal family in children's literature position the child reader into accepted modes of understanding parental roles. In the books discussed in this thesis, mothers are portrayed as being care-givers and nurturers, yet able to be replaced if absent. Mothers designated as "bad" when measured against societal norms and expectations, must suffer having their children removed and placed into an appropriate environment for nurturing future citizens of the nation. Fathers are the pivotal figure in the family, with ultimate authority over children and the household generally the main criterion is that of providing for the family. The father is not easily replaced but can authorise the removal, and re-homing, of his own child. The following chapter will explore justifications and instances of child removal in early Australian children's books and the role of children's literature in promoting the acceptance of such practices.

Chapter 4 - Rationalising Removal

"It seems to me your right in her is almost as great as Ellie's, considering you took her as a sickly baby, and have had her so long." (Ethel Turner. *Mother's Little Girl.* p. 241-2.)

In colonial times, Australia's child population was small but unplanned for. Few European children travelled on the early convict ships and of those that were born in the colony, most were born to at least one convict parent (Swain "Derivative" 4). The Indigenous child population was similarly small after European occupation due to the spread of disease and "post-contact violence" (Swain "Derivative" 4). Families in the colony with the means to do so sent their children back to England for their education and socialisation. Others had to rely on what colonial authorities could muster given the lack of schoolmasters, buildings and money (Dickey 14), and children of the lower-classes were considered destined to remain in the working classes and therefore not worthy of having their situation improved to any great extent (Dickey 15). Once the child population began to grow it became problematic; facilities were set up for children of convicts, but the rest had to make do with whatever was on offer. Initially institutions were established for orphan females of convict women, which Shurlee Swain attributes to "an indication of the focus on the vulnerability of young females in the male dominated colony" ("Derivative" 5). Similar establishments for boys were not set up until 1818 ("Derivative" 5). They provided accommodation and training for children of convict women considered unable or unwilling to care for them.

As the size of the free population increased there was concern about the quality of children who were now seen as the future of the emerging community. The increasing visibility of children in the public space from the 1850s saw some categorised as "threats to public order" rather than "victims of misfortune, cruelty or neglect" (Swain "Derivative" 5). The blame for this situation was placed firmly on the parents, the solution rescue via removal from what was perceived as the negative influence of families. For Aboriginal children the solution was cast in terms of the civilising mission. The focus of this chapter is on how and why the failure of caregivers gave cause for removal and the way in which removal policies introduced by government and charities were reflected in children's literature as natural and benevolent.

One of the modes of removal or relocation is that of relocation by consent, generally in the case of impending death of the remaining caregiver, but sometimes from a mix of benevolence and family obligation. It was the perceived vulnerability of children that justified

removal in such situations. This is a theme that consistently runs across the one-hundred year timeframe of this thesis and one that is still used to elicit sympathy in children's literature. Often the child's future is dictated to an "approved" carer from the parental deathbed. The voluntary relinquishment of a child transfers ownership and dictates an appropriate outcome for the child, albeit often into a stranger's home. In Mary Grant Bruce's *Anderson's Jo*, Jo's dying mother pleads for Anderson to find an appropriate home for her daughter, begging that he "Find her some one who will love her. She – she is such a naughty baby" (*Anderson's Jo* 39). Anderson ponders the "strangest reason that ever gave weight to a plea", but is swayed by it as he considers the alternative:

> … it moved John Anderson more than a hundred claims of goodness.
> A naughty baby: to be disciplined and brought into line with a
> hundred others in some rigid Home. (*Anderson's Jo* 39)

Even when a parent had deserted rather than died, they can still maintain a degree of control over the child's future by orchestrating placement with an appropriate carer until they deem it is time to return, generally when some form of change has taken place in either the life of the parent, the child, or both. Yet even such orchestrated arrangements could misfire. The quotation which introduces this chapter illustrates the assumed appropriateness of child removal. The new mother is seen as having just as much right to the removed child as the birth mother as she has taken a needy child and made her healthy, educated and socialised. It is the investment of time and appropriate care that confers the right of ownership on the new mother, denying the birth mother any authority over her child. Taken from Ethel Turner's *Mother's Little Girl*, in a chapter titled "A Second Renunciation", Alice and Wilf consider whether to return Sylvia to her birth parents, Ellice and Ted. Alice agonises over the thought of relinquishing her right to the child:

> "Oh, I know what you will say, and what Wilf says – that thousands
> of other women, who have no children, are very happy, and lead very
> useful, bright lives. That doesn't help me a bit. The love of children
> was born in me! I'm starved without them. I cannot help it, it is my
> nature." (*Mother's Little Girl* 78)

While Alice appeals to Ellice's assumed understanding of the innateness of motherhood, she also highlights the surrogate mother's right to parent a needy child, as she is more capable of offering an acceptable level of care. As Alice sits in her sister's house contemplating her

return home, her inner turmoil is portrayed as a juxtaposition of innate mothering and innate nurturing:

> "If I were really a noble woman, and thought only of the child's good, I should leave her here."
>
> "Thank Heaven, I'm not. I'm just human, and I *must* have my happiness." (*Mother's Little Girl* 234)

Eventually the child is returned to Ellice.

Despite the often unspoken belief that good children are not normally in the situation of requiring re-homing, that the child is somehow naughty or even responsible for the death or desertion of a parent, authors commonly depict them as being easily inserted into normal family environments. In the case of Sylvia, this justification is reversed. Initially considered available because she had the misfortune to be the sixth child in a poor family, she was spoilt and pampered in Alice's home. Hence her return to her birth family is justified because it offers the promise of a better childhood in which appropriate parental discipline can be maintained.

John Anderson's rationale for accepting Jo shows the author's awareness of the alternatives facing homeless children if such family-based care was not available. At the time of the release of *Anderson's Jo* in 1927, the press was beginning to turn its attention to the problem of institutional child abuse. One example is of a fourteen-year-old boy who had been "severely strapped" after running away from Melbourne's Royal Park Depot ("Boy Strapped" 16). An inquiry followed during which a medical practitioner, a psychologist and an inspector of schools, among other eminent men, argued in favour of corporal punishment as a means of controlling the children in care ("Royal Park Depot" 13). The outcome of the inquiry was that such punishment should be restricted to twelve strokes, six if the child was under fourteen years ("Corporal Punishment" 21). While using corporal punishment to control children housed in the institutional environment of Royal Park Depot continued to be sanctioned, the publicity surrounding the inquiry also led to concerns about the mix of children being held in such institutions. A scoutmaster attached to the Depot wrote to the editor of *The Argus* disturbed about the "mental defectives, moral perverts, and lads with confirmed criminal tendencies" and that such an arrangement would "breed successive generations of criminals" ("Delinquent Boys" 9).

This anxiety is echoed in *Anderson's Jo*. Anderson's initial response to being asked to care for Jo is to send her to the police, but a friend, Mrs Tarrant, is horrified:

> "You couldn't! Why, they'd send her to the Neglected Children's Department, or some such dreadful place".

> "They may not be dreadful at all, my dear", said Mr Tarrant, cautiously.

> "Oh, I suppose not – but they aren't mothers. And babies of six want mothers more than anything." (*Anderson's Jo* 37)

The hospital's matron suggests Jo and her mother were "a stray woman and child from a Melbourne slum, perhaps", asking: "What are orphanages and institutions for, Mr Anderson, if not to take charge of a child like that?" (*Anderson's Jo* 42), but Anderson feels differently:

> "… you could see she was something different. There was breeding about her – did you notice her hands? They weren't common hands. And the youngster is not a common child". (*Anderson's Jo* 42-43)

Class here is inscribed on the child's body, making her readily identifiable as justifying his concern. This justification reflects a commonly held view amongst child rescuers that while institutional care was appropriate for working-class children it was not considered so for those who were obviously of a better class. Swain and Hillel's analysis of the British child rescue literature concludes that while "middle-class children rarely came to the attention of child rescuers" (59), those that did were singled out for special treatment, and often restored to what was seen as their appropriate status in life rather than subjected to the discipline and training considered appropriate for working class children (Swain and Hillel 166; Barnardo "A Romance of the Slums" 65-67).

Mary Grant Bruce also shows an awareness of the increasing popularity of adoption, legalised in most Australian states in the 1920s. Jo's mother implores Anderson to find the child a home, not that he necessarily keep her in his home. He agrees, but his concern about "some rigid Home" (*Anderson's Jo* 39) compels him to consider adoption a more attractive alternative: "I am at liberty to give the child to anyone who would adopt her … There must be plenty of lonely people who would be glad to adopt a child as attractive as Jo" (*Anderson's Jo* 44).

Another mode of removal is determined by necessity, when parents have deserted, leaving children without protectors. Parental desertion, either physical or psychological, is a common theme in children's literature, one that elicits pity and sympathy in the reader. In Bertha Southey Adams's *Dusky Dell* (1898), desertion is the reason for Dell's first placement into another family, but there is also an underlying family link in her second, and permanent, removal. Dell had "a queer, dark-featured child-face" (1), and is "so very dark, so very unusual looking" (41), descriptions that immediately situate her as being different. She is found in the shrubbery with a pink scarf around her "tiny form", "a little gipsy [sic] thing" (9), and is taken into the Norman family as sister to their own newborn twin daughters. Dell, however, is the antithesis of the good child the Normans expect her to be and she is frequently savagely beaten by her new "stepfather". She is thus constructed as doubly vulnerable and in need of further rescue.

When Dell is about eight, Mr Graham, a widower and minister, offers to take her from the Normans. Dell calls him Grandfather and, as the plot develops, it becomes apparent that she is correct. Graham's daughter, Marian, had run away with a piano tuner, a Catholic, whom she later married, becoming lost to her father for many years (81-82). Her husband took to drink and became abusive. Marian was forced to menial labour. In what is depicted as a misguided act of love, she eventually leaves the baby where she is found in some bushes by the Norman family and is later claimed by her grandfather. Marion's distress at abandoning her child is palpable:

> "I went, leaving my baby. I left her in my misery, and fear, and
> despair, and I do not try to lessen the blame and wickedness of that
> act. But I loved her so, and my heart bled as I laid her down and left
> her in the Leonards' shrubbery. Poor little baby, but I knew when
> they found her they would take care of her whoever she might have
> been." (155)

Of paramount importance was Marian's marriage. Her Christian upbringing meant that she felt the importance of staying with her husband, no matter what abuse she was given:

> "I have told you how we lived since; from hand to mouth, sometimes
> actually starving; but one sin I cannot have against me: I stayed with
> him till death parted us, and that one thought consoles me now … I
> stayed with him, worked with him, starved with him, but I never
> came home again. When he was dying he told me I had been a good,

brave wife to him. I was glad he found that out before he died; glad

that death had opened his heart to know and his eyes to see that."

(155)

Published by a small publishing enterprise when Adams was just twenty one, *Dusky Dell* is considered by Saxby to be a "poorly written, sentimental story fraught with Victorian repression and complexes" (*Offered* 208). This is certainly illustrated in the dialogue between Dell and her long-lost mother:

"I love you now," said Dell. "I love you now, mother. Ever since I

can remember, I've been saving up love for you; I know it was for

someone, but now I know it is yours. I love you, dear, dear, mother".

(152)

The innate nature of biological ties, the reader is meant to assume, is a strong bond that binds unknown relations and brings them together. It also makes clear that the mother is crucial to the child's well-being and cannot be replaced, however kind the grandfather has been as a substitute.

The issue of child desertion is also dealt with in *Camp Kiddies: A Story of Life on Railway Construction* (1919) by Lillian M. Pyke which draws on Pyke's first-hand knowledge of life in a construction camp. After working as a teacher and journalist, she married Richard Pyke in 1906. They then moved to a railway construction camp at Monkland, near Gympie, Queensland, where Richard worked as an accountant. Their three children were born in camps. After Richard committed suicide in 1914, Pyke and her children returned to Melbourne where she turned to writing to support them (Kingston "Pyke, Lillian Maxwell" <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/pyke-lillian-maxwell-13161/text23721>). The book, written after Pyke's return, parallels her family's experience. Mr Clifford finds work as an accountant. As the family travel overland to the construction camp, they come across Toby, a twelve-year-old boarded-out boy who has run away from his abusive carers. Mrs Clifford approaches the authorities seeking permission to keep the child: "I'll keep him for a nurse-boy if I can persuade the Department to let me have him … There's many a little job my kiddies are too small for that a boy could do and be a great help" (*Camp Kiddies* 183). As a boarded-out boy though, the label of "delinquent" taints Toby. When the Cliffords first meet him, he has stolen their picnic hamper because, "Oh! I was so hungry" (*Camp Kiddies* 178), so, in a common device in children's literature, when a ring is found to be missing, it is automatically assumed he was the thief (it was later found to be a bower bird).

Toby has been abandoned by his carers three times. The first time from his biological family; as a boarded-out boy it is assumed they were either deceased or neglectful. He has also been deserted by the carers appointed by the Department:

> "I don't mind work, missus, but when it comes to kicks and blows
> it's more than I can stand. No matter what I do, it's nag, nag, from
> the woman that looks after me, and a beating and go to bed without
> supper if I answer back." (*Camp Kiddies* 180-81)

Thirdly, he has been deserted by the organisation ultimately responsible for his care. When asked by Mrs Clifford why he had not complained about the abuse to the Department, he replied: "Oh, who'd take the word of a boarded-out kid against the boss and his missus? … It was easier to run away" (*Camp Kiddies* 181). This example demonstrates how children's literature served to address public scepticism about child removal, particularly concerns over the lack of protection from abuse and neglect and the fact that children were often moved from one foster carer to another (Swain and Hillel 209, 218). Mrs Clifford is an example of the care and consideration expected of foster parents, and her intervention in Toby's situation allows the Department to honour its obligations. Such a resolution helps to overcome doubts raised by reports of mistreatment of removed children by showing a situation in which removal ultimately was in the best interests of the child.

Figure 9: "Lang and some of the Tent Dwellers, and, The Office and Staff's Quarters at Ventura."
(Lillian M. Pyke. *Camp Kiddies: A Story of Life on Railway Construction*. Melbourne: The Speciality Press, 1919. p. 177.)

The constructed authenticity of this book is reinforced by the use of photographs, and in particular their placement on the page in a style reminiscent of a family photograph album. The photographs above illustrate what life on a railway construction camp was like; the single cabin in a clearing with a father and two children in the foreground, demonstrate the loneliness and isolation, and also the danger, of living in the bush. It elicits sympathy and concern from the child reader for Toby, alone and vulnerable in the bush. The photograph's title points to the residence as a tent, rather than a cabin, its canvas walls offering little protection against the elements. The Office and Staff's Quarters represent a more community style of living compared to the sole tent/cabin.

Parental absence is also a theme in *Ginger for Pluck* (1929) by Arthur Russell, a journalist and prolific children's author. Thirteen-year-old Ginger is an orphan who for four years has been living by his own means, taking logs from the river to sell. His independent

life is buffered by his sense of self worth as he "believed in looking after himself" (17), as well as the care of an extended community of fruit growers (17). However, the dangers of tent life are made clear when Hughie, a bank robber and thug, steals Ginger's small stash of money (24-25). While the expectations for newly-orphaned Ginger would be institutionalisation in a children's home, Russell's story gives an alternative option, suggestive of the fact that homeless children often found their future on the streets, only in this case on the river. While Ginger's life on the river could have had tragic consequences, as many fending for themselves on the streets found, Russell pens an idyllic outcome. Ginger seems to be the classic Rousseuian, Romantic child, and it is this freedom in nature that allows him to carry out the act of bravery which gives the book its name. When another boy, Percival Johnson, falls into the river, Ginger heroically rescues him, and then decamps so that he can maintain his independence. As a reward for his bravery, the Johnson family seek him out, wishing to remove him from what they regard as an unsuitable lifestyle, and offer him a home – a more Puritan view of childhood thus begins to intrude in his life. He is torn between the offer and life on the river: "On the one hand there was what he longed for - a comfortable home, a good education, and possibly a position in life which would be the envy of many. On the other hand there was the river" (34). The life he chose turned out to be a mix of the two as his life is changed after accepting their offer; he later becomes the proud captain of a steamer.

There were instances, however, where removal was a result of active intervention, not by another family, but by authorities who judged that the existing family stood outside the limits of acceptable parenting in Australia. Religion played an important role in setting such boundaries. Parents who lived sinful lives were seen as being a risk to their children's future. Christian magazines and articles were full of instances of child abuse and neglect in which once the child was re-homed in a Christian environment she would thrive. Some children, however, were beyond salvation on this earth, such as the young girl who was found wandering the streets, reluctant to return to her abusive father ("Notes of the Month" 4-5). She spent only a short time in the Mission House before dying of "the fever", her little body and soul damaged beyond repair. This example demonstrates the evangelical view that children of abusive parents grow to be weak and for many, rescue could come too late; death being the only escape. The two things that the religious world view particularly condemned were alcoholism and child abuse.

Although colonial Australia has been seen by some scholars as more secular than earlier colonial foundations (Carey 2), religion was still afforded a primary role in ensuring community morality. The First Fleet was accompanied by Church of England ministers who

attempted to instil, if not maintain, a degree of religiosity in the convicts and later took it upon themselves to spread Christianity amongst the "natives". But it was a hard task that tested the most dedicated of Evangelicals. Missionaries felt that the Aborigines could be persuaded to parrot Christianity, but that they too easily reverted to their Indigenous beliefs. Convicts and free-settlers brought with them the denominational underpinnings of their homelands. Between one-quarter to one-third of convicts and free-settlers belonged to the Catholic Church (Carey 2), the majority of the remaining were of the Established Churches, that is, Anglican and Presbyterian. From the earliest days Evangelical clergy worked doggedly to counter vice and sin with the conversion and saving of souls (Carey 12-13). Yet to many it seemed that Christian practices were performed out of a sense of duty to state rather than spiritual need, "because the Church of England was an arm of the state" (Macintyre 49). The convicts were generally made up of the rough and ready of industrial society whose attitudes to religion ranged from indifference to active resistance (Carey 2, 13, 25), although it could also be argued that rather than being anti-religious, they were anti-clerical (O'Brien 17). The colony's administrators, good upstanding Christians of the established tradition, grew nervous of the effects of the religious unrest and intolerance that had been left behind (Carey 1). However, society's ambivalence towards religion did not limit its power, or indeed its effectiveness, in defining moral norms.

Religion constituted one of the most powerful streams in the development of both public and popular understandings of the "threat" posed by poor children in the nineteenth century. Christian ideals were received from the pulpit and disseminated through the publication of tracts, annals and novels, although the message was received in different ways, depending on class, gender and race (Swain "Religion" 30-32). Subordinates were indoctrinated with patriarchal views that had barely changed over centuries. These norms were enforced by the men at the top of the religious hierarchy, who were in turn aided and abetted in their quest by the women and men of a society that was decades away from widespread secularisation (Carey 172). One of the fundamental imperatives promulgated at this time was the notion of the civilising mission: the conversion, and hence, civilisation, of the morally bereft; the Aborigines, and those of the non-Indigenous lower-classes.

Christianity spread throughout the colony due to the zeal of missionaries and evangelical clergy whose work in missions, schools, church pulpits and chronicles enticed converts and donations to the cause. Women played an important role in this process. Despite their subordination within Christian denominations, women's involvement in religious culture gave them the chance to shine in areas that would otherwise have been frowned on (Carey

112). Nineteenth-century women found an accepting environment for charitable work within religious institutions. Charity also provided an eminently suitable vehicle for women to utilise their skills, also giving a degree of "power and prestige" (Walkowitz 57), while men maintained an authoritative role (Swain "Religion" 30; West 21-29; O'Brien; Kingston "Faith" 21; Teale 118). Within the Catholic Church, women were also active in missionary work and became a powerful force in the fields of education and nursing (Research Management Group 21; Kingston "Faith" 23-24).

From the earliest days of settlement, some non-Aboriginal children were identified as at risk of being swept up into the mire of immorality that respectable residents saw as saturating the colony. Richard Johnson, the colony's first chaplain, showed frustration at the lack of morals, let alone Christianity, in the white population:

> Why the pity and concern I feel for these poor people with whom I am here connected. Happy would I be were I to live upon Bread & water and to suffer the most severe hardship, did I but see some of those poor souls begin to think about their latter end. Am sorry to see so little good yet done amongst them. They neither seek nor will be persuaded to seek the Lord of Mercy and Compassion of God. They prefer their Lust before their Souls, yea, most of them will sell their souls for a Glass of Grogg, so blind, so foolish, so hardened are they.

> I am yet obliged to be a field Preacher. No Church is yet begun of, & I am afraid scarcely thought of. Other things seem to be of greater Notice & Concern & most wd rather see a Tavern, a Play House, a Brothel -anything sooner than a place for publick worship.[11] (Johnson)

Alienated by the heathen society in which he found himself immersed, Johnson was challenged by what he saw as a huge task ahead of him. It soon became obvious to many that children raised in such an environment posed a risk to the colony's future.

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[11] All capitalization and spelling in this quotation are reproduced exactly from the original text.

Yet zealous evangelicalism can be just as much at odds with ideal parenting. Bertha Southey Adams presents an alternative view with parents who use the background of religious morality to legitimize the abuse of a child. She presents the child reader with two models of parenting, both under the perceived mandate of religious dictum, one of which gives justification for a child's removal from abuse. The Normans, the new family of Dell in *Dusky Dell*, are a Christian family, but are abusive towards her. Under such influence, Dell becomes angry: "her face was distorted with passionate hatred, and a veritable fiend shone from her angry eyes: it was no child face at all, but a demon's with all goodness and childish purity utterly erased" (5). This harsh method of parenting is under the guise of the "spare the rod, and spoil the child" maxim favoured by many nineteenth-century Christian households. The fact that Dell does anything but thrive under this method of parenting offers an alternative view of child rearing, as she blossoms in the care of Mr Graham, the Church of England minister who takes her in:

> Two years at the Parsonage had made a marked difference in the
> child; the hunted, frightened look which used to haunt her eyes had
> gone, leaving in its place a bright, intelligent light. (74)

Mr Graham's model of parenting, based on providing a good Christian home and practising tolerance, demonstrates to the child reader that an appropriate home environment is paramount in maintaining a child within a family; abusive and intolerant parents give justification for the removal and re-homing of a child.

While abuse and alcohol were barriers to parenting that it was believed could be changed, poverty was seen as a misfortune, yet it was still considered a threat and gave justification for child removal. Removal because of poverty is a common theme. The depression of the 1890s and the rural drought which accompanied it would have been in the minds of both authors and their readers at the beginning of the twentieth century. An example of poverty reconstituted as threat is that of Gordon and Alice, parents to Flower and her three brothers in Ethel Turner's *Flower o' the Pine* (1914). Gordon and Alice move to Far North Queensland in order to earn enough money to repay losses that Gordon was responsible for when he forgot to renew the insurance on the family business, run by his brother John and his wife Eva. Turner depicts Alice as recognising the threat that poverty poses to Flower because, as a girl, she is not considered strong enough to cope with the harshness of outback life. Alice writes to John and Eva proposing that Flower be sent to them in Sydney for six months, so that she can return "fat and strong" to take over the running of the house from her mother

(*Flower* 17). Her three brothers, as they are strong enough to provide physical labour, stay with their parents, but Flower acknowledges her weakness. Referring to the iron supplement she needs to take she claims: "It's for my good, of course, you get so white in the summer up here when you're a girl, and you go so tired you can't even play" (*Flower* 17). The weakness associated with femininity is here compounded by the tiredness that results from a diet restricted by the family's poverty. As Flower is required to take over the household duties when she returns, it is assumed her mother is also similarly weak and ineffectual. However, once she leaves the outback dwelling, she blossoms and has a positive effect on all around her.

Other instances of child removal in children's literature relate to cases of confused identity rather than poverty. In such cases any questions as to validity of removal are resolved by the discovery of a genetic link between the child and its "new" family. In some cases this shift is represented symbolically as the death and resurrection of the child, incorporating opportunities for conversion of their new families as well. In Mary Agnes Finn's "Lost and Found" (1900), ship-wrecked Marie, raised Catholic, and Bertha, a Protestant, are saved, their identities resting on the wearing of a religious medallion. Originally given to Marie, it is passed to Bertha after her rescue as she was "clamouring with childish persistence for the pretty ornament" ("Lost and Found" 63). (In this Catholic text Bertha's self-centred and materialistic behaviour identifies her as Protestant; Marie, "of gentle birth" as Catholic ("Lost and Found" 48).) The girls are raised in religious environments at odds with their "natural inclinations"; however, their rebirth from a watery grave provides a symbolic kind of baptism and gives the opportunity for both children to instigate change in their families as well as themselves. Marie, (renamed Mary by the old sailor who rescued her from the shipwreck, and with whom she remained), was raised as a Protestant, but she educates the old sailor about the Catholic Church subliminally, as her innate Catholicism shines through. The Sisters of the school to which she was sent seem to know that Mary/Marie is innately Catholic as "They do not seem to mind a bit that I am not a Catholic like the other girls" ("Lost and Found" 61). As another consequence of the shipwreck, Bertha is raised by Marie's birth mother and converts to Catholicism. It is later revealed that Bertha's own birth mother, Mrs Arnold, is now the Reverend Mother of the convent. She had been living with her husband in India but sent Bertha back to England with a nurse, as the child was unwell in the oppressive heat. It is on the ill-fated return trip to India that, during a shipwreck, Bertha becomes separated from her carer. On hearing of the shipwreck, Mrs Arnold loses all hope: "not only my strength, but my reason gave way, and for weeks I hovered between life and death" ("Lost and Found" 79).

She is tended by a Sister of Charity whose "kindly counsels" and "untiring patience" encourage her to become a nun and later the Mother Superior of the convent ("Lost and Found" 79-80). When she is told who her birth mother is Bertha is faced with a dilemma:

> Mrs Neville: "And think of all your poor mother suffered. Think of all the years she has mourned for you as dead".
>
> Bertha: "I do think of it, and am glad that she will have her child restored to her, but, much as I may love her, and dear as she will be to me, I will never love you less". ("Lost and Found" 85)

It is decided that Bertha will remain with Mrs Neville but visit her mother "as often as desired" ("Lost and Found" 86).

The importance of a mother's love is foregrounded in "Mother's Love", an article in the Methodist denominational journal, the *Spectator*. Billy is keen to remove a baby bird from its nest, arguing that its mother would probably be glad to have one less mouth to feed. His family demonstrate how wrong this would be when his aunt asks to remove him from his mother as:

> "she has Fred and Gretna left, and she'll never miss you, and the house is so crowded, maybe she would be glad if I should take you away". ("Mother's Love" 889)

Here the common assumptions that poor mothers with too many children/birds in the home/nest would be grateful if their family was reduced, and that children within such families easily adjust to life in a new environment, are challenged, leading Billy to promise to protect the sanctity of the mother-child bond:

> "Please, dear God, if you will forgive me for taking those birds this time, I do not think I shall ever want to take any more little birds away from their mothers, and I'll try not to let any other boys do it, either, if I can stop them". ("Mother's Love" 889)

However, the cases in which the necessity for and benevolence of removal is questioned are rare. More commonly removal is represented as redemptive for the child, its receiving family and the nation as a whole, and often the family from which it was taken as well. This representation draws upon the Christian trope of the child as redeemer. Once saved the child can then provide the catalyst for adults to question their own shortcomings and

failures, and make their own decision to convert, thus rendering them better parents. While it is generally Evangelical Protestant children who are constructed as redemptive (Hillel "A Little Child" 57-58), Mary Agnes Finn's Catholic characters provide an unusual alternative. Symbolic of the Virgin Mary, her female characters inspire grown men to see the error of their ways as they reflect on the demise of their Christian upbringing due to the rejection of their faith. In Finn's "A Christmas Adventure" (1900), for example, the central character, Donovan, struggles to raise his two children after the death of his wife. He turns to bushranging, often leaving his family alone for weeks at a time. One Christmas Eve Donovan is forced to decide between his money-hungry associates who are keen to steal the Blessed Sacrament from a priest, and his young son, who has come to find the priest to attend to his dying sister Katie. Thoughts of Katie galvanise Donovan into action to protect his son. As Katie lies dying, Donovan reflects: "She was the creature that he loved best on earth, his one redeeming point was his affection for the girl who seemed far too fair and gentle to be the daughter of such a man" ("A Christmas Adventure" 8). Katie's angelic qualities of fairness and gentleness open his heart and he vows to return to his faith, promising to "return to God, who had, by the miracle of the Blessed Sacrament, subdued in a single moment a heart hardened by years of sin" ("A Christmas Adventure" 22). Although Donovan's continual absence classifies him as a bad father, his repentance and return to his faith and family allow for the improvement in the health of his daughter, and prevent his family from being removed.

The eventual return of the relinquished or removed child was also used to illustrate the redemptive value of child removal. In *Mother's Little Girl*, Sylvia is doubly redemptive. Sold to Alice and Wilfred, she was returned to her birth family after they had improved their situation. Redemption in the evangelical sense is also a powerful theme. "The elevation of the masses", literary historian Margaret Nancy Cutt argues, was the "great cause of the mid-century" (Cutt 48; see also 43-52) and fiction provided the ideal medium through which to pursue this aim for children as much as adults. The child as the means through which this redemption could be achieved provided a prominent theme for writers of Australian children's literature. Removal, in such works, although urgent, functions to provide the context through which the redemptive capacities of the child can be displayed.

The death of a child, whether actual or symbolic, provides the most powerful potential for redemption (Avery 87-108). Prior to the start of the twentieth century, childhood death was an accepted part of life, and this is reflected in contemporary literature (Avery 1). Jane, in Charlotte Barton's *A Mother's Offering*, suffers the death of not one, but two, children.

Indigenous Sally is stolen by Jane as a replacement for her own dead child, but is later killed by a wooden beam that falls on her as she plays (197, 213). The two deaths are depicted as punishment for the unfortunate Jane, who admits to having neglected the christening of Sally, with the implication that the spiritual health of her first child may have been similarly neglected. Sally's Aboriginality inhibits her redemptive abilities. Nonetheless, the tale is used to good effect to teach the child reader the evils of procrastination and the impermanence of life:

> "Oh! My children! How very, very fatal is this habit of putting off
> from day to day, what should be done immediately; for we know not
> the day, nor the hour, when time may cease for us; and we be
> summoned into eternity." (213)

This chapter has looked at representations of child removal and ways in which parents and caregivers fail their children, with a particular focus on instances involving children of the settler population. In literature in which Aboriginal children are removed the situation is more complex, arguments for the necessity of removal being complicated by assumptions about race. Chapter Five will therefore address these issues in greater detail.

Chapter 5 - Removing the Indigenous Child

"Clara: Notwithstanding, Mamma, it seems unnatural for a mother to part with her child. Though I know there is a little boy, who his parents wish you to take: but I think if I were ever so poor, I would not part with my children." (Charlotte Barton. *A Mother's Offering to Her Children. p. 202.*)

The prolonged acceptance of Indigenous child-removal in Australia can be partly explained through children's literature, examining the use of the themes of race and imperialism used to render family disruption as both necessary and benevolent. In early Australian children's literature, Aborigines were portrayed in a negative manner which took a number of forms. A strong underlying theme was that there was a need for the Aboriginal character to be changed to align them more closely with white culture. The child-removal theme first appeared in Australian children's literature fifty-two years after the removal of Abaroo and Nanbaree. In *A Mother's Offering to Her Children,* Charlotte Barton portrays Aborigines as being barbaric and animal-like, initiating her child readers into the racist attitudes of the time. Barton's child characters, who espouse the author's attitudes, are the role models with whom colonial children were encouraged to identify, providing them with a means through which to "view the imperial project in which their elders are engaged" (Bradford "Representing Indigeneity" 90; *Unsettling Narratives* 13; "Wise Colonial Child" 49; Brantlinger 21; Hillel "Race and Redemption" 586; Reece 63). The child characters in early colonial texts demonstrated how the child reader could best live and disseminate imperialism (Bradford "Representing Indigeneity" 90; "Wise Colonial Child" 49; Hillel "Race and Redemption" 586). Colonial authors, including those writing for young readers, portrayed the removal of Indigenous children as being in the best interests of the child, and ultimately of the nation. They depicted Aborigines as requiring assistance from white society before they were able to progress socially, an example of the Enlightenment theory, whereby "given the right combination of factors", societies "were seen to progress from one stage to the next" (Bradford *Reading Race* 68). Although Indigenous mythology and culture were accepted as being relevant parts of Indigenous life, they were considered part of the very things that prevented Aborigines from aligning with Europeans (Hodge and Mishra 27-28; Bradford "Representing Indigeneity" 95), situating them as the other and justifying removal to white society, to develop some alignment with European beliefs.

The early colonists brought to Australia beliefs grounded in imperialism. Their initial contacts with Australia's Indigenous peoples can be viewed through diary entries that express a sentiment which was to envelop the colony. By dehumanising the Aborigines, their murder

and dispossession were easier for the colonists to come to terms with. David Blackburn, master of the *Supply* (Lieutenant Phillip King's ship), wrote the Aborigines were "to all appearances the Lowest in Rank among the Human Race"; Edward Home claimed they were "I think, the most miserable of the human form under heaven"; Daniel Southwell, mate of HMS *Sirius,* wrote in May 1788: "more like monkys [sic] than warriors"; D. Bowes stated: "altogether a most stupid insensible set of beings"; and the log-keeper of *Fishburn*: "... quite harmless, only inclinable to thieving" (all quoted in Stanner 170).

There is a long history of Aboriginal people being represented as "different" in Australian children's literature, in ways that vary from being described in racist terms, depicted as being animal- or child-like, to being rendered invisible. These representations are reinforced by the inclusion of racist illustrations, the use of which has carried through to the twentieth century. Although the issue of race is now accepted as being a major theme in the removal of children from family and community, it is an issue that is worth discussing separately here, if only to emphasise that the racist opinions prevalent during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and which were perpetuated with adult zeal in Australian children's literature, had a profound effect on the lives of many children, families and communities. The racism which runs deeply through Australian children's literature of the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries is evident in representations of the removal of Aboriginal children who are taken from their families on a whim or with purpose. Aboriginal children are treated differently from white children. While the representation of child removal in the literature of the time is a reflection of the degree to which it had become normalised in the colonial era, this thesis argues that it also served to perpetuate the practice by positioning it as the natural and benevolent solution to what was presented as child neglect.

The epigraph to this chapter illustrates a colonial child's comprehension of Indigenous child-care as neglect. Clara discusses with her mother the removal of Sally from her mother. The white child reader is being directed to the belief that Aboriginal mothers are devoid of any morals and concern for their children by allowing them to be removed. Indigenous Australians represent the binary Other to white Europeans; their colour, physical features, language and cultural activities are perceived to be opposite to the norms of white society. These views are reinforced and sometimes magnified by literature, including children's literature. Using the theory of Aboriginalism, this chapter will highlight the racist attitudes that were being propagated through children's literature and which underpinned the theme of child removal.

Underpinning the depiction of Indigenous child removal in Australian children's literature is the theory of Aboriginalism. Aboriginalism utilises Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, by placing the West in a position of speaking on behalf of Aborigines, thereby disallowing an Indigenous voice: "There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated" (36). Transposed to Aboriginalism, the outcome appears equally blunt and precise. First used by literary critics Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, the theory of Aboriginalism (27) describes the tendency of colonial writers to applaud, on the one hand, Aboriginal culture, but on the other to "insist on speaking *for* Aborigines, as they are assumed not to be capable of speaking for themselves" (Bradford *Reading Race* 15). Drawing on Said's work, literary scholar Perry Nodelman describes the Orient as being a "European invention" that has influenced thought and action towards the East ("The Other" 29), defining it as a hegemonic relationship (6-7). Just as the Orientalist writes from a perspective of the Occident, so an Aboriginalist writes from the perspective of the non-Aboriginal. Both write of the "Other"; the Oriental, the Aborigine, the child. To an Aboriginalist, Aborigines are unable to speak for themselves, and therefore must be spoken for. There is little concern with Aboriginal welfare – the Aboriginalist is only so because she/he writes from the periphery: "the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact" (Said 21). Clare Bradford extends this to include the tendency of colonial writers to speak for Aborigines in order to preserve their narratives "against the day when Aborigines will have disappeared as a people" (*Reading Race* 109).

Aboriginalism is expressed within children's literature in a number of ways. This is evident in a generalised view of what anyone black or Other (Aboriginal, African, Chinese or Indian) might sound, look or behave like. Aborigines are often given African language and names, and illustrations often show them as having African features. This depiction expresses the relationship between language and racism: black has "pejorative associations" whilst white is associated with "goodness, beauty and purity" (Dixon 94). However, even when Indigenous Australians are Africanised, they are depicted as inferior to the warrior-like races encountered by colonial authorities in other parts of the empire. The sentiment behind the racist terms used in Australian children's literature is well known to most historians, but is included here to emphasise the depth of feeling towards the Indigenous and provide background to understanding the policies that lead to wide-scale child removal.

In the nineteenth century it was non-Indigenous writers who wrote the early Indigenous story, and white community organisations that influenced the "time-place relations that informed Indigenous cultural practices" (Bradford *Unsettling Narratives* 124).

Both used white narratives to situate the Indigenous in the accepted colonial discourse (Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths 4-5; Bradford *Unsettling Narratives* 9-10, 124; Langton 27, 33). Non-Indigenous authors were influenced by views and values that are generally taken for granted. As Peter Hollindale argues: "A large part of any book is written not by its author but by the world its author lives in" (32). Clare Bradford recollects early reading experiences in which the beliefs portrayed by authors such as Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce were felt to be "natural and true" (*Reading Race* 1-2), sentiments which have developed for many Australians into an incontrovertible truth that displaces any alternative explanations. The difficulty here is that non-Indigenous writers write of Aboriginal issues imbuing the Indigenous narrative with a non-Indigenous voice that "represent Indigenous cultures from the outside and from the perspective of majority cultures" (Bradford *Unsettling Narratives* 73). Linda Alcoff similarly argues that it is hard to "distinguish speaking about from speaking for" (in Bradford *Unsettling Narratives* 71). This is a point convincingly made by Indigenous scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson who states that white academic voices "purport to represent Indigenous people by taking on the role of 'expert' or the conscience of the nation" (*Sovereign Subjects* 2), effectively reinforcing the objectification of Aborigines as the "known" rather than as "knowers" (*Whitening Race* 76).

Mary Grant Bruce is an example of the white voice representing Indigenous people. Bruce's 1922 book *The Stone Axe of Burkamukk* is a collection of Aboriginal "legends" she "put into modern English" (*Stone Axe* 6), in effect conflating all the many Aboriginal languages into one. She acknowledges the impact the retelling of folktales has on subsequent generations: "the folktales of a people are the story of its soul" (*Stone Axe* 5). However, Bruce overlooks the importance of linguistic lineage in perpetuating both story and language:

> it would be a pity if the native races of our country were to vanish
> altogether before we had collected enough of their legends to let their
> successors know what manner of people lived in Australia for
> thousands of years before the white man came. (*Stone Axe* 5-6)

What seems on the surface to be a display of altruism is in fact a demonstration of the assumed knowledge that presupposes a power over Indigenous peoples, as the power to speak on their own behalf is taken from them, rendering them invisible. The child reader is influenced by this adult ideology and "assent[s] to the versions of Aboriginality proposed by knowledgeable and sympathetic experts, who speak about and for Aborigines" (Bradford *Reading Race* 110). Indigenous scholar Marcia Langton expands the point, arguing that white

Australians offer representations of Aborigines received from "the constant stereotyping, iconising and mythologising of Aboriginal people by white people who have never had any substantial first-hand contact with Aboriginal people" (34). Mary Grant Bruce's claim to the authority to write on behalf of Aborigines is backed-up by a handwritten book of notes that includes jottings, quotes, articles and letters which, however, indicate her knowledge of Aborigines and Aboriginal culture was received from external sources, rather than personal experience (see *Notes on Blacks*). Critics such as Bradford, Langton and Moreton-Robinson claim that stories written by non-Aboriginal writers become legitimised accounts, constructing Indigeneity for their child readers. The non-Indigenous voice normalises and perpetuates non-Indigenous beliefs of othering, which becomes an accepted trope in children's literature.

Many of the children's books examined here employ the strategy of what Knowles and Malmkjær term "fragmentation" (53). By using African-style language in children's literature the author accentuates the difference between black and white, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, imbuing a sense of power over the Other. Johannes Fabian, in his work on language in colonial histories, expands this point, writing of the "need to compensate for feelings of powerlessness" (Fabian 133), and arguing that by using African-style language the conversationist is claiming ownership of the Other. It also denies Indigenous Australians their own cultural identity (Dixon 118), as their voice is framed in African culture. For Australia's colonists, African language, or at least a standardised form of African language that had often been gleaned from literary classics, was familiar and known, and conveyed to the child reader a representation of the Other in more familiar terms.

Giving Anglicised names is also an expression of the imposition of colonisation on the Indigenous inhabitants of Australia. Literary critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o explores language in a colonial context: the language of imperialism/colonialism and the language of resistance. Ngũgĩ argues that "language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture", and the most profound effect on a country's culture is that of the "annihilat[ion] [of] a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves", by the dominating, imperial force (13, 3). When the Aboriginal child was forcefully exposed to European language, she/he was compelled to enter a foreign world which effectively shaped cultural thought and perception. The language of Australian colonial literature certainly presented Australian Aborigines as being savages, cannibals, animals, and child-like, and children's texts were no exception.

The Otherness of Aborigines is depicted as a threat, as is evident in White Captive narratives, although this is complex and not necessarily consistent. One of the most important themes in children's literature, it is a theme that is most common prior to the turn of the century, when Aborigines were still seen to be a threat. It functioned to educate children to the dangers of the bush, however, on occasions this message is modified when the Indigenous captors do not live up to their reputation for savagery.

White Captive narratives largely rely on Othering to situate the Indigenous in racist terms, while also positioning Europeans as superior, a reversal of the threat of the Indigenous. Often, the theme includes a lost child, argued by literary critic Peter Pierce as symbolising "the anxieties of European settlers because of the ties with home which they have cut in coming to Australia" (Pierce xii; see also McQueen 115). Promotion of the myth, and of other reports of life within Indigenous communities, served to frighten the colony's young into accepted beliefs of the otherness of Australia's landscape and the perceived necessity of remaining within prescribed boundaries, and also to present Aborigines as being incapable of caring for their children. Such myths directed the child reader into the belief that Aboriginal children would be at risk if left in their own family and community.

The way in which white captive stories were used to shape children's understandings of both Aborigines and otherness of the landscape is apparent in Charles Rowcroft's *Tales of the Colonies, or, The Adventures of an Emigrant* (1843), in which the double kidnap of a young girl, Georgiana, further emphasises the racial divide. Rowcroft spent five years in Van Diemen's Land, where he was a Justice of the Peace, returning to England in 1826. *Tales of the Colonies* is his first-hand account of his life in Van Diemen's Land described as being a "sensational and melodramatic tale of blacks, bushrangers and white settlers" (Hadgraft "Rowcroft, Charles" *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. 27 Apr 2012 <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/Rowcroft-charles-2613/text3603>). Georgiana's father becomes a bushranger, then prisoner before he dies, leaving his motherless daughter with a friend. He is from a family of means in England, and his death means that the family wealth now belongs to his daughter. Georgiana is kidnapped for her new wealth by two rogues. Their camp is attacked by Aborigines, who capture the now six- or seven-years old child. The authorities had not reacted to her original kidnapping by white reprobates, but the kidnap by Aborigines galvanised the magistrate and others to find the child as she was seen to be at greater risk of harm in an Indigenous environment.

James Skipp Borlase also wrote from firsthand experience. Borlase spent five years in Australia, during which time he was an officer of the Victorian Police. In *The Night Fossickers and Other Australian Tales of Peril and Adventure* (1867), he writes principally for a non-Australian audience in the hope that:

> those whose feet have never trodden Australian soil [will] picture to
> themselves the aspect and peculiar characteristics of that great
> southern land, with the habits of its peoples. (preface)

Borlase takes the character of Jimmy Brooke, a hero who achieves great things in the alien country. When an Aboriginal woman, whose husband has been killed by the overseer, threatens to take the daughter of station owner and his wife, Mr and Mrs Leslie, the narrator states:

> what was a more terrible threat than all to the fond mother, that her
> only child, a sweet little girl of about five years of age, should be
> stolen from her and brought up as a savage. (172)

Jimmy Brooke heroically rescues the child:

> Here was the very opportunity I had longed for; with one bound I
> sprang to my feet, I dragged the child out of her arms, and, drawing
> my revolver, cried, "Away, you rascals, or I'll shoot every mother's
> son of you!" (179)

In a great show of white colonial superiority Brooke tames the Aboriginal woman, releases the child from harm's way, and threatens the rest of the Indigenous community leaving the child reader in no doubt as to the superiority of the white race, the savageness of the Aborigines, and the risk to a child's life of being raised in an Indigenous environment.

M. Ella Chaffey's *The Youngsters of Murray Home* (1896) is another example of a children's text which contains elements designed to ensure the safety of the child reader yet elicits a degree of empathy towards the Indigenous population. The book is based on Chaffey's sixteen years spent raising a family on a hundred-acre property in Renmark, South Australia (Author record, M. Ella Chaffey. *Austlit.* 1 June 2012. <www.austlit.edu.au>). Brother and sister, Bertram and Dollie, wander away from home and meet Jinny, an Aboriginal woman. Their childish inquisitiveness sways Jinny to take them to her home. Rather than the savageness expected of her, Jinny treats her young captives tenderly, keeping

them amused with stones, shells and an emu egg. Their sister Kat, concerned for their safety, searches for them, her older years giving her the wisdom learned from the contemporary belief that Aborigines were savage and not to be trusted, indicating they are unable to raise their own children, and that a white child is therefore in great danger. It is a wisdom inherited from the previous generation and extolled through literature, paintings and song as "the stuff of cautionary legend as well as of plaintive history" (Pierce xii) is relayed through the nineteenth century. As Peter Pierce explains, the lost child provokes a sense of community as a search for a youngster is undertaken; sadly, the community spirit was often drawn on in bereavement (xii).
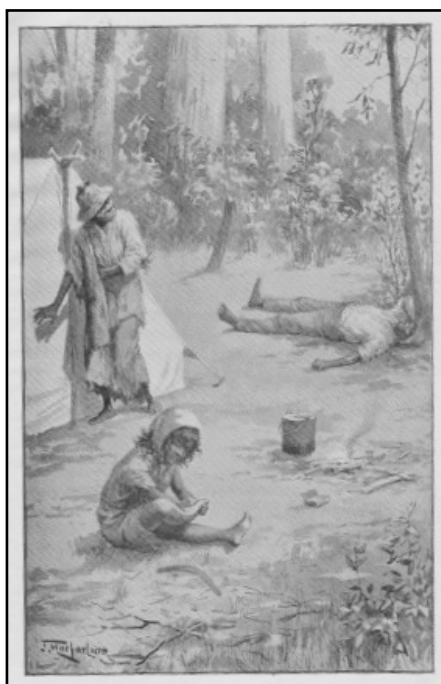
Figure 10: "The little creature was evidently concerned with a thorn or splinter its bare black foot had picked up."
(Mary Grant Bruce. *Norah of Billabong*. Melbourne: Ward, Lock, 1913. p. 224.
Illustrator: J. Macfarlane.)

While white captive narratives function in children's literature to educate children as to the inability of Aborigines to raise a child, on occasions this message is modified when Indigenous captors do not live up to their reputation for savagery. In Mary Grant Bruce's *Norah of Billabong* (1913), a baby girl goes missing in the bush. She is rescued and kept by Black Lucy, an Aboriginal woman, who raises her for fifteen months. The image above shows the lost child examining a thorn in her foot. When Norah, Wally and Jean first see her they assume her to be an Aboriginal baby: "'That's a rum little blackfellow,' [Wally said] 'See its foot; I've never seen a darky with a foot like that, and we used to live amongst 'em in Queensland'" (*Norah* 224-5). Wally's assumption is dictated not only by the child's dirty state, perceived to be due to Black Lucy's poor hygiene practices, but also by environment.

The whiteness of the child's foot is evident despite the outward appearance of being black and is the first clue that she is in an alien environment and therefore needs rescuing. This device illustrates the need for rescue which is written on the child's body and has been used by child-rescue publishers such as Dr. Barnardo, whose photographs as portrayals of before and after rescue were used to promote his homes (Murdoch 12). The portrayal of a child as savage gleaned a higher degree of public sympathy (and financial backing) (Murdoch 14). In this instance the image indicates that if the child were to remain in her present environment, she will grow to become like the others in the image: Black Lucy, depicted skulking about the camp "groping under the canvas with one hand, and her soul apparently charged with hope" (*Norah* 224), and Billy who has "succumbed to the heat, or the soporific effect of the eucalyptus scents, or his own loneliness – or, very possibly, to a combination of all three" (*Norah* 222). Historian Lynne Strahan considers Bruce to have a "respect for Aboriginal traditions" (Strahan "Bruce, Minnie Grant (Mary)" *Australian Dictionary of Biography.* 27 Apr 2012 <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bruce-minnie-grant-mary-5399/text9145>), yet contemporary ideas of racism are presented to her young audience by situating the Aborigines as animal-like, criminal and lazy. The moment of recognition comes when Babs smiles, her personality and delicate features confirming her whiteness. Once in the presence of Norah and friends Wally and Jean, the baby immediately responds: "There was no fear in the wide, dark eyes that met theirs - but rather an unspoken greeting, as though instinct told her that she was once more among her own kind" (*Norah* 230). Her innate whiteness shines through demonstrating the Otherness of the Aborigines. It was imperative that the child be rescued and raised in a "civilised" environment; her partially white features clear indicators of her assumed superiority. This example plays on the fear of the captive white child being raised as an Aborigine and raises the question of whether such a rescue as that performed by Norah, Wally and Jean would have been effected if the child had indeed been Aboriginal.

The risk of the white child in an Indigenous environment being raised as savage is predicated on the belief that Aborigines were unable to successfully raise their own children, an assumed understanding that was perpetuated initially by colonial missionaries who believed the fundamental way to raise Aborigines from their savageness and heathenism was to Christianise them.

The spiritual conversion of Australia's Indigenous people was attempted from the time of settlement, with the idea that Aborigines would renounce traditional practices and beliefs, and be absorbed into white society. Indigenous spiritual beliefs, if they were recognised at all, were dismissed as "nothing more than a jumble of animistic beliefs and practices which

should be superseded at the earliest opportunity" (Berndt and Berndt 498; see also Swain "Religion" 29). First Fleet Captain Watkin Tench's belief that "knowledge, virtue and happiness" would be bestowed on the Aborigines if they undertook to accept Christianity and educate themselves, and more importantly, their children (Tench 280), re-echoes through more than a century of missionary endeavour. The failure of Aboriginal people to become accustomed to life in white society was depicted as posing a challenge to effective evangelism, providing a justification for intervention. It was understood that Aborigines who received religious and secular education in the settlements set up to accommodate them would be amenable to the usurpation of their culture by European society (A. Johnston 169). Where adults proved unwilling to "settle" the removal of their children was constituted as rescue.

Writing in the early twentieth century, Reverend Herbert Pitts drew upon the experience of missionaries who, from the 1820s, had attempted to change Indigenous beliefs. After spending time as a missionary in Western Australia, Pitts returned to England and wrote of his Australian outback experiences in two books, *Children of Wild Australia,* a book aimed at the child reader, and *The Australian Aboriginal and the Christian Church,* a book "written primarily for Christians" (*Australian Aboriginal* ix). His books present the Aborigine as a completely blank canvas:

> He is a man with a soul a soul with a destiny a soul for which Christ died [sic].
>
> Is there anything in him which can be called "religion"? Are there any ideas already active in his mind which the Christian teacher can lay hold upon, and on which he can build the superstructure of the Christian faith? These questions I have tried to answer. (*Australian Aboriginal* ix)

His answer depicts the Aboriginal people as completely irreligious:

> In the really strict sense of the word the people of wild Australia have no religion. There is, as you have already seen, some faint belief in a Supreme Being and Creator who is known by a different name in the different tribes, but this belief in a supreme Being makes no difference to their lives and they do not recognize that they have any duties towards him. (*Children* 68)

> They never say any prayers, they offer no sacrifices, they build no
> temples or altars, and they make no idols. For these reasons we
> usually say they have no religion. (*Children* 69)

The best Pitts could suggest was that Aboriginal religion was a form of animism:

> That which takes the place of religion among them is fear of evil
> spirits, the ghosts of the dead. These ghosts are always looked upon
> as hostile, and always ready to do them harm. (*Children* 69)

This constructs for the white reader justifiable rescue as Aboriginal children are seen to be denied the right to be raised in the embrace of Christianity. Therefore it becomes everyone's Christian duty to remove the child.

While missionaries were effective, in some instances, in ameliorating the impact of the great change and upheaval experienced within Aboriginal communities, at least initially conversions were few (Carey 55; Broome 36-38). Most Aborigines were content for Christianity to sit alongside traditional Indigenous beliefs (Broome 80-81). For the religious stalwarts, however, nothing but absolute conversion would do. Spiritual conversion was seen as going hand-in-hand with civilisation; both were the means to an end, that of turning the Indigenous population into one more acceptable to the Europeans.

Missionaries taught skills aimed at making Aborigines suitable for employment in the domestic, agricultural or manual labourer industries (Bourke and Edwards 101; Edwards and Read x). However, most missionaries believed reading, writing and arithmetic were secondary to religious conversion in their endeavours to civilise the Indigenous population (Broome 36). In 1882 Reverend Mathew B. Hale, the first bishop of Western Australia and member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, put great faith in the successful Christianising of Aborigines, writing that:

> there is no moral influence, except that of Christianity, which has
> power to subdue the mind of the aboriginal native, and to induce him
> to submit to the restraints of civilisation. ("Responsibility" 6)

In early South Australia, Mathew Hale founded Poonindie, an institute for the education of Aborigines in Port Lincoln. He had been influenced by slave emancipation in the West Indies, and believed that once slaves were freed of physical control by their masters, they would be in dire need of a "powerful moral influence" which could only be provided by

Christian teaching (*The Aborigines of Australia* 1). Addressing those colonists who felt the native population was beyond redemption, he argued that issues such as the occupation of Australia "by the right of conquest" will "hereafter to be tried again before a much higher and more impartial tribunal than any earthly judgment [sic] seat" ("Prospectus" 4). In order to avoid factors which he believed explained the failure of missionary activity in the past, he decided that there would be less temptation for his pupils to revert to native ways if they were removed entirely from the influences of their local district. Hence his decision to establish the school at Poonindie, 630km away from Adelaide, in the belief that the presence of wilder and more ferocious Aborigines in the surrounding districts would deter his students from trying to make their way home. Other missionaries preferred a more direct and strict approach. At the Wellington Mission in New South Wales, for example, the Reverend Watson obtained his pupils by kidnapping and enforced a regime of uniforms and strict rules and regulations covering every aspect of their lives (Broome 37). These examples of Aboriginal child removal were performed in the belief that it was not only in the best interests of the child, but of the Indigenous population as a whole, as the removed children would be educated into the ways of the white population, making it easier for them to be assimilated into non-Indigenous society.

Many child readers were introduced to the history of Aborigines, and the attitudes of non-Indigenous authors, through mission literature. Missionaries were effective avenues of information about empire but also important primary sources of information relating to the unknown Indigenous population (Thorne 16), although its accuracy was often questionable. The work of Australia's missionaries was closely followed by readers, young and old, of religious publications. *The Australian Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, a Catholic Church monthly periodical published by The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, is one such publication. Early editions of *The Annals* ignored issues relating to Aborigines but by the twentieth century the work of missionaries who travelled to the Northern Territory and the Pacific Islands began to appear. Although the primary focus was on the religious, over the social, conversion of the Indigenous, stories of missionary zeal also instructed the reader as to the good work of the Church which would hopefully elicit donations to further the cause. The acceptance of articles into *The Annals,* and their absorption by the religious and lay community of the Catholic Church renders the Church complicit and allows for the perpetuation of child-removal in the broader community. These articles, and those that appeared in secular newspapers, attempted to solicit moral and financial support from readers and their families.

Father William Henschke, M.S.H., a young Catholic priest who moved into missionary work in the Northern Territory straight after his ordination in 1915, wrote a lengthy letter (published in extract form in an article possibly written by Mary Agnes Finn in *The Annals*) regarding his life on Bathurst Island:

> My half-caste boys are still alive. A new one arrived last week from some part of the mainland, and I have him fairly broken in to the ways of the others. When they first arrive they are a little wild and unruly, having come straight from the black's camp. (Henschke 18)

The overall tone of the article is the overriding belief that religious conversion was paramount and was not dependent on social conversion. The use of Henschke's letter in the article is to illustrate the "kind and tractable nature of the Bathurst Island natives" ("A Trip with the Blacks" 25), and to demonstrate the success of the missionaries in the school in divesting the children of their Aboriginality and preparing them for assimilation into white society.

Another missionary to write of his endeavours in religious publications is the Reverend Paul Fastre, M.S.C., a missionary in Papua New Guinea. Again published in *The Annals* in Australia, Fastre's article directs the reader to the assumption that all black children are the same, no matter where they were born or their cultural background. Fastre felt his vocation was to show the Indigenous people "from what depths of heathenism we seek to raise them; and to implant in these new converts to the faith a due sentiment of thankfulness to God" (92). Fastre wrote a series of articles spanning five months, titled "The Story of a Black Baby" (1918), which chronicle his activities as a missionary in Papua. The "Black Baby" is Daniel Kove Nomai, the first of over thirty children who were to live with him having been exchanged for food and gifts. Father Fastre, however, took care to emphasise the children were not bought, although their commodification appears obvious:

> The bargain was easily settled, though I took pains to explain that I was not buying the child: if I made gifts to the parents, it was with a view to lessen their grief at the separation. (Fastre 193)

> Remember, however, that if I am giving you anything it is not to buy a child as one buys an animal, but to make you happy. I want people to know that you are my friend, having given me your son who shall no longer be yours, but mine. (Fastre 128-9)

Fastre's justification for removing the young, predominately male, children of a Papuan village, is based on the belief that all Indigenous races were unable to care for themselves, and certainly not their children. It is rationalised on the grounds that to not do so would endanger their health, if not life, making it imperative that the Indigenous child be removed. The first child "adopted" by Reverend Fastre was Nomai who was "taken . . . into my family" (155); other children followed to become siblings for Daniel: "at last there came a time when I thought I ought to give Daniel other company, and looked about for a little brother for him" (155). The removal of very young children overcomes concern that they might become autonomous and free-thinking rather than obedient and subservient, once they grow up. This accounts for the fact that Fastre preferred to take very small Indigenous children to be ensconced in his home and educated in his school. The intention was to form a family unit, providing an ongoing example of family life to the Papuan indigenous:

> Thinking the matter over, I then resolved to limit myself to taking
> two children each year, and to set up something more than a mere
> school or orphanage: my idea was that of a real family, which might
> become the foundation of other families, and thus lead the way to
> introduce real family life among the natives. (224)

Of course, "real family life" meant European family life, as an Indigenous family was considered inappropriate due to its perceived savageness and heathenness.

Figure 11: "Missionary father directs a group of children in song, Papua New Guinea, c. 1900-1930."
(Yale Divinity Library Special Collection. Missionary Postcard Collection. 2 May 2012.
<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/search/controller/view/impa-m13196>)[12]

The photograph above is designed to illustrate the great lengths the missionary has gone to in order to "improve" the children. Dressed in European clothing they gaze fixedly on the authoritative priest, his raised arm a symbol of power. There are thirty children, but no happy, smiling faces. They appear to have some sort of collar, or possibly chain, around their necks, possibly for identification or restraint purposes; on some a small cross is visible, and another has what appears to be an identification tag. The viewer shares with the only white person in the photograph an oblique view of the children, situating them as detached from the image and the image producer, in what critical discourse analysts Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen describe as an attitude of "what you see here is *not* part of our world; it is *their* world, something *we* are not involved with" (143). The image is also an intrusion, the frame crowded with children, the viewer's closeness denying any privacy. The lack of direct gaze rejects any connection between viewer and child, situating the children as Other. The viewer is, in fact, an extension of Fastre, an analogy that effectively aligns the viewer with his purpose. Kress and van Leeuwen argue that Aboriginal people are often depicted as "objects of contemplation" rather than as subjects with whom the reader can have an active relationship (126).

Both Fastre and Henschke were open about their practice of child-removal; the publication of their memoirs is testament also to acceptance by the Church, its congregation

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[12] The original title of this photograph is "Le P. Fastre et ses petits Chanteurs - Nouvelle-Guinee" ("Father Fastre and his small Singers - New Guinea.").

and readership. Father Fastre hints that his surrogate family made him accessible to his parishioners, while Father Henschke's broadly themed letter showed that he believed the Indigenous community accepted him; that the Indigenous parents were willing to relinquish their children because they trusted him. He recounted how, going for a walk in the bush because he was "feeling a little lonely", he met a group of natives:

> ... men, women, and children, asking me all kinds of questions. I pretended to understand what they were saying, and looked quite interested. To finish up, I took hold on one of their babies, and then they dispersed, quite happy and satisfied. (Henschke 19)

Indigenous peoples are presented as being forever childlike; their perpetual childhood an attraction for white families. Julia Kristeva's argument that society "can only reject that which it already recognizes" (quoted in Wilkie-Stibbs 2) is made relevant to the individual by literary critic Christine Wilkie-Stibbs: "difference is the very condition of subjective identity; outsiders are, and only can be, the inventions of insiders – projections of what they find repugnant or alien within themselves" (2). The infantilisation and animalisation of Australian Aborigines situates them at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder in the Social Darwinist belief that races are "locked into different evolutionary stages" (Bradford *Reading Race* 24). Positioned in this manner they can be dominated and controlled in what has become an oppressive land, and justification is given for their dispossession and murder (Bradford *Reading Race* 68; "Representing Indigeneity" 91; Swain, Hillel and Sweeney 4), and also for the removal of their children

While mission literature normalised child removal, secular children's literature performed a similar function. There is a strong theme in children's literature of Christianising the Aboriginal child, including reinforcing their removal in order that religious education, and hence, civilisation, can occur. An example can be seen in Ellen Campbell's novel, *An Australian Childhood*:

> "It is all very well for you to laugh, John," said my mother, with some irritation, in her usually placid manner, "but what am I to do with a child like that? He will be more trouble and responsibility than any Christian baby, and I shall have all the worry of him."
>
> "We will make a Christian child of him," answered father, a little gravely. (31)

While early attempts to Christianise were focussed on full-descent Indigenous peoples, later efforts focussed on the assimilation of children of mixed descent. The growing numbers of mixed descent children forced governments to rethink the place of the Indigenous in society. It was considered necessary to remove children believed to be partially white and educate them into white ways so that their assimilation into white society became easier. The transmogrification of the "black" person into white is explored by literary critic Bob Dixon who argues that this is a device commonly found in children's literature. He states that "blackness is a stigma which has to be removed before [the black child character] can be accepted" (Dixon 110).

There are examples of Australian children's literature that promote the assimilationist belief that for successful acculturation into white society, the Aboriginal child must be removed from the influence of her traditional community as soon after birth as possible. Well known authors Mary Durack and Elizabeth Durack's childhood in the East Kimberley area of West Australia should confer an authoritative voice to their literary and artistic endeavours, however, as can be seen in Elizabeth Durack's images below, Aborigines are depicted in representations that have been appropriated from literature written by non-Africans, about African natives and which are familiar to the child reader.

Figure 12: *Chunuma.*
(Mary Durack and Elizabeth Durack. *Chunuma.*
Sydney: The Bulletin. 1936. pp. 9 & 11.
Illustrator: Elizabeth Durack.)

The young children in the images could easily have been used to illustrate books set in Africa. The first child shows she is beyond redemption. She is accompanied by spears and wears the head-covering of a woman; adult accoutrements demonstrate to the reader that she is destined to an adulthood of savagery and servitude. The plump, long-lashed and inquisitive child of the second image demonstrates a slight degree of whiteness. The implication is that most Aboriginal babies are not quite black, there is still hope for them to become white, but

the longer the child remains in an Aboriginal environment, the blacker, and more animalistic, she becomes; hence the need to remove the child into a white environment.

Representations of othering in children's literature take various forms that justify colonisation and also render Aborigines as unfit to parent, hence justifying removal. The focus was on their ability to assimilate into white society, ultimately making them more suitable parents, therefore Aboriginal children were portrayed as having degrees of whiteness, from the colour of their skin to their ability to absorb and retain European culture. The assumption was that Aboriginal children would rather be white than Indigenous, which made the child's removal into a white family easier to understand by a white child reader. Authors reflected community assumptions at a time when the Aboriginal population were seen as something to be dominated and made extinct.

Historian Niel Gunson argues that "for perhaps the first fifty years of contact the most successful form of missionary endeavour was the 'domestic experiment', the practice of raising orphaned Aboriginal children in the homes of pious citizens" (104; A. Johnston 170). It was not only orphaned children who were placed into white homes though, as children were also removed from their families in what literary critic Anna Johnston describes as an "investigation of Aboriginal potential for 'upraising'" (170). It was a time when some in the colony were concerned about the population of Aborigines in the colony:

> What plan can be adopted, what means used, or what steps taken,
> whereby we may most speedily and effectualy [sic] civilize and
> evangelize the Natives of New South Wales, local circumstances
> considered? (Philanthropus "Sydney Gazette" 7 July 1810: 2)

A correspondent who replied to this question set out a detailed solution to the problem posed by the "natives". Child removal was at its core. Under the pseudonym "A Friend to Civilization", the writer advocated that "as many of their children as they can be prevailed on to part with, must at an early age be distributed among the families of sedate persons" (28 July 1810: 2). Removed at a young age the children were more likely to absorb and retain the ways of white society. They were to be taught English, and to read and write. Despite their separation from family, "they must be taught to honour their parents, to esteem their relatives" (11 Aug 1810: 2). The Aboriginal child was to profit from being civilised and Christianised; the white family would benefit by demonstrating good, Christian character and the feeling of righteousness engendered by charity. White families from the better classes were implored to take in "as many of the native children as we can procure" from families who would be

"happy to consent to the alteration of their [child's] condition" (11 Aug 1810: 2). Advocates of removal felt they were acting in the best interests of the Indigenous population as they believed in the ability of the Aborigines to be "improved" and to embrace to the ideals of non-Indigenous society into which they would ultimately be assimilated. However, improvement and religious conversion were achieved at great cost to the Aboriginal population as Indigenous family life was systematically destroyed.

The attitudes expressed by Australian authors of children's literature during the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries that relate to the theme of child removal, appear by twenty-first-century standards, to be racist. The ease with which the Indigenous child character is removed from family and community and the attitudes expressed towards the Indigenous community in such literature need to be understood within the context of the links between child rescue and empire. In this understanding the racial hierarchy was fixed. Hence a child who exhibits traits of whiteness could not be allowed to remain in a non-white environment (Swain and Hillel 104). Removal in such circumstances was, as Anna Johnston claims, constructed as an act of Christian benevolence (172). However, in the new environment the child was tainted by his colour and could not become a "real" white child or be completely integrated into the "privileges of whiteness" (Swain and Hillel 105). The child in such a situation who refuses to embrace the opportunities whiteness offers is generally portrayed as ungrateful and degenerate. This can be seen with Sally, in *A Mother's Offering to Her Children,* who is depicted as being ungrateful as she would rather not sleep in a bed, and Tommy, in *An Australian Childhood,* who ignores the bed provided for him in favour of sleeping in a wood-box with a dog (Barton 199; E. Campbell 33).

Rescue thus becomes a national imperative as it can both symbolically and in reality brings children into the community of whiteness. In this context the use of the child-rescue theme in children's literature suggests that authors were keen to extend the limited privileges of whiteness to all Aboriginal children. As interesting examples of the keen desire to rescue Indigenous children from their Aboriginality, a number of children's books written around the turn of the twentieth century claim Aboriginal babies are not born black, but pale brown; their blackness developing and creeping across the body as the child ages. This belief functions symbolically to indicate to the reader that the longer a child stays with the Aboriginal

Community, the darker she becomes. She is tainted by association. Maud Jeanne Franc,[13] in *Golden Gifts: An Australian Tale* (1883), describes an Aboriginal child as being "more than half white, with a head covered by lovely auburn curls", and having "tiny half-white fingers" (60). Jeannie Gunn's 1905 *The Little Black Princess* claims black babies are "a very light golden brown but with thin black lines" when they are born. Gunn goes on to describe her feelings on seeing a newborn Aboriginal baby:

> I stood for some minutes too astonished to speak, for instead of the
> shiney [sic] jet black piccaninny I had expected, I found one just
> about the colour of honey. (*The Little Black Princess* 88)

The handwritten manuscript of *The Little Black Princess* shows the word "expected" was originally written by Gunn as "imagined" (*Manuscript "Bett-Bett, a Princess of the Never Never"*), but had been changed by the publisher. The word "imagined" indicates Gunn's uncertainty regarding the authenticity of the information whilst "expected" authoritatively places the information as legitimate. This is further reinforced by a letter to Gunn's publisher, written by anthropologist Baldwin Spencer, endorsing the manuscript, and therefore, the information within it (Spencer). Herbert Pitts acknowledges the influence of Gunn's book on his own writing. Pitts' 1914 book *Children of Wild Australia* is specifically directed to a child reader as he describes the life and culture of Australia's Aboriginal children. He claims they are born "a very beautiful golden-brown", but that this would soon change, as:

> Under his eyes and on his arms and on other parts of his body were
> little jet black lines, and these gradually widened and spread till in a
> few weeks time he was a very deep chocolate colour. (*Children* 17-
> 18)

Interestingly, this is a theme that has continued through to the 1930s. Mary and Elizabeth Durack's *Chunama* (1936) makes an almost identical claim: "At first he had been light brown with dark rings under his eyes and around his finger nails" (10). In another passage which invites the white child reader to laugh at the infantile adult Aborigines, the Duracks continue:

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[13] Maud Jeanne Franc was a longtime teacher and, later, deaconess in the Baptist Church. (Author record, Maud Jeanne Franc. *Austlit.* 1 June 2012. <www.austlit.edu.au>)

> The older members of the camp had set themselves assiduously to the
> task of smearing charcoal and fat over the new born, lest he grow up
> "little bit white fella" through their neglect of this colouring process.
> (10)

The efforts are considered successful:

> After the first few days it became apparent that their timely
> application of the charcoal had saved the King's Grandson from this
> fate. He was as "properly" a black piccaninny as ever was. . . . His
> color, deepest sepia in the shadows, became in the full light a rich
> chocolate brown with a soft down upon it that shone like gold-dust in
> the sun. (10-11)

This indicates that the Aboriginal child is born white and that it is only through immersion in Indigenous culture that she becomes Indigenous. If left alone, she would remain white. Being born white makes a child worthy of being raised white; she/he is seen to be innately white, and thus gives justification for keeping the (potentially black) child from family and community.

On the other hand, if an Aborigine remains within her community and rises to a level of status acceptable to white sensitivities, she is also seen to be partially white. John Mackie illustrates this in *In Search of Smith* (1911):

> This queen or chieftainess is an example of the black who dominates
> his or her fellows by possessing qualities that one associates solely
> with the white race. Possibly, she is not entirely black. (10)

Written after the reign of Queen Victoria, and demonstrating his background in the Queen's Army, Mackie argues that the only women capable of heading a community are English, or white ones.

An underlying assumption of assimilation policies is that the Aboriginal child would rather be white, and would readily and willingly embrace white acculturation. This is described by Doris Chadwick in her 1962 historical children's book *John and Nanbaree*: "He is too interested in what is happening at the Cove, and in the new food he is getting – and in us" (3). Chadwick assumes the young Aborigine would much rather be white than Indigenous and suggests the Aboriginal child is easily led and enticed. This is reinforced by the

illustration (below) in which Nanbaree, dressed in European fashion, smiles, happy to have divested his Aboriginality for a western persona. He is welcomed into a new, but alien life, by John who is viewed from behind which generally indicates vulnerability. However, this is countered by the position of one hand on Nanbaree's shoulder and an upheld knife in the other, and a slight lean towards Nanbaree, all of which denote power and dominance. Nanbaree is described patronisingly as John's "black boy" (Chadwick 3). He is viewed from an angle, indicating otherness, his "merry eyes" and grinning mouth, coupled with his dishevelled appearance in torn clothing, denote his unsuitability for life in a white world; his bare feet show that even though dressed in European clothing, he is still an Aborigine: he divests himself of all clothing before entering the bush.

Figure 13: Front cover of *John and Nanbaree*
(Doris Chadwick. *John and Nanbaree*. London: Thomas Nelson, 1962.
Illustrator: Margaret Senior.)

Chadwick's Nanbaree is to teach John and his mates how to survive in the bush:

"To the woods, Nanbaree", he said now, pointing to the green belt of

trees around the Cove. "We want you to show us how to climb trees

and get wild honey". (3)

Not only was Nanbaree to educate the white boys into the ways of nature, he was to show them the Otherness of Aborigines:

> These trees that the natives climbed in some unknown way intrigued
> the boys. How did the natives do it? Steps on the trunk so far apart
> that they could not be the steps of a man. Now they would find out.
> (3)

There was always the risk that the Aboriginal child, on contact with his own people, would want to remain with them. But the Europeans believed that the pull of a European life was too strong and that they would stay in the new, colonial community. Even so, in this book, Nanbaree was often left at home when the others went further afield.

However, the promise of acculturation is never fulfilled as, once removed, the child is always marked out by their otherness. The Indigenous child fits some criteria of innocence, but her life as an Aborigine means she is tainted and, left undisturbed, will not reach the potential of a white child (Bradford "Fading to Black" 17). Aboriginal child Tommy is considered an investment by the man who bought him, in Ellen Campbell's *An Australian Childhood*. While the lady of the house considers his lack of Christianity a problem, the father considers it his moral duty to rescue him from "the aged crone who parted with him for the small consideration I mentioned" (31). He is portrayed as displaying puppy-like devotion to the family's older child, Ted:

> His love for Ted was pretty to see; his tears and despair when, the
> holidays over, my brother returned to school, were only equalled by
> the rapturous, dog-like joy with which he would greet his return. (34)

When he, in turn, succumbs to the fever that afflicts Ted, he falls far more ill as "These natives take English diseases so badly, that not one in fifty gets over them" (34). His Indigeneity is seen to render him weaker and more susceptible to disease, than the Europeans.

During the nineteenth-century, colonists believed Aborigines practised cannibalism; ultimate proof of the degeneration of the Indigenous and the superiority of white society (Bradford *Reading Race* 38; Hillel "Race and Redemption" 593), and these fears were expressed to the white child reader. Charlotte Barton's *A Mother's Offering to Her Children* sets the tone for future Australian children's literature by setting up the Otherness of Australia, first by describing the flora and fauna of the new colony, then by outlining the differences between the Indigenous and the colonisers (1-84). Barton presents to the young child audience the scenario of a two-year-old European boy who, after being adopted by an indigenous woman and cared for, was later brutally murdered:

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Mrs S: "Master D'Oyley was a very handsome child, and they cut off his head to adorn the front of a canoe."

Emma: "This is monstrous! How could such thoughts enter their heads?"

Clara: "Were they cannibals, Mamma?"

Mrs S: "Yes, my dear. They ate the eyes and cheeks of the shipwrecked people; this they do with the idea that it increases their desire for the blood of white people." (34)

Depictions of savagery give justification for Indigenous child removal; the child reader is directed to the idea that to leave an Aboriginal child with her own community is to sentence her to a life of barbarity and cruelty.

Adventure novels, written specifically for boys, although often read by, and told to, their sisters, focussed on the Aborigine as savage. Aboriginal children were portrayed as being at risk of growing up savage if they remained in an Indigenous environment, giving justification for their removal. In William Howitt's *A Boy's Adventures in the Wilds of Australia, or, Herbert's Note-Book,* (1854), the child reader is given representations of Aborigines as savage. Howitt spent just two years in Australia, at the diggings (Author record, William Howitt. *Austlit.* 1 June 2012 <www.austlit.edu.au>), yet wrote that Aboriginal women "show no want of natural affection for their children in general" and that the act of killing and eating their children is an expression of their love, as "killing their children is attributed in a great degree to the impossibility almost of the women dragging them and all their household stuff about the country on their continual wanderings" (313). The perceived lack of attention given by the mothers, and the risk of being eaten, gives justification to the child reader for their removal from an ignominious future.

Even for removed children the threat of reversion to type was ever present. Reverend Hale warned that even an Aboriginal child raised in a white environment would revert to a "life of unrestrained freedom" if allowed to return to family ("Responsibility"). It was a sentiment shared by poet Henry Kendall who described a less hopeful scenario in his poem "Peter the Piccaninny" (1880). Kendall describes Peter's removal:

We picked him up the Lord knows where
At noon we came across him!

After more than three years of training, clothing and feeding, the young child is enticed back to his old ways by a tribal elder:

> Dear Peter from my threshold went,
> One morning in the body:
> He "dropped" me, to oblige a gent—
> A gent with spear and waddy!
>
> He shelved me for a boomerang—
> We never had a quarrel;
> And, if a moral here doth hang,
> Why let it hang—the moral!
>
> My mournful tale its course has run—
> My Pete, when last I spied him,
> Was eating 'possum underdone:
> He had his gin beside him. (Reed 187)

Kendall, like many others of the time, believed that if left to themselves, the Aborigines would die out. His poem, "The Last of His Tribe" (1875) tells of an old Aborigine:

> The wallaroos grope through the tufts of the grass,
> And turn to their coverts for fear;
> But he sits in the ashes and lets them pass
> Where the Boomerangs sleep with the spear –
> With the nullah, the sling and the spear.

As "he sits in the ashes", the remains of the tribe, his weapons lifeless, he dreams of his past as a tribal warrior:

> For his eyes have been full with a smouldering though;
> But he dreams of the hunts of yore,
> And of foes that he sought, and of fights that he fought
> With those who will battle no more –
> Who will go to the battle no more.
>
> (Henry Kendall. *Australian Poetry Library*. 1 June 2012
> <http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets/kendall-henry/the-last-of-his-tribe-0007064>)

The poem was to be reprinted in various forms for many years; its widespread readership demonstrates the influence the poem, and its point of view, had. The "dying race" beliefs of Kendall and others gave a sense of justification and urgency to the removal of children from Indigenous families. It was seen as a rescue endeavour, the future of the child lay in the hands of the white rescuer. In the classical Evangelical child rescue literature the rescued and converted child often went on to redeem the family from which she came. For the Aboriginal child, however, the fear was that the reverse would be the case, the pull of the old life overcoming the hold of the new.

In an interesting subversion of the portrayal of Australian Aborigines as animalistic, Richard Rowe gives animal attributes to his white characters in *The Boy in the Bush* (1869); they are, however, characteristics of the "noble" animal, as he attempts to justify the slaughter Aborigines: "Sydney soon got quite envenomed against the blacks ... There is a terrible amount of the tiger in human nature" (195). The use of an exotic rather than domestic animal implies an aristocratic nature, one imbued with power, and is given to two youths as they come to terms with life on a New South Wales station. Originally a journalist, Rowe wrote a number of children's books, a few of which contained Australian themes, after his return from a five-year visit to Australia in 1858.

Animalism is extensively used in Ellen Campbell's *An Australian Childhood.* Tommy is described in animal-like terms as "a misshapen little creature" with "large woolly head, thin body, and shrunken shanks" (31). Not only is animalism prevalent here, but in a colony in which health and strength play an integral role, Tommy is made irrelevant with words implying decay: "shrunken"; "misshapen" and "thin". He is perceived as animalistic, which is reinforced by his perceived preference for sleeping in a wood box with a terrier whose bones he also shares, and by his acceptance by a sow "perhaps not noticing any great difference between him and her own offspring" (33). When Tommy dies prematurely, he is buried under a tree in the garden, as many families would bury a pet.

Figure 14: Bett-Bett and Sue - "Me plenty savey Engliss, Missus"
(Mrs Aeneas Gunn. *The Little Black Princess: A True Tale of Life in the Never-Never Land.*
London: Alexander Moring, 1905. p. 10.)

A well known example of animalism and inability to distinguish between people of different cultures can be found in Jeannie Gunn's classic children's book based on her experiences on a cattle station at Elsey Creek, Northern Territory. *The Little Black Princess* (1905) is the real-life story of Bett-Bett, an eight-year-old girl, the niece of a tribal elder. Bett-Bett becomes detached from her community during a tribal scuffle. Gunn considers Bett-Bett to be lost, and keeps her. The image (above) of Bett-Bett shows her not in Gunn's home, but in the bush, partially naked and adorned with tribal accessories. It is uncertain whether the photograph is of Bett-Bett or another Aboriginal child, as Gunn acknowledges Mr W. Holtze of Katherine River, Northern Territory for "posing and photographing groups of natives, for the purpose of assisting in the illustration of 'Bett-Bett'" (*Manuscript*). Gunn diligently sought or staged the photography for her book which constructs the Aboriginal characters as savage. Bett-Bett is animalised; both dog and child are looking straight at the camera, they are equals, returning the gaze of the photographer. However, the dog's Anglicised and human name, Sue, suggests its superiority to the young, Othered, child. The reader is positioned to confirm the rightness of removal of Bett-Bett from her bush home, and her assumed uncivilised and animal-like life.

Jeannie Gunn had definite views of how her book should be presented to the reader. She claimed ownership of Bett-Bett in her original title for the book: "Bett-Bett, A Princess of the Never Never", arguing she "made it deliberately illusive as suiting my Bett-Bett best" (*Personal Data*), and was bitterly disappointed with the title given by the publisher. While the use of the term "princess" demonstrates a lack of understanding of tribal culture, Gunn admits this by suggesting the term was illusory. Despite Bett-Bett's royal moniker, she was,

nonetheless, a domestic servant. The other Aboriginal women on the station were put to work in the homestead, but Bett-Bett's early years, spent "in nature" with her community, meant another pair of hands would be lost. Bett-Bett was put to work sewing, washing and painting. When she was seen to revert to her old ways, by chewing tobacco, she was punished by being put in the bathroom, and threatened with being painted white and made into a white person (*The Little Black Princess* 19-30). Here is an illustration of power over the Indigenous peoples, as ironically tobacco was introduced to them by early explorers, settlers and missionaries, and continued to be used as payment and bribes which lead to detrimental health effects (Broome 58-9, 72, 106, 124-5). Power and ownership are underlying motives, and undeniable consequences, of child removal.

The Little Black Princess was widely read. It has been reprinted many times over the years, and extracts have been included in school readers (Bradford *Reading Race* 88). Generations of readers have accepted Gunn's authority over Bett-Bett and believed the child's removal and treatment was the right thing. Maurice Saxby describes the book as a "sympathetic" account of the "everyday life of the Aboriginals" (*Offered* 187) while at the same time acknowledging that it was "written from the best of motives, but enjoyed more for the humour of Bet Bet's [sic] behaviour than because of a genuine understanding of the people themselves" (*Books* 98). Brenda Niall claims that the "idealizing power of her memory" (208) meant that Gunn's story might in fact be less authoritative than many readers would like to believe. Yet for decades readers have been drawn into Gunn's reappropriation of Indigenous culture through what Clare Bradford calls "conversational idioms and sentence structures that construct a narrator communicating with her reading audience in a familiar and informal way" (*Reading Race* 89). In other words Gunn uses terms familiar to white readers that have specific meanings in white culture, and situates them in relation to Indigenous Australians for which those words have a contrastingly different meaning. One instance is of Gunn's use of generally accepted non-Indigenous terms to describe to the child reader the complex relationship structures of Aboriginal culture:

> Bett-Bett was Jimmy's mother-in-law. Of course she wasn't married
> yet, only engaged to Billy Muck; but that did not matter. She was
> Jimmy's mother-in-law, and when she did grow up and have a
> piccaninny, it was to be his wife. (*The Little Black Princess* 33)

Gunn's work aligns Indigenous culture with the ridiculous, giving the child reader yet another reason for Indigenous child removal.

Figure 15: "Hello, Crocodile," said the girl, "what you want here?"
(John Mackie. *In Search of Smith.* London: Grant Richards, 1911. p. 36.
Illustrator: R. Caton Woodville)

Another example of animalism is one that imbues the Indigenous character with power situating them as being a danger to Europeans. The image above is an illustration by renowned military artist, Richard Caton Woodville (1856-1927) which is used in John Mackie's *In Search of Smith* (1911) to indicate women's vulnerability in the bush; the Aborigine's posture indicates subservience, but the spear in his hand, his partially undone trousers indicate the defencelessness of the woman, his scars indicate fierceness. The discourse of savagery was first described by Peter Hulme as being the representation of Indigenous people as savage and cannibal; the Other to the colonisers (in Bradford *Reading Race* 14). The illustrator, R. Caton Woodville, was educated in an era of high imperialism and travelled extensively throughout the Middle East as a war artist. His autobiography portrays African slaves at market as being child-like and "only too anxious to get the sale over and to enter their new home" (166). Woodville is expressing the belief that Indigenous peoples were ultimately aware of their need to lose their Aboriginality and become as European as possible. It is doubtful Woodville ever travelled to Australia, his illustrations in John Mackie's novel offering a representation of Australian Aborigines more like the African people that he was more familiar with and that permeated children's literature at the time.

National angst about the Stolen Generation needs to be understood in the context of the Othering of Australia's Aborigines and its replication in children's literature. What seems cruel today seemed logical at the time, not least because the practice had been so ingrained in the literature that was read by people as children. The issue of Indigenous child removal has been highlighted by the Rudd Government's 2009 apology to the Stolen Generations. This symbolic gesture followed on from the report of the Select Committee into Native Welfare in

the Laverton-Warburton Range Area (WA) (1956) who reported on the removal of Aboriginal children and found that "in many cases the parent would never see the child again, which would be an unpardonable violation of human rights" (Grayden 13). The Committee also argued that the removed children, many of whom knew little English, would suffer distress:

> ... separated from their parents and transported long distances away
> from their parents and their tribal country [they] would be lost souls
> indeed. They would be perplexed in the extreme and would be
> without a single stabilising influence on which to orient themselves
> ... . (Grayden 13)

Yet the practice continued unimpeded for at least another twenty years and Indigenous peoples waited another thirty years for an official apology.

Another report that heavily influenced the apology was the 1997 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) *Bringing Them Home Report* which foregrounded the effects of removing Indigenous children from family and community in Australia. Some Indigenous children felt certain aspects of their life benefitted from removal, particularly those removed into another family environment; however, even these children felt a sense of not belonging. The justification for removing Aboriginal children centred on the conviction that it was "for their own good". Many removed children were considered orphans, despite the Indigenous norms of the extended family caring for parentless children (E. Campbell 31; van Toorn 25; Gunn *The Little Black Princess* 20-21).

Authorities justified the removal of Indigenous children by citing their perceived neglect and destitute status (Mellor and Haebich 53), but skin colour was a decisive factor; Aboriginal families were seen to be "sites of physical and moral danger and neglect" in which "the rights of parents and children to remain together [were] denied" (Haebich 13). Legislation allowed for the degree of whiteness exhibited by an Aborigine, whether it be skin colour or European skills such as language or custom, to indicate an ability to accept and embrace white society (HREOC 27, 29; Hillel "Race and Redemption" 594; Mellor and Haebich 248). Later generations of children were removed as punishment for the perceived sins of their parents, and to implement the white Australia policies of twentieth-century governments (Read *A Rape of the Soul So Profound* 2, 17-25). Because Aboriginal parents were considered "bad" it became easier to rationalize not only removal of their children, but also removal of land (Bradford "Wise Colonial Child" 43; "Representing Indigeneity" 93-94; Swain "Reflections and Refractions of Empire" 1096).

In twenty-first century Australia there is still a gap between the two terms, with the term "stolen child" and "stolen generation" implying injustice, and garnering media and public interest that emotively directs the reader/viewer to feelings of outrage and protest, while the more authoritative tone of the term "removed child" implies benefit, and elicits support and acceptance. The term "stolen" was first used in 1981 by historian Peter Read in *The Stolen Generations: The Removal of Aboriginal Children in New South Wales 1883-1969*. He uses the term "stolen generations" to describe what he sees as a systematic attempt to "'breed out' the Aboriginal race" (Read *The Stolen Generations* 5; see also Read *A Rape of the Soul So Profound*). The practice, he argues, amounts to attempted genocide:

> White people have never been able to leave Aborigines alone. Children particularly have suffered. Missionaries, teachers, government officials, have believed that the best way to make black people behave like white people was to get hold of the children who had not yet learned Aboriginal lifeways. They thought that children's minds were like a kind of blackboard on which the European secrets could be written. (*The Stolen Generations* 5)

This chapter has shown that Indigenous characters in children's literature have been portrayed in racist terms that have predisposed the child reader into accepting child removal as a natural, and obvious, outcome. Australia's Aborigines were seen to be irredeemable, therefore the removal of the Aboriginal child, predicated on race as an expression of Imperialism, was considered the best course of action. The slightest "degree of whiteness" displayed by the child gave justification for removal as she was considered more suitable to white sensitivities and more able to be redeemed and assimilated into white society. The popularity of the children's books examined here has meant that these racist opinions have been carried through from the nineteenth century into the twentieth, and will no doubt, through continued re-publication of books such as *The Little Black Princess*, continue into the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

"And over on the grass bank Alice was telling Baby her history. At least she was telling her the story of a little baby who had belonged to one mother, and been sent away to another". (Ethel Turner. Mother's Little Girl. p. 245.)

Set against a background of national and international apologies for forcible child removal, this thesis began with the intention of bringing to the fore the influence Australian children's literature had on perpetuating and normalising child removal from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. That the forcible removal of children occurred historically has been scarcely disputed, but that it occurred over such a broad time frame, and involved children of varying socio-economic and cultural groups was a surprise to many who felt that twentieth-century morality would not have allowed such occurrences. The last chapter quotation is taken from the final pages of Ethel Turner's *Mother's Little Girl*. Alice's conscience gets the better of her as she realises the pull of family ties in the mother/child relationship, and makes the decision to return Sylvia to her birth mother, Ellie. While Alice recognises the importance of history to the removed child, she is offering her own view of events. By using the words "and had been sent away to another" she firmly implies that Sylvia's mother was actively involved in the process, ignoring the fact that the child was in fact purchased. While this does illustrate the fact that there is no one version of history, it is also indicative of conflicting versions of child removal told about Australia's removed children, many of whom have been denied the right to a true account of their removal.

Australian children's literature has played a pivotal role in perpetuating the child-removal theme amongst child readers. The inclusion of the theme was predicated on nineteenth-century British evangelical literature that preyed on readers' moral sensibilities to extract financial support for the cause of removing neglected and vulnerable children from Britain's streets, and moral support for ridding city streets of children at the edges of society in order that they become "useful and industrious" (Barnardo "A Little Crossing Sweep" 460-61). The child-rescue literature of evangelicals such as Thomas Barnardo, Reverend Benjamin Waugh, Thomas Bowman Stephenson and Edward de Montjoie Rudolf reified the supposedly tireless work of child rescuers who gathered the unfortunate children and turned them into more responsible, Christian citizens of the future. Child removal literature argued that to leave a child in an unsuitable environment would lead to a moral degradation that would threaten the entire society. However, the child in such literature was cast as a victim as well as a threat.

With the child reconceptualised as the future of the nation families whose child rearing fell short of accepted standards faced the threat of having their child removed.

The thesis began with an historical overview of child removal in England and Australia which considered the various ways in which children have changed hands and the development of institutional care which were predicated on the prevalence of child abandonment. England's Poor Law attempted to address the needs of the vulnerable child, most significantly in the sixteenth century by placing them in the care of other poor women, and later in the 1834 Amendment Act by focussing on training designed to prepare the child for a future as potential citizen. Needy children were to be educated, in both secular and religious subjects, and taught a strong work ethic. But for this to be achieved, they had to be contained in a harsh institutional environment. Evangelical social reformers, alert to the orphaned, neglected or abandoned child's vulnerability, moved to implement various homes and societies based on the family group model. They were prolific publicists using magazines built around familiar Evangelical stereotypes to attract support to their cause. Such publications were read widely in England and the colonies, many of whose own children came to be recognised as in need of a similar kind of care. Child welfare reformers argued that it was the responsibility of the parents to maintain accepted standards if they wanted to retain the right to parent a child. Strict delineation of parental roles, along the lines of gender, class and race, coupled with contradictions that left many parents unable to maintain the ideal, formed the basis on which Australian society regulated who should, or more importantly should not, parent a child.

Parental roles have been examined, and their representation in Australian children's literature over a one-hundred year time span from 1841 to 1941 explored, to demonstrate how these standards and stereotypes were perpetuated to generations of child readers. Authors and publishers utilised both language and images to disseminate accepted ideologies and child readers were not exempt. Idealised mothers were portrayed as caring and nurturing, and fathers as authoritarian providers. Parents who fail to uphold the ideal, through neglect or absence, risk having children removed. Child readers came to accept these mores as they matured into their pre-ordained roles in society. The propagation of these mores in Australian children's literature helped to normalise the practice of child removal. Child readers were exposed to childhood vulnerability and the harm that could befall a child who remained with alcoholic or abusive parents. Within such literature the vulnerability of children born into impoverished families was overcome when they were moved to a more appropriate environment.

Australia's extensive history of child removal began with Aboriginal removal by early explorers and settlers. One of the assumptions made at the start of the study was that representations of Indigenous child removal would far outweigh that of non-Indigenous. This has proven to be incorrect. The assumption was based on the prominence of the *Bringing Them Home* Report (1997) and films and books such as *My Place* (1987) by Sally Morgan, and *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002), as well as the coverage of Aboriginal child removal in the media. More recently similar exposure has been given to non-Indigenous removal, in the *Lost Innocents* Report (2001), Alan Gill's book *Orphans of the Empire*, (1997), Margaret Humphreys' *Empty Cradles* (2009), (released as a film in 2010 under the title of *Oranges and Sunshine*), and the 1992 film, *The Leaving of Liverpool* which dealt with child migration. The *Forgotten Australians* Report (2004) reported on local children who grew up in Australian institutions, a group whose experiences were further explored in books such as Joanna Penglase's personal account of institutional life, *Orphans of the Living* (2005). It is an interesting observation that within the children's literature examined here, the removal of a child into an orphanage was not advocated, although it has been discussed as being an unviable option.

This thesis has moved beyond Clare Bradford's focus on race to include the white child in children's literature and that of Margot Hillel and Shurlee Swain who drew on the literature of child-rescue organisations to question how representations of the neglected child influenced their readership. By examining a broad range of literary genres it has argued that the theme was therefore disseminated and normalised to a larger readership, predicated on the assumption that the reader would be complicit in the attitudes therein.

One of the overall conclusions reached has been the importance of children's literature as an historical resource, given the powerful influence of authors over their readers (Arizpe and Styles 8; Bradford *Reading Race* 3; Hillel "Race and Redemption" 580; Hollindale 32; Knowles and Malmkjær 43; McCallum and Stephens 360; McGillis "Literary Studies" 347; *The Nimble Reader* 17-18; K. Reynolds *Modern Children's Literature* 3). It is through authorial influence that children's literature has shaped societal attitudes. As themes of imperialism permeated British literature, expressed through racist, sexist and paternalist characteristics, so it infiltrated literary works in the colonies, presenting Aboriginal culture and landscape in terms of otherness and directing readers into accepting as normal the pervasive cultural ideologies of race and empire (Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths 5-7; Hillel "Race and Redemption" 580; Kutzer xiii-xv; Zornado 102).

While a great number of children's texts have been found to include the child-removal theme, the large volume of Australian children's literature available has necessitated that only a limited number can be included here. Although the thesis is not a definitive listing, it does indicate the pervasiveness of the theme. What is apparent though is that the theme must certainly carry through past the 1940 limit, indicating an obvious direction for further research.

The thesis draws extensively on Ethel Turner's *Mother's Little Girl*, the child-removal novel *par* excellence, but it has also shown that the child removal theme has been effectively used by many other respected and popular authors, reaching a wide readership. That the child removal theme in *Mother's Little Girl* caused little stir amongst contemporary critics is suggestive of the normalisation of the practice at the turn of the century. Publication of the story in book form drew comments that indicated child removal was an accepted part of life, ranging from: "one of the most human and humanising, one of the most touching of her works" ("Publications Received 30") to the feeling that Turner had "give[n] her readers a little too much" of the "common experiences in these times of taxation and retrenchment" ("Current Literature 6"). But the emphasis was on the "common experiences" felt by families in the beginning of the twentieth century: "There is not a character there that anyone of ordinary experience has not met, not an incident or a piece of dialogue that has not for the most part come within anyone's most usual experience" ("Books & Magazines 50"). Undoubtedly there would be many readers of the book whose lives would have been affected by drought, unemployment and financial constraints. But given that Sylvia's removal is the major focus of the book, it also applies that there is "not an incident" or "piece of dialogue" that would indicate that many families would also have keenly felt the trauma of child removal. The implication of such commentary was that it was, after all, a recurring and normal practice.

The overriding argument of this thesis is that Australian children's literature has, over a period of one hundred years, presented child removal as being a normal part of life, and a practice that had potential to be repeated. Authors of children's literature have reflected and reinforced the ideologies of society, thus have provided an ongoing set of values for the young reader. Children's books tend to reproduce and reinforce the prevailing ideologies of their times. Through the literature which supported the practice of child removal, in its many forms, therefore, child readers were imbued with society's thinking; underpinned by the pervasive belief that child removal was both necessary and justifiable.

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Note: where an edition other than a first of a book has been used the date of the book's original publication follows the title.

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