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The Dwarfing of Men in Victorian Fairy-Tale Literature

Heather Victoria Vermeulen

Honors Thesis
Department of English
University of Richmond

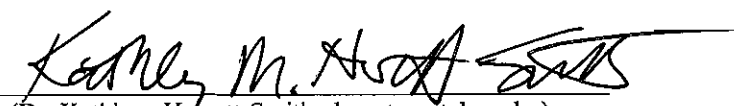
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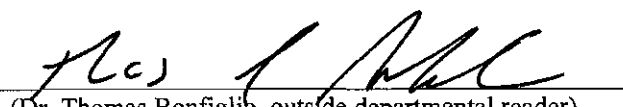
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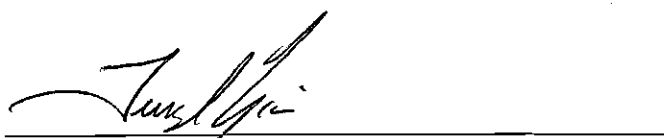
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The Dwarfing of Men in Victorian Fairy-Tale Literature

Heather Victoria Vermeulen

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I. Introduction: The Dwarfing of Men in Victorian Fairy-Tale Literature

As Jack Zipes explains in his preface to *Victorian Fairy Tales: The Revolt of the Fairies and the Elves*, “The Victorian fairy-tale writers always had two ideal audiences in mind when they composed their tales – young middle-class readers whose minds and morals they wanted to influence, and adult middle-class readers whose ideas they wanted to challenge and reform” (xiv). “It was through the fairy tale,” he continues, “that a social discourse about conditions in Victorian England took form, and this discourse is not without interest for readers today” (xi). My project begins with a critical analysis of the Grimm Brothers’ “Snow White” and “Rumpelstiltskin,” exploring the precedent such tales set for stories of female maturation in particular. Using the Grimms’ fairy tales as a point of departure, I proceed to examine the ways in which three Victorian fairy-tale authors – Christina Rossetti, George MacDonald, and Juliana Horatia Ewing – reject this precedent and employ dwarfed men to craft subversive social commentaries on nineteenth-century conceptions of masculinity. Whereas Rossetti’s “Goblin Market” dwarfs and banishes the masculine altogether, MacDonald’s *Princess* books and Ewing’s “Amelia and the Dwarfs” attempt to navigate gender boundaries, working within their constraints to an extent, and yet also deconstructing popular notions of woman’s (and man’s) place in Victorian society. For all three authors, the dwarfed male represents an angry, violent, and inherently frustrated masculinity – one which inhibits ideal male-female interaction and growth, thereby limiting the human potential of Victorian England.

II. Dwarfs in the Grimm Brothers' Tales: Establishing a (Grimm) Precedent

First translated into English by Edgar Taylor in his *German Popular Stories* (1823-1826) (Haase, "Introduction" 13), the Grimm Brothers' tales spread quickly through British popular culture, intermingling with its own body of folktales. The various nineteenth-century English translations of the Grimms' collections represent an influential component of the dynamic Victorian literary market, one which was potentially stifling for female readers and writers alike. As numerous scholars have noted, the Grimms' masculine presence in the genre of children's literature (once considered a feminine literary domain), together with the arrival of Lewis Carroll and his *Alice* books,¹ often motivated women writers towards a reclamation of the storytelling tradition. As Auerbach and Knoepfelmacher note in their Introduction to *Forbidden Journeys*, although "Victorian readers found the association of women with children's books natural, [...] the most acclaimed writers of Victorian children's fantasies were three eccentric men – Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, and James Barrie" (1).² Unlike male writers of children's fantasy literature who sought to preserve childhood, however, nineteenth-century women writers frequently display a desire to enable their female

¹ Carroll published *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a finalized version of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, in 1865, and *Through the Looking-Glass* in 1871.

² In the introduction to *Men in Wonderland*, Catherine Robson outlines the "idealization and idolization of little girls" perpetrated by authors like Carroll, connecting this literary outcome with "a pervasive fantasy of male development in which men become masculine only after an initial feminine stage" (3). "In this light," Robson continues, "little girls represent not just the true essence of childhood, but an adult male's best opportunity of reconnecting with his own lost self" (3). In my discussion of George MacDonald's *Princess* books, I will return to this concept of the feminine representing a lost, ideal self, comparing MacDonald's depiction of girls and women with that which theologian Rosemary Reuther categorizes as "romantic feminism" (44).

protagonists, allowing the girls to mature.³ “Most Victorian women,” Auerbach and Knoepfmacher write, “envied adults rather than children” (1).⁴

In *From the Beast to the Blonde*, Marina Warner elucidates another problematic aspect of the Grimms’ literary presence as it relates to their portrayal of girls and women. She notes that the Grimms “gradually made their heroines more polite, well-spoken, or even silent, [...] while their wicked female characters became more and more vituperative and articulate.” This precedent, she continues, “was replicated in mass children’s publishing of the nineteenth century” (281). Known as “the golden age for the literary British fairy tale” (Hearn xix), this prolific period gives rise to a wealth of new stories, many of which in fact *challenge* the Grimms. Among these critical responses are Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market,” George MacDonald’s *The Princess and the Goblin*, and Juliana Horatia Ewing’s “Amelia and the Dwarfs,” which constitute the primary focus of this work.

To establish a point of reference from which to study the significance of the dwarfed male in Victorian fairy-tale literature, it bears investigating the various narrative functions of the dwarf in the Grimm Brothers’ popular collection, which sought to reflect the perceived folkloric origins of the tales and their characters. From this starting-point, one can begin to assess the ways in which Victorian writers of fairy tales deviated from the Grimms’ tradition and recast these natural helpers, employing them not solely as magical agents or catalysts, but

³ Nina Auerbach and U.C. Knoepfmacher distinguish between men like Carroll, who felt free to appropriate fantasy and folk literature, and women writers of the Victorian period, “still expected by their culture to adhere to and propagate the realism of everyday, [who] were at a decided disadvantage” (“Part One: Refashioning Fairy Tales” 12). Thus, woman writers like Ewing and Rossetti (examined in the following chapters) had to “refashion” these tales in order to differentiate their work from that of the male fantasy writers. Their subversions, moreover, had to remain subtle.

⁴ I would disagree with Auerbach and Knoepfmacher, however, when they compare George MacDonald to Carroll and Barrie, “whose obsessive nostalgia for their own idealized childhoods inspired them to imagine dream countries in which no one had to grow up” (“Introduction” 1). MacDonald, in fact, as I will argue, wrote tales encouraging his boy protagonists in particular to *mature* – to catch up to their female counterparts, who frequently embody a higher wisdom uniting both imagination and intellect.

rather as a surface on which to subtly (and perhaps subversively) project controversial social issues, namely, those related to gender roles and expectations. An examination of the Grimms' collection reveals several varieties of dwarfed male characters, whose roles range from that of the androgynous helper, exemplified by the Seven Dwarfs, to the thwarted, angry Rumpelstiltskin.

The dwarfs in tales like "Snow White" are specifically associated with girls transitioning through childhood and adolescence into womanhood. However, the Grimms' "Snow White" glosses over this transition (she essentially sleeps peacefully through adolescence in her glass coffin), while downplaying the sexuality of both dwarfs and prince. In most versions, the dwarfed men assist the young woman in her transition, but must ultimately relinquish her to a princely suitor, remaining themselves relatively androgynous. However, Maria Tatar reveals that variations on the "Snow White" tale feature "compassionate robbers, thieves, bears, wild men, or ogres" instead of dwarfs (ABG 241); it is significant that the Grimms elected to publish the version in which Snow White's helpers appear the least sexually threatening (annotation 12, ABG 246). The dwarfs in "Snow White" keep an "indescribably dainty and spotless" cottage ("Snow White" 245), and even their bed sheets are "as white as snow" (SW 246), suggesting virginal purity and yet also anticipating their connection with the snow-white young runaway. In a far more explicit version from Switzerland, "Death of the Seven Dwarfs," however, the dwarfed men actually fight over who will sleep *with* the "attractive young peasant girl" (Ashliman).⁵ Further, German language and

⁵ This version, translated by D.L. Ashliman, not only acknowledges the dwarfs' sexual attraction to the young girl, but also the way her relationship with the dwarfs is perceived by others. The oldest dwarf wins the argument and "[takes] the girl into his bed," but when an old woman arrives at the cottage, she "accuse[s] the girl of being a slut, thinking that she [is] cohabiting with all seven men." Interestingly, the *girl* receives the accusation of sexual promiscuity, *not* the dwarfs. The old woman leaves "in a rage" and returns with two men who break in, kill the dwarfs, and burn down their house. The tale ends, "No one knows what became of the girl," but it

folklore scholar Wolfgang Mieder points out that despite the Grimms' fairly androgynous published version, the sexual suggestiveness of Snow White living with seven men recurs in various modern German aphorisms as well, among them one that translates, "Did you know that Snow White had no rest on any day of the week?" (156).

Another significant editorial decision that Tatar highlights is the Grimms' election to publish a version with a wicked *stepmother* instead of a wicked biological mother. She writes that "The Grimms, in an effort to preserve the sanctity of motherhood, were forever turning biological mothers into stepmothers" (ABG 242). This concept of male discomfort at perversions of the maternal will return in the discussion of the Goblin Queen in George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*, and it reflects the very narrow image of the feminine ideal projected by the Grimms throughout their collection. "For the Grimms," Jack Zipes reflects, "the good woman was the woman who knew her place" ("Spinning with Fate" 49). Tatar points out that "The stepmother traps Snow White by donning disguises and by mimicking nurturing behavior" (annotation 16, ABG 249); she represents a horrifying deformation of the maternal who not only wishes to destroy her (step)daughter, but who will mimic maternal behavior in order to trick the girl.⁶ Feminist critics have identified Snow White with "a cultural script in which women are enmeshed in a discourse connecting beauty, death, and femininity" (Tatar, "Introduction: Snow White" 77), and the tale is widely read as a story of female maturation from a child or adolescent into a desirable, marriageable woman. The alternative to this "angel-woman," explored in depth by critics Gilbert and Gubar in *The*

appears likely that she merely changes hands from the aroused dwarfs to the full-fledged, sexual, and violently possessive men.

⁶ Interestingly, as Gilbert and Gubar point out, the queen also employs items and practices typically associated with *women* in her attempts to kill Snow White: she "suffocates her with a very Victorian set of tight laces," she "promises to comb Snow White's hair 'properly,' then assaults her with a poisonous comb," and she concocts a poisonous apple. In other words, they conclude, "The girl finally falls, killed, so it seems, by the female arts of cosmetology and cookery" (40).

Madwoman in the Attic, is the “monster-woman” embodied in the wicked stepmother (Tatar, ABG 242). This woman seeks to “dream up something that will destroy [Snow White]” (SW 250), yet the dwarfs twice thwart her plan, reversing the stepmother’s poisons and reviving her intended victim. Illustrator Trina Schart Hyman characterizes the stepmother through her symbolic relationship to Snow White: “This woman wasn’t evil,” she writes, “she was simply a complex personality whose only power was her beauty. She didn’t think about the girl as a person. She hated only what Snow White symbolized, which was youth and the power and beauty of youth” (296). Thus, the seven dwarfs merely enact the wishes of a male-dominated society, literally preserving the youthful and beautiful (yet also passive and weak) feminine ideal that the creative, powerful stepmother seeks to annihilate. Before Snow White can make a desirable bride for the prince, she must cultivate her submissive beauty and learn traditional domesticity, a concept Juliana Horatia Ewing explores and challenges in “Amelia and the Dwarfs,” discussed in the fifth section of this work.

When the wicked stepmother believes she has finally put an end to Snow White, she cries out ecstatically, “This time the dwarfs won’t be able to bring you back to life!” (SW 252); the feminine ideal (and her competition), she hopes, is dead. The Grimms, however, decidedly proffer their catatonic, objectified beauty, who is “completely fooled” (SW 250) by the poisoned comb and shows no sign of intelligence throughout the tale, as the ideal embodiment of woman. Again, as we will see in the discussion of Ewing’s “Amelia,” Victorian women writers often sought to reverse these degrading and limiting conceptions of proper femininity. In Grimms’ tale, however, Snow White enthusiastically accepts the dwarfs’ domestic compromise: “If you will keep house for us, cook, make the beds, wash, sew, knit, and keep everything neat and tidy, then you can stay with us, and we’ll give you everything

you need” (SW 248). She replies, “Yes, with pleasure” (SW 248), and is well on her way to making suitable wife-material. Of note, too, is the way in which this agreement reinforces the Grimms’ portrayal of an innocent and pure woman. These androgynous, dwarfed men can provide Snow White with all of *her* needs, and yet when the prince sees her body in the glass coffin, he pleads with the dwarfs, “Make me a gift of it, for I can’t live without being able to see Snow White” (SW 254). Clearly, grown men need women for sexual satisfaction and the production of children, but, for the Grimms, women do not (*no, never!*) feel sexual desire; they are as asexual and chaste as the emasculated seven dwarfs.

In “Snow White,” the Grimms’ dwarfed men serve as desexualized agents of the external patriarchal culture, helping to reinforce the message of a woman’s place as an aesthetic object within the home (see Figure 1). As Tatar comments, “Their diminutive stature makes them sexually unthreatening, even as their sevenfold admiration for Snow White’s beauty magnifies her attractiveness” (annotation 12, ABG 246). Just as Snow White’s real mother accidentally pricks her finger when she dares to look beyond the ebony window frame (SW 243)⁷ – a subtle warning against feminine aspirations beyond the home – the dwarfs constantly discourage their charge from any contact whatsoever with the outside world. “Don’t let anyone in the house” (SW 248), they repeatedly warn her – presumably out of concern for her safety – and yet they repeatedly leave her unprotected. Twice, however, Snow White dares to traverse the boundaries of the home, “peek[ing] out the window” (SW 249 and 250) to view her disguised stepmother’s wares, only to “[fall] down as if dead” (SW 249). In other words, the result of this brief flickering of will in the Grimms’ passive female character is that she nearly dies for her transgression of (dwarfed) male authority. The tale repeatedly

⁷ Tatar notes that Gilbert and Gubar identify the first queen’s imprisonment within the ebony window frame with the second queen’s imprisonment within the mirror (annotation 3, ABG 243-244).

punishes Snow White for making contact with a woman who perverts society's feminine ideal with her frightening power and dangerous, unnatural (and unfeminine) activity.⁸ The dwarfs' repeated revival of Snow White and their increasingly strict admonitions directed at the foolish girl to prevent her from breaching the boundaries of the home suggest an awareness of her innocence *and* a desire to preserve it (see Figure 2). Their social duty is to protect Snow White from both from the stepmother who seeks to destroy this icon of feminine passivity and from the girl's own potential temptation to deviate from the prescribed norms of female behavior.

Tempted a third time, Snow White “[feels] a craving for the beautiful apple” her stepmother proffers, and commits her most devious act: she “put[s] her hand *out the window*” (emphasis mine, SW 252) to take the fruit – a physical denial of the boundaries of the home (see Figure 3).⁹ “But no sooner had she taken a bite,” the Grimms narrate, “than she fell to the ground dead” (SW 252). The message is perfectly clear: curb feminine desire or it will self-destruct/destroy; woman is inherently sinful, naturally prone to temptations. It is troubling, too, that, as Tatar points out, “it is ultimately sheer chance that Snow White comes back to life” after ingesting the poisoned apple (annotation 21, ABG 254). Or, in other words, perhaps there is little import in making a distinction between the living woman and the dead. After all, Snow White in her coffin “did not decay, and she looked just as if she were sleeping” (SW 254); the prince proclaims to the dwarfs that he will “honor and cherish her *as if she were*

⁸ Gilbert and Gubar depict the queen as “a plotter, a plot-maker, a schemer, a witch, an artist, an impersonator, a woman of almost infinite creative energy, witty, wily, and self-absorbed” (38-39). Differentiating between (step)mother and (step)daughter, they write, “the one, sweet, ignorant, passive, the other both artful and active; the one a sort of angel, the other an undeniable witch” (36).

⁹ An apple, of course, alludes to Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden, recalling the pervasive fear of feminine susceptibility to sin as yet another reason for men to protect (imprison) women within the home. Further, the apple is made in Snow White's image (Tatar, annotation 17, ABG 251) – “white with red cheeks – and if you saw it, you craved it” (SW 251). This craving is mirrored in the prince's declaration to the seven dwarfs: “I can't live without being able to see Snow White,” he exclaims (SW 254). The Grimms present fulfillment of the *prince's* desire for Snow White as natural; granting of *feminine* desire, however, proves dangerous and deadly.

[his] beloved" (emphasis mine, SW 254). Thus objectified, is the living woman any different from the dead? More importantly, is Snow White ever fully alive, fully human? Apparently, she can serve the same purpose for the prince regardless, although, presumably, a living version would provide him with increased pleasure and potential heirs. At any rate, like her mother before her, Snow White suffers for her transgressions of masculine authority when she sets her sights beyond the confines of the home. Seemingly deceased and confined to the glass coffin for her actions, Snow White has become "An 'it,' a possession, [...] and as such she has definitely proven herself to be patriarchy's ideal woman, the perfect candidate for Queen" (Gilbert and Gubar 41). Juliana Horatia Ewing, as we shall see, likewise crafts a female protagonist drawn to windows and the outside world, and yet *her* heroine, unlike Grimms' objectified beauty, learns to navigate the boundaries between home and society, between external expectations and internal desires.

Snow White's "craving" for this oral pleasure additionally emphasizes the historical, patriarchal stigma against women's speech, a topic investigated in great depth by Marina Warner in *From the Beast to the Blonde* as it relates to folkloric storytelling traditions and the myth of a lost oral culture.¹⁰ Her desire for the pleasures of the mouth (a voice), like the queen's desire for beauty (the only form of feminine power available to her), results in an admonitory death.¹¹ Again, although the Grimms condone *masculine* desire for a beautiful,

¹⁰ In her chapter "Word of Mouth: Gossips II," Warner traces negative beliefs surrounding women's speech through the Bible as well, citing that "The translators of the King James Authorized Version [...] had no difficulty with English words for these different types of condemned speech [...]: garrulousness was a woman's vice, and silence – which was not even considered an appropriate virtue in the male – one of the chief ornaments a good woman should cultivate. It is a commonplace that what counts as articulateness in a man becomes stridency in a woman, that a man's conviction is a woman's shrillness, a man's fluency a woman's drivel. The speaking woman also refuses subjection, and turns herself from a passive object of desire into a conspiring and conscious stimulation: even fair speech becomes untrustworthy on a woman's lips" (30).

¹¹ In the Grimms' "The Three Little Men in the Woods," another tale featuring maturing girls and dwarfed men, the dwarfs reward the submissive, beautiful daughter with the gift "that gold pieces shall fall from her mouth whenever she says a word" (66); essentially, they make her speech more profitable (and tolerable) for her future

passive woman, feminine desire proves objectionable. Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," which will be discussed in the third chapter of this work, explores the pleasures of the mouth and the threat of female temptation, but from a perspective that turns a critical eye on men as the source of women's peril. Not only is Snow White's reaction to the apple troubling for her male storytellers, but terrifying, too, is the fact that a woman (the wicked stepmother) could manufacture an object inciting such irrepressible, controlling desire. What if she proffered the apple to a man instead? What would happen if a woman could control and manipulate masculine free will? And in "Amelia and the Dwarfs," Juliana Horatia Ewing does indeed teach her girl-protagonist to fool and manipulate (dwarfed) covetous men through her talent at dancing.

Denying the Grimms' continuum of feminine deaths (essentially at the hands of men), later Victorian writers like Christina Rossetti and Juliana Horatia Ewing will seek to resurrect their female protagonists, subjecting them to (dwarfed) masculinity in the name of experience, so that they may eventually overcome death in a kind of woman-mediated resurrection. In the Grimms' version, however, Snow White faces the irreversible death of her independent child-self, as the following lines suggest: "The dear child was gone, and nothing could bring her back" (SW 252). Both Ewing and Rossetti's female protagonists similarly undergo "deaths" at the hands of dwarfed men, and yet these authors suggest that women can overcome – even subversively deny – the constraints of self-effacing social expectations. Snow White, however, seems fated to perish like her stepmother once her life-saving beauty naturally alters with age. Indeed, the Grimms' narration of the stepmother's demise, "She had to put on the red-hot iron shoes and dance in them until she *dropped to the ground dead*" (emphasis mine,

husband-king. Conversely, the dwarfs give the willful, ugly daughter the punishment "that a toad will jump out of her mouth whenever she speaks" (68). The woman who voices her opinion and refuses submission becomes a social aberration, one who is ostracized and ultimately silenced.

SW 255), strikingly mirrors their depiction of Snow White's repeated deaths. Maria Tatar summarizes the argument made by Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, likewise remarking that "it is the queen who foreshadows the destiny of Snow White; once Snow White gains the throne, she will exchange her glass coffin for the imprisonment of the looking-glass" ("Introduction: Snow White" 76-77). Beyond the mirror, however, the "liberated" Snow White also faces imprisonment in the form of marriage to a man who initially desires her for her physical appearance and passivity alone. When the bewildered Snow White awakens, asking, "Good heavens, where am I?" the "thrilled" prince instructs her, "You will stay with me, [...] I love you more than anything else on earth, [...] *Come with me to my father's castle. You shall be my bride*" (emphasis mine, SW 254). In reply, the Grimms simply narrate, "Snow White had tender feelings for him, and she departed with him. The marriage was celebrated with great splendor" (SW 254). In short, male possession and patriarchal impositions merely transition from the dwarfed, androgynous, and instructive males to the full-fledged, possessive, and sexually desirous prince, the "son of a king" (SW 254). Being "the daughter of a king" (SW 254) (a label fixed like a price tag on Snow White's coffin by the seven dwarfs) makes one marriageable and sexually desirable, a trophy of sorts; being the "son of a king" endows one with the power to make such a premier marital selection.

In female maturation tales like "Snow White," the focus inevitably shifts from the young woman's formational interaction with the dwarfs to her intended placement within the husband's home. The seven dwarfs relinquish Snow White to the prince with little dispute, but in other tales, the dwarfs can be angry, violent, and excessively possessive; in short, they can assume the mentality of the emasculated and extraordinarily frustrated male. Such is the

case with “Rumpelstiltskin,” a story that carries numerous names, from “Tot Tit Tot” in British folk literature to “Ricdin-Ricdon” in French tales (Zipes, “The Fate of Spinning” 584), and is generally referred to as “The Name of the Helper” by folklorists (Tatar, ABG 256-257). Maria Tatar points out in her annotated version of the tale that, regardless of his name, Rumpelstiltskin’s “essence and function remain much the same” (ABG 256). “Not so,” she continues, “with the tale’s heroine,” who is typically “a young girl of humble origins,” but who may be either lazy or hard-working, and of various spinning capabilities (ABG 256). The real consistency here, then, is the battle over the spinning girl’s child and, by extension, the sexual territory represented by her physical body. The spinner’s nature, like her name, is insignificant, and the story’s focus subtly shifts in the direction of a masculine virility competition. Unlike the androgynous dwarfs of “Snow White,” these dwarfed men demonstrate subtle, but undeniable, sexuality, primarily expressed through their desire for a child.¹² They represent frustrated, ostracized masculinity and the anger that the dominant male’s self-assertion incites within his inferior. As Maria Tatar relates in *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, in each version of the tale the spinner “finds herself in desperate straits” and must bargain with “a devilish creature” (126). The central conflict becomes the dwarfed male’s claims to the dominant male’s progeny, the first-born child. It is the king, after all, who gives the spinner a spindle – often symbolic, as Heidi Anne Heiner notes, of the

¹² In the English version, “Tom Tit Tot” (reecorded by Joseph Jacobs), the dwarfed male’s sexual arousal is made more overt by his lengthy and rapidly spinning phallic tail. The figure first appears to the young girl as “a small little black thing with a long tail” (4), which he twirls as he begins to make his bargain. No baby is involved in this version, however; the diminutive man informs her, “I’ll give you three guesses every night to guess my name, and if you have n’t guessed it before the month’s up *you* shall be mine” (emphasis mine, 5). Throughout the tale, Tom Tit Tot is referred to as “that” and treated as less than human. On the last night, Jacobs writes, “That was grinning from ear to ear, and Oo! *that’s tail was twirling round so fast*” (emphasis mine, 8). The king, however, has overheard the dwarfed male’s name, and the young woman is able to escape her bargain. Appropriately, the spinning tail that Tom Tit Tot holds proudly and seductively in their early encounters (Figure 4) droops between his legs (Figure 5) as he cowers before her. After she names him, he “[gives] an awful shriek” and flies away, never to be seen again (9). Presumably, however, he is also free to seek new victims, unlike the Grimms’ self-destructed Rumpelstiltskin.

phallus (annotation 9, “Rumpelstiltskin”) – and the impotent gnome who in turn appropriates the king’s spindle with the identical aim of acquiring a child, the “living creature” he desires above “all the treasures in the world” (“Rumpelstiltskin,” ABG 260). Although Aarne-Thompson and others classify Rumpelstiltskin as a “helper,”¹³ in his article, “Spinning with Fate,” Jack Zipes agrees that this classification is erroneous; “he is obviously a blackmailer and oppressor” (43), he concludes.¹⁴

During the spinner’s trials, both king and gnome repeatedly invade the feminine space of the spinning-room, where the monarch imprisons the young woman each evening (see Figure 6). The spinner’s first introduction to her future husband comes when he commands, “Get to work right away. If you don’t succeed in spinning this straw into gold by tomorrow morning, then you shall die” (R 258). The vulnerability of the girl’s position (she is spinning for her life) and the progeny desires that motivate the dwarfed and dominant male make these spatial penetrations verge on symbolic rape. The eventual “reward” for the spinner’s labors is that she may become the greedy king’s wife, and yet, as Donald Haase indicates, his “slave” would be the more accurate term (“Response and Responsibility” 239).¹⁵ Further, in

¹³ In *The Types of the Folktale*, Anti Aarne and Stith Thompson classify “Rumpelstiltskin” as tale type 500, or “The Name of the Helper,” in which “The maiden learns the name of her supernatural helper” (167). The standard version consists of three identifiable parts, which Aarne and Thompson outline as an impossible task, a bargain with the helper, and the defeat of the helper (167-168).

¹⁴ In the same article, Zipes makes a fascinating comparison between an 1810 recording of the oral version of the tale, “Rumpenstünzchen,” and the Grimms’ heavily edited 1857 literary fairy tale, “Rumpelstiltskin” (45). Zipes proposes that the oral version “appear[s] to represent a peasant woman’s perspective” (48), and it portrays women and spinning in a far more empowering, positive light. Of the spinner in the oral version, Zipes writes, “With the help of another woman, she names her exploiter, who is carried away on a female utensil” (49); the dwarfed male “flies through the window on a cooking ladle. That is, he is banished by a utensil associated with women, who have united to defeat him” (49). Zipes agrees that the Grimms’ version, however, “undermines the value of spinning and the autonomy of the spinner.” “Here the miller’s daughter is totally at the mercy of men,” he writes, “In fact, her whole life is framed by men: her father the boaster, a king the oppressor, Rumpelstiltskin the blackmailer, and a messenger the savior. The only thing she seems capable of doing is giving birth to a baby” (49).

¹⁵ Indeed, Haase relates that when he read the tale to his daughter, pausing to allow her to guess at certain words in the story, she concluded the sentence, “You must spin all this into gold tonight. If you succeed, you shall become my ___” with “slave,” not “wife” (“Response and Responsibility” 239).

“Rumpelstiltskin,” the common courtship items, a necklace and a ring, are given *by* the spinning girl *to* the gnome. This reversal suggests that, in reality, premarital gifts merely serve as a male’s investment in anticipation of sexual return.¹⁶ The last “gift” is, of course, a child – the end desire of gnome and king alike.¹⁷

Not surprisingly, the dominant male, the king, wins this virility contest, and the impotent, frustrated, dwarf suffers complete emasculation and mockery before perishing in a violent expression of self-destructive rage at his thwarted desire. The ultimate degradation of the dwarfed male stems from his defeat by the Queen when she names him (see Figure 7). On the power of names and naming Tatar writes, “Knowing the name of your antagonist represents a form of control, a way of containing the power of the adversary and of having influence over his soul” (annotation 7, ABG 260). When Rumpelstiltskin first confidently penetrates the walls of the spinning room, he remarks to the crying, victimized girl, “Good evening, Little Miss Miller’s Daughter. Why are you in tears?” and when she explains her plight, he asks, “What will you give me if I do it for you?” (R 258). Not only does the spinning girl remain nameless in a tale that hinges on the power of names, but the diminutive man refers to her as her father’s daughter (possession). Even a dwarfed, ostracized male can confidently label the young woman and offer his services with his own best interest in mind (see Figure 8).¹⁸ Further, one could argue that his “escape clause” made out of “genuine

¹⁶ Similarly, in Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market,” Lizzie warns Laura, “Their offers should not charm us, / Their evil *gifts* would harm us” (emphasis mine, ll. 65-66), in reference to the fruits proffered by the goblin merchant men. In an attempt to attract Laura, one of the goblins also “[begins] to weave a crown” (l. 99) to offer her.

¹⁷ Jack Zipes likewise concludes that in the Grimms’ literary version of the tale, “The miller’s daughter cannot spin straw into gold, and there is not even any mention that she can spin. [...] She is reduced to reproduction and placed at the mercy of men” (“Spinning with Fate” 56). In other words, bodily production replaces manual production, and the once independent spinner finds herself in a dependent and highly vulnerable position.

¹⁸ In her annotated version, Heidi Anne Heiner notes that Rumpelstiltskin’s refusal to accept riches as a substitute for the child “implies that his intention was to win the baby from the beginning of his participation in

compassion” according to Tatar (annotation 6, ABG 260), appears instead to represent a self-confident declaration of his belief that surely a woman cannot overcome him, cannot exercise her power over his will. If Rumpelstiltskin were truly compassionate, one would expect him to find some pleasure in the queen’s success in naming him and saving her child, rather than the following violent reaction: “‘The devil told you that, the devil told you!’ the little man scream[s], and in his rage he stamp[s] his right foot so hard that it [goes] into the ground right up to his waist. Then in his fury he seize[s] his left foot with both hands and [tears] himself in two” (R 262). The power Rumpelstiltskin has over the queen is his name, which he cannot imagine losing to a woman, and yet he does. However, the queen merely triumphs over a dwarfed male, and with the help of a messenger, no less (R 260).¹⁹ Rumpelstiltskin’s self-destructive rage leaves her at the mercy of a greedy husband-king who still believes she has the ability to spin gold from straw. The vulnerable temporality of the spinner’s “triumphant” position is similar to Snow White’s return from death and the intransient, unnatural preservation of her beauty. In time, the husband-king will desire the products of a skill that the spinner does not possess, and Snow White’s prince may very well reject his revived beloved when her youthful beauty fades. As Elisabeth Bronfen remarks in *Over Her Dead Body*, the prince requested “not the displayed body but rather the entire display” (100) – coffin *and* preserved beauty.

The king, the dominant male, remains the only true victor, and, as Heidi Anne Heiner notes, the continuation of the patriarchy is assured: “A first born son would be the crown prince. Giving up the crown prince to the manikin would not be just a personal tragedy for the

the story. He was happy to accept the maid’s necklace and ring before, but he took those so he could reduce her to agreeing to the horrible arrangement they made previously” (annotation 29).

¹⁹ As Jack Zipes also notes, in the published version, the Grimms have replaced the spinner’s *female* helper with a *male* messenger, further removing any trace of feminine power and independence from their tale (“Spinning with Fate” 48).

Queen, but a possible disaster for her [husband's] kingdom which relies on progeny to avoid strife in the royal lineage" (annotation 27). The dwarfed male becomes the laughing stock of the entire court and even the plaything of the Queen as she teases him with two fake guesses at his name before identifying him correctly with the aid of her messenger's information (Tatar, *ABG* 257). Rumpelstiltskin, having reached the epitome of emasculation (losing his name, power, and desired progeny to a woman and a stronger man), is consequently destroyed by the awareness of his own inferiority.²⁰ The spinner-turned-Queen has spun for her life (thanks to her father and the greedy king), and then "won" marriage to the man who exploited her spinning fertility (which was only an illusion, after all). The "helper" (himself an exploiter as well) is no more, and the young woman finds herself entirely at the mercy of the dominant male, the full-fledged version of the possessive aggression manifested by Rumpelstiltskin.

The Grimms' "Snow White" and "Rumpelstiltskin" reveal opposite, yet related, ends of a spectrum of male-female interaction. At one end, we note feminine admiration and objectification by androgynous dwarfs and prince, and at the other extreme, feminine predation and violation by a sexualized dwarf and king. Rossetti, MacDonald, and Ewing, discussed in the following sections, similarly explore thwarted male aggression through their diminutive (but incessantly aggressive and angry) characters. However, unlike the Grimms' tales, in which the young woman must necessarily become the possession of the dominant male, these Victorian authors' revisions preclude the necessity of such a sacrifice.

²⁰ In his essay, "Fairy-Tale Allusions and Aphorisms," Wolfgang Mieder groups "Rumpelstiltskin" in the "anti-fairy tale category," because the tale reveals "that modern existence is not at all like a perfect fairy tale" (160). Citing a modern German aphorism translated, "What good does it do a person if he/she can spin straw into gold and still remains his/her whole life long a Rumpelstiltskin?" (160), Mieder uncovers the pervading view of this emasculated male as a failure. He associates Rumpelstiltskin with the dwarfed human condition, writing that "many of us play the role of Rumpelstiltskin throughout our lives, never quite attaining our full potential as social beings" (161). In her annotated "Rumpelstiltskin," Heidi Anne Heiner also cites Jane Yolen's intriguing interpretation of the tale as anti-Semitic (annotation 13): "Rumpelstiltskin is a medieval German story. This is an anti-Semitic tale. Little man, odd name, lives far away from the halls of power, is a moneychanger, and the old blood-rites canard (Yolen 2000, 288)."

Problematically, Rossetti prefers to omit the masculine altogether at the close of “Goblin Market.” MacDonald’s *Princess* books attempt to reeducate boys and to propose a more mutual, positive pattern for male-female maturational interaction. Lastly, in “Amelia and the Dwarfs,” Ewing works to enable the survival of the self-possessed woman beneath the superficially obedient one, leaving Amelia’s future (and the girl-reader’s) open to conjecture.

III. Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market”: Dwarfing, Defeating, and Banishing Men

In “Goblin Market” (1862) – a poem interpreted as everything from an allegory of Original Sin and redemption through Christ to a “feminist manifesto” (Knoepfmacher, VIC 321) – Christina Rossetti employs her goblin merchant men to caricature and dwarf an aggressive, destructive masculinity that she effectively defeats and banishes by the poem’s close.²¹ The masculine, in the form of “goblin men,” is a monstrous, threatening presence, bent on seducing and defiling innocent young girls. Not men, but not quite beasts (see Figure 9), these “queer brothers” are a disturbing interspecies mix representing an animalistic, aggressive masculinity that her two female protagonists must overcome. Problematically, the poem fails to offer a satisfactory alternative to the threat of perverse masculinity. Critics have interpreted Rossetti’s goblins as everything from agents of temptation recalling the serpent in the Garden of Eden, to caricatures of the exclusive Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, to

²¹ In another popular male-banishment fairy tale, Jean Ingelow’s *Mopsa the Fairy* (1869), the boy protagonist, Jack, assumes a protective, quasi-maternal role in watching over the young Mopsa. However, as Knoepfmacher summarizes, “A narrative that starts out with Jack as its ostensible hero, the patron of the still nameless fairy child he carries in his pocket, ends with her eminence as a grown-up visionary and with his abasement and exile” (VIC 280). By the tale’s close, Mopsa outgrows Jack, both physically and emotionally. The fairy novel ends with Mopsa banishing the boy from a feminine fantasy world – one not unlike the female enclaves reinstated by Rossetti at the close of “Goblin Market.” Ingelow, like Rossetti, “tries to reclaim the former mode [of storytelling] from boyish worshippers of the feminine” (Knoepfmacher, VIC 281).

representations of the prostitute-seeking men responsible for defiling the young women Rossetti helped through her work at Highgate Penitentiary.²² Regardless of their actual inspiration – if Rossetti had just one particular significance in mind – their threatening, aggressive masculinity and hybrid nature between the human and the animal are as indisputable as the fact that these goblin men represent Rossetti’s sole depiction of the male sex in this work. The key to analyzing Rossetti’s construction of masculinity in “Goblin Market” hinges on a tendency towards violent, sexual aggression that the author seems to have feared in *all* men.

However, the gluttonous fruit vendors in “Goblin Market,” whether symbols of spiritual fallenness or dangerous sexuality, represent a temptation to which both of Rossetti’s female protagonists respond with desire. Whether Rossetti wishes Lizzie and Laura to triumph over the sinful temptations of the flesh, or of worldliness, or the desire for level footing with exclusive, all male cliques like the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the author, like her protagonists, is deeply, internally conflicted. This duality of feeling resounds throughout Rossetti’s poetical works, and the goblins may even represent her misgivings about worldliness in life on earth, as her poem “The World” seems to suggest:

By day she woos me to the outer air,
 Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety:
 But thro’ the night, a beast she grins at me,
 A very monster void of love and prayer.
 By day she stands a lie: by night she stands
 In all the naked horror of the truth
 With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands (ll. 5-11).

In dialogue with “Goblin Market,” this poem, too, contains alluring “Ripe fruits” and “full satiety” (l. 6), as well as the frighteningly aggressive “clawed and clutching hands” (l. 11)

²² As will be discussed shortly, Jan Marsh notes Rossetti’s volunteer work aiding victims of the prostitution market at the St. Mary Magdalene Penitentiary in Highgate, beginning in 1859 (218-219).

present in so much of Rossetti's darker poetry. Her use of the feminine here suggests that the monster is something she fears within her self; the wicked goblin men have tainted the speaker, and their evil has become feminized as she recognizes sinful worldliness lurking within her own person. Like Lizzie, whose veiled blushes are attempts to hide evidence of temptation and desire, "By day she stands a lie" (l. 9), concealing her worldliness. At night, alone and unable to escape, however, "she stands / In all the naked horror of the truth" (ll. 9-10). Perhaps by gendering these fears *masculine* in "Goblin Market," the author felt more capable to remove them from herself. Thus, Rossetti allows her female protagonists to defeat this worldliness (externalized in the form of goblin men), and to discover in sisterhood the strength to transcend sinful temporality.

Even more overtly than in Ewing's "Amelia and the Dwarfs," with its subtle portrayal of the Victorian marriage market, in "Goblin Market," Rossetti literally constructs a marketplace ruled by men and undeniably threatening to young women who "[hear] the goblin cry" (l. 2) both "Morning and evening" (l. 1). One notes an apprehension of the night – "Twilight is not good for maidens" (l. 144) – as well as a precedent of female violation: "Do you not remember Jeanie," Lizzie asks her sister, and later recollects the young woman "who for joys brides hope to have / Fell sick and died / In her gay prime" (ll 314-316). The two most obvious sources of inspiration for this goblin-run trade are the prostitution market and the literary market. Neither was a particularly friendly place for aspiring young women. In her introductory notes to Rossetti's *Maude*, Elaine Showalter highlights the fact that although Christina grew up in a literary and artistic family, "Victorian sisters and Victorian brothers [...] lived in very different worlds" (x). She further remarks that even "Rossetti's connection with the brotherhood of the Pre-Raphaelites was defined in conventional feminine terms" (xi).

In other words, she was not considered an equal among the brothers, but rather a subject for painting or a potential wife. Knoepfmacher views Rossetti's "Goblin Market" as being "as much a narrative of female growth as Jean Ingelow's *Mopsa the Fairy*," and notes that "Laura, like Ingelow's Queen Mopsa, stands for the awareness reached and the authority assumed by a writer who must overcome her dependence on male precedents" (VIC 324). At the close of "Goblin Market," Knoepfmacher concludes, "The goblin music has been dissipated, banished, and replaced by a more controlled voice. And that voice is at last [Rossetti's] very own" (VIC 324).

In reference to the other likely marketplace Rossetti portrays, Jan Marsh cites the author's volunteer work aiding victims of the prostitution market at the St. Mary Magdalene Penitentiary in Highgate, beginning in 1859. Her work at the Penitentiary involved "supervising young prostitutes who wished to relinquish a life of shame" (Marsh 218-219), and "Goblin Market" seems to reflect her experiences there.²³ The goblin merchant men reveal base intentions that are even more sexually charged and amoral than those of Ewing's dwarfs. Rossetti depicts them as

Leering at each other,
 Brother with queer brother;
 Signalling each other,
 Brother with sly brother (ll. 93-96),

As we shall note with the dwarfs Amelia faces, Rossetti's "little men" (l. 55) also come with compensatory accoutrements, their tantalizing fruits and platters, which are so cumbersome that the creatures scarcely manage these manifestations of their prideful masculinity. Using

²³ In his essay, "Re-reading Sisterhood in Christina Rossetti's 'Noble Sisters' and 'Sister Maude,'" however, Scott Rogers cites recent scholarship arguing that Rossetti actually may have composed "Goblin Market" (written in April of 1859) just before beginning work at Highgate (1860). He contrasts the hopefulness of "Goblin Market" with poems by the author from 1860. "By this date," Rogers writes, "Rossetti had gained sufficient experience to recognize that the work of reclamation was not always as successful as she had imagined in 'Goblin Market'" (865).

such verbs as “hauls,” “bears,” and “lugs” (ll. 56-8), Rossetti suggests that the goblin men’s reliance on oversized offerings to attract young women stems from deficiencies elsewhere. Having no other modes of luring females, these grotesque men pander their massive, tantalizing fruits: “One *reared* his plate; [...] One *heaved* the golden weight / Of dish and fruit to offer her” (emphasis mine, ll. 98, 102-3). The upward motion of the heaving and rearing, moreover, suggests anticipatory sexual arousal.²⁴

In the characters of Laura and Lizzie, Rossetti establishes the tension between desire and restraint, navigating the benefits and dangers of innocence and experience in the face of goblin men. The two sisters, with their nearly interchangeable names and identical appearance (Knoepflmacher, VIC 317), may even represent one woman’s internal conflict over temptation. On the one hand, Rossetti presents Laura, who “rear[s] her glossy head, / And whisper[s] like the restless brook” (ll. 52-53); and, to counterbalance her, she creates Lizzie, who “cover[s] up her eyes, / Cover[s] close lest they should look” (ll. 50-51). Pleasure, in the form of sensuous, ripe fruits, requires interaction with the goblin merchant men, and “Curious Laura [chooses] to linger / Wondering at each merchant man” (ll. 69-70), while her sister, Lizzie, “thrust[s] a dimpled finger / In each ear, shut[s] eyes and [runs]” (ll. 67-68). The goblin merchant men tempt Laura, “sound[ing] kind and full of loves” (ll. 79), who in turn, “stretch[es] her gleaming neck / [...] / Like a vessel at the launch / *When its last restraint is gone*” (emphasis mine, ll. 81, 85-86). Like her sister later, however, Laura attempts to interact with the goblin men on her own terms, economically speaking. She apologizes, confessing, “Good folk, I have no coin; / To take were to purloin” (ll. 116-7), which indicates her

²⁴ Interestingly, the globular nature of the fruits recalls the *female* body rather than the male, and Hassett terms Laura’s “sucking” of the goblin fruits (ll. 134-135) as “infantile erotic” (18); Rossetti combines the image of a nursing child with that of adult sexual desire. And when Lizzie procures the goblin fruit juices to heal her sister, she becomes the fruit, with Laura partaking of her body: “Eat me, drink me, love me; / Laura, make much of me” (ll. 471-472).

intentions to participate in their market as an independent consumer. The goblin men, however, are quick to reveal their desire for her *body*, not her money. Their intentions may be slightly displaced by the suggestion, “Buy from us *with a golden curl*” (emphasis mine, l. 125), but, as Jan Marsh reveals, “Laura’s payment for the fruits with a golden curl is traditionally sexual” (234). In other words, the woman becomes the commodity, denied the ability to participate in the marketplace as a self-possessed consumer. Lulled into trusting the goblin men by their “tones as smooth as honey” (ll. 108), Laura agrees to clip a golden curl (see Figure 10) and “drop[s] a tear more rare than pearl” (l. 127), presumably in recognition of the sacrifice of her virginity. By paying with her body, Laura becomes a vulnerable participant in an uneven and self-destructive exchange.²⁵ One wonders at Rossetti’s repetition of the parenthetical line in reference to the goblin fruits, “Men sell not such in any town” (ll. 101, 556); is she, in fact, implying precisely the opposite? Does she subtly suggest that men *are* responsible for tempting and defiling young women? The mob mentality with which the goblin men “all together” (l. 124) assure Laura, “You have much gold upon your head, / [...] / Buy from us with a golden curl” (ll. 123, 125), certainly suggests a scheming, dangerous masculinity, united by the common goal of acquiring Laura’s hair and, by extension, her body.

Moreover, the pleasure with which she “suck[s] and suck[s] and suck[s] the more / Fruits which that unknown orchard bore” (ll. 134-135) quickly turns disastrous when she becomes addicted to the pleasurable experience, yet “never [catches] again the goblin cry” (l.

²⁵ Helsinger discusses this unbalanced economy as well in her essay, “Consumer Power and the Utopia of Desire: Christina Rossetti’s ‘Goblin Market.’” She makes an interesting contrast between Marx’s view of economy and Rossetti’s, writing, “Like Christina Rossetti a few years later, Marx uses the buying and selling of sexual pleasure to stand for all markets. But in his version of the exchange there is no place for women as either buyers or sellers. Like money, women represent a power properly belonging to masculinity and are the objects, not the agents, of the exchange” (906). This corresponds precisely with the goblin men’s interactions with both sisters.

272). It appears that, once “undone” (l. 482) and “ruined” (l. 483), Laura no longer attracts the goblin men; it is the conquest of her virginity that stimulates masculine desire. Once violated, Laura becomes unattractive, and thus ceases to hear the cries of goblin men; they have lost interest in her and shift their attention to her virginal sister. Problematic, too, as we will discuss in Lizzie’s encounter with the goblins, is the fact that feminine purity only further incites masculine desire and aggression. Women are desired for their purity, consequently defiled, and then abandoned, destined to become victims of an indisputable double standard. Rossetti depicts the resultant disastrous and self-destructive hunger as Laura, denied the goblin wares, “[sits] up in a passionate yearning, / And gnashe[s] her teeth for balked desire, and [weeps] / As if her heart [will] break” (ll. 266-268). Further, Rossetti conveys the consequences of tasting the goblin fruit through images of ageing and sterility: Laura’s “hair [grows] thin and grey” (l. 277), and when she attempts to raise her own goblin fruits, the ruined woman “Watch[es] for a waxing shoot, / But there comes none” (ll. 284-285). In a sexually suggestive depiction of the ungerminated seed, Rossetti writes, “It never saw the sun, / It never felt the trickling moisture run” (ll. 286-287); pleasure, sexual or otherwise, has ended for the violated Laura, leaving only lifeless frigidity and infertility in its wake.

Conversely, Lizzie’s encounter with the goblin men – an effort to procure their fruits in order to save her sister – reveals the violent nature of the *rejected* (dwarfed) male. Jan Marsh correctly differentiates, “the goblin assault on Laura is a seduction, while that on Lizzie is attempted rape” (233), and Rossetti expresses her fear of the fate of women in the hands of men when she describes the two sleeping sisters (see Figure 11) as “two wands of ivory / *Tipped with gold for awful kings*” (emphasis mine, ll. 190-191). When Lizzie “tosse[s] them her penny” (l. 367), instructing, “Give me much and many” (l. 365), she enters into their

scheme on her own terms; she becomes an active participant in the reversal of a market in which women are the *commodity*, and men the *consumers*. Rossetti allows her female protagonist to subtly mock the dwarfed merchant men, unaccustomed to feminine intelligence and noncompliance with their traps. However, Lizzie's attempt to pay the goblin men for their services, rather than sell herself (or her hair) for mere fruits, provokes violent anger and aggression. When the goblin men refuse to give her fruits without assurance of her bodily company, pleading, "Sit down and feast with us, / Be welcome guest with us, / Cheer you and *rest with us*" (emphasis mine, ll. 380-382), Lizzie, still attempting to interact on equal footing as a legitimate, paying customer, instructs,

If you will not give me any
Of your fruits tho' much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee (ll. 386-389).

However, as Rossetti demonstrates, feminine self-assertion in a masculine market (whether a fruit market, a prostitution market, or a literary market) provokes violent territorial defensiveness and vicious attacks on feminine purity. The goblins

[begin] to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling (ll. 390-393).

Not only do they call her "proud, / Cross-grained, [and] uncivil" (ll. 394-395) for refusing to fulfill their fantasies in the manner of her sister, but "Their tones [wax] loud, / Their looks [are] evil" (ll. 396-397).

The scene quickly transforms into one of attempted rape (see Figure 12) as the goblins attack Lizzie in an animalistic manner, "Claw[ing] with their nails, / Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking" (ll. 401-402). The little men force themselves upon Lizzie in a violent,

explicitly sexual manner: they “[Tear] her gown and [soil] her stocking, / [Twitch] her hair out by the roots, / [Stamp] upon her tender feet” (ll. 403-405), and “[hold] her hands and [squeeze] their fruits / Against her mouth to make her eat” (ll. 406-407). Rossetti’s description of Lizzie’s struggle with the goblin men evokes troubling images of sexual conquest, battle, and the spoils of victory. The violent attack, however, only further illuminates Lizzie’s purity. Once, she “veiled her blushes” (l. 35), but in the ensuing onslaught, purer and more martyr-like than ever,

White and golden Lizzie [stands],
 Like a lily in a flood, [...]
 Like a royal virgin town²⁶
 Topped with gilded dome and spire
 Close beleagued by a fleet
 Mad to tug her standard down (ll. 408-409, 419-421).

Lizzie’s self-controlled, defensive silence against the goblins’ attempted rape, “Lest they should cram a mouthful in” (l. 432), is particularly disturbing, although perhaps learned from the fate of women like Jeanie. Feminine silence becomes a form of protection against the aggression of dwarfed men, and yet this defense mechanism is repressive and disabling as well. A silent woman, after all, cannot serve as an active participant in the marketplace, literary or otherwise.

It is through this silent, patient resistance amidst insupportable conditions that Rossetti enables her protagonist to triumph over and ultimately banish goblin men; silence becomes a tool for subversion. Lips tightly sealed against their pressing fruits, Lizzie “laugh[s] in heart

²⁶ Rossetti’s description of the goblin attack on Lizzie also mixes sexual imagery with religious fervor, echoing John Donne’s sonnet, “Batter my heart three-person’d God...” Donne’s speaker, “like a usurpt town, to another due” (l. 5), finds that “Reason your viceroy in me, me should defend, / But is captv’d, and proves weak or untrue” (ll. 7-8). Likewise, Lizzie, “a virgin town,” is besieged by “a fleet” of merchant men, as she acts on behalf of her sister (or other half) who went astray and requires powerful intervention. Donne’s expression of the speaker’s desire for God to rape or “ravish” him, thereby making him “chaste” (l. 14), raises the possibility that Rossetti – through the torments of the malicious goblin men and the exorcismic nature of their juices – is acting out her own cleansing fantasy in the combined persons of Lizzie and Laura, that she is purging her own inescapable sense of sin.

to feel the drip / Of juice that syrup[s] all her face” (ll. 433-444), until “At last the evil people / Worn out by her resistance / [Fling] back her penny” (ll. 437-439), and disappear dejectedly with their uneaten fruits. Rossetti presents Lizzie as suffering, but triumphant: she “hear[s] her penny jingle / Bouncing in her purse, – / Its bounce [is] music to her ear” (ll. 452-454). Her “inward laughter” (l. 463) indicates a secretive, self-possessed mockery of aggressive, thwarted masculinity; she has wrested the pleasurable fruit juices from the goblin men without herself falling under their destructive spell.

Ewing, as we shall see, allows her female protagonist a magical four-leaved clover escape from marriage to a (dwarfed) man, and so too does Rossetti free her heroines from the prying, possessive fingers of goblin men, substituting a sister-mediated Eucharistic redemption scene and the reinstatement of a secured feminine domain. The problematic nature of this “solution” suggests that the author herself is grappling with an inner dividedness over issues sexual *and* spiritual, her fears in both realms associated with a frightening masculinity. Lizzie’s curing of her sister’s ailment by way of the procured goblin juices reveals an ambiguous treatment of feminine experience. Lizzie’s innocence does not spare her the vicious attacks of goblin men, and when she brings Laura the juices as an antidote to her suffering, one wonders if pleasure is not the enemy here, but rather the frightening, aggressive masculinity that proffers such temptations only to seduce, defile, and destroy. Can Rossetti envision a pleasurable encounter with the masculine? It would appear not.

When Lizzie transports the male juices back to her sister to cure her, Knoepfmacher rightly notes, “Though secreted by her male attackers, the spilled ‘Goblin pulp and goblin dew’ have become female fluids” (VIC 318), as evidenced by Lizzie’s renaming them “my juices” (l. 468). The result is that Rossetti has created a world where, “By offering herself as a

vessel for the products of goblins [...], Lizzie can remove her sister's transgression, and, at the same time, make the male sex seem utterly redundant" (VIC 318). In this sense, Lizzie removes the pleasurable juices from the threatening speakers of "sugar-baited words" (l. 234), thus taking from these violent, diminutive men their sole means of attracting and manipulating women. Bestowing upon her self the power of the goblin men's fruits, Lizzie transcends the dwarfed goblins' attempted rape, and transforms its foul products into the sacrificial offerings of sisterly affection, resulting in what Hassett aptly deems "an uninhibited consummation scene in which Laura is transported with pleasure and pain" (23).²⁷ The ejaculatory "juice that syrriped all her face" (l. 434, Marsh 233) becomes a restorative feminine essence as Lizzie urges Laura,

Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me (ll. 468-472).

In her chapter, "Harmonizing *Goblin Market and Other Poems*," Mary Arsenau also notes the contradictory nature of the goblin fruit juices, calling them "disturbingly ambiguous and difficult to interpret, for Lizzie deals with the goblin men and carries home not poison, but an antidote" (125). She proceeds to note the "Eucharistic" nature of the appropriated fluids, rightly concluding that, "Like Christ, Lizzie redeems the fallen, and brings 'Life out of death' (l. 524)" (128). The violent reaction produced by these antidotal goblin juices is both orgasmic and exorcismic, as "Shaking with anguish fear, and pain, / [Laura] kisse[s] and kisse[s] her with a hungry mouth" (ll. 491-492), and yet "Writhing as one possessed she

²⁷ In *Christina Rossetti and Illustration: A Publishing History*, Kooistra cites *Playboy* magazine's attraction to this female-female interaction, noting, "It was Hefner's *Playboy* that first circulated the new, sexy Christina for a middle-class audience of 'hip' men who liked their erotica laced with a certain amount of cultural erudition" (241).

leap[s] and [sings], / Rent[s] all her robe, and [wrings] / Her hands in lamentable haste” (ll. 496-498). The juices quickly become “wormwood to her tongue” (l. 494) as she transcends their tempting power; “Swift fire spread[s] through her veins, knock[s] at her heart” (l. 507).²⁸ However, Hassett remarks that the scene is “undeniably beautiful” (27) as well. She writes, “Laura may be suffering here, but Rossetti is riding the euphoria of language. Laura’s is a consummation to be wished and her poet is rapturous as she works the verbal magic that wrests triumph from calamity” (27-28). One might also say that Christina constructs a goblin-mediated rape fantasy in order to purge sin and transcend the temporal, corrupt goblin Man in favor of the spiritual, chaste Christ. Arsenau reminds the reader that in Christina Rossetti’s work, “things of nature can be good or evil, depending on the inner attitude with which people greet them” (125); perhaps the fruits themselves are good, and merely have fallen into degenerate goblin hands. When proffered with restorative, sisterly love, they inflict the necessary didactic lesson, enabling Laura to see her error in trusting goblin men, and to share her experience with future generations.

At the close of “Goblin Market,” Rossetti relegates men to a circumferential position at best, reestablishing a secure and inpregnable feminine core that unites mothers and daughters in the bonds of sisterhood. Critic Scott Rogers similarly concludes, “Rossetti seems to advocate women’s collective activity and friendship, insisting that women’s communities are not only viable, but also that the instabilities that emerge within them are the direct result of male forces working outside the female community” (860). Unable to envision a healthy male-female courtship and marriage story, Rossetti instead glosses over the process by which the sisters become wives and mothers, writing merely of a time “Afterwards when both were

²⁸ Again, one notes the reference to Donne’s sonnet: “Batter my heart, three-person’d God; for you / As yet but *knock*, breathe, shine, and seek to mend; / That I may rise, and stand, o’erthrow me...” (emphasis mine, ll. 1-3).

wives / With children of their own” (ll. 544-545). Their husbands are suggested only by the presence of children (Knoepfmacher, VIC 314), all of whom appear to be girls. Jeanie’s admonitory tale failed to protect either sister from dealings with goblin men, and Laura’s final words to their daughters, “joining hands to little hands” (l. 560), suggest that these girls, too, must come to understand the dangers of goblin men through their own experience. Rather than pass on her sister’s early warning, “Their offers should not charm us, / Their evil gifts would harm us” (ll. 65-66), Laura stresses that “there is no friend like a sister / [...] / To strengthen whilst one stands” (ll. 562, 567).²⁹ Unable, and perhaps unwilling, to protect their daughters from experience, Laura conveys the strength of sisters to “fetch one if one goes astray” (l. 565). Instead of condemning experience, she reveals its antidote – sisterhood. If Rossetti’s ending appears problematically exclusive, it is not because women are unwilling to enter the marketplace, but rather because men exercise dangerous control over the fruits, preventing more positive male-female interaction. “In the utopian conclusion of her poem,” Helsinger reflects, “the female protagonists undo the erasure with which a male market, like male texts on the market, threatens their existence. The poem becomes a fantasy of consumer power, where the empowered consumer is a woman” (907).

²⁹ Here, too, one notes a possible reference to Donne’s lines, “That I may rise, and *stand*, o’erthrow me and bend / Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new” (emphasis mine, ll. 3-4). It seems likely that Rossetti, too, would ask God to exercise force, reasoning along with Donne, “for I / Except you enthrall me, never shall be free, / Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me” (ll. 12-14).

IV. George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*: Masculinity as Immaturity

For George MacDonald, the dwarfed male symbolizes an immature, faithless, and aggressive masculinity – a man who denies the feminine “childlike” within himself. As he remarks in “The Fantastic Imagination,” an essay on fairy tales, “He who will be a man, and will not be a child, must – he cannot help himself – become a little man, that is, a dwarf. He will, however, need no consolation, for he is sure to think himself a very large creature indeed” (10). And in *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), his hard-headed, overly-rational goblins attempt to capture the Princess Irene, symbolic of youth and a threatened, mystical spirituality.

Like Rossetti's merchant men, MacDonald's goblins initially appear to pose a greater threat to *women*. Furthermore, the danger similarly increases with nightfall, and the nurse's terror of shadows echoes Lizzie's warning to her sister, “Twilight is not good for maidens” (l. 144). When Lottie and Irene have stayed out too late one evening, “the shadow of a great mountain peak” startles the nurse. Shaking with fear, she takes off running without explanation (see Figure 13), and merely warns Irene, “We must not be out a moment longer” (PG 40). However, Irene, like Laura, is determined to “look” despite her nurse's admonitions. Her repeated cry, “Look, look, Lottie!” (PG 41), parallels Laura's interest in the goblin merchant men: “Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie, / Down the glen tramp little men” (ll. 54-55). MacDonald's goblin creatures similarly mock the frightened nurse's attempts to ignore them, echoing the merchant men's laughter when Lizzie “[begins] to listen and look” (l. 328). The princess asks Lottie, “Who's that laughing at me?” and when the nurse responds, “Nobody, child,” MacDonald writes, “But that instant there came a burst of coarse tittering from

somewhere near, and a hoarse, indistinct voice that seemed to say, ‘Lies! lies! lies!’” (PG 41).³⁰ MacDonald, like Rossetti, seems to support honesty with children and value experience over sheltering them from the knowledge of potential dangers. In the same way that Laura, despite the warning-story of Jeanie, must encounter the goblin men’s tainted wares, so too does MacDonald’s narrative argue against the king and his servants for their foolish fearfulness – for keeping the princess oblivious to the threat of goblin designs. After Irene’s first visit to her great-great-grandmother, Lottie scolds the child for her long absence, saying, “I began to be afraid –” but then rethinks revealing the danger: “Perhaps I will tell you another day” (PG 28). Had Lottie been honest with her charge, Irene might have listened to her out on the mountain, instead of “[begging] her to go on just a little farther and a little farther” (PG 39). “Irene was not in the least frightened,” MacDonald writes, “not knowing anything to be frightened at” (PG 40), for “the servants all had strict orders never to mention the goblins to her” (PG 42). This ignorant, uninformed lack of fear, however, is not something that MacDonald condones. Rather, his goblins, like Rossetti’s, represent a necessary threat that one must acknowledge and experience *before* defying and transcending. Lottie’s fearful attempt to run from the goblins and elude a danger that she refuses to acknowledge to her young charge is as ineffective and problematic as Lizzie’s covering of her eyes and ears in “Goblin Market” (ll. 67-68).

Lottie’s foolishness on the mountain allows MacDonald to sweep in with his heroic male protagonist, Curdie (see Figures 14 and 15), who “[is] not a miner only, but a prince as well” (PG 218), and possesses the bravery, strength, and logical thinking that the nurse lacks.

³⁰ A more recent example of this call for truth in the stories we tell our children is found in Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy. Dr. Mary Malone receives the following instructions from a ghost regarding how to best help Lyra and Will: “Tell them stories. They need the truth. You must tell them true stories, and everything will be well. Just tell them stories” (*The Amber Spyglass* 432). MacDonald would certainly agree.

Whereas Lootie, in a flustered state of complete helplessness, cries out, “We are lost, lost!” (PG 42), still trying to run from imminent danger, Curdie bursts onto the scene with his aggressive, masculine rhymes and fearless confidence:

Ring! dod! bang!
Go the hammers' clang!
Hit and turn and bore!
Whizz and puff and roar! (PG 43).

However, Curdie (rational without faith) and Lootie (irrationally imaginative and fearful) are scarcely better than the goblins; imagination must check reason and vice versa. Irene braves the goblins so that her divine great-great-grandmother may test her faith; Curdie, on the other hand, must be *rescued* from the rationalistic goblin men and the threat of his own disbelief. Strict rationality, like utter irrationality, fosters intellectual and spiritual immaturity; it creates “dwarfed” men (see Figures 16-18). Fearfully ignorant, Lootie angrily chides the young miner boy for mentioning the goblins in front of the princess, for the very word “goblin” has taboo status among the king’s servants. The nurse foolishly believes that if no one speaks of the goblins, the princess may somehow remain safe. Curdie, however, instructs Lootie, “If you’re not afraid of them, they’re afraid of you” (PG 45). When he corrects her instinct to run, saying, “That’s the worst thing you can do. [...] And if you run now, they will be after you in a moment” (PG 47), Curdie undermines the nurse’s irrational, surrogate-maternal authority. Out of fear, the king and his servants have unwisely denied Irene knowledge of the perverse masculinity that surrounds her, whereas Curdie uninhibitedly reveals the goblins’ presence. For both MacDonald and Rossetti, failure to acknowledge the threat of goblins only increases the danger they pose by ignoring the reality of the situation.³¹

³¹ J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series is the best current example of the dangers of fearfully blanketing evil manifestations, like Lord Voldemort, with euphemistic terms, such as “You-Know-Who” (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, 55) or “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named” (85). When Harry tries to call Voldemort “You-Know-

Although MacDonald writes that his “strange race of beings” (PG 11) are “troublesome to all, but to the little princess dangerous” (*The Princess and Curdie* 6), the goblins pose the greatest threat to Curdie. At the beginning of the sequel novel, the miner boy “[is] getting rather stupid – one of the chief signs of which [is] that he believe[s] less and less in things he [has] never seen” (PC 12). Like the rationalistic goblins, he suffers from disbelief, first noted when he considers the princess’ story of her great-great-grandmother’s string “nonsense” in *The Princess and the Goblin* (177). When Princess Irene saves him from the goblins’ underground lair, she represents faith and the imagination rescuing humankind – specifically *mankind* – from godless rationalism and immature, aggressive masculinity. The arrogant rationality of the goblins signifies for MacDonald a dwarfed, unimaginative intelligence. Along with the great-great-grandmother, the princess represents a higher wisdom that incorporates both faith *and* intellect.³² MacDonald appears to identify spirituality as a more inherently *feminine* quality, a tendency which theologian Rosemary Reuther classifies as “romantic feminism,” the idealization of women as “expressions of a lost self, suppressed by alienated rationality” (44). He does believe, however, that men can and must reconnect with this “lost, better self” (Reuther 44). Rather than infantilizing feminine spirituality by separating faith from intelligence, MacDonald presents spirituality and wisdom as requiring a

Who” after battling him at the end of the first book, Dumbledore corrects the young wizard, saying, “Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself” (298). Likewise, MacDonald’s narrator comments on Irene’s foolish decision to run up the mountain to escape the goblin creature, musing, “but that is the way fear serves us: it always sides with the thing we are afraid of” (PG 116).

³² In the sequel novel, Curdie asks the divine great-great-grandmother, “could you not give me some sign, or tell me something about you that never changes – or some other way to know you, or thing to know you by?” (PC 58). She responds, “No, Curdie; that would keep you from knowing me. You must know me in quite another way from that. [...] It would be to know the sign of me – not to know me myself. It would be no better than if I were to take this emerald out of my crown and give it to you to take home with you, and you were to call it me, and talk to it as if it heard and saw and loved you. [...] No; you must do what you can to know me, and if you do, you will” (PC 58).

higher, more mature degree of intellect.³³ This concept is similar to the Romantic John Keats' idea of "Negative Capability," or the state when "a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (quoted by Armstrong 347). In *A History of God*, Karen Armstrong posits that "a God who cannot appeal to the imagination is in trouble" (309), and it would appear that MacDonald's work represents an awareness of this threat to spirituality, as well as an attempt to salvage religious experience through the re-education of excessively rationalistic boys in particular.³⁴

At the start of his narrative, MacDonald establishes the goblins' connection to the human, and he uses these fantastic creatures to illustrate the dangers of excessive rationalism and lack of imagination. "Now in these mountains lived a strange race of beings," he begins, and explains, "There was a legend current in the country that at one time they lived above ground, and were very like other people" (PG 11). The reader is meant to associate these goblins with degenerate humanity, and by dwarfing them, MacDonald mocks their self-important sense of superiority to their above-ground relatives. In a parody of "enlightened," rational civilization, he reveals that "as they grew mis-shapen in body, they had grown in knowledge and cleverness, and now were able to do things no mortal could see the possibility of" (PG 12). The goblins will later make such statements as, "The goblin's glory is his head" (PG 63), and, "What a distinction it is to provide our own light, instead of being dependent on a thing hung in the air" (PG 71). Delighting in the dwarfed male's need to assert himself and

³³ "A genuine work" (like a good fairy tale), MacDonald writes, "must mean many things; the truer its art, the more things it will mean" ("The Fantastic Imagination" 7). In other words, MacDonald displays this same concept of wisdom combining intellect *and* imagination in the very construction of the tales through which he conveys this message. If readers differ in their interpretations of his fairy tales, he proposes, "That may be a higher operation of your intellect than the mere reading of mine out of it: your meaning may be superior to mine" (7).

³⁴ As Jack Zipes also remarks in the introduction to *Victorian Fairy Tales: The Revolt of the Fairies and the Elves*, "the return of the magic realm of the fairies and elves was viewed by the Romantics and many early Victorians as a necessary move to oppose the growing alienation in the public sphere due to industrialization and regimentation in the private sphere" (xv).

compensate for his smallness, MacDonald has a member of the goblin court relate “the self-evident fact that we excel them [the humans] as far in mental ability as they excel us in stature” (PG 77-78) (see Figure 19). Curdie’s mother similarly remarks of the goblins, “[They] think so much of themselves! [...] Small creatures always do. The bantam is the proudest cock in my little yard” (PG 209).³⁵ When Curdie stumbles into the goblin king’s residence (see Figures 20 and 21), the threatened monarch “[draws] himself up to his full height of four feet” and “spread[s] himself to his full breadth of three and a half” (PG 150), in the manner of Lewis Carroll’s indignant caterpillar (see Figure 22).³⁶ Curdie’s presence in his home poses a threat to the goblin king’s pride, and in an attempt to reassert his dominance, he “plant[s] himself with outspread feet before [Curdie], and [says] with dignity- ‘Pray what right have you in my palace?’” (PG 150). The goblin king, typifying MacDonald’s dwarfed man, clearly “think[s] himself a very large creature indeed” (FI 10).³⁷

³⁵ In *We and the World: A Book for Boys*, Juliana Horatia Ewing similarly mocks the power complexes of men of short stature. The narrator Jack explains his nickname for the rooster and hens he owns (“the Major and his wives”) as a reference to “a certain little gentleman who came to our church, a brewer by profession, and a major in the militia by choice, who was so small and strutted so much that to the insolent observation of boyhood he was ‘exactly like’ our new bantam cock” (WW 31). Not only does this diminutive man strut about and voluntarily assume a position of power in a masculine field of work outside his actual profession, but, not surprisingly, “height [has] a curious fascination for him.” After the death of his first wife, he had a tall obelisk built to mark the grave, and when his next wife died as well, “He erected a second obelisk, and it was taller than the first” (WW 31). The Major’s towering obelisks are as compensatory as the tall hats and long, pointed shoes worn by Ewing’s dwarfs, and the fact that these self-assertive structures mark the graves of his two dead wives adds a disturbing element of possessiveness as well. The male need for demonstrated power and authority is subtly mocked, and perhaps the book’s title itself makes a mockery of this masculine drive for greatness that in a woman would seem dangerously willful and perverse.

³⁶ When Alice confesses to the caterpillar, “Well, I should like to be a *little* larger, Sir, if you wouldn’t mind, [...] three inches is such a wretched height to be,” Carroll’s dwarfed male angrily responds, “‘It is a very good height indeed!’ rearing itself up as it [speaks]” to a height of “exactly three inches” (*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* 60).

³⁷ Similarly, the angry, petulant king in MacDonald’s “The Light Princess” requires steps to climb onto his throne, “For he was a little king with a great throne, like many other kings” (18). His throne is as much of a compensatory accessory as his crown and his sword, which he draws “when he [thinks] his dignity [is] in danger” (45). Again, when the dwarfed male feels his masculinity threatened, he resorts to wielding his phallic sword in angered, frustrated self-defense. The king’s flustered reaction is provoked by MacDonald’s boy-hero prince, who uses phrases like, “I will cork your big bottle,” and “I will put a stopper [...] in your leaky lake, grand monarch” (45) to explain that he has come to present himself as a sacrifice in order to salvage the vanishing body of water. Once the king realizes the “leaky lake” to which the boy actually refers, he “[puts] up his sword with great difficulty, it was so long” (45). Like Ewing’s dwarfs or Rossetti’s goblins, this diminutive

MacDonald's depiction of the goblin king's interaction with his wife – the only goblin undeniably represented as evil (see Figure 23) – further ridicules this minuscule monarch, and also presents a foil to the character of Mrs. Peterson. When the impotent goblin king remarks, "I think you might take off your shoes when you go to bed! They positively hurt me sometimes" (PG 162), the queen responds by apparently (and suggestively) stomping on her husband's weak place (his feet), evoking "a great roar from the king" (PG 162). Joseph Sigman discusses this dichotomy between the "nourishing" mother and the "devouring" mother in his essay, "The Diamond in the Ashes" (186). Like Mrs. Peterson, Irene's great-great-grandmother represents a "nourishing mother who fosters growth toward maturity and spiritual vision," whereas the goblin queen, who wants to feed Curdie to the animals or perhaps eat him herself, is a "devouring mother [...] who draws the personality backwards toward incapacity" (186). And it is she, not the goblin king, who turns on Curdie in the final battle, "Her face streaming with blood, and her eyes flashing green lightning through it" – who attacks him "with her mouth open and her teeth grinning like a tiger's" (PG 236). Although MacDonald is attempting to validate the "Wise Woman" personae (Willard 67) – exemplified by Mrs. Peterson, Queen Irene, and Princess Irene in their attempts to save Curdie from becoming a dwarfed man – he is also problematically polarizing the feminine.

In his depiction of the hard-headed goblins, however, MacDonald is, of course, ridiculing the non-belief into which he fears the increasingly "rational" (male) culture has fallen, a fault that critic Joseph Sigman identifies in Curdie as well. Sigman diagnoses MacDonald's adolescent boy protagonist with the same "self-destructive impulse [...] that threatens Victorian society: an overintensification of ego-consciousness leading to a

king who hates punning (22) and refuses to be "childlike" can scarcely manage the cumbersome manifestations of his masculine pride.

disassociation from the inner world and a tendency to trust only what can be seen” (187). Curdie’s age and gender are both critical factors influencing his crisis of faith. MacDonald, who consistently associates openness to faith and childlike innocence with *women*, has created in Curdie a youth on the precipice of young adulthood, and thereby treading dangerously close to the loss of faith the author identifies with physically grown (but intellectually and spiritually dwarfed) men. Whereas Victorian girls tend to remain closer to the maternal, home-center even as they grow older, boys emerge into a masculine world where “feminine” intuition and “blind” faith can subject one to ridicule or even danger.³⁸ Curdie, who spends increasing time in the mines as the novel progresses, stands in peril of losing touch with the “little heaven” (PG 104) his mother has created; he risks detachment from the “inner world” of faith that MacDonald consistently genders feminine.

In Curdie’s rhymes, one also notes the seeds of masculine aggression, as well as Irene’s (and her author’s) dislike for male violence. MacDonald’s princess responds, “Do you know, Curdie, I don’t quite like your song; it sounds to me rather rude” (PG 51), to which the young miner responds, “I never thought of that; it’s a way we have” (PG 51). By the sequel novel, however, MacDonald’s boy-hero has become still more aggressive and violent. Unlike the rough miners’ song that he sings “because [the goblins] don’t like it” (PG 51), his shooting of the pigeon at the beginning of the second *Princess* book is a disturbing act of senseless violence. MacDonald first describes the boy’s admiration of the “lovely being,” and then narrates the following unjustifiable act of aggression: “it was just bending its little legs to spring: that moment it fell on the path broken-winged and bleeding from Curdie’s cruel arrow” (PC 13). In *The Princess and Curdie*, MacDonald removes the ruse of goblin men and

³⁸ In the sequel novel, when Curdie attempts to argue that the miners may not fully understand the divine great-great-grandmother, whom they label as “an old hating witch, whose delight was to do mischief” (PC 40), the men react by “laughing and mocking” (PC 44).

makes overt his point that the degenerate goblins represent fallen humanity (masculinity in particular). Curdie stands in peril of becoming as bad as the miners with whom he works, who “[know] very little of the upper world,” and are “a mingled company – some good, some not so good, some rather bad – none of them so bad or so good as they might have been” (PC 11). As MacDonald remarks in *The Princess and Curdie*, the young miner “was gradually turning into a commonplace man” (12). Curdie is losing touch with the childlike, when, according to his author, “The boy should enclose and keep, as his life, the old child at the heart of him, and never let it go” (PC 13). His increasing masculinity represents not growth but regression: “There is this difference between the growth of some human beings and that of others,” MacDonald writes, “in the one case it is a continuous dying, and in the other a continuous resurrection” (PC 12). Similar to female Victorian fairy-tale authors seeking to resurrect their girl-protagonists from maturational deaths, MacDonald longs to salvage the childlike, spiritual center within Curdie, so that he will not become a dwarf.

In his essay, “The Fantastic Imagination,” George MacDonald reveals that he “[does] not write for children, but for the childlike, whether of five, or fifty, or seventy-five” (7). Ideally, “the childlike” transcends both gender and age, becoming a point of equality for humankind. Problematically, however, MacDonald’s girls and women appear more inherently “childlike” than his boys and men; as he informs his imaginary audience, “every little girl is a princess” (PG 9). Further, his female characters’ openness to imaginative (potentially illogical) thinking occasionally borders on the infantile and greatly differs from the noble heroism of his maturing boy characters. It is undeniable that Irene’s trial, which her grandmother describes as “not a very hard one, I hope” (PG 102), pales in comparison to Curdie’s trial and quest in *The Princess and Curdie*, which “will hurt [him] terribly” (PC

69).³⁹ For MacDonald, woman naturally resides closer to this ideal “childlike” state, which he conceives as a higher wisdom, a combination of intellect and the imagination. Her duty to man, then, is to guide him towards the childlike, so that he may become noble and good, a moral giant rather than “a little man, that is, a dwarf” (FI 10). The central conflict in *The Princess and Curdie* thus becomes the struggle between the childlike faith of Irene and the degenerate sinfulness of the goblin race over Curdie’s soul. C.S. Lewis tellingly refers to the two novels as “the Curdie books” (17), and as Joseph Sigman correctly asserts, “the ‘Princess’ books are about Curdie,” and “it is Curdie’s struggle with unbelief that comes to be the dramatic center” (187). It is Irene who wrests Curdie from the goblin underworld; MacDonald’s boy-protagonist thus avoids irretrievably losing touch with the childlike, and escapes becoming one of the author’s dwarfs. Curdie’s salvation also requires an acknowledgment of his sins and a sincere desire to change; to “Do better, grow better, and be better” (PC 28). C.S. Lewis writes that “[MacDonald] hopes, indeed, that all men will be saved; but that is because he hopes that all will repent” (20).

Curdie must move beyond his reliance on visual confirmation and rationality and learn to embrace a kind of spiritual wisdom; he must learn to have faith. Even as Irene guides him out of the mines following her grandmother’s string, Curdie remarks, “What nonsense the child talks!” (PG 177), unable to see the string or understand Irene’s explanation. She informs him that he “must believe without seeing” (PG 186), and yet even when the two arrive safely

³⁹ MacDonald is aware and relatively critical of unequal gender expectations in Victorian society, but he struggles to create girl characters that are as enabled as his boy characters. In “The Light Princess” MacDonald muses, “princes get away to follow their fortunes,” but princesses “are forced to marry before they have had a bit of fun” (32); however, he often relegates his female characters to a more feminine sphere. The author who “wish[es] our princesses got lost in a forest sometimes” (LP 32) does indeed allow Irene an adventurous descent into the mines, but her journey (with the aid of her great-great-grandmother’s string) appears less independent than Curdie’s cross-country quest. MacDonald seems unable to envision the necessity of a female transformative quest; for him, the feminine more closely reflects the ideal human condition. In her essay, “*Kore motifs in The Princess and the Goblin*,” critic Nancy-Lou Peterson further contrasts Irene’s “centripetal,” feminine world with Curdie’s “linear,” masculine world of quests and adventure in *The Princess and Curdie* (170).

outside the mountain, Curdie fails to see (believe in) Irene's grandmother. "I don't see any grandmother," he responds "rather gruffly" (PG 190) when the princess leads him to Queen Irene's room. Like the self-conscious dwarfed male, Curdie reacts defensively to Irene's story: "You're making a game of me, your royal Highness" (PG 191), he remarks, and patronizes her when he retorts, "I think you had better drop it, princess, and go down to the nursery, like a good girl" (PG 192). When he relates the story to his parents, however, Curdie's mother remarks, "You confess, my boy, [...] there is something about the whole affair you do not understand?" (PG, 200),⁴⁰ and muses, "Perhaps some people can see things other people can't see, Curdie" (PG 202). She then proceeds to share her own experience of the unknown, further validating MacDonald's depiction of feminine wisdom.

Juxtaposed to MacDonald's feminine models of pristine faith are the subterranean goblins, whose caverns literally threaten to "undermine" the world above. Critic Michael Mendelson identifies MacDonald's goblins as representing "the irrational, sublimated malformations of the unconscious working to undermine (literally) the stability of the ego and to compromise innocence (in the person of the princess Irene)" (44). Of both the male and the female sexes, these aggressive, scheming creatures nevertheless display the most negative qualities that MacDonald fears lurking within *men*, just as his exemplary female characters model the goodness and imaginative wisdom he lauds as the most positive and "natural" aspects of the *feminine*.⁴¹ The goblin prince, Harelip, deserves particular attention as he stands

⁴⁰ Similarly, Tangle, the girl-protagonist in "The Golden Key," watches the Old Man of the Earth, a boy child, playing with colorful balls and senses "there [is] something in her knowledge which [is] not in her understanding. For she [knows] there must be an infinite meaning in the change and sequence of individual forms of the figures into which the child [arranges] the balls, [...] but what it all [means] she [cannot] tell" (139).

⁴¹ Princess Irene and Mrs. Peterson, like Queen Irene, perhaps typify John Ruskin's conception of woman's "majestic peace" and "that yet more majestic childishness" (80), as expressed in *Sesame and Lilies*. Ruskin writes that woman "must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise – wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side" (emphasis mine, 78). One certainly notes this relationship in the Peterson family. Mrs.

in opposition to MacDonald's boy-protagonist Curdie as the future husband of Princess Irene; he represents that which Curdie must avoid becoming. Harelip, like his fellow goblins, manifests an aggressive, obstinate masculinity. Contemplating his future bride, the goblin prince sadistically muses, "it *will* be nice to make her cry" (PG 148), relishing the chance to exercise power over someone more vulnerable than he.⁴² Not surprisingly, Harelip resorts to pouting when the goblin royal family ridicules his sun-woman bride-to-be: "It was anything but a laughing matter to Harelip. He growled, and for a few moments the others continued to express their enjoyment of his discomfiture" (PG 149). It is his petulant self-consciousness that makes Harelip not only desirous of torturing Irene, but also of altering her feet so that she better resembles his people. Out of fear of facing ridicule, he nastily declares, "I'll have the skin taken off between her toes, and tie them up till they grow together. Then her feet will be like other people's, and there will be no occasion for her to wear shoes," footwear being a sign of inferiority (PG 148). Significantly, the goblin prince's self-conscious defensiveness mirrors Curdie's reaction to feeling mocked by the princess; Curdie must repent and reform if he is to avoid becoming such a (dwarfed) man.

The goblins' reaction to their defeat near the end of *The Princess and the Goblin* (see Figure 24) proves similar to the humiliated retreat of Rossetti's vanquished merchant men. When attacked at their point of weakness, the dwarfish, cowardly goblins flee the men's stamping feet, "howling and shrieking and limping, and cowering every now and then to cuddle their wounded feet in their hard hands" (PG 232). Likewise, Harelip, who foolishly

Peterson is described as "such a nice good mother!" (PG 104) and her husband and son as "two persons in one rich, happy woman" (PC 60).

⁴² As we shall see in the final section of this work, Ewing's dwarfed men take a similar sadistic pleasure in pinching and poking poor Amelia. Ewing writes, "when she went too fast, the dwarf trod on her heels with his long-pointed shoe, and if she did not go fast enough, he pinched her funny-bone" (AD 113). Meanwhile, his fellow dwarfs excitedly cry out, "Ho, ho, ho!" (AD 114), thoroughly enjoying Amelia's plight.

attempts to run off with Lootie, “drop[s] his burden and roll[s] shrieking into the earth” (PG 235) when Curdie delivers a crushing blow to his feet. Curdie’s defeat of the goblins at the close of *The Princess and the Goblin* does not ensure that he has transcended the threat of dwarfed, perverse masculinity, however. The boy’s reunion with Irene only marks the beginning of his gradual repentance and acceptance of faith; upon discovering the princess safe in his mother’s arms, Curdie immediately apologizes, saying, “I am very sorry I did not believe you” (PG 240). His complete transformation into a suitable young man and future husband for Princess Irene remains to be enacted in the sequel, *The Princess and Curdie*. As MacDonald remarks to his audience at the close of the first novel, “*if you once get rid of the goblins there is no fear of the princess and Curdie*” (PG 262); like Rossetti, he recognizes the ever-present threat of goblin men, the necessity of telling (and retelling) this story. He closes the tale writing that it is “*Not more unfinished than a story ought to be, I hope. If you ever knew a story finished, all I can say is, I never did*” (PG 263). Similarly, the ideal male-female unity between Irene and Curdie at the close of *The Princess and Curdie* proves impermanent; their golden reign dissolves after they pass away, the two not having any heirs to continue their kingdom. Like the heavenly unity of Mossy and Tangle in “The Golden Key,” Curdie and Irene represent a vision of equality for which humanity must strive, but one that MacDonald recognizes Victorian society has not yet realized.⁴³ Jack Zipes likewise identifies this idealist vision with the genre of fantasy when he remarks, “Fairy-tale writing itself becomes a means by which one can find the golden key for establishing harmony in the world – a utopian world, to be sure, that opens our eyes to the ossification of a society blind to its

⁴³ Again, Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* trilogy treats a similar vision of the ideal contrasted with the reality of the human condition in the relationship between Lyra and Will. The two children represent “the true image of what human beings always could be, once they had come into their inheritance” (TAS 470), and yet they must part at the close of *The Amber Spyglass*; humanity has not yet realized this utopian interdependence. Theirs is a relationship for which to strive – one that we have yet to attain in this world.

own faults and injustices” (“Introduction” xxiii). In the *Princess* books, George MacDonald presents masculinity as immaturity; Victorian men are the ones who need to grow up, and in the meantime, the women (like Tangle) are waiting.⁴⁴

V. Juliana Horatia Ewing’s “Amelia and the Dwarfs”: Manipulating (Dwarfed) Men

“What is to be done? Here comes Amelia!” (AD 106), exclaim her mother’s acquaintances when they spy the “wilful” young girl approaching for a visit. For Ewing, however, the question extends far beyond the storyline implications, the necessary safeguarding of delicate ornaments and bracing for “rude” (but truthful) remarks from this “very observing child” (AD 106). This is a social question, an inquiry into the child-rearing practices of Victorian England, and the behavior expected from maturing young ladies like Amelia. Through her protagonist’s first encounter with a dwarfed male in the hayfield, Ewing reveals an aspiring young girl’s (or woman’s) lack of place in Victorian society. “Perhaps your Sauciness is not quite aware of how things are distributed in this world,” the self-important dwarf retorts, as preface to the following taunting lyrics: “All under the sun belongs to *men*, / And all under the moon to the fairies” (emphasis mine, AD 113). Amelia’s cleverness and “strong, resolute will” (AD 105), while appropriate and even encouraged in boys, are perceived as uncharacteristic of her sex,⁴⁵ her “constant wilful destruction” of

⁴⁴ In her essay, “Reading ‘The Golden Key’: Narrative Strategies of Parable,” Cynthia Marshall asks, “Why must Tangle endure so much more than Mossy? And why, upon reaching the great hall at the doorway to paradise, must she wait seven years for Mossy’s arrival before she achieves entry?” (100). Perhaps here, too, we see MacDonald emphasizing the lagging nature of male development and suggesting that men and women must advance together in the direction of a better world.

⁴⁵ The seeds of the “separate spheres” for grown men and women, so emphatically differentiated by John Ruskin in *Sesame and Lilies*, appear to germinate in the nursery. This dichotomous approach to child-rearing is also

dresses and skirts (AD 109) represents a seemingly unnatural rejection of femininity. Those seeking to maintain stereotypical gender roles of the time period might prescribe a dose of Grimms' "Snow White," or some such lesson in feminine submission, self-repression, and domesticity to correct this wayward child, transforming Amelia into a marriageable young lady.

In "Amelia and the Dwarfs," however, Ewing deviates from this social prescription. Although she presents a child who is the utmost terror of her parents' friends, it is Amelia's refusal to mature and assume personal responsibility that Ewing wishes to amend, not her atypical feminine behavior. Further, the author finds fault with Amelia's "rather soft" (AD 105), indulgent parents (her mother in particular) for suspending Amelia in this state of petulant childishness. The fairy tale thus becomes a means by which the author can teach girls like Amelia to manipulate and evade (dwarfed) men, while successfully maintaining their independent sense of self. When the reader examines Ewing's dwarfed manifestations of an aggressive, frustrated masculinity, "Amelia and the Dwarfs" becomes much more than "a pleasant tale, with a good moral" (AD 127).⁴⁶ Her story depicts a microcosmic Victorian marriage market, a feminine training ground in the manipulation of the male sex – one which demonstrates the dangers of violent, possessive masculine desire. Ewing's simple classification belies the latent complexity of the tale's controversial subject matter, including

evident in Ewing's *We and the World*, when Jack's father angrily suggests to his son that if he had been born a girl, "He could have sent me to my mother, and my mother might have sent me to my needle" (114).

⁴⁶ This distancing tactic, by which Ewing superficially separates herself from her work, is also evident in *Six to Sixteen*, her "Book for Girls." The author prefaces the work writing, "It is, I fear, fragmentary as a mere tale, and cannot even plead as an excuse for this that it embodies any complete theory on the vexed question of the upbringing of girls. Indeed, I should like to say that it contains no attempt to paint a model girl or a model education, and was originally written as a sketch of domestic life, and not as a vehicle for theories" (3). In reality, however, the work is a subversive argument for female education and a mockery of male disdain for such feminine pursuits.

the “tacit alliance” Knoepfmacher notes between the author and her “wilful” protagonist (VIC 401).

Ewing in fact delights in caricaturing a defensive, frustrated masculinity and lauds Amelia’s manipulation of her dwarfed captors. Her protagonist’s first glimpse of the dwarfs reveals both their anger and their humorous compensatory garments:

she plainly perceived by moonlight a tiny man dressed in green, with a tall, pointed hat, and very, very long tips to his shoes, tying his shoestring with his foot on a stubble stalk. He had the most wizened of faces, and when he got angry with his shoe, he pulled so wry a grimace that it was quite laughable (AD 112).

Like many dwarfed male characters, Ewing’s little men compensate for their short stature with lengthy accoutrements, and their frequently angered state suggests an inherently frustrated masculinity (see Figure 25).⁴⁷ However, this frustrated male is also “quite laughable” (AD 112), and the story mocks the dwarfs’ childish petulance, perhaps allowing the author to covertly give vent to long repressed frustrations with male-dominated Victorian society. It is critical to note that these miniature denizens of Ewing’s underground world are all distinctly masculine. The author makes no mention of lady dwarfs (perhaps one source of their frustration), and the only female presence besides Amelia is an old woman who came from above ground and is their servant.⁴⁸ As the dwarf moves from haycock to haycock in search of a place to hold the evening’s festivities, his thwarted responses, “Ah, bah!” and “Fie! fie!” (AD 112), reveal the anger felt by this diminutive male when inconvenienced by the larger-than-life effects of Amelia. Ewing relishes the dwarfed male’s angry, defensive

⁴⁷ The King of the Golden River and South-West Wind, Esquire, two dwarfed males in John Ruskin’s 1841 fairy tale, “The King of the Golden River,” also fit this description, although they will not be discussed in this work. The South-West Wind in particular compensates for his short stature with lengthy accoutrements (see Figures 26 and 27). Indeed, Knoepfmacher writes that Ruskin’s “ugly intruder with a giant phallic hat [is] every bit as grotesque, dangerous, and violent as Rossetti’s malevolent, tramping ‘little men’ (line 55)” (VIC 319).

⁴⁸ Regarding this woman, Knoepfmacher writes, “Given the unmistakable sexual interest that Amelia soon arouses in the dwarfs, the woman who has sojourned among them for so ‘many years’ may well have been abducted when she was herself still young, lively, and desirable” (VIC 406).

response to feminine encroachments upon his dominions – to Amelia’s torn, soiled clothing, uneaten leftovers, and broken items that crowd *his* territory. The twice-thwarted dwarf snorts, “‘Pshaw!’ [...] frowning terribly; and [...] [blows] such an angry blast that the grass stalk split[s] into seven pieces” (AD 112), demonstrating an anger that verges on the violent.⁴⁹ In an attempt to reassert his territorial claims, he defensively tells a fellow dwarf, “If she’s wise, she’ll keep as far from these haycocks as she can” (AD 112). On another level, of course, Ewing mocks masculine possessiveness in *all* of its manifestations, employing dwarfs merely as a distancing technique.

When Amelia confronts the dwarf – for, “to hear that she had better not do something, was to make her wish at once to do it” (AD 113) – Ewing’s protagonist demonstrates an immediate lack of respect for this diminutive male. Not surprisingly, the affronted little man resorts to indignant self-assertion. Ewing allows Amelia to tug on the dwarf’s garments, “just as she would have twitched her mother’s shawl” (AD 113); her protagonist shows this dwarfed male no more respect than the parent she clearly and knowingly dominates in the first half of the tale. When Amelia asserts her right to frolic in the haycocks, she unwittingly invokes patriarchal notions of authority and ownership without understanding their looming implications for her. “They belong to my papa,” she insists, “and I shall come if I like” (AD 113). Amelia’s bold claim to the haycocks as her father’s daughter (in the manner of a first-born *son*) produces the following angrily mocking response: “you are not lacking in

⁴⁹ Ewing will later depict similar masculine frustration in the character of Jack’s father in *We and the World*. The boy narrates, “My father ‘pish’ ed and ‘pshaw’ ed when he caught me ‘poking over’ books, but my dear mother was inclined to regard me as a genius, whose learning might bring renown of a new kind into the family” (4-5). Jack’s father, who also degrades his son’s admiration for an Indian Colonel as “*weak-womanish*” (WW 114), appears as preoccupied by his son’s lack of “proper” masculinity (and the reflection this casts on the father himself) as the dwarfs in “Amelia” are unsettled by the threat of a girl-child’s intrusion into their domain. Ewing demonstrates sympathy with the gender constraints faced by girls *and* boys, and she is especially critical of adults who insist upon these restrictive categorizations based on sex. The dwarfs in “Amelia,” mocked by the author for their frustrated maleness, serve as caricatures of men like Jack’s father in *We and the World*.

impudence. Perhaps your Sauciness is not quite aware how things are distributed in this world?" (AD 113). The dwarf significantly proceeds to reeducate Amelia about her rights in society (or lack thereof), singing the taunting song mentioned previously (AD 113). Hearing this refrain, and perhaps sensing her danger, Amelia tries to leave and yet finds herself trapped: "the dwarf seem[s] to dance and tumble round her, and always to cut off the chance of escape" (AD 113). Her attempts to flee are constantly thwarted; physical strength alone will not defeat these diminutive creatures. The dwarf's dancing and tumbling represents a system that trumps Amelia's will power; if she shall ever escape, she must play the Trickster, working within the confines of a system that is beyond her powers of alteration – a system covertly mirroring Victorian society itself.

Born into a household where her powers reigned supreme, Amelia is nevertheless quick to recognize that the balance of power has shifted in favor of these angry little men. Confronted with the first dwarf's inescapable pinching and prodding, "for once in her life she [is] obliged to do as she [is] told" (AD 113). In this underground world, Amelia's overt willfulness proves ineffectual; she must adjust her tactics here, just as, when no longer a young girl in her parents' home, she will have to assimilate into the world above. Despite cautiously admiring her willful protagonist, Ewing's first important message is that before Amelia can subvert the system, she must understand it and learn to work within its constructs. Unlike above ground, where she is pampered by her mother's indulgent behavior, Amelia will find no sympathetic faces here, but rather a sort of vindictive, aggressive mob mentality, as evidenced by the dwarfs' cries in unison of "'Ho, ho, ho!' with such horrible contortions as they [laugh], that it [is] hideous to behold" (AD 114).

The dwarfed males' reaction to Amelia's presence mirrors Rossetti's depiction of the "leering" (l. 93) goblin men, and perhaps Ewing, too, constructs a subtle criticism of male reactions to female "intrusions" into the literary market. Symbolically speaking, it is the female author who potentially faces the externally-mandated command to subdue her literary progeny, her child. As Ewing's creation, Amelia by necessity reflects upon her author, and perhaps the dwarfs, flustered at feminine intrusions into their dominions, represent a mockery of men who believe that they control the literary market. Reflecting on Amelia's frolic among the workmen in the hayfield (another masculine space that also suggests freedom), Ewing notes that "the haymakers had constantly wished that she had been anywhere else" (AD 111). Her dangerous wielding of a pitchfork, moreover, with which she "nearly kill[s] herself and several other persons" (AD 111), plays upon the masculine fear of feminine phallus-appropriation. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar commence their chapter, "The Queen's Looking Glass," by asking, "Is a pen a metaphorical penis?" (3), and conclude, "Male sexuality [...] is not just analogically but actually the essence of literary power. The poet's pen is in some sense (even more than figuratively) a penis" (4). One can imagine the terror that a pitchfork-wielding Amelia struck in the hearts of the haymakers, or the fear that a "wilful" female author, pen in hand, might generate among men who, like Ewing's dwarfs, consider the literary market to be *their* domain. Faced with the frustrating realities of Victorian society, however, Ewing, like Christina Rossetti, essentially came to the conclusion that her greater happiness must lie in the hereafter, eventually resigning herself to a woman's "second-tier" existence on earth.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ In "Madame Liberality," a tale that Horatia K. F. Gatty identifies as reflecting Ewing's own personae (5), the author remarks, "It is possible, after one has cut one's wisdom-teeth, to cure oneself even of a good deal of vanity, and *to learn to play the second fiddle very gracefully*; and Madame Liberality did not resist the lessons of life" (emphasis mine, *Juliana Horatia Ewing and her Books* 77). Similarly, Rossetti's poem, "The Lowest

Anticipating her audience's reaction to this "most tiresome little girl" (AD 106), Ewing subversively employs the Grimm precedent of tales endorsing a doctrine of feminine submission and domesticity in order to facilitate her girl-protagonist's eventual *defeat* of this constraining, sexist prescription for female maturation. Unlike the Grimms' Snow White, who practices domestic skills in the service of dwarfed men as preparation for marriage, Amelia learns so that she may accept greater responsibility *for herself*. Underground, she quickly learns "that 'I won't' is not an answer for everyone," substituting "I can't" instead when ordered to wash her "large clothes-baskets full of dirty frocks" (AD 115). By teaching her girl-protagonist to wash and mend her dirty clothes and to cook her own meals, Ewing enables Amelia to gain greater independence by learning to accept personal responsibility. In fact, Ewing does not object to the girl who tears her dresses climbing walls, but rather to the spoiled, irresponsible child who believes the mending and cleaning to be her nurse's duty. This lack of self-reliance represents a weakness that her protagonist must recognize and transcend; with maturity come strength and independence. Amelia's increasing knowledge thus becomes a source of power in contrast to the passive weakness associated with Snow White's catatonic maturational experience. Further, it appears that the narrator's observation,

Room," originally titled, "A Fight Over the Body of Homer," contains these revealing autobiographical lines: "Not to be first; how hard to learn / That lifelong lesson of the past; / [...] / But, thank God, learnt at last" (ll. 265-266, 268). Near the end of her life, she likewise reflected that "it was the lot of girls to play second fiddle" (Marsh 543). Ewing's novel *The Story of a Short Life* also reveals this frustration. The author employs the handicapped boy-child, Leonard, to subtly critique a *woman's* realities and frustrations. The crippled boy explains the title for his "Book of Poor Things" (118), *Laetus sorte mea*, saying, "It means Happy with my fate, and in our family we have to be happy with it, whatever sort of a one it is" (123). Ewing also uses this technique with the character "Cripple Charlie" in *We and the World*. Regarding his decision to run from home and stow away on a ship to America, the healthy, unfettered Jack simply narrates, "And then I got up, and crossed the threshold, and went out into the world" (WW 131). *His* journey through adolescence represents a conscious exercise of free will, whereas the maturational process of *female* children (like Amelia) appears more externally manipulated. Unlike Jack and "normal" boys, "Cripple Charlie," living out a girl child's maturational fate, is confined to the home as his peers travel the world. Jack's brother, Jem, has a revealing reaction to the crippled boy: "he didn't really like being with him," Ewing writes, "though he was sorry for him, and he could not bear seeing his poor legs." Jem confesses, "They make me feel horrid [...] And even when they're covered up, I know they're there" (WW 53).

“if she climbed a wall she never tried to free her dress if it had caught; on she rushed, and half a skirt might be left behind for any care she had in the matter” (AD 109), echoes a desire on the part of Ewing to occasionally free *herself* from such cumbersome feminine trappings, both literal and figurative. Ewing may be a figure as “bent by experience” (Knoepfmacher, VIC 406) as the old woman Amelia encounters underground, but she can at least transmit advice to her willful young protagonist, enabling her survival and, one hopes, her greater freedom and happiness as well. Comparing the old woman to Lizzie in “Goblin Market,” Knoepfmacher remarks, “In a fairy tale and in a poem where there seem to be no female fairies, ‘real’ women are called upon to protect girls from the predations of goblin men” (VIC 406).

Ewing’s “Amelia and the Dwarfs” in many ways functions as an alternative version of the Grimm’s infamous “Snow White.” And like their “Wilful Child” who is beaten into submission,⁵¹ Amelia, too, is essentially silenced, representative of this socially-imposed feminine transformation beginning in girlhood and continuing through adolescence. When she hears her parents coming to find her, Amelia “[begins] to shriek for help” (AD 114), but the dwarfs push her into the haycock, thus literally and symbolically silencing the girl’s cries. A stock or “senseless person” (Auerbach and Knoepfmacher, note 10, AD 114) identical in appearance to Amelia replaces the child at home during her trials among the dwarfs, representing this socially-required silencing or death. The stock “[seems] to Amelia to be a

⁵¹ The original German version of Grimms’ “The Wilful Child” – translated by Tatar as “The Stubborn Child” (ABG 381) – is gender-neutral (Tatar, ABG 382); the child could be a boy or a girl. In this brief tale, a “wilful” child is seemingly buried alive and then beaten into submission by his/her mother until the child ceases to force a defiant arm out from beneath the earth. Descriptive of the Victorian social climate, however, Margaret Hunt’s popular 1884 Grimms’ translation, *Household Tales*, genders the child *feminine*. The tale thus transforms into a vehement warning against female ambition, promoting instead submission (or death). It is short enough to reprint in its entirety here, as it appears on Heidi Anne Heiner’s *SurLaLune Fairy Tale Pages*: “Once upon a time there was a child who was wilful, and would not [do what] her mother wished. For this reason God had no pleasure in her, and let her become ill, and no doctor could do her any good, and in a short time she lay on her death-bed. When she had been lowered into her grave, and the earth was spread over her, all at once her arm came out again, and stretched upwards, and when they had put it in and spread fresh earth over it, it was all to no purpose, for the arm always came out again. Then the mother herself was obliged to go to the grave, and strike the arm with a rod, and when she had done that, it was drawn in, and then at last the child had rest beneath the ground.”

little girl like herself. And when she look[s] closer, to her horror and surprise the figure [is] exactly like her” (AD 114). The connotations of inferior intellect associated with the term “stock” additionally convey the message that in Victorian society, the maturing girl child must cease to be *observing* (intelligent), and instead passively submit to masculine *observation* and objectification. The old woman Amelia encounters underground warns her that eventually the stock will leave its girl-body: “But the figure that is like you,” she reveals, “will remain lifeless in the bed, and will be duly buried. Then your people, believing you dead, will never look for you, and you will always remain here” (AD 118). Only after the death of her individuality and self-possessed spirit may the girl assume her prescribed role in a society that “will never look for” (yet subconsciously continue to fear) that former, willful self. Similarly, in *Fictions of Modesty*, Ruth Yeazell asserts, “modesty was first and foremost a question of face” (10), “And like all questions of face, it kept threatening to prove a mere matter of appearances” (11). This fear of insincere modesty, Yeazell argues, manifests itself in the Victorian preoccupation with “distinctions between the ‘true’ virtue and the ‘false’” (11). Thus, it would appear that Ewing’s tale, which ends with the *willful* protagonist’s *willingness* to “[lie] still and silent” on the doctor’s orders – “though Amelia [knows] it [will] do her no harm” to converse (AD 125) – suggests outer conformity with expectations, belying internal, subversive knowledge of superior intellect. Ewing subtly resurrects her female protagonist from Snow White’s maturational death (prerequisite to marriage), and Knoepfmacher accurately detects traces of “the old Amelia” (VIC 409) surviving beneath the reemerged child at the tale’s close.

Not surprisingly, as she completes her tasks and becomes more submissive, Amelia’s desirability in the eyes of her dwarfed captors increases. The first dwarf Amelia encounters

obstinately informs her that they have captured her so that she will clean up her messy encroachments into their territory, “not because [her] society is particularly pleasant” (AD 115). Later, however, the “smutty” tinker dwarf becomes “mollified” when Amelia admits, “I am ashamed of myself, [...] very much ashamed. I should like to mend these things if I can” (AD 120). Pleased with her submissiveness, he responds, “Well, you can’t say more than that. [...] I’ll show you how to set to work” (AD 120). Regarding Amelia’s desire to return home, the old woman relates the girl’s “improved” status with the dwarfs, delivering troubling news:

You see, when you first came you were [...] such a peevish, selfish, *wilful*, useless, and ill-mannered little miss, that neither the fairies nor anybody else were likely to keep you any longer than necessary. But now you are such a *willing*, handy, and civil little thing, *and so pretty and graceful withal*, that I think it is very likely that they will want to keep you altogether. I think you had better make up your mind to it. They are kindly little folk, and *will make a pet of you* in the end (emphasis mine, AD 118).

As Amelia’s role among the dwarfs begins to mirror that of Snow White, however, she also becomes more miserable, and Ewing’s election to remove her protagonist from this oppressive underground environment suggests her desire to help Amelia avoid similar imprisonment within the home. Ewing writes, “Amelia often cooked for them, and she danced and played with them, and never showed a sign of discontent; but her heart ached for home, and when she was alone she would bury her face in the flowers and cry for her mother” (AD 122). However, the old woman reveals that if the dwarfs trust her superficial submissiveness, they will take Amelia above ground to dance, where she may search for the four-leafed clover that will magically liberate her from their clutches. And in the very next scene, Amelia overhears the dwarfs’ plans to dance above ground. United, author and protagonist begin working towards Amelia’s eventual escape from this oppressive domestic existence.

Although the dwarfs act in part as “retributive avengers” on behalf of those above ground (Knoepfmacher, VIC 405), they certainly have ulterior motives beyond their storyline roles as correctional agents. Not only does Ewing refute the Grimms’ use of Snow White’s encounter with the dwarfs as preparation for her eventual marital subjection to a grown man, but she simultaneously rejects the downplayed sexuality of the androgynous dwarfs and prince. Her little men represent masculinity in mocking miniature, sexuality included, as evidenced by the covetous, “grotesque and grimy old dwarf” (AD 119-120) who desires Amelia for his bride. Through Amelia’s interactions with this dirty, sexually-aroused dwarf, Ewing constructs her criticism of the obscured sexuality in “Snow White” as well as the Grimms’ nonchalant treatment of male sexual aggression in “Rumpelstiltskin.” The old woman advises Amelia to dance and “seem happy, that they may think [she is] content, and [has] forgotten the world” (AD 119), and this tactic proves particularly useful with the tinker dwarf. Ewing initially describes him as “a kindly little creature” (AD 120), and yet he quickly transforms into the most blatantly sexual of the dwarfs Amelia encounters underground. “The first time he [gives] her a few minutes in which to rest and amuse herself,” Ewing notes, Amelia “[holds] out her little skirt and [does] one of her prettiest dances” (AD 120); she tempts the dwarf’s repressed sexual appetite and procures a great deal of help with her tasks as a result. Ewing cleverly displaces the grimy old tinker dwarf’s sexual arousal, locating it in the lengthy shoe points that compensate for his short stature. When he first witnesses Amelia dancing, his excitement is evident: “‘Rivets and trivets!’ shrieked the little man, ‘How you dance! [...] On with you! [...] *It gives me the fidgets in my shoe points to see you!*’” (emphasis mine, AD 120). Amelia, however, does not dance as part of some aesthetic display, but rather deliberately manipulates her dwarfed captors. As Knoepfmacher notes, Ewing

delights in mocking an adult male's questionable attraction to a young girl and his corresponding confidence that she will return his affections (VIC 408).⁵² Watching Amelia's subversive performance, the old tinker dwarf self-assuredly remarks, "Look how content she is, [...] and, oh! how she dances; *my feet tickle at the bare thought*" (emphasis mine, AD 123), revealing eager conjugal anticipation. Again, Ewing employs the expectations of patriarchal culture to subvert its intentions; feminine display transforms from Snow White's passive aestheticism to Amelia's deliberate manipulation of the male sex. Aroused, the tinker dwarf arrogantly declares, "Give me your work. I can do more in a minute than you in a month, and better to boot" (AD 121). In return, however, he demands, "Now dance again" (AD 121).

As this work-for-pleasure exchange suggests, Amelia's tasks underground intertwine traditional domesticity with developing sexuality. The result is a tale that refuses to be read as merely retributive, just as one cannot view its dwarfed males solely as "agents" of Amelia's disciplinary re-education. The very phrase the first dwarf uses to propel Amelia to work, "On with you!" (AD 113), is also used by the "smutty" tinker dwarf to command Amelia to dance, with the telling sexual arousal discussed previously (AD 120). And the same shoe points with which the first dwarf "trod on her heels" (AD 113) – using these compensatory masculine accoutrements to exercise power over his female victim and bend her to his will – are also the location of the smutty dwarf's displaced sexual arousal. These sadistic dwarves are the denizens of a microcosmic Victorian marriage market in which power and sexual impulses are

⁵² Interestingly, the first dwarf Amelia encounters remarks, "we love children, and we are wilful ourselves" (AD 115). Perhaps Ewing further caricatures the "child-loving" associated with male Victorian fairy tale authors and their "dream children," Carroll and his *Alice* books in particular. The division between innocent love for children and sexual desire for them becomes blurred as Ewing's tale progresses. James R. Kincaid's *Child-Loving* explores this topic in great depth. As a preface to his project, Kincaid explains that "the child is not simply the Other we desire but the Other we must have in order to know longing, love, lust at all. The child is that which we are not but almost are, that which we yearn for so fiercely we almost resent it" (7).

conflated, and the feminine is domesticated in order to provide pleasure and a “mirror-mirror” for male power complexes and self-assurance. After watching Amelia dance, the tinker dwarf is quick to assert, “I am a good dancer myself,” and teaches Amelia a new dance that he claims, “is much admired [...] *when I dance it*” (emphasis mine, AD 120). Moreover, he is quite self-congratulatory, asking, “Good, wasn’t it?” to which Amelia responds, “Wonderful!” (AD 120),⁵³ already aware of the assurance this diminutive male needs, as well as her ability to manipulate him.

As his attraction to the girl builds, the “kindly” tinker dwarf demonstrates a repeated, aggressive self-assertion in his interactions with Amelia, in the form of “I will” and other encroaching diction. As Amelia begins another dance at his command, he asserts, “mark the time well, so that I may catch the measure, and then *I will accompany you*,” followed by the bargaining assertion, “teach me that dance and *I will patch up all the rest of the gimracks*.” His invasive self-assertions culminate in a desire for physical interaction: “*I will learn the step*, and then *I will put my arm around your waist* and dance with you” (emphasis mine, AD 121). Not surprisingly, during the dance Amelia notes that “his shoe points were very much in the way” (AD 121). When Amelia is ushered to her final task, picking up the broken conversational threads, the tinker dwarf suspiciously materializes behind her, “playing away, and making the most hideous grimaces as his chin presse[s] the violin” (AD 122). Amelia takes notice, and the dwarf ejaculates, “Dance, my lady, dance!” (AD 122), not only employing the possessive “my,” but also referring to Amelia as a “lady,” indicating a degree of sexual maturity (actual or desired) in his love-object. Furthermore, the dance *Amelia* taught him has become “our own dance,” (AD 122), and later, exercising once more his assertive

⁵³ One might argue that this appeasing, manipulating response mocks the eager anticipation with which male authors like Lewis Carroll presented tales to their dream children. Carroll clearly wished Alice Liddell would find *Wonderland* wonderful.

“will,” he proudly tells another dwarf, “we will take Amelia, and dance *my* dance” (emphasis mine, AD 123), indicating an encroaching possessiveness of Amelia’s person and talent. As Knoepfmacher points out, when the dwarf is fooled by the girl’s dancing, “Amelia and Ewing have become allies again. They jointly expose the self-delusions of older males” (like Lewis Carroll) “who firmly believe that their desire for little girls must automatically be reciprocated by the object of their affections” (VIC 408).

The dwarfed male also derives a sense of power and distinction from his interactions with Amelia, of which he is quick to boast to his peers. He remarks with self-importance to a fellow dwarf,

If she does not come, I will not. I must dance my dance. You do not know what it is! We two alone move together with a grace which even here is remarkable. But when I think that up yonder we shall have attendant shadows echoing our movements, I long for the moment to arrive (AD 123).

Thus, the tinker dwarf distinguishes himself and his semi-carnal knowledge from the other frustrated dwarfs, and awaits their dance as an aggressive male might await the consummation of his marriage to a virtuous, “modest,” and surely virginal young bride. The “attendant shadows,” moreover, prove as compensatory as the dwarfs’ tall hats and long, pointed shoes: “When one sees how colossal one’s very shadow is,” the tinker dwarf tells Amelia as they dance above ground, “one knows one’s true worth” (AD 123). Further, the dwarf is “in raptures” when “the shadows [lengthen]” with the moon’s descent (AD 123). Complimenting Amelia, “You also have a good shadow” (AD 123), Ewing’s “smutty” old dwarf reveals his attraction to her *figure* as well. Aroused by what he sees, the dwarf concludes, “We are partners in the dance, and I think we will be partners for life. But I have not fully considered the matter, so this is not to be regarded as a formal proposal” (AD 123). In this caricature of male aggression in the Victorian marriage market, all decisions rest unequivocally in the

hands of the (dwarfed) man. Amelia's desires are of little to no concern; the dwarf merely reveals what *he* thinks their future holds, explaining that *he* needs a little more time to decide their fate. Just as the prince in Snow White orders the awakened, disoriented girl, "Come with me to my father's castle. You shall be my bride" (ABG 254), or the king in "Rumpelstiltskin" instructs the spinner, "You have to spin this to gold in one night. If you succeed, you will become my wife" (ABG 259), the suitor (dwarfed or dominant) gives his bride-to-be little choice in the matter.

Amelia, however, escapes the Grimm precedent realized by Snow White and the nameless spinner; *she* enters masculine territory and emerges triumphant, self-possessed, and unmarried. Amelia matures, but not at the price of her freedom; she validates *herself* rather than seeking masculine approval. Nor does the little girl who peeks through drawing room blinds at the free world outside suffer Snow White's repeated deaths for her desire to transgress the boundaries of the home. When Amelia escapes, the tinker dwarf (like Rumpelstiltskin) displays telling rage at being denied the object of his affection, revealing Ewing's consciousness of the danger of over-possessive masculine desire. He utters "a hideous yell of disappointment" (AD 124) as Amelia, four-leafed clover in hand, narrowly escapes his clutches and returns safely home. Ewing's ending suggests, as Knoepflmacher concludes, that "Amelia's contrition is genuine, but her acquiescence is self-imposed, a measure of her strength and resolute will" (VIC 409). The "wilful" and "observing" child has learned to comply outwardly with the demands placed on women by Victorian society without losing her sense of self.

On one level, "Amelia and the Dwarfs" represents another fantastical journey of female maturation, a process which, despite Ewing's desire to help her girl protagonist, she

concedes Amelia must undertake essentially on her own – or at least without any expectation of help from Victorian society. On the other hand, however, in an effort to do “the best” (AD 118) she can for this rebellious child, Ewing does proffer a space in which aggressive, controlling men are revealed to be dwarfs whose indignant possessiveness may be manipulated and defeated. Perhaps Amelia represents a new breed of drawing-room ladies whom Ewing believes will re-make this traditionally feminine space into a haven for “wilful” and “observing” young women, just as the girls in *Six to Sixteen* radically transform their kitchen into a study.⁵⁴ For Ewing, as for MacDonald, angry, self-important, controlling men are not truly men, but dwarfs, and their cocky foolishness makes them ripe for manipulation. By dwarfing men, Ewing enables Amelia to grow.

VI. Some Conclusions and Looking to the Future: Gender Reconstruction

An examination of the use of dwarfed males in Victorian fairy tales reveals that these authors appear increasingly drawn to view and employ the dwarfed male as just that: a dwarfed man. In “Goblin Market,” Christina Rossetti utilizes her goblin merchant men to caricature and dwarf an aggressive, destructive masculinity that she effectively defeats and banishes by the poem’s close. George MacDonald’s goblins in *The Princess and the Goblin* symbolize the immaturity he associates with overly rationalistic masculinity; instead, the

⁵⁴ In reference to the kitchen-study, Ewing’s protagonist in *Six to Sixteen* narrates, “We found ourselves so cozy and independent that we returned again and again to our new study. The boys (who go away a great deal more than we do, and are apt to come back dissatisfied with our ‘ways,’ anxious to make us more ‘like other people’) object strongly to this habit of ours. They say, ‘Whoever *heard* of ladies sitting in a kitchen?’ [...] But we have this large, airy, spotlessly clean room, [...] and may do anything we please, so I think it no wonder that we like it, though it be, in point of fact, a kitchen” (13).

author privileges an imaginative, faith-based, feminine wisdom as representative of superior, mature intellect. And in “Amelia and the Dwarfs,” Juliana Horatia Ewing subtly critiques and subverts the expectations of Victorian society and the marriage market, teaching her female child protagonist to manipulate foolish (dwarfed) men, thereby escaping their covetous clutches. Viewed chronologically, one notes the banishment of men in Rossetti’s “Goblin Market” (1862), the manipulation of men in Ewing’s “Amelia and the Dwarfs” (1870), and the radical re-education of men and denunciation of masculinity as immaturity in *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872).

While Christina Rossetti may have been unable to envision positive male-female interaction⁵⁵ – let alone the bridging of gender divides – both George MacDonald and Juliana Horatia Ewing navigate the realities of Victorian society while at the same time displaying idealistic projections for future generations. Although MacDonald maintains a somewhat restricted, romantic conception of the feminine, he nevertheless identifies the preexisting social constraints faced by growing girls, presenting them in a negative and somewhat ridiculous light. He writes of “the princes [who] get away to follow their fortunes,” noting, “In this they have the advantage of the princesses, who are forced to marry before they have had a bit of fun,” and declares, “I wish our princesses got lost in forests sometimes” (“The Light Princess” 32). As Knoepfmacher comments, “MacDonald’s irreverence towards fairytale conventions is also levelled at the sexual double standards that operated in actual

⁵⁵ In *Speaking Likenesses* (1873), however, Rossetti *does* portray a more empowered female character, Maggie, who reverses the economic situation found in “Goblin Market.” In this tale, consuming masculinity takes the form of Mouth Boy, whose “face exhibit[s] only one feature, [...] a wide mouth” (355). This “wide mouth [is] full of teeth and tusks, and [he begins] to grind them” (356) as he stands before Maggie, begging for food from the basket she is carrying (see Figure 28). Despite his gruesome over-sized mouth and lack of eyes, this character, too, is dwarfed. Only a whining boy, he aggressively “snatche[s] at the basket” (356), but slinks away hurt and humiliated when Maggie “indignantly” denies him (356). Not only has the animalistic male become weaker in *Speaking Likenesses*, but Rossetti’s female protagonist has gained control of the goods and, with them, the power to refuse to nourish masculine aggression.

Victorian life” (annotation 18, “Notes” 344). In the *Princess* books, he directs much of his social criticism at Victorian constructions of masculinity, deliberately representing this expression of manhood as dwarfed, immature. Like Tangle in “The Golden Key,” Irene has surpassed her male co-protagonist and patiently awaits his maturation – the slow progress of Curdie’s attempt to bridge a falsely conceived separation between intellect and the imagination. MacDonald’s portrayal of the “childlike” promotes this faith-based, imaginative state as a gender-neutral territory – a place where men and women may reconvene and mature together, both spiritually and intellectually. First, however, men must leave behind aggression, excessive rationality, and a seemingly inherent tendency towards disbelief.

Whereas Ewing’s “Amelia and the Dwarfs” takes a realistic approach to the challenges faced by maturing young girls like Amelia, some of the author’s other works explore the more idealistic directions in which she would like to see society progress. In “The Ogre Courting” (1871), for example, Managing Molly uses her intellect to defeat not a dwarf, but a *giant*, and after tricking him into providing her with a large dowry, she “[is] soon mated to her mind” (emphasis mine, 133). In other words, her intelligence spares her marriage to a domineering, undesirable husband; instead, Molly is able to find and marry a man who suits her taste. In “Benjy in Beastland” (1870), the corresponding boys’ tale to “Amelia and the Dwarfs,” Ewing radically transforms the violent, aggressive, and cruel Benjy (see Figure 29) into “a first-rate naturalist and a good friend to beasts” (122). She concludes, “[There] is no doubt that some most objectionable boys do get scrubbed, and softened, and ennobled into superior men. And Benjy was one of these” (BB 122).

It is in “The Brownies” (1870), however, that Ewing enacts her most radical revision of Victorian society through a tale that subtly rejects Grimms’ “story of the Shoemaker and

the little Elves” (B 11).⁵⁶ Commenting on the appeal of this particular Grimms tale, Maria Tatar cites Ruth B. Bottigheimer’s conjecture that “sudden and unanticipated reward after ceaseless labor seems to represent a constant dream at least among Western laborers, and probably among laboring people worldwide, a dream of eternal release from endless grinding toil” (ABG 183). For a woman in Victorian England, however, the “release from endless [and unacknowledged] grinding toil” was perhaps even more appealing than for the shoemaker in the Grimms’ tale. Moreover, as Ewing subtly notes, the housework that seems to magically accomplish itself is likely the result of underappreciated feminine labor. Ewing refutes the little boy Deordie who echoes the pervading belief (contained in and preserved by the Grimms’ collection) that chores and housework are not the responsibility of boys and men. After reading about the shoemaker and the elves, Deordie informs the Doctor, “I thought it would be so jolly if we had some little Elves to do things instead of us” (B 11); meanwhile, his sisters struggle with the house work and the boys’ messes as well. In her revision of the Grimms’ tale, Ewing argues for reeducating boys to assume household responsibilities *alongside* their sisters (see Figure 30). “[In] the Brownie’s habits of self-denial, thoughtfulness, consideration, and the art of little kindnesses,” she acknowledges, “boys are, I am afraid, as a general rule, somewhat behindhand with their sisters” (B 28), and yet she wishes, like MacDonald, for her boy characters to mature and bridge this gap. Knoepflmacher correctly remarks that in this complex and remarkable tale, “the gendered and generational identities of tellers and listeners begin to dissolve and become interchangeable” (VIC 420); Ewing deliberately deconstructs and blurs gender divides. The “little man” who “[does] all sorts of house-work” (B 16) – who accomplishes the chores typical of the unacknowledged

⁵⁶ In *The Annotated Brothers Grimm*, Maria Tatar cites this story as “[one] of three tales designated under the title of ‘The Elves’” (183) in the Grimms’ collection.

housewife and mother – becomes not an effeminate object of mockery, but rather a growing man, a boy who is maturing by learning to accept personal responsibility (like his sisters) *in the home*.

Jack Zipes elucidates this “feminine quality” in Victorian fairy tales as being “part of the general re-utilization of the traditional fairy-tale motifs and topoi by utopian writers to express the need for a new type of government and society” (“Introduction” xxvi). In “Goblin Market,” Rossetti warns women of preexisting dangers and seeks to protect them by banishing the masculine from her tale. Continuing where she left off, MacDonald and Ewing work to enable and validate girls and women, while also reeducating boys and men. Conscious *and* critical of social realities, these revisionary authors labor to undermine gender roles that they find inhibiting for both sexes. Further, they effectively uncover – if only in the realm of fantasy – the higher potential that humanity can reach when it learns to transcend these inhibiting gender constructions.

Appendix:

Dwarfs in Fairy-Tale Illustrations

Heather Victoria Vermeulen

Figure 1:

Walter Crane illustrates the dwarfs admiring a sleeping Snow White for Lucy Crane's 1882 Grimms' translation, *Household Stories from the Collection of the Brothers Grimm*. Their fascination with Snow White emphasizes her attractiveness, while their androgynous nature, as Maria Tatar notes, allows her to remain pure (annotation 12, ABG 246). Here, Snow White is hardly the seven-year-old girl described in the Grimms' version.



Figure 2:

John Batten depicts the dwarfs removing the poisoned comb to revive Snow White in Joseph Jacob's *European Folk and Fairy Tales* (1916).



Figure 3:

Snow White's final temptation takes the shape of a poisoned apple, as depicted by Walter Crane for Lucy Crane's *Household Stories from the Collection of the Brothers Grimm*.



Figure 4:

Tom Tit Tot self-assuredly makes a bargain in John Batten's illustration for Joseph Jacob's *English Fairy Tales* (1890).



Figure 5:

Tom Tit Tot loses his bargain, and his manhood, to the woman who names him (Batten).



Figure 6:

In H. J. Ford's illustration for Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889), Rumpelstiltskin is shown entering the spinning room. It is noteworthy that, while the female spinner is trapped, the male characters enter her space at will, and with their own interest in mind, as the dwarf's expression here suggests.



Figure 7:

In George Cruikshank's illustration for *German Popular Stories*, translated by Edgar Taylor in 1823, Rumpelstiltskin, humiliated by the queen, stamps his foot into the ground and prepares to tear himself in two.



Figure 8:

Walter Crane depicts Rumpelstiltskin as a little old man propositioning the despairing spinner in Lucy Crane's translation of the Grimms' tale.

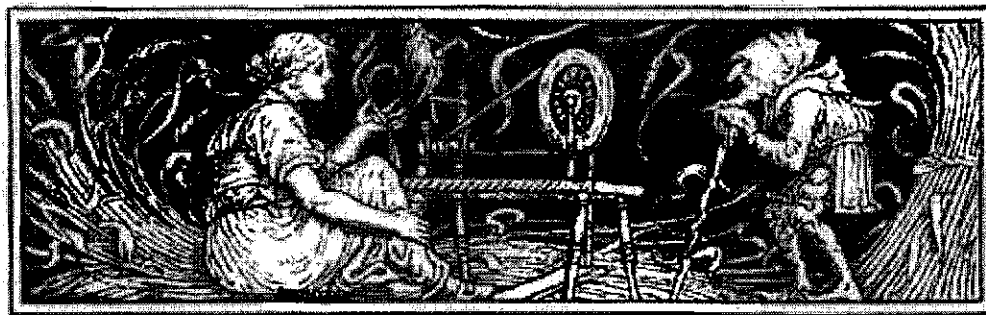


Figure 9:

The goblins are shown “leering” and “signaling” in the manner of men seeking to attract young women in Laurence Houseman's illustration from the 1893 publication of “Goblin Market.”



Figure 10:

Laura clips a golden curl to purchase goblin fruits, as illustrated by Dante Gabriel Rossetti for the second edition of Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, published in 1865.



Figure 11:

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 1865 illustration of the two sisters embracing in sleep captures an aspect of the poem that will suggest homoeroticism to many readers.



Figure 12:

This illustration by Laurence Houseman depicts the goblin men's attempted rape of Lizzie, who remains standing and resists them with her lips sealed.



Figure 13:

Lootie and Irene run down the mountain in Arthur Hughes' original illustration (Penguin Group, PG 32). Here, Hughes depicts the goblin creatures as opposed to the goblins themselves.



Figure 14:

Hughes illustrates the scene in which Curdie scares away the goblins with his rhymes (Penguin Group, PG 29). Interestingly, the figure in the bottom left-hand corner neither resembles the goblins nor their creatures, but rather a mix between the two, perhaps emphasizing the transformation through which the goblin creatures' "countenances [have] grown in grotesque resemblance to the human" (PG 111). "[While] their owners had sunk towards them," MacDonald explains, "they had risen towards their owners" (PG 112).



Figure 15:

In this color illustration by Maria L. Kirk from a ninth edition U.S. reprint of *The Princess and the Goblin* (1907), the goblins appear more like little children, the artist emphasizing the immaturity that MacDonald associates with these dwarfed men, rather than their grotesque deformities.



Figure 16:

The cover for the 1907 reprint also depicts the goblin men as silly little children over whom Princess Irene towers, guided by the wisdom of her great-great-grandmother's string.

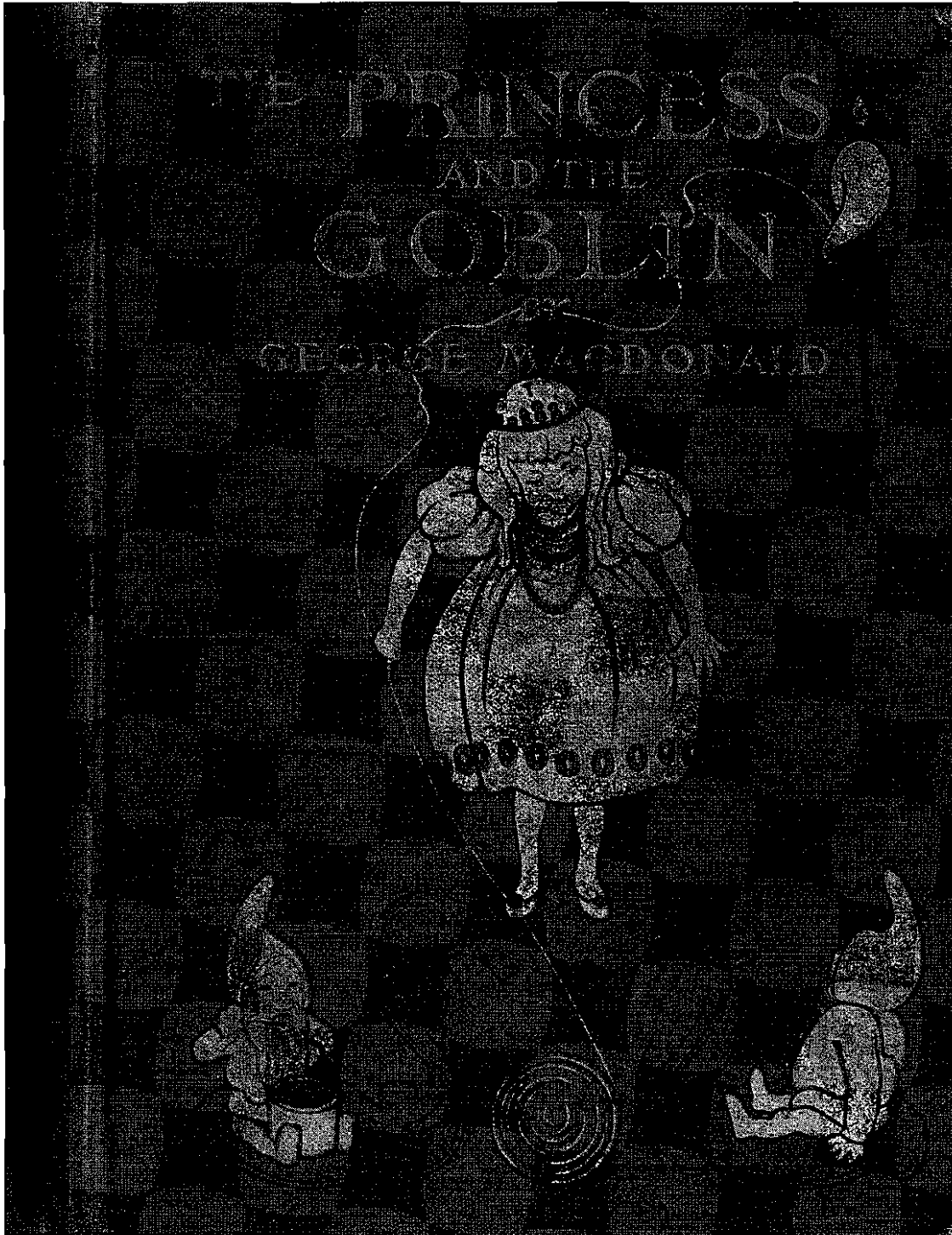


Figure 17:

In Hughes' illustration below, the goblin miners appear more like dwarfed men and not so animalistic or grotesque (Penguin Group, PG 3).



Figure 18:

The members of Glump's goblin family, depicted here by Arthur Hughes, seem a bit more animalistic and cruel, especially the children (Penguin Group, PG 56).



Figure 19:

Here Hughes depicts the scene in which Curdie eavesdrops on the goblin assembly. The goblin king is seated in the center of the great hall on a raised platform (Penguin Group, PG 66).

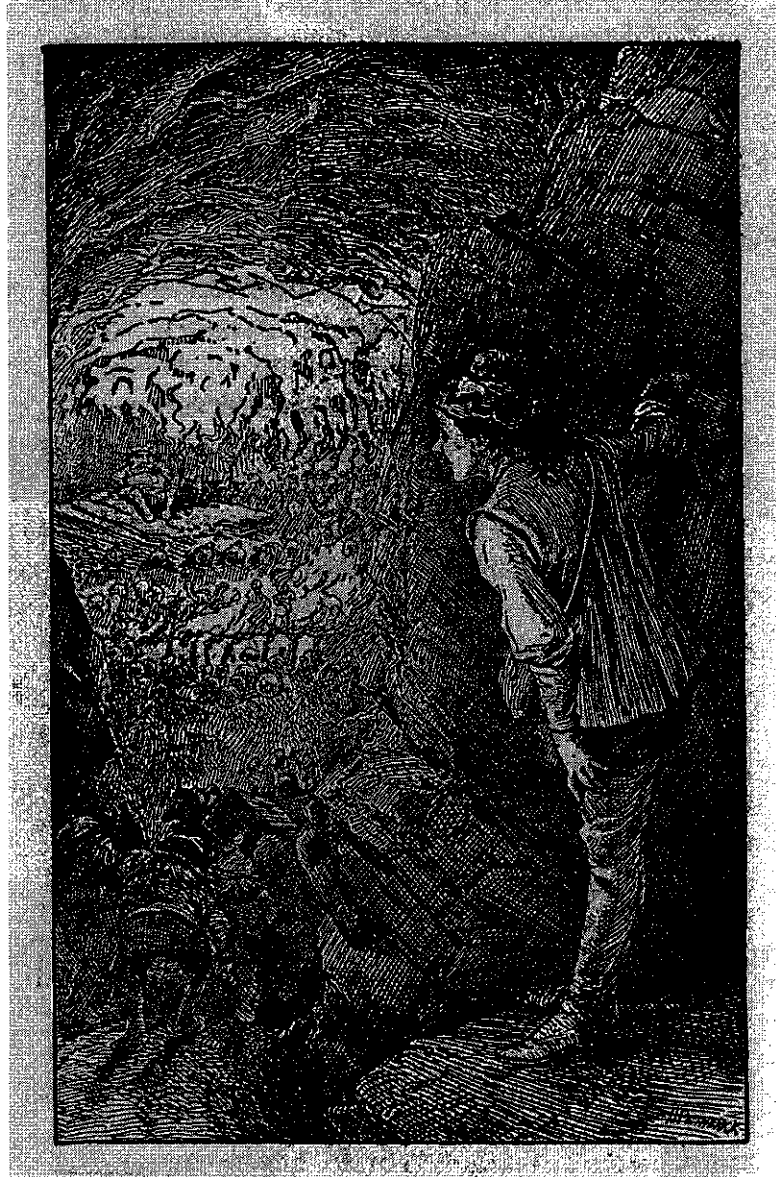


Figure 20:

Curdie stumbles into the residence of the goblin royal family. Hughes draws a slightly more monstrous goblin king and queen here (Penguin Group, PG 136).



Figure 21:

In the 1907 reprint, however, Kirk again depicts the goblin royal family as foolish children, rather than hideous deformations of the human.



Figure 22:

John Tenniel's illustration shows Carroll's three-inch caterpillar seated atop a mushroom and looking down upon a three-inch Alice.



Figure 23:

The goblin queen, a terrifying monster, chases Irene and Curdie in Arthur Hughes' illustration. Irene wisely extinguishes the torch so that the queen cannot see them (Penguin Group, PG 166).



Figure 24:

One of the goblins' downfalls, illustrated here by Hughes, is the taste they acquire for the wine in the king's cellar (Penguin Group, PG 209). Curdie arrives, "dancing and gyrating and stamping and singing like a small incarnate whirlwind" (PG 231), and ultimately defeats them.



Figure 25:

The upper half of this illustration by George Cruikshank depicts the first dwarf (with his tall hat and long, pointed shoes) ordering Amelia to wash her dirty clothes. The bottom half shows the sexually aroused tinker dwarf who enjoys Amelia's dancing and eventually reveals his desire to marry her.

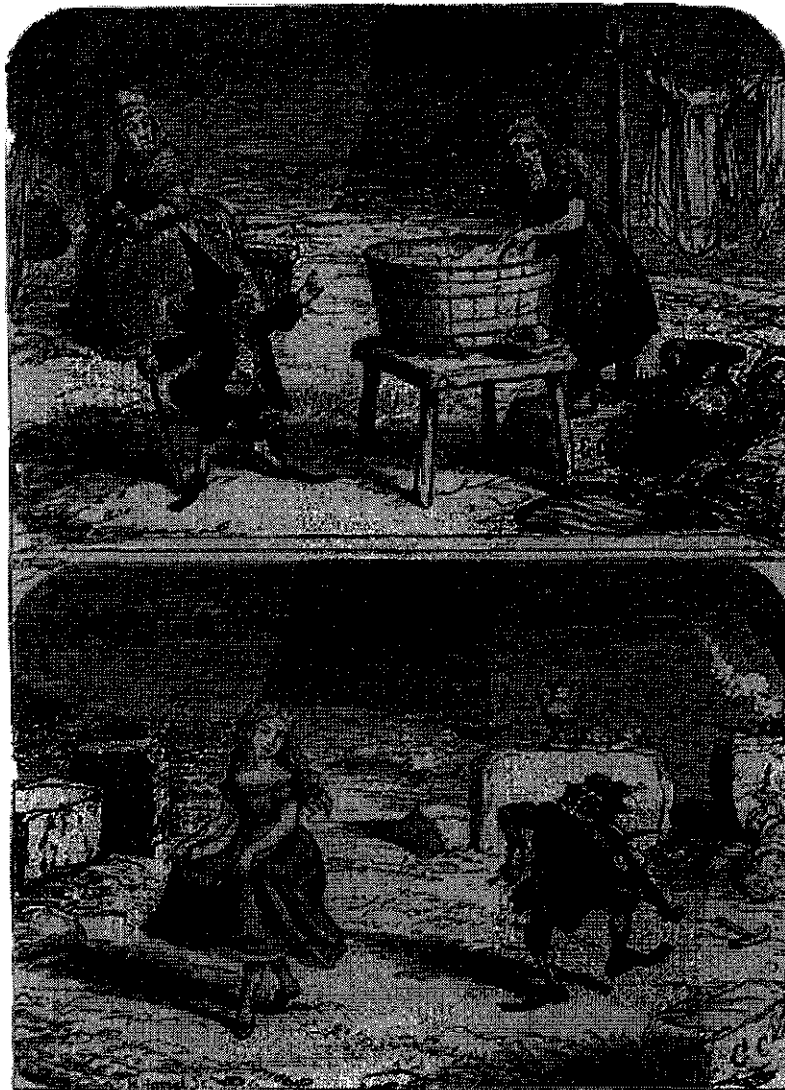


Figure 26:

In *Ventures into Childland*, U.C. Knoepfmacher contrasts the phallic nose on illustrator Richard Doyle's first version of the South West Wind, Esquire, seen here, with the revised version (VIC 57-58), featured in Figure 27.



Figure 27:

Knoepfmacher cites “a suddenly prudish Ruskin” who “[forces] Doyle to redraw the phallic proboscis, now shortened and naturalized” (VIC 57), as it appears in the following illustration (VIC 59).



Figure 28:

Mouth Boy begs Maggie for food from her basket in Arthur Hughes' illustration for Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses*.



Figure 29:

George Cruikshank draws Benjy being thrown out of Beastland (a kind of animal heaven) for the violent acts he has committed against innocent creatures. He is saved from drowning (like the animals he tortured) by the brave dog Nox, and thus begins his repentance and reformation (*The Brownies and Other Tales* 118).



Figure 30:

In the bottom portion of this illustration by George Cruikshank, the two boys in the doctor's story are shown taking care of the housework in the morning before their father awakes. The upper image is from the scene when the wise old owl, associated with Grandmother Trout, subtly tells Tommy that *he* is the Brownie, and must learn to accept greater responsibility in his father's home.



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