

Historical Fiction for Children and Young People: changing fashions, changing forms, changing representations in British writing 1934-2014

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Abstract

In *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992) John Stephens forecast the demise of children's historical fiction as a genre on the grounds that both history itself and the humanist values Stephens saw as underpinning historical fiction were irrelevant to young readers in postmodernity and intrinsically at odds with the attitudes and values of literary postmodernism. In fact, by the end of the millennium juvenile historical fiction was resurgent and continues to propagate humanist ideology.

This study explores the changing nature and status of the genre as it has been published in Britain since Geoffrey Trease's ground-breaking *Bows Against the Barons*, a left-wing retelling of the Robin Hood story, was published in 1934. Consideration is given to the relationship between cultural change and the treatment of the structure, themes, settings and characters that typically feature in historical novels for the young. The work comprises an Introduction and three themed case studies based on a character (Robin Hood), a historical period (the long eighteenth century), and a historical event (the First World War). The case studies are used both to chart changes in the nature, quantity, and reception of historical fiction and to demonstrate the extent to which writers have used historical narratives to explore concerns that were topical at the time the books were written.

In addition to the case studies, which of necessity discuss only a proportion of the texts published on each topic, the thesis includes complementary appendices which provide comprehensive bibliographies for the subject.

Key changes noted over the period include the rise since the 1970s of historical novels featuring groups that were previously marginalised on the grounds of gender, sexuality, class and/or race; adjustments to the age and audience of historical fiction, and considerable use of fantasy elements including timeslip narratives.

Texts discussed in detail include works by Enid Blyton, Hester Burton, Elsie McCutcheon, Marjorie Darke, Penelope Farmer, Leon Garfield, Julia Golding, Stephen R. Lawhead, Robyn McKinley, Linda Newbery, K.M. Peyton, Marcus Sedgwick, Theresa Tomlinson and Geoffrey Trease.

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Chapter 1. Recalled to Life? Historical Fiction for Young Readers in Britain, 1934-2014

As a genre historical fiction is faced with a problem which threatens to deprive it of its readership, in that the assumptions of its intellectual and ideological bases are no longer dominant within Western society.

(Stephens, 1992, p.203)

This statement was made by John Stephens in his influential study, *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*. It underpins his subsequent assertion that the end of the millennium would also see an end of historical fiction for children because the audience for novels set in the past was declining (1992, p. 203). He goes on to explain the dwindling readership for historical fiction as a consequence of the cultural shift from humanism to cultural relativism that accompanied postmodernity. More will be said about the perceived incompatibility between humanism and postmodernity later in this chapter. First it is important to understand the significance of Stephens' claim and to map the contribution and development of historical fiction as a genre for young readers.

Stephens' concerns about the health of historical fiction are noteworthy since there is a long, well developed and admired tradition of writing historical fiction for children in the United Kingdom. For example, a review in a 1972 number of *The Times Literary Supplement* claims that 'the historical novel for children has for many years set a standard by which other writing has been judged' (*TLS*, 28 April 1972). According to Fred Inglis (1981), Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) [and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910)]:

set the syllabus of the historical events which were to be described by writers of historical novels who followed him: the Iron Age, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, 1066 and all that, Queen Bess, Trafalgar.

(Inglis, 1981, p.158)

However, Stephens was not alone in sensing that by the end of the last century historical fiction was no longer the force it had been. Children's literature professionals in both the UK and North America were also suggesting that the genre was in decline and losing its audience. Indeed, even before Inglis identified juvenile historical fiction as the literary benchmark for children's literature, Geoffrey Trease, himself a writer of historical fiction, had pointed to its lack of popularity among young readers (Trease, 1977, p.22). Trease's claims were born out by a Schools Council Research Studies project into children's reading choices, conducted by Frank Whitehead and a team of researchers in the period 1969-1974. In *Children and their Books* (1977) Whitehead *et al* state that the study, which was based on a random national sample of children 10+, 12+ and 14+ years, found that while some classical historical fiction books were chosen by all age groups, more recent writers of historical fiction such as 'Joan Aiken, Cynthia Harnett ... Leon Garfield, K. M. Peyton ... Henry Treece ... figured infrequently on the questionnaires, nor was there evidence of very wide reading even of the more firmly established children's writers such as Rosemary Sutcliff' (1977, p.133). They further note that 'historical stories seem to appeal these days to a comparatively small minority of child readers, though they are more widely read at 12+ and 14+ than at 10+' (1977, p.149). In an overview of historical fiction for children published the year before *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*, the academic Suzanne Rahn (1991) points to the impact on historical fiction in the 1980s caused by a conservative government's minimising of history in the school curriculum (1991, p.22). Librarian Janet Fisher too claimed that the young were turning away from books set in the past. In the introduction to *An Index to Historical Fiction for Children and Young People* (1994) she observes:

All of us involved in working with children and books are aware that there are a large number of good historical novels for children, and that they remain unread by the vast majority of children and young people.

(Fisher, 1994, xiii)

Fisher hoped to encourage parents, teachers and children to read more historical fiction by providing information and summaries of more than 460 books published since the 1960s.

Janet Fisher's index gives some sense of the size and significance of the genre, issues that had to be taken into account in conducting the current research. These are addressed in the methodology section at the end of this chapter. Here it is sufficient to establish that in the closing decades of the last century there was a widespread perception that the appetite for reading historical fiction had declined among the young. Such a perception is supported by a survey carried out by the Children's Literature Research Centre at Roehampton Institute in 1996. This national survey, *Young People's Reading Choices at the End of the Century* (1996) indicates that there is a negative response at both Key Stage 2 (7 – 11year olds) and Key Stages 3/4 (11 – 16 year olds) to the question of how often children read 'stories set in the past' sustaining John Stephens' claim.¹ However, John Stephens is the only one of those who were investigating this phenomenon to connect the lack of interest in novels set in the past to the threats to humanism, the central intellectual and ideological bases to which he refers in the opening quote, arising from the condition of postmodernity. One task of this introductory chapter, therefore, is to explain why Stephens felt humanism was a defining feature of historical fiction and why both therefore had no place in postmodern culture. First, however, it is necessary to establish if and how far the diagnosis of the health of historical fiction was accurate by tracing the origins and development of the historical novel for children to the closing decades of the last century.

1.1 What is historical fiction?

Traditionally historical fiction has been understood as any fiction set in the past, but this fails to make visible the range and breadth of the genre as it has been shaped by readers, authors, publishers, agents and the press over time. There is, in fact, no agreed definition of historical fiction. For Joseph W. Turner, writing in 1979, '[n]either history nor fiction is itself a stable, universally agreed upon, concept' (1979, p.333). In 2005 James Goodman is more certain of his categories, distinguishing between 'fictional history' with real characters in real historical settings and 'historical fiction' which has 'fictional characters in real historical situations or

¹ A follow-up survey in 2005 found that 10 percent of children identified historical fiction as a reading choice at KS2 and 12.7 percent at KS 3/4.

general historical contexts' (2005, p.245). For the most part children's historical fiction is drawn to the latter, although real historical persons may be part of the narrative. Jill Paton Walsh, author of several historical novels for young readers, defines what she terms the 'true' historical novel as one that is 'wholly or partly about the public events and social conditions which are the material of history, regardless of the time in which it was written'(1972, p.17). Walsh does not explain what she means by 'true', though it is likely she is differentiating between novels informed by significant amounts of historical research and those that could be defined as quasi-historical costume novels. Gary Schmidt adds nuance to this claim by declaring that in historical fiction verifiable facts predominate. Historical fiction, he explains, 'is concerned with presenting a realistic fictional tale within the boundaries of a reality in the past' while drawing the line at time-fantasy (Schmidt, 2007, n.p.). Geoffrey Trease, a prolific writer of historical fiction across much of the period covered in this study and a key figure in my research, fuses fact and fiction in what he calls the 'period novel'; novels in which 'every event and every character is as imaginary as in a contemporary [novel], but in which the author's aim is to re-create some historical period' (Trease, 1972, p.6). In one of the most recent studies of the genre, Jerome de Groot identifies 'the intergeneric hybridity and flexibility of historical fiction' as 'one of its defining characteristics' (de Groot, 2010, p.2). For de Groot, historical fiction can be understood as composed of a compilation of a number of genres, and one of its principal attractions, as Matthew Phillpott (2011,n.p.) agrees, is the way it 'can be moulded into: romance, detective, thriller, counterfactual, horror, literary, gothic, postmodern, epic, fantasy, mystery, western and children's books' (de Groot, 2010, p.2). De Groot does not mention the time-slip fantasy, which has become increasingly popular in juvenile historical fiction for the way it intensifies readers' awareness of the similarities and differences for children in the past and the present time of reading. Also to be considered is Anne Macleod's view that 'historical interpretations of what happened, and why, are subject to endless revision over time' making 'true' representations of facts subject to transformation according to writers' ideological views and cultural changes at the time of writing (Macleod, 1998, p.1). Such a statement enhances the validity of historical fiction as representative of history.

Since I began this study two significant critical texts on children's historical fiction have been published. Although both draw on texts published in a number of countries in their analyses

and take a very broad view of what constitutes historical fiction, they share many of the concerns of this thesis. Kim Wilson's *Revisiting Historical Fiction for Young Readers: The Past through Modern Eyes* (2011) considers 'living history', by which she means works that involve physical and psychical time travel as a way of capturing what she calls the "'spirit" or "sense" of an age' (Wilson, 2011, p.2). Wilson's interests, then, are close to those of Trease, though she relates living history novels to living history displays, museums and re-enactments. Living history novels and those which represent historical persons face a particular challenge, however, since 'the perception of reality in this genre is a difficult task' (2011, p.62). Wilson raises issues about the manner in which writers superimpose values and attitudes relating to the present of writing on characters, a theme that also runs through my discussion. This is particularly apparent in representations of agentic females in narratives. Of specific relevance to this study is Catherine Butler and Hallie O'Donovan's *Reading History in Children's Books* (2012), which specifically engages with Stephens' comments about the nature and construction of historical fiction for children and explores the criteria for historical fiction that Stephens sets out. Among the various forms of historical fiction, from the realist to the quasi-historical novel, Butler and O'Donovan include what might be termed 'alternative histories' such as those written by Joan Aiken which they describe as having 'a distinctive set of relationships to history ... distinguished by their emphasis on the past as primarily a setting for narrative, rather than on history *per se*' (2012, p.120). As this suggests, their discussion extends to fantasy and non-fiction texts as they explore the relationship between the reader and the past and the various ways in which a sense of past events can be portrayed for readers. The approach in *Reading History in Children's Books* suggests that too great a focus on genre boundaries impedes understanding of what historical fiction offers readers. In the authors' view 'it is more useful to consider these generic boundaries with an understanding of their inherent permeability' (Butler and O'Donovan, 2012, p.13). To test this view it is necessary to consider how historical fiction evolved and how it has been received by critics.

1.2 Origins and developments of historical fiction

There are conflicting views of when historical fiction was first conceived and produced.

According to Marxist critic Georg Lukács, the idea of the historical novel which developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was born as a result of the French Revolution and

its repercussions around Europe (1962, p.23). Richard Maxwell (2009) challenges this view, indicating that the historical novel derives from seventeenth-century France, even though Lukács, in discussing French writing in the seventeenth century, disputes the historical formulation of such writing in terms of linguistic features.

Jerome de Groot identifies Marie-Madeleine Lafayette's *The Princess of Cleves* (1678), a story set during the reign of Henry II, as the first historical novel, thus supporting Maxwell's claim (de Groot, 2010, p.10). Lukács' justification for the birth of the historical novel is based on an understanding of history that arose in response to the revolution in France. Prior to the Revolution, life was experienced and major events such as war were conducted largely in isolation; wars had been fought by specific armies in areas away from public view, and ordinary people were largely unaware of the manner in which their society was controlled. Under these circumstances it was difficult to get any sense of perspective on what events meant. As Lukács explains it, the pace, scale and proximity of the events that make up what is referred to as the French Revolution made them more immediate and their historical character more visible. They also affected more groups of people than the men who were traditionally associated with historical events: monarchs, military leaders, soldiers, explorers, inventors and others who attracted similar public attention.

Although traditionally historians have also credited men with inventing and establishing the historical novel as a genre, in Britain at least recent research has identified a number of women who helped bring it into being. Among these are Maria Edgeworth, one of Rousseau's disciples and a writer of children's fiction whose *Castle Rackrent; A Hibernian Tale* (1800) for adults is set in the past. For children, Jane Porter wrote a novel about William Wallace called *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810) while with her sister Anne-Maria Porter produced *Tales Round a Winter Hearth* (1826) (Calman, 2009; Birch, 2011). A few years later, Barbara Hofland wrote *Adelaide; Or, The Massacre of St Bartholomew; A Tale Including Historical Anecdotes of Henry the Great* (1830). It was in fact Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* that inspired Sir Walter Scott to finish *Waverley, or 'Tis*

Sixty Years Since (1814), the novel that is widely regarded as the foundation of historical fiction in Britain.² Lukács makes the case in terms of quality and the extent to which it introduces:

new artistic features identified as: the broad delineation of manners and circumstances attendant upon events, the dramatic character of action and, in close connection with this, the new and important role of dialogue in the novel.

(Lukács, 1962, p.31)

Scott's novel, set in distinct social and cultural settings in the past, established the parameters on which later historical novels were based and, significantly, informed the writing of historical novels for children as seen in novels such as Harriet Martineau's *The Settlers at Home* (1841) although it is Captain Fredrick Marryat's *Children of the New Forest* (1847) which is especially remembered. This latter narrative is identified by Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard (1984) as the key text in children's historical fiction of the nineteenth century. Also identifying Marryat's story as a seminal text for this period, Thomas Kullman (2003) links its subject, the English Civil War, with the Romantic concept of history propounded by the Victorian historiographers in a period when art and literature frequently harked back to the chivalric period of the Middle Ages. Like so many later historical novels about the Civil War, readers' sympathies are with the cavaliers as the Romantic figures, and 'with royalist virtues such as personal loyalty ... emphasised' (Lucas, 2003, p. 75). Kate Agnew identifies Charlotte Yonge as the children's author who first placed a child at the centre of a historically-based narrative (Watson, 2001, p.335).³ The didactic nature of these early novels led to historical fiction becoming 'a staple of children's literary diet ... by 1900' (Carpenter and Prichard, 1985, p.249).

1.3 Historical fiction and historiography

Because of their didactic qualities, historical novels for children were for long associated with traditions of teaching history, therefore initially, historical fiction and historiography had much in common in the nineteenth century. Both conveyed a sense of the past as 'other' while the present is presented as familiar, and both historians and historical novelists felt it necessary to

² Scott acknowledges his debt to Edgeworth in the General Preface to the first edition of that novel (Scott, 1814; this edition 1922, p.xxi).

³ Charlotte Yonge's *The Little Duke* (1854) has a small boy as protagonist and *The Dove in the Eagle's Nest* (1866), a teenage girl (Rahn,1991,p.5) She identified history learning first followed by historical fiction in her novels which promoted the quick learning children needed (Maxwell, 2009).

explain for readers the transition between these states. The historical novelist 'explores the dissonance and displacement between then and now, making the past recognisable but simultaneously familiar', while in historiographic writing a narrative of events is created which connects events to each other in order to give meaning to incidents from the past (White, 1973; de Groot, 2010, p.3). In this the fairy tale and chivalric romance forms acted as models because their focus was on the romantic fortunes of royalty and nobility (Kullman, 2003).⁴ However, Michael Holquist, in his introduction to the translation of Bakhtin's *Four Essays*, identifies differences between historiographic writing and the novel, stating:

histories differ from novels in that they insist on a homology between the sequence of their own telling, the form they impose to create a coherent explanation in the form of the narrative on the one hand, and the sequence of *what* they tell on the other.

(Holquist, 1981, p. xxviii; Holquist's emphasis)

Historical fiction, then, gives writers more freedom in relation to the sequencing of events and the form in which these events are revealed. Additionally, the presence of a character who reflects and presents a viewpoint on the actions helps reveal the writer's ideological stance.

According to Lukács, the classical historical novel causes readers to re-experience the social and human motives of people within what Stephens identifies as 'the tenets of reality' suggesting that less important personages and relationships are more suited to this than greater personages (1992, p.203). Rather than descriptions of great battles, Lukács identifies as key to the historical novel the small encounters which Sir Walter Scott uses so expertly to provide readers with a sense of the spirit of the event, or, 'to reconstruct and bring to life the events, culture and zeitgeist of the period' (Agnew et al, in Watson, 2001, p.335). Scott's first historical novel, *Waverley* was followed by many others and these historical novels, written for adults, also appealed to and were taken up by children.⁵ His conviction that children 'should be presented with ideas beyond [their] immediate comprehension' and so should work their way through his novels, may have precluded his writing specifically for children (Carpenter and

⁴ Perrault published his literary fairy tales with the title of *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé* in 1698 implying that at that time there was no distinction between a narrative of real or fictional events of the past (Dalton, 1958, p.86).

⁵ For example, *Guy Mannering* (1815), *Rob Roy* (1817), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *Ivanhoe* (1819) *Redgauntlet* (1824). Matthew Grenby in *The Child Reader* indicates that 'Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901) when aged about eleven was allowed a chapter of a Scott novel a day' (2011, p.115).

Prichard, 1995, p.473).⁶ That in 1888 Scott is identified as the third most popular boys' author in a published survey of young people's reading preferences indicates the appeal or cultural approval of his work and it inspired many imitators. These varied in the quality of their writing, the amount and kind of historical information they contained, and the nature of reader involvement (Salmon, 1888 cited in Carpenter and Prichard, 1984). Seventy years later Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Kidnapped* (1886), specifically for children. It is another Scottish historical novel of adventure reflecting the Victorian Romantic period of writing, set in the post-Jacobite Rebellion period of the 1750s and incorporating a number of historical persons but with a fictional teenage protagonist, David Balfour. Stevenson draws on two different historical episodes concerning historical persons, blending fictional and real historical characters while changing dates and activities to explore 'the Scottish culture of a specific period in the past and how what was happening affected people's lives' (Rahn, 1991, p.3).

Works of historical fiction written in the nineteenth- and early twentieth century demonstrate a number of predominant concerns in society at the time. Many celebrate nationalistic dominance of other peoples and the bravery of upper-middle-class boys or former public school boys in different parts of the empire. By the second half of the nineteenth century, with the expansion of the British Empire, adventure stories which involved travelling and working in far-off regions of the world were produced for an increasing readership of middle- and upper-class boys. These stories were read by girls also since they contained exciting events in exotic and interesting places, unlike much writing for girls at that time which continued to reflect 'the moral and religious purpose of their writers' (Knowles & Malmkjaer, 1996, p.15). Of note are G. A. Henty's historical adventures which focussed on major historic military campaigns and exploration in which his upper-middle class or aristocratic heroes were resourceful and patriotic, epitomising the public school ideal concerning the roles pupils might assume in the Empire (Knowles & Malmjaer, 1996, p.10; Butts, 2010, p.38).⁷ Henty's production of more than 120 historical novels formed part of writing for boys 'that perpetuated myths of heroism, male

⁶ Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* (1827-30) was the only historical novel written specifically for children, although his Waverley novels were abridged for children in the 1920s as *Scott for Boys and Girls* which including abridged works by other authors (Maxwell, 2009).

⁷ Julia Briggs and Dennis Butts indicate that Henty's novels like R.L. Stevenson's were exercises in 'blending ... the extraordinary with the probable', for instance, by featuring teenage heroes who go off to seek their fortunes and succeed in dramatic circumstances (Hunt, 1995, p.150).

comradeship and courage in the face of danger, and even death' (Hunt, 1995, p.189). As such they were narratives which reflected late-Victorian British imperialist ideology (Butts, 2003). These formulaic novels continued to be published long after Henty's death in 1902; they and many others in similar style persisted in promoting the imperialist ideologies of the times, although, as Dalton notes, they were chiefly directed to younger boy readers (1958, p.311). By the beginning of the twentieth century the conventions of historical fiction began to seem outmoded. Edith Nesbit (1858-1924), satirised the historical fiction genre through her use of mock-archaic speech in *Five Children and It* (1902). More than half a century later Margery Fisher points to the same problems of clichéd conventions as contributing to the decline of historical fiction. '[W]ithout imagination and enthusiasm,' she writes, 'the most learned and well-documented story will leave the young reader cold, where it should set him on fire' (Fisher, 1964, p.225). Fisher's warning note reflects the fact that in many ways how historical fiction was written changed little for much of the twentieth century. While by the 1950s children's literature as a whole was becoming more experimental and innovative (Hunt, 1995), the preferred style of writing remained a mainly chronological form, nearer to historiographic writing. There were, however, some notable exceptions.

The possibilities of almost instant global communication presented by the invention of telegraphic communication in the nineteenth century followed by that of the telephone had a profound impact on the experience and understanding of time-space. Such instant transmission was enhanced by Einstein's space-time continuum theory (1905) and may have influenced Edith Nesbit, already a successful writer for children of more than twenty years. She published *The Story of the Amulet* in 1906 in which children are able, with the help of a broken amulet, to travel into the past.⁸ The story is witty and has unexpected twists, with Nesbit's socialist beliefs apparent, particularly when the magic of the amulet takes the children to different societies in the past which are ideologically and politically contrasted with early twentieth-century England (Ang, 2001, p.510). It was followed by two other time-travel novels with a stronger historical base: *The House of Arden* (1908) and *Harding's Luck* (1909). A second writer, Rudyard Kipling having successfully published a range of stories for adults and children, wrote *Puck of Pook's Hill*

⁸ Nesbit was a friend of H.G. Wells and both were founding members of the Fabian Society. H.G. Wells' adult novel *The Time Machine* was published in 1895.

(1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) in which Puck brings imaginary historical characters from the past to the twentieth century to enable the boy, Dan, and girl, Una, to learn of England's heritage. Kipling and Nesbit present differing ideological views of the then current society; Nesbit's socialist background puts forward a challenging view of early twentieth century London to show that inequalities in society need to be addressed, while Kipling's conservative ideology, results in stories that argue for the need to continue to build on Britain's heritage. Both texts move beyond realism; however, although the use of a space-time continuum had found its way into children's historical fiction and would continue to be a presence, young readers still read Henty and his followers' formulaic historical fiction for many years to come (Carpenter and Prichard, 1985, p.249).

The 1920s and 1930s are often identified as a low period in the quality of children's books produced although there were a few outstanding writers (Townsend, 1965; Crouch, 1972; Leeson, 1985). Knowles and Malmjaer (1996,p.21) identify the adventure story at that time as still having the characteristics of a novel written in the 1890s, while Robert Leeson emphasises the continuity of older historical fiction novels observing that 'of the most popular historical novels available in the 1930s and 1940s, eighteen were over 20 years old, twelve over 50, eight over 75 and others over a century old' an indication of reading trends but also the lack of quality in new historical writing (Leeson, 1985, p.113). The 1930s was also a time of unrest as people contemplated the implications of the rise of Fascism in Europe and the input of the Depression saw mass unemployment and hardship in many parts of the country. Such times of unrest and uncertainty are often reflected in literature, including in fantasy which provides a distancing and a different way of engaging with concerns of the present. A few enduringly popular works from the period covered in this thesis fuse historical fiction and fantasy. Nesbit has already been mentioned. *A Traveller in Time* (1939) by Alison Uttley also uses a time-fantasy feature to tell a story about plans for rescuing Mary, Queen of Scots from imprisonment in England. The story also suggests that the past is embodied in a house in Derbyshire where the protagonist Penelope, and her brother and sister have gone to recover after winter illnesses. The disruption of the narrative as Penelope moves through a door into the house's Elizabethan time and where a boy from Elizabethan times appears in the present of the 'frame' narrative is another example of children's literature displaying concerns associated with literary Modernism. Despite

individual experiments such as Uttley's, by the 1930s the majority of historical fiction had become highly conventionalised and clichéd. This is why Geoffrey Trease's *Bows Against the Barons* (1934) made such a lasting impact. In it Trease tells a story about the social problems in Depression-era Britain using a setting in the past. This Marxist-influenced text tells how a group of men challenge the regime under which they live. Because of its determination to confront the predictable modes and messages of the conventional historical novel, Trease's *Bows Against the Barons* features prominently in the first case study.

1.4 Humanism and historical fiction

Although John Stephens discusses the language of historical fiction, his principal concern is with its ideological function. This reflects the fact that his career spanned the intellectual upheavals which affected western universities from the 1970s. By 1992, when Stephens published *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*, academic interest had for more than two decades largely been focused on theorising the operations of power in society; how these were produced and sustained but also challenged by ideology, or 'the system of ideas that define a culture' (Parsons, 2011, p. 113). As the title of Stephens' book acknowledges, these concerns were as much of interest to those working on children's books as they were to academics investigating other kinds of texts and areas of study. In fact, the idea that the world is ideologically constructed and that normative ideas are passed on through all forms of language including stories made children's literature, as a primary area of children's encounter with both stories and new forms of language particularly worthy of study.

Emphasis on the world as ideologically constructed undermined earlier ways of thinking about and experiencing culture, not the least of these being humanism, with its messages around eternal verities and the unchanging nature of human values and responses. This context to which was added a series of intellectual movements that defined the closing decades of the twentieth century as an era of postmodernity forms the basis for John Stephens' claim that 'intellectual and ideological bases' that had underpinned historical fiction were 'no longer dominant within Western society' (1992, p. 203). To understand the connections he draws between these cultural changes and the condition of the historical novel for children it is necessary to understand what Stephens is referring to when he talks about humanism and its relationship to children's literature.

Humanism has its origins in the Renaissance, but the term now refers more generally to the belief that individual and personal values - as opposed to religious or political dogma, or the rigid social structures - should be at the centre of the way we understand and act in the world. Indeed some now use 'humanism' as a very unspecific term to denote a culture or system that makes human needs and wishes paramount. Peter Faulkner (1975), for instance, identifies humanism, in its modern sense, as an ethic 'which places human happiness as its central concern (Faulkner, 1975, p.1). In literature humanism became an influential way of explaining the world. For instance, didactic writing, common in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, gradually gave way to moral stories and literature informed by a humanist perspective. Such stories focused on the individual and were instrumental in the socio-political and ethical constructions of childhood leading, for example, to the child labour reforms of the nineteenth century (Hawthorn, 1998). These social, political and ethical contexts in which fiction is posited are, according to Jeremy Hawthorn (1998), promoted by such contemporary humanist academics as Alan Bullock (1985), David Lodge (1990), Irving Howe (1992) and William Booth (1993). As we have seen, in the nineteenth century, the success of Sir Walter Scott's historical novels paved the way for historical fiction written specifically for children where a humanist perspective is portrayed through the lives, activities and thoughts of young protagonists. These stories are centred on the conduct of children in sometimes extraordinary situations; their experiences enable them to recognise their own and the needs of others and to act on these. Such historically-based stories present history as woven through the lives of mainly ordinary people and set within a microcosm, yet usually affected by the ripples of significant events.

For John Stephens and Robyn McCallum (1998) the two most significant and constant characteristics of humanism are that 'it focuses on human beings and starts from human experience' and that 'individual human beings have a value themselves, grounded in the power to communicate, and in the power to observe themselves, to speculate, imagine, and reason'(1998, p.19). They argued that much children's historical fiction writing reflects these convictions. Alan Bullock (1985) agrees that children's literature should present the young reader with a wide range of human experience, both contemporary and historical. He regards the study of 'questions of conscience, conflicts of loyalty, rebellion and authority, the ambivalence of feelings, the search for identity ... are reflected in literature, theatre, the arts,

history and philosophical debate ... engaging the imagination and the emotions in the penetration of other people's worlds and ideas' (Bullock, 1985, p.187). The best children's historical fiction provides this for its readers.

If we try to unpick precisely what Stephens and McCallum mean by humanism, we find a suggestion that literary humanism 'promotes tradition and the conserving of culture ... while valuing altruistically intersubjective social and personal relationships' (1998, p.18). The centrality of story over time in portraying a humanist philosophy or a belief in human responsibility and human potentiality is also indicated by Alan Sinfield (2004, p.41). Sinfield emphasises the way in which literature, and other forms of media representation, inform our understanding of the world and how we live in it (2004, p.26). Such humanism is emphasised, as Peter Barry indicates, when readers see '[t]he same passions, emotions, and even situations ... again and again throughout human history' (Barry, 2009, p.17/18). This is a feature which writers draw on to invite reader empathy with protagonists in historical fiction writing for children and to extract 'truths' which they can transfer to their own lives.

John Stephens equates the decline in interest in historical fiction reading and publishing with the rise of postmodernism in the 1980s which had undermined the position of humanism in western culture (1992, p. 203). His view was that humanism, which had provided the driving force of historical writing and thus of historical fiction since the Middle Ages, was no longer dominant or perhaps tenable in postmodern times. According to Stephens, humanism was being replaced as cultural relativism, that is, the view that each individual considers events from his or her own cultural perspective, became the dominant principle by which the world was viewed. Cultural relativism challenged the tenets of humanism, which holds that individual views reflect unchanging truths, although Stephens qualified this by indicating that '[t]he two positions are not wholly irreconcilable' (1992, p.203). For Stephens, since postmodernism, there are neither essential meanings to be learned from considering past events nor universal values from which present and future life can benefit. As he saw it in 1992, this cultural shift robbed historical fiction of its chief motivation for readers and writers alike and it is this position that underpins his claim that the decline of humanism was rendering historical fiction obsolete.

Since he believed the ways of viewing the world associated with postmodernity had had a lasting impact, Stephens did not foresee that historical fiction itself would be affected by postmodernism. As the following chapters show, this can be seen in the fusion of other genres with historical fiction. Twenty years later, with the advantage of hindsight, Catherine Butler and Hallie O'Donovan, while agreeing with Stephens' views concerning the conservative nature of the humanist perspective in children's historical fiction, identify 'the variety and heterogeneity of historical fiction' and promote the humanist model as a means of valuing transhistorical continuity and extent. They indicate that 'the humanist model typically prizes history for its ability to teach humane values, a task to which the assumed universality of human experience is central; but it may also apostatize history as something larger than any human life' (2012, p.180). In fact, far from the situation as Stephens saw it, the changes in the different models in which historical fiction is presented since Stephens' initial comments in 1992 have led to the creation of both a wider audience for such stories and more writers being attracted to the new modes of historical fiction. Equally significant, and as will be demonstrated in the close readings contained in the following chapters, is the fact that, despite postmodern influences in how stories are told, many writers have continued to incorporate humanist elements in their historical novels. This finding bears out the conclusion reached by Tony Davies in his 1997 study *Humanism* that, 'the question of humanism remains ideologically and conceptually central to modern- even to 'postmodern' concerns' (Davies, 1997, p.5).

As a cultural relativist, Stephens maintains that cultural attitudes and values are not universal or transhistorical but vary across time and from one society to another.⁹ Looking at social attitudes in the postmodern West, with its focus on the present and future as opposed to the legacies of history, Stephens concluded that 'there is no common ground between peoples of different places and times' had taken hold (Stephens, 1992, p.203). That being the case, no truth or values can be transferred between characters and events set in the past and readers in the present. Stephens argues that this shift in understanding renders redundant traditional humanist approaches to writing historical fiction which had been a feature of the genre since its advent in the early nineteenth century. From his vantage point in 1992, Stephens saw cultural

⁹ This view, associated with Kant and Hegel was later developed in the fields of philosophy and anthropology through the work of Franz Boas (1858-1942), Melville J. Herskovits (1894-1963) and Margaret Mead (1901-1978).

relativism being strengthened by a culture which celebrated the acquisition of personal wealth. Circumstances, he believed, were breeding 'loss of curiosity about and devaluing of interest in the historical past in late-twentieth-century Western society caused by pressures to exist in the present and to consider only the immediate future' (Stephens, 1992, p.203). These views are at variance with those which maintain that writers who want to express concerns about the present time of writing often choose to set their narratives in a past time in order to distance them for readers. This is the intellectual context from which Stephens made his claim. To underpin the close readings in the case studies, it is also necessary to include a discussion of the changing cultural contexts that provide the background for the changes in the way history is turned into fiction for the young in the case study texts.

1.5 External factors affecting historical fiction

The 1930s, where my study begins, was a time of economic depression with 17 percent of the population 'living hand to mouth, in and out of debt, in cramped, cold, damp, insanitary conditions and the politics of a conservative hegemony (Sinfield, 2004, p.10). Such times and conditions prompted Geoffrey Trease to write his *Bows Against the Barons* (1934).¹⁰ Alan Sinfield (2004) relates the appalling damage done by the Blitz during the Second World War when, in the first three years, more civilians were killed than soldiers and when 'whole streets of working-class houses [were] flattened' an indication that in such circumstances many people's lives in the post-war period were not that much different from pre-war times. However, he identifies the Second World War as a 'crucial turning point in the development of the modern world' (Sinfield, 2004, p.7). Following the Second World War there was full employment, a stable economy and the politics of the labour-constructed Welfare State. A move towards a common class culture seemed to be in hand with William Beveridge's proposals for a Welfare State but how far 'a historic shift towards a new kind of civilization occurred in 1945' is disputed (Sinfield, 2004, p.22). Certainly most novels for children, whether historical or contemporary, still presented mainly middle-class protagonists. The issues around interpreting the post-war period as one of unfettered social progress are given expression by Richard Hoggart in his landmark text, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), discussed later, and by a system of welfare-capitalism. However, the gradual erosion of empire and a changing ideology in which

¹⁰ Eve Garnett wrote *The Family from One End Street* (1937), a novel with a contemporary setting, after seeing the deplorable conditions for families living in London's East End (Butts, 2010, p.123).

equality became an even more significant facet in the post-war decades encouraged a new generation of historical fiction writers (Hunt, 1995, p.256).¹¹ Their rise to prominence during the 1950s and 1960s came partly as a result of the end of austerity in the 1950s, minimum unemployment, and increased wages which released more money to spend on luxuries, including books: 'Opportunities in life, if not equal, were distributed much more fairly than ever before and the weekly wage-earner, in particular, had gained standards of living that would have been almost unbelievable in the thirties' (Unstead, 1963, p.224).¹²

Other influences on the writing of historical fiction came from changes in the education system with a focus on children's literature in English teaching in secondary schools. It promoted a 'reinvigorated market' and an increase in adults' interest in children's fiction books. Hunt also identifies a steadily increasing critical interest in children's novels.¹³ Geoffrey Trease's conviction (1949; 1964) was that by focussing his stories on the lives of characters from poor or working-class backgrounds rather than the middle- and upper-class protagonists that had dominated children's literature including historical fiction, he had helped instigate a significant change in historical fiction writing. Trease believed that the changes he introduced and fostered, particularly in relation to historical fiction, helped to rejuvenate the children's book market and attract new writers. The new breed of historical novelists for children adopted Trease's methods, including the importance of avoiding anachronistic dialogue, '[b]etter characterization, livelier action, less hackneyed subjects, more vivid backgrounds, a poetic power to evoke something that really *is* "atmosphere" and not the reek of moth-balls' (Trease, 1964, p.97; Trease's emphasis). Such writing is evidence of the way in which children's historical fiction writing has changed over time and perhaps Trease's most enduring legacy has been, as Margaret Meek indicates, his reliance on thorough research embedded in a good story (Meek, 1961; 1968).

¹¹ Hunt identifies Lucy Boston, Philippa Pearce, William Mayne, Alan Garner, Rosemary Sutcliff, Leon Garfield, Joan Aiken, Jill Paton Walsh and Peter Dickinson.

¹² Marcus Crouch states that 'the paper famine, almost as much as the writer famine, limited the production of books during the war years' (1972, p.26) and that this continued for some years in the post-war period.

¹³ F. J. Harvey Dalton's, *Children's Books in England* (1932) was followed by Roger Lancelyn Green's *Tellers of Tales* (1946) and Trease's *Tales out of School* (1949). In journals *The Horn Book Magazine* (1924-) and *Junior Bookshelf* (1936-) were added to by *Children's Literature in Education* (1969) and *Signal* (1969-2003).

At times in the immediate post-war period, history itself, not just historical fiction, seemed to be uncertain, particularly during the 'Cold War'. With eastern European countries becoming communist regimes by 1947 and the first Russian atomic warhead exploded, western nations felt themselves in a constant state of threat from nuclear attack (Davies and Sinfield, 2000, pp.103/104). The Cold War influenced the work of writers of children's historical fiction; for example, Rosemary Sutcliff, always interested in pre- and Roman history, particularly that dealing with the Romans in Britain, wrote a trilogy of narratives around the coming of the Anglo-Saxons to Britain's shores at the time of the withdrawal of Roman troops after four hundred years of Roman rule. Her tales about invasion from the east by barbaric tribes who will wipe out civilisation and culture reflect the concerns of Britons about a communist 'invasion' and nuclear threat (Collins and Graham, 2001, p.112).¹⁴

The rise in social concerns brought about largely through the introduction of a welfare state led to an increasing focus on the lives of working-class people. Three men are significant in considering the working classes and shaping views of them while directing writers of children's historical fiction to their struggles in the past. When Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* appeared in 1957 it illuminated the lives of working-class people and especially those living in the north of England. Based on Hoggart's childhood in Leeds from the 1930s to 1950s it exposed the destructive nature and waste of Britain's class-riven culture. Raymond Williams too made a significant contribution to changing perceptions of the working class through his Marxist critique of culture and the arts, beginning with *Culture and Society* (1957). Edward Palmer (E.P.) Thompson, a Marxist historian, explored the social and cultural formation of people in the period between 1780 and 1832 in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). The significant number of juvenile historical novels set in the eighteenth century bear witness to the importance of this book (see Appendix B). The substantial influence of these works on historical fiction writing at this time and since, particularly with respect to the number of working-class protagonists who became the subject of historical novels, is explained in the remaining chapters of this study.

¹⁴ Rosemary Sutcliff's *The Eagle of the Ninth* (1954), *The Silver Branch* (1957) and *The Lantern Bearers* (1959) form the trilogy. The final story concerns the Romans' withdrawal from Britain and invasion by Anglo-Saxons.

When considering the audience for historical fiction it is important to think about the age of the implied reader and other forces at work that could shape their willingness to read novels set in the past. Stephens, for example, points to the reader's ability to engage imaginatively with the characters, the settings and the events in texts, skills that are to some extent acquired with maturity and experience of reading. Age also affects how readily readers grasp what history is. These are two aspects of historical fiction that writers must contend with when choosing to work in this genre.

The relationship between historical research and storytelling is also challenging. Historical information that is judiciously integrated and does not overwhelm the story with detail is more likely to engage child readers than one where large sections of historical description obscure the plot. Accuracy of historical detail within the period under consideration has continued to be significant, presenting readers with history 'from the perspective of individuals caught up in the past' (Sarricks, 1999, n.p) and an indication that historical fiction texts are used to supplement historical teaching. Since the implementation of a National Curriculum for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 1988, publishers are increasingly likely to bring out fiction in which the setting and plot relate to the history curriculum; with their eye on the schools' market historical accuracy takes on additional importance (Johnson, 2002). It is noticeable that many writers call attention to the amount of historical research they have conducted in paratextual material such as Author Notes while at the same time promoting the imaginary and inventive aspect of their work which, Wilson indicates, challenges the integrity of the historicism (2011, p.1).¹⁵ Emphasis on historical accuracy can be understood as part of a cultural trend among writers to justify the importance of historical fiction as a genre at a time when historiography was considering the very nature of the writing of history.

The question of what constitutes history may create more problems for children's writers than for those addressing an adult readership, but both need to have an understanding of what counts as history. Adult historical novels are identified as those set fifty or more years in the past, and based on research or beyond personal experience (Fleishman, 1971; Johnson, 2002).

¹⁵ See for example, Trease, Sutcliff and Treece who often included historical notes to support their narratives as do Hester Burton on *Casters Away!* (1962), Marcus Sedgwick on *The Foreshadowing* (2005) or Nicola Morgan on *The Highwayman's Curse* (2007).

In this they correspond to Sir Walter Scott's implied definition when he sub-titled his novel *Waverley* as *'Tis Sixty Years Since*. Since for very young children the difference between six, sixty, and six hundred years may be vague, Stephens identifies the target audience for children's historical fiction as children in the upper primary years through to junior secondary, that is, nine to thirteen years (Stephens, 1992, p. 202). Before this, according to Stephens, most children struggle to engage imaginatively with characters, places and technologies of a past era. Most also lack the ability to absorb a discourse which has been made strange in order to create an illusion of a past time.

Different issues pertain to historical fiction written for an older audience of post-fourteen year olds. While many teenage children read adult literature, writers increasingly write specifically for this age-group. Publishers and booksellers have seized the opportunity to market books, including historical fiction, for a young-adult (YA) readership from fourteen years.¹⁶ While constituting a change particularly in historical fiction writing, there are also implications for the nature of the narratives told to an older readership in terms of structure, theme, outcome and the quality and quantity of detail, particularly the kind of detail which, in stories for younger readers would have been excluded.¹⁷ Stephens did not foresee either the growth of historical fiction for young adults or the large number of historical stories in a picture book format which have appeared in the children's literature market in recent years, some of them aimed at children as young as five to seven years. Nor could he foresee developments specific to the UK such as the impact of the National Curriculum for England and Wales in the 1980s. Both aspects indicate change in historical fiction writing.

The National Curriculum identified story within the history curriculum as a way to support children's knowledge and understanding of the past. Department of Education and Science documents encouraged the use of story with young children in schools on the grounds that they enabled them to understand the chronology of events through sequencing. However, academic historians were dismissive of story, considering it an unreliable mode of analysis (Husbands,

¹⁶ Sarah Trimmer recognised young adulthood as between 14 and 21 years in 1802 but it was from the 1950s that a teenage audience was identified. Hester Burton's historical fiction stories written in the 1960s were clearly aimed at an audience of teenagers since most of her protagonists are in their teenage years. The 1970s and 1980s saw booksellers and libraries creating young-adult sections distinct from children's literature or that for adults.

¹⁷ Subjects or attitudes that were considered taboo in children's stories have, over time, changed since the 1970s (Pearson with Hunt, 2011, p.246).

1996, p.46). This attitude ran counter to Hayden White's argument that the 'writing of history as a narrative form already places it on the same axis as fiction' (Stephens, 1992, p.205; Jenkins, 1995, p.134). The National Curriculum History Description Levels for 2010 state that children between five and seven years (Key Stage 1) can be expected to have a developing understanding of past and present, to perceive the differences between lives of people in the past and present and to become familiar with dates. Awareness of past and present and of key events through anniversaries has been continued in the new proposals of 2013. Picture books which provide a mimesis of life in the past can be perceived as playing an important role in this. While such views challenge Stephens' perception of historical fiction in relation to reader age, there are also challenges to what can be perceived as history. To young children, ten years in the past is often beyond their memories and could be perceived as history; picture books which relate stories of the Iraq War (2003) or the war in Afghanistan (2001- present), for example, would be considered appropriate to support the History curriculum. Such a text is Michael Foreman's *A Child's Garden: A Story of Hope* (2008), an anti-war narrative set in the rubble of a war-torn society, possibly the Middle East or Afghanistan. While it is recognised that picture books can be, and are, read by older readers, these picture book texts confound Stephens' assumptions about the intended readership for historical fiction.

1.6 Historical fiction today: the return of humanism?

As this chapter has established, children's historical fiction has never been a static genre. Indeed, Linda Hall suggests that it has always been a hybrid form since Marryat 'hit upon the winning formula of wedding the adventure story-cum-Robinsonnade with historical fiction, that immensely popular new genre for adults invented forty years earlier by Walter Scott' (Hall, 2003, p.305). Richard Maxwell indicates that the historical novel 'cuts at an odd angle through the larger body composed of all fiction, neither unproblematically a part of this totality nor independent of it' and that this makes it 'hard to isolate and get into focus' (Maxwell, 2009, p.8). But, particularly over the past ten years or so, there have been distinct changes in the manner in which some historical fiction is presented which show that while Stephens was premature in announcing the death of historical fiction for the young, it only survived by responding to the cultural changes he recognised were threatening its existence. These changes

are discussed in detail in the chapters that make up the remainder of this thesis. It is important to note here that they are part of larger changes in British culture's interest in history.

The human aspiration to solve mysteries, to search for evidence, draws on a hermeneutic desire which has long been part of literature as evidenced in the mystery genre, forensic fiction, and television programmes and series within these genres. An interest in the past is being revitalised by drawing on these genres in ways that refresh the tradition of writing historical fiction and enable it to be brought back into the mainstream of contemporary narratives. In the field of literature there is mass marketing of classic novels which correspond with current drama series on television and film.¹⁸ These narratives contemporary to the time of publication seem historical to readers today, while their production in film also reveals a presentist manner.¹⁹ Together these and newly written dramas set in the past imply a cultural attitude built around heritage and nostalgia in a society waiting to move forward but looking for things from the past which are seen as having value.²⁰ Such interest is also evidenced by the fact that both in film and adult fiction there has been an increase in production of texts with a historical focus.²¹ Indeed, Kim Wilson concludes that 'over a period of the past thirty to forty years is an inherently embedded humanistic metanarrative of positive progression'. She suggests that such a view presupposes that 'anything moving into the future is better than what came before and ... that there are core human values and emotions consistent to every age' (Wilson, 2011, p.5). As Butler and O'Donovan remind us, this teleological aspect of historical fiction with its assumption of the superiority of the present over the past is problematic in the twenty-first century. Their interest on the residual humanist elements they identify in contemporary historical fiction is the

¹⁸ In film and television the works of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writer Jane Austen are being produced; Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* (1851-3) and Flora Thompson's trilogy *Lark Rise to Candleford* (1938) have experienced resurgence.

¹⁹ 'presentist': a term indicating that writers' own cultural views determine how characters and events are presented.

²⁰ The television series *Downton Abbey* evokes a sense of the time of the First World War and the way society was changing while the series *Call the Midwife*, based on the memoirs of Jennifer Worth (1935-2011), recalls social conditions in east London in the 1950s and improvements following the introduction of the National Health Service.

²¹ In recent years adult historical fiction novels have been recognised and achieved prizes; in Britain the Booker Prize was awarded to Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin* (2000) and Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* (2001). Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* (1997), Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* (1997) and Tracy Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1999) have all been reproduced as films, while *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), *Elizabeth* (1998), *Gladiator* (2000), and *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007) also ensure historical representation in film. The adult historical novel has achieved such prominence that the US Historical Novel Society established a website in 1997 and includes reviews, critical articles and conference reports as well as a journal. See www.historicalnovelsociety.org

extent to which these enable readers in the present to learn about their own times 'by looking at similar situations that have arisen in the past' (Butler and O'Donovan, 2012, p.177).

Historical novels are not real history, although they present a semblance of reality, through mimesis of a past age, albeit through a presentist viewpoint in which writers' own cultural views determine how characters and events are presented. They do this for an ideological purpose as well as to entertain and provide a representation of a historical past. Readers, as they become more familiar with novels and the genre in particular, recognise and accept the unreality of the text. This is more likely to happen as postmodern trends become apparent in texts, such as mixing of literary genres, intertextuality, incorporation of pastiche, parody and allusion between texts along with irony.

Such writing must therefore carry the writer's ideological views, whether implicit and passive and/or explicit and active (Hollindale, 1988). Children's fiction exists as a cultural practice to socialise children by presenting, through narrative, information about themselves, the world in which they live, about relationships with others and how and what to think, this being presented within an exciting and aesthetically engaging narrative. Historical fiction is a part of this socialisation practice through the performance of characters within events of the past. In this process the child reader is offered an ideology or system of beliefs by which a sense of the world in which they live is understood. As Stephens notes,

Writing for children is usually purposeful, its intention being to foster in the child reader a positive apperception of some socio-cultural values which, it is assumed, are shared by author and audience. These values include contemporary morality and ethics, a sense of what is valuable in a culture's past ... and aspirations about the present and future.

(Stephens, 1992, p.3)

Stephens identifies this as social conservatism, 'an illusion that the reader's present time, place and subjectivity constitute a normative position against which alterities are to be measured' (Stephens, 1992, p. 205). In many ways, then, his larger view of writing for children continues to encompass aspects of humanism, and as this thesis will show, historical fiction is no exception.

This chapter has explored the development of historical fiction for children over time and in doing so has begun to identify the range of texts that have emerged at different periods in order

to explore the ideological influences at particular points in time. It has also indicated some key features of historical fiction as a means of explaining how and why John Stephens' argument that children's historical fiction in the 1980s was declining proved to be flawed. Stephens' assumptions were based on the acceptance of the pervading discourses of postmodernism which, he believed, had swept aside humanism and replaced it with an emphasis on the individual and a lack of human knowledge or values. The case studies that make up the body of this thesis show how at different points over time the relationship between individuals and society have changed and that movement and trends identified by Stephens were merely temporary phenomena.

To end this introductory chapter I explain how I set about tracking changes in the popularity of historical fiction and subgenres within it over the 80 years covered by this study and I identify a number of factors that I suggest have affected the status and nature of historical fiction at different times.

1.7 Methodology

In carrying out this study of eight decades of historical fiction for children the number and range of primary works was such that it was necessary to devise a sample and an approach that would allow for a reliable overview without becoming unwieldy. This was done in a number of ways: firstly, by only considering texts from mainly British writers; secondly, by limiting the study to the period 1934 to 2014; and thirdly, by selecting indicative sets of texts which relate to specific areas of historical fiction writing. Confining my study to mainly British writers enabled me to focus on texts in which British history predominates and to reduce the cultural influences which international writers might bring to texts. In relation to the time span, I considered that a period of eighty years from the publication of Geoffrey Trease's radical text *Bows Against the Barons* (1934) to 2014 would provide a substantial period of time to identify 'change' in the way in which historical fiction texts had developed and to consider the influence of humanism or otherwise. Because even once the first two filters had been applied there were still an unmanageable number of texts to consider it was necessary to make the parameters even tighter. This was done by choosing historical fiction narratives which relate to specific subject topics and adopting what Robert Stake identifies as a collective case study approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p.138; Yin, 2014). Overall the case studies provide a lens to examine change

in a number of areas through comparison and detailed study of identified texts within each case study. Text choices within each case study provide evidence of change in the way narratives are told and the manner in which socio-cultural and political developments influence this, particularly in relation to humanistic presentation of history (Stephens, 1992, p.203). Three case studies were fashioned as a means of providing coverage of the main types of historical fiction, the materials covered, and changes in approach to writing historically for young readers. The three case studies examine a historical character, a historical period and a historical event. Together they enabled me to map key developments in the genre over time.

1.7.1 *The case studies*

Character

The first case study takes a particular character as its focus, acknowledging the fact that particularly for younger readers of historical fiction engagement can be underpinned by basing events around a usually young, character. Sometimes this will be an imagined young person who is 'living through' a particular period or momentous event, sometimes it will be a historical figure. In many ways character-led narratives lend themselves to a humanist treatment since by making a character a point of identification the stories imply that there are essential, unchanging aspects of what it means to be human and what people value in each other and in the societies they inhabit. Readers engage, virtually, in the character's problems and challenges and may cast a reflective light on the actions. For this reason a character-based case study seemed important when testing Stephens' claims about the decline of humanism.

A survey of books which feature different historical characters indicated that the character of Robin Hood has been written about more than any other and more regularly throughout the period under investigation. This range of material therefore provides many opportunities to relate retellings to particular periods and topical events and to see how the treatment of the Robin Hood figure has been reshaped for new audiences and in response to ideological shifts such as that from conservative to liberal and humanism to cultural relativism. Additionally, the frequency of Robin Hood tales provides a useful point of comparison with the other case studies.

Period

I considered a number of historic periods and made an initial survey of texts within each period. In the process it became clear that the eighteenth century held a special position as a touchstone for social change within the twentieth century. I see this as connected to E. P. Thompson's critical and historical perspective on the latter part of the eighteenth century in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), an influential work at a time when historical fiction was in the ascendancy. Reflecting the recent tendency in historical studies to think in terms of a 'long eighteenth century' I stretched the dates of the period to chime more accurately with current understanding of the key events, developments, legacies, and spirit of the age.

Historical fiction set in the eighteenth century generally features a numbers of motifs and themes which continued to resonate in new ways over the decades covered by this study: slavery, pirates, highwaymen, rebellions, revolutions and warfare as well as concerns relating to social change. To augment close readings a database of texts with an eighteenth century setting was compiled, indicating characters, location, key dates and themes (Appendix B). From this I was able to identify patterns and substantiate claims about the prevalence of specific attributes of historical fiction set in the eighteenth-century.

Event

My third and final case study centres on a historical event. I wanted either a significant event, such as a war, or some other noteworthy historical occurrence which provides a backdrop to the actions of the narrative or in which the protagonist is engaged. To avoid overlap with the period and character case studies and to ensure that some of the most experimental examples of contemporary historical fiction for young people was covered by the discussion, I decided to focus on novels about the First World War. Again, in preparation for researching this chapter I read and set up a database of stories about the First World War. Ultimately I decided to examine works which present the war through the eyes and experiences of girls and women because such stories run counter to the large number of historical fiction texts which explore the experiences and actions of boys and men in war. It was also a means of considering the role and impact of feminism in the period under consideration.

Together the case studies enable discussion of a wide range of historical periods, events and issues as they have been represented across the decades covered by this study. Although it was

only possible to discuss in detail selected texts within the case studies, the appendices provide comprehensive bibliographies of other relevant works. This data was gathered and interrogated to support the findings of the case studies. The appendices provide a big picture of how the genre, and individual subsets within it, evolved over a period of 80 years. They also constitute a unique resource in themselves.

Since each case study varies in the number and the publication dates of the texts being discussed, it was necessary to vary the methodology employed in each case study. Once a database of texts relating to a particular case study was set up, I considered how to identify which specific texts to subject to my analysis. The texts chosen had to be spread across the period 1934-2014 so that it would be possible to identify and analyse change across time and to identify whether there was a continuation of a humanist ideology. It was particularly important to include texts published from the 1990s onwards, which is when, according to Stephens, humanism was in retreat. A second/third reading narrowed the choice to texts based on criteria such as author, reader age, protagonist, theme/s or narrative content. In my case study based on a single character (Robin Hood) a choice of texts approximately ten years apart was considered sufficient to indicate any change. In the case study on a single period (the eighteenth century), because there was such a large body of texts, the most prolific periods of publication were identified and a text chosen from each of those periods. The third case study (focussing on the First World War) concerned publication over a shorter period of time, and again, a sample of texts published roughly a decade apart seemed workable and representative. More detail of each case study's methodology will be found within the individual case study.

Although each case study demanded its own approach, some questions were common to all; for example, what cultural influences can be identified that are likely to have affected the choice of protagonist, setting or the structure and narrative approach used? Is a humanist approach always present? Topical concerns and current constructions of the past affect the way in which historical fiction is perceived and written, resulting in reversions which impact on how historical events are depicted and meanings ascribed to them. How the past is understood will often also affect the style of writing and the genre or form a writer decides to use. These aspects, as well as critical responses to juvenile historical fiction, the way the past is shaped by cultural and

historical events of the time of writing as well as reader response, all form the basis of the case study analyses.

Chapter 2. Case Study of a Fictional Character: Robin Hood

the discourse which shapes the cultural implications of a retelling is more significant than what is retold.

Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p. xi

Robin Hood is a fictional or legendary character who has been represented in stories for children within a historical setting for many years. This case study considers how the nature of the character of Robin Hood and stories about him have changed across the span of eighty years in ways that indicate cultural change or which are used to reflect the concerns of writers at the time of writing. The character, Robin Hood, and the narrative of his exploits embody features which are manipulated to challenge readers because these representatives of people in the past have the same thoughts and feelings as readers in the present – a universal humanist perspective. The opening of Geoffrey Trease’s narrative *Bows against the Barons* (1934) provides an example of this:

Crack!

The long whip curled round his shoulders, burning the flesh under his ragged tunic. Dickon swayed sickly, but did not cry out. His hands tightened on the woollen cap he held, and he bit his lip to still the pain. ...

He longed to leap on the bailiff’s saddle-bow and drive his dagger into that fat belly, but he knew how impossible it was. The man would shake him off like a rat, and the long sword would flash down to finish him off forever ...

It was no good. The masters were the masters. The peasants must obey and be whipped and work again, till death brought time for resting.

(Trease, 1966, p.7)

This dramatic beginning establishes the situation in which the protagonist, a youth named Dickon, finds himself because he has been born poor in feudal England. It conveys the

degradation and cruelty endured by serfs like Dickon. To readers in the 1930s Trease's Marxist retelling is likely to have conjured up images of serfs in pre-Revolutionary Russia as well as the deprivation suffered by some people in Depression-era Britain.

Shortly after the opening scene, Dickon kills one of the King's deer after it trampled and ate the vegetables he was growing to feed his household (his father is absent because he was required to form part of the force taken by the local Lord who has joined the Crusades). Trease has Dickon think through his likely fate:

... they wouldn't cut off a hand, because he wouldn't be of any use to Sir Rolf if they did. He was Sir Rolf's serf, Sir Rolf's property. It didn't matter about his own work, but they'd have to leave him fit to work for Sir Rolf.

It would probably be his ears, he decided.

Unless -

...

Somewhere, if he still existed, was Robin Hood, but to find him in this maze of wood and heath would be like searching for a needle in a haystack.

(Trease 1966, p.9)

Dickon, of course, finds Robin Hood in the forest and begins his political education.

Trease's radical retelling of the Robin Hood narrative makes an appropriate beginning in this case study of narratives about a historical character, but before embarking on analyses of a range of retellings an overview of the Robin Hood legend is needed to provide a background to this long-lived cycle of stories.

2.1 The background of the Robin Hood legend

Robin Hood, the legendary medieval outlaw, is a significant character in popular culture who has featured in stories for both adults and children throughout the centuries. His name is associated with 'principled resistance to wrongful authority' (Knight, 2003, p. xi) and because of this his name and associated cycle of tales have a mythic force which has endured.¹ John Matthews

¹ For example, his name has been used by The Robin Hood Foundation in New York, USA which works to eradicate poverty.

(1993) relates this mythic force to the Green Man, a 'personification of the natural world' (1993, p.2), suggesting that over time historical persons assumed his mantle. Whether there was once a real person on whom the stories are based or whether he was always in some sense mythic, Robin Hood has found his way from early writings such as a poem by John Gower (1376) and into a whole range of spoken, written and visual genres and formats including verse, song, play, opera, pantomime, comic, film, television, video games and story.² He has served as the central character of novels for adults and, since the nineteenth century, for children also.³

Several theories are offered as to why the legend of Robin has persisted. James Holt (1982) suggests that the narrative is focused around an on-going conflict between the virtuous individual and corrupt authority in the form of the reluctant outlaw and the sheriff. This tale of adventures alternates between woodland and the town, with its castle environs, and provides the settings for a number of 'scenes'. The very impreciseness or the ambiguity of the circumstances and motifs, other than that the sheriff represents the law and Robin is 'wolveshead' or outside it is, Holt suggests, one of the reasons it has lasted. Robin is the just outlaw, his characteristics those of any medieval hero. He is:

courteous, brave and, yeoman that he is, bears himself with dignity. He is strong and resourceful, skilled in the way of the wood, and in the use of weapons; above all he is an archer. He is loyal to the King and he is conventionally pious. (Keen, 1977, p.133)

This idea of the just outlaw became a motif in other narratives; for example, Colin Richmond (Knight, 1999) identifies the genre of the western in film which also tends to feature an outlaw, or outsider, bringing justice.⁴ The length and richness of retellings of Robin Hood make this character eminently suitable for a case study as do its adaptability and ability to absorb and be

² Keen (1977) indicates that a range of similar medieval outlaw ballads used the convention of disguise, for example, the story of an outlaw who disguises himself as a potter is first told of Hereward the Wake, then Eustace the Monk, then of Robin Hood. Later it is also told of William Wallace. But disguise in the Robin Hood tales is also used by many: Little John as Reynold Greenlefe, the King as a monk and Robin in many disguises including that of Guy of Gisborne.

³ Sir Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* (1819) is perhaps the most well known in which Robin Hood (Locksley) appears in four chapters; Piers Egan 'produced the detailed, sprawling' novel *Robin Hood and Little John or The Merry Men of Sherwood* in book form in 1840 after serialisation (Knight, 2003, p.127). It is described by Carpenter as having 'terrific battles, terrible injuries, violent deaths, attempted rapes, wailing Gothic ghosts, lecherous old villains' (Carpenter in Briggs et al. eds. (2008, p.51). Alexander Dumas' two stories of Robin Hood, *Prince of Thieves* (1872) and *Robin Hood the Outlaw* (1873) are said to be developed from Scott's novel.

⁴For example, Clint Eastwood in *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) and *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (1967).

taken up by other forms of entertainment such as, for example, when different adventures were dramatised and performed as plays (Holt, 1982, Dobson and Taylor, 1997). By the sixteenth century Robin Hood characters had become part of the May Games (Hilton, 1991; Knight, 2003).⁵ In this they are often in the company of Friar Tuck and Marian.⁶ A third reason for choosing Robin Hood for this first case study is that he embodies the set of characteristics that John Stephens and Robin McCallum term the 'western metaethic'. These, they claim, are found in most stories that are regularly retold for children. The significance of the western metaethic is discussed later; for now it suffices to say that Robin Hood gives shape to the attributes which readers throughout the ages have found attractive in heroes.⁷

In contrast to the views of Barrie Dobson and John Taylor (1997), Stephen Knight (2003) relates writers' and readers' interest more to the mythic quality of Robin who, through his energy, evokes a desire in readers for him to have existed. He suggests that Robin Hood presents a model for readers concerned with a search for their own identity, but states that the usual representation of Robin Hood is beyond that of any human. For Knight such a character enables writers at different periods of history to represent 'their own idea of what constitutes oppressive authority, and how in dreams, wishes, or even reality, that might be resisted' (Knight, 2003, p. xiii). Stephens (1992) also identifies the importance of humanist characteristics in the enduring appeal of the Robin Hood stories, that is, their underlying concern with human nature and 'the important human qualities such as Reason, Love, Honour, Loyalty, Courage and so on, which are transhistorical ... and thus individual experiences reflect constant, unchanging truths' (Stephens, 1992, p.203). This humanist perspective is the key aspect which, he indicates, has provoked writers to retell the legend and the fact that the Robin Hood narratives continue to be told in the twenty-first century is evidence for the persistence of humanist concerns in recent historical fiction.

⁵ The May celebrations have pre-Christian origins in the fertility rites of an agrarian culture and Leech (2001) indicates that the Robin Hood games were part of these celebrations between 1400 and 1600. The activities performed show resemblance to the ballads.

⁶ Dobson and Taylor (1997, p.39) cite, among others, churchwardens' accounts at Kingston on Thames (1507-1509) where expenses for costumes are identified for 'Robyn Hode', 'the frere' and 'mayde Maryan' and 'little John' for the May games; from D. Lyson's, *The Environs of London, Vol.1, The County of Surrey* (London, 1792) pp. 226-229. The Marian character is thought to derive from a French Romantic story of a shepherdess while there was a separate narrative about Tuck.

⁷ The sword would be added later when he was en-nobled; initially Robin, the yeoman, would be skilled with stave and bow only.

Robin Hood rhymes or ballads were known before the fifteenth century, indeed they are referred to in William Langland's *Piers Ploughman*, written in or about 1377 (Holt, 1982), indicating that they had been known for some time; however, the nearest that scholars can get to identifying when *A Littel [sic] Gest of Robyn Hood* was written down is sometime after 1450. Holt (1982), Dobson and Taylor (1997) and Knight (1994) date the story to the mid fifteenth century; Holt (1982) links it linguistically with Mallory's *Morte D'Arthur*, which was finished by 1471, while Anthony Pollard (2004) suggests that though it originates in the second half of the fifteenth century it carries 'the collective memory of earlier times' so has anachronistic elements (Pollard, 2004, p. x).⁸ The collection of ballads which form *A Gest of Robyn Hood* is the longest compilation. This medieval romance of interlaced events and adventures (Knight, 1994), derived from earlier texts, comprises eight fyttes: *The Story of the Knight* (fyttes I, II and IV), *Little John and the Sheriff of Nottingham and a Knight called Sir Richard* ((fytte III) *Robin Hood and the Sheriff* (fytte V) and *Robin Hood and the King* (fyttes VII & VIII).⁹ By 1515 the rhymes had been transferred from bawdy entertainment to a more courtly form to become the subject for more serious playwrights.¹⁰ Many other tales were added in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹ In the eighteenth century there was a revival of *Robin Hood* stage plays for adults and the introduction of operatic versions, while others, including children, continued to enjoy the stories published in cheap broadsides which 'became the main vehicle for the transmission of the Robin Hood legend' (Dobson and Taylor, 1997, p.47).¹² The 'ripping yarns, woven around stock characters, with lots of action and adventures, in which heroes triumph over villains' which constituted the fifteenth century stories of Robin Hood, have continued to engage and entertain child readers through the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, notably in the form of popular television series and related merchandise (Pollard, 2004, p.xii).

⁸ Knight states that the reference in the *Gest* to 'our comely king' (st.353) may relate to King Edward IV thus placing it between 1461 and 1483 (Knight, 1994, p.47).

⁹ A fytte is identified as a song or part of a ballad www.onlinedictionary.com (Accessed 31/10/08).

¹⁰ Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1599) makes reference to the ballads when the old king and his courtiers in the Forest of Arden 'live like ... old Robin Hood' (Dobson and Taylor, 1997, p.43). The play itself is a form of the Robin Hood narrative but within a courtly setting (Leach, 2001).

¹¹ For example, *Robin Hood and Little John*, *Robin Hood and Allen-a-Dale* as well as Martin Parker's *The True Tale of Robin Hood* (1632); and *The Noble Fisherman and Robin Hood and the Shepherd*, both seventeenth century (cited in Knight, S. Ed., 1999, pp.214-216).

¹² Robin Hood Garlands, collections of ballads and songs about Robin Hood ensured that the stories continued, although these hardly changed from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century.

Joseph Ritson's comprehensive collection of the Robin Hood ballads in 1795 may have prompted his friend Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* in 1819, which includes a character that can be identified as Robin Hood.¹³ Scott's novel in turn pre-empted Romantic versions during the Victorian period in written narratives for children. *Ivanhoe* was widely read by children and in stories since then the legendary outlaw has continued to be placed in a sometimes vague temporal setting within the medieval period (Watson, 2001, p.335). Despite its lack of specificity, the setting is integral to the narrative as, for example, in Trease's *Bows Against the Barons* (1934) which has a setting leading up to the time of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Whether or not Robin Hood himself was a real figure, then, the character works for a case study of historical fiction since both historical personages and events are often included in the narratives and it allows for consideration of a humanist perspective in such narratives, contrary to Stephens' expectations.

2.2 Choice of texts and focus for analysis

Study and analysis of narratives for children which reflect the actions of Robin Hood characters, as well as events in their lives, provide an opportunity to consider how such events are presented by writers across a period of time, so this first case study draws on the methodologies of comparative literature (O'Sullivan, 2005).¹⁴ As will be shown, comparative analysis reveals how writers of historical fiction that includes Robin Hood inevitably interject current social concerns, issues and events in their versions of the past, demonstrating how the different versions of the Robin Hood tales reflect/reveal much about the cultural periods in which they were produced (Thompson, 1986; Stephens, 1992; Tucker, 2000).

There are far too many Robin Hood texts written within the time period 1934 – 2014 by British writers for a full study of each; Appendix A provides a comprehensive list. So the discussion here is based on texts which are representative of the corpus as a whole but which vary in significant ways that point to changes in the genre. In doing so I have taken into account the *form* in which the narratives are presented, an aspect which will be discussed later in this

¹³ Ritson, J. (1795) *Robin Hood: A Collection of all the Ancient Poems, Songs and Ballads, now extant, relative to that celebrated author*. London: Longman reprinted in 1820 (cited in Dobson & Taylor, 1997, p.54 and Carpenter, K. 2008, p.59).

¹⁴ Bassnett identifies this as 'a method ... that foregrounds the role of the reader but which is always mindful of the historical context in which the act of writing and the act of reading takes place' (Bassnett, 2006, p.7)

chapter, and have selected texts written at different times between 1934 and 2014. Both female and male writers are included, and the age range of the intended audience spans primary to young adult or approximately seven to sixteen years.

In addition to limiting the text sample, it has also been necessary to focus the analysis. The study and analysis of all aspects of the chosen narratives of Robin Hood goes beyond both the need and the ability of this case study, therefore consideration here has been confined to specific areas which will enable the elements identified below (transhistorical humanistic characteristics of Reason, Love, Honour, Loyalty, Courage and so on) to be explored. To this end, the character of Robin Hood will be considered along with that of Marian, who, although not introduced into the canon of Robin Hood narratives until the sixteenth century, usually figures alongside Robin in narratives written within the identified period. Marian's appearance in the earlier narratives coincides with the transformation of the yeoman outlaw Robin to that of the distressed gentleman, Robert Earl of Huntingdon or Sir Robin of Loxley, also a creation of the sixteenth century (Knight, 2003). This is a feature which has survived to the present day, particularly as portrayed in film versions of the tales. The cultural and ideological implications of such choices are discussed at some length.

The sample texts are representative of the many versions of Robin Hood published between 1934 and 2014. They are: Geoffrey Trease's, *Bows against the Barons* (1934, revised edition 1966); Rosemary Sutcliff's, *The Chronicles of Robin Hood* (1950); Enid Blyton's, *Tales of Brave Adventure* (1965); Robyn McKinley's, *The Outlaws of Sherwood* (1988); Theresa Tomlinson's, *Forestwife* Trilogy (1993-2000) and Stephen Lawhead's, *Hood* (2006). While these texts provide the main focus for analysis, further understanding of the developments and changes in Robin Hood variants can be identified by briefly considering some audio/visual texts from the same period. For the purposes of this exercise, such examples are secondary to printed texts. Of these, the principal visual texts are: Michael Curtiz's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), Richard Carpenter's television series *Robin of Sherwood* (1984-1986), Kevin Reynolds' film *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves* (1991), John Irvin's film *Robin Hood* (1991), and Dominic Minghella's television series, *Robin Hood* (2006-2009). The central questions relating to these texts which is explored in this case study are how, and how far are social and ideological concerns at the time

of writing affecting the nature of the retelling and significantly, in texts published after the 1980s, does a humanist perspective continue to be portrayed.

Analysis of these texts, and particularly of the characters of Robin and Marian within them, provides a means of identifying whether all texts demonstrate the presence of a Western metaethic as identified and defined by John Stephens and Robyn McCallum (1998). This is based on the premise that the Robin Hood tale belongs within the tradition of folk and fairytales which have their own values and ideas about the world embedded within them. Stephens and McCallum identify this as a metanarrative, 'a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience' (1998, p.6). The metanarrative which informs the Robin Hood narrative is that truth and justice will or should prevail. Such a metanarrative informs the structure of such stories and provides a framework for those retellings. Stephens and McCallum indicate that 'a particular narration has value because it offers a patterned and shapely narrative structure, expresses significant and universal human experiences, interlinks "truth" and cultural heritage, and rests moral judgements within an ethical dimension' (1998, p.7). This they identify as the "Western metaethic" which is a meta-metanarrative, and western because it has 'evolved within European based and derived cultures' (1998, p.7).

2.3 Robin Hood as cultural barometer

Stephens and McCallum suggest that the modern Robin Hood stories have an important cultural function not only in initiating children into aspects of a social and cultural heritage, but also in 'transmitting many of a culture's central values and assumptions and a body of shared allusions and experiences' (1998, p.3). Keen (1977) suggests that they are stories of social justice in that the innocent, who are victims of poverty and misfortune brought about by the rich and powerful wicked, are rewarded. These earlier ballads, or 'pre-texts' have later been adapted or modified to suit changing ideologies, particularly in relation to the nature of Robin Hood (Stephens 1992; Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.4). This is evident especially from the sixteenth century.¹⁵ Retellings always bear the cultural views of the teller, these views being identified as

¹⁵ Some of the early or pre-texts present Robin Hood and his followers as brutal or violent in the manner in which they dealt with enemies, which Keen (1961, 1977) indicates reflects the times in which the ballads were told and later written but which represents an attitude to the corruption of their enemies not the law itself, although the forest law was arbitrary. Cultural change over time meant that the Robin Hood narratives needed to be modified in order to present a more acceptable (perhaps sanitized) view of the hero. The ballads were also transformed into a

a 'conservative metanarrative' comprising 'the implicit and usually invisible ideologies, systems, and assumptions which operate globally in a society to order knowledge and experience' (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.3). This is represented in the Robin Hood retellings as 'the struggle for truth and justice, for freedom against tyranny, where oppression is largely externalised in the Norman other' (Gates, 2006, p.69). Robin is the 'embodiment of honour and an agent of retribution' (Holt, 1982, p.10). The stories represent binaries of:

the struggle between rich and poor, freedom and tyranny, justice and injustice, respect for authority (in the person of the rightful king) and defiance of it (in the person of the sheriff), reverence towards the Virgin Mary and hostility towards corrupt clerics. (Jones, 2000, p.134)

Stephens and McCallum indicate that like children's literature as a whole, which has a tendency towards a socially and politically conservative ideology, Robin Hood stories stay within the conservative bounds set by the many early versions of the legend, even though 'the legend can sustain and provoke a diversity of representations' (1998, p.165). They go on to conclude that because they belong to the category of stories placed within a historical setting, the ideological messages of Robin Hood stories, whether overt or covert, assume a universal meaning and provide a humanistic experience in a culturally conservative manner.¹⁶

The early ballads of Robin Hood have been critically studied by only a few scholars owing, Knight (1994) suggests, to their presentation of ambiguous human characters. For example, in *Robin Hood and the Monk*, Little John and Much entice into the wood the monk, who has betrayed Robin to the sheriff, and his page on their way to inform the king of Robin's capture. There they decapitate both the monk and his page 'Ffor ferd lest he wolde tell' (*Robin Hood and the Monk*, Stanza 52). This ballad, like that of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* not only recount violence on the part of the outlaws, so keeping what the authorities would regard as transgressive acts, but they also celebrate them. Violence in particular is counter to the ideals of modern narrative tradition, particularly for children. However, Knight states that when reading the texts 'in the context of social attitudes across time' they demonstrate 'changing attitudes to authority' (1994, p.45).

more acceptable chivalric form for higher class audiences and Robin became an earl and romance was introduced in the form of Lady Marian.

¹⁶ Stephens and McCallum identify this as 'the responsibility of the present to remember the past' (1998, p.165).

2.4 Robin Hood: three approaches

Stephens and McCallum (1998) identify three different types of modern stories featuring Robin Hood:

1. Modern retellings of the Robin Hood story for children all share the conservative metanarrative and can be sub-divided into three types.
 - a. Retellings in a novelistic form but which are substantially based on the ballads and possibly also on all or some of the fifteenth to seventeenth century pre-texts but include some inventiveness; for example: Antonia Fraser's *Robin Hood* (1955, 1971), Antonia Pakenham's *Robin Hood* (1957) and Patricia Leitch's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1979).
 - b. Replications of the early ballads in episodic form with a traditional selection from the ballads; for example, Sara Hawks Sterling's *Robin Hood and his Merry Men* (1928).
 - c. Illustrated or comic books which focus on a narrow selection of incidents from the ballads, for example, Marcia Williams' *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1995).
2. The second type of narratives Stephens and McCallum term 'alternative reversions' (1998, p.171) to indicate a Robin Hood text which has a 'politicized radical narrative stance which refuses the transcendent order on which the majority metanarrative finally rests' (ibid). They identify, as example, Trease's *Bows Against the Barons* and Carpenter's television series of the 1980s also produced in novel form.
3. The third way in which writers are using the figure of Robin Hood and tales associated with him in contemporary children's literature involve transforming traditional details to present an alternative metanarrative, in opposition to that of the more familiar one. The premise for this is that by presenting an alternative metanarrative, readers will perceive the underlying assumptions of the metanarrative more clearly. Several of the texts discussed below do precisely this and are discussed in detail later in the study. A focus on the character of Robin Hood along with that of Marian will enable identification of the manner in which the narrative is told to present a particular ideology and to identify whether or not aspects of the conservative metanarrative are present.

2.5 Robin and Marian

This section looks in detail at a chronologically organised cross-section of texts, focusing on the characters of Robin and Marian within the setting of the narrative. In this way it is possible to make a comparative analysis of the characters in relation to the Robin Hood cycle of tales, the metanarrative, the manner in which the focus text presents its narrative in relation to the types indicated by Stephens and McCallum, and its relation to the cultural context of the time of writing and indications of change in historical fiction including evidence of a humanist viewpoint being presented. The Marian character is useful because her presence may highlight further cultural attributes of the character of Robin; for instance, while it is 'Our Lady' to whom Robin is devoted in the *Gest* and pre-texts, Marian's appearance in ballads of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provided a romantic interest and reflected the concerns of Romance literature from medieval times. Her role in the later narratives has fluctuated, and an analysis of how the character has been developed and integrated during the period under consideration can be considered against cultural change.

A comparison of character representation using the seven stereotypical features of Robin Hood as identified by Stephens and McCallum (1998) makes it possible to identify where writers have drawn on or reacted against the metanarrative and the ideological implications of this. The seven stereotypical Robin Hood features are:

1. a charismatic projection of authority;
2. physical prowess in a male group;
3. an impulsive acceptance of physical challenges;
4. generosity to anyone needing help;
5. sound organisational skills;
6. a readiness to overlook past differences;
7. a capacity to make shrewd assessment of people.

(Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.183)

Some of these qualities signalling Robin's strengths within the alternative society of the Greenwood and in relation to the wider world of medieval England might also be identified as mainstream leadership qualities in present-day western culture; either way they will be related to writers' world views.

2.6 *Bows Against the Barons* (1934; this revised edition 1966) by Geoffrey Trease

2.6.1 *Trease's Robin*

Geoffrey Trease, a teacher, children's writer and critic, states that *Bows Against the Barons* (1934) was provoked by the poor quality of writing for children in the 1920s and 1930s, when writers of historical fiction were still writing to the formulaic standard of books produced at the end of the nineteenth century (Trease, 1975, 1977).¹⁷ This, his first novel, though not considered one of his best, was significant in bringing about great changes in the presentation of children's historical fiction in that it challenged the calcified historical fiction writing which had dominated children's literature for the previous fifty years (Crouch, 1972; Mackenzie, 1998; Craig, 2008). Trease confronted the fashions for writing such stories which involved inventing linguistic mannerisms to give a sense of past ages, as in, 'Thus, then, he worked with ardour, and ere long became able to hold his own even with the veterans of the regiment.' (Henty, 1896; revised 1966, p.60). He also challenged the subject matter of such stories as in, for example, Henty and pseudo-Henty imitations which often focus on famous historical battles, and particularly on the role of the upper ranks of society in these. Instead of accounts of the 'derring-do' of people of nobility in historical events which promoted the imperial stature of Britain, Trease chose ordinary young people of both sexes through which to focalise his narratives.¹⁸ Given that he was brought up in Nottingham, it is perhaps not surprising that in *Bows Against the Barons* he draws on some aspects of the legend of Robin Hood; by making connections between the historical past of the fourteenth century and the political and ideological concerns of the time in which he was writing, he produces an alternative reversion which challenges the metanarrative. The instigation for the story was Trease's response to the rise of Nazism, his own left-wing political beliefs, and the current social, political and cultural situation in Britain at that time of depression. In an Author Note at the end of the 1966 edition he states that, as a child, Robin Hood was his favourite hero, but he felt that 'some of the stories did not ring true' (Trease, 1966). With that in mind he wrote a 'new historical view of a commoner inciting rebellion against his betters, a perspective diametrically opposed to the romantic tradition of Merrie England's pomp, pageantry, class bias and superiority' (*Children's*

¹⁷ Trease refers to his own childhood reading as a diet of classist and racist historical adventure through the writing of Stevenson, and Ballantyne (from 1894), and Henty (from 1902) (Trease, 1975, p.13).

¹⁸ The incorporation of female protagonists was more prevalent in his later novels from *Cue for Treason* (1940) onwards.

Literature Review, Vol.42, 1976, p.142). Analysis will reveal how much Trease's intentions are realised and how, or whether, the metanarrative is revealed. The text to which I refer is the revised 1966 version which, Trease states, was altered only slightly to 'weed out historical blemishes' (Trease, 1996, p.133), and with 'a few words and phrases here and there' (1966, p.126), notably by replacing socialist terminology: 'comrades' becomes 'friends' or 'neighbours', a chapter heading, 'Hammers and sickles' becomes 'Friends in Need'. The changes were made when the first edition went out of print and in the light of critical comment at a time when fear of communism was prevalent.

Trease utilises an omniscient narrator and focalises the narrative mainly through sixteen year old Dickon. Readers follow his adventures in the forest after he has been introduced to Robin Hood, and with him they are introduced to Robin's vision of a world in which ordinary people are not made to serve the rich and powerful. Dickon's perspective gives the narrative a strong sense of immediacy and appeal, but it means that Dickon rather than Robin is at the centre of events. The shift in focus supports Trease's efforts to impart historical and ideological information to a young audience. Trease, 'consciously in revolt against the established values' channels readers' attention to the plight of serfs, or working-class people, and the harsh reality of those who work for others and can be treated by them as they wish (Trease, 1975, p.17). This view clearly reflects the period in which he was writing. The late 1920s and early 1930s was a time of slow economic growth in heavy industry. Thousands of men lost their jobs in the north of England, on Clydeside in Scotland and in south Wales, where the owners of coal mines and iron and steel manufacturing industries purposely reduced output following the decline in orders for shipping and reduced exports. The cotton and woollen manufacturing industries in the north were equally affected. Whereas in the United States President Roosevelt spent money creating new work and ensuring money would circulate, '[i]n Britain the idea was to cut expenditure, so that people had even less wages to spend, thus reducing the demand for goods and causing more unemployment' (Trease, 1965, p.181; Richardson, 1969). By the end of December, 1929, there were more than two and a half million unemployed (Taylor, 1975, p.284).¹⁹ It was followed by a financial collapse and a government decision to cut

¹⁹ Jarrow on Tyneside had 'practically the whole adult male population out of work, with two thirds permanently unemployed' (Taylor, 1975, p.351).

unemployment benefit rather than inflict heavy taxation which would be detrimental to the wealthy. It led to angry demonstrations followed later by 'dogged resistance and sullen despair' (Trease, 1965, p.182). This was the political and economic climate that helped make Geoffrey Trease, himself a northern man on the political left, on the path of writing left-wing books for children. Though later books lost much of their overt engagement with politics they remained liberal and committed to many of the ideals articulated through this first published novel.

The choice of title implies the Robin Hood story through connotations with 'bows' and 'barons', but there is also a clear distinction in the choice of 'against' and 'barons' in relation to Trease's ideology and the theme of an uprising. Trease's decision to write about an older Robin enables him to avoid retellings of the pre-text ballads and to focus readers' attention more specifically on the overt ideological viewpoint, an ideology to which Trease himself adheres.²⁰ This immediately challenges any preconceived ideas and expectations which readers might have. At their first meeting Dickon is surprised to discover that 'Robin Hood ... was quite old ... he did not look the wonderful hero of whom the songs and stories told' (23). Readers are placed alongside Dickon in relation to their perceptions of Robin Hood and, like Dickon's, their perceptions are initially challenged. However, this view is overturned by, 'When he met those steel-blue eyes, and felt the hands, friendly but strong, gripping his shoulders, he knew differently. This man was a man among men' (23). While the final cliché is weak, readers do get an impression of the power and charisma of Robin.

The narrative goes on to extol Robin's virtues as Dickon sees them: he is 'affable and pleasant' and 'something bigger and stronger' than the barons and 'laughed musically' (23), characteristics which correspond to the criteria identified by Stephens and McCallum (1998, p.183). This Robin is also a more 'political' figure than the one featured in the *Gest of Robin Hood*. Rather than a Robin who 'dyde pore men moch god' (cited in Dobson and Taylor, 1997, p.112), this Robin is an outlaw leader who always works towards a goal of equality for all, 'He had made them see the dream [of no barons, no king and an end of serfdom but of everyone working for the good of all] which had been his for years' (83), states the omniscient narrator. While Scott's *Ivanhoe* influenced other writers whose work features Robin Hood by making race, that is, animosity between Saxons and

²⁰ Trease states that he later modified his political views (1964).

Normans, a motif (Knight, 2003, p.112), Trease works against this and identifies those in control with power and workers as the oppositions, as the bridle-smith in Nottingham says, 'it isn't Normans against Saxons, it's masters against men' (32).

Trease's choice of an older, more mature Robin is juxtaposed with his depiction as a charismatic figure of authority:

He might be affable and pleasant, not haughty like a baron, but he was something bigger and stronger than any of the men who went with rich armour and gay banners, and made working men kneel as they passed. (23)

Although Trease does not explore the origins of Robin, this extract implies that the difference between him and the barons is not so much his manner, or his stature, but something else – what could be described as 'charisma', '(t)he boy knew [Robin Hood] was a man for the people, against their oppressors' (58) but, although in authority with his seconds, Little John and Alan-a-Dale, Trease also presents him in a Marxist or left-wing manner, one who is also an equal ' "...Don't call me 'sir'. We're comrades in Sherwood, all equal." ' (24). Trease is drawing on the materialist and rational philosophies of the eighteenth century German philosopher Hegel, who was a supporter of aggressive but non-revolutionary politics, views which were later 'inverted' by Marx into a materialistic theory of a historical development which ended in communism. In *Bows Against the Barons* Trease presents this ideology through the words and actions of Robin and the other outlaws, particularly in their support for the exploited serfs on Baron D'Eyncourt's estate and the workers, both Norman and Saxon, of the town of Nottingham. Readers must reconsider their own cultural views of Saxon and Norman alongside the protagonist; Dickon reflects that he had always thought the townspeople better off than people in the country, and had thought the Normans better off, but learns that there are poor Normans also (32).

The ideological message of equality is pressed home as events unfold; the bridle-smith says "We'll never end our troubles till all of us unite against the barons" (32). There is an implicit ideological message of the need to fight to overcome the oppressor, which child psychologists have identified as suited to the young reader's need for adventure and belief in fair play and where all should adhere to a strict moral code (see Piaget, 1932; Tucker, 1981). The need to overcome the oppressor can be ideologically juxtaposed with the actions of the unemployed in the late 1920s and early 1930s when 'angry demonstrations ... stone throwing ... arrests and

imprisonments' indicated the men's mood and the '[h]unger Marches which brought men from the depressed areas ... to London' where people there were well fed (Trease, 1965, p.182).²¹

Robin's leadership qualities are well-established in the novel and are demonstrated implicitly through planning and organisation, '... a horn rang out ... Sixty men leapt on to the wall ... In a second every bow was bent, a goose-feather tip drawn to each outlaw's ear' (37). Readers are made aware of a well-established forest society, apparently in one place, in Sherwood near Nottingham, and 'News came every day to the outlaws' hiding-place. Robin sat in his cave, piecing together the bits of information as they arrived' (71). While presenting this, Trease also emphasises his own Marxist ideology through Robin's message that they are all equal, 'he was their friend, not chief, like the leaders of most outlaw gangs' (82; Trease's emphasis), and his leadership is accepted. He listens to the recommendations of others and then gives his opinion and decision (68, 116).

Perhaps because this Robin is represented as more mature, Trease has omitted aspects of the earlier pre-texts which present him as always accepting a challenge and enjoying demonstrating his physical prowess in the male group. However, other motifs from the earlier stories are utilised, often by giving them to other characters or for adventurous purposes. It is Alan-a-Dale (a later addition to the Robin Hood stories) and Dickon who use disguise effectively. Alan uses it to rescue Dickon from the Foresters' capture (46-48), and there is some negative cultural comment here when Alan sings a message to Dickon, making fun of the Gascon foresters, "*These foreign fools don't understand/a word of what I sing*" (p.48, Trease's italics). Whether this is a narrative ploy or a negative comment on foreigners is difficult to distinguish; it might be Trease's reflection on the fascist rising in Germany but it presents a carnivalesque feature. So do the moments when Dickon is disguised as an apprentice weaver to gain entry to Nottingham (27-); cross-dressed to entice a bishop, transporting much wealth, from the main road into the forest (86-89); dressed as a page to gain access the D'Eyncourt's castle to make a survey as a preliminary to the outlaws' and serfs' attack (91-97); and finally given the character of a hunchback to enter the castle to attack from the keep (98/99). The taking of money from rich

²¹ Both Taylor (1965,1975) and Trease (1965) make reference to the hunger marchers passing through Oxford and other towns where people were well-fed to London, but even in London there were many out-of-work dockers and their families who relied on soup-kitchens to survive.

clerics is encapsulated in a chapter (85-89) relating to disguise and trickery to capture the Abbot's wealth, but Trease identifies its purpose as being to produce more weapons. In this text adventures and battles are focalised mainly through Dickon, who is usually paired with Alan-a-Dale, Dickon being given important tasks to do, sometimes in disguise. It is a device well suited to the needs and tastes of the target age group of eleven to thirteen years. Appleyard (1991) indicates that the powerful hero/heroine is the 'principal archetype' for this age group, offering the reader satisfaction through his/her ability to solve problems of the world, a model with which the reader can associate (Appleyard, 1991, p.59/60). Dickon as protagonist undertakes tasks set by Robin and, as readers would anticipate, succeeds against the odds.

Another attribute identified by Stephens and McCallum (1998) is Robin's generosity to those needing help. Here Trease's depiction again relates more to a mature Robin, who has outgrown his youthful ways and has a clear ideological intention, indicating a humanist perspective. It is demonstrated through the support the outlaws give to the townspeople such as blacksmiths, and weavers (33-36) and for the villagers, not through food and money but through physical deed and ideological support (61-64), including the practical form of weapons. There is also no evidence of Robin's readiness to overlook past differences, but his capacity to make shrewd assessments of people is, for Trease, based on detailed evaluation of their capabilities, "I like to know what people can do – and what they can't do," explained the outlaw. "Then I can depend on them in an emergency" (24). His initial appraisal of Dickon (23) is followed by tasks which test Dickon's loyalty indicating not only an initial assessment but one which is supported by further evidence.

While the death of Robin at the hands of the Prioress at Kirklees is incorporated into the tale, Trease passes the fatal decision to take him there after the defeat by the barons to the few remaining outlaws, unlike in the *Gest* where it is his decision. But his death is not the end of the story, as signalled by Little John's comment, "I think things will come about slower than we thought", followed by Dickon's reaction, "And we'll go on working to make Robin's dream come true" (124). These remarks underscore for readers the story's ideological message more effectively than if it had ended at the point of Robin's death and burial. It moves away from the pre-text ending, where the outlaws bury Robin and it states in stanza 22:

Thus he that fear'd neither bow nor spear
Was murder'd by letting blood;
And so, loving friends, the story ends,
Of valiant, bold Robin Hood.

(*Robin Hood Garland* version cited in Dobson and Taylor, 1997, p.139)

It adds to what Dobson and Taylor (1997) identify as the structure of the medieval outlaw tale by promoting the ideological Marxist message which Trease has maintained in this alternative version.

Although Trease adapts the Robin Hood story to his own ideological ends, leaving out many of the early stories about Robin Hood, this alternative version shares with them some motifs. There are clear binary opposites in Robin and the Sheriff, and perhaps more significantly in Robin and Baron D'Eyncourt. The change in focalisation enables Trease to present through his external omniscient narrator a strong ideological message against ruling classes, '[Baron D'Eyncourt] had brought new notions of luxury and cruelty, learnt in the rotting courts of Eastern Europe' (65). The connotation between 'luxury' and 'cruelty' is emphasised by 'rotting' in relation to cause and effect. This was probably a reference to the political situation in Europe at the time of writing and the perceived need for a Marxist-socialist ideology. Another motif is the role of the trickster which is evident at times in the characters of Alan-a-Dale and Dickon rather than in Robin, as in the pre-texts.

2.6.2 Trease's Marian

When considering the character of Marian alongside that of Robin, it is apparent that she does not play a major role in Trease's version and has no part in any of the 'adventures' or engagements with the opposition. There are, in fact, very few references to her (23, 60). Readers might assume that she is the woman sitting beside the fire in the cave when Alan-a-Dale brings Dickon to meet Robin (23), and she is named standing at the mouth of the cave laughing at Dickon and Martin when they return without their clothes after swimming (60). When the outlaws need to escape the forest and D'Eyncourt's soldiers, the women and children are sent deep into the caves for safety and then appear no more in the narrative. Like other stories based on Robin Hood over the years, it seems that Trease did not consider this

character, or other women, an essential part of his project, reflecting a hegemonic and patriarchal male ideology. He even goes so far as to ridicule them in relation to their poor throwing skills (54), although he adopts a different stance to females in later novels.

Trease's text provides some evidence to support the presence of the metanarrative as identified by Stephens and McCallum (1998). Although there is one exception where some outlaws oppose Robin's outlaw band's support of the serfs (68), the brotherhood of outlaws demonstrates the conservative metanarrative, mainly in relation to 'the struggle for freedom against tyranny' which is the central theme of *Bows Against the Barons* (Gates, 2006, p.3). Other aspects of the metanarrative, such as 'struggle for truth and justice' are subsumed into this. However, there is a clear defiance against all those in power, including the king which clearly challenges traditional versions or retellings; instead these are subsumed in a version which utilises the Robin Hood narrative in a more structured ideological and historical position relating it to the lead-up to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. So Trease's narrative set a new radical manner of using the Robin Hood story for clear ideological purposes while presenting a humanist view in which the protagonist develops agency, a greater awareness of the needs of others and the determination to address those needs in a humanist manner. How much his model was adopted will be considered in the text published 15 years later just after the end of the Second World War.

2.7 *The Chronicles of Robin Hood* (1950) by Rosemary Sutcliff

In contrast to Trease's Robin Hood text, with its representation of an older 'Marxist' Robin and a challenge to the idea of a 'merrie England', Rosemary Sutcliff's *The Chronicles of Robin Hood*, also a first children's novel,²² adheres more to the earlier ballads. The title presents connotations of the importance and subject of the narrative; the choice of the noun 'chronicles' implies not only a history of Robin Hood's exploits but also authority and veracity concerning this central character. The authoritative voice of the chapter titles, through the recurrent use of 'How', as in the first chapter, 'How Robert of Locksley became Robin of Barnsdale' also supports

²² Belinda Copson (2002) suggests that in this novel Sutcliff had not found her writing style which was to become a signature of her work. It was published at the same time as a narrative of Queen Elizabeth.

the veracity of the telling.²³ Of the nine chapters which use this opening, four can be related directly to Wynkyn de Worde's publication, *A Geste of Robyn Hode* (1492-1534), a collection of ballads derived from even earlier sources (Holt, 1982; Dobson and Taylor, 1997; Pollard, 2004). These are *Robin Hood and the Knight*, *Robin Hood and the Sheriff*, *Little John and the Sheriff and Robin Hood and the King* and *The Death of Robin Hood*. Reversions of other early ballads are; *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Robin Hood and the Potter*, *Robin Hood and the Curtel Friar* and some are Sutcliff's own expansion of the narrative gleaned from later writings, such as the introduction of Little John, Will Scarlet and Marian.

Identified by Stephens and McCallum as a 'shared conservative metanarrative', or 'global or totalising cultural schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience' (1998, p.171), it is a reversion of the ballads that make up the *Robin Hood* cycle of stories which were collected in and which Holt indicates came from a piece composed as early as 1400 (Holt, 1982, p15).²⁴ Sutcliff's text can be identified as having 'novelistic renditions with a developing sense of coherence and an inclination towards inventiveness' in that it is not a straight re-telling (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.171). It draws substantially on a selection of pre-texts, but at the same time elaborates them.

2.7.1 Sutcliff's Robin

The opening chapter presents readers with the circumstances in which Robin is outlawed as Sutcliff imagines them. Readers are enticed to enter the text by an external narrator who describes the setting of Barnsdale Forest in a manner which reflects the harmony of the forest, as is evident in the early ballads (Knight, 2003, p.17), before presenting a distant view of the protagonist, whom readers familiar with other narratives of Robin Hood will recognise because of the detailed description, though at this point he is un-named:

... he was no Forester, though his woollen tunic was of Lincoln green and he carried a seven foot bow-stave in his hand.

He was a tall man, slightly built, and seemingly about three-and-twenty years of age, with a thin, pleasant face, and eyes which seemed very blue against the berry-brownness of his skin. The hood of his capuchin lay back on his

²³ The use of 'How' reflects Henry Gilbert's 1912 text, very widely read and appreciated, which is likely to have been one of Sutcliff's sources.

²⁴ Holt indicates his source for this as Robert Graves, *The English Ballad* (London, 1927, p.133).

shoulders and his dark hair curled crisply from beneath a close cap of velvet in which a curlew's wing-feather was stuck at a jaunty angle. (2)

The lexis of this description, which shows similarities with Henry Gilbert's 1912 version and is also reminiscent of Errol Flynn's portrayal of Robin Hood in the Curtiz film of 1938, emphasises the historical nature of the text and stands in marked contrast to Trease's use of modern speech and idioms. This is immediately apparent through, for example, the way it describes: his age, 'three-and-twenty years of age' with number reversal; his clothing, 'hood of his capuchin ... close cap of velvet'; and his weapons 'seven foot bow-stave', and through cadences that give the narrator's voice an archaic quality, as in, 'Quietly he threaded the mazy woodland ways, neither dawdling nor making any attempt at speed' (2). While readers get no deep insight relating to this man, he is identified simply as a yeoman, living on land rented from St Mary's Abbey which he inherited from his father, they do get a sense in these opening pages, focalised through an external narrator, of a man at one with the forest (3). They also learn that he is returning from visiting his friend Marian, who lives twenty miles away, that they love each other, but that her noble station means they will never be allowed to marry: this Robert of Locksley was only a yeoman, and not a rich one either (3). This love relationship has become a recognised part of the legend, possibly transmuted from Robin's love of the Virgin Mary in the early ballads, symbolising his Christian devotion and contrasting with views expressed about some clerics. It indicates Sutcliff's adherence to the Robin Hood story tradition, even though it seems oddly out of place in a narrative for primary aged children.²⁵ Robin's subsequent discovery, through a warning from his friend Much, that Guy of Gisborne has taken his land in the name of the Abbot of St Mary's Abbey at York, unjustly declaring Robin 'wolshead', leads to his killing a guard while rescuing his workers and retreating with them to the forest. Thus the 1950s Robin's life as a fighter for justice only begins when provoked by the dissembling manner of the Abbot and behaviour of the abbot's henchman, Guy of Gisborne. This Robin is declared outlaw because his land is coveted by the Abbot, Sutcliff pointing up early in the narrative one of the motifs of the Robin Hood ballad, that is, the greed of clerics.²⁶

²⁵ This was Sutcliff's first published novel, written at the request of Oxford University Press.

²⁶ While reflecting previous narratives of Robin Hood's outlawry, Sutcliff's text also makes links with Nazi occupation of the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia in 1938 followed by that of other countries.

Within the opening chapter Sutcliff has identified three aspects which the Robin Hood tales almost invariably foreground: class, gender and power. Again, these reflect the cultural setting at the time of writing. In relation to class, Robin as yeoman, an ideological decision on Sutcliff's part, would not be allowed to marry Marian of noble birth. Sutcliff has chosen the pre-text and *Gest* class position of Robin since it was not until the seventeenth century that he was presented as the Earl of Huntingdon, a situation in relation to marrying within one's own class still prevalent in Britain in the post-Second World War period.²⁷ In relation to gender, Marian is assumed to have no choice in decisions about her marriage partner, her father using her marriage as a means of making an alliance, for wealth or security. Thirdly, when we consider power, in medieval times among certain groups of people, namely nobles and clerics, identified as the First and Second Estates, were those who manipulated land and the common people, or the Third Estate, to their own advantage (Keen, 1990). We can suppose that most children reading this narrative in the 1950s would have an understanding of the church, of Christian doctrine, and marriage would still be central to adult life and procreation.²⁸ The text adheres to the traditional tale and to a western conservative metaethic, as well as ideologically reflecting aspects of the late 1940s, particularly in relation to class, gender and religion. Its middle-class connotations, a passive ideology or 'the writer's unexamined assumptions' however, exclude or make 'other' children who entered Britain with their families in post-war times from what had been British colonies and who came with a different cultural background (Hollindale, 1988, p.12).

Sutcliff's text culturally and ideologically demonstrates links with the Second World War and post-war period in which it was written. While the 1938 film *The Adventures of Robin Hood* portrays a Robin fighting against Norman tyranny, which was in itself an ideological positioning against the Nazi regime and the threat of war in Europe (Jones, 2000), Sutcliff's narrative moves beyond wartime to the Cold War era with its constant threat of nuclear war. The outlawed Robin ensures that his six followers understand his rules and swear fealty (16), then they begin a period of training in the forest. The narrator states of the outlaws, 'Robin worked them hard to

²⁷ *A Gest of Robyn Hooode* identifies Robin as a yeoman.

²⁸ The post-war social structure still reflected adherence to the Church of England, nine out of ten people saying they belonged to a church or sect and attending Sunday services with more than half sending their children to Sunday School (Sinfield, 1983).

make them what they were; schooling them in the use of bow, quarterstaff, in sword and buckler and in all the nameless lessons of the forest and its ways' (18) in a manner reminiscent of national service training. Over a period of time the group grows, reflecting the older stories, gaining Little John, Will the Bowman, Will Scarlet and the Curtel Friar. Focalised through Robin, readers learn that in six months the group has grown to twenty. Sutcliff emphasises the right of what Robin is doing through implicit reference to the miserable, ragged, hungry hunted fugitives that joined him whom freedom and training and good food had changed for the better. Sutcliff is here perhaps thinking of the many European refugees who lost homes and livelihoods during the Second World War or were hunted, as were the Jews and Romany. Robin is their leader and they become a well-trained fighting force, with summer camps in Barnesdale and winter camp in the caves of Sherwood. Their readiness is indicated in 'There was no need for [Robin] to give last-minute orders: every man knew what he was to do when the moment for action came' (160). It reflects guerrilla warfare and the resistance groups in Europe during the Second World War.

Sutcliff's language choices identify for her readers how they are to view the various characters. When Robin meets the friar and they are attacked by the Abbot's men, led by Gisborne, these men are described by the narrator as brave, until overwhelmed by the odds against them. However, Gisborne is identified as a 'blackguard' (45) and the omniscient narrator informs readers that he is in disgrace since Robin's escape and looking for revenge, the ideological implication being that seeking revenge is a negative attribute.

This Robin meets all the categories identified by Stephens and McCallum mainly because Sutcliff adheres to the pre-texts: he is a charismatic leader, shows physical prowess and accepts challenges from Little John and the Tinker, is a good organiser and overlooks past differences, especially with Little John, about whom he also demonstrates an ability to make shrewd judgement (1998, p.173). And if Robin's description, through Sutcliff's narration, is reminiscent of officers in wartime and after, then analysis of Marian in Sutcliff's text identifies some distinctive cultural features relating to women at the time of writing.

2.7.2 Sutcliff's Marian

It is evident that despite their contribution to the war effort in the 1940s, women were still part of a hegemonic male society and Sutcliff's representation of Marian reflects this. Readers do not encounter Marian, other than through Robin's focalised thoughts, until after most of the other traditional characters of the outlaw band have been introduced, Robin thinks to himself that 'the Greenwood is no life for a woman' (75). However, Sutcliff's Lady Marian, of noble birth, and escaping from a forced marriage, encounters Robin, searching for her in the forest, when incognito in boy's clothing. They fight with swords neither, surprisingly, but true to tradition, recognising the other until the fighting is over. Robin states, '... Friar Tuck shall marry us this very day.' (86), the narrative adhering to middle-class cultural views of the 1940s. Later Marian is treated with a kind of reverence and respect by other members of the outlaw band in a manner reminiscent of the Lost Boys' relationship with Wendy in *Peter Pan* (Barrie, 1904) or perhaps this is Sutcliff's implicit reference to the pre-text aspect of Robin's love for 'Our Lady', that is, the Virgin Mary. Although Marian never completely cross-dresses again though she does wear trousers under her kirtle, she is respected by the group as a comrade, sharing their tasks and 'had not been afraid when there was an alarm of an attack' (90), implying Sutcliff's recognition of the role of women in wartime. She also perhaps represents Sutcliff's middle-class views of women at the time. When Marian's comment 'We heard your horn and the lads ran, but I could not leave the stew' (120) the ideological implication is that woman's priority is with food preparation and the home. However, since this Robin Hood narrative was aimed at readers who were more interested in adventure, an aspect appealing to both boys and girls, rather than the more female-orientated romance, such treatment of Marian is not surprising. Philippa Pearce recalls re-enacting Robin Hood adventures as a child, yet always adopting the role of Robin implying that it was the adventurous nature of Robin that appealed to girls also (Pearce, 1985).

The reversion covers years and leans heavily on the older fifteenth and sixteenth century versions and Stephens and McCallum suggest it 'was influenced by national mentalities in the aftermath of World War II' (1998, p.170). Robin's outlaw band comprises fighting men in successful campaigns, reflecting idealised views of the Second World War. In her text, when Robin calls out, 'Raise your hands. Keep them raised. Let no man make any move' (162/163), it

echoes many propaganda war films and the television series *Adventures of Robin Hood* in the 1950s with its disciplined 'army' of outlaws led by actor Richard Greene. It also reflects the continuation of compulsory national service in not only a Cold-War period but a time of continued warfare.²⁹ Its ending reminds readers of the hegemonic conservative values Robin and his men stood for: freedom, justice and kindness, though there is clearly a nationalistic cultural view against foreigners, portrayed through Norman names and foreign mercenaries. The child reader is more likely to enjoy the adventurous side of the story, its reflections of a post-war era fitting in with the cultural ideologies of the time, and still familiar in the years following in relation to war and fighting, through new representation as well as other narratives in comic and film. More than a decade later, Enid Blyton also took up the yoke of traditional heroes in presenting a specifically child-orientated and undeniably humanistic view of Robin.

2.8 *Tales of Brave Adventure* (1963) by Enid Blyton

Enid Blyton's *Tales of Brave Adventure* (1963) was published towards the end of a forty year writing career which produced more than 700 books for children, including poetry and non-fiction (Rudd, 2001, p.91). Writing for what Hollindale and Sutherland (1995) term middle childhood, the text under consideration is one of two parts, being retold narratives of Robin Hood and King Arthur. Like Sutcliff before her, Blyton has selected from the pre-texts a number of ballads, the choice of which perhaps reflects her ideological viewpoint in relation to a humanist transmission to children. It is an interesting selection which is manipulated and retold to present a particular ideological view of Robin which also intimates the kind of reader for whom Blyton intended the text. So recently after the turmoil of war and with the threat of nuclear war during the Cold War period, perhaps Blyton, in the early 1960s, wanted to avoid as much as possible killing and death in her stories, while still promoting bravery, as in the narrative's title, or, it is possible that she felt children should be protected from these, a point supported by Bob Dixon: 'Blyton didn't believe in including material in her stories which would, in her estimation, be painful or disturbing to children' (Dixon, 1977, p.57). However, Nicholas Tucker suggests that she was able to identify very closely with the needs of her child readers and her books 'never move far from children's own, egocentric, quasi-magical views about life' (Tucker, 1981, p.106). Tucker is referring to contemporary realistic adventure stories with child

²⁹ British National Service personnel fought in the Korean War (1950-1953).

protagonists, however, these comments can equally relate to her narrative of Robin Hood. Robin's behaviour, for example, in staff or sword fights with Little John, Will Scarlet and the Tinker before they join his followers, have childlike elements, particularly in their shared enjoyment of the combat and his appreciation of their skill, and where only minor cuts or bruises are received and soon forgotten. These are also a reflection of the views expressed in some of the pre-texts. It is apparent that the choice Blyton makes from the pre-texts is such as will endear children to Robin in the way in which his followers do. And this endearment reflects an ideological stance which Hunt suggests is most likely to be 'stamped (through subconscious osmosis) into the national consciousness because Blyton's books were so widely read' (Hunt, 2001, p.36).

2.8.1 Blyton's Robin

Blyton's first stage of endearing Robin to her young readers comes when the omniscient third-person narrator tells of Robin's decision to be an outlaw after his home is destroyed and father and workers are killed by 'enemies' (7). By removing the specific agency of the action, signifying only 'enemies', Blyton avoids the need for Robin to address the act through confrontation, although identification of the sheriff as 'enemy' at a later point in the narrative presents the binary opposition of Robin and the Sheriff. Robin's motives for living as an outlaw in the Greenwood are also identified and justified early: Robin will rob 'rich men and greedy priests' giving the money to the poor 'who had no one to help them' (8), the altruistic decision in relation to cause and effect presumably requiring no further political explanation for young readers.

Most of the chosen pre-text ballads from the seventeenth century which make up the narrative promote Robin's cheerfulness, leadership, impulsiveness and willingness to partake in single combat. As in the pre-texts, Robin enjoys fights with Little John, Will Scarlet, the Tinker and Maid Marian. He also enjoys wearing disguise as when he helps Allen-a-Dale, and when fighting with Marian, also disguised as a page. His Merry Men, outlaws like himself who join him, 'would have followed him to the ends of the earth' (9), refer to him as 'master' and come running and kneel at the sound of three blasts on his horn (12) indicating a hierarchically structured or class society unlike that presented in Trease's text. However, he also rages; his fight with Will Scarlet is a result of Scarlet's refusal to submit and pay a tax and because he laughs at Robin (16),

behaviour which children might understand and because it can be equated with childhood. Although 'the sheriff was his bitter enemy' (15), when the sheriff is tricked into Sherwood by Robin disguised as a butcher, Robin 'whistles and sings' (20) and is a 'merry mocking outlaw' (21). The sheriff returns to Nottingham unharmed, though lighter in his purse.

Kim Reynolds (2005), discussing the ideology of family as it was articulated at the end of the Second World War, identifies a variety of attributes associated with it, namely that the family:

- was indispensable for emotional security;
- was fundamental to the creation of responsible citizens;
- and acted as a conservative force against the cultural degeneration some people believed was inextricably linked to the rise of modernism, with its links to ennui, anxiety, women's rights and less manly men.

(Reynolds, 2005, p.27)

In Blyton's text Robin is the white patriarchal leader or 'father' of a 'family' of outlaw followers. The oath they swear and the feasts they enjoy together followed by the bonding activities they pursue of wrestling and archery, reinforce the family feeling which is further emphasised by the 'merriness' of Robin and the group, and their welcome of new members. The particular manner of presentation through her choice and retelling of pre-text ballads enables Blyton to transfer an implicit hegemonic ideology to a white middle-class audience.

Blyton's choice of pre-texts support the notion of family and 'merriness' in that none of these retold pre-texts relates to combat between hero and villain until the final chapter. Blyton has chosen pre-texts which emphasise the Arcadian quality of the Greenwood and the lives of Robin and his merry men. The narrative might be considered to reflect the changing times in the 1960s when Britain had come through a politically, culturally and economically difficult and austere time in the 1950s and looked forward to a brighter future. Her choice of pre-texts differs considerably from those of Trease and Sutcliff, although her chapter headings owe much to Sutcliff and earlier texts in the use of 'How' as in 'How Robin Hood met Little John' (10) and 'How Robin turned Butcher' (15). In relation to Stephens' and McCallum's criteria for the character of Robin, while the text meets most, there is no evidence of his readiness to overlook past differences (1998, p.183). He does demonstrate 'ability to make shrewd assessment of people' as with Little John (10-14), Allen-a-Dale (30-35) and the Tinker (69-74). This Robin demonstrates the 'trickster' motif with the tinker, ordering drinks and telling him tales of Robin

Hood until he falls asleep.³⁰ Then Robin can retrieve the warrant for his own arrest, though later after their fight, he says ‘you are a good fellow and a sturdy fighter’ (74) agreeing with his followers that the Tinker should join the merry men.

2.8.2 Blyton’s Marian

The meeting with Maid Marian, ‘a maid of high degree’ (53) who misses Robin and decides to dress as a page and seek him in Sherwood Forest, follows the seventeenth century pre-text structure. This Marian is not fleeing an unwanted marriage, which at the time of writing would have been construed as a challenge to middle-class patriarchy and an inappropriate ideology to pass on to the young reader. When they accidentally meet, disguises prevent their recognition of each other and they fight, Robin admiring the page’s skill. When the fighting comes to an end with an invitation to join his ‘Merry Men’, Marian identifies her unknown assailant as Robin, and he recognises her voice. She is determined that she will stay despite his concern for her and ‘the rough life we lead’ (54). One surprising humorous moment left open to interpretation is when the narrator says, ‘How [the merry men] stared when they saw their master hand-in-hand with a slender page’ (55). Robin and Marian are wed that day by Friar Tuck, adhering to pre-1960s middle-class morality, and there is a feast. Thereafter Marian disappears from this text apart from an illustration in the following chapter.

In Blyton’s text, Robin meets the king in disguise, feasts him, entertains him, showing him the archers’ skill and all are pardoned, some going with Robin to the king’s court in London. Later when King Richard dies overseas, Robin returns to the forest because King John ‘was mean and crafty, and oppressed the people as much as the rich abbots did in Nottingham’ (87). But John sends a large force of archers to hunt and kill Robin and his followers, although, ‘Robin and his men would not fight until they were made to, for they did not wish to harm any brave English archer’ (90). And this is a central theme of Blyton’s text; there is plenty of fighting, particularly in relation to those about to join the followers, but no killing until this last chapter and Robin’s

³⁰ The trickster motif is a familiar one to Blyton who uses it in her retelling of the B’rere Rabbit stories and her own Noddy stories.

eventual death. Death is also dealt with summarily, 'many of their number were hurt, and some were dead' (91). Only Robin's death, at the hands of the prioress, is dealt with in detail, Robin telling Little John, "'Do not grieve for me overmuch, for I have been happy, and must die sometime'" (95). So, Blyton presents her young readers with a prosaic statement relating to death, while emphasising the 'happy' aspect once more. The ideological elements of this narrative concern the 'merriness' of Robin and his followers; even the term 'outlaws' is used less as the narrative progresses. The absence of any killing is partly because of Blyton's choice of pre-texts to retell and partly through the nature of the retelling. The manner in which she presents the material clearly indicates the nature of her target audience and her views on what childhood and childhood experiences should comprise. She states:

I write for children because: first I love them and understand them, and know exactly what they want; secondly, I trained as a kindergarten Froebel, teacher, one of the finest groundings possible, because of its insistence on the importance of an understanding of children's psychology ...
(Blyton cited in Trease, 1964, p.22)

Her views contrast with Sutcliffe's, who states that she writes for the child 'from nine to ninety' (Thompson, www.lib.rochester.edu). Blyton's text makes narrative links more directly with folk tales and legends, the only specific historical references being to King Richard and Prince/King John, and her language is free from metaphors or literary allusions. The retellings of the death of both the sheriff and Guy of Gisborne are omitted. Blyton states that writers have a responsibility to ensure their stories have sound morals because that is what children like, linking it with Piaget's views, and presumably this is why she has manipulated her retelling to that end (Blyton cited in Trease, 1964, p.116). The conservative metaethic is upheld through the metanarrative of an honest man, his origins unidentified, who respects King Richard, abhors the greed of the rich - particularly bishops and abbots - and chooses to acquire and redistribute their wealth to support the poor, although there are few acts recounted to support this.

Enid Blyton's text marks the end of an era for from the 1960s onwards children's literature was to change, particularly in relation to characterisation and subject focus as already discussed in Chapter 1. The feminist movement, concerns about women's rights, particularly in relation to equal pay in the late 1960s, had escalated and by the 1980s the rights and independence of girls

and women had become a feature of children's fiction. Robyn McKinley's Robin Hood text reflects these changes.

2.9 *The Outlaws of Sherwood* (1988) by Robyn McKinley

Like the previous texts discussed Robyn McKinley's *The Outlaws of Sherwood* also offers a humanist account of the Robin Hood story. This is evident in the way the external narrator conveys the manner in which Robin Hood, Marian and other characters reflect on their understanding of themselves and those around them. They make decisions and choices in relation to family and other authorities through their concern for and support of others and through their own psychological journey to selfhood. The humanist elements of the retelling serve to convey the anxieties of society in the 1980s, when children's texts were, Victor Watson (1992) states,

more likely to be openly concerned with the embarrassments and taboos of the contemporary western world – poverty, inner-city despair, racial violence, conservation, death in various forms, and personal issues associated with sexuality... (Styles, Bearne and Watson, 1992, p.18)

Watson says they reflect also a concern with 'values of tolerance, caring and assertion', elements that are embodied in McKinley's narrative (Styles, Bearne and Watson, 1992, p.20). This story for young adults was written in the social and political context of the end of the 1970s and the fall of James Callaghan's Labour government, and a time of social and industrial chaos. The period led to the election of a conservative government in Britain, under the leadership of the first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher in 1979, and mass unemployment (Sked and Cook, 1993).³¹ The narrative, within a historical setting, is a product of and mirrors not only the political turbulence of the 1980s but also the cultural implications of the feminist movements which re-aligned ways in which both women and men were perceived. McKinley's alternative version of the Robin Hood story presents challenges for young adults for, unlike the previous texts discussed, it reflects changing views on the nature of male and female and how they might be represented in children's literature. From the 1960s the continued discussion of the unequal role of women in society led to the modern feminist criticism of the present which considers such aspects as the mechanisms of patriarchy which have promoted sexual inequality (Habib,

³¹ Prime Minister Thatcher's commitment to a policy which stressed 'the primacy of market forces, individualism and sound money' led to a 'steep and unforeseen rise in unemployment' (Sked and Cook, 1993, pp.330/331)

2008). McKinley presents a literary text which 'calls into question many of our essentialist ideas about gender' (Bennett and Royle, 2004, p.156). It overtly challenges gender stereotypes through Robin and Marian and other characters, particularly Cecil/Cecily. McKinley's introduction of this character into the narrative enables her to further challenge patriarchal/hegemonic attitudes to women.

McKinley draws on a limited number of pre-texts in her narrative but manipulates them, recasting some events around the chosen characters. Elements which are taken from *A Gest of Robyn Hode* are from: *Robin Hood and the Knight*, *Robin Hood and the King* and *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*. Elements of other pre-texts which are incorporated are from *Robin Hood and Little John*, and *Robin Hood and Allen a Dale*. Five of the seven key events are included when comparing them with 'The Key Events and Cultural Significance of the Robin Hood Metanarrative' (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.174).³² The humanist nature of the retelling is presented through the narrative mainly focalised through Robin. Readers are able to ascertain the nature of Robin and the circumstances in which he lives in the opening pages. His reflections on his family, his skills, such as 'his slight local fame as a fletcher' (1) or otherwise; his friendship with Much and Marian and the taunting he gets from other sub-apprentice foresters, 'Robin knew that any story of his own indifferent marksmanship would lose nothing in the telling' (5) all build a picture for readers of a young man to whom they can relate. These descriptions present a kind of 'reality' which is a social construct, albeit of a fantasy which 'imparts meaning to human life' (Stephens, 1992, p.242). Such a discourse embodies liberal humanist concepts. The manner in which McKinley does this ensures that readers are presented with a narrative very different from the traditional retellings, and therefore one that will have more significance, a view which will become apparent as the characters of Robin and Marian are explored and challenges to the metanarrative are revealed.

2.9.1 McKinley's Robin

In *The Outlaws of Sherwood*, McKinley focalises through the character of Robin thus facilitating reader identification with this sub-apprentice forester struggling against the abuse and

³² Key events included are: "1. A young man forced into outlawry, 2. He gathers and leads a band of similar victims of persecution and formulates a code of ethics; 3. The outlaws engage in a struggle against the forces of corruption; 5. Robin fights a climactic duel with Guy of Gisborne; 6. Robin meets the king and is pardoned and raised to a position of honor [sic]. Reparations are usually exacted." (1998, p.174 -175)

maltreatment of the Chief Forester and his cronies, and trying to survive and keep his cottage. It provides deeper insights into this Robin's character: his concerns at his lack of skill as an archer, 'He did not hate the fact that he was a second-rate archer' (5); and his hand-to-mouth existence. Thus McKinley provides a context for Robin's subsequent outlawry when he accidentally kills one of a group intent on bathing, attacking and killing him and in doing so she presents readers with a less stereotypical Robin which challenges some of the criteria identified by Stephens and McCallum in relation to his physical prowess and his acceptance of physical challenges (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.183). Hidden from the law he is initially unwilling to lead a group of Saxon malcontents against the Normans from a safe camp in the forest, as suggested by his friends Much and Marian. He reflects 'He did not like it that they deferred to him so easily' (29) when he first meets the other young men. However, he accepts that 'the price on his head gave him an aura' (29) and the camp he sets up in the forest becomes a focus for homeless and jobless families. He meets the criterion of 'a charismatic projection of authority' but finds it hard to accept, 'like Little John, Will Scarlett was one of the few of Greentree's members he could talk to without feeling as if CHIEF was branded on his forehead and every word must matter'(69; McKinley's capitalisation). He also has 'sound organisational skills' evident in the Greentree camp and others as well as his ability to foresee the need for woodcraft skills, archery training, sentries and so on (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.183).

The structure and setting of this narrative reflect the social discontent evident in the 1980s when Thatcherite monetary policies elevated individual capitalist initiative, as opposed to welfare spending, and privatisation of former national industries resulting in many industries closing and people being without employment. Additionally centralised control of the civil service resulted in spending by local authorities being cut with their powers reduced (Marwick, 2000, p.307). The young men who join Robin are not outlaws; many are social and political activists concerned about the suffering of their fellow Saxons as a result of heavy taxation by Norman law administrators.³³ McKinley's choice of Saxons against Normans reflects the struggle between workers and capitalists of the 1980s.³⁴ However, the urban riots of the 1980s related

³³ The exception is Little John, while Will Scarlet joins them because he sees what they do as a just cause.

³⁴ McKinley confesses in her Afterword the influence of Pyle's text of Robin Hood in her life and reflects in particular Holt's thesis that 'the tales of Robin Hood have always reflected what the teller and the audience needed him to be *at the time of the telling* (p.282; McKinley's italics).

to race as much as unemployment; the black communities suffered the most from unemployment and were treated to police harassment and political disparagement (Sked and Cook, 1993, p.351).³⁵ McKinley's alternative version of the Robin Hood story presents Saxons (in ways that reflect 1980s social conditions) as the under-class being turned out of work and consequently their homes while the over-class Normans expect them to find their own means of living.

In contrast to Sutcliff's and Blyton's Arcadian greenwood setting, McKinley's text depicts the difficulties of existing in a forest setting or any place where dependence on trust is a necessary safety factor; there is an emphasis on surviving in temporary accommodation in poor weather conditions. In this the text reflects the social concerns of the 1980s; of homeless people and those forced outside their 'comfort zones' trying to survive and learn new skills.³⁶ The outlaw band has an over-riding philosophy to support those unjustly imposed upon by those in power. As Will puts it when he comes to join the outlaws, "I heard ... of a band of folk deep in Sherwood, who, having become outlaws because they were not permitted to earn a living, have been sending those poorer than themselves along their ways with coin in their pockets'" (51).

Once settled in the forest, Robin changes from being a 'somewhat decentralised character' to the 'social bandit' which Knight says appeared before and after the noble Robin of the seventeenth century (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.189; Knight, 2003, p. xiii). He can be compared with Carpenter's Robin in the television series *Robin of Sherwood* (1984-1986), where both represent 'principled resistance to wrongful authority' (Knight, 2003, p. xi). Carpenter's Robin, 'this young radical in touch with magic and ecology' champions the needs of the common people (Knight, 2003, p xiv).³⁷ And like McKinley's Robin he is also a representation of 'new man' with the leadership qualities and a social purpose given to him by the man-god, Herne the Hunter, who also acts as Robin's mentor and protects him. Carpenter's Robin has been given

³⁵ 1981 saw a police 'stop and search' policy in south London which caused riots by black youth while in 1985 rioting spread to Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham. Norman Tebbit's comment 'I grew up in the 1930s with an unemployed father. He did not riot. He got on his bike and looked for work, and he went on looking until he found it' (1981) indicated the Thatcher government view of the unemployed and led to the catchphrase 'On yer bike'.

³⁶ In London homeless, jobless people were sleeping under London Bridges and in doorways, while Centre Point built in 1969 remained empty.

³⁷ The television series was followed-up by four novels relating to the series written through the collaboration of Carpenter and other authors, e.g. *Robin of Sherwood and the Hounds of Lucifer* (1985) with Robin May, and *Robin of Sherwood the Hooded Man* (1986) with Anthony Horowitz.

'Albion one of the Seven Swords of Wayland' by Herne 'and swore on this sword to help the poor and the oppressed' (1985, p.9) unlike McKinley's Robin who in pre-text tradition has his knife, his bow and his staff, although his fight with Guy of Gisbourne is the first real fight in which he engages.

Stephens suggests that humanistic narratives of children's literature identify 'man' and 'woman' as coded behaviours to be learned. He indicates that there is a need to read 'against the text' or oppositionally, in the manner advocated by feminist critics such as Lissa Paul (1998).³⁸ By reading in this manner, it is possible to identify McKinley's Robin as 'new age boy or man' that is, not a 'hegemonic male' but a 'sensitive male' who does not deny agency to others, a behaviour Robin shows in relation to Marian and others (Stephens, 2002, p.38; Connell, 2005).³⁹ McKinley is here challenging what Perry Nodelman suggests is a feature of young male society, in that 'personal vulnerability and concern for others must be kept from men in order to be acceptably masculine' (Nodelman, 2002, p.9). She is relating more significantly to what American psychologist William Pollock (1998) was later to suggest, of moving beyond a culturally constructed 'boy code' or a set of assumptions about hiding feelings other than that of rage, by demonstrating through Robin's behaviour feelings of empathy, and vulnerability. Simon Baren-Cohen indicates that different parts of the brain have attributions which are accorded male and female. The male part is identified as that concerned with organising and systems whereas the female part relates more to empathy (Baren-Cohen, 2003, p. 6). McKinley's Robin plans and organises the outlaws' camps, guards, attacks, and networks for moving people on but he is also empathetic towards those who arrive in the forest having been turned from their homes. The narrative tells us that after a few weeks families are arriving, and 'were sitting huddled by the fire ... [Robin] had not had the heart to send the families immediately on their way ... [they] were too weary' (38/39). He demonstrates what Baren-Cohen identifies as a 'balanced brain', one that is both organisational and empathetic, possessing both male and female attributes (Baren-Cohen, 2003, p. 6).

³⁸ Stephens cites R. Buchbinder's (1994) *Masculinities and Identities* in this.

³⁹ Sybil a widow who comes to the group after her husband's death and being turned from the farm, becomes one of the first to be skilled with the longbow and remains with the outlaw group, taking on all tasks.

Robin is never seen by the people of Nottingham and surrounding area and therefore acquires a legendary status, as Much and Marian predict and encourage. And later in the narrative when Marian, dressed in men's clothing, enters the shooting contest at Nottingham Fair there is much speculation about whether this is Robin Hood. A woman tells Cecily: 'he's an elemental, of course, child ... Robin Hood is one of the gods come back to save England from the Normans' (182) reinforcing the mythic quality of this character. Even King Richard states that he has heard many tales of the legendary Robin Hood during his journey back to England (280). But readers are privileged to share Robin's concerns about the people under his care; he is not presented as the Robin of the pre-texts although he meets the criteria identified by Stephens and McCallum.

2.9.2 McKinley's Marian

Just as readers are able to 'know' Robin better through focalisation, so also McKinley allows them to learn more of Marian who plays a significant role in this narrative. This reflects a changing society's growing awareness of the varied roles of women as a result of the feminist movement, particularly changes brought about through the 1970s and 1980s. McKinley's presentation of Marian as a childhood friend of Robin and Much also identifies for readers her mixed Saxon and Norman blood: her mother and Robin's mother were friends; and her noble birth and social position come from her Norman father. It leads her to raise questions about trust while admitting that she and Much have discussed a revolutionary force with Robin as its symbol. She states,

But there is Norman blood in my veins, and your friends are not sure of me ... I have never gone cold or hungry, that is true. But you do not know, because I have not told you, what it is like to have a half-Norman father who despises all things Saxon, including his wife, who died I believe because of it; including his own tainted blood and his daughter's ... I blame all my faults on my Norman blood, and my virtues on my Saxon. (26)

How much might this reflect the views of children who were the product of mixed-race marriages in the 1980s? However, it is evident that Marian is as committed as they are (26), although she never moves fully to the forest, instead remaining in her home. This is not the mild Marian of Sutcliff's text but one who demonstrates feistiness within the bounds of her circumscribed background, demonstrating her agency.⁴⁰ Marian's agency is evident in the

⁴⁰ Butler (1990) explores the performative aspects of gender.

manner in which she has, over time, developed methods by which she can escape her home without raising suspicion. Her actions reflect what Charles Altieri indicates, in that 'intentionality consists of the ways that agents shape routes within the world and thus provide the bases for defining convictions, expressing priorities, and ultimately accepting responsibility for the routes chosen' (Altieri, 1994, p.96). Marian has made deliberate choices, becoming skilled in forest-craft, wearing a tunic similar to the outlaws, able to find her way to and from the Sherwood hideaway, bringing much needed materials and information. Focalised through Robin, readers learn that she 'stood, lithe and slender, wearing one of the dark-green woollen tunics that nearly all his forestfolk now wore ... her hair was tied back, and her boots and breeches tied too as the outlaws did; she might have been a young man' (73).⁴¹ Her presentation is that of androgyny. She works as hard as the outlaws to learn to shoot with the longbow. She skilfully manipulates her father and suitor to attend Sir Richard at Lea's home when Robin goes to present the mortgage repayment in the presence of the sheriff, and by her manner and speech ensures the outlaws' safety. She is also a fine archer, winning the contest in Nottingham, perceived as Robin Hood, a transgression with the purpose of deceiving the sheriff.⁴²

McKinley's text, while reversioning the outlaw characters from the old ballads, also introduces female outlaws who are skilled archers and hints at a homosexual female relationship. The text challenges views of masculinity and femininity, through Marian's agency and various roles, but also questions attitudes: Cecily having escaped a proposed marriage to a Norman, and trained in all the outlaw skills, calling herself Cecil, working in partnership with Little John, challenges him, when her sex is discovered, ' "would you so freely have taught me to use a staff, and to throw large opponents, and to leap out of trees upon them, had I been Cecily, Lady Cecily of Norwood – these weeks past?" ' (169). She also tells Robin ' "I won't leave ... I am worth my salt" ' (168), a fact with which he agrees.⁴³ McKinley also raises here the point about females not wanting to fulfil conventional gender expectations in relation to their biology; Cecily was expected to marry

⁴¹ It reflects a culture in which some popular performers assumed androgynous roles: singer and song-writer Annie Lennox cross-dressed in men's suits in the early 1980s as well as assuming an androgynous style; David Bowie's alter-ego Ziggy Stardust had appeared in the 1970s and he also used cross-dressing in his performances.

⁴² Flanagan indicates that females cross-dress because it 'allows them to inhabit the male world and experience many of the liberties denied them in the female form' which Marian is doing here as does the character Cecily also (Stephens, 2002, p.78/79).

⁴³ This is later justified when Cecily rescues injured Marian and saves Little John from death in Nottingham (189, 194) and later saves Robin in the fight with Guy of Gisbourne (235).

an older Norman, but she also is challenging 'the polarized conceptions of masculinity and femininity and [attempting] to create a gendered realm outside conventional expectations and stereotypes' (Flanagan, 2002, p.80). Marian chooses to operate between the two areas but readers learn that she has a stronger will than her father and it is evident that she has cleverly manipulated events to her advantage on more than one occasion, while appearing to stay within the bounds of propriety. Her acumen is acknowledged by the king when he offers to make her sheriff but accepts her choice to accompany Robin to the Crusades.

McKinley represents feminist thinking in a number of ways in this text, her female characters portraying the wide variety of subjective positions women might adopt. From Mathilda, the female representation of the woman who stays at the greenwood fireside and cooks, but ensures that all work is completed by others, to Marjorie, wife of Alan-a-Dale, who is set to learn to cook but with no other expectations, except that she takes upon herself the task of learning to fight with staff, and it is she who gets help after Robin's fight with Gisbourne. There is the possible lesbian relationship of Sybil and Eva who Cecily describes as daughters of yeomen with the implication that class position keeps them apart from her. Cecily escaping an unwelcome marriage contract, demonstrates agency, adopts male dress and learns woodcraft and fighting skills and is accepted as male until her biological form gives her away. McKinley uses her to challenge perceptions of what male and female can achieve. Marian demonstrates subjectivity throughout, her agency and her class position, at times, enabling her to move between situations. She appears to use cross-dressing for both disguise and convenience when within the forest and as disguise when impersonating Robin at Nottingham. The presence and roles of these female characters within the narrative challenges the metanarrative and the conservative meta-ethic, presenting a narrative which, although within a Saxon versus Norman historical situation and including some of the traditional events, forefronts masculinity and femininity, challenging young adult readers to consider these in society today.

McKinley's narrative of Robin Hood is an often humorous and sometimes ironic retelling suited to a young adult audience, but unlike Trease's text has used archaic linguistic cadences to give a historic flavour to both narrative and dialogue. It reflects the changing culture of the 1980s through masculine and feminist interpretations of Robin and Marian, and with a much greater emphasis placed on the role of Marian than demonstrated in the previous texts discussed. A

humanist perspective is embodied within the narrative; characters are presented as having qualities and attitudes commensurate with those of young people at the time of reading; it reflects their various subjective positioning and concern for others. While a significant range of pre-texts are chosen for the narrative they are manipulated to reflect cultural concerns of the 1980s and a re-interpretation of the cultural positioning of both men and women. It was followed by Theresa Tomlinson's which also makes a significant contribution to the cultural positioning of male and female in the 1990s.

2.10 *Forestwife* Trilogy (1993-2000) by Theresa Tomlinson

The three stories that make up Theresa Tomlinson's *Forestwife Trilogy*; *The Forestwife* (1993), *Child of the May* (1998) and *The Path of the She-Wolf* (2000) were written, Tomlinson states, as a result of an interest in medieval wise women, whom she links with earth mother goddess worship from an earlier time, stating that by the Middle Ages 'the ancient religion had faded and Christianity is the dominant religion, but the healing role ... still remains' (Interviews, Tomlinson; www.writeaway.org.uk). This narrative makes strong links with nature and the changing seasons, something which the May Games of medieval times reflected through the celebration of the earth's fertility and the renewal of life (Keen, 1977; Holt, 1982; Matthews, 1993). As such it meets the challenges of the 1990s and concerns about the environment. As with Trease's narrative, the title to some extent disguises the fact that this trilogy is also a narrative of Robin Hood which can be identified as an alternative reversion along with Trease's *Bows against the Barons* (1934) and Carpenter's novelised versions of the TV series; it shares elements of magic with the latter as will be discussed later. All share a 'politicalized, radical narrative stance which refuses the transcendent order on which the majority metanarrative finally rests' (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.171).

The narrative of the trilogy spans more than fifteen years, unlike Trease's and McKinley's which last only an eighteen month period. From the pre-texts Tomlinson integrates the fight between Robert/Robin and Gisburn, in which Gisburn dies and Robert is badly wounded, though the agency of this action is removed for readers through John's retelling. The pre-text of *Robin Hood and the Potter* is also utilised as is part of *Robin Hood and the Sheriff*. In relation to *Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford*, Tomlinson manipulates the nature of the tale to suit her narrative as she does with *The death of Robin Hood*. Tomlinson weaves these pre-texts into a narrative

which encompasses a historical period from Richard I's imprisonment and release, through to the reign of King John and the revoking of the Barons' Charter in 1215.⁴⁴ It presents a perspective on historical events through the perceptions and lives of ordinary people, with an ideology which challenges the abuse of power and forefronts the struggle of the common people, much as Trease's text does.

2.10.1 Tomlinson's Robin

The Robert/Robin of Tomlinson's text is, like McKinley's Robin, in his late teens when first introduced into the narrative. However, while McKinley's Robin is 'pessimistic and pragmatic' (Gates, 2006, p.71), Tomlinson's Robert is moody and wild, although, in common with other Robin Hood reversion and pre-texts, he has a determination to fight those he identifies as working against the king's interests, namely barons and law administrators. His first appearance is focalised through Marian when she sees:

... a hand sticking out from beneath the curling bracken. The skin was the same gingery brown as the bracken fronds making it hard to see. ... He was young and thin cheeked, with a dark growth of beard. He was dressed in a grey hog-skin jerkin worn silver in patches like the yew tree's bark, and dark ginger leggings that blended with the colour of his hand and the dying bracken. His cloak was a deep foresty green. ... It seemed he was part of the woodland itself; grown from the trees, the bracken and the rich earth. ... Robert, the fierce wolfshhead, the wicked one. (54)

This text of the 1990s has a particularly 'green' frame of reference, reflecting cultural concerns of the times, and this introduction to the Robin character carries with it linguistic overtones of the forest, through the colour of his clothing equated with the bracken and the tree, and its camouflage effect like that of a forest creature. It also emphasises the 'elemental' or 'organic' nature of this Robin, Marian perceiving him initially as a forest spirit, but with a frisson of interest, heightened when she learns he is the outlawed son of her former nurse, Agnes. Years later, while still enjoying the risk of challenging the sheriff and frustrated by the defeats in the causes he is fighting for, he is identified as a man of wild moods. John says, 'I think the bitterness of this world hangs very heavy on him ... he will often slip into a foul mood and never speak to us for days' (276). However, he also indicates that when happy Robert is the 'best fellow in the world' (276).

⁴⁴ The revoking of the Barons' Charter in 1215 forms the ending of the latest Robin Hood film *Hood* (2010).

The criteria which Stephens and McCallum identify for Robin Hood do not match Tomlinson's Robin quite as well as the Robins previously discussed. While he is charismatic, he is less authoritative, though his friends John, Much and Will Stoutley are happy to go with him in the manner of young lads looking for adventure. Later he, John and Much are joined by Brother James when they go to fight for the Bishop of Durham. His description as the Hooded One and his growing reputation over the years earn him a following when necessary. He does have some organisational skills and develops empathy for the suffering people in the forest clearing and throughout the forest of Barnesdale.

The forest clearing, where the outlaws recuperate and use as a refuge, is not an outlaw retreat established by Robert but is the Forestwife clearing from ancient times. For, as the book's title implies, the narrative of Robin is juxtaposed with and overshadowed by that of Marian, their roles overlapping in a narrative reflecting a particular period in history, but with a feminist humanist ideology relating to the 1980s and 1990s. Tomlinson presents an externally narrated narrative which is focalised mainly through Marian and Magda, John's daughter, the two female protagonists, emphasising the influence of feminism in the late twentieth century. Readers perceive how the humanist development of these women's own agency supports their awareness of their power to make changes in the society in which they live and that around them.

2.10.2 Tomlinson's Marian

Tomlinson's text, like Trease's *Bows Against the Barons* (1934) and McKinley's *Outlaws of Sherwood* (1988) reflects the struggle of people against oppression. It challenges views that a nation 'has a natural ruling class which rules altruistically because that is its essential nature and function' (Stephens and McCallum, 1998, p.176). In this Tomlinson's text explores the Robin Hood narrative from a different standpoint, focusing primarily on re-positioning women in the twelfth century in the light of the subjectivity of women in the 1990s as a result of the feminist movements of the 1970s and 1980s. This re-positioning of women in relation to their subservience to a hegemonic male society explores their developing subjectivity and agency. In her Author's Note Tomlinson links the power of the Marian character and other women in this novel with research on women during the historical period of King Richard I's and King John's reigns (Tomlinson, 2003, pp. 469-472). Some of the book covers present an inversion of the

Robin Hood motif of the bow and arrow to 'woman-power' making strong cultural links with the Spice Girls, the highly successful all-female pop group of the 1990s, and the iconic symbolism that they gained through their manner and representation of 'Girl Power'.

The narrative is focalised through the female characters with an emphasis on social concerns and the social effects on families of fighting and war. The opening sentence of *The Forestwife*, 'Mary stood before her uncle's chair on the raised dais at the end of the great hall' (1) establishes the female position which Tomlinson sets out to subvert through the narrative. Adhering to feminist critic Lissa Paul's (1998) indication of the need to read differently to uncover the text's and writer's ideologies, it is evident that this first sentence positions the protagonist by:

- indicating her position of subservience and lack of agency in relation to the chair;
- referencing the chair, which is symbolic of her uncle's power and agency;
- identifying her place relating to hegemonic male's control of her life.

Tomlinson's text prioritises the position of Mary [Marian] as an outsider, 'in some way physically and/or mentally displaced from 'home'' (Wilkie-Stibbs, 2002, p.xiii). By running away she develops agency with the help of her former nurse, now Forestwife. Her transformation is in a forest clearing, becoming Marian, her cloak dyed forest green, trained as herbalist and speaking in the vernacular. Lorinda Cohoon equates this and other Marian transformations with those of Princess Diana and Madonna which, she suggests, 'draw on the theories of the transgressive and carnivalesque and reveal the social and linguistic contestation for control and transgression of maidenhood' (Cohoon, 2007, p.211). These transformations also both challenge and reinforce hierarchies in a playful manner, disrupting gendered roles through Marian's developing ability with bow and knife.

Tomlinson's Marian rescues the blacksmith's wife, Philippa, from a scold's bridle, branding and outlawry. Philippa, a tall, strong woman, becomes the 'Little John' to Marian's 'Robin Hood' as they pair up to help other women in distress. According to Cohoon, this transgression of the traditional role challenges constructions of young womanhood. Cohoon refers to Bakhtin's and Kristeva's consideration of transgression and carnival in literature, asking whether such

moments are about resisting authority or releasing pent-up emotion (Cphoon, 2007, p.211). Tomlinson uses transgression in relation to both. Together these characters embody subjectivity and power, carrying knives and bows, leaving the safety of the forest clearing to rescue or support other women. Yet it is not only Marian and Philippa who demonstrate their subjectivity. With their help the Sisters of St. Mary leave their convent where they are imprisoned by monks and continue their work supporting the homeless and starving in the forest, and Lady Matilda of Langden stands up to her husband in support of Sarah and Agnes and the children (186) and later the sheriff, while the sheriff's wife is also shown to be supportive of other women (336). It recalls the feminist movement where demonstration of independence by some women led to that of others. In the second book in the trilogy *Child of the May* (1998), Magda, John's daughter, dresses in men's clothing and is proficient with the bow.

The historically medieval narrative context of out-of-work, homeless, hungry people, the result of higher taxation by the barons, reflects Tomlinson's residual concerns of 1980s Britain, with its unemployed, homeless, and the growing disparity between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. Both Philippa and Marian recall the women who also achieved subjectivity through running food kitchens for miners' families, writing, and speaking against government action during and after the Miners' Strike of 1984-1985, while Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher referred to miners as 'the enemy within,' a phrase the sheriff might use against the outlaws.⁴⁵ The outlaws' disappointment on their return from Runnymede where the King having signed the charter, later revokes everything, reselling their own property to the barons, can be juxtaposed with feelings when the government in the 1980s privatised state corporations.

According to Peter Bramwell, 'the gender polarities [of Robin and Marian] in Tomlinson's texts are not so much broken down as re-prioritized', suggesting that while Robin goes into the world beyond the forest, Marian remains near and within where her privileged role is more effective (Bramwell, 2005, p.115). Keen suggests that the forest acts as a sanctuary for Robin Hood; he goes out and returns (Keen, 1977). However, Marian also passes the Forestwife girdle to other

⁴⁵ July 19th 1984, Margaret Thatcher made this statement when addressing the 1922 Committee.

women so that she too can leave the forest to support others, fulfilling the 'Robin Hood' role also (Keen, 1977, p.2).

This transgressive role and re-prioritising of the gender roles of Marian and Robin are also demonstrated by Marian in the 2004 television series directed by Dominic Minghella, where the role reflects the increased understanding among audiences of the fluidity of gender as performance. This Marian's dress code and actions indicate her transgressive position. Skilled with the bow, she performs kindly acts as the Night Watchman, wearing manly apparel with cloak and hood, and secretly dispensing food and medicine to the poor of Nottingham. She is also seen in a bustier over other garments or a red flowing off-the-shoulder gown, such as she wears when setting out to entrap Gisborne. The fluidity of her clothing echoes the fluidity of her performativity towards Robin and other characters.

Tomlinson also explores the breadth of masculinity through the figures of Robert or 'The Hooded One' and Little John (Connell, 1995). Robert, who is initially solely concerned with fighting to overcome the Normans, becomes empathetic towards the numbers of injured and starving families arriving at the forest clearing, his male persona becoming modified towards the 1990s 'new man'. This Robert, unlike other 'Robins' in earlier texts discussed, says to Marian, 'I cannot serve my king – I shall serve thee instead.' (200), hinting at a reversal of male and female traditional roles of pre-1980s. It also relates to the cultural situation of the late 1980s and early 1990s where many people were dissatisfied with the ruling power of the country which they felt was 'selling them out' through privatisation of former nationalised industries, with ensuing job losses; where the poll tax, or community tax meant that they had to pay more for local services. The recession in the late 1980s and early 1990s resulted in even more out-of-work people.

2.10.3 Magical aspects

Throughout Tomlinson's narrative there is a strong link not only with ancient rites relating to pre-Christian nature worship but also with foreseeing, the ability to predict the future. Marian's mother is a seer who through her dreams foretells things to come. Marian also develops this sense of a need to prepare for the future, through her awareness of seasons and nature, a reference to Tomlinson's environmental concerns. The inclusion of such aspects in the narrative

reflect the increasing interest in magic and fantasy which developed from the 1980s as posited in film and television and literature, continuing into this century.⁴⁶ Tomlinson's narratives have adapted to the cultural concerns of the time of writing and moved away from the Robin Hood pre-texts.

Like Trease's text which has a Marxist philosophy in relation to equality for all people, destruction of a class system and the end of sovereignty, Tomlinson's text, particularly through Robert's comments on the barons, sheriffs and the king, confronts, for readers, the social system prevalent in society in the 1990s and challenges the metanarrative. It is Marian who says, 'I fear for our men ... I don't trust these bishops and barons; I'm sure they're after their own gains. There are no clear sides to this struggle' (368) reflecting the political situation of the time of writing concerning those in power. While emphasising women's stronger perceptions of male and hegemonic intentions, it does not support a western metaethic as identified by Stephens and McCallum. However, the humanist perspective by which the main protagonists reflect on their circumstances and those of others in addition to illumination through dialogue demonstrates their awareness of the situation and needs of others. This is clearly articulated throughout, again challenging Stephens' prediction that humanism was becoming obsolete in postmodernity. As the following example shows, the reverse is the case. I have yet to find a retelling of the Robin Hood story in which humanist elements have not been retained.

2.11 *Hood* (2006) by Stephen R. Lawhead

Hood is the first book of *The Raven Trilogy* which traces the exploits of a Welsh Robin Hood.⁴⁷ Set in the Marches between England and Wales in the time of William the Conqueror's son William Rufus in 1093, it concerns the invasion of the territory of the Britons or Cymry by the Normans. Lawhead presents this postmodern text from a number of focalised viewpoints, interrupting a direct chronology, which has the effect of disrupting readers' engagement with any plot, but encourages reflection on the actions and implies verisimilitude. The narrative has much more historical detail than the texts discussed previously. It is likely that it was conceived

⁴⁶ Already mentioned is the mystical aspects of Herne the Hunter in the Carpenter television series *Robin of Sherwood* (1984) balanced against the diabolic aspects. The 1991 film *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves* also contains links with the dark arts performed in the services of the sheriff but in a postmodern ironic manner.

⁴⁷ The other titles in the trilogy are *Scarlet* (2007) which continues the narrative as focalised much of the time through Will Scarlet and *Tuck* (2009) told from the viewpoint of the mendicant friar.

at a time following the Government of Wales Act of 1998 and the setting up of the National Assembly of Wales in 1999, with power to decide how the budget for Wales is spent and administered.⁴⁸ Such a development would provoke a renewed interest in the heritage of the Welsh people even though the nationalist movement in Wales had progressed through the twentieth century with Plaid Cymru seeking greater autonomy or independence from British government at Westminster. By setting a narrative of Robin Hood at the time of the Norman invasion of this land, Lawhead, a writer with an interest in Welsh mythology, is able to reflect on the nation's past heritage. He justifies his choice of Wales as a focus in a section at the end of this novel, citing the presence of the extensive primeval forest of the Marches and the Welsh longbow which, he states, all men and women could use (Lawhead, 2006, p.435). The narrative is focalised from a number of viewpoints through an external narrator, at times omniscient, which presents readers with a number of perspectives indicating an older, probably cross-over, reflective readership (Appleyard, 1991). Empathetic views are channelled towards the main protagonist through the Prologue of the lonely boy at one with the forest which is to become his home years later.

While there is little reinterpretation or retelling of the pre-texts in common with McKinley's and Tomlinson's texts, Lawhead focuses on the motif of the on-going relationship between the outlaws and the Normans which forms the focus of many earlier retellings, although in this case it is Britons against Normans, particularly the relationship between the outlaws and the sheriff, here represented by Count Falkes de Braose. He is responsible for Rhi Brychan, Lord of Elfael's death along with his war-host as they journey to petition the king in London. The Lord of Elfael's chief warrior, Iwan (John) is the only one to escape, sent to warn the people of the Norman attack and who meets Bran (Robin) as he rides after them. Other characters transferred from the pre-texts are Mérian (Marian), Aethelfrith (Tuck) and Guy of Gysburne, a young ambitious knight of Baron de Braose.

2.11.1 Lawhead's Robin

Robin is presented as a freedom fighter in accordance with the tradition of the retellings although this is not evident until towards the end of the narrative, readers' early encounters

⁴⁸ The act was amended in 2006 giving the assembly greater legislative powers similar to those in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

with the young adult Bran imply a waywardness and selfishness. This is presented through his pursuit of young women, and his decision, after his father is killed and his land taken, to flee north to his mother's family, leaving his people to suffer under the Norman yoke. The priest reflects that he is 'feckless ...profligate, recklessly licentious and dissolute' (172) while conceding deeper qualities as yet unseen. Readers are presented with a physical description of this Robin, which challenges previous versions discussed.⁴⁹ As with Tomlinson's view of Robin, it is focalised through the female, Mérian's, perspective in a manner more likely to appeal to a young adult audience:

Certainly there was not another in all the valleys like him. In looks, grace, and raw seductive appeal, he knew no equal. With his black hair, high handsome brow, and ready smile that was, as always, a little lopsided and deceptively shy – the mere sight of Bran ap Brychan caused female hearts young and old to flutter when he passed. Add to this a supple wit and a free-ranging unfettered charm, and the Prince of Elfael was easily the most ardently discussed bachelor among the marriageable young women of the region. (17)

This external narrator description presents a particular view of maleness to readers which perhaps challenges and encourages a range of responses to this character. The description of 'high handsome brow' with its connotation of intelligence, and 'ready smile' but 'a little lopsided and deceptively shy' is presented in romantic novel vein. Even the 'supple wit and a free-ranging unfettered charm' implies a feminine response while making links with pre-text versions.

Having learned of his father, the king's, death along with all his warriors, this self-centred young man, Bran ap Brychan, at the urging of the bishop rides to London, accompanied by Iwan and a monk to challenge Count de Braose's taking of the land. On their journey, their meeting with Aethelfrith, a mendicant friar, in Hereford, who journeys with them to London proves useful. Bran is captured by Normans on their return to Elfael and his outlawry comes when he fails to present ransom money to Count Falke and, though badly injured by Norman knights pursuing him, escapes to the forest. Lost and dying he is cared for by Angharad, a female Celtic Christian, a wise woman, skilled at healing, who readers are told, 'had expected him to come to her injured. She had foreseen the fight and knew the outcome, but the wounds he had suffered

⁴⁹ It does reflect the representation of Robin as a profligate son, as identified by Marian in the film *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves* (1991).

would tax her sorely' (156). This inclusion of far-seeing introduces a mystical or fantasy element to an otherwise historical fiction text, reflecting, like Tomlinson's texts, the increasing interest in fantasy, magic and the occult from the 1980s onwards and particularly at the century's end and a fusion of genres in historical fiction. It also presents a humanist perspective since Angharad has agency and sees her role as that of caring for Bran and for the people of Elfael who have found primitive shelter from the Normans deep in the forest. During the long period of his recovery Angharad, also a bard, sings the old stories and myths Bran remembers from his childhood. The omniscient narrator tells readers that these are 'markers along a sacred and ancient pathway which led into the deep heart of the land and its people' (181). They are part of his preparation to be a hero to his people. Yet another link with fantasy are the dreams which Bran experiences while under the care of Angharad and a response to the myths he has heard. These include out-of-body experiences, flying over the landscape, as well as visions of a huge bird, which will later become the symbol of his power, when dressed in a long cloak covered in raven feathers and a skull and long beak, he appears to Normans in the forest.⁵⁰ This is Rhy Bran y Hud or King Raven. Its appearance is part of a strategy to frighten Norman soldiers before they are robbed, presenting an alternative version of the Robin Hood tales. It is Angharad who gives him seasoned wood to make a longbow and helps him by making flint-headed arrows. It is she who, when he is well-recovered, intentionally misinterprets his statement 'I will go to my people' (250), meaning northwards, and leads him instead into a clearing peopled by families who have sought the refuge of the forest when their lands have been invaded and taken by the Normans thus making links with other Robin Hood narratives. Although a humanist perspective is presented through the actions of Angharad as she cares for Bran, through her self-knowledge and desire to prompt Bran to aid his people, his humanism does not become evident until later. His initial presentation as an anti-hero is seen to develop towards agency as his awareness of firstly the forest and what he identifies as 'the spirit of the greene Wood' (247) and then respect for the suffering families, 'He talked to them and listened to their stories of loss and woe, and his heart went out to them' (268).

⁵⁰ This bird, the raven, from mythology and associated with death also forms an essential fantasy part of a later novel by Marcus Sedgwick, discussed in Chapter 4.

When considering the criteria for Robin Hood identified by Stephens and McCallum (1998, p.183) as they were present in the pre-texts, it is clear that this Robin of all the Robins discussed fails to meet most. Except that he is the heir to Elfael, and as such has a natural authority, he is not a charismatic projection of authority. There is no impulsive acceptance of physical challenges, or physical prowess in a male group, instead he has rages which lead him to put himself and others in danger, as when he tries to pay to redeem his land, 'He saw the cardinal, officious and smug in his sumptuous robes as he reached for the coins; his vision dimmed as the blood rage came upon him ... Bran slammed [the cardinal's] head down on the table' (406). It does, however, make links with Robin Hood's hatred of greedy clerics. The organisational skills which result in Rhy Bran y Hud's attacks against the Normans are the result of far-sight by Angharad, and planning by her, Bran, Iwan and Siarles. There is an implication that Angharad is manipulating Bran to her, or God's, intentions; she asks questions to focus his thinking and by dawn he has a plan, 'This night you have become a shield to your people' she says (352).

2.11.2 *Lawhead's Marian*

Unlike the narratives of McKinley and Tomlinson who present a view of a Marian who has subjectivity, reflecting the rise of feminism from the 1970s, the Mérian of Lawhead's text adheres more to the traditional role of Marian as presented in a number of retellings. The daughter of Lord Cadwgan with lands adjacent to Elfael, she is initially presented as one of Bran's female friends, but readers get a different view of her through the various narrator focalisations. When she hears of Bran's death, the news, 'hit her like a blow to the stomach' but 'able to bear up without betraying the true depth of her feelings' although she is 'shocked, horrified, mournful and leaden with sorrow' (125). The cliché she is able to 'put on a brave face' (126), implies that she knows how to hide her feelings in the manner that Marian does in McKinley's text. The reader is subject to her thoughts about the Norman overlords in relation to her brother's view that 'times are changing' and the Normans, 'were somehow justified in their crime [of taking their land and people] by the innate superiority of their customs or character' (130). However, she comes to admire Norman customs through her family's connection with Baron de Neufmarché, and enjoys his appreciation of her. This is not the feisty Marian of McKinley's text with agency and ability to manipulate her life in pursuit of her ambitions and agency; Lawhead's Mérian accepts patriarchal male society's rules for her life and seems willing,

eventually, to accept the hegemonic Norman way of life to the point of fighting Bran when he takes her hostage as a means of escaping Neufmarché's knights (423). Her agency in these circumstances is less obvious to the reader and her reflections imply the selfish desires of a young woman. Her attempted refusal to submit to Bran's heavy-handedness leads him to say, '... let us hope that, along with your loyalty and good sense, you have not also forgotten how to ride' (427) indicating his views of her in respect of the Normans but is also an indication of her agency which requires brute force to overcome. It can be assumed that their relationship will be developed further in the later parts of the trilogy though how much it will relate to the metanarrative or even to cultural changes of the time of writing in relation to women is questionable.

Lawhead's Robin Hood text goes against the western metaethic and bears little resemblance to the pre-texts, other than through the choice of male characters and 'Marian' in the fight against a new authority. Lawhead adheres to the sixteenth century romantic view of Robin Hood as being from upper echelons of society while being displaced from these by being of British birth as opposed to the traditional Saxon. One of the key differences is the significance Lawhead places in the character Angharad and her role in manipulating Robin to be a saviour of his people and to reclaim his principality from the Normans. Here it equates with Carpenter's (1986) version where Herne the Hunter directs Robin, the male Herne being replaced here by a female mystic, perhaps in deference to the rise of feminism but more likely a mythic trope. Such an ideology relates more to the cultural times in which the narrative was written and to Wales in particular, than to a western conservative metaethic. The fusion of fantasy with folk tale and history equates with Tomlinson's trilogy and although postmodern trends are apparent, particularly in focalisation through different viewpoints, a humanist perspective is also evident in the manner in which Bran reflects on his inadequacies (238) drawing readers to question his apparent conflicts, rebellion and other experiences which the writer presents as universal. The narrative demonstrates the continued presence of a humanist viewpoint into the twenty-first century in stories of Robin Hood.

2.12 Conclusion

This case study set out to discover if and if so how narratives of Robin Hood have changed in relation to the times in which they were written and considered how much the chosen text adhered to the metanarrative as identified by Stephens and McCallum (1998). There was a need also to explore a humanist presentation within all the narratives, the absence or demise of which Stephens equates with the demise of historical fiction. As can be seen in Appendix A, rather than diminishing, narratives of Robin Hood have increased considerably over the period in question and since, although many form part of a series of stories about his adventures and have moved away, like those narratives from the 1960s onwards, from the pre-texts or have expanded on those making them more ideologically relevant to the time of writing. What is evident from these narratives of Robin Hood is the manner in which writers between 1934 and 2014 have manipulated the pre-texts or the legend of Robin Hood in order to make points relating to their ideological concerns about society at the time of writing. In this a focus on Robin Hood provides an appropriate subject. While the novels vary in relation to the time of a setting, all include historical figures and times within the narrative enabling the genre of historical fiction to be attached to them. References to King Richard, King John, King William I and William II along with other nobles, as well as narrative such as Tomlinson's on events at Runnymede, place the narratives clearly within the historical genre rather than legend, even if within different historical periods, while myth and legend is also embedded within. Most texts place an emphasis on action rather than analysis, allowing readers to identify with the hero, where 'the excitement of vicarious danger is shared with certainty of ultimate success' (Tucker, 1981, p.169). Later, narratives from the 1980s (Carpenter, 1984; May, 1985; Horowitz, 1986; Green, 1990; Tomlinson, 1993, 1998, 2000; Morpurgo, 1998; Lawhead, 2006) incorporate magic in both positive and/or negative ways. The role women play in the narratives of Robin Hood is commensurate with the increased feminist activity from the 1980s onwards and indicates a change in the manner in which these stories are told. The humanist tradition of recognising and learning from the experiences of those in past times is sustained throughout including within the many narratives of Robin Hood published in the new millennium thus challenging Stephens' statement concerning cultural relativism. The narratives indicate that writers are no less concerned about the inequities and injustices in twenty-first century society than they were in 1934.

Chapter 3. Case Study of a Historical Period: the Eighteenth Century

This case study identifies developments in historical fiction between 1934 and 2014 by concentrating on the way a specific historical period – the long eighteenth century - has been treated. It allows consideration of variations which have occurred in children’s historical fiction writing over the period under investigation and themes which have been used by writers to reflect their concerns. These variations are captured by the ‘tag cloud’ below which represents the surface and underlying themes in historical fiction texts set in the long eighteenth century and identified in Appendix B; size relates to the occurrence of such themes across the full range of texts.

class conditions **corruption** democracy
dishonesty education elements **equality**
espionage fantasy freedom **greed** hegemony
highwaymen **injustice** kidnapping land piracy **poor**
pressgangs religion revolution sea **slavery**
smuggling **survival** war working

As can be seen corruption, injustice and the poor are significant features of these historical novels. This chapter shows that the decision to set a story in the long eighteenth century signals that these are also topical concerns for the author at the time of writing and so there is a kind of palimpsest effect in these novels in the way issues from the past rise up to affect the surface meaning of the story. The frequency with which this set of issues occurs in books set in the long eighteenth century means that regular readers of historical fiction are likely to have certain expectations about the kinds of subjects and points of view they will find in works from this period. Such expectations also apply to the continuance of a humanist perspective promoting the experiences of individual characters eliciting human behaviours which readers can understand. The case study will consider whether texts set in the eighteenth century and

especially those written within a postmodern period also demonstrate that the presence of a humanist ideology continues to be a focus for writers into the twenty-first century contrary to John Stephens' expectations (Stephens, 1992, p.203).

The long eighteenth century spans the years from 1688 to 1832 (de Bolla, Leask and Simpson, 2005). Where the first case study focused on attributes given to a national hero and the cluster of values associated with the western metaethic, the argument here is concerned with how key motifs and themes associated with the long eighteenth century have been developed and deployed in response to issues and debates at the times of writing. Rosemary Sutcliff (1989), considering her role as a writer of historical fiction, refers to the eighteenth-century professor of rhetoric Giovanibattista Vico, who believed that man [sic] could only be understood historically. For Sutcliff, 'knowledge of our past is vital to our understanding of ourselves' (Collins and Graham, 2001, p.111). Such a statement underpins Sutcliff's humanist approach to writing historical fiction. Although most of Sutcliff's best-known works were published before 1989, this view was expressed during the period when Stephens was connecting the demise of historical fiction to the diminishing relevance of humanism in postmodernity.

There were several reasons why the long eighteenth century seemed particularly appropriate as the period for this case study on 'setting'. To begin with, it is a period which has attracted writers of historical fiction for children from the beginnings of the genre as discussed in Chapter 1. For example, Harriet Martineau's *The Peasant and the Prince* (1841) consists of two short stories both set before and during the French Revolution, while her *Feats on the Fiord* [sic] (1841) is set in eighteenth-century Norway. The prolific writer G. A. Henty also used an eighteenth-century setting for several of his novels. *The Young Buglers* (1880), for instance, features two brothers who join the army to fight in Spain in the Peninsular War of 1808 - 1814, while *With Clive in India* (1884) tells the story of a young man's journey to work for the East India Company in Madras during the Anglo-French conflicts of 1750-63, when Robert Clive was leading troops against the French who were attempting to gain control of land in south east India and Bengal. As Appendix B shows, from these early beginnings, eighteenth-century settings have regularly been used by writers of historical fiction for children within the period 1934 – 2014, that is, the period under investigation.

The data in Appendix B demonstrate that during the second half of the twentieth century interest in writing about the eighteenth century for children rises at key points; for instance, during military conflicts, times when issues relating to social justice are high on the public agenda, and during anniversaries of social landmarks associated with the period, such as the 1807 Act to prevent slave trading. Reading widely across twentieth-century children's literature set in the long eighteenth century reveals that part of the appeal of this 'Age of Enlightenment' or 'Age of Reason' stems from its value as a mirror in which modern societies see themselves reflected. While there are distinct variations across time, there are also some persistent ghostly images in the mirror which signal to readers the manner in which people's characteristics or behaviours and memories of significant cultural events persist and re-occur over time (Myers, 1988; Stephens, 1992; Watkins, 1999). Overall, the frequency with which a small group of motifs and themes to do with liberty, justice and civil rights feature in works set in the long eighteenth century reveals these as concerns that have consistently preoccupied writers despite the fact that during the period I am investigating there was considerable social progress, beginning with the establishment of the Welfare State and continuing to the present time with legislation intended to ensure equal opportunities for all groups in society.

A useful bellwether for how twentieth-century children's writers viewed the eighteenth century is Leon Garfield who, perhaps more than any writer during the decades with which this thesis is concerned steeped himself in the eighteenth century and sought to imbue his novels with a sense of how he understood it. This perception is summed up in his non-fiction text, *The House of Hanover* (1976):

It was an age of Empire building ... a quarrelsome, greedy time; a time of foreign wars and domestic upheaval; a time of hectic rushes for money, driving the countryfolk into the towns, to turn them into warrens of filth and poverty forever crowded upon the stately mansions of the newly rich.
(Garfield, 1976, p.9)

Just as the nineteenth-century writer Charles Dickens used historical settings in novels such as *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) to draw readers' attention to what he considered some of the abuses of life in the nineteenth century, so Garfield also identifies his novels philosophically with the long eighteenth century in order to raise concerns about events

in the twentieth century.¹ By the 1960s, when Garfield's career as a children's writer took off, the significance of Empire was waning; nevertheless, writers in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s remained alert to both the issues around granting independence to former colonies and Britain's continued dependence on the resources they provided. Of particular relevance to an eighteenth-century setting for such writers is the fact that independence was not achieved without struggle; some colonies (notably India) had to mount campaigns of civil disobedience in which people died in order to achieve independence. At home, meanwhile, significant changes in industry following the Second World War and associated movements of people refracted another set of changes allied with the second half of the eighteenth century.

One such change in the eighteenth century was The Inclosure [sic] Act of 1773 which affected the lives of many rural families in England, especially following on from the 'agricultural revolution' in which machinery replaced the work of large numbers of labourers (Porter, 1990, p.91; p.197). Other technological developments, some leading to the factory system for manufacturing, had enormous consequences for many ordinary people, 'driving the countryfolk to the towns' as Garfield states, or to the American colonies, in search of a livelihood (Porter, 1990, p.291).² There was extreme poverty in both countryside and city and excessive punishments for those who stole, even if from desperate necessity. This grinding poverty for the masses contrasted with the extreme wealth of a comparative few. Parallels can be drawn with periods throughout twentieth-century Britain, for example, the 1930s and 1970s-1980s when reduction in heavy industry manufacturing and coal mining left many unemployed and often homeless, or required them to move to other parts of the country in search of work. These aspects feature in historical fiction for children set in the long eighteenth century, often within a context of the need for social reform and human rights. Writing specifically about Garfield, Roni Natov observes that he 'uses the eighteenth century ... as a psychological place where we can reenter the past and explore the roots of the present' (1994, p.55). But it is not only the *roots* of the present that children explore; these texts also map concerns specific to the writer's present.

¹ Natov (1978, 1994) considers Garfield is a writer in the style of the eighteenth-century novelist Henry Fielding and Charles Dickens while Garfield expands these views by stating in Natov (1991, p.15) that he combines eighteenth-century philosophies with social and political concerns associated with the nineteenth century.

² Such a move to live in other regions of the world is echoed in the 1940s to 1970s Australian assisted passage scheme when many families from the UK emigrated to Australia. While part of Australia's desire for workers, it also reflects the economic situation in Britain (<https://www.immi.gov.au>)

During the eighteenth century, British soldiers fought against the Dutch and French to gain territory and resources in India and to protect holdings there, such as the East India Company (Porter,1990). In North America they fought as part of on-going wars over territory between the French, New Englanders and Dutch. It was a time also when individual greed and the greed of nations resulted in Europe becoming a war zone with enormous loss of life on land and at sea, where naval strength was particularly important. Although the theatre of war has changed, military conflicts have also dominated the twentieth and the start of the twenty-first centuries and often the motivation for such wars has been suspect (Jenkins, 2007, p.145).

During the long eighteenth century the desire to expand through colonisation and to bring commodities and natural resources to Britain and to sell goods to those countries made it imperative to ensure supremacy at sea. In fiction with an eighteenth-century setting, foreign wars provide an exciting backdrop and strong themes of loyalty, courage, duty and compassion, with writers such as Susan Cooper, Paul Dowswell, Sally Gardner, Leon Garfield, Mollie Hunter, Elizabeth Laird, Jan Needle , Rosemary Sutcliff , Geoffrey Trease and Ronald Welch producing one or more stories about conflict in other lands and at sea.³ But the eighteenth century also witnessed significant change and development at home, particularly in relation to such conflicts. Leon Garfield, who served in the army in the Second World War, was among one of the first groups to enter the death camps in Germany. For him the connections he saw between the past and present are more psychological than historical in emphasis (Natov, 1994, p.56). For young readers in the twenty-first century such psychological connections are likely to be to more recent wars such as those in Iraq, Libya or Afghanistan but many of the moral and ethical issues associated with them, such as treatment of prisoners, continue to resonate with eighteenth-century debates and settings.

Although there were developments in the mid-twentieth century which to some extent alleviated anxiety about the way society is organised, notably the establishment of the Welfare State, for reasons that become clear below there were other factors that continued to make the long eighteenth century, and particularly its strong associations with revolution and the desire for social progress, reverberate for children's writers. A sense both of to what extent and which

³ See Appendix B for more information.

parts of the period have been used as a backdrop for twentieth- and twenty-first-century children's literature becomes evident in the following account of how the focus texts for the case study were selected. Details of the full range of texts located are contained in Appendix B.

3.1 Process of selection of focus texts

The focus texts used in this case study were drawn from a large corpus. This was constructed through a survey of critical texts relating to children's literature (Trease, 1951; Crouch, 1962; Eyre, 1971; Crouch, 1972; Carpenter and Prichard, 1984; Chevalier, 1989; Hunt, 1995; Watson, 2001) which was supplemented through investigation of specific author websites and those relating to children's historical fiction, reviews in children's literature journals, author obituaries in newspapers, publishers' catalogues and websites, the National Library of Scotland, the archives of Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books and the Booktrust and Butler Collections at Newcastle University.⁴ Appendix B represents a comprehensive summary of children's books by British writers set in the long eighteenth century and published between 1934 and 2014. It contains 93 novels and one picturebook. The complete sample was read and organised according to authors, themes/motifs and publication decades (see Appendix B). In this way, recurring themes and motifs were identified and related to the socio-political context of the time of publication.

The data show that while the eighteenth century has consistently been used as a setting, its popularity with writers and publishers has varied considerably from decade to decade, with many more books being published in the 1960s, 1970s and 2000s than in the 1940s, 1950s, 1980s or 1990s.⁵ Clearly one question the data poses is why the eighteenth century fell from favour in those five decades or conversely was more significant in three. Related to this are questions about how historical fiction for children fared generally at these times and (much beyond the scope of this chapter) whether there are other periods that might have attracted more attention from writers. As its name suggests, the long eighteenth century is a lengthy span

⁴ For example www.collectingbooksandmagazines.com for information about writers and their books, particularly those now deceased while www.writeaway.org.uk now www.justimaginestorycentre.co.uk was useful for reviews and author interviews. Some living writers have their own websites which are updated regularly. Children's literature journals such as *Junior Librarian*, *Junior Bookshelf*, *Signal*, *Children's Literature in Education* and *Books for Keeps* were accessed for titles and reviews. Newspapers provided reviews of more recent publications with author information, as did publication catalogues.

⁵ It should be noted that Burton and Garfield published several books within the 1960s and 1970s and Golding and Dowswell produced series or trilogies in the 2000s.

of time and so consideration also needed to be given to when within the period texts were set and why.

3.2 The eighteenth century for twentieth and twenty-first-century children

While it is recognised that narratives for children are likely to demonstrate the humanist agenda of a protagonist's struggle against the odds towards selfhood culminating in the ultimate achievement of a happy ending (Tucker, 1981; Hunt, 1994), novels set in the eighteenth century additionally employ a number of surface historical themes relating to that century likely to appeal to child readers. Tabulation of the data relating to the primary texts identified a number of such themes including piracy, slavery, smuggling, warfare on land and at sea and revolution. Some writers weave multiple themes together as seen in Garfield's *Jack Holborn* (1964), about a boy who encounters smuggling, treasure, piracy and slavery. Beneath these exciting elements, however, are clearly articulated concerns about poverty - especially child poverty - homelessness, power and its abuse. Additionally, there is a strong appeal to children's and young adults' tendency to condemn injustice, perhaps reflecting the widespread familiarity in the 1960s among teachers and others involved with children of Piaget's views that children are innately moral (Piaget, 1932, 1977). As shown in Appendix B, these underlying themes are also represented in the data, with a large number of the novels incorporating them. Looking across the complete body of material reveals a thematic grid common to texts set in the long eighteenth century and represented in Figure 3.1 which, as the analyses below demonstrate, helps explain its appeal to writers in the decades when it has been used most frequently. These key themes were used to select the focus texts discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

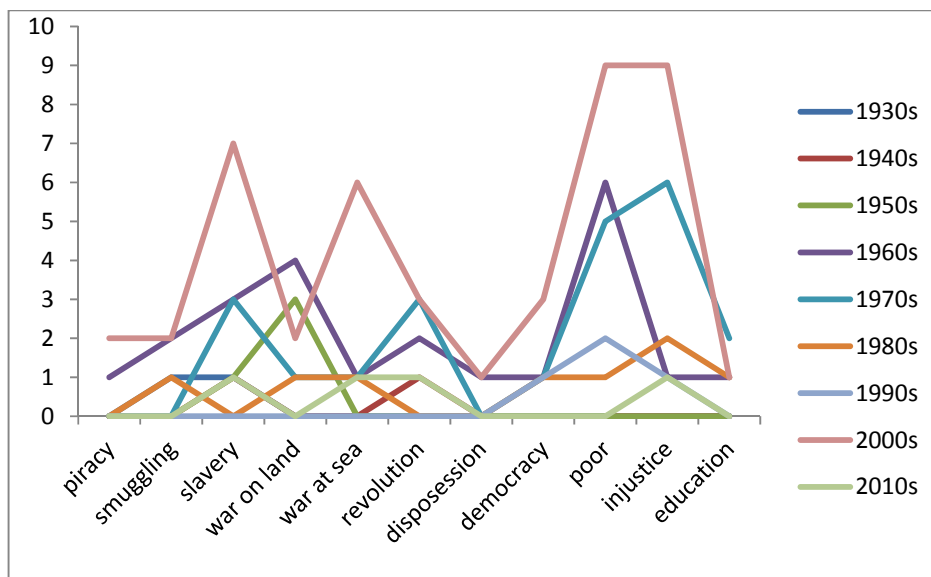


Figure 3.1 Graph to indicate significance of key themes within decades

The struggle of orphans or very poor children to survive in changing circumstances is a strand which runs through many of the novels identified in this period. While it is characteristic of narratives which promote a child's struggle against the odds, it also serves as a metaphor for the disenfranchised and vulnerable in times of economic hardship and civil unrest. As discussed in relation to Geoffrey Trease in the Robin Hood case study, radical writers for children used their novels to critique society and to support views associated with socialism. While in the interwar period this was relatively unproblematic, there was a notable change in cultural attitude to radical left-wing politics in the period following World War II, encompassing both concerns about militant Labour at home and Cold War power struggles. Although there was much excitement around radicalism and revolution in the eighteenth century that could appeal to writers such as Trease, there was also a profound fear of revolution, meaning that mid-twentieth century concerns about threats to national security and stability could also be conveyed effectively by using an eighteenth-century setting. To give a focus to the analysis I decided to concentrate on texts in which these anxieties are explored, but to ensure a representative overview. Additionally the data was also coded according to the age and sex of the protagonist(s), narrative voice and point of view. This enabled an initial survey of the data from which key themes were identified as significant.

3.3 Themes: nationhood, rebellion and authority

A number of texts feature the nation's fighting forces. Usually these deal with life in the army or at sea and present a version of nationhood in which Britain is epitomised by courage against all challenges, whether from the enemy or within. For example, Ronald Welch published such stories in the 1950s; Welch depicts the fighting lives of young upper-class men (usually cavalry officers with bought commissions as was the eighteenth century custom) who represent a masculine ideal comprising ability, courage and honour. This aligns them with a chivalric mythos which, while in many ways based on good research, nevertheless harks back to an earlier tradition. This tradition is typified by the novels of G. A. Henty and is ideologically conservative, upholding perceived upper-class values.⁶ For instance, while the books allow social mobility for some characters this does not include those who are from lower-class backgrounds.⁷ In contrast to this drive to maintain the status quo by validating upper-class behaviour is Hester Burton's first novel *Castors Away!* (1962). Burton underlines the enduring social spirit of ordinary people in times of conflict presenting a humanist ideology as the main characters develop self-reflection and agency in their struggle to help a soldier also achieve selfhood. Mollie Hunter's *The Ghosts of Glencoe* (1966) also offers a different yet still humanist perspective through her use of a Scottish setting, though in fact the book is principally concerned with exploring the intrigues of powerful people of both the English and Scottish nations and their management of soldier pawns in pursuit of devious objectives. *The Ghosts of Glencoe* presents the Scottish and English military and political hierarchy as deceitful and manipulative, charges that point to the cultural mood after the Suez Crisis of 1956 (Marwick, 2000, pp. 208-210). Leon Garfield's *The Drummer Boy* (1970) similarly exposes the machinations of those in power. Here the corruption and manipulation of those in power as well as their failure to admit to mistakes is at the heart of the novel. The shift, then, from Welch's traditional view of the military establishment to the challenging depictions of it by Hunter and Garfield is indicative of the way children's historical fiction was reflecting changing social and

⁶ Henty, who had worked as a war correspondent and was a strong supporter of British Empire, wrote historical adventure stories of young men who were intelligent, courageous, honest, resourceful yet modest. Stories were developed after research from library books. He was an influence on other writers: Herbert Strang, Percy F Westerman and Cptn Brereton wrote in the Henty tradition.

⁷ Welch's *Mohawk Valley* (1958) is an exception since the narrative concerns independence in the new colonies of America where the upper-class protagonist quickly demonstrates an affinity with the 'new world', recognising strengths in ordinary men, learning bush-craft from them and developing subjective agency.

political attitudes in the late 1950s and 1960s. The debacle of Suez in 1956 and its abortive military intervention emphasised Britain's loss of authority in world affairs while Macmillan's 'wind of change' speech heralded the loss of the remnants of Empire (Marwick, 2000, p.210; Sandbrook, 2006, p. xv). The threat of nuclear attack in 1962 from Russia which seemed imminent at the time of the Cuban missile crisis was juxtaposed with political scandal and satire which mocked the Establishment and helped to challenge the hold it had on government (Sandbrook, 2006, p.577) ^{8 9}

Another common feature of books set in the long eighteenth century is a depiction of life on-board ships, whether the ships are involved in defence of the nation and its empire or less potentially noble acts such as smuggling, piratical activity and slavery. Stowaways, press-gangs, kidnappings or naval careers may all be reasons for the protagonist's arrival on-board ship, but whatever the reason and the orientation of the writer it seems those who go to sea must suffer.¹⁰ The struggles of boys on-board ships provide models of positive and negative behaviour although, unsurprisingly, the moral rectitude of the protagonist ultimately results in his triumphing over adversity. This pattern remains true in recent narratives prompted by the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar (1805) including Elizabeth Laird's *Secrets of the Fearless* (2005), Paul Dowswell's *Powder Monkey* (2005) and Susan Cooper's *Victory* (2006).¹¹ In each instance the protagonist must endure and work to overcome challenges from the circumstances and people he encounters. Often in texts set on ships there is an underlying conservative message of the need to accept, learn from and learn how to negotiate hierarchical structures as well as the formative lessons of hardship and endurance.

While the themes and motifs mentioned so far are present in a high proportion of the sample, the dominant concern of juvenile historical fiction set in the eighteenth century is on the lives,

⁸ The political scandal was known as The Profumo Affair (1963) when there was a fear that political secrets were being passed to the USSR. John Profumo was Secretary of War (Brown, 2001).

⁹ The Establishment is a term used by the media to refer to a dominant group or elite that holds power or authority in a nation. The term suggests a closed social group which selects its own members. Members of the Establishment were mocked by such people as Richard Ingrams, editor of *Private Eye*, who attacked both Conservative and Labour politicians as did Peter Cook who opened *The Establishment*, a members-only club in which anti-establishment comedians performed.

¹⁰ The data indicate that only in the twenty-first century were narratives with girls on board ship published.

¹¹ Paul Dowswell's *Powder Monkey* (2005) is the first book of the Sam Witchell trilogy. It was followed by *Prison Ship* (2006) and *Battle Fleet* (2007) the last concerning the Battle of Trafalgar.

rights and freedoms of the poor and/or those suffering deprivation of some kind. In line with the peaks in writing activity around eighteenth-century settings these concerns mirror key debates and events from the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, decades associated with, for instance, the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, the counter-culture, anti-war protests, second wave feminism and the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Given the general tenor of social change it is not surprising that during these decades eighteenth-century settings were often used to give credence to democratic movements and libertarian philosophies. As the close readings of selected texts that follow show, there is a strong tendency in such texts to make use of the powerful rhetoric around freedom and liberty associated with the eighteenth century and to show rebel movements as victorious and vindicated, making them simultaneously inspiring and encouraging for those concerned with debates and activism at the time they were written.

During the second half of the last century texts set in the eighteenth-century increasingly show the impact of the 1950/1960s counterculture with its interest in peace and ethos of individual freedom, often demonstrated through an overt and organised opposition to authority. Social anthropologist Jentri Anders sums it up as, 'freedom to explore one's potential, freedom to create one's Self, freedom of personal expression, freedom from scheduling, freedom from rigidly defined roles and hierarchical statuses...' (Anders, 1990, n.p.). This ideology extended to children, stimulating a desire for children's education to encourage an 'aesthetic sense, love of nature, passion for music, desire for reflection, or strongly marked independence' (Anders, 1990, n.p.). Although framed in terms of mid-twentieth-century ideologies, the basic philosophy can be traced back to eighteenth-century views on education promoted by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Rousseau taught that in raising children, parents and teachers should listen to nature, 'giving free rein to growth, rather than bending twigs to a desired shape' (Cunningham, 2005, p.58). This is another example of how an eighteenth-century setting could be used to underpin ideas being articulated in the mid-twentieth century.¹²

¹² Rousseau's view of the innocent child has been particularly influential in writing for children where following his *Emile, or On Education* (1762) the child is a construction of what adults would like a child to be – eternally innocent and outside society. Jacqueline Rose's *The Case of Peter Pan and the Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984) revolutionised children's literature studies by indicating that the fictional children produced in some children's fiction and presented as models were impossible.

Across the decades with which I am concerned the primary focus of texts set in the eighteenth century was largely on the poor, marginalised and abused, with most books ultimately suggesting that change for the good of the many has been achieved through a mixture of rebellion and reform. Since these concerns play across the full range of historical novels listed in Appendix B, an indicative sample of books written over the period and which most productively explore typical themes, motifs and concerns was chosen for more detailed consideration.

3.4 Criteria for selection

The final choice of three texts for in-depth analysis was made according to several criteria. First was period: texts were selected from each of the most productive periods for published novels set in the eighteenth century: 1960s, 1970s and 2000s. The spread of decades enables comparison over time at the levels of style, content and ideology so, for example, changes to strategies for avoiding archaic language and increased focus on the experiences of ordinary people and females (Collins and Graham 2001, p. 10) were considered. Also visible is a growing tendency to emphasise the relationship between fiction and history.

The next criterion was the sex of the writer: one text each by a prolific and recognised male and female writer of novels set in the eighteenth century was selected. The female writer is Hester Burton who published between 1962 and 1976; the male is Leon Garfield whose novels with an eighteenth century setting were published between 1964 and 1980. The third writer whose work is discussed is another female, Julia Golding, who is representative of a new generation of writers. Golding has written a series of novels with an eighteenth-century setting and which use a faux eighteenth-century style, published between 2006 and 2011. Golding's work completes the criterion concerning the time of writing and helping me span the period, but it is also of interest for its use of a female protagonist-narrator. The final sample consists of Hester Burton's *Time of Trial* (1963), Leon Garfield's *John Diamond* (1980) and Julia Golding's *The Diamond of Drury Lane* (2006) a text which is indicative of a new form of historical fiction and thus challenges Stephens' statement about the end of writing from a humanist perspective and the expected demise of historical fiction.

3.5 Background

In the period from the 1930s to 1960s a limited number of books with an eighteenth-century setting were published. One reason for this might be that during this period most of the writers of children's literature came from middle-class backgrounds and wrote for middle-class children. Conceivably the children's literature of that period was part of a conservative default attitude among the well-off to preserve the status quo. Related to this is the fact that most of the books were bought by middle-class adults (parents, educators, librarians and other 'gate-keepers') and thus publishing had to satisfy their requirements. Butts (2010) draws attention to secure employment during the 1930s and 1940s in the Midlands and southern counties and this, and the majority culture represented by the London-centred children's publishing industry, evidently meant that the need for narratives about the struggles of the working people and the associated need for change presumably seemed less pressing as did representations that addressed the needs of other parts of the country. From this perspective the eighteenth century was not seen as a mirror of current events, while the shortage of books with eighteenth-century backgrounds in the 1940s can at least in part be explained by shortages of paper throughout wartime and the lingering effects of war-time disruptions to the publishing industry. Eyre (1971) identifies Geoffrey Trease as promoting social concerns in writing for children and his work led the way for writers such as Rosemary Sutcliff, Hester Burton and Leon Garfield in the 1950s and 1960s. Their emergence coincided with expansion of the children's book publishing industry with Oxford University Press emerging as a publisher of excellent children's books (Crouch, 1962). Additionally, the Education Act of 1944 had resulted in a tripartite secondary education system of grammar schools, technical schools and secondary modern schools making secondary education to the age of fifteen a legal requirement for all children from 1947. It resulted in more children of secondary age, including girls, being educated, which ultimately led to an increasing awareness of social difference apparent to the pupils themselves and increased demand for books that reflected changes to the curriculum, for this expanding secondary cohort.¹³

The 1950s also saw changes in perceptions relating to child development and experience as a result of the focus on child welfare through the National Health Service, implemented under a

¹³ Hollindale and Sutherland (1995) indicate that recognition of the value of children's literature by teacher training institutions led to its place in classrooms and school libraries.

Labour Government in 1948. Greater awareness of social class and lifestyles became the focus of adult literature in the 1950s and 1960s as seen in a range of adult plays and novels which highlighted this difference.¹⁴ Significantly, these were not set in the past but spoke directly about contemporary experiences and attitudes. In relation to children's fiction, other important factors, particularly in relation to the change in focus from historical persons and events to the lives of ordinary people, must be the publication of the New Left critic and commentator Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) discussed in Chapter 1. Hoggart's work together with E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), also considered in Chapter 1, focused writers' attention on eighteenth-century working people. For example, Peter Carter's *The Black Lamp* (1973) about the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 draws its title from the secret society of working men whose lives are described in Thompson's book.¹⁵ Hoggart's and Thompson's texts were at the forefront of a new social and intellectual focus on the lives of ordinary people including children and young adults. This is reflected in historical fiction which increasingly set such characters within events of a past which was often the eighteenth century.

3.6 Time of setting

A small number of texts from the total corpus are set at the beginning of the eighteenth century, namely: Cynthia Harnett's, *The Great House* (1940) set in 1699 and symbolising a new era through a new form of architecture; Ronald Welch's novel, *Captain of Dragoons* (1956), set in 1704 about spying during wartime; Rosemary Sutcliff's, *Flame Coloured Taffeta* (1986), set before 1727 concerning smuggling and spying, and Geoffrey Trease's *Trumpets in the West* (1947, revised 1994), which concludes at the beginning of the long eighteenth century. All are concerned to some degree with freedom and the fight for democracy. The remaining texts are set mainly in the second half of the long eighteenth century, when the greatest changes - scientifically, socially and politically - were taking place. They mirror developments in the post-Second-World-War era of the twentieth century when British society saw great changes through loss of empire, declining heavy industry and rapid growth in modern technology and medicine

¹⁴ Identified as 'Angry Young Men' John Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957), Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) and John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1959) explored social alienation through a range of literary forms.

¹⁵ More information can be found in *Books for Keeps* No 27, July 1984: Politics and Children's Stories.

through the development of vaccines which along with improvements in sanitation, housing and food have enhanced children’s lives especially (Sked and Cook, 1993, p197).

3.7 Discourse of freedom and social mobility [in eighteenth-century historical fiction for the young]

3.7.1 Class

The analysis of texts set in the eighteenth century identified eight works with upper-class protagonists, 29 texts with middle-class protagonists and 41 texts with lower or working-class protagonists as can be seen in table 3.1 below.

Decade	Upper-class protagonist	Middle-class protagonist	Lower- or working-class protagonist
1930s	0	4	0
1940s	1	1	1
1950s	3	2	1
1960s	3	7	12
1970s	1	7	9
1980s	1	3	2
1990s	0	1	3
2000s	0	9	18
2010s			1

Table 3.1 Social class of main protagonists in historical fiction set in eighteenth century ¹⁶

Lower- or working-class protagonists are more evident in novels written after 1960, an indication of change, probably reflecting the interest generated by Hoggart and Thompson and in response to changes in education, although it becomes more difficult to attach such labels in novels written later when the degree of education and mobility seems a clearer indicator of

¹⁶ In novels with multiple protagonists, the first main character introduced in the narrative has been identified.

social position and where multi-voiced texts present a number of protagonists from different backgrounds. Novels that have plots which present main characters from different classes enable writers to contrast attitudes to social change. An example of this is Leon Garfield's *The Prisoners of September* (1975), where he establishes rivalry between a young man from a newly rich family and the son of an upper-class family. They have shared a tutor and both become involved in the French Revolution, but Garfield twists the narrative in such a way that both characters suffer. Each becomes a pawn in the manipulations of members of the English and French upper-classes who prey on the innocence of the young and ardent. The effect of such treatment is to reduce focus on class divisions and show that social change in the form of a more equal society leads to greater interest in those from all strata of society. This is generally achieved through a humanist approach by having middle- or upper-class protagonists become more aware of themselves, their agency to make changes in their lives and to demonstrate a social conscience and caring attitude towards the lower classes. They do this by openly recognising their own intelligence. The wisdom which comes from this promotes a desire for equality through democracy. Lucy Boston's historical time fantasy, *The Chimneys of Green Knowe* (1958) uses time-slip between the present of writing and the latter part of the eighteenth century to contrast freedom and class in the twentieth and eighteenth centuries through the boy Tolly. Tolly, who is from the twentieth century, is staying with his great-grandmother Oldknowe in the house that has been in her family for centuries. The boy is able to observe the people who lived in the house in the eighteenth century and to be seen by and interact with some of them. For example, he meets Captain Oldknowe, who is returning home from a visit to the West Indies and brings with him a freed boy slave as companion for his blind daughter Susan. Boston thus enables eighteenth-century views on emancipation and discrimination to be explored through the lens of a twentieth-century child character. Susan is guided towards a degree of subjectivity through her companionship with Jacob, the freed slave. In this narrative views on slavery are played out among the different classes represented by the family and servants in the house.

3.7.2 Race and Gender

Date	Author	Title	Protagonist
1936	Florence Bone	<i>The Lads of Lud</i>	Caroline (13 yrs)
1938	Florence Bone	<i>A Coach for Fanny Burney</i>	Fanny Burney (16 – 40 yrs)
1940	Marjorie Bowen	<i>Strangers to Freedom</i>	Gabrielle (15 yrs)
1955	Margaret Jowett	<i>A Candidate for Fame</i>	Deborah (14 onwards)
1963	Hester Burton	<i>Time of Trial</i>	Margaret (17 yrs)
1976	Hester Burton	<i>To Ravensrigg</i>	Emmy Heskett (15 yrs)
1977	Marjorie Darke	<i>The First of Midnight</i>	Jess (15 yrs)
1986	Rosemary Sutcliff	<i>Flame Coloured Taffeta</i>	Damaris (15 yrs)
1991	Theresa Tomlinson	<i>The Rope Carrier</i>	Minnie Dak (12-14)
2000	Frances Mary Hendry	<i>Chains</i>	Juliet (16 yrs)
2001	Theresa Tomlinson	<i>Beneath Burning Mountain</i>	Nan (13 yrs)
2003	Celia Rees	<i>Pirates</i>	Nancy (16)
2005	Kate Pennington	<i>Charley Feather</i>	Charlotte (15 yrs)
2006	Susan Cooper	<i>Victory</i>	Molly (11 yrs)
2006	Julia Golding	<i>The Diamond of Drury Lane</i>	Cat (Catherine) (13 years)
2006	Julia Golding	<i>Cat Among the Pigeons</i>	Cat (Catherine) (13 yrs)
2007	Julia Golding	<i>Den of Thieves</i>	Cat (Catherine) (13 yrs)
2007	Julia Golding	<i>Cat O'Nine Tails</i>	Cat (Catherine) (13 yrs)
2008	Celia Rees	<i>Sovay</i>	Sovay (16 yrs)

2008	Julia Golding	<i>Black Heart of Jamaica</i>	Cat (Catherine) (14 yrs)
2010	Julia Golding	<i>The Middle Passage</i>	Cat (Catherine) (14 yrs)
2010	Julia Golding	<i>Cat's Cradle</i>	Cat (Catherine) (15 yrs)
2012	Anne Perry	<i>Blood Red Rose</i>	Rosie (15 yrs)

Table 3.2 Historical novels set in eighteenth century with female protagonists

As can be seen in table 3.2 a limited number of texts written between 1934 and 1960 feature girl protagonists while girls are increasingly at the centre of the action from 1960 onwards, including novels with boy and girl protagonists as identified in table 3.3 below.

Date	Author	Title	Protagonists & Ages
1949	Cynthia Harnett	<i>The Great House</i>	Barbara (9) Geoffrey (11)
1950	Meriel Trevor	<i>Sun Slower, Sun Faster</i>	Richard (12) Cecelia (12)
1962	Hester Burton	<i>Castors Away!</i>	Nell (12) Tom (13), Edmund (14)
1966	Barbara Leonie Picard	<i>The Young Pretenders</i>	Francis (13) Annabel (11)
1975	Geoffrey Trease	<i>The Chocolate Boy</i>	Sarah (9) Sam (9)
1977	Marjorie Darke	<i>The First Of Midnight</i>	Jess (13) Midnight (15)

Table 3.3 Historical novels set in the eighteenth century with both female and male protagonists

It was in the 1960s that the 'women's movement' renewed concerns articulated during the eighteenth century, notably by Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), about women's place in society and their representation in literature. By the 1970s these activities had helped to foster greater awareness in children's literature of issues concerned with being female. Strong models respecting female behaviour in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries were also reflected in texts set in the eighteenth century. This was demonstrated through a positive portrayal of women's feelings about their roles in society and in influencing events. For

example, in 1975 Geoffrey Trease, an early and committed advocate of girl protagonists, published *The Chocolate Boy* which features a black slave boy and a white female Quaker child as protagonists. The narrative not only draws attention to feminists' concerns but also to racial tension in Britain at that time, combining a message of equal opportunities with one of acceptance. Marjorie Darke's *The First of Midnight* (1977) is alternately focalised through the girl Jess, a white illiterate pauper, ill-treated and sold in the Bristol market, and the educated black youth, Midnight, who is forced to wear a padlocked metal collar because his colour means he can be owned at a time when 'The law says all men are free in England' (45/6). Darke's equating of black and female oppression and the fact that the two become a couple was not well regarded in its day, perhaps because it was ahead of its time. In 2007 it was republished to mark the 200th anniversary of The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, perhaps a tacit recognition that slavery continues and is in many ways colour-blind. Although there was a gradual increase in the number of female protagonists explicitly espousing the feminist cause (table 3.2) it should be noted that male protagonists continued to dominate; not least because books from the past remained in print on backlists. Nor was the image of the female as dependent, weak and easily manipulated eradicated. Indeed, the past was sometimes used as justification for perpetrating this out-dated stereotype by presenting female characters in minor supporting roles as in P. J. Kavanagh's *Scarf Jack* (1978) and Jamila Gavin's *Coram Boy* (2000), or excluding them altogether as in Elizabeth Laird's *Secrets of the Fearless* (2005).

3.8 Choice of texts

All three protagonists discussed in detail below are drawn not from what would be identified as the typical eighteenth-century working class since each is privileged in that they have received an education. However, their circumstances, though different, present situations where they must confront the conditions in which poor and deprived children exist or where inequality is challenged. How they deal with this provides the ethical centre as well as the plot of the narratives and enables them to demonstrate or achieve freedom for themselves and others.

3.9 *Time of Trial* (1963) by Hester Burton

Between 1960 and 1980 Hester Burton produced six historical novels set in the eighteenth century, all initially published by Oxford University Press. While these feature both male and female young adult protagonists, there is a tendency to include a romantic theme within the

narratives. Additionally, the points of view of both male and female characters are provided and these usually express their concerns about family, friends and their own lives providing a humanist perspective for readers. Sometimes these reflections also touch on issues to do with romance; most of Burton's novels end in either the marriage of the protagonist or intimation that marriage lies ahead. Burton was not, however, writing historical romances per se; links between women's roles and the radical manner in which they involve themselves in significant events in the eighteenth century are presented as a means of linking the past with the present of writing for readers, whether female or male and presenting for them the universality of human experience.

Thinking about the position of women when Burton started writing it is worth noting that the Victor G. Ambrus's cover illustrations often make female characters dominant in ways likely to attract a female readership. Writing in the 1960s and 1970s at a time of increasing interest in feminist issues, it seems that Burton and the publishing house were promoting female interest in novels set in the eighteenth century. The emphasis on strong female characters seems calculated to broaden the appeal of historical fiction set in the eighteenth century at a time when books set in this period tended to feature the lives and actions of males caught up in battles or revolutions as can be seen in Appendix B. The three different cover illustrations for *Castor's Away!* (figure 3.2, figure 3.3. and figure 3.4) by Victor Ambrus demonstrate the manner in which the various reprints attempt to encourage a wider readership. A naval warship forms the background in all three illustrations and denotes the significance of warfare while the presence of uniformed boys indicates their role in this, thus sustaining the appeal to boy readers. However, the presence of a girl in two of the covers along with the feminised or romanticised lettering in the Puffin edition of 1978 indicates the role of women also, thus appealing to female readers.

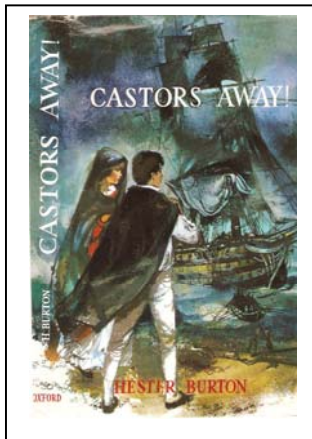


Figure 3.2: Cover 1962

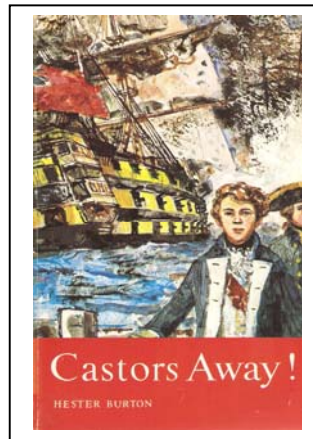


Figure 3.3: Cover 1974

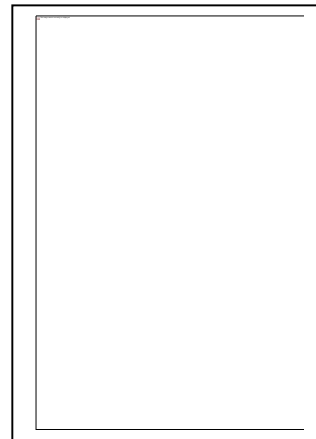


Figure 3.4: Cover 1978

Some of the covers of Burton's later novels illustrated by Ambrus also depict female and male late-teenage characters and consideration of these helps identify possible readership and author intentions in relation to an eighteenth-century setting.¹⁷ In *Ravensrigg* (1976, figure 3.5) the well-dressed female is positioned in a place of dominance, centrally in the forefront with the threatening, official male behind, potentially making him subordinate. While this effect is lessened because of his height on the page and the fact that he is positioned on the left, where western readers' eyes are trained to look first, his gaze towards the girl indicates her dominance in the narrative; readers will recognise his look of suspicion because he suspects her of hiding a runaway slave (seen running away on the back cover). In *Riders of the Storm* (1972, figure 3.6) positioning is reversed and though the female is less boldly drawn, the fact that her face is fully visible in contrast to the man who is shown in profile, indicates her significance in the narrative to readers.

¹⁷ I have drawn on William Moebius's (1968) codes of position, size and perspective when analysing the cover illustrations.



Figure 3.5: Cover Illustration



Figure 3.6: Cover Illustration

The colourful dress of the women in these two illustrations draws readers' attention, giving a stylised yet attractive representation while simultaneously presenting readers with information about the dress of the period and marking them as historical. The illustrations are feminised through the curves of the female characters; the curving line of the cloak or the other character's abundance of red curling hair offer a contrast to the male characters who are illustrated through angular lines and shapes in their position and dress. The well-dressed appearance of their clothing identifies them as middle-class and, particularly in the case of the man in *Riders of the Storm*, and educated since he carries a book, images that are at odds with the narratives' content of slave emancipation and of support for educating and liberating children working in factories. Overall, any appeal to male readers is semiotically balanced by female concerns and thus the covers offer something to readers of both sex while creating a visual dialogue between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. These covers imply that there is traditional 'boy' material, but that young adult boys may also be interested in romance when disguised as adventure.

Burton's narratives present the manner in which seemingly small events can disrupt the lives of ordinary people, creating key moments of tension relating specifically to aspects of social struggle which the characters encounter. They also demonstrate the fortitude with which characters engage in promoting and supporting radical change in society. This social dimension and the fact that characters tend to be in their teens corresponds to the qualities that Appleyard (1991) has identified as typical of young adult readers. Appleyard associates

adolescent readers with 'idealism that is often grandiose as well as naïve, self consciousness, romanticism, moodiness and ambivalence, ambition and drive, rebellion and crisis' (1991, p.96). As the following discussion of Burton's *Time of Trial* (1963) shows, these characteristics correspond to attributes in that novel also.

Although idealistic, Burton's protagonists demonstrate a critical self-consciousness and a self-reflexive nature and this introspection provides reader-edification in addition to pointing to a humanist ideology. Part of this stems from what Appleyard calls a hypothetical-deductive method, also characteristic of adolescent readers, that involves as Arthur Applebee states, 'systematic untangling of cause and effect and fundamental advance in the individual's understanding' (Applebee, 1978, p.108), that helps make the text's ideology apparent. Not only do readers learn about the circumstances in which such people lived in the eighteenth century, but deductions around cause and effect are likely to lead to understanding that characters' struggles and concerns in the fictional past of the novel, particularly humanistic concerns of moral, personal or emotional actions reveal similarities with those in readers' own times.

All six of the novels Burton set in the latter part of the long eighteenth century present themes mainly concerning the protagonists' struggle to come to terms with inequalities in society and their attempts to make things better for the under-privileged while challenging undemocratic circumstances in the lives of others.¹⁸ They also promote education as a means of rising above the lower levels of society.

3.9.1 Contexts

The 1950s were difficult times for those living in Britain. People were still experiencing the aftermath of the Second World War and a war in Korea (1950-1953) in which British soldiers, many conscripted through National Service, were part of the United Nations forces.¹⁹ Housing was in short supply and by 1946, demobbed soldiers and their families became squatters, taking over abandoned military camps and other empty buildings as accommodation, remaining there into the 1950s (Webber, humanities.exeter.ac.uk; Addison, 1985).²⁰ Cities were still being

¹⁸ See Appendix B

¹⁹ The National Service Act 1947, intended to defend the gains of World War II, called for conscription of eighteen year old men for eighteen months. The last national serviceman was demobbed in 1963.

²⁰ By early autumn of 1946, 45,000 people had taken over disused army camps, prisoner of war camps, nurses homes and empty houses in cities including London's west end.

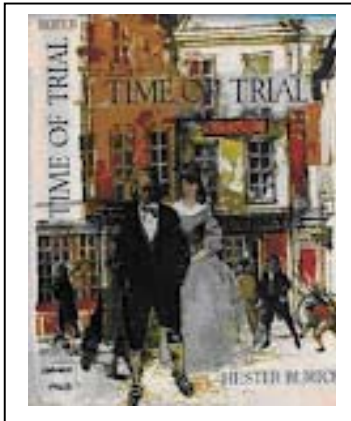
rebuilt after the extensive bombing of the Blitz and slum clearances, often through high rise or tower block developments which were able to accommodate a large number of families within the required density level of population. The Abercrombie Plan (1944, 1945) led to the New Towns Act (1946) when a number of satellite new towns were built around London and in other areas to house those suffering from war damage and to compensate for overcrowding. Benefits of the National Health Service and the 1944 Education Act were beginning to be seen in a healthier and better educated population, although in the 1950s there was still 'a lag in [producing] subsidized housing ... [and a] relative slowness in replacing antiquated school buildings' (Fyvel, 1963 cited in Sked and Cook, 1993, p198). Meat, butter, cheese, sugar and sweets were still rationed in 1953. While older parts of the population who had survived the war were glad to be alive and used to 'making-do', many young people wanted new and better goods and opportunities (Marwick, 2000, p.194, p.197).²¹

In this climate, Hester Burton's choice of incidents to feature in her historical novels is significant. For instance, she consistently draws attention to the way in which ordinary people could be affected by or involved in national events by drawing overt parallels between the London of 1950s and early 1960s and the late eighteenth-century. In particular, the London of her second novel, the Carnegie Medal-winning *Time of Trial* (1963), which is set in 1801 as the Treaty of London is about to be signed in the process of ending the war with France, has much in common with London in the 1950s. Both are periods of instability in Europe: following the French Revolution, Britain and other European countries fought against revolutionary France in an attempt to restore the Bourbon royal family and aristocracy. The wars ended in the Treaty of Amiens and Napoleon's rise to power as First Consul. Similarly, in the 1950s Britain and the rest of Europe were still recovering from six years of warfare in the Second World War and Britain lived under the constant fear of nuclear attack from the USSR. Hardship and unrest resulting from heavy taxes and the deprivations of war affected both eighteenth- and twentieth-century populations. Burton seems to be inviting her young adult readers to draw parallels between the sufferings of some during the eighteenth century and post-Second World War and to

²¹ London in 1950 saw the development of the subculture of the Teddy Boy, a form of Edwardian style dress adopted by young men; the 1951 Festival of Britain was a showcase for contemporary design while television became more widespread leading to changes in homes and lifestyle (Marwick, 2000, p.193/4; 197/8).

understand how moral fortitude is necessary alongside a need for betterment through education. Analysis of *Time of Trial* demonstrates how Burton, through her characters, expresses a desire for equality which can be brought about by the efforts of all working together. This central subject of the novel will be considered through reference to themes of housing, rioting, class and education.

Several strands linking the 1950s are apparent through the character, Margaret: her concern, along with her father, for education; her concern for those less fortunate; and particularly her self-determination, reflecting the emerging feminist movement of the time of writing. The narrative is mainly focalised through seventeen-year-old Margaret Pargeter, who having led a sheltered life spending much time reading in her father's bookshop, is forced to face life's



vicissitudes when her father is imprisoned for sedition at a time when revolution is still a fear and peace with France only in the offing. This in itself reflects the anti-communist concerns of 'Reds under the bed' of the early 1950s.²² The opening passage, focalised through Margaret, identifies the themes of poverty and inadequate housing as she listens to the sounds of London and in particular to those of builders and joiners 'shoring up the walls of the tenement on the corner' (2), a reference to the dilapidated

state of a building which is later to collapse with loss of life and perhaps a metaphor for the condition of the British state at the time of writing. This disaster provides the impetus for the novel's plot about a philosophising printer and book-seller who is tried and imprisoned for sedition at a time when the government's fear of revolution is acute.²³ As will be shown, through this humanist perspective, focusing on how his family and friends deal with these events evokes correspondence with feelings and events of the times in the 1950s at several levels.

²² In America Senator Joe McCarthy led a campaign against perceived un-American activity and created a frenzy of anti-communist paranoia and fear while in Britain people in the spotlight such as Joan Littlewood and Ewen McColl were on MI5 lists (Norton-Taylor, 2008).

²³ Printers and booksellers were key figures in the eighteenth century, particularly in relation to children's literature and in relation to social and political comment.

3.9.2 Exploitation of the poor

Mr Pargeter's radical views about the nation and about property in particular lead him to say to visitors to his bookshop, 'We are becoming a nation of two peoples: those with property and hopes; those with no property and no hopes' (10), words which echo not only the views of eighteenth-century radicals but also socialists in the 1940s and 1950s and since, when there were not enough properties for poorer people to rent and when much of the council housing stock had been destroyed during the war.²⁴ It was a time when the rich property owners were getting richer by charging high rents for inadequate accommodation while the poor were getting poorer because of higher rents and heavier taxation. When Mr Pargeter comments that, 'the houses and tenements should belong to the parishes, not the landlords' (10), Burton is reflecting the views of not only Thomas Spence, the eighteenth century radical who published a pamphlet *Property in Land Every One's Right* in 1775, and mentioned in the text, but also giving expression to the vision put forward by Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health and Housing in 1946 that the National Health Service should be free for all and that council housing estates should be places 'where the doctor, the grocer, the butcher ... all live in the same street' (Hennessey, 1992, p.163; Beckett and Beckett, 2004, p.76) and built in London and new towns to replace slums and war-damaged buildings. It also recalls comments made in 1941 by the socialist Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, who stated that 'every child should find itself a member of a family housed with decency and dignity' (Temple, 1941, p.97). Burton, then, uses the eighteenth-century setting to capture the zeitgeist of the post-war period. Mr Pargeter's comments pertain equally to the poor conditions and exploitative practices endured by many less well-off tenants both in the eighteenth century and the present of its writing and original reading:

The four men ... looked up at the rambling, dilapidated building which the workmen were trying to repair. It leaned drunkenly on one side so that the top two floors were tilted at an angle of thirty degrees; the plaster had fallen from the upper storeys revealing the crumbling ruin of the walls beneath, and half the windows were boarded with planks or stuffed with rags. (11-12)

²⁴ For a full discussion of post-war housing see Alan Sked and Chris Cook (1975; 4th Edn, 1993 pp.107-108) *Post-War Britain: A Political History*.

Burton's description of the 'rambling,' 'dilapidated' and unstable condition of the building paints a vivid picture of eighteenth and twentieth-century decaying property; precisely the kind of building that Bevan wanted to eradicate throughout the country not just in London. Following the Second World War there was a housing crisis; many properties were destroyed or damaged by bombing and a lack of building materials meant only a limited number were finished. It also reflects the state of British economy at that time when a monetary loan from the US and Canada was necessary to provide food and to re-build homes and industries. The book provides a moment of double vision in the contemporary moment here, for the description of the building's eventual collapse mirrors what must have been the sound of collapsing buildings after bombing in many cities during the war as well as the sound of buildings being knocked down as part of slum clearances. Robert and John's efforts to reach the child, the only survivor, are strongly reminiscent of wartime newsreels of firemen working to retrieve bomb survivors:

In the dim light of the shattered stairs, they had groped their way down over the planks and heaps of plaster, now stooping, now crawling on all fours, and now lying flat on their faces and working their way onwards with their forearms, like moles. The stench from the vault at the foot of the shaft grew stronger and more loathsome the lower they got; it sickened and nearly stifled Robert; he had never met anything so foul. But John had clenched his teeth and plunged downwards without a word. (19)

Although written well after the end of the Blitz, there is a sense here of Burton recalling and drawing on those experiences in trying to capture for her readers some idea of what it was like to live through such times. Similarly the loathsome smells and other discomforts she describes would have been as familiar to those living in sub-standard accommodation in twentieth century Britain as it was in the eighteenth. Even though housing shortages continued, the period towards the end of 1950 is looked on as a time of affluence, a time of economic growth following the Second World War. Sked and Cook report:

Life at last seemed less of a struggle for many people. Thanks to the Welfare State, there were few worries regarding health, and since 1944 children had a better chance of staying on at school and going to university. People lived

longer, enjoyed a rising standard of living and were not troubled by unemployment. (Sked and Cook, 1993, p.196)

However, despite improvements in technology, science and medicine there was considerable lack; no new hospitals were built and subsidised housing could not keep up with demand (Sked and Cook, 1993, p.198).

3.9.3 Housing

Inadequate housing was a feature common to both the late eighteenth century and in 1950s and 1960s London giving rise to many exploitative landlords. At this time London was experiencing new waves of immigration, exacerbating demands for housing. Many immigrants did not qualify for the limited council accommodation available and were forced to apply to private landlords who often took advantage of their situation. One such was Peter Rachman, a European immigrant himself, who seizing the opportunity provided by the 1957 Rent Act, bought up low-value housing in Notting Hill, ousted the existing tenants and inserted new, mainly black, tenants at much higher rents in smaller units (Sandbrook, 2006, p.333).²⁵ From the profits gained by these exploitative practices he became known in the media for his flamboyant life style as he gambled and mixed with prominent politicians, society people and prostitutes in London's exclusive nightclubs (Sked and Cook, 1993, pp.186/7). Although the places he frequented were twentieth-century in style, Rachman's lifestyle was not unlike that of many politicians and wealthy men and women in the eighteenth century, including royalty. While there is no evidence that any of Rachman's properties collapsed, Burton includes the collapse of the tenement building as much to indicate the state of such buildings in the 1950s and the callousness of some private landlords as to evoke reader empathy.

In both the novel's eighteenth-century setting and the present day of its readers the consequences of such profiteering brought about campaigns for social reform. Margaret comes to understand that for the families in the tenements it was their poverty and appalling living conditions, not who they were, that 'made their lives ugly and hopeless' (21). Burton makes the character echo the views of the Rev. Bruce Kenrick, a Christian social activist, who was so aware of the extent to which people's problems stemmed from bad housing that he founded the

²⁵ The Rent Act of 1957 was a highly contentious piece of legislation designed to resolve the problem of housing shortages, the government arguing that by abolishing rent controls landlords would be encouraged to maintain, improve and invest in private rented property and thereby increase its availability.

Notting Hill Housing Trust in 1962, a trust which bought, renovated and rented houses to the needy poor (White, 2007).²⁶ Kenrick arrived in Notting Hill three years after the racial troubles of the 1950s but Burton makes connections with them and Kenrick's work around her use of William Blake's poem, *The Little Black Boy*, which Margaret reads to the rescued child, Elijah. Blake's poem takes the view that whether black or white all children are God's and that their souls are the same; in modern terminology it constitutes a plea for racial tolerance.

Parallels can also be drawn between Rev. Kenrick and Burton's character Mr Pargeter in that each is prepared to speak out and do something about the living conditions of people in London. The pamphlet, *The New Jerusalem* (the title referencing another of Blake's poems, *Jerusalem*, but also the name of the post-war Labour government's blue-print for social legislation) which Mr Pargeter produces and distributes, declares: 'A poor man's home should not suffer the wicked neglect of a private landlord, who squanders his rents elsewhere, careless from whence his wealth comes and indifferent to his tenants' plight' (31-32). Burton's words here are equally suited to the behaviour of Rachman and other twentieth-century landlords like him. The absence of any agency other than the landlord at the beginning emphasises his negligent role, condemned through a lexis of wrong-doing: he is 'wicked', 'careless' and 'indifferent'. The placing of 'his tenants' plight' at the end of the sentence connotes with the landlord's lack of interest in his tenants.

Publication of the pamphlet results in Mr Pargeter's arrest and trial for sedition and leads to a rioting mob burning the book-shop. The description of the mob provides another contemporary parallel: the Nottingham and Notting Hill riots of 1958, when gangs of white 'Teddy Boys' encouraged by right-wing fascist groups attacked blacks, breaking into houses in some cases.²⁷ As Sandbrook states, 'they were ... a product of poverty and despair' (Sandbrook, 2006, p.336). Set against riots in the eighteenth-century such references add a layer of critique, as in the eighteenth century rioting was a means of objecting to government policies since workers could not vote, while in 1958 Britain was a fully democratic country with universal suffrage. Burton is

²⁶ Rev. Kenrick later founded Shelter in 1966.

²⁷ Members of Sir Oswald Moseley's Union Movement, a right-wing organisation, were present to encourage violence against black people (Sandbrook, 2006, p. 337).

linking the riots of 1958 and transferring the transgression to the eighteenth century. In both times mob-rule is shown to be easily perverted and so a poor tool for social reformers. In this case the rioters, through misunderstanding, are manipulated to attack and burn down the imprisoned Mr Pargeter's shop whose pamphlet argues on their behalf. As Mr Stone explains to Margaret, the rioters mistakenly believe that it supports legislation preventing their children from being able to earn until fourteen (83). In line with Burton's evocation of the Blitz, this appears to be a retrospective reference to the 1944 Education Act which increased the school leaving age to fifteen.²⁸ Burton's combined images of uninformed and thuggish mobs put forward two of the book's central ideas: riots are misguided and best avoided through education and reform. This does not however, mean populations should avoid necessary confrontations.

3.9.4 Freedom to challenge the status quo

As has already been shown, throughout *Time of Trial* parallels between post-war Britain and the novel's setting are systematically developed. When Mr Pargeter is brought to trial, in response to the accusations made against him, demonstrating for readers an alignment with the law-abiding educated middle classes who made up, for example, campaigning groups such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, he calmly addresses the court using the opportunity to challenge the terms 'sedition' and 'libel' by explaining their meaning and then reading aloud the pamphlet.²⁹ He goes on to say;

If you condemn me for speaking the truth – for truth it *is* that I have written of the landlords, and you know it – then you condemn the liberty and the brave spirit of this great nation of ours. You curb its freedom (73/74; Burton's italics).

Just as the time of the setting of the novel, 1801, was one time of unrest and fear of a revolution in England, the global political scene of the 1950s and 1960s was dominated by the Cold War and threat of a nuclear war. It was a time of distrust and espionage on both sides of the Iron Curtain and suspicion of Communists in Britain by the 'Establishment' (Davies and Sinfield, 2000, p.103). Again, Burton uses events of the past to create an atmosphere for and

²⁸ Some parents in the post-war period interpreted the increase in school leaving age as a loss of a year's income for the family.

²⁹ The Committee or Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) established in 1957 organised a number of peaceful protest marches between Aldermaston and London between 1958 and 1963.

provide insights into fears in the present. In the 1960s when she was writing *Time of Trial*, government and police action led to a counterculture among young people in both Britain and America. Concerns about nuclear attacks led to a number of 'ban-the-bomb' marches and eventually to the peace movement. For them civil disobedience became a 'modus operandi'. The violence and arrests which often resulted from protests was an example of mistrust between government and people at a time when it became apparent that government and its institutions were prepared to lie to the populous, suppress dissent and protest, to manipulate evidence and use illegal means to bring convictions.³⁰ Burton indicates that, 'by skilful omission of the argument' and choosing to read 'a sentence here and a paragraph there' (71) a case is made against Mr Pargeter in spite of his assertion that '[t]hey cannot imprison a man merely for suggesting a way for people to live in greater happiness' (47). When later his sentence is commuted following representations by members of the Establishment the implication is that the judiciary of eighteenth-century Britain can be influenced by those in high places and raises questions about the judiciary of the twentieth century.

3.9.5 Education

Burton uses the sacking and burning of the bookshop by the mob as a metaphor for lost opportunities in education and to enable Margaret to raise questions about the ability of under-educated people to understand the manner in which change can be affected. Later, while in prison, Mr Pargeter tells Margaret of the new book he is writing, 'A book to teach men and women how to read' because 'reading unmanacles a man. It sets him free', something which he sees as a 'slow, practical, lowly step to better things' (162-163). The parallels between the eighteenth and twentieth century allow Burton to develop a message about the need for an education which will prepare working-class people to challenge inequalities in society and to bring about change. This implicit support for the 1944 Education Act is matched by that for the Welfare State more generally as when Mr Pargeter's plans for a bookshop with a school attached in which Margaret will teach and with medical services supplied by Robert.

³⁰ In 1954 the case against Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Peter Wildeblood and Michael Pitt-Rivers succeeded because the prosecution used illegal means to fabricate evidence (Marr, 2007, p.138).

3.9.6 Class

The introduction of Robert's father into the narrative develops another important strand, that of class attitudes. Readers are forewarned that Dr. Kerridge, Robert's father, was rescued as a young man 'from downright disgrace' (77) by Mr Pargeter, his godfather. Through Margaret's perspective readers are encouraged to perceive Dr. Kerridge negatively. She sees him as a man 'to whom the performance of the duty laid upon him entailed a tiresome interruption in the pursuance of more important affairs' (102). She sees that '[s]uccess had made him arrogant' and that 'he had shed his scruples ... and had equipped himself instead with a more worldly and comfortable set of rules.' (103). His hegemonic, patriarchal attitudes are resisted by Margaret, who is 'determined not to be bullied by his catechism' (108). In contrast to Dr Kerridge she sees Elijah, the young boy rescued from the collapsed tenement, as a symbol of their hopes for all destitute London orphans and families.³¹ From corrupt official to child of the future Burton's novel speaks to anxieties and aspirations for post-Second-World-War Britain.

The theme of class is played out as Margaret becomes aware of divisions in Herringsby, the coastal town where she and Elijah stay to be near her father in prison.

Margaret could see quite plainly now the roofs of the new Crescent built on the cliff above the little huddled port ... of gleaming stucco facades, fine bow windows, and imposing porticos ... Seventy feet below, about the ancient quay, stretched the warehouses and timber yards and coal heaps of quite a different world ... Herringsby was a town of two nations; the two nations that her father had often talked about. And here in Suffolk, seventy feet of sandy cliff stood between them. (126-7)

Burton arranges the geography to mirror class hierarchies. While Dr Kerridge and his wife live among the middle classes on the cliff top, he has arranged accommodation for Margaret among the fisherfolk below, implying his view of her social position. His actions reflect the post-second-world-war period where having experienced a more egalitarian wartime, the class barriers were re-established. Class division is again made apparent when Robert tells Margaret that though smuggling goes on in Herringsby, 'It's no concern of ours' the implication being that it is the 'fisherfolk' or lower classes who are involved (183), and this is reflected when the society

³¹ This is perhaps another reference to Thomas Spence by Burton. *Spence's Plan* published in his penny pamphlet included the rights of infants to be free from abuse and poverty.

people, attending the Assembly ball, look on as soldiers fire among the fishermen's houses as they chase the fishermen-smugglers while Dr Kerridge talks of its implications for loss of revenue to the town in the coming season. His indifference to the suffering of a dying fisherman is a condemnation of middle-class views on the poor,³² while the inference that he is the organiser of the smugglers reminds readers that lawlessness and dishonour can be found in all sections of society. Burton's tale makes clear the view that if the post-war society is to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past it must start from principles of equality and communal responsibility.

Margaret, her father and Robert, are striving for just such a society; they work to break down class barriers, not in a revolutionary way, through violence, but through helping people whatever their position in life, and seeking to work for social betterment more generally. This is a central theme of Burton's novel. It reflects socialist views and policy in the 1950s in the desire for a more egalitarian society with the instigation of a Labour government in 1945 following the harshness of wartime repression. Along with other novels of the 1960s it marks a change in the manner in which novels were presented to readers particularly through the developing subjectivity of the girl protagonist. Leon Garfield's novel *Smith* (1967), published just a few years later, also emphasises the need for education as a means of progression and achievement in life through the character of the main protagonist Smith. While this narrative highlights the dishonesty, greed, the blindness of the judiciary and poverty present in the eighteenth- and twentieth-century societies, the narrative is, like Burton's, ultimately optimistic, demonstrated through the cheerfulness, resourcefulness and determination of the main character. Smith is a successful pickpocket and a survivor who becomes embroiled in a sinister adventure, hunted, tricked and incarcerated in Newgate Prison after being falsely accused of an old man's murder. He escapes and, having learned to read, goes on to solve not only the mystery of the document he stole but also the murder. All ends happily and prosperously, with Smith becoming companion to the blind magistrate he helped. He learns that some adults are not all they seem, that some adults can also be duped, that in this world money is power, but that belief and honesty in oneself is important – aspects which relate equally to the eighteenth century and the

³² Perhaps this is Burton's comment on the manner in which the doctors through the BMA (British Medical Association) challenged Aneurin Bevan's moves to set up a National Health Service in 1946 (Becket and Becket, 2004, p.84).

time of writing. However, Garfield's views of socio-political development in the twentieth century are reflected in a different way in his later novel, *John Diamond* (1980). Comparing the protagonists of *Smith* and *John Diamond* reveals a shift from the ebullience of the 1960s to disenchantment at the end of the 1970s.

The commitment and optimism of the post-war twentieth century as demonstrated through the novels *Time of Trial* and *Smith* were, it seems, short-lived. Jock Young (2002) discusses the changes in society from post-war regeneration and 'high employment' with 'stable family structures and consensual values underpinned by the safety net of the welfare state' to a period from the mid-sixties onwards of 'structured unemployment, economic precariousness, a systematic culling of welfare provision' along with the 'growing instability of family life and interpersonal relations'. It led, he concludes, to a 'risk society' (Young, 2002, pp. 28-29). Writing at the end of the 1970s Leon Garfield, addressing similar issues to those explored in *Smith*, makes his context one of ignorance, deviousness, maliciousness, violence, cruelty and greed in addition to the extreme deprivation seen in Burton's text and reflecting much of what Young describes.

3.10 *John Diamond* (1980) by Leon Garfield

3.10.1 *Socio-political context for the narrative*

Published in 1980, *John Diamond*, which received the Whitbread Award, concerns the journey the twelve year old narrator, William Jones, makes to London following the death of his father. On the night his father dies William learns that his father, whom he had always seen as 'a tall, handsome man, with his own hair, his own teeth, and in fact nothing false about him' (7), had built this image on a lie. His dying father confesses to William that as a young man he swindled his partner in the coffee trade, thus instigating a narrative in which deceit forms a central part. After his father's death William perceives a need to make some form of retribution, initiating what becomes his quest or 'archetypal journey' as a way of expiating his father's sins and so freeing himself from their taint (Natov, 1994, p.108). He runs away to London with the fragments of information his father has given him, foremost among these the name of his father's former partner - Alfred Diamond. So begins a series of events in which William is constantly required to confront the fact that outward appearances and behaviour are

subterfuges to deceive and conceal inner intentions. The atmosphere of anxiety, mistrust and uncertainty that pervades the novel corresponds to Garfield's increasing disillusion with the way British society was being run and a widespread failure of social responsibility.

His father's dying revelations overturn William's feelings towards him, making him conclude, 'My father had cheated me just as he had cheated Mr Diamond ... My father ... was nothing but a swindler and a cheat' (23). Garfield here reflects what must have been many people's views of government and society in the 1960s and 1970s as 'swindlers and cheats', a view of some also expressed by Burton in her novel. The son's disillusion concerning his father reflects the disillusion many in British society felt about the British government of the time. Youthful freedom celebrated through popular music and 'flower power' and groups such as The Beatles promoted as clean and fresh, contrasted with the Conservative government's scandals of Soviet spies and call girls. For example, William Vassal an Admiralty clerk was imprisoned in 1962 for spying. He was blackmailed by the USSR to spy for them and had been protected by Thomas Galbraith, a former civil Lord of the Admiralty and Lord Carrington, Lord of the Admiralty. They were cleared by judicial enquiry (Sked and Cook, 1979, p.182). In a time of climbing unemployment Prime Minister Macmillan destabilised government when he sacked a third of his cabinet, political butchery known as the 'Night of the Long Knives' (Sandbrook, 2005, pp.373-7; Marwick, 2000, p.214; Marwick, 2003). Then, on winning the general election in 1964, Harold Wilson was unable to get consensus between the various groups within the Labour party which made it difficult to provide a clear policy for the country. The 1970s marked a desperate time for many people in Britain: a national miner's strike was followed by the Heath-led Conservative government implementing the Industry Act of 1972 which gave the government unprecedented powers of intervention on prices and wages; an oil crisis in response to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war when oil prices increased four-fold; low coal stocks resulting in power-cuts; and a three-day working week. Successive governments in the 1970s were unable to stem rising inflation which then resulted in growing unemployment. The Labour Government, in office from 1974, had by 1976 'to abandon long-standing principles and agree many cuts in public spending and social welfare' resulting in strikes for higher pay (Stevenson, 2004, p.30). Additionally, whereas between the early 1950s and 1970 people's disposable income had doubled, between 1974 and 1978 there was high and rising inflation, rising unemployment and a fall in real income so that

living standards went into decline. In *John Diamond*, 'the never-ending shouts and curses of demons and damned as they got in each other's way' (36/37) conjures up the sounds of people in the 1970s as well as eighteenth-century London, 'Everybody was angry. There was anger in the very air' (37). Fear and danger are never far from the plot of Garfield's stories, but where earlier novels, such as *Smith* (1967) end with a collocation of optimistic images and changes to characters' lives that celebrate the prospects of social improvement, the best *John Diamond* offers is the limited benefit to individuals arising from acts of personal kindness. By this point in his career Garfield, like the then Prime Minister Thatcher, seems to conclude there is no such thing as society (Thatcher, 1993, Steele, 2000). Garfield's earlier work tells quite a different story as typified by *Smith*. Unlike Smith, and although he has had a middle-class education, William is unable to make use of that education when faced with the challenges of London. Thinking about the past as a mirror on the present, this could be Garfield's reflections on governments' failure to implement what had been announced would be a truly comprehensive system for all children. Margaret Thatcher as Secretary of State for Education and Science in Edward Heath's Conservative government (1970-74) chose not to close grammar schools or work for a truly comprehensive system although egalitarian education reached its symbolic apotheosis in the launch of the Open University in 1969 and innovations were evident in education (Marwick, 2000, p.220). For example, in 1965 the Inner London Education Authority was formed which set a precedent for development in education reflected throughout the country, along with an independent body, the Schools Council. It seemed to be a move towards the idea of collective responsibility, change and an egalitarian society. However, by the end of the 1970s following the 'winter of discontent' with many strikes, the predominant mood of the country was one of disillusionment (Sked and Cook, 1993). This is the mood reflected in *John Diamond*.

Garfield's narratives set in the eighteenth century are seen through a particular kind of lens. It is a version of the long eighteenth-century, though as John Rowe Townsend observes, 'it is not the eighteenth century that would be recognised by a historical novelist' but is rather 'original, organic, springing straight from the Garfield imagination' (Townsend, 1979, p.68). Garfield understood that his approach was not conventional: 'I have trouble writing what other people take as historical fiction. I deliberately avoid dates because I try never to look back, but rather to

look about me' (cited in Natov, 1994, p.14). His work signals a change in historical fiction writing for children. Clearly the composite and personalised version of the latter part of the long eighteenth century Garfield constructs is one he found particularly useful for exploring what he found by 'looking about' the world in which he lived.³³ It is certainly the case that he populates this eighteenth-century world with 'quite contemporary characters' (Eyre, 1971, p. 99). Before *John Diamond*, Garfield's use of the quest undertaken in a shifting and troubled world is 'always a search, conscious or otherwise, on the part of Garfield's young heroes, for truth and lasting values' (Bell, 1989, p. 376).³⁴ In these novels lasting values cannot be divorced from social justice, and the political determination to combat it is his way of showing that progress is possible if people are prepared to work together to bring it into being. Like the eighteenth-century artist William Hogarth (1697-1764) he often creates grotesque characters amidst scenes of violence and degradation and infuses these with a dark humour as a way of asking readers to consider and re-evaluate their own behaviour and that of society.³⁵ In *John Diamond* the critique remains but the reforming energy is largely gone. Nevertheless this retains some of the characteristics of earlier works and, important for the purposes of this discussion, it is the novel where Leon Garfield's use of themes relating to freedom and liberty are explored in particularly pointed and interesting ways especially in relation to the kind of education which enables a sense of freedom and equality.

3.10.2 Concerns about Education

The novel is written as if retrospectively, the protagonist-narrator returning to some months previously. In William Jones, Garfield has his naïve protagonist-narrator convey the simplicity of a protected middle-class child's views through his often ironically humorous reflections, as when he hears his father walking about in the room below his at night, 'it occurred to me that, just as some people have the sleeping sickness, some the falling sickness, my father had the walking sickness' (8). This seeming naivety encourages readers to a humorously patronising

³³ Peter Hunt (1995) queries whether Garfield's novels can be considered historical fiction at all, since they are not based on historical research and identifies them as historical fantasy. Roni Natov (1994) identifies *The Prisoners of September* (1975) and *The Confidence Man* (1978) as exceptions because they are set in a particular historical time and place.

³⁴ Tucker suggests that this theme comes from Garfield's own separation from his Jewish family (Watson, 2001, p.279).

³⁵ Garfield's discussion of Hogarth is in *The House of Hanover: England in the Eighteenth Century* (1976) pp. 58-65; William Grimes, writing Garfield's obituary in the *New York Times*, refers to the manner in which Garfield 'conjured up the London of Hogarth and Dickens'.

view of William; curiously, he does not elicit empathy, something unusual in children's historical fiction. In addition, the narrator's subjectivity conveys a lack of social awareness beyond the confines of his middle-class position, which helps to raise questions about the limited education such children receive. Garfield's lens shows more than a family resemblance in problems to do with education over the generations, suggesting that Garfield was dissatisfied with the changes in education which were being implemented in the late 1970s. By the 1970s both Labour and Conservative governments had stepped back from some of the reforming ideas of the 1944 Education Act, allowing, for instance, selection for grammar schools and thus a two tier education system to continue. As well, the economic situation at that time resulted in cuts in education spending. Gillard (2011) states that,

comprehensivisation slipped off the political agenda. It disappeared from view altogether in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government came to power and set out to transform the country's schools into an education market place. (Gillard, 2001, n.p.)

Garfield reflects these changes and relates them to social divisions in *John Diamond*; William in spite of his middle-class education, represents 'the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation' (Williams, 1973, p.1).³⁶

The use of 'flashback' in the narrative provides opportunities for the more mature William to reflect on what has happened, just as Garfield is reflecting on cultural changes over a period. The pocket watch given to William by his dying father is Garfield's metaphor for a time of change in a society and particularly as a need for change which will bring about educational and welfare improvements. Just as William accidentally finds Alfred Diamond's address, hidden in the pocket watch when he is despairing of ever succeeding in his quest, Garfield is indicating a need for a more hopeful future - for things to improve.

3.10.3 Concerns about the Welfare State

As he negotiates to meet John Diamond, various characters make demands on William for money. He cannot tell if they are legitimate and entirely mismanages his finances, another parallel between events in the book and those in the world of the original reader. Garfield's

³⁶ Raymond Williams was an influential cultural figure at the time and whose work Leon Garfield was likely to have read.

London is both dark and fearsome, and in its wildness and unpredictability it conjures up the uncertainty and anger of the late 1960s and 1970s, a period when inflation increased and economic growth decreased resulting in more than one and a half million unemployed by 1979 with resulting homelessness.³⁷ Arthur Marwick comments that as the recession of the 1970s bit deeper it was the working class that was the most vulnerable of British society and in 1979, the time of the publication of *John Diamond*, there were more workers out on strike than at any time since the General Strike of 1926 (Marwick, 2003, p.173; p.177). The narration uses black humour in its characterisation of feelings of oppression, particularly in relation to the families from different parts of the country living in the house rented and then sub-let by Mr Seed, a dwarf who works for the lawyer William's father indicated to William and who watches out for William. Mr Seed's tenants are crowded into rooms and must eke out a living by whatever means they can. Garfield's details of the conditions in which whole families must live in a single room (77-78), are a reflection of the living conditions for many families in the 1960s and 1970s and highlighted by campaigning organisations such as Shelter. William meets Mrs Baynim 'whose husband came from Shropshire and was in the building trade' (75) and Mrs Branch from York, in London with her children and searching for her husband. Their twentieth century counterparts are the people who had to move and search for work in the wealthier south in the 1970s and vulnerable groups such as single parent families also struggling to survive. But it is also reflected in the manner in which Garfield describes others living in the area, 'a grim and menacing crowd of ruffians, with murder in their eyes ... armed with nothing worse than fists,' (72) and in the way in which John Diamond talks of how he preys on visitors to London:

"You ought to be paying me for all this, William," he said mildly. "It's how I get my living, you know. I show strangers round the town and point out interesting items. Jenkins puts them on to me. Well-to-do young men from the country, like yourself. I show them the high life, I show them the low life, and I show them where they can play cards. Then I show them where they can borrow money to pay their debts, and where they can buy pistols to blow their brains out when they're ruined." (108)

Garfield's cynicism is portrayed through the character John Diamond, whose actions reflect the way government-supported 'enterprise' can cause deprivation for others while

³⁷ In 1966 the BBC production of Jeremy Sandford's play *Cathy Come Home* highlighted the problems of the homeless (Giddings. D. (no date). Charities to support the homeless were established: The Simon Community (1963), Shelter (1966); Crisis (1967); St Mungo's (1969); Centrepoint (1969).

what had been collective assets, the nationalised industries, were privatised or sold off. For many of Garfield's generation with similar political sympathies privatisation marked a very low point.

3.10.4 Freedom and liberty

Shot-in-the-Head is the name given to one of the gang of urchins who 'all looked needy, furtive, restless and anxious to be out of the light' (91). They carry knives and are controlled and used by John Diamond in a number of nefarious activities including terrifying the gullible William and chasing him with the intention of frightening and ultimately killing him. William's epiphany comes when he allows Shot-in-the-Head to escape from Mr Seed's house, having looked into his eyes and seen their expression: 'it was as if a scream had looked at me' (85). As his name suggests, this child demonstrates the 'psychological damage' (Natov, 1994, p.111) also experienced by William after his father's death, but added to this is impoverishment in Shot-in-the-Head's physical life and maltreatment within the gang. Garfield recalls for the reader a link between Edvard Munch's painting *The Scream* (1893) and the images which Garfield must have retained of refugees in the death camps, and he appears to use these images as a metaphor for the despair which many felt during the economic depression of the 1970s. William is considered a victim by the gang of urchins. The desolation that William experiences when being chased by the gang is emphasised through Garfield's language. William is in 'a stony passageway, between tall, toppling tenements that went up so high that even the moonlight only got halfway down, before giving up the ghost on the dirty walls.' As he listens for footsteps, the rain falls 'in large sullen drops' and looking up he sees 'a line of washing stretching across the narrow sky like hanged men in a row, sullenly weeping rain' (114). Garfield creates a sense of foreboding through the adjectives 'stony', connoting with impenetrable or barren, and 'tall, toppling' which connotes with being buried, creating a sense of doom. This is intensified by the inclusion of 'ghost' and the reference to the washing 'like hanged men'. The use of personification in 'sullen drops' implies that even the rain is miserable and the emphasis of 'sullenly weeping rain' is all indicative of a perceived ending to William's life, although the use of 'sullen' and 'sullenly' emphasise a brooding despondency at the implied death of a child. His rescue by Shot-in-the-Head is therefore all the more miraculous. The urchin saves William's life and takes him to safety in his rooftop hideaway, protecting him from the viciousness and cruelty of John

Diamond and the gang who mean to kill him. Readers know that William as narrator-protagonist must survive and his rescue by Shot-in-the-Head is symbolic of a move from darkness to light or understanding, as William is led blindly to Shot-in-the-Head's rooftop security. Shot-in-the-Head's collection of valuable objects obtained through 'snick-an-lurk' are admired by Shot-in-the-Head for their beauty and sparkle, as is the starlit sky, Garfield's ideological message to readers to see beyond the darkness and misery to other aspects of beauty. It seems also that Garfield is indicating a shift of belief in society as a whole, towards individual acts of kindness.

On the rooftop, William and Shot-in-the-Head learn from each other, Garfield promoting the value of mixing children from different social backgrounds, reaffirming his belief in a comprehensive education system. Indeed it is the socially invisible Shot-in-the-Head who is the real adventurer: he later travels from London to Hertfordshire to find William from whom he heard stories and through whom he recognises the need for an education beyond that of the streets. But he is only one child rescued. Unlike the earlier optimism of *Smith* in which a single child seems to stand for a social trend, this later novel suggests that for every one child helped in the 1970s there were many others who struggled to survive. The Labour government's draconian measures in the 1970s which attacked the Welfare State: the housing programme reduced; prescription charges introduced; and an increase in dental charges dealt a blow to the Labour supporters and increased suffering for families on low incomes or none. The Labour government had stopped free school milk for secondary pupils in 1968 but the withdrawing of it for pupils from seven years by Margaret Thatcher while Secretary of State for Education and Science (1970-1974) added to the challenges faced by the Welfare State. It also exposed more children to the corrupting influence of adults on the streets, something which features powerfully in *John Diamond*. In this last historical novel, on the threshold of Thatcherism, Leon Garfield sounds a note of despair, evidently not expecting a new Conservative government to offer any relief from the deprivations of the 1970s. Townsend (1996) states of Garfield that '[f]rom the 1980s onward, Garfield moved away from his previous range', that is, historical fiction with an eighteenth-century setting, writing instead adult novels and compiling retellings of Shakespeare's plays.³⁸ Such a move may have been a reaction to socio-political events of the 1970s and 1980s, however, other factors need to be considered, not least the reduction in the

³⁸ Garfield completed Charles Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1980) and *House of Cards* (1982)

publication of historical fiction for children generally and of texts set in the eighteenth century in particular, during the period of the 1980s and 1990s and which provided a focus for this thesis.

3.10.5 *Effects of children's historical fiction publishing in the 1980s and 1990s*

During the 1980s and 1990s relatively few historical fiction stories set in the eighteenth century were published (see Appendix B). A number of factors are responsible for the lack of appeal of the eighteenth century as a setting. Before moving on to consider Julia Golding's novel published in the new millennium, it is useful to consider these, particularly in the light of socio-cultural change during this time, starting with changes to the publishing industry in the 1980s (Pearson, 2011). Publishing was re-organised in line with the Thatcher government's policy to keep inflation low, relying on market forces to drive the economy with privatisation and an enterprise culture, a point which addresses John Stephens' assumptions about the decline in children's historical fiction and discussed in Chapter 1. Children's book publishing became slimmer, encompassed within mainstream London-based publishing and with this went a heightened demand for each individual children's book to be marketable. In combination with contemporary publishers' and librarians' view that 'children don't read historical fiction' these changes resulted in a reduction to what had once been a highly admired section of the children's book scene (Eccleshare, 1991, p.23).

There were several reasons for a decline in historical fiction reading in the early 1980s: the re-organising of publishing discussed above; the decline in publications from well known writers now in their declining years; traditional methods of teaching history which were concerned with learning by rote; and the recession of the 1970s 'provided a rationale for economic cutbacks in education not only in England but in most advanced western industrial countries' (Galton, Simon and Croll 1980, p.41 cited in Gillard, 2011: n.p.). John Stephens' (1992), view of the 1980s as a time when western society's humanist tradition, in which human traits were promoted and mediated through history writing and therefore also through historical fiction, came to an end is not the only reason.

This view that historical fiction can only be presented through the influences and perspective of the present of writing and can never be a true representation of the historical times being

written about underpins recognition of the relationship between historical fiction and fantasy (Nikolajeva, 2000). If history and historical events, seen through the eyes of a writer in a later time, however much it is researched can never be a true representation, then it must be viewed as fantasy. Such a view as Stephens' does not take account of the writers who use a setting in the past to mirror their concerns about the present of writing in a narrative represented through the eyes of characters that present a mixture of the sensibilities of the past and present. Or does he- is this the crux of his argument: that it is not historical fiction because it is presentist and concerned with the present not the past? Well that's the writer's viewpoint and we know that setting a story in the past is a means of distancing those concerning events for the reader while, at the same time, transmitting a heritage and humanist significance.

The historiographical viewpoint has already been discussed in detail in Chapter 1 and here it suffices to say that linked with postmodernism a different perception of history and ipso facto its connection with children's historical fiction might be conceived as a changing purpose for presentation of a historical setting. Although Stephens' views briefly appeared to have been vindicated in the continuing decline in the historical fiction books published in the 1980s and 1990s, it did not take into account the changing nature of historical fiction representation and has therefore not been born out since the new millennium saw a rapid increase in historical fiction publication.

Jack Zipes (1996) draws attention to the different views of childhood presented by those on the left and right of politics. When considering the importance of children and preparation for their role in the future, he identifies the right-wing desire 'to reform education in the 1980s and to gain greater moral and social control over children' while the left want to "'decommodify" the child and enable the young girl or boy to gain a sense of autonomy and take a critical stance vis-à-vis the social forces that are exploiting and reifying children' (Zipes cited in Egoff et al., 1996, p.366). Such a view links with the 'new history' methods of teaching where pupils became investigators of historical artefacts, including facsimiles of historical documents or objects and pieced together responses to questions posed about lives in the past. It had a greater concern with social history and was therefore more significantly linked to pupils, drawing on empathy and understanding. This view of teaching promoted a humanist perspective. However a more convincing analysis of the changing role and status of historical fiction is offered by Tony

Watkins and Zena Sutherland specifically in relation to Leon Garfield's work. While quoting Garfield's views about the humanist significance and didacticism of his writing, 'his novels' they write, 'represent, in fiction, our own contemporary ideological uncertainties about belief and value' a link to postmodernism (Hunt, 1995, p.296). Other historical novels from long-standing writers also continued to purvey humanist ideas believed by Stephens to be no longer accepted in a changing society. Rosemary Sutcliff's two novels that make use of an early eighteenth-century setting, *Bonnie Dundee* (1983) and *Flame Coloured Taffeta* (1986) are concerned with moral values and the need to be true to oneself and particularly one's beliefs. Joan Aiken's (1924-2004) long-eighteenth-century settings for her Felix trilogy are mainly in Spain in a post-Napoleonic period and feature belief in a Judeo-Christian God's direct guidance.³⁹ The focus on the misuse of Christian theology in the second and third novels of Aiken's Felix trilogy might be a critical reflection on the Thatcherite enterprise culture where moral and theological justification was given for the free market economy and a 'new rational capitalism' (Anderson, Drakopoulou-Dodd and Scott, 2000, p.5) which promoted a Protestant work ethic at a time of rising unemployment.

By the 1990s social realism was dominating children's fiction (Eccleshare, 1991) to the detriment of humanism. Although some celebrated writers of historical fiction such as Jill Paton Walsh continued to be published, they did not use the eighteenth century as a setting. Neither did two new historical fiction writers published in the 1980s and 1990s: Julian Atterton whose narratives of northern England are set between the sixth and twelve centuries, and Philip Pullman, whose historical fiction is set in the nineteenth century. Two other writers new to children's fiction did, however, choose the long eighteenth century as a setting for their novels: Theresa Tomlinson gave a voice to working-class women in northern England in her feminist novels set in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴⁰ And *Dagger in the Sky* (1992) by Alan Gibbons contrasts the newly-rich and the workers in the manufactories in northern England at the time of the Luddites. Gibbons was writing directly in response to pit closures, the privatisation of the remaining coal mining industry and the subsequent unemployment of

³⁹ Aiken's texts are *Go Saddle the Sea* (1977); *Bridle the Wind* (1983); and *The Teeth of the Gale* (1988).

⁴⁰ Theresa Tomlinson's *The Rope Carrier* (1991) contrasts the rural life of rope-making in Castleton in Derbyshire with the harsh life for families engaged in the Sheffield knife-making industry as focalised through a female narrator.

thousands of miners as part of the Conservative government's neo-liberalist policy which favoured deregulation and trade liberalisation. In a personal email, dated 23 May 2010 about his novel, Alan Gibbons states, 'I was a member of the SWP [Socialist Workers Party] for twenty-five years so my sympathies were with the Luddites. There was also an element of allegory with the Great Miners' Strike of 1984-5'. The government's use of the police force to 'bring down' the miners as part of Margaret Thatcher's policy to break the power of the trade unions is echoed in the narrative by the factory owners' use of military and yeomanry force to 'put down' the protesting groups in the late eighteenth century. Both of these writers provide a humanist perspective in their narratives where, in dire circumstances, the protagonists develop agency through their experiences and reflections. Therefore, concerns about the treatment of people by those in power was a focus for a limited number of writers of historical fiction from the north of England during the 1990s, perhaps because it was the north that suffered most from the Conservative government policies.

With the new millennium a new generation of writers of historical fiction and some established ones once again began to use eighteenth-century settings to express humanist views and concerns following the optimism that had characterised the first years of Tony Blair's New Labour government. By the end of the government's second term in office and a greatly reduced majority in the 2005 general elections five more children's historical fiction books set in the eighteenth century had been published (see Appendix B). While some of these were written in response to anniversaries, others explored issues which linked the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries, among them equality, whether of gender, race or class; and corruption among those in power. Increasingly writers have incorporated aspects of fantasy when writing about the past so, for instance, Susan Cooper's *Victory* (2006) uses the transfer through time of an English girl to replace a young boy powder monkey on board HMS *Victory* during the Battle of Trafalgar, while Linda Buckley-Archer invents a time-travel device to enable movement between the two centuries in her Gideon or Time-Quake Trilogy, *Gideon the Cutpurse* (2006), *The Tar Man* (2007) and *Time Quake* (2009). The second book, *The Tar Man* concerns fraud, perhaps making links between the eighteenth century and a twenty-first century government involved in

fraudulent dealings between the Saudi government and BAE Systems.⁴¹ Other writers drawn to historical fantasy set in the eighteenth century include Sally Gardner, Celia Rees and Sally Prue. Gardner's *The Red Necklace* (2007) and *The Silver Blade* (2009) set at the time of the French Revolution, alternate between France and England and concern Yann, a young man of gypsy origins with magical powers, and his task of rescuing and keeping safe the girl he loves during the French Revolution. Challenges to liberty and freedom by those with power are also the focus of Celia Rees's novels *Pirates* (2003) and *Sovay* (2008), while another present-day issue, that of equality (especially for those with learning difficulties), is the subject of Sally Prue's *Wheels of War* (2009) where the wealthy owners have left their servants to protect the house and estate from Jacobite and English soldiers. While currently there is less emphasis on historical fact and more on creating situations in which the narrative provides a background for raising issues in a more open yet humanistic ideological manner, the range and number of texts set in the eighteenth century alone show that Stephens' predictions about the death of historical fiction with a commensurate end of humanism were clearly premature. These texts also display the manner in which historical fiction has adapted and fused with other genres, an indication of change.

Another change in historical fiction writing in the new millennium concerns the way in which postmodern features are incorporated into historical fiction texts set in the eighteenth century. The playfulness of the text infuses it with a fantasy-feel where the protagonist's manner and behaviour is clearly fantastical. Julia Golding began writing in this newly invigorated, less generically defined climate for historical fiction while still adhering to the representation of a humanist ideology through the reflections of her narrator-protagonist which again challenges Stephens' predictions concerning postmodernism. Like many of those who began to use the past as a setting around the turn of the millennium her work is a dynamic mixture of adventure, fantasy and historical fiction, featuring characters that traditionally did not appear as part of history. *The Diamond of Drury Lane* (2006), the first of a series, explores similar themes to those of Burton and Garfield and uses similar motifs, but presented in a more light-hearted manner. That said Golding adopts a more overt, often ironic, yet humanist ideological stance and tackles

⁴¹ See article CorpWatch: BAE's Dirty Dealings at www.corpwatch.org by Sasha Lilley Nov 11th 2003 and the Guardian report 'BAE chairman named in 'slush fund'' May 2004. It concerns a deal between the British Government and the Saudi royal family involving an exchange of arms for oil.

these issues directly and effectively. It is appropriate then that a detailed analysis of this text is part of this case study particularly as this novel with its eighteenth-century setting speaks to contemporary debates and events and exemplifies more overtly a turn towards post-modernist historical fiction.

3.11 *The Diamond of Drury Lane* (2006) by Julia Golding

Six novels and a novella by Julia Golding were published in the Cat Royal series between 2006 and 2010, and although each book deals with issues relating to the eighteenth century, they all also reflect socio-political events and concerns of the twenty-first century. This reiterates Stephens' view that writers writing about historical events cannot avoid doing so from a presentist perspective. However, the overarching presence of a humanist perspective is evident in the text, contrary to Stephens' predictions. Golding, like Garfield, provides readers with a sense of the eighteenth century without reference to any specific historical events and incorporates anachronistic elements of the present or time of writing, although their manner of doing so differs. Marketed for an audience of nine years and over, *The Diamond of Drury Lane* (2006), the first book in the Cat Royal series, introduces Cat (Catherine), the protagonist-narrator of the whole series, and her companions. Cat both displays and challenges the traditional roles of eighteenth-century females offering a point of identification for girls growing up in the equal opportunity ethos of twenty-first century Britain. As a member of the theatre world she is, however, a peripheral member of eighteenth-century society with her upbringing, as described by her for readers, having many fantastical elements to it and is clearly very different from and most possibly freer than that of children in twenty-first century Britain. As a girl of approximately twelve years, brought up and living in the theatre, working for no wages, she has to turn her hand to almost any task, yet also seems to have a great deal of freedom both in the theatre and outside. She sleeps in the attic where the costumes are stored, is dressed in clothing supplied by Mrs Reid the wardrobe mistress who acts in a motherly way but beats her as she deems necessary. She has been taught to read and write and she learns to speak fluent French and Italian, acquired from various cast members. However, probably like most girl readers today, she is deficient in the eighteenth-century womanly tasks of needlework: sewing, mending and darning costumes which would have been the accomplishments of some eighteenth-century women. As a person much more comfortable

relaying messages and wanting to be a member of the Covent Garden boy gang led by her friend Syd, this feisty female protagonist helps establish links between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries for readers. Cat has subjective agency; as an orphan of the theatre she can re-make herself to be anyone she wants putting on theatrical clothes to dress for the part she chooses to play within society and performing as some members of the twenty-first century society do. In this she differs from earlier female characters in historical fiction who, although reflecting a desire for things to be different for themselves and others, still conform to their time period's expectations, even though like Cat they are perceptive and intelligent. These anachronistic characters are recognisable in the case studies particularly from the 1980s. Butler and O'Donovan (2012) challenge the view that texts should be free from anachronisms, arguing instead that anachronisms perform functions beyond merely 'smuggling ideologically acceptable points of view into the narrative' (2012, p.81-82). They show how anachronisms can aid comprehensibility and can be used for comic effect.

Cat is a good example of an anachronistic character for while her story is set in the eighteenth century, Cat is clearly a product of the second-wave feminist movement. Unlike Margaret Pargeter in *Time of Trial* (1963), for instance, she moves freely among different groups of people and does not conform to any code concerning eighteenth-century women; she cross-dresses to attend a boxing match and later, in *Cat among the Pigeons* (2006), does so again to pose as a boarder in a boys' public school. Although she seems less constrained in her gender role compared to other female characters I have discussed, Cat's world is still shaped by hegemonic and monetary structures; she can still be deprived of her freedom and power. For example her arrest and later denunciation by Lord Avon results in incarceration in a police cell with the probability of death by hanging.

The most obvious ways in which Golding constructs parallels between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries include themes of revolution, the slave trade, misuse of power and social divisions based on extremes of wealth and poverty. They reflect the beginning of the twenty-first century in the manner in which the Labour government continued the former Conservative government's 'excessive salaries and share awards to 'fat cats'' (Marwick, 2003, p.430). There was still corruption in government and now 'spin' was added with dubious associations between Prime Minister Blair and the media monopolist Rupert Murdoch while Cabinet Ministers were

forced out of office through media campaigns for improprieties. Such occurrences emphasise the links between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries (Jenkins, 2007, p.242).⁴² These themes persist through the series: slavery and gangs are major themes in Golding's second novel *Cat among the Pigeons* (2006), while *Den of Thieves* (2007) sees Cat in Paris and pursues her involvement in spying on behalf of Mr Sheridan during the French Revolution. In *Cat O'Nine Tails* (2007) a comparison of eighteenth-century life in England and the newly independent states of America is made with the positive attributes of a Native American tribe presented as Cat lives with them before being returned to friends in Philadelphia. In *Black Heart of Jamaica* (2008) Golding considers equality and political intrigue through pirates and slavery of all kinds, included in the novella *The Middle Passage* (2009), published in e-book version only. The final book, *Cat's Cradle* (2011), explores the idea of family through the effects of the Industrial Revolution, immigrant workers and multiculturalism. This last novel is much less light-hearted than the others perhaps reflecting the worsening economic and social conditions that prevailed at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Central to this discussion is Golding's use of the eighteenth-century setting simultaneously to instruct readers about limitations in freedom in the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries. Lessons are bound up in themes of class, social marginalisation and the pursuit of freedom and liberty, but her postmodern style enables her to address these themes in a manner which avoids didacticism while contributing to her humanist ideological message about the importance of understanding that rights bring responsibilities.

3.11.1 A postmodern approach

The theatrical backdrop of *The Diamond of Drury Lane* enables Julia Golding to draw on several characteristics of postmodernism including a playful presentation manner, pastiche of genres, and interruptions to allow the narrator-protagonist to speak directly to readers.⁴³ Golding's

⁴² Peter Mandelson, Geoffrey Robinson and Keith Vaz were forced to leave the Cabinet because of improprieties concerning the million pounds donation to Labour party funds by Bernie Ecclestone and links with the government's decision to exclude motor racing from the promise to abolish tobacco sponsorship of all sporting events (Jenkins, 2007, p.142).

⁴³ By the new millennium postmodernism had become an accepted way of writing for the young. David Lewis (2001) identifies five categories of postmodernism in which picturebooks and prose can fit: boundary breaking where characters wander beyond the narrative level; excess as in grotesque humour or metaphorical representation; indeterminacy through gaps in narrative text; parody which in picturebooks 'poke fun at the conventions' (2001, p.97); and performance: Lewis suggests that the interactive nature of 'pop-ups' and 'flap' books draw readers' attention away from the narrative, thus undermining it and are therefore metafictional.

style demonstrates a change in the manner in which historical fiction is written; where in the past realism, adventure and historical detail were emphasised, now hermeneutic challenges and amusement are in the ascendant. For example, readers gain a sense of the historical background of the eighteenth century not just by being provided with details of period and setting but by solving textual riddles of the levels of plot and language, such as how to read the faux-eighteenth century chapter headings, or to recognise the blurring of fact and fiction. At the same time Golding directs them to recognise that they are twenty-first century readers through her use of anachronistic behaviours and views, particularly associated with Cat or Catherine Royal, the protagonist.

Cat's story began, she tells the reader, when she was found as a young child at the stage door of a theatre and raised by a real historical person, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, playwright, theatre owner and politician. This inclusion of a real-world historical figure inserted into a fictional contexts is, McHale states, a strategy used by postmodern writers its intention to elicit strong reactions (McHale, 1987, p.85) though it is questionable whether nine-year-olds will be familiar with Sheridan. Cat is raised under the direction of Sheridan in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (hence her name). Cat speaks directly to readers, but in a manner which differs from that of earlier protagonist-narrators in historical fiction. Dennis Butts indicates that most post-modernists writers remind their readers 'that they are reading a story, not simply looking at a mirror of the world' through the use of author comment directly to the reader (Butts, 2010, p.152). Golding draws on conventions from eighteenth-century novels, mimicking works such as Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) through an outmoded form of address as in, 'Reader, you are set to embark ...' (1); 'it occurs to me now, Reader, that you may ...' (15). Such pastiche draws attention to the fictitious nature of the text, even though most of Golding's implied readers are likely to be unaware of the originals on which it is based. It differs from the kind of pastiche Garfield uses, which generally incorporates aspects other than narrative styles less overtly; for instance, adopting the rhythm of the language and the imaginatively descriptive passages reminiscent of Charles Dickens' writing. In Golding's work, by contrast, the whole structure and phraseology of eighteenth-century antecedents are referenced and she includes a

glossary of eighteenth-century terms. The effect of Golding's mixture of styles and strategies is more playful than that of Garfield, however, they share a seriousness of purpose since Golding's novel draws attention to challenges of the new millennium in the way Garfield's did for the mid to late twentieth century.

Golding includes a number of paratexts which are both humorous and ironic and which fulfil the postmodern delight in confusing readers (Butler, 2002). The paratextual elements in *The Diamond of Drury Lane* include a section, familiar in present day as part of the publishers' apparatus for promotion but here masquerading as 'The Critics,' in which famous figures from the eighteenth century are 'quoted'. Each 'puff' makes reference to the commentator's own literary work or personality as in, 'Cat Royal has no Rivals'- R. B. Sheridan'; a playful allusion to the real writer Sheridan's play, *The Rivals* (1775). In a 'Note to the Reader,' Catherine 'Cat' Royal, informs readers of the coarse language they will find in the text, drawing their attention to the inclusion of a glossary.

The novel uses the trappings of a play-text: the contents page identifies a List of Characters, Prologue, Acts, Scenes and Epilogue. These references to theatre and plays also emphasise the self-conscious representation and performance of the text. It includes a map of the theatre district of London while a dedication completes the preliminary paratextual elements. It is necessary to suspend disbelief to appreciate the playfulness here.⁴⁴ The book covers add to the playfulness of the whole: while the back cover presents information about the novel's contents in the style of an eighteenth-century playbill, the front cover gives an image of an eighteenth-century theatre stage.⁴⁵ Again, imitating elements from eighteenth-century novels, each 'Act' or chapter is opened by a brief synopsis which identifies its content, as in, 'Act IV- In which Pedro is shown the ropes and reveals where his loyalties lie ...' (254) though even these synopses are filled with puns. Although playful these elements encourage readers to keep in mind that they are not being transported back in time but are reading a text while at the same time, paradoxically, such headings also give the book a more genuine eighteenth-century 'feel' for those familiar with eighteenth-century novels. Golding in this way calls attention both to the

⁴⁴ This is something which will appeal to Appleyard's 'Reader as Thinker' since the style presents readers with a puzzle to work out.

⁴⁵ Reference here is to the cover of the first paperback edition; later editions show a photograph of a girl meant to represent Cat, indicating perhaps acknowledgement of a mainly female readership.

fictional nature of history and to the familiar conventions of the novel. The postmodernism of the text is further demonstrated by Golding's own website (<http://www.juliagolding.com>) where she engages in discussion of the narrative with readers, reinforcing the lack of elitism in this work of art and identifying it as a commodity. This 'play' with genres also identifies it as historical fantasy.

Living in a theatre Cat is at the intersection of different groups of people who inhabited the latter part of the eighteenth century and thus is able to meet and interact with a wide range of characters from different backgrounds and interests. These 'eighteenth-century characters' however, are in an obvious manner behaving in twenty-first century ways; establishing this encourages readers to understand the relationship between past and present. Analysis of this text will consider the manner in which Golding uses the eighteenth century to instruct readers about limitations in freedom in the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries.

3.11.2 Freedom in the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries

The focus of the narrative is the 'diamond' of the title, which Cat believes to be a jewel hidden by Sheridan within the theatre, and which Sheridan, after learning she has overheard a conversation concerning it, encourages and gives her the task of protecting: "You'll keep my jewel safe for me, won't you Cat?" (12). The 'diamond', readers and Cat eventually learn, is not a jewel as such, but Lord Jonathan Fitzroy, son of the Earl of Ranworth, alias Captain Sparkler, a political cartoonist hiding in the theatre from the law (his cartoons have been deemed seditious) under the assumed name of Johnny Smith. As such he becomes the prompter as well as tutor to Cat. His anti-royalist cartoons, printed and distributed on the streets, indicate his republican ideals, Golding using a philosophical discourse between him and Cat to demonstrate for readers that the desire for freedom, liberty and equality is not related to class in either the eighteenth or the twenty-first century. He tells Cat that "all men are equal. Titles are nothing when you place man beside man in the wild. What is important then is character and intelligence ... It's not the man's title but his qualities you should look to" (232). While Cat corrects the gender bias, replying "Or woman's", a comment which will be familiar to readers in the twenty-first century but which reflects eighteenth century views also, the discourse indicates for readers significant ideals in relation to 'liberty' in both the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries; people who are working to achieve freedom for themselves and others must

demonstrate integrity and abide by their own value systems. Golding here seems to be indicating that failure to live up to expected standards of behaviour became an increasing issue around the 'New Labour' Government over time (Jenkins, 2007). Interestingly, although it was a time which saw a revolution in information technology and thus possibilities for fast communication, Blair's personal style of government had much in common with that of government in the late eighteenth century where the then Prime Minister and a number of close friends or aides of corresponding political views made decisions rather than working with a Cabinet of elected politicians.⁴⁶ Simon Jenkins likens it to a reversion of the eighteenth-century practice of the cabinet as a 'conversation of equals' (2007, p.236). Bernard Porter considers Blair's role as similar to the time of imperialist rule in relation to Blair's views that 'western values were good for everyone' (Porter, 2004, p.360).⁴⁷ This attitude can be seen most clearly with regard to his explanation to the British people concerning the need for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein that resulted in war. This proposed war was challenged by what the police termed 'the UK's biggest ever demonstration with at least 750,000 people taking part' (<http://www.news.bbc.co.uk>) in London and other demonstrations in Belfast and Glasgow and around the world. Although focussed on a different country, the threat of radicalism and revolution in Iraq is effectively evoked by the eighteenth-century setting while the protest marches in Britain evokes eighteenth-century revolutionary threats. Fear of the taint of revolution following independence in America and revolution in France in the late eighteenth century led to restrictions in freedom for many in Britain, a time when a whisper of suspicion led to arrests, something raised in Burton's text and which Golding reflects in her narrative. In twenty-first century Britain changes to government 'policy on asylum and immigration, civil rights, free speech, crime and punishment and the relationship between the executive and the judiciary' in the days preceding the Iraq War of 2003 similarly address government fears (Jenkins, 2007, p.249).

3.11.3 Restrictions on freedom

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks led to significant changes in policy in Britain and the USA as a result of fear of further attacks from members of what has come to be known as Al-

⁴⁶ Of course the role of the monarch, King George III was potentially greater.

⁴⁷ The *New Statesman* linked this and other statements by Blair as 'in effect the revival of imperialism, with the liberal humanitarian's burden replacing the white man's burden' (10th May 1999) cited in Porter, 2004, p.361)

Qaeda. This fear of a breakdown of law and order in the twenty-first century was addressed by an increase in security, including a large number of surveillance cameras in public spaces and, in particular, Muslims living in Britain were subject to observation, arrest and intense scrutiny. The fear seemed justified on 7 July 2005 when bombs were detonated in London, causing injury and death. Living with fear and the desire to be free are themes which Golding invokes to create an undercurrent in her narrative that points up the challenges faced by those working for freedom from oppression of one kind or another. Francis Fukuyama (1992) indicates that the principles of liberty and equality in the eighteenth century were only understood by ordinary people and slaves through observation of those in authority. Through working for them and going through a process of self-education to overcome fear they realised that as human beings they are 'capable of free and creative labor' [sic] (Fukuyama, 1992, p.195). These are the humanist principles which Golding continues to present in her narrative using her eighteenth-century setting to infuse a see-saw of emotion between fear and attaining change:

We had entered a new and fearful age: the revolution in France had made the rich fear for themselves ... I had only just woken up to understand that the answer to this would decide my future too. (237-238)

There is optimism but at a cost, Golding providing a gentle reminder to readers to consider cause and effect in present times through this overt humanist ideological perspective.

3.11.4 Freedom of individuals

Freedom for Cat is directly linked to her facility with language. Golding ensures that the reader understands that because she has grown up in the theatre Cat has a well-developed ability to code-switch depending on the audience and situation. It is supported by the facility to draw on the theatre's wardrobe stock and to perform according to the requirements of the situation in which she finds herself. This performativity provides a degree of freedom, allowing her to move among and make friends with different groups or class of people including Lord Frances and Lady Elizabeth. These characters choose to befriend Cat initially because of their interest in her different life-style but later because she is perceived as a person of integrity and spirit, traits which she also sees in them. Is Golding demonstrating here that in the twenty-first century class is less important than education and integrity? And if so, is this also a comment on the New Labour government? While Blair indicated that New Labour were on the side of ordinary people

against privilege and therefore must be purer than pure (Rawnsley, 2000) the actions of the Blair circle proved otherwise when it was revealed that they had been granting favours or privileges in return for money to support the Labour party.⁴⁸ Andrew Marr suggests that such scandals reflect the 'wilder years of the eighteenth century (Marr, 2007, p.559), something of which Golding would be aware. In *The Diamond of Drury Lane*, Cat is accused of stealing and imprisoned when, after helping Johnny flee England, she is arrested as a thief. Cat's treatment at Bow Street Station indicates that the Bow Street Runner believes her guilty, a reflection on the twenty-first century British police force where many innocent Muslims were imprisoned at a time of fear of attacks from Al-Qaeda, the (Sunni-Islamist) terrorist movement. Cat's rescue comes ultimately through the Earl of Ranworth, who has learned of Cat's role in helping Johnny sail for America and uses the 'old boys' network' to arrange her release with the judge and Lord Avon, much as in the twenty-first century people's mistrust of the Blair government and their connections reflected the eighteenth century.

Another character caught up in the theme of freedom is Pedro; Golding introduces the 'freed' slave Pedro Hawkins early in the narrative in a specific manner which demonstrates his apparent subjective agency and as a major character in the series. For the most part slaves are peripheral characters in novels set in the eighteenth century. They are presented in a matter-of-fact manner particularly in those written before the 1970s.⁴⁹ Barbara Leonie Picard's *The Young Pretenders* (1966), for example, features a black slave page, the fifth that Lady Rimpole has owned (Picard, 1971, p.13) who is briefly referred to, although in Leon Garfield's *Jack Holborn* (1964) Jack secures freedom for a group of slaves. From the late 1970s, however, novels start to feature slave characters as in Marjorie Darke's *The First of Midnight* (1977; 2007); Jamilla Gavin's *Coram Boy, Part II* (2000); Frances Mary Hendry's *Chains* (2000); Celia Rees's *Pirates*, (2003); and James Riordan's *Rebel Cargo* (2007) (see Appendix B). In these novels they feature as main characters with a point of view. Such novels with slaves as heroes were published close

⁴⁸ Bernie Ecclestone, a friend of Tony Blair, was allowed to advertise cigarettes on his Formula 1 racing cars at a time when cigarette advertising was banned. Geoffrey Robinson MP had money in off-shore accounts and lent Peter Mandelson, who later became secretary of State for Trade and Industry and investigated such accounts, to buy a house. Two Indian business men who helped to fund the Dome, tried to obtain British citizenship through Peter Mandelson. He and David Blunkett had to resign from government twice because of scandals.

⁴⁹ Lucy Boston's *Chimneys of Green Knowe* (1958) is the only one that I have identified with a positive attitude (by some characters) to a freed black slave, although slaves and concern for them form the subject of Norman Collins (1948) *Black Ivory*.

to the two hundredth anniversary of the formation of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1787) and of The Slave Trade Act (1807). In Golding's *The Diamond of Drury Lane*, not only is Pedro confident and acrobatically skilled, he is also a violin virtuoso and has supposedly been bought, freed and brought to London by Signor Angelini, the theatre's musical director. Pedro's presence provides an opportunity for Golding to provide information about the eighteenth-century slave trade and 'the recent exertions of the Abolitionists to bring their plight to the public's attention' (26/27). She refers here to the children's books written in the eighteenth century which featured slavery.⁵⁰ A twenty-first century sensibility also informs Golding's use of racist comments. While these acknowledge the accepted attitudes of the past they are used in a different spirit in *The Diamond of Drury Lane* as when Billy calls Pedro 'Blackie' and comments 'We can't 'ave our English girls messin' with no African slave boys, can we now?'(49).

Pedro Hawkins, named for his former master's pet dog and his owner, is determined to remove any stain of slavery and make a name for himself as a musician presenting a humanist attitude as indicated by Fukuyama (1992). His social status and his ambition are shown to be precious because of his race, particularly in the second book in the series, *Cat Among the Pigeons* (2006) in which he is kidnapped by Billy Shepherd for his previous slave owner, Hawkins. In this novel Golding blurs fact with fiction by presenting cameo roles of abolitionists including historical figures: Granville Sharp, Olaudah Equiano and others in order to present the challenges faced by abolitionists in the late eighteenth century and perhaps those challenging slavery in its many forms in the twenty-first century. Golding also presents readers with the problems which those supporting racial tolerance encounter highlighting the attitude of media then and now in relation to those deemed 'other': Cat tells readers, 'I smoothed the newspaper out and stared at the bald words before me – 'the African', 'former slave', 'missing' (*Cat among the Pigeons*, 2006, pp.183/184). As Cat realises, language has the power to remove agency, underlining the importance of Cat's linguistic fluency and Pedro's talents but making a significant point for

⁵⁰ Slavery has been a feature of children's books since the late eighteenth century when both abolitionists and pro-slavery groups sought to influence children through texts. Although, '[e]xtant examples of pro-slavery literature for children are rare' (Sands-O'Connor, 2008, p.22) many anti-slavery texts exist from writers such as Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth and Charles and Mary Lamb. While Thomas Day was a campaigner for abolition, his *The History of Sandford and Merton* (1783) makes only brief reference to the slave trade but Sands-O'Connor (2008) draws attention to Amelia Opie's, *Black Man's Lament: or How to Make Sugar* (1826) a verse narrative.

readers. Golding's placing of Pedro centrally within the narrative provides an ideological humanist standpoint to enable readers to consider race in relation to freedom in the multicultural society of the twenty-first century. It also challenges readers to think about the nature of freedom in eighteenth-century society. Francis Graham-Dixon (2005) comparing Linda Colley's discussion in *Britons – Forging the Nation 1710-1837* (1992) with the beginning of the twenty-first century, indicates that Britain's long-projected image of values of liberty, justice and tolerance does not fit with recent social statistics which indicate also segregation by 'inequality, poverty, wealth and opportunity' (2005, p.1). This reinforces the point that there are many negative elements common to both eighteenth and twenty-first centuries, particularly in relation to freedom. Through Cat's friendship with Pedro and their support for each other in the difficult situations faced by each, Golding presents a positive attitude towards multiculturalism in both eighteenth and twenty-first centuries.

3.11.5 Towards a better society

The riots and revolutionary challenges of eighteenth-century Britain parallel concerns of the twenty-first century which saw the initial stages of a more concerted move toward social or community cohesion. This was prompted in part by race riots between white and Asian communities in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001 which drew attention to the dangers of fragmented communities (Muers, 2011). At the same time the 'emergence of extremist views on the far right of British politics and amongst radical Islamists' (iCoCo, 2010, n.p.) identified a need to develop a sense of inclusiveness if a new understanding of Britishness, that would enable cohesion, were to be developed.⁵¹ For Cat, the Theatre Royal is a cohesive and functioning community; she tells the reader, 'The theatre has become my family and I have become its Cat. It has fed and clothed me, taught me to read and write and given me employment ... The theatre is a kingdom' (16/17). She goes on to explain how within this microcosm everyone can be identified as part of a community or 'kingdom,' with Mr Sheridan as its head or 'king'. However she accepts that there are those who challenge that cohesiveness: the horn player refers to Pedro, as 'a performing monkey' (27) racial abuse in any century, demonstrating that there are always those within a society who will oppose cohesiveness. The

⁵¹ See report from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), 2003-04, p.5 where a definition of a cohesive community is given.

community of the theatre is also set within the wider community of Covent Garden where Cat played throughout her childhood. Golding explores the social cohesiveness or otherwise in this community within the narrative identifying those, such as Billy Shepherd and his gang, from an area outside Covent Garden who would like to infiltrate Covent Garden and who does not adhere to either social or community expectations and might therefore be considered to be one who challenges a cohesive society. Because Golding makes them a key feature of the text, the role of gangs needs to be considered in relation to twenty-first century views on cohesiveness and in relation to Golding's focus on two gangs in the eighteenth-century setting of her novel.

3.11.6 A cohesive society - the role of gangs

The Diamond of Drury Lane emphasises similarities between gangs in eighteenth-century London and London gangs in the twenty-first century in terms of their organisation, their role, their territory and their rivalries. Threats on lives by individuals and gangs were common in some parts of London in the eighteenth century as Garfield's text has exhibited. Golding helps her readers understand. Two gangs are part of Cat's life in the streets around the theatre. Syd, a butcher and a boxer and leader of one gang, has grown up with and protected Cat since early childhood and his gang supports the market traders in Covent Garden. Cat explains to Johnnie, new to the company:

If you want anything solved round here- stolen property returned, revenge for assault, runaway wives tracked down – you have to go to one of the gangs. They know everything that's happening on their turf. (97)

In contrast, Billy Shepherd, 'the leader of one of the gangs that vies for control of the market underworld' (45) is depicted as clever but cruel. Although there is wit and humour in his interactions with Cat which readers will appreciate, there is also the underlying threat that gangs impose on those outside them. Cat informs readers,

All of the stallholders had reason to fear Billy Shepherd. He was a nasty piece of work who would not think twice about wrecking their business if it suited him. The market traders had been appealing to Syd to do something about Billy and we all knew a confrontation was brewing. (52)

This reference to a possible protection racket reflects the operations of urban criminal gangs historically although it is possible that Golding is here referring tangentially to the developments in the Docklands area of London. Thatcherite policies following the 'Big Bang' or de-regulation

of the stock exchange in 1986 resulted in multi-national corporations being allowed to invest in land in deprived areas and build their skyscrapers in Canary Wharf while local people, unemployed in a failing industrial economy were also unemployable in a computerised society. In Golding's novel *Billy Shepherd* is also symbolic of the multi-national corporations that deprive local people of their livelihood and communities through the installation of self-contained complexes of offices, shops and restaurants. The eighteenth century aristocratic owners of vast areas of London have been replaced in the twenty-first-century by big multi-national landlords through an Act of Parliament in 2004 which enables them to buy up property through compulsory purchase (Minton, 2009, p.22).⁵² While Golding positions Billy as a character to cause problems for Cat and other characters, he also challenges the idea of a cohesive society, reflecting for readers those who will always challenge its ideals.

While Johnny equates the eighteenth-century Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, with Billy Shepherd, despising their cruelty and greed, this also makes links with Tony Blair who might have been considered this in relation to property buying while there were so many homeless people sleeping on the streets in Britain. Golding juxtaposes this with Cat's reflections later as she goes out in the snow, 'the benign snow would become a menace to those with no roofs over their heads, freezing to death the vagrants sheltering in doorways' (235). It is both an eighteenth and twenty-first century comment on the homeless at a time when in the twenty-first century 240,000 houses are empty in London and the south east and 255,000 families own second homes in England.⁵³

Readers are made aware of the unscrupulousness of some members of the upper classes and the judiciary in both eighteenth and twenty-first centuries in London. Just as in Burton's text, Golding emphasises, through Cat's experiences with the law, the manner in which truth can be manipulated, how powerful people can condemn without proof and how cynical views of some elements of society can affect the discovery of truth. The episode of Cat's arrest and incarceration with Billy Shepherd speaks to events in the past and present when it has been found that the police do not investigate crimes carefully, where police and judicial corruption

⁵² See also, for example, Canary Wharf. The New Labour government continued the policy initiated by a Conservative government particularly in Stratford in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games.

⁵³ Source:<http://www.21stcenturychallenges.org/60-seconds/housing-in-england> [Accessed 27 May 2012]

result in miscarriages of justice.⁵⁴ Even Cat's release from imprisonment is the result of manipulation by the Earl of Ranworth and not owing to 'due process of the law'.

Cat is not afraid to accept challenges; in this she reflects the upwardly mobile young society which resulted from Thatcherism and New Labour, where talent and risk can bring money and an extravagant lifestyle. But she also demonstrates for her readers honesty, friendship and the need to be prepared to rise to challenges; Cat's desire to be a writer reflects this.

3.12 Conclusion

A key component of this case study is an examination of the importance given to women's roles in society, including as leaders. These changes go some way towards explaining the recent renaissance of historical fiction. They also identify a facet that Stephens overlooked in predicting its demise. Historical fiction does not simply hold up a mirror to the present, though that function is valuable and constitutes one enduring aspect of the genre. Stephens assumed historical fiction was outmoded because ideas of the self as constructed and/or self-fashioned that came to prominence in the last decades of the twentieth century made the essentialist and humanist views of historical fiction, as it had until then been written, obsolete. In fact, as this case study shows, across the decades under consideration historical fiction has itself been repeatedly refashioned in response to changing ideas about the self as well as about what constitutes history and in this a humanist perspective has continued to be presented. The analyses show that the succession of Marxist, feminist and postmodern retellings covered thus far in themselves provide a kind of historical story of the period.

In the case of the eighteenth century setting, as well as offering insights into changing ideas about self-identity, this cross section of texts also delineates social and political changes to the roles of women, education, and the abuse of power, particularly by politicians. What better setting could there be for stories about the importance of civil rights for all and the value of freedom and liberty?

⁵⁴ In 2005 Prime Minister Tony Blair issued an apology to the families of the eleven people imprisoned for the IRA bombings in [Guildford](#) and [Woolwich](#) after retrials found that Surrey police had tampered with confessions and that the Office of the Public Prosecutor had withheld evidence supporting them. Former Judge Constance Briscoe was found guilty of lying to the police in the Huhne speeding points scandal and sentenced to a period in prison: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article> 1 May 2014

It is not just through the content that these points are made. The manner in which narratives are written is also part of change. Burton offers a straightforward chronological telling, focalised mainly through the female protagonist but also engaging readers with other aspects of inequality associated with class and wealth. Garfield's use of a protagonist-narrator requires the reader to work harder to understand the psychological underpinning of the narrative. Finally Golding creates a humorous pastiche of eighteenth-century life through employing a range of postmodern narrative devices. At the same time Golding's narrative emphasises a humanist ideology through the actions and, particularly, through the reflections of the protagonist-narrator. Together these texts show both change and continuity in what the eighteenth century signifies to writers over the period and how writers encourage readers to think about the relation between past and present. They also challenge readers through a humanist ideological perspective to consider the implications for themselves, their lives and their society through the various themes explored.

Chapter 4. Case Study of an Event: the First World War

The war was a phase of life in which women's experience did differ vastly from men's and I make no puerile claim to equality of suffering and service when I maintain that any picture of the war years is incomplete which omits those aspects that mainly concerned women ... The woman is still silent who, by presenting the war in its true perspective in her own life, will illuminate its meaning afresh for its own generation.

(Vera Brittain, *A Woman's Notebook*, 24th January 1931, Bostridge, Introduction to *Testament of Youth*, 2004, p.xv)

The article by Vera Brittain from which the above is an extract foreshadowed her *Testament of Youth* (1933). Published in *The Nation and Athenaeum*, a weekly newspaper with a liberal-to-left-wing viewpoint, it calls attention to the manner in which the role of women during the First World War was overlooked by official history books and the populace in general. Her call for women to speak of their wartime experiences is part of the process of enjoining society to recognise not just women's contributions in their roles near the fighting, but also the many responsibilities women undertook on the home front and the sacrifices they made which for long had gone unrecognised. Brittain calls for retrospective acknowledgement at a time when the clouds of another war overshadowed the 1930s, something of which she would have been aware from her speaker engagements across Europe for the League of Nations. The date of Brittain's autobiography is significant since between 1934 and 1960 no historical novels for children and young people set in the First World War were identified, presumably because most of this was a period when the Second World War was the focus of attention in war writing for the young.

This case study focuses on the manner in which women's involvement in the First World War has been represented in a number of historical novels for readers ranging from approximately nine years to young adults, some of which are crossover texts. (Reader ages are based on publishers' recommendations, linguistic elements, illustrations and paratextual features such as covers, back cover synopses or 'blurbs', prefaces and material on web sites). As this chapter will show, these historical novels set in the First World War deliberately draw attention to the roles

women undertook in that war as part of the belated recognition of the extent to which female experiences had largely been written out of historical accounts. As has been true of all the works discussed in this thesis, an essential focus for the study is to identify whether novels presenting women's role during the First World War demonstrate a humanist ideology, particularly from the 1980s onwards. Doing so tests Stephens's assumptions, as expressed in *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction*, that the impact of postmodernism on literature, with its focus on decentring the author and depicting humans as constructed through language rather than the origins of meaning, was rendering humanism obsolete (Stephens, 1992, p.203). Although more recent novels employ postmodern narrative devices that break the illusion of the coherent, controlling subject, because they also accord value and meaning to women's actions and their struggle for equal rights and status with men, all the examples that make up this case study are underpinned by and convey a humanist agenda.

Focussing on women's involvement in the First World War provides a valuable opportunity to see how historical fiction has reflected and shaped the changing position of women over the last century. The manner in which stories of women and girls are represented in children's historical fiction is indicative of the changes which have taken place both in women's history and in attitudes to childhood. The focus of this chapter differs from the previous case studies in that it considers one sex and, for reasons that will be explained, looks at novels published over a shorter period of time. Part of its work is to evaluate the way women's history of the First World War has been recovered for a juvenile audience and the relationship of that enterprise with maintaining a humanist perspective. Fiction about the First World War is a useful starting point for encouraging young readers to engage with issues around women's rights and female experience. The focus texts cover the years that saw the call for women's suffrage, the efforts of women's trade unions for better wages for women workers, and the many roles at home and in the workplace that women undertook during the war. These activities form the basis for narratives which help young readers understand and value the struggles women have had for equality.

I want to begin by looking at two extracts. The first is from near the beginning of Penelope Farmer's *August the Fourth* (1975), which is narrated by Meg, a member of a middle-class family

and younger sister of Robert, a young man who is fighting in France. The passage describes the tumultuous thoughts in Meg's mind when a telegram is delivered to her home.

There had been a telegram to Celia's house a long time ago now, not so long after the war started. Her brother Geoffrey had been killed then, just a week after he went to the front. But our brother Robert had been fighting for more than two years and had only been wounded, twice, but not seriously. I had begun to think perhaps he would be lucky, perhaps he had a charmed life. Except that at the back of my mind I knew it could happen, he could die at any time. Maybe this telegram was just to say he had been wounded again. But somehow I didn't think so, I daren't think so, and I was right not to, as it turned out ... The war's been going on for two and a half years nearly and it seems as if it will go on for ever. Sometimes I wonder if it can be worth so many people killed, but I suppose it must be or they wouldn't go on fighting it.

(Farmer, 1975, p.5)

The naïve voice of the narrator gives expression to the anxiety about loved ones at the front which those at home, many of them girls and women, must have experienced. At the same time, it also acknowledges that as the war went on many of those at home were beginning to question its legitimacy and value indicating a humanist perspective. The second and third extracts are from James Riordan's *War Song* (2001), which presents the war through the eyes of working-class girls. In contrast to Farmer's text, which focuses on the cost of the war and the difficulties for women at home, Riordan acknowledges the freedom that war brought some women. However *War Song* too graphically depicts the brutal effects of war on others, reinforcing what Esther MacCallum-Stewart terms the 'parable' of war based on 'cultural shifts rather than on historical perspectives' (2007, p.176).

War Song follows twin girls Dorothy and Florence (Doss and Floss) who, on leaving elementary school, eventually take on different roles in the war - one working in munitions, the other as a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse who travels to care for soldiers in the theatre of war. The text carefully balances positive changes for women, including for girls from lower-class backgrounds, with passages that dwell on the impact of mass loss of life across most sections of society. For example, at one point the narrator tells readers about Doss, the munitions worker:

Another sport Doss enjoyed was cycling. With her first month's wages, she rescued Jack's bike and Mum's wedding ring from the pawnshop. And of a Sunday, when she wasn't running the [women's] football team, she'd cycle off

with her girlfriends and their brothers for a day-long outing. ... Doss and her mates would cycle to the New Forest, paddle in streams, have a picnic, sing and play, and finish off with a shandy in a pub.

To many girls like Doss, war had changed their world beyond recognition, they were seeing their actual or future mates swept away by that ever-growing tidal wave of war. How could you believe in religion when men were being carved up and murdered in their millions by Christian nations? (62)

These passages establish Doss's working-class background through her activities and use of non-standard linguistic features as in 'And of a Sunday ...'. The didactic nature of the passage also informs readers of the implications of war for women on the home front: many worked long hours and frantically filled their free moments to prevent themselves from seeing a bleak future without brothers, lovers, husbands and/or fathers. Published in 2001, so nearly a decade after Stephens had predicted the demise of humanism, in attempting to capture how the loss of faith in religion and governments that many experienced during the First World War brought humanist values to the fore, *War Song* also provokes a humanist response in contemporary readers. It may condemn the war as meaningless, but this is not a nihilistic text: the sacrifices of soldiers and those they love are seen as heroic even if the cause is not.

A parallel storyline about Doss's twin, Flossie, provides some insight into what war meant for women nursing at the front. After German planes drop bombs on the hospital, Flossie sees the results next morning:

Where the nurses' tents had stood was a single deep hole full of nothing but red earth, worms, and a black puddle.

Where had the four bodies gone? Down the throat of Thor the god of war. All the nurses' scant belongings had blown away. The stores were flattened: the wooden walls had fallen in, the contents had tumbled out. All over the ground lay a jumble of cotton wool, gauze, swabs, and rolls of bandages ... when [the Commandant] returned she was dragging what looked like a sack of knobbly potatoes – bits and stumps she'd found in trees and flower beds over a hundred yards away. (115)

The text does not dwell on the deaths of the four nurses, but neither does it turn away from making sure readers understand something of what bombs do to human bodies. The scene is masterfully oblique; readers are left to infer the meaning of the sack and its contents though they are in no doubt about what the Commandant has been gathering. Together the passages

from Farmer's and Riordan's books give some sense of how, on the one hand, narratives about the First World War (and war more broadly) have evolved over time in response to changing attitudes to both childhood and war and what constitutes a war story (and how it should be told) while retaining humanist values on the other.

4.1 Women and war

The First World War was the first war in which large numbers of British women were actively involved. As a rule they were not fighting on the front line, although there are some exceptions.¹ However, the war could not have continued without women taking on the jobs men vacated after enlisting or, from 1916, being conscripted. These jobs ranged from working in armament and munitions factories or other engineering manufacture, through jobs in transport and in agriculture to doctoring and nursing the wounded on both the war and home fronts. All such jobs feature in historical fiction set in the period.² By the end of the war the number of working women had increased by almost fifty percent, with nearly 800,000 females entering industry between 1914 and 1918 (Rowbotham 1977, p.110). The work that they did was considered so important that a Women's War Work Sub Committee was established at the Imperial War Museum in 1917 to collate and document material pertaining to women's involvement (Marwick, 1977, p.7).

¹ Dorothy Lawrence, a journalist, passed herself off as a man and joined the B.E.F Tunnelling Company but after ten days gave herself in (www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk; writingwomenshistory.blogspot.co.uk; 28 July 2012; (Accessed 12 May 2014). Flora Sandes fought with the Serbian army and was a sergeant-major by 1916 (Smith, 2004, p.6; Tylee, 1990, p.32-33).

² The government's initial reaction to women doctor volunteers for work at the war front was to turn them away. Dr Inglis, an already well-established pioneer in medical practice, was instrumental in forming the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service Committee and sent a group to France and went with her own group of women doctors and nurses to Serbia and Russia. Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland set up her own Red Cross Hospital south west of Dunkirk with her own staff by raising funds in England.



Figure 4.1. Montage of working women (sources: www.visualnews.com/2013/working-women-in-first-world-war; http://avaxnews.net/fact/WWI_The_Home_Front.html)

Even though there were many female pacifists who, like women's suffrage campaigner Sylvia Pankhurst, were convinced that any involvement in supporting the war was wrong, there were others who ardently supported the war effort and urged all women to do the same (Davis, 1999).³ These included other militant suffrage campaigners led by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. Women, whether mothers, wives, daughters or sweethearts often featured in propaganda encouraging men to enlist as depicted in war posters (Figure.4.2) (Gilbert, 1987).

³ See Jo Vellacott's 'Feminist Consciousness and the First World War' in *History Workshop Journal* No 23 (Spring 1987); Jill Liddington's, *The Long Road to Greenham: Feminism and anti-militarism in Britain since 1820* (1989) and Johanna Alberti's, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in war and peace 1914 - 1928* (1989), for accounts of the pre-war feminists who supported negotiated peace.



Figure 4.2 Examples of Recruiting Posters produced by the Parliamentary Recruiting Office.

Additionally, there were women who felt that having encouraged brothers, husbands and friends to fight they too needed to make some sacrifice. Such feelings were frequently transformed to a sense of unease or guilt as the death tolls from the front were published. Women's 'sacrifice' could be made through their own involvement in the war in a number of capacities. It must be remembered, however, that war work was seen as a welcome liberation from domestic duties and the constraints of pre-war life for some women. The conflicted nature of women's attitudes to the war can be seen in the reflections of the feminist and pacifist, Helen Mana Lucy Swanwick, who noted in 1915 that 'when women did seem to be supporting the war effort, this was only due to their sense of familial loyalty. To do otherwise might be seen as an insult to their menfolk' (Bourke, 2011, n.p). While it must be recognised that many women, both single and married, had always worked, including on the surface of coal mines, in cotton mills, in small businesses, and on the land as well as in volunteer capacities, the First World War saw unprecedented numbers of women from most backgrounds taking on employment. Often doing so went against the traditional expectations of middle- and upper-class women and widely held views about their abilities, including that women lacked 'the mental capacity, the tenacity, the equability of temper, and the physical resources to undertake the types of work which required leadership qualities, skill, or brute force' (Wilson, 1986, p.714). The years of the First World War saw this view challenged as women began to do long hours of arduous work. A letter of 1915 sets out the nature of the demands being made on some women:

I do lead an extremely strenuous life these days. I am doing a 48 hour week in a large munitions works near here to which I bicycle every morning ... I have

charge of all the office cleaners – all womens [sic] cloakrooms, lavatories etc – General supervision (with v. competent underlings fortunately) of the Works and Staff kitchens and dining rooms with a little assistance to the women’s employment superintendent thrown in! It is very interesting and varied, but my what [sic] a change from the lady of leisure life that I have been leading! (Mabel Scott cited in Wilson, 1986, p.714)⁴

Such work challenged patriarchal attitudes and legislation that had made women, as daughters and wives, dependent on them. It also led some women to question their primary roles as wives and mothers; child-bearing, raising families and establishing secure and happy homes were seen, by some women, as insufficient in wartime. Even though during the war the suffrage movement was suspended, women’s war work ultimately lent credence to women’s claims for more rights and recognition (Marwick, 2000, p.47).

4.2 Reclaiming women’s history of war work

As in the case of adult publishing, historical fiction for the young about the First World War which focuses on the roles and experiences of women provides an important means by which this vital part of women’s history has been recovered and re-presented for children and young people since the 1970s (Rowbotham, 1973, 1977). As has been established at various points in this thesis, the use of a historical setting is only partially about conveying information about the past, however, and in these novels as in those that feature in other case studies, writers have used a historical backdrop to explore concerns about the time of writing (Myers, 1989; Stephens, 1992; Hunt, 1995). In the 1970s a particular concern in academia and culture more generally was bringing to light writing by women that had been forgotten by the 1930s. Some powerful examples of women’s writing were produced in response to the First World War, but these were effaced by the thousands of narratives featuring political, strategic and economic aspects of the war as experienced and recorded by men (see for example, Hart, 1930 and Taylor, 1963). There was ‘still a lack of reference to women in standard texts’ (Hannam, 2008, n.p.). Those who produced influential studies of women’s roles during the First World War include Arthur Marwick (1965) whose *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* devotes a whole chapter to the role of women in the war, while his *Women at War 1914–1918*

⁴ Mabel Scott was the daughter-in-law of C.P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*. The excerpt is from a letter sent to Barbara Hammond, 29th November 1915

(1977) was among the first dedicated studies of women's contributions to the war effort.⁵ Such histories repositioned women in the history of the First World War; they were followed by a spate of books published from the 1970s onwards which reflect a wider understanding of culture during the war (Marwick, 1977; Winter, 1985; Woollacott, 1994; De Groot, 1996; Robb, 2002; Bilton, 2003; Gregory, 2008). Together they document and examine how the First World War involved women, particularly on the home front, reminding readers of the important role women played, which needs to be recognised, and which is reflected in historical narratives for children and young adults. The influence of uncovering information about what women did and recovering their voices in the form of writing is evident in juvenile historical fiction about the war.

4.3 Reclaiming women's war writing

Recovering details of context and experiences from factual sources has been complemented and extended by the identification and republication of writing by women across a range of genres. For instance, for adult readers Lyn Macdonald's *The Roses of No Man's Land* (1980, 1993) consists of a collection of diary extracts and letters, particularly from women who nursed behind the warfront. Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone* (1929, 2008) was first published when 'the uncensored story of the war was beginning to emerge' (Hutchinson, 2008, p.xiv).⁶ Novels were also reclaimed and republished.⁷ Catherine Reilly re-introduced a collection of poetry written by women during and reflecting the war. *Scars upon my Heart* was published in 1981 by Virago Press, adding to the body of re-claimed women's poetry about the First World War, while *The Virago Book of Women of the Great War* (Marlow, 1998) records women's memories of working at the battlefront. The work of 'historians of women' as part of second wave feminism came with a message to readers about women's power and independence in the past which the

⁵ Sir John Hammerton devoted a chapter to women's work in the services, trades and professions in his *Popular History of the Great War* (1934) where Hammerton states 'women proved convincingly their fitness for an equal share with men in public life' (Todman, 2005, p.182).

⁶ It presents her impressions of the war working for the French army as a nurse behind the war front.

⁷ Helen Zenna Smith (pseudonym of Evadne Price) wrote a feminist response to Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929): *Not so Quiet ... Stepdaughters of War* (1930) was republished in 1988 and draws on the war diaries of Winifred Constance Young, an ambulance driver at the warfront. Barbara Hardy, in the introduction to the 1988 publication of *Not So Quiet ...*, recalls reading it as a child and later in adolescence, saying that in later reading she 'felt the currents of feminism under the great breaking waves of its pacifism' (1988, p.7). Irene Rathbone's semi-autobiographical novel *We That Were Young* (1932, 1989) is based on her own and a friend's war diaries.

years between had failed to sustain (Scott, 1987, p.22). Other significant material 'recovered' was Sylvia Pankhurst's account of the social effects of the war, especially on poor families and women in London's East End and the endeavours of herself and others to support them; *The Home Front* was first published in 1932 and republished in 1987. Vera Brittain's (1893-1970) autobiography, *Testament of Youth* (1933), which records her life at home and working as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurse in England, Malta and France and gives some background information on life for mainly middle-class families during the war, was re-published by Virago Press in 1978, sixty years after the war's end. A television series based on the autobiography was produced by the BBC in 1979, while a new edition of *Testament of Youth* was published in 2004.⁸ By the 1970s these first-hand and fictional accounts served as models and source materials for children's writers who were writing at a time when issues of gender were prominent and publishers were seeking work that featured active girl characters. The publication of these historical novels set in the First World War is another example of John Stephens' miscalculation that historical fiction would decline from the 1980s, in this case a whole area of historical fiction was stimulated by both the women's movement and the 75th anniversary of the First World War. For reasons already outlined and as evidenced by the texts that make up this case study, their setting in the time of the First World War imbues these books with at least a latent humanism.

4.4. Stories set in the First World War

Interest in women's rights and equal opportunities gave rise to narratives of the First World War that featured self-confident and determined girls and women, often associated in these stories with the suffrage movement of the time. In line with a general tendency to support the goals of the women's movement, these narratives seek to convey a sense of what it was like to live through such a turbulent era but do so in the light of contemporary concerns about the position

⁸ A film based on the book *Testament of Youth* released in 2014, marks the centenary of the outbreak of war.

of women in society.⁹ It accords with Trites' observation that Feminism is the social movement which has most affected children's literature.¹⁰

A large proportion of these novels with female protagonists and written for children centre on events on the home front. These include narratives where the war provides a backdrop to girls' journeys to adulthood and the effects on families of father's dying, as in James Riordan's *War Song* (2001); of brothers fighting and dying in such novels as Penelope Farmer's *August the Fourth* (1975) and Alison Leonard's *An Inch of Candle* (1980), or through stories concerned with the destruction of homes and factories from German bombing as in Mary Treadgold's *Journey from the Heron* (1981). With their focus on characters' struggles to survive and their triumphs over obstacles and adversity, all of these stories offer a humanist ideological perspective concerning girls and war. Those for young adults, such as Ruth Elwyn Harris's *The Dividing Sea* (1989) or Marjorie Darke's *A Rose from Blighty* (1990), divide their attention between the home and war fronts, as told through the perspectives of young women. In line with the conventions of historical fiction at the time, they attempt to create realistic settings which convey 'atmosphere, attitude and values' (Stephens, 1992, p.209).

4.5 Ideological concerns

The ways in which these narratives depict change through structure, characterisation or writers' ideologies are integral to this thesis overall and therefore of primary consideration. Reflecting the close association between children's literature and the education system, writers of historical stories for children usually research their subject well (Hunt, 1995; Cullingford, 1998; MacCallum-Stewart, 2007). In the case of stories relating to women in the First World War, evidence tends to rely on established histories of the war in combination with whatever primary sources were available at the time of writing, including in the media. One text that has clearly informed most writers of books about girls' and women's experiences of the First World War is Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* (1933). Its ubiquity as a primary source makes it a useful litmus test by which to judge the accuracy of the fictional accounts, so throughout this chapter comparisons are made to Brittain's work.

⁹ For more information see Trites (1997, p. ix.)

¹⁰ This does not mean that other stories about the First World War were not published and successful (see Table 4.1 below); Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse* (1982) was made into a film and a stage production and has achieved great acclaim.

As the material about women's roles that is available to children's writers has expanded over recent decades, the number of perspectives and kinds of stories has also increased.

Nevertheless, there is a surprising similarity in the approach to telling stories about girls and women in the First World War. In the same way, there is a broadly similar set of attitudes informing how far war itself is presented, with an anti-war message being most strongly marked. A danger in this 'presentist' approach is that young readers may struggle to recognise that, particularly at the beginning of the war, such attitudes were not as common as they appear to be from the historical novels they are reading. Arguably this danger is exacerbated by humanist discourses that ennoble those who served their country in the theatre of war.

4.6 Pacifism

One element of the novels that shows well the shared concerns of past and present is a pronounced anti-war attitude and rhetoric which runs through most of the novels. In part this reflects what Dan Todman identifies as a 'unified mythology' of the First World War in British culture which itself echoes 'the war literature of disillusionment that began a decade after the Armistice with the publication in 1928 of Edmund Blunden's autobiography *Undertones of War*' (Bostock, 2004, p.xiv). Todman's 'unified mythology' depicts the war 'in terms of mud, horror, stupidity and futility' as typified by the satirical play, musical show and later film *Oh What a Lovely War* (1963) (Todman, 2005, p.178).¹¹ Such a revisionist view reflects the feelings of the 1960s, and although there was a strong anti-war feeling among, in particular, socialist and religious pacifists before and during the war, in the years since the Second World War this anti-war rhetoric has steadily become more openly expressed as in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament marches from 1957, Anti-Vietnam War demonstrations (1968), the establishment of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (1981), marches against the Gulf War (1991), and demonstrations against the wars in Afghanistan (from 2001) and Iraq (2003). The more overt opposition to war and aspects of specific wars are reflected across the novels set in the First World War. Esther MacCallum-Stewart suggests that writers of historical novels challenge any positive views of war by depicting events which are morally instructive (MacCallum-Stewart, 2007, p.176). Often such views are demonstrated through a change of heart or belief in

¹¹ Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, incorporating the words of Wilfred Owen, first performed in 1962 presents a contrasting anti-war stance or 'spiritual affirmation of pacifism' (Tylee, 1990, p.2)

characters as the war's effect on those fighting and at the home front is revealed. It is also demonstrated through the reflections of those who have lost family members.

Acknowledgement is also made to socialist and pacifist principles which existed in the years prior to the war and were demonstrated through various acts during the war, some of them portrayed in the novels.

4.7 Sample Texts

As can be seen in Table 4.1 below, twenty novels about the First World War met the criteria for inclusion in this study, these being: stories by British writers or first published in the UK between 1960 and 2014; stories either set during the First World War or containing a section set during the First World War; stories which focus on the lives of girls or women during that period; and stories which explore the lives of girls or women either on the home front or near the war front. The twenty novels were written by thirteen female and three male writers. Of these, four (shaded) are presented by an external narrator alternately focalising through male and female protagonists, usually brother and sister, sometimes twins, with the brother's wartime experiences from the front also conveyed in a manner that can be compared or contrasted with those of the sister. Such a strategy, which privileges neither male nor female character, positions females as equal with males at the same time appealing to young readers of both sexes.

Writer/Illust.	Date	Title/publisher	Location	Theme/s	Characters	Point of view	Rdrs
1960							
Barbara Sleigh (1906-1982)	1967	<i>Jessamy</i> London: Collins	London	Time-slip from present of 1960s – WWI as background; loneliness; selfhood	Female (9-11) –middle class	External	9-13
Penelope Farmer (b.1939)	1969 1992 2002	<i>Charlotte Sometimes</i> Windus & Chatto Bodley Head London: Random House	Outer London	Anti-war; loss of loved ones; finding oneself; importance of education for girls	Female (11); middle class	External	9-13
K.M. Peyton (b.1929)	1969	<i>The Edge of the Clouds</i> Illust. Victor Ambrus Oxford University Press	Southern England	Equality; gender	Female (18) ; middle class	External	YA
K. M. Peyton (b.1929)	1969	<i>Flambards in Summer</i> Illust. Victor Ambrus Oxford University Press	Essex	Equality: class and gender - democracy	Female(21); Christine; middle class	External	YA
1970							

Penelope Farmer	1975	<i>August the Fourth</i> Illust. Jael Jordan Berkeley, California: Parnassus Press	Wiltshire	Anti-war	Female; middle class	First person narration;	9-13
Marjorie Darke (1929-2009)	1978	<i>A Long way to Go</i> Harmondsworth: Penguin Books	London	Equality: race, class, gender; conscientious objectors Anti-war	Focalised through Female (17/18) and twin brother – Luke; lower class	External narration;	YA
1980							
Alison Leonard (b.1944)	1980 1982	<i>An Inch of Candle</i> Angus & Robertson Ltd William Collins & Co Ltd	Country village – north England	Anti-war; conscientious objectors Religious conflict	Female; middle class (16)	External narration;	11- 13
Mary Treadgold (1910-2005)	1981	<i>Journey from the Heron</i> London: Jonathan Cape Ltd	London	anti-war Irish Home rule	female (12); lower class	External narration;	11- 13
Elsie McCutcheon (n/a)	1983 1984	<i>Summer of the Zeppelin</i> J.M. Dent and Sons; Harmondsworth: Puffin	Suffolk village	Anti-war Stress/trauma on women	female (12); lower class	External omniscient narration focalised mainly through girl	9-13
Ruth Elwin Harris (b.1935)	1989 2002	<i>The Dividing Sea</i> London: Julia MacRae Books London: Walker Books Ltd	Somerset ; France	3 rd in Quartet	Female(17); Male(18); middle class	External narration; Alternates female and male	YA
1990							
Marjorie Darke (1929-2009)	1990	<i>A Rose from Blighty</i> London: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd	France	Equality of class in nursing at front	Female; lower class Female; middle class	External narration	YA
Linda Newbery (b.1952)	1990 1992	<i>Some other War</i> Armada Books London: Barnowl books	Essex; France	Equality: class; gender Anti-war	Male Female; twins (18-); lower class	External narration; letters provide other viewpoints	YA
Linda Newbery	1991	<i>The Kind Ghosts</i> London: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd	France; London; Essex	Equality: class, gender Anti-war	Female; lower class	External omniscient	YA
Mary Rayner (b. 1933)	1992	<i>The Echoing Green</i> Ill. Michael Foreman London: Penguin	Country village	Anti-war Remembrance	female; Lower class – child's perspective of effect of war on those involved	External narration	9 – 13
2000							
James Riordan	2001	<i>War Song</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press	Portsmo uth; France	Theme: destruction caused by war to families. One sister munitions; other nursing. Father traumatised	2 females (twins) Lower class Letters from brother at front	External	11+
Theresa Breslin	2002	<i>Remembrance</i> London: Doubleday, Random House London: Corgi; Random House	Scotland	Effects of war on both those at home (village), and at front; challenges to women of all social groups; hardship,	Charlotte – Middle (nursing) Maggie – Lower (munitions	External; Similarities with Newbery's <i>Some other War</i> but	YA

				courage.	then nursing)	based in Scotland. 1915- end of war	
Marcus Sedgwick	2005	<i>The Foreshadowing</i> London: Orion Children's Books	Brighton and western war front	Anti-war; fantasy elements	Female- Sasha Fox – middle 16+	1st person; undated diary form	13+
Dennis Hamley (b.1935)	2006	<i>Ellen's People</i> London: Walker Books	Southern England; France	Follows all war; issues of class; nationality	Female – Lower; Ellen 16+	1st person ; present continuous narration	11+
2010							
Anne Perry (b.1938)	2010	<i>Rose of No Man's Land</i> Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke	HTF England/ Belgium	Rose time-slips to WWI at time of Edith Cavell's arrest (Identified as suitable for YA dyslexic readers)	Female – no indication of age but teenager	Rosie	YA
Pat Barker (b.1943)	2012	<i>Toby's Room</i> London: Penguin Books	Home counties; London	Relationships; women and war	Female; Middle class artist/pacifist Toby	External; mainly focalised through sister; but also Toby; Paul	YA

Table 4.1: Historical fiction texts based on the First World War with female protagonists

4.8 Male protagonists for comparison

The total group of works identified contains a number of historical novels about the First World War with male protagonists which can be seen in Table 4.2. Although not part of this case study, they make a useful comparison when considering the body of historical novels for children pertaining to the First World War. There are fifteen novels, four novellas and four picturebooks written by twelve male and three female writers. The picturebooks are aimed at younger readers and despite their picturebook format, they vary in length and, on the basis of style and paratextual information, are aimed at readers from five years upwards rather than very young children.¹² Within the United Kingdom the First World War has been a popular theme in the National Curriculum since its inception. History at Key Stage 1 (5 -7 years) recommends exploring 'events that are commemorated' and teachers often arrange visits to war memorials and involve children in making poppies. The majority of the novels with male protagonists are aimed at a slightly younger audience than many of the novels with female protagonists; recent publications are four short stories by Terry Deary for younger readers marketed towards the

¹² No stories for boys are identified in the 1960s, although W. E. Johns *Biggles* stories set in the First World War initially for adult readers were bowdlerised and re-published for young readers at this time.

centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.¹³ There are three which might be identified as for young adult readers; the majority are for readers of approximately nine to thirteen years. While this in itself is of interest and deserves further consideration, it is not part of the focus for this case study.

Writer	Date	Title/Illustrator and Publisher	Location	Themes	Characters	Point of View	Reader
1960							
1970							
Bruce Carter (Richard Hough) (1922-1999)	1971 1972	<i>B Flight</i> Hamish Hamilton; Harmondsworth: Puffin	Lake District; London; France	1916:experiences of flying, fears, fun, death	Male – Will (16) Lower class	External;	9-13
Frederick Grice (1910 – 1983)	1971	<i>The Black Hand Gang</i> Ill. Doreen Roberts London: Oxford University Press	Co. Durham	1918; Home front, effects on school- boy; father POW	Male- Lower class	External	9+
Ronald Welch (Ronald Fenton) (1909-1982)	1972	<i>Tank Commander</i> London: Oxford University Press	Western front	Western Front development of tank warfare	male - upper class	External;	11+
Alexander Fullerton (1924-2008)	1976	<i>The Bleeding of the Guns</i> London: M. Joseph	North Sea	At sea; Battle of Jutland	male - upper	External	11+
Alexander Fullerton	1978	<i>Patrol to the Golden Horn</i> London: M. Joseph	Mediterranean	Commander of a submarine; Dardanelles	Male - upper	External	YA
1980							
Michael Morpurgo (b.1943)	1982 2007	<i>War Horse</i> London: Kaye & Ward Ltd Re-issued London: Egmont UK Ltd	Dorset; Western front	Anti-war; War and treatment of horses	Horse	1st person (horse)	9+
1990							
Alick Rowe (1939-2009)	1990	<i>Voices of Danger</i> London: Methuen	England; Somme	Ill treatment and war destruction linked music	Male-middle class	External	9-13
Michael Foreman (b.1938)	1993 1997	<i>War Game</i> PICTUREBOOK New York: Arcade London: Pavilion	Flanders	futility of war; English and German soldiers fraternising Christmas 1914	Male; -lower class		9-13
Michael Morpurgo	1997 2011	<i>Farm Boy</i> London: Pavilion London: Harper Collins	Devon; Flanders	Sequel to <i>War Horse</i> ; frame; Grandfather tells story of Albert's enlisting to find Joey	male – lower class	1st person	9-13
2000							
James Riordan (1936-2102)	2001 2002	<i>When the Guns Fall Silent</i> Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press	Portsmouth and Western Front	Theme: anti-war; socialist; Somme	2 males Lower class	External	11+
Iain Lawrence (b.1955)	2001 2002	<i>Lord of the Nutcracker Men</i> USA: Random House London: Collins	Country	Effect of war on children; art reflects feelings; trauma	male – middle class	External	8+

¹³ Terry Deary, well known for his subversive Horrible History non-fiction series, has also written a number of historical fiction stories.

Marcus Sedgwick (b.1968)	2003	<i>Cowards</i> London: Hodder Children's Books	England; Western Front	Narrative? More factual. Treatment of COs	Male –class ?	External	9+
Michael Morpurgo (b. 1943)	2003	<i>Private Peaceful</i> London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd	England ; Western Front	Anti-war; Trauma	Two brothers	External	11-16
Michael Morpurgo; Ill. Michael Foreman	2004	<i>The Best Christmas Present in the World</i> PICTUREBOOK London: Egmont	Dorset; Western front	Anti-war; conveyed through letters; memory	Male-middle(?) Letters from soldier during war	1st person	7+
Marcia Williams	2007	<i>Archie's War</i> PICTUREBOOK London: Walker Books	London East End,	Archie's narrative of the war in scrapbook form including letters from front.	Male-Archie 10 at start of war	1 st person	7+
2010							
Paul Dowswell	2012	<i>Eleven Eleven;</i> Pub. Bloomsbury	France/ Belgium	Challenges attitudes to war 'brutal, violent and staggeringly effective' Sch Lib.	Male-American flier; German soldier; British soldier	External	11+
Lynn Huggins-Cooper	2010	<i>One Boy's War</i> PICTUREBOOK Illust. Ian Benfold Haywood Frances Lincoln	Durham; war front	Anti-war 'journal' narrative with letters	Male – 15 - lower	1st person; illustrations external	7+
Sam(antha) Angus	2012	<i>Soldier Dog;</i> Pub. Macmillan	France/ Belgium	Brutality of war; messenger dog crossing no-man's-land.	Stanley Ryder (15) and his dog	External	11+
Terry Deary	2013	<i>World War I Tales: The Last Flight</i> A & C Black (Bloomsbury) & E PUB	France/Belgium 1917	Story of Alfred Adams photographer shot down by Red Baron – ends up as POW	Diary form	1 st person	7-11
Terry Deary	2013	<i>The War Game</i> London: A & C Black (Bloomsbury) & E PUB	Western front 1914	Albert - trenches, Christmas Day	Albert	3 rd person	7+
Terry Deary	2013	<i>The Bomber Balloon</i> London: A & C Black (Bloomsbury) & E PUB	Essex; 1916	Presents both sides' views of war	Millie- Lower		7+
Terry Deary	2013	<i>The Pigeon Spy</i> London: A & C Black (Bloomsbury) & E PUB	Western Front 1918	Americans cut off; pigeon messenger	Joe- American farm boy – lower class	external	7+

Table 4.2 Historical fiction stories set in the First World War with male protagonists

To consider how texts featuring females in narratives set during the First World War have changed over time, an approach similar to the one adopted for the case study of a character (Chapter 2) has been utilised, enabling consideration of socio-cultural aspects that influenced the writers at the time of writing and allowing 'change' to be investigated in addition to identifying the presence of a humanist perspective. The proliferation of these novels in itself indicates that Stephens was mistaken in his assessment of how far postmodernism would impact on historical fiction. Moreover, as the most recent examples in this study show, writers

of fiction about the First World War have found ways to make postmodernism compatible with humanism.

Novels were chosen for analysis from each decade in which stories of the role of women in the First World War are represented. A mixture of female and male writers is included as representative of the eleven female and three male writers. From the original eighteen novels seven were selected for analysis starting with K. M. Peyton's *Flambards in Summer* (1969). The third book in what began as a trilogy for teenagers (a fourth book was added much later) it follows on from *At the Edge of the Clouds* (1969) which concludes at the outbreak of the First World War and sees the husband of the young protagonist, Christina, joining the Royal Flying Corps. *Flambards in Summer* explores how, in spite of the war, Christina's independence and inheritance is used in an equitable manner. Penelope Farmer's *Charlotte Sometimes* (1969) is a time-slip novel which offers a view of the First World War from the perspective of a child of the 1960s. Marjorie Darke's *A Long Way to Go* (1978) is an example of a novel that uses both male and female as central characters. Unusually, it also features a black protagonist enabling Darke to reflect concerns about race at the time of writing. Elsie McCutcheon's *Summer of the Zeppelin* (1983) is one of four First World War stories with female protagonists written during the 1980s. It was selected because of its rural setting. Linda Newbery's *Some Other War* (1990) and *The Kind Ghosts* (1991), considered together are representative of texts from the 1990s. Newbery uses both female and male characters with a focus on the role of nursing at the war front. Nursing became a notable focus of historical fiction set during the First World War from the end of the 1980s. Newbery's work also provides an opportunity to consider the roles of lower- and middle-class women. Marcus Sedgwick's, *The Foreshadowing* (2005) is representative of the penultimate decade of my period with its incorporation of a supernatural strand that goes beyond historical realism. Sedgwick is one of the three male writers of novels with female protagonists.

Writer/Illust.	Date	Title/publisher	Location	Theme/s	Characters	Point of view	Rdrs
1960							
Penelope Farmer (b.1939)	1969 1992 2002	<i>Charlotte Sometimes</i> Windus & Chatto Bodley Head London: Random House	Outer London	Anti-war; loss of loved ones; importance of education for girls	Female (11); middle	External	9-13
K. M. Peyton (b.1929)	1969	<i>Flambards in Summer</i>	Essex	Equality: class and gender - democracy	Female(21); Christine;	External	YA

		Illust. Victor Ambrus Oxford University Press			middle		
1970							
Marjorie Darke (1929-2009)	1978	<i>A Long way to Go</i> Harmondsworth: Penguin Books	London	Equality: race, class, gender Anti-war	Focalised through Female (17/18) and twin brother – Luke- lower class	External narration;	YA
1980							
Elsie McCutcheon (n/a)	1983 1984	<i>Summer of the Zeppelin</i> J.M. Dent and Sons; Harmondsworth: Puffin	Suffolk village	Anti-war Stress/trauma on women	female (12); lower class	External omniscient narration focalised mainly through girl	9-13
1990							
Linda Newbery (b.1952)	1990 1992	<i>Some other War</i> Armada Books London: Barnowl books	Essex; France	Equality: class; gender Anti-war	Male Female; twins (18-); lower class	External narration; letters provide other viewpoints	YA
Linda Newbery	1991	<i>The Kind Ghosts</i> London: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd	France; London; Essex	Equality: class, gender Anti-war	Female; lower class	External omniscient;	YA
2000							
Marcus Sedgwick	2005	<i>The Foreshadowing</i> London: Orion Children's Books	Brighton and western war front	Anti-war	Female- Sasha Fox – middle 16+	1st person; undated diary form	13+
2010							

Table 4.3 Texts chosen for analysis

This group of books enables discussion of representation of a wide range of female experience during the First World War including class, family, school, work, nursing and attitudes to women taking on men's roles. As will become clear in the discussion that follows, there are several notable themes across the sample: opposition to war; equality; and stress/ trauma. The focus for each novel discussed relates to one or two of these themes while also pointing to the continued allegiance to humanist values.

4.9 Independence and equality: K. M. Peyton's *Flambards in Summer* (1969)

The late 1960s was a time when a new Labour government's 'concern with the country's economic decline and its lack of international political significance' attempted unsuccessfully to join the European Economic Community as a means of being part of a strong international community (Sinfield, 1983, p.40). It was seen as a time of, and for, change following the Second World War and the upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s when youth had challenged and defied

authority through rebellion and a quest for self-expression. K. M. Peyton's *Flambards* series (1967-1981) evokes the manner in which change occurs following violent disruption in society.¹⁴ The novels are aimed at young adult readers, mainly female, and are based around 'a crumbling country house and crumbling aristocracy' (Rossof, 2011, n.p.). Like much 1960s juvenile fiction they are novels of development when characters on the edge of adulthood start to question social institutions (Trites, 2000, p.3). The third book focuses on the effect that war has on a middle-class family and, though set during the First World War, also makes strong links with the financial decline in country estates following the Second World War (Krips, 2000, p.3). It reflects a time when country estates were being broken up and old country houses demolished thus releasing land for housing development. The house and estate in the time of the First World War provide a background for events when a woman takes charge. The external narration is mainly focalised through the twenty-one year old orphan heiress, Christina, now a war-widow and pregnant. It charts her development to self-assured woman as she manages the difficulties of trying to run a farm with no men available to work for her and aware that the local farmers who she knows 'both despised and pitied her for presuming to do a man's job' (77). Ultimately she restores the badly run-down Flambards house and estate, though in an egalitarian manner. Christina's new found independence following her widowhood and her open attitude to others (including her eventual second husband Dick, who was once a stable boy on the estate) is in keeping with post-Second World War efforts to achieve a more equal society; efforts which culminated in civil rights and equal opportunities activism between the 1960s and 1980s. *Flambards in Summer* (1969) deals with Christina's attempts to do the same in the small world for which she is responsible. With its emphasis on individual striving and self-fashioning, K.M. Peyton's novel is grounded in a humanist ethos.

Christina's story has a dual function; on the one hand it charts the manner in which the post-Second World War period required many women to negotiate competing demands for them to be traditionally feminine and effective managers and on the other it reflects the rising determination of the women's movement from the 1960s to challenge the dominant male view of women. The series as a whole calls attention to the social changes that evolved in this period

¹⁴ The trilogy was broadcast as a television series in 1979

as the patriarchal order of the first and second novels gradually changes through the series and 'male dominion succumbs to female rule' yet based on finances (Ang in Watson, 2001, p.263).

The predominantly middle-class perspective of *Flambards in Summer* presents a very different view of war from that of later writers. Peyton's contemporary, Penelope Farmer, also writes about the way the First World War affected middle-class children and families.

4.10 Search for self: Penelope Farmer's *Charlotte Sometimes* (1969)

The present day of Penelope Farmer's narrative *Charlotte Sometimes* is 1958 (McCallum, 1999, p.81), a time when a nuclear war between the USSR and the west was a constant threat. In this phase of the Cold War the unpopular war in Vietnam was also the subject of civil protest. Penelope Farmer, by describing the effects of war both on a single family and on a group of individuals in a boarding school, captures the anti-war mood of the day and projects it back to a First World War setting. The 'presentist' approach is unproblematic because of Farmer's use of time-slip: juxtaposing the two periods is an integral part of the narrative. Charlotte's interaction with other characters while in 1918 allows the writer to convey information about homes, clothes, manners, food-rationing and other educational aspects of wartime as well as about the ways in which the war affected people through the death of brothers or fathers at the front. It also contains some interpreted reflections on what fighting at the front was like. While an anti-war message pervades the narrative implicitly and explicitly, for the girls in the boarding school during the last year of the First World War, the war impinges, initially, on their lives almost entirely through teachers' reminders and food rations. For example, Bunty tells Charlotte and Emily 'Miss Bite says it's doing your bit to eat things you don't like ... I don't see how it hurts Germans myself, eating nasty porridge' (22).

Potentially more problematic is the decision to set the story in a girls' boarding school in 1958, for this ignores changes taking place in education for many during the late 1950s and 1960s as 'arguments against the eleven plus by sociologists, psychologists and committed social egalitarians were becoming deafening' (Marwick, 1982, p.155). However it does give readers some insight into the effects on children whose families were broken up by war. Time-slip and exchange of characters within a boarding school offers an appropriate setting for creating a microcosm of events of the First World War on the home front and the uncertainty about self as

represented by the protagonist, Charlotte. As Margery Fisher (1969) suggests, this is in fact Charlotte's story and its principal focus is on her discovery of who she really is. Robyn McCallum's discussion of subjectivity in novels which explore the notion of selfhood, identifies characters who experience 'temporal cultural or psychological displacement ... out of their familiar surroundings' saying that they are experiencing 'some form of identity transformation or crisis' (McCallum, 1999, p.68/69). The boarding school separates Charlotte, an orphan, from home, grandfather and younger sister, providing an initial dislocation which is intensified through the time-slip. This emotionally unsettling experience is then exacerbated by the events of war. Farmer approaches a difficult subject for readers by facilitating their experience of aspects of life on the home front during the First World War and what separation means, since it is filtered through the present-day protagonist's reflections. Penelope Farmer's concern with time is demonstrated not only through the protagonist's journey back in time to 1918 but also stylistically; use is made of prolepsis and analepsis, large gaps and the reflections of the protagonist which contrast things in 1918 with those of her present time of 1958. These devices make this a narrative that is more about identity and girlhood than the war per se. A typical example is found in Chapter 7 when Charlotte, after a disturbed night from an air-raid alarm in the past and a reprimand from the headteacher in the present, asks Emily, when they meet again in the past, why she identified her as her sister, Clare. Emily's reply that it was expectation rather than visual looks sets Charlotte musing about the link between facial recognition and 'knowing':

And, she thought, uncomfortably, what would happen if people did not recognize you? Would you know who you were yourself? If tomorrow they started to call her Vanessa or Janet or Elizabeth, would she know how to be, how to feel like Charlotte? Were you some particular person only because people recognised you as that? (74/75)

The text deals more closely with the war's consequences for families when Charlotte and Emily are placed as temporary boarders with a middle-class family in the nearby town. This provides readers with a view of middle-class family life in 1918. The attitude to peace of Mr Chisel Brown, a traditional patriarchal father, is conveyed through a stereotypical pro-war comment: 'Damned peace-talks, damned conchies, hun-lovers. Should all be hanged, I say' (87). The authenticity of such comments can be seen by comparing them to Vera Brittain's experience of 'rampant',

'bloodthirsty armchair patriotism' (Brittain, 2004, p.144). The Chisel Brown's son has been killed in the war, which readers might initially accept as explaining and mitigating his behaviour. However, his sustained dismissive attitude to the girls, including his own daughter, is clearly condemned in the text. Farmer's critique of patriarchy is not confined to men, for his wife subscribes to his worldview and so her behaviour is little better. While the parents spend most of their time in a semi-dark room, an indication of the crippling effects of bereavement, it is their daughter who must run the household and care for the needs of the two girls, while the mother constantly criticises her daughter's household management. The clash between generations of females was something Vera Brittain recognised and documented.

The daughter embodies the limited opportunities available to unmarried middle-class women of that time. Her life revolves around being quietly responsive to the demands of her parents and the needs of the household on the one hand, and visiting and reading to the wounded in the local hospital on the other. Her grief for her brother eventually finds an outlet through supporting Charlotte and Emily, which also gives her an opportunity to talk of him and his justified fears of fighting and of the war.

A broader attack on war is provided through the figure of a teacher whose fiancé has been killed and who Charlotte recognises in the present of 1958. Now old but still wearing her engagement ring 'she looked bedraggled somehow, a little shrunk, her clothes not quite so tight on her as before. Certainly she was not jolly any more' (135). In subtle ways the impact of the war on Charlotte refract humanist values: Charlotte, not a religion or other extra-human authority, is the measure of change and the source of meaning. As with so many modern books about the First World War, the nature of the humanist narrative has changed significantly, however. The anti-war tenor of these observations contrasts powerfully with the way earlier wars celebrated the mythos of war as a place to display courage, loyalty, self-sacrifice and other valued aspects of human character.

Such episodes encourage readers to value the kinds of changes in their own experience of growing up female, changes anticipated in a speech given by the headmistress on the first Armistice Day. She predicts a future of which they will be part, stressing the importance of education in preparing the girls to take on significant roles in the country's future. Presenting

the scene enables Farmer to make comparison between past and present with the implication of a determination not to lose ground. It speaks to a topical concern about girls' tendency to conform to stereotypes. Gaby Weiner (1997), in a conference paper to the British Educational Research Association, highlights the problems with the secondary curriculum in the 1960s indicating that syllabuses and content were found to exclude the experiences of girls and women. She indicates that 'even where choice was available, girls tended to prefer the humanities, languages and social sciences' while boys were more likely to choose science, mathematics and technological subjects. Furthermore she indicates that 'students tended to be directed into conventionally male and female subjects and careers, and in the main, girls' careers were believed to be less important than boys' (Weiner, 1997, n.p.). In addressing this through the narrative, Farmer reminds girls of female oppression in the past and the need to protect and build on hard-earned rights.

While an anti-war message is clearly presented in Farmer's text, it is in the 1970s that historical novels with a First World War setting begin to focus on the role of women more precisely in relation to that war, in contrast to the novels discussed earlier which have a war setting which forms a background to the actions.¹⁵ This focus on women corresponds with the 1970s marking a period when 'the desire for social and cultural change represented in the political activism of the feminist movement and the civil rights movement found particular expression in children's literature' (Pearson with Hunt, 2011, p.26). It also resulted in a dramatic expansion in children's publishing. Children's novels depicted the social realism of working-class children and their families while historical stories about war now contained representations of violence that publishers would have considered unacceptable for readers in earlier times (Fisher, 2011, p.26). Reflecting these changes, Marjorie Darke presents a very different narrative from those of Peyton and Farmer through her focus on the lives of working-class people which enables her to raise controversial issues concerning war, pacifism and equality of race and gender.

¹⁵ See MacCallum-Stewart (2007) concerning the 'parable' of war represented in children's stories of the First World War from the 1970s.

4.11 Activism and race: Marjorie Darke's *A Long Way to Go* (1978)

In *A Long Way to Go* (1978)¹⁶ Marjorie Darke features the descendants of Midnight, the eighteenth-century black slave of an earlier novel, *The First of Midnight* (1977). In doing so she not only demonstrates the continuity and history of black people living in Britain but also points to the legacies of slavery and empire still evident during and after the First World War. Alongside continuing interest in feminist debates and activism at the time of writing found in earlier books, here we see inclusion also of plot lines and references to racism and equality. The attitudes represented in the novel echo concerns about these aspects of social life from the 1960s onwards, with efforts to achieve gender equality and the integration of black and Asian immigrant families in Britain following their mass arrival from the 1950s through to the 1970s.¹⁷ The combination of the First World War setting and a girl character from a mixed race family enables the writer to link readers with the diaspora of the 1960s and 1970s. In this narrative of a family considered by many of their working-class neighbours as 'outsiders' and living in London's East End, readers are confronted with a history of family break-up through inter-marriage between white and black. Judith Elkin suggests that in this novel Marjorie Darke 'demonstrates a very sympathetic understanding of how ordinary working people cope in difficult and often rapidly changing circumstances' which echoes not only families at the time of the First World War but also of the sixties and seventies (Elkin, 1989, p.263). The narration deals mainly with Bella and her twin brother Luke, making this an example of the kind of text in which the experiences of brothers and sisters, or other pairs of females and males, are contrasted. However, because Darke's protagonists are black adolescents, there are further layers of meaning and ideology within the text. The narrative explores themes of pacifism, racial prejudice, a young woman's developing self-awareness and journey to maturity and the efforts of women pacifists. As might be expected in a novel set on the home front, women predominate, but emphasis is given to anti-war sentiments through characters such as Bella's brother Luke, a conscientious objector, and those who support them. The novel presents a humanist ideology through the manner in which Bella and her brother Luke develop agency through their experiences and interaction with others. Their efforts result in a sense that they

¹⁶ References will be to the 1982 edition.

¹⁷ Ugandan Asians arrived in Britain in 1972 after their expulsion by President Idi Amin of Uganda (Sked and Cook, 1993, p.269).

have decided who they will be, not that they have discovered a preordained self. This understanding that they are in charge of their destinies is a fundamental precept of humanism that also defies some of the nihilistic tendencies of postmodernity.

The story begins with seventeen year old Bella caring for her grandfather, a former dock-worker, now disabled and affected by a stroke. Her older brother is fighting in France and her twin brother has become silent and secretive. Darke creates empathy for Bella through her self-effacing humour and reflections on her colour. Intimate access to the two main characters' thoughts is given as part of engaging readers in their dilemmas and decision making. Overall the book provides a picture of life on the home front for some women from mainly lower-class backgrounds. At the story's opening, Bella is at Victoria Station seeing her older brother Jack off to France:

“See after the Admiral and our Luke, and write to us. You will write?”

There was a wistful note in her brother's voice that cut her to the heart and brought embarrassment. Big bluff Jack Knight, promising middle weight, hard as nails, selfish as they come, appealing to *her*!

“Course! And don't you fret about nothink. I'll keep my eye on things. Shan't let our Luke have it all his own way!” ... It pushed back her lurking suspicion that he didn't want to go to war, might even be *afraid*. (5; Darke's emphasis)

Such an opening places readers immediately in the chaos and confusion of war on the home front, making them aware that Bella is subject to the masculine attitude of her older brother through his directive, 'See after the Admiral and our Luke' but followed by 'you will write?' indicating personal uncertainty and insecurity. The dialogue and Bella's reported reflections indicate a lower- or working-class background through the use of colloquialisms, syntax and vocabulary: 'see after', 'keep my eye on things' and dialect features 'write to us', 'don't you fret about nothink'. It also raises questions about expected norms; that her brother, who is a boxer, might not want to fight in the war seems barely possible to Bella, who sees the war as exciting and an opportunity to get away from a dull home-life.

The narrative raises issues of gender performance in that outwardly Jack conforms and performs to the accepted male role, making Bella mistrust her own insights about his reluctance to go to war. However, as her thoughts run to the rhythm of the train, 'Oh it wasn't fair ... it

wasn't fair' (7) they reveal not her fears for her brother and the war, but her own desire to get away and do something different. Her thoughts convey the initial excitement associated with war for some, but also the manner in which girls' lives, in particular, were circumscribed and how little she and her peers knew about war. For Bella as for many girls and young women in real life, the war was to provide unexpected opportunities. Such a restricted pre-First World War life is in marked contrast to the lives of young people in the 1970s, so Darke carefully illustrates what it was like for some women as when Bella says to a young woman she meets 'you don't know how I wish it was me on that train ... What is there to do? 'Cept sit at home and sew ruddy buttons on shirts and knit balaclavas. Not to mention socks' (8). Her words echo what Vera Brittain wrote to her fiancé Roland Leighton: 'Women get all the dreariness of war, and none of its exhilaration' (Brittain, 2004, p.84). As such it appears to be an implicit indication that there was some excitement in participating in warfare possibly culled from empiricist novels. Passages such as this convey the 'nature and genesis of women's oppression and social subordination' in that there is a social and cultural expectation and acceptance that Bella will stay at home to care for her grandfather and brother (Rubin, 1997, p. 27). This expectation is partly a matter of class: while the war quickly enabled some women 'to serve, to be needed, to feel themselves part of this world-embracing Cause', for others the opportunity to move beyond the restrictions of home and family only came later (Pankhurst, 1987, p.38).

Bella is educated in the cruelties and deprivations of war by her new friend Emily: 'I hates this war. It's cruel and stupid. A lot of blockheads telling everyone else what to do. Makes fools of us all' (9). Through exchanges such as this, Darke builds a sense of opposition to the war that would have resonated with 1970s readers during a period of anti-war protests (McCallum-Stewart, 2007). Emily is also working-class but, as this quotation suggests, she is more aware of the way the poor become the victims of war. Darke introduces Emily as the character who will support Bella's development from un-informed girl to politically aware activist. Emily's views have come partly from her father's Birmingham socialist and trade union background, but for

the most part her knowledge and attitudes have been nurtured by educated and articulate middle-class women through her involvement with the women's suffrage movement.¹⁸

When Bella's twin brother Luke, the male pacifist counterpart of Emily, decides he will ignore his call-up papers, the narrative conveys Bella's personal concerns,

I daresay you ain't never given a thought to the rest of us. Mud sticks you know ... it's bad enough having to walk around in skins that ain't white. Trying not to notice that everyone thinks yer different from the rest. Trying to make 'em see as yer just as much an East Ender as they are. (Darke's emphasis)(54)

Her concerns with her colour help to establish that she regards herself as being an 'outsider' and has low self-esteem. However, her brother's confident view that 'It's sticking to what you thinks right that matters' (54) underlines Bella's lack of self-knowledge and direction at this point. Bella's confession to Emily about her twin's determination to refuse to fight leads to an introduction by Emily to the pacifist movement, particularly the N-CF (No-Conscription Fellowship) and to Sylvia Pankhurst's involvement with it. This is the next stage in Bella's political and cultural education which began when she got work in a munitions factory.

The long hours of work and the hostility women experienced from some male workers form part of Bella's new experiences and make her conscious of the distinctions between how men and women are treated. Although she suffers at the hands of some men, males are not universally condemned. As happened in real life, some take up the women's cause and accept them as equals. In Bella's case this includes accepting her race: Bella is told by an older workman that she is 'as good as any apprentice lad and I've seen a good few of them ... I'd never thought a woman could do it – a blackie an' all' (115). Following an incident in which oil is poured into Bella's toolbox and discussion of equal pay for the women, Emily suggests a formal complaint to the manager would be the appropriate form of action as long as they have the backing of all the other women with a 'No rise, no work – and mean it' (111) campaign, demonstrating her knowledge gleaned from suffragettes' actions and the Women's Trade Union League. While identifying and representing the conditions in which women worked in wartime it also makes links with the social shifts in the 1960s when, in a manufacturing industry with

¹⁸ Emily's involvement with the suffrage movement, particularly the Women's Social and Political Union, is recounted in Darke's earlier novel, *A Question of Courage* (1975)

strong unions, strikes, such as that of women at Ford's Dagenham plant (1968), as part of the fight for equal pay, led eventually to the Equal Pay Act of 1970.¹⁹

Bella's growing self-confidence is demonstrated as she and Emily confront male hegemony in the form of the manager. The manager's assertive response, 'there has never been any problem in my works and I don't intend that there should be now' (136), is meant to repress anything they might say, while further empowering him. The use of the possessive in 'my works', places Emily and Bella as outsiders, while the change to the all-encompassing cluster of declarations beginning with the pronoun 'we' - 'We have a fine war record. Fine. High output. It will stay that way' (136) - infers a workforce in which neither they nor any of the other women figure. Bella refutes his comments by listing the women's complaints and articulating their desire for equality of pay, but her reasoning is dismissed: 'I had hoped' he says 'to deal with this in a civilized way' (136). The use of 'civilized' here suggests a racist edge to the argument. In any event she is dismissed. Bella's actions are not unusual. A contemporaneous comment in the *Women Worker* of 1916 states, 'It is pleasant to hear Mr Lloyd George say [that we are as clever as the men] ... it becomes the duty of girls to see ... that they receive the same pay as men' (Marlow, 1999, p.173). Increasing numbers of women were challenging the government's and manufacturers' tendency to treat women workers as cheap labour.²⁰ Bella, in confronting the manager, is challenging the uneven balance of power in the cultural system at that time (Sinfield, 2004). Although unsuccessful in achieving her goals, ultimately it is this act that evokes a change in Bella's views of herself, and of her brother Luke, making her also question her attitude to the war.

The re-appraisal of her views evokes a change in Bella who becomes involved in N-CF work. She continues to be guided by Emily, who uses her knowledge and experience in support of Bella when learning of Luke's decision not to fight. However, Emily is also influenced by Bella. When Bella is fired, Emily quits to do VAD work, telling the factory manager, 'If I've got to be in this

¹⁹ It was not fully implemented until five years later, more than fifty years after the end of the First World War.

²⁰ Most male-dominated professions remained closed to women. Even in areas where they were employed in large numbers, such as munitions and transport, they were often treated as inferior, stop-gap replacements for enlisted men. Moreover, women's wages, routinely portrayed as 'high' in the wartime press, remained significantly lower than those of their male counterparts (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk Accessed 14 May 2014)

ruddy war I'd as soon lend a hand mending folk as help kill them. That's what I call civilized' (137).

4.11.1 *Women against war*

Bella represents the 792,000 women who entered industry between 1914 and 1918 (Rowbotham, 1977, p.110). Her pacifism is also representative of a significant group of women who from the beginning of the war were extensively involved in supporting pacifism. These were mothers, wives, girlfriends and friends of conscientious objectors on religious or other grounds; and men who often had to face hostility from family and neighbours. There were also women pacifists who chose to be involved in the N-CF movement either through helping conscientious objectors escape conscription or in N-CF offices, especially as its male members were imprisoned. Their work involved keeping records, locating conscientious objectors, attending tribunals, producing pamphlets, and so on. Conscientious objectors and those who supported them have become the subject of writing for children in more recent years, as in Marcus Sedgwick's *Cowards* (2003), where he describes the experiences of two conscientious objectors in the First World War. Women who were active in supporting conscientious objectors play a key role in Darke's novel. For example, Mrs West, an elderly woman, 'built like a navy. Twice as broad as [Luke] was and taller' (83) helps conscientious objectors because of the punishment meted out by police and the state to her mentally disabled son who died in a mental institute. She tells Luke, 'he liked his freedom too' (86) while implicitly demonstrating that skin colour is of no importance. Mrs West pushes Luke in a coal sack in a pram to a female relative who then transports him in a coffin to the next place in the escape route. These women are breaking the law, instructing readers in the genuine risks women took for their beliefs. Parallels can be drawn between such women protesters during the First World War and others who over many years have actively protested for their beliefs, including, in the 1970s, those who demonstrated against the war in Vietnam. Again, the validation of opposition, struggle and action is innately humanist in orientation.

While an anti-war theme is also played out in the next text to be discussed, because it is a narrative for younger children, the ideological message is incorporated within a story of mystery and intrigue. Published in 1983, Elsie McCutcheon's *Summer of the Zeppelin* recounts the

experiences of a girl living in a rural village in the last year of the war. It offers a view of life on the home front from the perspective of the rural working class.

4.12 Female Trauma: Elsie McCutcheon's *Summer of the Zeppelin* (1983)

In his study *The Problems of Nervous Breakdown* (1919) Sir Edwin Ash concludes:

All wars necessarily throw an added stress on the nerves of the people at large; thoughts of dear ones at the front, anxieties about general developments, financial worries and the inevitably distressing effects of war-time conditions always react on those left at home. (Ash, 1919, p.275-6 cited in Smith, 2004, p.39)

Such a statement alerts readers to the conditions experienced by families on the home front which were often exacerbated by the constant fear of bombing and air raids, particularly near the east coast where this story is set, and overlooked in histories of that war. Elvira Preston, the central character in *Summer of the Zeppelin*, lives in Suffolk, is twelve years old and has endured three years of war already. The changes war brings in her life affect her home life, her friendships and her schooling. Such a narrative intimates that McCutcheon is drawing both on her own experiences of the Second World War and earlier ones of family members in Suffolk.

4.12.1 War and its effect on women and girls

The narrative is told mainly from Elvira's perspective, but in considering the representation of women and girls during the First World War, it is necessary to consider both Elvira and her stepmother Rhoda. An anti-war theme is evident in the build-up of experiences which Elvira, the protagonist, has endured since the war began, particularly since her father was conscripted. A series of flashbacks informs readers about Elvira's earlier life and her father's expectations for her which three years of war have destroyed in various ways. The stress, sometimes amounting to trauma, which women and girls were subject to during the war and which was endured rather than treated and relieved is presented through the narrative implicitly in the actions of the stepmother, Rhoda, and of Elvira. Elvira sometimes feels antagonistic towards Rhoda, is jealous of her half brother, and feels overburdened with tasks. Through Elvira's reflections readers are able to perceive the mood swings which affect her, an indication of the trauma/stress the war has caused in her life.

The stress which Elvira is experiencing is also evident in the manner in which she, formerly known as a bright girl and good pupil, is falling behind in her school work and spending time in school in reverie and reflection when she is expected to be working. For Elvira, day to day experiences of school, chores, caring for her half brother and less freedom to read or play are intensified by the fact that no letter has been received from her father for some weeks. This emphasises the concern felt and conveys the extra pressure placed on mothers, wives, daughters and other children in wartime. Elvira's reflections on her own actions and her recollection of her father's views about himself, Elvira and other people, evidence of a humanist ideology, leads her to become friendly with a young German prisoner of war who is a medical student, contrary to the views of others. His concerns for his young orphan sister in Germany leads Elvira to plan to help him escape.

The mood swings which Elvira experiences are also evident in Rhoda, whose behaviour towards Elvira at times is also related to Rhoda's concern about her husband, her child and the war. Elvira empathetically reflects, 'it must be hard for Rhoda having to leave little Arthur with Mrs Boniface while she went to work in a factory making parts for aeroplanes' (9). Through Elvira's reflections readers learn about the long hours that women had to work in factories and the need to leave very young children in someone else's care. Although needing women workers, 'the state was ... slow to recognise the consequent need for childcare' (de Groot, 1996, p.221), provoking Sylvia Pankhurst to write '[f]amily life is impossible. Mothers and grown children make munitions, younger ones suffer neglect at home' (Pankhurst, 1932, p.278).²¹ The situation would certainly have resonated in the 1980s when there were more lone mothers through separation or divorce (Thane, 2011), when families were more dispersed, and when child-care provision for children under three years was rarely state funded. Like many working-class women during the First World War, Rhoda takes work in a factory in part to help end the war more quickly but also as a means of social security and advancement. The 'nest egg' she is accumulating will support their move to the nearby market town and a business where they can

²¹ There were exceptions to this: Robert Owen had started nursery for ages 1 – 6 years for workers in his New Lanark cotton mill in the late 18th century; in 1911 Margaret and Rachel McMillan had founded the Deptford Camp School, an open-air nursery school based on socialist principles (Steedman, 2004) and Sylvia Pankhurst established a day nursery in a former public house in London's East End (Davis, 1991, p.49) but state funded or other child care was inadequate even though the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Munitions established nurseries for women munitions workers' babies (Woollacott, 1994, p.77-78)

all 'live more civilised' (23) she feels. But this money cannot alleviate the war-time conditions under which they are living. Reflecting on the effect war had on those at home, Vera Brittain sums up the situation that McCutcheon is recreating: 'I had underestimated the effect upon the civilian population of year upon year of diminishing hope, diminishing food, diminishing light, diminishing heat, of waiting and waiting for news which was nearly always bad when it came' (Brittain, 2004, p.391). As well as the pressure of managing a job and a family on her own, Rhoda also has huge emotional demands made on her by the war; especially when she is told her husband is missing. She refuses to allow herself to give way to her emotions and thus implicitly the novel suggests she is emotionally overloaded. Such trauma comes from the ongoing, relentless stress which Rhoda has endured over the years of the war.

Rumours of spies abound in the village and the presence of German Prisoners of War in a camp and working in the fields generates new fears and creates tension for readers. Being told that her husband is missing on top of Rhoda's long hours of work, separation from her child, concerns about Elvira's problems at school, the demands of domestic life and her previous high levels of concern about her husband contribute to what is evidently an unrecognised state of trauma. Andrea Peterson indicates that Vera Brittain did not recognise her own experiences as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when she had what she identified as a nervous breakdown upon returning to Oxford University in 1919 (Smith, 2004). Peterson suggests that such failure to recognise it relates to the belief that only men – and fighting men at that - could suffer such things. McCutcheon's inclusion of the effect that war had on Rhoda and Elvira can be linked with Brittain's text and the recognition of PTSD in Vietnam War veterans in the 1970s and since.

A humanist perspective is presented through the character of middle-class Miss Kindness, 'a brown-skinned leathery-looking little woman with a pleasantly creased face' (47) and great skill as a military lorry driver. She features, as her name suggests, as a sort of 'magic helper' to both Elvira and Rhoda. She recognises that Rhoda is in shock from the news that Elvira's dad is missing and she drives Elvira home, demonstrating her agency. From that time on she is a support for Rhoda and Elvira enabling Rhoda to enjoy time with her son and Elvira to catch up on reading books given by Miss Kindness as she recuperates from influenza. Miss Kindness's socialist principles are evident in the way she admires the villagers, challenges the negligence of

the superintendent at the orphanage and later arranges to adopt Clarry, the orphan she has got to know.

Summer of the Zeppelin, like the other novels discussed so far in this chapter, concerns the lives of women and children at the home front. It offers insights into their concern for the safety of fathers, sons, brothers, lovers or friends fighting at the war front; their grief at the loss of loved ones; their experiences and struggles to live under the harsh conditions which war brings, and the accumulated stress which all these factors combined bestow on them. The trauma portrayed in this story based on experiences of women that went unrecognised and un-researched for many decades plays a significant part in the story. This and that pertaining to nurses at the war front began to be studied through the war diaries of civilians and nurses from the 1980s. It is an indication of the manner in which narratives of war changed from that time as feminists took on board many aspects of the humanist belief in humans' ability to change the world and to take charge of their fates (Higgonet, 2002, n.p.).

Seventy years after the end of the First World War, novels for young people with historical settings began to represent more directly the lives and experiences of nurses at the war front.²² From the late 1980s young adult readers have had access to works that are consciously part of the effort to reclaim women's history. These novels also highlight changing views of what it is appropriate for younger readers to experience through story, especially in relation to injuries sustained and their treatment, reflecting the influence of media representations. In the following novels to be discussed, *Some Other War* (1990) and *The Kind Ghosts* (1991), Linda Newbery brings together these different facets as well as the effect of war on class structure through the characters of Alice and Lorna.

4.13 Class and re-educating women: Linda Newbery's *Some other War* (1990) and *The Kind Ghosts* (1991)

Some other War and *The Kind Ghosts* follow the lives of Jack and Alice Smallwood, twins about to celebrate their eighteenth birthday at the first novel's opening. Kate Agnew suggests that *Some other War* is a romantic story in which 'the horrors of the war are clearly depicted'

²² Other novels concerning nursing at the war front are Ruth Elwyn Harris's *The Dividing Sea* (1989), Marjorie Darke's *A Rose from Blighty* (1990), James Riordan's *War Song* (2001), Theresa Breslin's *Remembrance* (2002) and Marcus Sedgwick's *The Foreshadowing* (2005)

(Agnew, 2001, p.661) while Esther McCallum-Stewart indicates that such a story of nursing, expresses the 'female equivalent of soldiering on the Western Front' (MacCallum-Stewart, 2007, n.p.). Similarities with Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* are particularly apparent and deliberate in this work. Just as Brittain's autobiography includes letters from her brother and Roland Leighton, the man she was engaged to, Newbery has included letters from Alice's brother, Jack, and Edward, the man to whom she becomes engaged and who is killed shortly before their wedding. Newbery also places Alice, like Vera Brittain, in a military hospital at Étaples. As with Darke's novel, by splitting the focalisation between brother and sister, the writer can juxtapose male and female experiences of the war. However, by featuring working-class characters, the novels' trajectory points to an ideology indicating a breaking down of class barriers in a more substantial way. The novels reflect this for women and men, indicating a desire for, in post-war years and from the 1980s, a continued struggle for equality of class and gender. My analysis only uses the sections focalised through Jack where it sheds light on his sister or other female characters through reflection or dialogue. Because the novel is sectioned into parts representing each year of the war, with the final year concerning 1918 through to Armistice Day, 1919 in *The Kind Ghosts* (KG) (1991), it is necessary to consider this novel also. Whereas historical novels of the war written by men are likely to begin with events leading up to the protagonist's entry into the war and end at the Armistice or return home, or to be concerned with a short intensive period of the action, those from women writers which consider war as an ideological struggle for women present women's experience of war 'over a different period' (Higgonet and Higgonet, 1987, in Rathbone, 1989, p.467). This indicates that a feminist re-vision will consider time and space in a different manner from the sharply defined masculine concept, hence the narrative continuing to November 1919. The rural setting of Littlehay, a village in Essex with a large house in its own estate, provides a home background for the novels, which begin and end there. As will be seen through the analysis, the manner in which one girl's progress to independence is aided by another, a former suffragist, is thematically similar to Darke's book. In this the texts also present a humanist perspective which portrays the manner in which individuals are perceived as valuable, demonstrated through the protagonist's reflections and actions and through an anti-war stance.

Two key points are significant when analysing these stories: Newbery has drawn heavily on research concerning women during the First World War, either re-published as part of feminist retrieval of women's history or through war materials released to the general public, and particularly on the writing of Vera Brittain; and she reflects multiple female positions in her representations of class and views of the war. These characters embody characteristics of females in relation to culture at the time of the setting of the novel and the time of writing. The narrative demonstrates how some women's lives were changed as a result of their experiences while others' changed little.

4.13.1 Challenging hegemonic restrictions

De Groot points to the institutional sexism of the British government with its view that women 'should continue doing womanly things, and thus minimise the war's disruption ... knit[ting] socks, send[ing] parcels to the front ... in ways strictly confined to their sphere' while acknowledging how 'a large number, Vera Brittain among them, salved their frustration by becoming nurses, predominantly in the Volunteer (*sic*) Aid Detachment' (de Groot, 1996, p.67,69). Brittain was appalled at the 'suburban complacency of her mother's friends who 'provincialized' the war by serving tea to Red Cross doctors and playing at first aid' (Robb, 2002, p.39). A similar sense of outrage is articulated in Helen Zenna Smith's *Not So Quiet ...* (1930) where the main character works as an ambulance driver in France. The opportunity and need for this kind of work led Vera Brittain to take first aid certificate training and later to leave university and enrol as a VAD nurse (Brittain, 2004, p.141). Similar concerns provoke the character Alice in Newbery's novels to train as a nurse though she is from quite a different section of society. Such a presentation echoes what MacCallum-Stewart identifies as a feature common to young adult literature which privileges female experience in the First World War (MacCallum-Stewart, 2007, p.182).

Alice Smallwood, an aspiring teacher, is a maidservant to the Morland family. She still reads and discusses books lent to her by Edward, the doctor's son, now studying at Cambridge. When the vicar announces in church that war has been declared, she mentally questions the indication of equality implied by him, 'we all have our part to play, and we must play it as equals, since we will all be affected if might is allowed to triumph at the cost of the weak and the unprepared'

(SOW16), especially as she suffers subjugation in her private life by her employer, Mrs Morland. ²³ Sheila Rowbotham indicates that in the years before the war '[e]mployers expected to control the moral and spiritual welfare of their employees', something Alice is questioning in relation to the hegemonic society and which was still being questioned by some in the late 1980s (Rowbotham, 1977, p.109). Alice's sense of frustration at the class system and paternalistic social rules match her own frustration about Britain's involvement in the war. Her reflections echo Sylvia Pankhurst's response: 'the madness of world war, our own country drawn into the maelstrom, too hugely inconceivable' (Pankhurst, 1932, p.11). While financial circumstances prevent Alice from doing voluntary work, once the war begins, she is encouraged by middle-class Lorna, Edward's older sister, a socialist, pacifist and suffragist, to apply for nursing. By lying about her age Alice is accepted as a full-time probationer nurse at a local military hospital. Lorna, a graduate, independent and working as a VAD nurse, introduces Alice to two other VADs working in the same hospital who with their husbands, like Lorna, are pacifists. Her meeting with these new friends and listening to their conversation leads Alice to reflect that they and Lorna 'came from a new enlightened age, compared with which Littlehays and all its concerns seemed positively medieval ... in the village you were expected to think as everyone else did and do as you were told' (SOW85-86), indicating the patriarchal hegemony of rural landowners and an ingrained class system, but also a humanist awakening and reflections on her own self and position. This view that educated people make choices which differ from mainstream views, introduces readers of the 1990s and after to an aspect which was part of the history of the period. It carries an implied message for readers to contemplate in the light of their own experiences at the time of reading.

Alice's concerns about her social position are reflected in the novel. She feels her Red Cross uniform gives 'her a sort of classlessness' (SOW76) and by 1916 working at a hospital in London '[f]or the first time in her life, in spite of her long and exhausting hours of work, she felt that she was independent' (SOW137) when contrasting her life now as a nurse with that of working for the Morlands. However, she also suffers from feelings of inferiority and anxiety as when Edward proposes marriage, and she considers his mother's reaction. Her reflection on the changing

²³ I use the abbreviations SOW for references to *Some other War* and KG for references to *The Kind Ghosts*

times and women's ability to deal with changing circumstances and demanding work pre-empts but also reflects transformations in women's future in society.

Like many of the young women who became nurses, Alice has lied about her age and by 1917 is nursing in a military hospital in Étapes (Macdonald, 1980). The narrative describes the conditions under which nurses worked and lived drawing on descriptions from texts such as Brittain's and of others recalling nursing at the war front. One such diary states how a VAD, given charge of three tents of wounded by Sister, is told to carry on:

There was no off-duty time for over a fortnight and we slept with one ear open in case the 'Fall in' went, which meant the arrival of a fresh convoy of patients. We had no time to feel tired. It was just a case of rushing through the work and when a spare moment arrived, flying up to the Mess to get a meal. Often we didn't get supper until we came off duty about eleven o'clock at night. By then we were too tired to eat. (Kit Dodsworth VAD No 12 General Hospital, Rouen in Macdonald, 1980, p.109)

This description implies a parallel with the men fighting in the trenches; it challenges the 'ministering angel' view of nursing indicated in war propaganda (Macdonald, 1980; Powell, 2009). It also links with the changing role of nurses in the 1980s when they were being called on to provide less hands-on care for patients (O'Dowd, 2008). Lorna's continued friendship and support for Alice is reflected in Alice's view that 'without Lorna's company she would have found it hard to keep going', particularly after Edward's death at the war front (SOW196).

Newbery makes direct parallels between the socialist work being carried out in Britain at that time and the need for such in the 1990s following the effects of Thatcherite policy on the poor during the years of Conservative government. It was a time when 'many pensioners were the worst hit. The proportion living below the poverty line rose from 13% to 43%. Child poverty more than doubled' (Dean, 2013, n.p.). Sir Ian Gilmour, a former Tory minister, summing up the Conservative government policies of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, commented: 'The sacrifice imposed on the poor produced nothing miraculous except for the rich when the rich saw their tax rates fall from 83% to 40%' (Gilmour cited in Dean, 2013, n.p.). Lorna's middle-class friends, Mathilde and Dorothy, are now working at Sylvia Pankhurst's canteen in the East End of London. They provide food for 'mainly women with children, and elderly people, but there were

one or two men of military age on crutches or with arms in slings' (SOW215). The inclusion of these pacifist-socialists in the narrative echoing the work of Sylvia Pankhurst which is described in *The Home Front* (1932, 1987) reinforces the view across this body of writing that right-minded and aware women oppose war. Such figures serve as moral guides for readers (MacCallum-Stewart cited in Fisher, 2011).²⁴ Newbery spells it out as Alice becomes aware that, 'there was another war to be fought here ... a war against poverty and deprivation' (SOW215). While promoting a social conscience and a desire to foster improvements in society it also indicates a need for equality and removal of class structures. It is an echo of what Vera Brittain who, after touring post-war Europe, returned in 1925 to a Britain run by a Conservative government and became a member of the Labour Party, stating:

My first vague realisation that poverty was the result of humanity's incompetence, and not an inviolable law of nature ... I had seen ... the young, brave and the idealistic giving their lives and their futures in order that the powerful might have more power, the rich grow richer. (Brittain, 2004, p.594)

The narrative also points to the inadequacy of soldiers' and widows' pensions at the start of the war, reflecting Sylvia Pankhurst's comment that 'separation allowances were cut off, no pensions as yet forthcoming' for widows or mothers (Pankhurst, 1987, p.240).²⁵ Such concerns were still being argued in 1989.²⁶

Lorna's support for Alice performs a similar function to that of Emily in Darke's novel by raising awareness of a need for social justice. On first meeting, Alice 'liked Lorna very much ... with her open manner and total lack of regard for convention' (SOW67). They belong to the group of women who lost brothers, husbands, fiancés or lovers, but who continued to work for a more equal future.

²⁴ Also see Bruley (1999, p.54) for accounts of The Women's Peace Crusade in 1917 with demonstrations in Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Birmingham and Cardiff.

²⁵ By 1917 separation allowances to families had improved and amounted to about half the weekly expenditure. Widow's pensions were graduated according to rank (Winter, 2003, p.240/241).

²⁶ The Armed Forces Pension Scheme came into effect in 1973 but in 1989 the discrimination between the pensions received by war widows from the Second World War and by those from the Falklands War was being argued in parliament, with many war widows 'having been widowed while they were young, live in poverty now they are old' (Hansard, Vol.162, cc 334-42, 23/11/89).

In this novel Newbery, through Alice's viewpoint, offers readers other minor characters representing an opposing view to that of the pacifist-socialist women discussed, thus presenting the wider spectrum of women in the time of the First World War and of the 1990s. Madeleine Morland fulfils the typical middle-class woman's position where 'the potential that loomed largest on the horizon was marriage' (Brittain, 2004, p.19), her intention to marry someone not involved in the war is successful and re-education and change are not for her. Harriet, a kitchen maid at the Morland's house, is representative of women who saw the war as an opportunity to enjoy themselves. She moves from her job as kitchen maid at the Morland's home to being a land girl, eventually leaving husband and child to join a friend in the town, to work and to have a good time. Poorly educated, she is shown to be selfish and manipulative. Both these characters reflect a Thatcherite policy of individualism which was against the feminist movement's emphasis on democratisation or empowerment (Bashevkin, 1994).

These two novels encourage readers to question whether their involvement in the war could bring about changes in their relationships, thinking and manner. They also remind readers of the manner in which education supports change. Reflecting the war, it also posits that for some there was little change; Alice, revisiting the house where she formerly served, ironically reflects that 'not much had altered ... not so many servants, fewer elaborate dinner-parties, but the Morlands' wealth and position as landowners buffeted them against change'(KG275), Newbery's censure on class and how it shapes society still.

The significance of the First World War for historians and writers of historical novels for adults and children continues to draw attention, especially as conflict continues in different parts of the world and the First World War provides a distance for writers who want to express concerns about war and promote an anti-war message. In some cases the manner in which such narratives are presented also changes reflecting the manner in which historical fiction has fused with other genres in writing for children. Marcus Sedgwick's *The Foreshadowing* (2005) is one such. In this narrative of the First World War and of a girl's determination to prevent the death of her brother at the war front, elements of the supernatural are included, echoing the strong beliefs of the times in a spirit world by those in the trenches and families at home and a trend towards an increase in fantasy writing in the early twenty-first century. It is also an indication of

the manner in which children's historical fiction has been transformed to meet modern needs in a young adult market, challenging Stephens' views about the demise of the genre.

4.14 Trauma and opposition to war: Marcus Sedgwick's *The Foreshadowing* (2005)²⁷

All but one of the other books discussed so far in this case study present historical fiction concerning the First World War as social realism with female experience focusing on the effect war has on the individual in a number of ways. Esther MacCallum-Stewart (2007) suggests that books about nursing indicate 'a linearity caused by a lack of source material' (MacCallum-Stewart, 2007, p.183) something which evidence in this case study disputes, while acknowledging that Brittain's autobiography forms a substantial reference for some texts, particularly Newbery's. The heroine in Marcus Sedgwick's *The Foreshadowing* lives up to expectations for modern readers in that she becomes strong-willed and proactive like many other female protagonists in the narratives discussed. However, she is also devious and manipulative of others in order to achieve her goals in a manner that might be considered an anti-hero role but reflects the manner in which women have to operate in a hegemonic society. In contrast to the other novels focusing on women who trained as VAD nurses, perceiving doing so as either their patriotic duty or as support for brothers or fathers fighting in the war, this story is innovative in that it presents a different narrative of one middle-class girl's nursing experiences while presenting a humanist ideology which challenges Stephens' predictions about a replacement of humanism in a time of cultural relativism in postmodernity. Although Sedgwick has stated that he wanted to write a story about Cassandra, the story seems to bring together the trauma caused by the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, the Iraq War of 2003 and the terrorist threat under which Britain and the US now live. This is produced through the experiences of the female protagonist-narrator who, like Cassandra, has premonitions and ultimately acts on them. Transposition of these experiences to a narrative set in the First World War enables Sedgwick to present a consideration of the consequences of war through explication of trauma experienced by the protagonist-narrator. While any reason for her premonitions is left unexplained, the effect of them and her family's disbelief provokes her to take responsibility for attempting to free herself

²⁷ Page references are from the 2006 paperback edition

from tradition and to act to save her brother. Sedgwick, then, has added to the group of feminist-humanist characters and texts that make up this case study.

Shortlisted for the Booktrust Teenage Prize in 2006, *The Foreshadowing* was Sedgwick's sixth young adult novel coming after his book *Cowards* (2003) about conscientious objectors during the First World War. The novel has an anti-war theme throughout, with vivid descriptions of the wounded, the chaos in mobilisation of troops, the suffering experienced by combatants, nurses and the indigenous population as well as destruction of the topography. Conveyed through the protagonist-narrator's descriptions the didacticism of the presentation about the effects of destruction is more convincing.

The text includes many features of postmodern texts: fragmentation in the narrative through changes in temporality in an undated diary form with its combination of continuous present and past historic forms of narrative; the protagonist-narrator's state of mind is reviewed for readers; there is intertextuality, particularly through links with Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Homer's *The Iliad*; and magic realism in the use of dreams and links with mythology and symbolism: a raven appears in visual premonitions and dreams either speaking to the main character, Alexandra (Sasha), or when she herself becomes the raven. All these features are utilised both to create uncomfortable disruptions in readers' involvement with the text and to evoke and explore feelings akin to trauma.

Like Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Alexandra is not believed by her parents, and also like Cassandra sees her ability to foresee death as a curse. Her father, a doctor in charge of a Brighton military hospital, deals with shell-shock and initially stops her observing and helping at the hospital after a short period because of gossip concerning her helping a shell-shocked patient, however he later retracts and for a short while she trains as a VAD nurse.

Following a premonition about the death at the war front of her eldest brother which comes to fruition, another in which she sees her brother Tom being shot provides the trajectory for the novel which involves her journeying to France, with the intention of saving Tom's life. Set to work initially at a rest station where wounded soldiers from the front are de-trained, she meets Jack, a despatch rider, who also experiences visions and who she persuades to help her find Tom, leading to her premonition coming true, but not in the way she anticipated.

Readers experience the beginnings of this trauma with Sasha as she reflects her experiences, 'If I can see the future, then what does that mean? It would be like knowing the end of the story right from the start, almost as if you were reading it backwards'(36) and later 'I have seen the future four times and each time it was death' (38). Psychological trauma is conveyed through Sasha's nightmares of a raven swooping down to her, its feathers brushing her face (45) and after reading *The Iliad* with 'stories full of deaths, awful deaths, and battles and tragedy'(47). As a VAD in the hospital in Brighton, she sees visions of empty beds signifying soldiers' deaths or 'hears' them speak of their own death. In France, she becomes accustomed to seeing death in the faces of the wounded men she helps, dreads sleeping when the nightmare of the raven will return, and journeying by train to the front for wounded, senses the souls leaving the dead on the battlefield. She meets the raven in her sleep, 'I woke cursing it, still unable to understand why it keeps appearing to me' (208). When in the battle zone, she tells readers 'I do not want to sleep again, in case I see those things, those dead people again' and 'I saw the gun that will kill Tom, and I flew with the bullet, spinning, spinning towards him.' (233).

During the first discussion Sasha has with Jack, he tells her there's nothing she can do: 'The future is written in blood. Your brother's death, yours, mine.' (191). But Sasha's response is 'it's my future to try to save Tom, whether he dies or not' (193). This view that the future is already established forms one of the central issues of the novel: that of trying to change what seems to be inevitable. Sedgwick is confirming through the narrative the readers', especially girls', right to make their own futures; he states '[T]he Cassandra myth speaks to her: she thinks she can free herself from [middle-class] tradition and the restrictions placed on women and act to save her brother's life and 'Alexandra eventually frees herself with her belief that she can't make her own future' (Gamble, 2007). It echoes the decision of passengers on board a hijacked aeroplane on 11 September, 2001, to overcome the hijackers, leading to their deaths as the plane crashed in rural Pennsylvania, rather than on a building in Washington DC. Sasha's determination to attempt to save a life is at variance with President Bush's and the US government's decision, following the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City and part of the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, to continue a 'war on terror' through the Iraq War of 2003-2004 in which Britain led by Prime Minister Tony Blair was involved, against the recommendations of other members of the United Nations. In such a war environment Sedgwick seems to be

indicating that the voices of those who foresee and warn of a future of continuous war with its implications of destruction and trauma, will be ignored.²⁸ Even so as a pacifist, Sedgwick, through this novel, makes a humanist plea for other ways of confronting aggression through the story's ending which indicates individual freedom - release from premonitions for Sasha and better understanding of his premonitions for Jack through their efforts to secure Tom's safety. It also provides a safe and upbeat ending for its readers through Sasha's decision to stay and help other wounded soldiers.

The narrative is also an echo of the trauma suffered by thousands after the 11 September, 2001 disaster who were involved in rescue work or lost family or friends. Sasha is presented to readers as a traumatized, but intelligent and determined young woman, someone who has to achieve her goals by devious means and who relies on others to help her. Millie, another VAD supports her, 'I needed Millie. I needed her to look out for me, covering my back,' (197). Unlike the nurses in Newbery's stories, she also demonstrates a naivety in her manner concerning her lack of knowledge not only of nursing but expectations of behaviour for nurses. She is prepared to break rules and manipulate people in her determination to reach her brother reflecting many women of the twenty-first century. In this she echoes some postmodern girls of the new century in a 'risk society' (Beck, 2004). Ultimately it is Jack who saves not only Tom's life, but hers also raising questions about women's independence. However, the novel's ending indicates that Sasha, through her actions has aided Jack, also traumatized, to recovery.

4.15 Conclusion

As the discussions above have shown, humanist ideology and discourses run through the texts that make up this case study of historical fiction about the First World War. The works also show a strong affinity between feminism and humanism which is unsurprising as during the period when these works were produced women were fighting to achieve equal rights and to challenge many kinds of discrimination. A theme shared by each of the texts discussed is individual

²⁸ There has been a backlash against the US government; anti-war protestors have identified the large numbers of civilians killed following the US use of drones against al-Qaeda; drone attacks have also taken a heavy toll on civilians, generating a bitter popular repercussion against U.S. policies toward those countries (Whitlock and Gellman, 2013). Patrick Henningsen states, 'Pakistani officials now admit that at least 67 innocent civilians have been killed by US drones since 2008. One UN investigator puts the number at 400 since 2004. Some human rights groups put the number even higher' (Henningsen, 2013, <http://rt.com/op-edge>)

responsibility: each of the protagonists learns that they (humans) rather some greater power is responsible for managing how they live and what they do. As they begin to recognise their strengths and set out to achieve goals progress is measured by moral and ethical growth as well as by effective action. Readers are then inducted into a humanist mindset as they follow characters' deliberations and self-examination. As with the other case studies, these historical novels about the First World War demonstrate the continuation of a humanist perspective.

Despite the continuity provided by humanist aspects of the texts, this case study reveals considerable changes in the perception of the role of women reflected in children's historical fiction concerning the First World War written between 1960 and 2014. The main theme that emerges centres around women's contributions which, though identified as different, are recognised as equal to those of men and as such reveal the significant shifts in female identity which the war brought. From the 1960s the developing historical interest in social history is represented through stories of girls and women at the home front and, from the 1980s, narratives of those nursing behind the war front produced in more graphic stories for young adult readers. An anti-war feeling and argument is presented as a growing ambiguity for authors, depicted in the heroics and horrors of war, the perceptions and reflections of women nurses in particular, and emphasising the pointlessness of violence in resolving disputes. The manner in which war affects both men and women through the resulting death, mutilation or stress and trauma which they experience serves to re-emphasise the anti-war message that the First World War was a 'tragedy and disaster' (Todman, 2005, p.xii). As such it reflects the war myth perpetuated particularly since the 1960s. Such an anti-war feeling is also represented through the changing views of the nature of nationalism and its consequences as characters question nationalistic feelings and attitudes. It is presented through the contrast between generalised comment on the nationalistic nature of war as opposed to the views and contributions of individuals caught up in it – especially as they affect the family, destabilising the historical role of both men and women.

Chapter 5. Conclusion: Where next for historical fiction?

The case studies and appendices that make up this thesis together disprove John Stephens' prediction in *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992) that postmodernity had rendered historical fiction irrelevant. Stephens indicated that this would happen as a result of a humanist ideology, which has formed the core of historical writing, being made redundant by a relativist view (Stephens, 1992, p.203). However, not only does historical fiction not disappear or suffer demise but it continues and becomes more sophisticated in terms of its structure and social comment and exhibits a continuation of a humanist ideology.

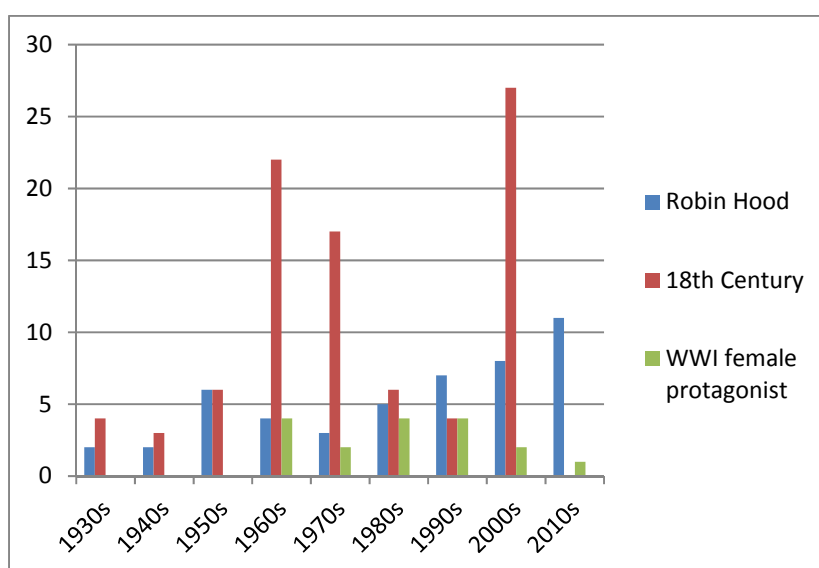


Figure 5.1 Graph indicating numbers of case study texts published.

The 'dip' in historical fiction publishing which Stephens identified is not unique. As can be seen in figure 5.1 above, across the years considered there have been periodic peaks and troughs in the amount of historical fiction published and the focus of that historical fiction as well as any concerns about whether or not children are reading historical fiction. These are particularly evident in texts about Robin Hood and those featuring events in the eighteenth century. Geoffrey Trease recalls that when he first wrote *Bows Against the Barons* (1934) it was at a time when 'those of us who began to write [historical fiction] in the nineteen-thirties had to overcome plenty of prejudice [towards the genre] among children' (Trease, 1977, p. 21). Trease

further suggests that it fell from favour in the late 1970s as an element of 'disenchantment with tradition' on the part of children and teachers at the time.¹ The influence of new media technologies from the late 1970s which saw children enticed away from reading by television games, videos and computers was, and remains, another significant factor. Children's reluctance to seek out stories which they feel are associated with school and lessons also needs to be considered as a factor in Britain at the time Stephens was writing. A response to the way in which history was being taught and a possible response to pupils' feelings of dissatisfaction was addressed in 1991 by the Nuffield Primary History Project which was introduced to 'examine the National Curriculum and explore its implications for the teaching of primary history' (Fines and Nichol, 1997, p.viii). Such a focus moved away from history as a definite body of knowledge to be learned to that of historical enquiry into 'random surviving resources from the past' with new ways of studying history being introduced in schools. This change which involved pupils in speculating, making connections, debating issues, and understanding the past from the inside would be enhanced and supported through historical fiction (Fines and Nichols, 1997, p.ix). Stephens' views expressed in *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction* (1992) concerning historical fiction were therefore rather precipitate.

There is a rather paradoxical relationship between the conditions emerging in the 1980s that temporarily led to a reduction in the status and publishing of historical fiction. The slimming down of industry (not least the publishing industry), cutting taxes for the rich, privatising state assets, deregulating labour, and reducing social security all eventually provided material for a new wave of historical novels in which the past was used as a setting to raise concerns about the present. They did not, however, directly feature in Stephens' analysis which, as this thesis discusses, was principally concerned with the effects of cultural relativism. Stephens' starting point was that the tenets of cultural relativism meant historical fiction could no longer be written because it was now understood that writers cannot re-present the past as it was, but always mediate it through their own times. This understanding was not new to the 1980s; as has been examined here, many writers whose work has been discussed in the case studies, for example, Trease, Burton, Garfield, Gibbons and McKinley consciously rewrote the past from the

¹ The Schools Council History Project begun in 1972 which considered new strategies for the teaching of history in secondary schools could also have affected publication of historical novels (Booth, 1994).

perspective of the present. What is different about historical fiction since the approach of the new millennium, and what Stephens did not anticipate, is the way the cultural complications and dissatisfactions of the 1980s led to a re-birth of historical fiction through new experiments in the hybridisation of historical fiction and other genres, particularly myth and fantasy, an influence of postmodernity. Although a fusion of genres had been implemented in the past by individual writers such as, for example, Penelope Farmer in *Charlotte Sometimes* (1969) from the 1990s onwards it was on a much greater scale. In order to understand and challenge Stephens' premise I set out to consider other changes in historical fiction writing to ascertain if and how these might impact on it.

5.1 Changes in representation

A concern of fiction for children is for it to be truly representative and to present positive models for readers, reinforcing the didacticism of most children's fictional writing and historical fiction in particular as a process of socialising its young people (Stephens, 1992; Reynolds, 1994). Prior to the 1960s, as noted within the case studies, there is less evidence of representations of the lives of protagonists from lower classes. Trease's influence through his inclusion of lower-class protagonists in his historical fiction stories to meet the needs of a growing readership in the 1950s following the implementation of the 1944 Education Act, encouraged more new writers to follow his model.² The graph below indicates the increase in protagonists from working-class backgrounds in novels published from the 1960s. Cultural influences, through the writing of Hoggart (1957), Williams (1961) and Thompson (1963) have already been discussed along with educational changes which brought historical fiction within the reach and interest level of a wider group of children. And since, as Stephens states '[historical fiction] has always performed a moral, and even didactic function, especially through its capacity to transform events which appear to be historical particularities into universals of human experience' in other words a humanist approach, it is difficult to see why he was convinced about the demise of historical fiction (Stephens, 1992, p.238). Stephens is acknowledging here that although historical fiction is influenced by relativism, there is still a humanist perspective to it, especially as its ideological presentation for readers is through a wider demographic of protagonists. As such it marks a significant change in representation

² Most writers of children's historical fiction were themselves from middle-class backgrounds at this time.

while reflecting cultural change. The case studies all show a progressive shift over time away from middle- and upper-class protagonists, starting with Trease’s *Bows Against the Barons* with its focus on the lives of the poor and oppressed. Similarly, in novels set in the eighteenth century and the First World War the number of stories about upper-class protagonists gradually declines while stories focusing on children from the lower classes begin to predominate, as can be seen in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 below. While much remains to be done before all parts of society can be said to have had their histories told, this change not only reflects current efforts to achieve a more just and equal society but it also rewrites traditional narratives of what the past was like. Young readers today are no longer given a picture of the past as a world inhabited by white men with a few shadowy female companions and ethnic minority minions or enemies. Instead more writers place characters from all backgrounds in stories which are based on detailed historical research of situations in which they were likely to appear, although not necessarily considered worthy of mention in historical documents.

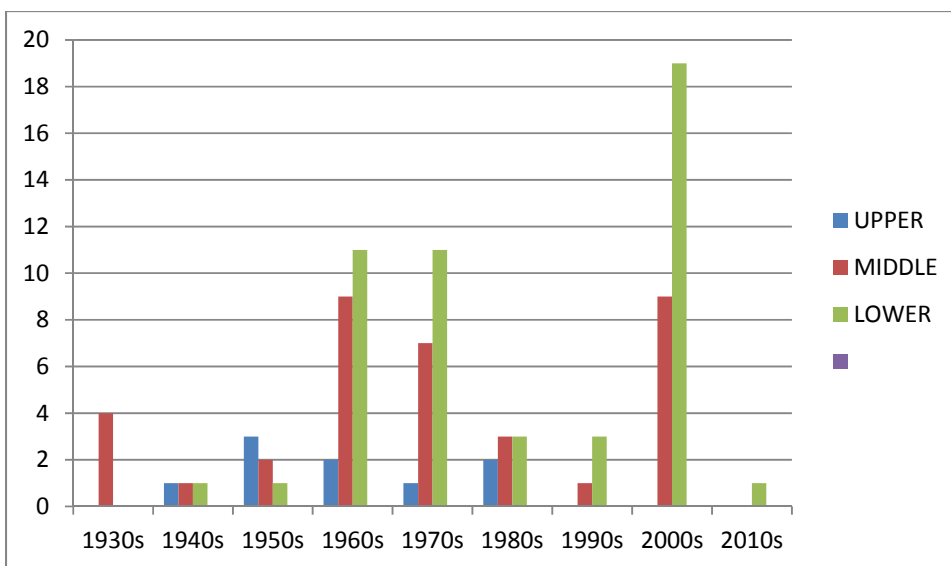


Figure 5.2 Graph to indicate social class of protagonists in texts set in eighteenth century

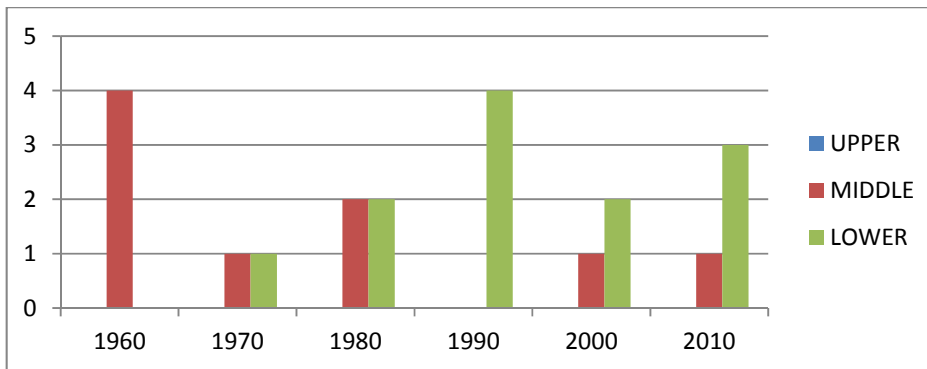


Figure 5.3 Graph to indicate social position of protagonists in texts set in First World War

The role played by girls and young women has also become more apparent in narratives since the progression of the feminist movement from the 1960s with more stories presenting events focalised through their lives and humanist viewpoints. The case study which focuses on historical fiction texts set during the First World War narratives are focalised specifically through girls' viewpoints from the late 1960s, as are some of those with eighteenth century settings. In the more traditional narratives of Robin Hood girls taking a significant part are not evident until McKinley's *Outlaws of Sherwood* (1988). The female protagonists in these narratives also demonstrate a humanist viewpoint by taking responsibility for their own actions having first explored their consciences and positions in relation to patriarchy and religious hegemony. This increasing focus on stories which present a feminist viewpoint in the 1980s also challenges Stephens' premise that historical fiction would suffer demise from the 1990s, for he did not take account of the influence of feminism on writers and readers of historical fiction texts.

5.2 Changes in structure and narrative features

Early novels for junior aged readers adhered to the formula of a story, in that it should have a beginning, middle and a positive ending and be written chronologically. While this remained a guiding principle for writers, Trease states that with the sophisticated techniques of television and film, by the 1970s children were better able to follow more complex modes and structures of telling which included the use of analepsis or flashback (Trease 1972, p.14). Such changing strategies of narration have included those which present the same narrative from completely different viewpoints which some stories for young adults demonstrate in the case studies. The influences of postmodernism particularly where dual or multiple narrations are used beyond the

inclusion of focalised dialogue have added to the complexities of such narratives, presenting readers with a number of differing viewpoints on a story's actions from different cultural backgrounds and imposing different ideological viewpoints.³ These and the inclusion of fantasy features, particularly since the new millennium, also demonstrate the continuance of historical fiction for children, contrary to Stephens' comment. To these changes have been added an increasing number of trilogies or series where readers are encouraged to read more by the excitement and style of the narrative, engagement with the protagonist or an ending which indicates that the story is not complete.

5.3 Representations of Britishness

A lack of positive representations of children from ethnic minorities was also a concern from the 1960s when a large number of immigrant families settled in Britain. The Race Relations Act of 1965 was a way of addressing casual colour prejudice which was part of daily life for some, as reflected in Marjorie Darke's *A Long Way to Go* (1978). Further Acts in 1968 and 1976 addressed other prejudicial behaviours concerned with, for example, housing and the workplace.⁴ Realistic fiction in contemporary settings unsurprisingly reflects the changing demographics of a multi-cultural Britain, but the task of repopulating historical fiction requires research and imagination since for much of the time covered by this thesis there was little knowledge of or ready access to evidence of how minority groups lived and contributed to culture. Recovering that information as well as documenting the effects and abuses of colonialism in the past has led to many changes in the subject and tone of present-day historical fiction. Some changes clearly project present ways of thinking onto the past as when, for example, stories about the slave trade set in the eighteenth century include scenes in which protagonists detail the injustices slaves are experiencing. With the advantage of hindsight it is tempting to wonder why such material did not feature earlier, but it is important to remember how far ideology makes the status quo seem natural and inevitable so that some groups (including white, middle-class women and children) were effectively invisible for much of recorded history. It takes time to adjust thinking and resistance to new kinds of history and new stories can obstruct change for what may seem the best of reasons. Geoffrey Trease recalls the difficulty he initially had getting

³ See, for example, Frances Mary Hendry's *Chains* (2000) which explores slavery from a number of perspectives.

⁴ The Race Relations Act of 1965 legislated against racial discrimination on the grounds of colour, race or ethnic or national origins in public places.

a story concerning a black servant boy in the eighteenth century published at a time when publishers had concerns about depicting black people in a negative light (Trease,1996, p.137).⁵

All the case studies reflect change in the areas of social inclusion and multiculturalism which inevitably suggests evolving ideas about what it means to be British. Novels set in the eighteenth century published from the 1970s demonstrate more positive attitudes to 'others', particularly slaves or black servants, although within a historical representation this can be more difficult to achieve without seriously falsifying how they were treated in the past. To do this writers may feel it expedient to re-shape characters anachronistically as Marjorie Darke does in *The First of Midnight* (1977) and its sequel with the focus on a mixed-race marriage between an educated slave and a white illiterate servant girl. The device enables her to develop a story about love and equality between partners and provides a model of race and gender which cultivates self-determinacy in both. The reflections and actions of such characters offer models for overcoming disadvantages and promise the possibility of success. As Darke's work exemplifies, the multicultural nature of modern Britain has helped writers of historical fiction to show readers that Britain always was a place where people of different backgrounds, races, ethnicities and nations converged. In the case studies, the most recent books express current thinking about Britishness in their efforts to strike a balance between expressing positive attitudes to inclusivity without denying the abuses that make up much of the history of colonialism and Empire building.

5.4 Where next?

Contrary to Stephens' expectations, historical fiction has been transformed since the 1990s while retaining a humanist ideology, reflecting the manner in which society has also been transformed. The increase in historical fiction novels set in the eighteenth century and published in the new millennium echoes and reveals the way in which writers are making parallels between the twenty-first century 'risk society' and that of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, another period of great change. Ulrich Beck suggests that a stage of techno-economic progress has now been reached in which 'the social production of wealth is systematically accompanied by the social production of risk' (Beck and Willms, 2004, p.19). In

⁵ Reference here is to *The Chocolate Boy* (1975) which was eventually published by Heinemann.

the place of scarcity in the West, 'capital expansion is creating chemical, nuclear, ecological and lifestyle risks as well as political hazards like terrorism' have become the order (Bullen and Parsons, 2007, p.128). Characters in historical narratives reflect this risk society. Julia Golding in her *Cat Royal* series (2006-2011), discussed in Chapter 3, epitomises the fractured society of the twenty-first century through the character of her narrator-protagonist Cat. This eighteenth century girl is anachronistically representative of a twenty-first society in which class is less significant in that like some people in the twenty-first century she is able to 'pursue a diversity of lifestyles that cut across class boundaries' (Giddens, 2001, p.189). Yet Cat's individualism means that she must constantly calculate what her actions could lead to rather than be accepting of what the future might bring. As such she reflects a more fluid lifestyle representative of people in the twenty-first century and particularly of young people. Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel suggest that because of changing demands in the workplace 'young people today have to negotiate a set of risks which were largely unknown to their parents: this is true irrespective of social background or gender' (Giddens, 2001, p.203). Such a life as Cat leads reflects Beck's view that although potentially liberating, her life is full of risk as a consequence.

The narratives of Robin Hood, initially exploited through retelling and expanding the pre-texts, developed from the 1980s into new narratives with vestiges of the mythic old (Matthews, 2003). Seen through Carpenter's *Robin of Sherwood* television series (1984-1986) with Robin's links with mythic Herne the Hunter and the sword of Albion, it is further developed through Theresa Tomlinson's *Forestwife* trilogy (1993-2000) with a feminist wise woman focus. Stephen R. Lawhead exploits mythic and fantasy themes in his Robin Hood narratives; his *King Raven* trilogy (2006-2009) draws on Welsh mythology. Such narratives are also a reflection of the new millennium in which the presentation of historical fiction reflects the rupture and fragmentation of society as a result of increased globalisation and the way in which economic growth undermines class structure with increasing individualisation (Giddens, 2001, p.194). It also reflects the manner in which historical fiction has morphed with fantasy in writing for junior aged readers and for young adults. Brian McHale states that 'historical fiction must be realistic fiction; a fantastic historical fiction is an anomaly (1987, p.88) adhering to a historicist model of viewing history in which 'people's minds are the products of their unique historical

circumstances' (Butler and O'Donovan, 2012, p.178) which Stephens identifies as cultural relativism. However, such an anomaly reflects culture in the new millennium and is produced by moving from the realm of the real to the anachronistic, and integrating the historical and the fantastic while sustaining the perspective that human nature and the human condition are fundamentally unchanging. This is a continuation of a humanist model of historical fiction (Butler and O'Donovan, 2012, p.177).

Postmodern historical fiction is revisionist and as such transforms the conventions of historical fiction. It draws on the hesitation which Todorov indicates where the reader is challenged by the text in terms of 'where an event occurs that cannot be explained by the laws of the same familiar world' (Todorov, 1973, p.24/25). This sort of experience Todorov identifies as the fantastic. An example of such a hesitation is exemplified in Sedgwick's story set in the First World War, *The Foreshadowing* (2005) and discussed in Chapter 4. In that narrative, there is an episode where Sasha the narrator-protagonist, helping at the hospital where traumatised soldiers are being treated, ends up in a linen cupboard talking with a Welsh soldier, Evans. He tells her about the electric treatment he is being given and that it feels like it has happened before. He says to her query "The room, them, the wires, the pain. Like it's all happened before, and I'm going through it all over again. Living it again" (75). Shortly after Sasha is told by a nurse that Evans has not "spoken a word of sensible English since he got here ... [o]nly talks gibberish. Not a word anyone can understand" (76). In the light of this comment, Sasha hesitates and reflects "But that can't be right, one way or another. For although Evans was a frightened, hurt and timid man, I had understood everything he said" (76) and readers hesitate with her, between believing in Sasha and her conversation with this man, and questioning whether it is imaginary, part of her dreams, visualisations and perceived comments from soldiers who tell her they will be dead by the next day. Sedgwick's postmodern novel has been discussed in detail in Chapter 4, but it is not an isolated example of historical fiction novels which demonstrate the fusion of historical fiction and fantasy in the twenty-first century, while presenting a humanist perspective.

In addition to Sedgwick's narrative set during the First World War, three other writers produced historical fantasy in the 2000s with settings in the eighteenth century. Susan Cooper, well known for her fantasy writing and following the success of her historical-time-fantasy *King of*

Shadows (1999), published *Victory* in 2006.⁶ This is a historical time fantasy which takes the unsettled contemporary female protagonist back to the Battle of Trafalgar on board HMS Victory where she is transformed/morphed into a boy powder monkey. In keeping with the features of time-slip it uses a scrap of flag left in a book and the girl's visit to the restored ship H.M.S. Victory in Portsmouth harbour as the magic portal or 'fantaseme' by which the transfer is accomplished (Nikolajeva, 1988, p.23). The story is likely to have been written to mark the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 2005 and the inclusion of time-slip dislocation reflects the twenty-first century use of fantasy with historical fiction, something which Stephens did not foresee. The focalisation through two different protagonists and settings reflects postmodernism causing disorientation in readers.

Sally Gardner's *The Red Necklace* (2007) and its sequel *The Silver Blade* (2009) explore the entanglements of a young gypsy, Yann, who has magical powers including thought-reading, and who uses these to overcome greed and power in others while rescuing people from the guillotine during the French Revolution. A humanist perspective is presented through the reflections of the young orphan protagonist and is seen to have been promoted through the teachings of the dwarf who has raised him. The inclusion of a magical element enhances this narrative of the French Revolution and the Scarlet Pimpernel-like work of the protagonist, while involving readers in his thoughts concerning his own background, his acquisition of self-determinacy and his concerns about the girl, Sido, who he loves and rescues. The eighteenth century is again used as a setting to reflect the greed and hegemonic power of men in the twenty-first century. The protagonist's reflections on the various schisms in his life which have brought him to his situation provide a significant humanist element to the narrative, encouraging readers' consideration of cause and effect (Appleyard, 1991; Stephens, 1992). Like Cat Royal, Yann has to negotiate his way trying to calculate what the outcome will be but never secure in the way events will lead him, a reflection of the society in which young people find themselves in the twenty-first century.

The *Time Quake* trilogy by Linda Buckley-Archer (2006 - 2009) for young adults is also historical-time-fantasy and consists of *Gideon the Cutpurse* (2006), *The Tar Man* (2007) and *Time Quake*

⁶ Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series of five books (1965-1977) is contemporary fantasy.

(2009). Time displacement occurs initially for Peter and Kate from twenty-first century Derbyshire to 1763. Butler and O'Donovan (2012, p.180) point out that the humanist perspective is still evident in novels published recently with a historical fantasy element of time-slip and Kate and Peter quickly establish friendships with some eighteenth century characters while recognising that the distance of time makes no difference to some things. However there are many time dislocations both backwards and forwards for a range of characters, including in Book 3, *Time Quake* (2009), fracturing of time and bringing events to the edge of and back from Apocalypse. The narratives reflect the dislocation of society today as the protagonists and action swings between the eighteenth century and the present. Focalisation through different sets of characters enables Buckley-Archer to challenge readers to consider 'what if?' as the opportunities for changing events and becoming more powerful occur for some characters. She also presents tangentially the responsibility of scientists to consider the implications of scientific experimentation. One character reflects the speed at which technological advancement accelerates; displaced to twenty-first century Derbyshire, he comments "'it is but four of my lifetimes [since 1763]. And yet, it seems to me that the *accumulation* and *acceleration* of knowledge in that time is *stupendous*'" (Buckley-Archer, 2009, p.108; Buckley-Archer's emphasis) a reflection on technological developments since the eighteenth century. The portrayal of the girl protagonist, Kate, whose movements become accelerated in the eighteenth century is an ideological reminder for readers of the speeding up of technological developments leading to the increased pace of globalisation and positive and negative effects in the twenty-first century and ultimately on the lives of readers.

John Stephens failed to anticipate the way in which historical fiction would change with the new millennium in response to a changing world. He also assumed, incorrectly, that a humanist ideology would disappear because cultural relativism would make historical fiction redundant. Although there is recognition that historical fiction writing changes over time as demonstrated by the case studies, there are implications for the future publishing of historical fiction in line with socio-cultural developments in the future. While the Secretary of State for Education's prediction in 2011 for the new National Curriculum programme for history implied rote learning and a focus on royal historical persons, the new National Curriculum in England Framework Document (2013) has been produced after much revision following 'near universal derision from

the entire history profession' (Evans, 2013, www.theguardian.com [accessed 26/06/2014]). It announces in its Purpose for History that

History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time' (www.gov.uk)

Such a statement reflects the aims of historical fiction also while, more significantly, indicating a humanist view. Teaching which uses history to 'impart a patriotic sense of national identity through the uncritical hero-worship of great men and women from the British past' (Evans, 2013, n.p) as suggested by Michael Gove has been abandoned. The recognition of historical fiction writing as a means of elaborating the past albeit anachronistically is acknowledged in the new National Curriculum. Story, particularly historical fiction, will be given a prominent place throughout the primary years. A humanist ideology remains a feature of historical fiction writing. It is recognised and forms a central part of a National Curriculum for history and it is still within the expectations of publishers and parents and teachers.

The centenary of the First World War has seen a proliferation of historical novels set in that period and perhaps the next target will be the bi-centenary of the Battle of Waterloo in 2015. However, while the inclusion of fantasy and myth in historical stories is likely to continue in times of concern about the environment, global warming, organic fuels, ethnic cleansing and terrorist wars, writers will continue to explore their cultural anxieties of the present by setting narratives in appropriate settings in the past with or without fantasy elements. Historical fiction for children and young people as part of the body of children's literature is an important vehicle in influencing readers to consider not only events of the past, but to consider their own times and perhaps their role in them, through the ideological underpinning of the narrative. John Stephens' view of what was happening and likely to happen to historical fiction writing for children from the 1980s in retrospect was a statement made without consideration of other implications in terms of humanism, historicism and current economic and political developments. As such it is seen to be presumptuous.

My concern in this thesis was to challenge Stephens' statement concerning the demise of historical fiction. Perceiving that he indicated a move from a humanist perspective to that

relating more to cultural relativism, I chose to consider the manner in which culture and writers' views about socio-cultural concerns at the time of writing are inculcated within the historical setting and actions of their narratives and how this affected the nature and kind of historical fiction stories published. What I discovered was that writing did precede or reflect cultural developments and the ideological tenor of the narratives presented readers with opportunity to reflect not just on the past but the present of their reading. The manner in which historical stories are told reflects the way our culture has changed, for example through the inclusion of protagonists from lower classes or the increasing role girls and women play in historical fiction stories which reflects the feminist movement. Since the time of its expected 'demise' in the 1980s, children's historical fiction has expanded to present narratives for a wider age range and increased in popularity through its fusion with fantasy. It is probably enjoyed by a wider audience now than formerly.

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Appendix A: Table representing children's and young people's historical narratives of a character: Robin Hood, from 1934 – 2014

Writer	Date	Title Illustrator/Publisher	Themes	Characters: age/gender/class	Narrative Voice & Point of view	Reader Age
Geoffrey Trease (1909-1998)	1934	<i>Bows against the Barons</i> London: Lawrence	Struggle to support poor and oppressed against barons. Serfdom and struggles of serf working for baron when fathers have died fighting for baron in Crusades. Focalisation through Dickon, young lad who flees to forest & older RH presents a new focus on RH character. Includes some of Gest tales but changed towards new theme of fight against this particular baron. No Saxons v Normans but poor downtrodden v powerful	Dickon Alan a dale, RH	3 rd person Marxist language tempered in new 1948 edition	11+
	1948	London: Lawrence and Wishart (New edition)				
	1966	London: Hodder and Stoughton				
	1967	Leicester: Brockhampton Press				
	1968	London: London University Press				
	1972	Leicester: Knight				
	1983	London: Hodder & Stoughton (Rev Edn)				
	2004	London: Elliot Thompson (1st Edn)				
	2009	Nottingham: Five Leaves				
	2013	Nottingham: Five Leaves				
Carola Oman (1897-1978)	1937	<i>Robin Hood: The Prince of Outlaws; a tale of the fourteenth century from the 'Lytell Geste'</i> Illust. S. Van Abbé London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd	Expands on themes in Geste but end relates cruelty of King Edward and queen's lover, Welsh marcher baron Roger Mortimer who is slain at Nottingham. Marian weds Robin towards end of story relates activities in Geste and of Black death	Author's Note shows how researched early documents, Wynken and Copland(?) All taken from Little Geste	3 rd person True to Geste but relates also at end to the desire to print by Wynken and Caxton	11+
	1939	This Edn 1949				
1940						
Charles Herbert (retold)	1940	<i>Robin Hood and his Merry Men</i> Juvenile Productions Ltd	Usual themes including court of King and back to forest, extras added. Ends with death of RH from Geste	Usual	3 rd person omniscient	9-11
No author named No Illustrator	1949	<i>Robin Hood and his Merrie Men</i> (Regent Classics)	Starts with Robin as a boy. Attempts to give present day social background to		3 rd person Robin says 'is dinner ready?' and 'mother's reply came from	9+

named		Date identified through: www.WorldCat.org . The Thames Publishing Co. London	appeal to readers-called in for dinner		the kitchen' Written as if in present 'mother washing up'	
1950						
Donald Suddaby (1900-1964);	1950	<i>New Tales of Robin Hood</i> Ill. T. H. Robinson; London: Blackie & Son	No reference to Geste tales. Ending when RH and men having escaped to Whitby fight off Prince John and his men and are then called back to Sherwood by herald from King Richard.	Lots of new characters mentioned as well as usual	3 rd person omniscient	9-11
Rosemary Sutcliffe (1920-1992)	1950	<i>The Chronicles of Robin Hood</i> Illust. C. Walter Hodges London: Oxford University Press	Loyalty, Love, friendship; support for poor	Narrative containing most of Geste extended in narrative but with new parts. Episodes	3 rd person True to early rhymes; conservative	9-11
Roger Lancelyn Green (1918-1987)	1956 2010	<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i> Illust. Walter Crane Alfred A Knopf Illust: Arthur Hall London: Penguin Introduction John Boyne	States in Author's Note that he has drawn on Munday, Noyes, Tennyson, Peacock & Scott, Johnson & Green as well as A Lyttell Geste & ballads. Reign Richard 1 C12th	Usual characters	3 rd person Focalised through main characters Uses linguistic connotations to imply speech of times past 'Now by my soul ... proud sir, we be but four brave foresters '	11+
Antonia Pakenham (b. 1932)	1957	<i>Robin Hood</i> Ill. Geoffrey Whittam The Heirloom Library	Introduces attitude of Norman to Saxon from beginning; Expanded narrative but some relation to pre-texts	Includes Lady Marian	3 rd person Focalised through range of characters	9-11

Ruth Manning-Sanders (compiler) (1886-1980)	1959	<i>A Bundle of ballads</i> Ill. William Stobbs London: Oxford University Press	Author's Note: from <i>A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode, Munday's Downfall of Robert Earl of Nottingham & The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon</i> Ritson- end C18 made them into real literature		Rhyming 3 rd person	9-11
Donald Suddaby	1959	<i>Fresh News from Sherwood</i> Illust. William Stobbs				
1960						
Enid Blyton (1897-1968) (retold)	1963	<i>Tales of Brave Adventure</i> No Illustrator identified Dean & Son Ltd	Childlike characters: Fun fighting, admiring skill of others, death dealt with summarily	First half Robin Hood; Second half King Arthur	3 rd person Very sanitised narrative for young children	7+
Pamela Melnikoff	1965	<i>The Star and the Sword</i> Ill. Hans Schwarz Pub: The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia	Jews; Pogrom- York; boy & girl escape; flee and taken to forest & RH; he takes them to uncle in Oxford Caring nature of RH = equality of race	Setting 1193 Boy- Benedict (13) Girl – Elvira (10)	3 rd person RH used as a model for present day equality of race. Focalised through perspective of children	9+
Donald Suddaby	1965	<i>Robin Hood's Master Stroke</i>				
Ruth Manning-Sanders	1968	<i>Stories from the English and Scottish Ballads</i> Ill. Trevor Ridley London: Heinemann	Introduction explains about ballads- minstrels singing these stories- dateless and anonymous	Includes 9 ballads of Robin Hood		9+
1970						
Antonia Fraser (b.1932); ill. Rebecca Fraser; Pub. London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd	1971	<i>Robin Hood</i> Ill. Trevor Ridley Pub. Heinemann, London	Republication of Antonia Pakenham's (now Fraser) (1955) text	Expanded tales but with main characters from earlier texts. Meeting with Marian: has set out to entrap him for Montdragon & Sherriff 'Cowered in her litter and buried her head in her hands' (52) but confesses	3 rd person Omniscient tells readers of Marian's deceit (55) - pebbles	

Donald Suddaby	1972	<i>Robin Hood Omnibus</i>				
Patricia Leitch (b. 1933)	1979	<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i> Illust. Peter Archer London: Armada by Fontana Paperbacks	States that it is based on the ballads Robert Fitzooth- son of Earl of Huntingdon	Story from Robin 11 years old who sees man & boy shoot deer and captured by King's Foresters. From tree rescues them	3 rd person Captures 'merriness' of Robin Fighting injustice of King John	9+
1980						
Richard Carpenter	1984	<i>Robin of Sherwood</i> Pub. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books	Based on TV script Set Richard 1 reign. Introduces magic – stone circles called Rhiannon's Wheel. True to spirit of RH. Good v Evil, good overcoming but with Herne's help. Short scenes which introduce various characters	Usual character; Robin, Much, Sherriff; Guy Abbot Hugo, sheriff's brother. Others: Simon de Belleme – Azael ademon; prophesies of Gildas re Hooded One.	3 rd person; omniscient. Short 'scenes' moving from one character to another Includes magic	11+
Robin May (1929-1996)	1985	<i>Richard Carpenter's Robin of Sherwood and the Hounds of Lucifer</i> Harmondsworth: Puffin for Penguin Books	RH rescues victims intended for sacrifice	Story of TV Series RH Marian a minor character/appendage	3 rd person Includes fantasy/black arts	11+
Anthony Horowitz (b. 1955)	1986	<i>Richard Carpenter's Robin of Sherwood: The Hooded Man</i> Harmondsworth: Puffin for Penguin Books	1209; Transhistorical nature of RH; Robert of Huntingdon called by Herne the Hunter from the castle rescued the outlaws after RH's death, becomes the new RH. Prologue focalised through Sheriff informs that RH dead, though a hooded man came from forest and rescued	Story of TV series Brings in new characters and events but concerned with Normans desire to subdue Wales. Marcher Lords since William have become too powerful.	3 rd person omniscient Marian still minor character though focus given to her rescue	11+
Richard Carpenter	1988	<i>Robin of Sherwood: The Time of the Wolf</i> Harmondsworth: Puffin for Penguin Books	Good against evil. Based on the Summer King mythology and autumnal death. Robin against Gisbourne and	Guy of Gisbourne and Robin share the same father	3 rd person omniscient Separate episodes (cf TV progs)	11+

			Sheriff. Good monks – reliquaries, - speaking out against wickedness of those who deprive poor. Emphasises serfdom (slavery)			
Robin McKinley (b. 1952)	1988	<i>The Outlaws of Sherwood</i>	More social services – caring nature RH	Usual characters – more agentic women: Marian, Cecile	3 rd person Omniscient Role of women much stronger and more independent	13+
1990						
Simon Green (b. 1955)	1991	<i>Kevin Costner is Robin Hood Prince of Thieves</i> based on story by Pen Densham & John Watson Pub: Fantail Books	Robin; Azeem (Moor) Marian- feisty at times	Story written from novel and screen play RH returns from Crusades- learns father killed and land taken by Sheriff – outlawed. Dumas?	3 rd person Incorporates fantasy (black magic- foretelling) post modernist aspects & humour	13+
Theresa Tomlinson (b. 1946)	1993	<i>The Forestwife</i> Pub: Julia MacRae; London: Red Fox	Struggle of poor against those more powerful & rich. Support of poor outsiders for others. Support of women for women	Nurse/Forestwife-female (Robert's mother) Mary/Marian-female young woman -Lady Robert - poor	3 rd person Focalised through Mary/Marian	YA
Robert Leeson (1928-2013) (retold)	1994 1996	<i>The Story of Robin Hood</i> Ill. Barbara Lofthouse London: Kingfisher	Traditional. Author's note at end relates historical background to legend and relates message: 'that truth, justice and courtesy should be defended, if need be against the law, is as valid for the present as the past' (160)	Traditional characters and narrative strongly related to pre-texts -May King and Queen – R & M. Modern language; no indication of 'making strange'	3 rd person Focalisation through different characters	11+
Monica Furlong (1930-2003)	1995	<i>Robin's Country</i> Pub. New York: Random House	Deprivation of orphan at hands of adoptive family – slavery and abuse; reclamation at hands of RH and followers, particularly	Boy – orphan slave 'Dummy' (mute); RH; Marian;	3 rd person Cf : Trease-focalisation through character not in Geste; Marian helps child-motherly(?)	9+

			Marian. Discovery of self and background. Speech			
Michael Morpurgo; (b.1943)	1996	<i>Robin of Sherwood</i> Illust. Michael Foreman; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt	Inclusivity/acceptance. Outlaws are cast-outs; dwarfs, albinos who hide in forest. Marion an albino.	Frame story present day: Boy, epileptic, in present of great storm finds arrow head, bow and skeleton of RH; while RH dreams of his own death	3 rd person; told through boy and RH as 12 year old	9+
Spike Milligan (1918-2002) (according to)	1998	<i>Robin Hood</i> Virgin Publishing Ltd	A mixture of historical fact and modern humour; changes character of Robert Earl of Loxley into mean man		3 rd person omniscient Main focus humour	13+
Theresa Tomlinson	1998	<i>Child of the May</i> London: Red Fox	Mixture of RH ballads and history of women in medieval times – healing; Focus on John’s daughter Emma had married LJ but been shot in back by soldier	Usual characters but story expanded	3 rd person omniscient Mainly focalised through Emma	YA
2000						
Theresa Tomlinson	2000	<i>The Path of the She-Wolf</i> London : Red Fox	Leads up to death of Robin and Marian	Focus on Mary/Marian	3 rd person omniscient	YA
Theresa Tomlinson	2003	<i>The Forestwife trilogy</i> London: Corgi Books	Three separate narratives Published as one book		3 rd person omniscient	YA
Stephen R. Lawhead (b. 1950)	2006	<i>Hood: King Raven Book 1</i> Pub: Atom books	Welsh version US Author but writes of celtic mythology		3 rd person omniscient	YA
Marcia Williams (b.1945)	2007	<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i> (retold and illustrated by Marcia Williams London: Walker Books	Picturebook version with underlying narrative and speech Relates a few of the Geste ballads but modern overview Postmodern		Several narrators- narrative 3 rd person of events; dialogue comments of actions Different focalisations provides ideological perspectives as well as humour	9+
Stephen R.	2007	<i>Scarlet: King Raven Book</i>	Framed narrative from Will		3 rd person Focalisation from	YA

Lawhead		2 Pub: Atom Books	Scarlet, imprisoned; story of his life to a monk-scribe		Scarlet's viewpoint	
Stephen R. Lawhead Pub: Atom books	2009	<i>Tuck: King Raven Book 3</i> Pub: Atom Books			3 rd person Focalisation from Tuck's viewpoint	YA
Tony Lee (b.1970)	2009	<i>Outlaw: The Legend of Robin Hood</i> Graphic Novel London: Walker Books				YA
Angus Donald (b.1965)	2009	<i>Outlaw Chronicles: 1:Outlaw</i> Pub. Sphere	Presents Robin as a cruel gangster type character			12+
2010						
Angus Donald	2010	<i>2: Holy Warrior</i> Pub. Sphere				12+
Angus Donald	2010	<i>3: King's Man</i> Pub. Sphere				12+
Angus Donald	2012	<i>4: Warlord</i> Pub. Sphere				12+
A.C. Gaughen	2012	<i>Scarlet</i>	Twist on RH tale – Scarlet is a woman disguised and in love with RH.			YA
Angus Donald	2013	<i>5: Grail Knight</i> Pub. Sphere				12+
Angus Donald	2013	<i>The Rise of Robin Hood;</i> Pub. Sphere Prequel to series	Novella			12+
Lauren Johnson	2013	<i>The Arrow of Sherwood</i> Barnsley: Pub. Pen & Sword Books	1193: Returning from Crusades, believed dead and land given to other family, Wants justice against heavy taxation for poor; sets up encampment as a leper colony in forest for protection			YA

Adam Thorpe (b.1956)	2013	<i>Hodd</i> London: Random House	Linguistically challenging; includes footnotes purporting to come from man who was a medievalist, who found manuscript.	Frame story- indicates a manuscript found in WWI trench but writing of a monk at Whitby in C15th; telling of story he made up which has become a legend	1 st person narrative Focalised through various in dialogue	YA
Toby Venables (b. 80s)	2013	<i>The Hunter of Sherwood 1: Knight of Shadows</i> Abaddon	Good against evil but tables turned re RH. Writer draws on history for background	Focus on Guy of Gisburne, a C21 James Bond; RH is a psychopath	Use of analepsis	YA
Steven A McKay (b.1977)	2013	<i>Wolf's Head (The Forest Lord 1)</i> Self-published	Setting 1321; Justice for the poor against those in high places, including the Dispensers and King Edward II	Based on Wakefield & Barnsdale Some use of trad. version & pre-texts. Addition of Adam Bell (other folk tale) as leader of outlaws that RH joins. Scenes move between RH and other events – Matilda, Richard of Lee, as plot develops	3 rd person; omniscient Focalisation through dialogue. – foul language and profanity. Some analepsis or recalling of events p.248 Matilda practises combat with smaller bow, staff and knife	YA
Steven A McKay	2013	<i>The Wolf and the Raven (The Forest Lord 2)</i> Self-published			3 rd person Narrative focalised mainly through Guy of Gisbourne as king's bounty hunter	YA

Appendix B: Table representing children's and young people's historical fiction novels of a period: the long eighteenth century (1688-1832) 1934-2014

Writer	Date of pub.	Title	time	setting	Themes	Characters: gender/age/class	Narrative Voice & Point of view	Reader age
L. A. G. Strong (1896-1958)	1935; 1949	<i>Mr Sheridan's Umbrella</i> Harmondsworth: Penguin Books	1808	Brighton, London	responsibility move to adulthood	Male -15; MIDDLE	1 st person Focalised through male	11+
Florence Bone (1875-1971)	1936	<i>The Lads of Lud</i> Sir I Pitman & Sons	1812	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
John Masefield (1878-1967)	1938 1974	<i>Dead Ned</i> London Heinemann Harmondsworth: Penguin	1740	London	Class/greed; befriended by old ship's captain; later accused of murdering him.	Male – 16-18: MIDDLE – apprentice doctor; son of Dr	1 st person Focalised through Ned	11+
John Masefield	1939 1975	<i>Alive and Kicking Ned</i> London: Heinemann Harmondsworth: Penguin (Abridged edn.)	1740	Liverpool; at sea; W Africa	Slavery; on slave ship bound for west coast Africa; on coast	Male: 18; MIDDLE; same character; returned to life; Ship's surgeon	1 st person	11+
1940								
Marjorie Bowen (1885-1952)	1940	<i>Strangers to Freedom</i> Illust. Gina Dawson; London: J.M. Dent & Sons	1789-	France – northern & Paris	Survival; Effect of French Revolution on poor members of aristocracy; Class decrees certain behaviours	Female-15 -UPPER	1 st person	11+
Geoffrey Trease (1909-1998)	1947 1994	<i>Trumpets in the West</i> London Basil Blackwell Ltd London: Pan Macmillan Children's Books	1685-6	Sedgemoor West country and London	Following battle of Sedgemoor help Major escape who later helps them in London	Male – 15-Jack; Female-15-Jane Goodrich Henry Purcell (music link)	3 rd person	9+

Norman Collins (1907-1982)	1948	<i>Black Ivory</i> Pub. London: Collins	1740	N. England; at sea. W. Africa; London	Survival of poor Greed of newly rich landowners- slavers; Ship; slavery not just of Africans; inhumanity religion – struggle for ‘rights of all men’	Male-14- LOWER	1 st person Strong religious viewpoint of refusing to be subject to harshness & overt power	11+
Cynthia Harnett (1893-1981)	1949	<i>The Great House</i>	1690	London; Surrey	Heritage; preserving and building on from past	(Male - 11 - MIDDLE (Female x 2 - 9yrs Grandmother -UPPER	External Mainly indirect speech; Some dialogue focalised through characters	9+
1950								
Meriol Trevor (1919-2000)	1955	<i>Sun Slower, Sun Faster</i> Illust. Edward Ardizzone; Bathgate, North Dakota: Ignatius Press	HTF 1780s	Country house and Bath	Threat nuclear war; catholic faith – strong in family	Male 12/13 MIDDLE Female	3 rd person Deborah	9+
Margaret Jowett	1955 1962	<i>Candidate for Fame</i> Illust. Peggy Fortnum; London: Oxford University Press	1776-	England: Beverley, York, London	C18th theatre; actors	Female-16 – Deborah LOWER; daughter of an actor-manager	3 rd person	11+
Ronald Welch (1909-1982)	1956	<i>Captain of Dragoons</i>	1703-1704	Low Countries Paris	Warfare; honour; upper class; espionage;	All male – John Carey UPPER	3 rd person omniscient	11+
Ronald Welch	1958	<i>Mohawk Valley</i>	1755-1759	Canada	Frontier farming/estate; dealing with corruption/bad-management; bravery	Male- 17 – Charles Carey; UPPER	3 rd person omniscient	11+
Lucy Boston (1892-1990)	1958	<i>The Chimneys of Green Knowe</i> Ill. Peter Boston London: Faber and	HTF present/ 1750s	Cambridgeshire	WWII period – missing father Class- mother W dead Prejudice- class & slavery	Tolly: 9 - MIDDLE Grandmother	3 rd person Mainly Tolly	9+

	2003	Faber Hemingford Grey: Oldknow Books						
Ronald Welch	1959	<i>Captain of Foot</i>	1808-1812	Spain- Peninsular war	War; fighting; honour;	All male- UPPER- Christopher, Richard Carey	3 rd person omniscient	11+
1960								
Geoffrey Trease	1960	<i>Thunder of Valmy</i> Illust. J.S.Goodall; London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.	1784-1789	Paris & N. countryside	Recognition of talent whatever class or gender Class prejudice of some upper class; Importance of wealth; Value of integrity	Male- artistic- LOWER - 12- 15; Pierre Woman artist- MIDDLE; Girl aristo (dependent) Man – UPPER devious	1 st person - Pierre	11+
Frederick Grice (1910-1983)	1960 1964	<i>Aidan and the Strollers</i> Illust. William Stobbs London: Jonathan Cape Harmondsworth: Puffin		Various parts of south, London and north.	Money & inheritance, old men's need for it and depriving others. Aidan runs away; taken on by strolling players (knows his Shakespeare); moves on; lots of adventures eventually returns to his home and inheritance	Male- Aidan – Poor but UPPER-MIDDLE;	3 rd person- Aidan	9+
Ronald Welch	1960 1978	<i>Escape from France</i> London: Oxford University Press Harmondsworth: Puffin Books	1791	Cambridge; London; France - northern	Rescue of aristocrats from guillotine; honesty & courage – demonstrates that dishonesty is not related to poor only;	Male - 19 - UPPER 'but of sound moral fibre'; Richard Carey;	3 rd person Mainly Carey	11+
Hester Burton (1913-2000)	1962 1972	<i>Castors Away!</i> Illust. Victor Ambrus; London: Oxford University Press Oxford: Oxford University Press	1805	Suffolk; London	Concern and care for all; Middle class Dr and family; Integrity – Rescued soldier hidden but wants to fight for country Questions childhood innocence – parents want to protect, but chn can't be	Female-Nell Male-Edmund Male-Tom Brothers & sister; MIDDLE - YA - soldier etc. Freedom of choice	3 rd person Varies; involves whole family, servants, soldier	11+

					protected (124)			
Hester Burton	1963	<i>Time of Trial</i> Illust. Victor Ambrus; London: Oxford University Press	1801	London; Suffolk	Gender – focalised through girl Need for democracy – ignoring poor; housing/greedy landlords Speaking out against gvt leads to imprisonment	Girl – 17 MIDDLE	3 rd person Focalised thro’ Meg mainly	11+
Leon Garfield (1921-1996)	1964	<i>Jack Holborn</i> Constable: Young Books Harmondsworth: Puffin	1750s	London, Bristol, at sea, Caribbean;	Adventure; sea; pirates; slaves, treasure Law system and abuse of; Greed v honesty/caring; Boy’s desire for family	Jack -9 -LOWER; Sheringham UPPER etc. – all male	1 st person - Jack	11+
Phyllis Bentley (1894-1977)	1964	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sleigh</i>	1720s	Yorkshire	Life for poor in cloth trade; poor laws; Daniel Defoe helps. Detail of cloth trade	Male-Tom; LOWER	3 rd person Tom	11+
Kathleen Fidler	1964	<i>The Desperate Journey</i>	1811	Highlands; Glasgow	Dispossession of crofters in Scotland; cotton mill work Glasgow; emigration to Canada	David - Male Kirsty – Female; LOWER	3 rd person Focalised through children’s perspective	11+
Michael Mott	1965	<i>Master Entrick</i>	1754	England; New York; west; England	England; lawlessness; Kidnapping, bondage shipping to America; survival and friendship	Robert Entrick – male MIDDLE		11+
Elsie K. Seth-Smith	1965	<i>Selina</i>	1819	Village outside London	Social conscience in middle-class girl; in contrast to clergyman father Conditions for poor- Newgate prison, poorhouse	Selina- female MIDDLE		11+
Hester Burton	1966 1975	<i>No Beat of Drum</i> Illust. Victor Ambrus; London: Oxford University Press Paperback Edn	1829-1830	Hampshire, At sea; Van Diemens Land	Taxes on poor; starvation; deceit Anger at injustice justice system; transportation- eventual better life	Joe – 19 – LOWER	3 rd person Omniscient Ideological in narration and dialogue	11+

Leon Garfield	1966	<i>Devil in the Fog</i> Illust. Jason Cockroft; Oxford: Oxford University Press	1750s	London	Deception & greed Similar themes to Jack Holborn – brothers; boy's father Circus	Boy – 9 – LOWER Mr Tweet-LOWER Family-UPPER	1 st person-	11+
Barbara Leonie Picard (1917-2011)	1966 1971	<i>The Young Pretenders</i> Edmund Ward (Publishers) Ltd Harmondsworth: Puffin Books Ltd	1745	N. Yorks family estate	Looking for adventure; deception friendship/trust Ideology about haves/have nots; money from slavery Childhood innocence	Boy – Francis Rimpole – 13 Girl – Annabel -11 UPPER Man – Seamus – LOWER	3 rd person Omniscient; Ideological; focalisation through dialogue	11+
Mollie Hunter (1922-2012)	1966 1979	<i>The Ghosts of Glencoe</i> Evans Brothers Ltd London: Pan Books Ltd	1691-1692	Fort William, & Glencoe	Slaughter of Maclan Clan in Glencoe instigated by Campbell of Glenlyon with British backing. Deceit of Scots against other clans- using British army to their purpose	Male – 19 – Robert Stewart-UPPER	1 st person- Robert	11+
William Mayne (1928-2010)	1966	<i>Earthfasts</i>	HTF 1780	Richmond, N. Yorks	Present and 18thC drummer boy appears from hill	Male –12 – LOWER 2 friends (pres) drummer boy (past) Lower	3 rd person Focalised through 2 friends	11+
Rosemary Manning (1911-1988)	1966	<i>Boney was a Warrior</i>	1805	Dorset coast	Young boy longs to be a soldier (for 6-8 year olds)	Male		6+
Ruth Manning-Saunders (1886-1988)	1966	<i>The Extraordinary Margaret Catchpole</i>	1790s	Suffolk	Fictionalised true story of girl's support for man-seaman/smuggler; results in her imprisonment & transportation	Margaret – female LOWER		11+
Leon Garfield	1967	<i>Smith Constable</i> Harmondsworth: Puffin	1750	London	Survival, determination – reading (Educ) Justice is 'blind' – (cf Sir John Fielding-social reformer) Mr	Male – 12 –LOWER Barrister – MIDDLE Mainly male	External omniscient Focalised mainly through Smith	11+

					Mansfield-deceit (Billings)			
Phyllis Bentley	1967	<i>Ned Carver in Danger</i>	1810	Yorkshire	Challenges to croppers and weavers with introduction of machinery; Luddites;	Ned – boy, male LOWER Robert Stead-cropper – male LOWER	3 rd person	11+
Barbara Freeman (1906-1999)	1967	<i>The Forgotten Theatre</i>	1760s	?	Theatre in C18; lives of strolling players	2 girls	External with focalisation through characters	11+
Leon Garfield	1968 2001	<i>Black Jack</i> Longman's Young Books Oxford: Oxford University Press	1749	South country & London	Manipulation of young people by others determination of Bart saves girl who is not insane	Male -14 – Bartholomew (Tolly) LOWER Black Jack 20s- LOWER Girl –Belle MIDDLE	3 rd person omniscient Focalised mainly through Bart and later through Black Jack	11+
Iona McGregor (b.1929)	1968 1986	<i>An Edinburgh Reel</i> Faber & Faber Ltd Edinburgh: Canongate Publishing Ltd (Kelpies)	1751	Edinburgh	6 years after Culloden, father returns from prison hulks and France to discover who betrayed him. Daughter must save him; love interest	Female- 15 Christine Murray- Poor MIDDLE but accepted by wealthier relatives	3 rd person focalised through Christine and dialogue	11+
1970								
Catherine Cookson (1906-1998)	1970 1973	<i>The Nipper</i> Harmondsworth: Puffin	1800	NE England	Living conditions of poor Mining & revolt against working conditions and effects Landlords, squires (man trap) land; Class Landlords/owners & workers- manipulation	Male – 16 – LOWER Grandmother - LOWER Based around a pony which becomes a pit pony	3 rd person	9+
Barbara Willard	1970	<i>Priscilla Pentecost</i> Illust. Doreen Roberts; London: Hamish Hamilton			Contrasts lives of poor orphan girl placed with a farming family and a spoilt, wealthy girl. Attitudes of hierarchy of	Female- Priscilla – LOWER 8/9	3 RD person Attitudes to foundlings/orphans-poor house;	9+

					servants in house.		philanthropists	
Leon Garfield	1970	<i>The Drummer Boy</i> Longman's Young Books Illust. Anthony Maitland; Peacock Books	1756-1763	Low countries/ France, London	Young poor person's views of war and how ignoble it is. How some people prey on others drawing them in to manipulate and destroy them	Male – Charlie Sampson - 16/17 – LOWER	3 rd person omniscient Present tense opening of battle. Focalised mainly through Charlie	13+
Hester Burton	1971	<i>The Rebel</i> London: Oxford University Press	1788 – 1793	Yorks France/Paris Yorks	Belief in equality and how this can affect life How ideals can be overturned (French Rev.) but take a new direction through teaching – education – 'freedom of reading' (130)	Stephen – 17- MIDDLE Sister-Catherine Brother Josh - 16 Sister's friend –Martha	3 rd person Focalised mainly through Stephen; Stephen's ideology made apparent at opening thro' thought & dialogue.	13+
								Author's note always provides historical background for story
Hester Burton	1972	<i>Riders of the Storm</i> Illust. Victor Ambrus; Pub. London: Oxford University Press	1793-1794	Manchester. Author note explains its basis on real happenings	Dedication to others to bring value of education to ensure change Socialist views v others Sequel to <i>The Rebel</i>	Stephen –23; MIDDLE	3 rd person Focalised thro' Stephen	13+
Peter Carter (1929-1999)	1973	<i>The Black Lamp</i> Illust. David Harris Pub. London: Oxford University Press	1805	Yorks/Lancs border	War-increasing costs and taxation affects poor, not rich Injustice – greed of mill owners who call on yeomanry to support against cottage weavers etc. Effect on one family of injustice Child labour-conditions Need for a continual fight for justice and good treatment	Daniel - 13; LOWER Male_ Male – Cranley: LOWER aspiring to MIDDLE	1 st person – Daniel Engineering apprentice Retrospective and reflective; Personal; ideological through reflection and through dialogue prentice	11+
Peter Carter	1974	<i>The Gates of Paradise</i> Illust: Fermin Rocker;	1796	London	Starved orphan boy Ben taken in by William Blake and wife. Man spying on Blakes Blake practises what he	Male-, Ben – 12; LOWER Male –William Blake – 20s -MIDDLE Female –Sophy, his wife	3 rd person Omniscient Focalisation varied Lot of dialogue	11+

		London: Oxford University Press			preaches - socialism Religion			
Leon Garfield	1974	<i>The Sound of Coaches</i> With engravings by John Lawrence; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.	1760s	Dorking- London- Dorking – Chichester	Adventure of coach driving Finding self- knowing self In three parts	Sam Chichester LOWER (fostered)- from birth to young man	External omniscient Varied: mainly Mr Chichester; then Sam	11+
Geoffrey Trease	1975	<i>The Chocolate Boy & other stories in Long Ag Children's Omnibus</i> Illust. David Walker London: William Heinemann Ltd	1785	Nottingham	Freedom-black servant/slave arranges his own 'death' and joins a circus Church's attitude to slavery Treatment of servants Quakers and anti-slavery	Girl- Sarah – 9/10 MIDDLE Boy – Sam, black 9/10 LOWER Aunt-MIDDLE	3 rd person – omniscient Sam; Sarah	8+
Leon Garfield	1975	<i>The Prisoners of September</i> Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd	1789 Or is it later?	Sussex; Paris; Sussex	Democracy - French rev. Human relationships & weaknesses - prejudice Mistaken beliefs	Lewis - 17 -MIDDLE - son of wine merchant (new rich) Richard - UPPER; old aristocratic family	3 rd person Focalised mainly through Lewis Boston but occasionally through Richard & others	13+
Geoffrey Trease	1976	<i>Violet for Bonaparte</i> London: Macmillan London Ltd	1814	England; Italy	Belief in freedom for all- democracy	LOWER young man -art American Girl -	3 rd person	11+
Hester Burton	1976	<i>To Ravensrigg</i> London: Oxford University Press	1786	Bath; sea; Cornwall, Liverpool, LD	Helping others - fighting injustice Belief in democracy (slavery) Knowing who you are	Girl – 15 MIDDLE	3 rd person;	13+
Leon Garfield	1976	<i>The Pleasure Garden</i> Illust. Fritz Wegner; Pub. London: Penguin Books Pub. London: Lion	1800s	London	Pleasure garden – with café and arbours and walks; secret meetings; group of children acting as spies; intention theft & information used for blackmail. Secrets; Murder.	Various characters all LOWER	3 rd person	13+

	1991	Tracks						
Leon Garfield	1976-8	<i>The Apprentices</i> William Heinemann Ltd; William Heinemann Ltd; London: Mammoth	1764	London	How poor survive- takes different apprentices & demonstrates their lives-honest or not.	11 stories Young men mainly but one woman; all LOWER	3 rd person; omniscient	13+
Joan Aiken	1977, 2007	<i>Go Saddle the Sea</i> Doubleday Harcourt Books	1821	Spain; at sea, Somerset	Need to find one's Identity & self determination Honesty and Godliness (talks with God)	Male – Felix-12 - UPPER Pedro -LOWER; Grandfather	1 st person- Felix Focalised through Felix	11+
Marjorie Darke	1977 2007	<i>The First of Midnight</i> London: Kestrel London Barn Owl Books	1807	Bristol	Treachery and corruption of those with power – Class. Struggle of girl and black youth for emancipation. Support of some.	Female– Gatty-14- LOWER Male- Midnight - 15 – SLAVE 2 elderly sisters-MIDDLE	3 rd person POV- Gatty Midnight	13+
P.J. Cavanagh	1978 1980	<i>Scarf Jack</i> London: The Bodley Head Ltd London: Puffin Books Ltd	1798-9	Gloucester county	Fear of revolution (French via Ireland to England)and Ethnic cleansing lies behind story	Male: Francis 12 – MIDDLE Scarf Jack (father), Mr Edward mother in background	1 st person - Francis	11+
Leon Garfield	1978	<i>The Confidence Man</i> Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd	1730s	Germany	Protestants leave for America from persecution	Male – Hans-Rupert MIDDLE – 14	3 rd person POV Hans Rupert	13+
Jan Needle	1979	<i>A Fine Boy for Killing</i> London: André Deutsch Ltd	1803-1815	South coast; at sea	Corruption (navy) & corrupting young Cruelty/survival	All male – Thomas Fox – 12- LOWER (farmer's son) William Bentley- 12; MIDDLE (midshipman and nephew of Captain	3 rd person- omniscient POV intelligent - William; & simple boy-Thomas	13+
1980								
Leon Garfield	1980	<i>John Diamond</i> London: Kestrel London: Puffin/Penguin	1780s	Hertfordshire London	Trying to right a wrong A child's growth towards independence through concern for others	William – 12 – MIDDLE All male Shot in the head – 13- LOWER	1 st person-William POV William; often naïve & humorous	11+

Rosemary Sutcliff	1983 1994	<i>Bonnie Dundee</i> London: The Bodley Head London Red Fox; Random House	1680s	Scotland	Religious freedom Fighting for a cause	Boy – 12 – Hugh Herriot- LOWER John Graham of Claverhouse – 20s- MIDDLE Girl – Darklis LOWER	1 st person Frame: Hugh Herriot looking back revealed at end.	13+
Joan Aiken	1983	<i>Bridle the Wind</i> Pub; Jonathan Cape Pub; Puffin Books	1822	France; N. Spain	Again listening and speaking with God a key element- believing in God's guidance Element of diabolism	Boy –Felix-12 UPPER Girl -Juan- a girl (impersonating a boy) MIDDLE	1 st person – Felix POV Felix	11+
Philippe Dupasquier	1986	<i>Jack at Sea</i> PICTUREBOOK	1805	At sea	Cruelty of life for men on ships Value of Friendship of some	Boy- orphan 8 - LOWER; friend press-ganged	1 st person – Jack written text; Pics – external	6+
Rosemary Sutcliff	1986	<i>Flame Coloured Taffeta</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press	Pre- 1727 1726	Dorset	Smuggling Helping others (good Samaritan) Overcoming fears rescues & shields young man with papers (spy?) Girls can have adventures too but need help of boy!	Girl – Damaris-12 - MIDDLE (wealthy farmer's daughter Boy- (vicar's son) -15 - MIDDLE	3 rd person POV -Damaris	11+
Helen Cresswell (1934-2005)	1987	<i>Moondial</i> Illust. P.J. Lynch London: Puffin with Faber & Faber Ltd and the National trust		Lincolnshire	Psychological Time slip from present to different periods in past; section about girl with facial disfigurement in C18	Girl – 13 – Penelope - LOWER	3 rd person analepsis	9+
Joan Aiken	1988 1997	<i>The Teeth of the Gale</i> Jonathan Cape Ltd London: Red Fox	1821	N. Spain	About freedom to pursue beliefs- liberalism being stifled (imprisonment) by king	Boy-Felix – 12 UPPER Pedro – 14 LOWER Girl – Juana - 12 (novitiate) MIDDLE; her cousin (duplicitous)	1 st person – Felix now a student	11+
Bernard Cornwell	1981- 1989	<i>Sharpe Series</i>	11 books based on Richard Sharpe's adventures in Spain ending in Waterloo		Adventure; battles, cleverness of Sharpe as a leader but empathy	Richard Sharpe LOWER	3 rd person	Adult but read by YA

1990								
Theresa Tomlinson (b.1946)	1991 1994	<i>The Rope Carrier</i> London: Julia MacRae Books London: Walker Books Ltd	1786	Castleton, Derbyshire Sheffield	contrasts rural & urban life; support and security from living in a close-knit community; harsh realities of life in townships re accommodation water, food, milk; Beginnings of unions/re old guilds & fighting for rights; dangers in some manufacturing (knives/metal)	Minnie Dak -13/15 - LOWER	3 RD person POV Minnie Feminist projection narrative	11+
Alan Gibbons	1992 1994	<i>Dagger in the Sky</i> <i>Dent Children's Books</i> London: Orion Publishing group Ltd	1812	Lancashire	Fighting against injustice Class - adjusting to change Class contrast	Boy - 13 -LOWER Girl – 13 - MIDDLE	3 rd person Various; mainly boy	11+
Jan Needle	1996	<i>A Fine Boy for Killing-</i> unabridged	1803-1815	West country	Corruption (navy) & corrupting young Cruelty/survival	All male – Thomas Fox – 12- LOWER (poor farmer's son) William Bentley- 12; MIDDLE (midshipman, nephew of Captain	3 rd person Omniscient POV intelligent - William; & simple boy-Thomas	YA
Geoffrey Trease	1997	<i>Danger in the Wings</i> Pub: London: Hodder Children's Books	1774-1776	Boston; Bristol	Desire to follow dreams; Spying Freedom and democracy – American war of Independence from both sides Gender equality	American Boy – Dan - 17- MIDDLE Girl -(actor) -17 - LOWER	3 rd person	11+
2000								
Jamila Gavin	2000	<i>Coram Boy</i> London: Mammoth/Egmont Children's Books Ltd	In two parts: 1741; 1750	Gloucestershire; London	Baby & child murder; preying on misfortune Contrasts lives upper & Lower classes Choices/responsibilities Gender emancipation	Otis -adult -LOWER ; Meshak -14-LOWER Alexander – 14- UPPER Thomas – 14 –LOWER	Meshak Focalisation changes from one character to another & dialogue	11+

Frances Mary Hendry	2000 2004	<i>Chains</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press Paperback Edn	1794	Liverpool; Mali; Mali-Niger boarder; Aberdeen; At sea;	Story about different sorts of slavery & cultural views Fight for a voice-independence Mr Hunter puts the other POV about slavery Ultimately it's the wealthy higher class girl, now rich, who sets out to change the world. Implication that power and riches are necessary to make changes	Girl-Juliet 16 - MIDDLE Boy -Hassan- -16- MIDDLE; Girl-Gbodi- 11-LOWER Boy – Dand- 12-LOWER; Male-Captn Maxwell	External; multiphonic which tell same story from different POV; come together towards end; Focalised mainly through each character	YA
Frances Mary Hendry	2001	<i>The '45 Rising: The Diary of Euphemia Grant, Scotland 1745-1746</i>	1745-1746	Scotland, Edinburgh & Inverness	Jacobite Rebellion but effects of such on ordinary people. Girl's growth to independence	Euphemia- 15/16 - MIDDLE Alan-cousin	Diary form 1 st person Includes reported dialogue and letters	11+
Theresa Tomlinson	2001 2005	<i>Beneath Burning Mountain</i> Pub. London: Red Fox In collection, Pub. London: Corgi; Random House	1801	NE Coast	Adventure about press-gangs etc Oppression for working class people from masters; others; elements	Nan – 13 –LOWER Joseph, Polly	1 st person - Nan	11+
Celia Rees	2004	<i>Pirates!</i> London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc	1722-1724	Bristol; at sea; Jamaica; at sea.	Gender; females can overcome male hegemony but need strength of mind and courage	Female –Nancy – MIDDLE- 16 Female –Minerva- SLAVE - 16	1 st person; journal-like	13+
Nicola Morgan	2003	<i>Fleshmarket</i> London: Hodder Children's Books	1822; 1828	Edinburgh	Fighting against Burke & Hare Early days of anatomical medicine ; Burke & Hare killed to sell bodies for surgeons - Robert Knox	Male – 14 -Robbie - LOWER Young sister-Essie	3 rd person – POV Robbie	YA
Elizabeth Laird	2005	<i>Secrets of the Fearless</i> London: Macmillan Children's Books	1807-1815	Edinburgh; Out of Bordeaux	War and spying; defrauded of home and then accused of murder, father Patrick & son sail but press ganged & separated.	Male –12 - John – LOWER/MIDDLE	3 rd person POV John	11+

Kate Pennington	2005	<i>Charley Feather</i> London: Hodder Children's Books	1740s	Yorkshire - London	(Highwaymen) Gender- survival; longing to belong	Charley (girl dressed as boy) – 15- LOWER Male - Delamere- LOWER Male – Robert- 15- LOWER	1 st person- Charlotte/Charley	11+
Kate Pennington	2006	<i>Nightingale's Song</i> London: Hodder Children's Books	1805	Whitby; at sea; east coast of America	Smuggling; Contrasts corruption and power of some over others with kindness and honesty of some. Friendliness of native Americans	FEMALE- 13- Maggie - Nightingale -LOWER -	1 st person-Maggie Focalisation relates to dialogue and action as for younger readers	13+
Paul Dowswell	2005	<i>Powder Monkey</i> 1 st of Sam Witchall trilogy. London: Bloomsbury	1800	Coast Britain; Gibraltar	Adventurous life in the navy (press gangs) Life on board ship in the navy for ordinary seaman and sometimes contrasted with officers' lives on board. – Brutality detailed	Male – Sam LOWER Sea-Daddy – Ben Robert-UPPER- midshipmen; Richard (American)	1 st person- Sam	11+
Nicola Morgan (b.1961)	2006	<i>The Highwayman's Footsteps</i> (sequel to Noyes' Poem) London: Walker Books	1705	Hexhamshire; Cumbria	Revenge against soldiers for father's death Gender-survival; brutality of soldiers	Male – Will, 14 – MIDDLE Female – Bess; 14- LOWER	Alternate focalisation	YA
Susan Cooper	2006	<i>Victory</i> London:The Bodley Head; Random House Children's Books	1805 HTF	Connecticut; London; at sea; London; Portsmouth	Life on board HMS Victory as powder monkey; Transported from security to insecurity in both time and place, but finding self	C21 st Girl – 11- C18th Boy – Sam-11- LOWER	3 rd person in present 1 st person for boy's press-ganged life on HMS <i>Victory</i> at Trafalgar; POV focalised alternately	11+
Julia Golding	2006	<i>The Diamond of Drury Lane</i> London: Egmont	1790 (Jan)	London	Adventures of a girl in the theatre and surroundings Gender; class; democracy	Female – 12/13- Cat- LOWER Sheridan-MIDDLE Johnny Smith-UPPER Pedro: ex-slave	1 st person – Cat; POV Cat; speaks to reader Focalisation through dialogue	11+

		Features faux C18th theatre programme and novels				Syd Fletcher: LOWER Billy Shepherd: LOWER Lord Francis Avon - UPPER Lady Elizabeth Avon- UPPER		
Julia Golding	2006	<i>Cat among the Pigeons</i> London: Egmont	1790 (Nov/ Dec)	London	Adventure – rescuing Pedro from return to slavery Slavery (ref to Twelfth Night?)	Female – Cat-LOWER Male-Pedro Male –Hawkins-MIDDLE Syd and Billy-	1 st person – Cat POV Cat; speaks to reader Focalisation through dialogue	11+
Paul Dowswell	2006	<i>Prison Ship;</i> 2 nd of trilogy London: Bloomsbury	1801	On board ship; Battle of Copenhagen ; Australia	Life on board a prison ship before transportation to Australia; life in Australia-escape, freedom	Male – Sam LOWER; Richard Meet girls on ship bound for Australia upper girl & servant	1 st person- Sam	11+
Linda Buckley-Archer	2006	<i>Gideon the Cutpurse</i> London: Simon and Schuster Ltd	Present & 1763 HTF	C21st London; Derbyshire C18th Derbyshire; London	Fantasy Adventure – with historical information Corruption in high places - Gangs of thieves, murderers; manipulated by ‘thief-taker’ Lord Luxon	C21st –Male MIDDLE- Peter-14? C21st -Female- Kate-14 MIDDLE C18th Male-Gideon- mature LOWER Tar Man-LOWER Lord Luxon-UPPER	3 rd person POV: Mainly focalised through Peter and Kate & dialogue	YA
Nicola Morgan	2007	<i>The Highwayman’s Curse</i> London: Walker Books	1705	Scotland	Sequel to The Highwayman’s Footsteps. Bess and Will fleeing to Scotland are captured by family. Narrative focuses on religious bigotry and warring between Covenanters/Presbyterians and Episcopalians. Themes smuggling, survival. Two young highwaymen on the run in Scotland, where they are captured by smugglers.	Male -14 – Will UPPER Female – 14 – Bess - LOWER	1 st person – Will Author note: highlights story’s ideology and message for present times. Focalisation through Will- lot of reflection concerning events.	YA
Paul Dowswell	2007	<i>Battle Fleet;</i> 3 rd in trilogy	1805	Sydney to London to	Journey back from Australia on merchant ship via Spice	Sam Richard	1 st person	11+

		London: Bloomsbury		Trafalgar	Islands; Smallpox- UPPER class girl Lizzie dies. Robert's father pays for Sam to become midshipman like Robert. To Trafalgar on Victory; battle.			
Linda Buckley Archer	2007	<i>The Tar Man</i> London: Simon and Schuster Ltd	HTF	London in C18th and C20th; Derbyshire	Tar Man in 20 th century; Peter left behind in 18 th . Alternates. Learn how Tar man got his name. Takes Kate back to 18 th meets Peter as an old man	Kate Tar Man or Blueskin	3 rd person And focalisation through Tar Man; Peter, Kate & through dialogue	YA
Julia Golding	2007	<i>Den of Thieves</i> London: Egmont	1791	London; Paris	Adventure in Revolutionary France Feminist; Class; freedom and liberty	Female-Cat Male – Pedro Male - Johnny	1 st person - Cat	11+
Julia Golding	2007	<i>Cat o' Nine Tails</i> London: Egmont	1791	Bath Bristol At Sea America	Kidnap, press gang & slavery Corruption; Comparison with wealthy and poor, philosophises about cheating and cruelty,	Female- Cat Male -Billy Shepherd	1 st person - Cat	11+
James Riordan	2007	<i>Rebel Cargo</i> London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books	1720s	Portsmouth, at sea, Jamaica	2 separate stories which come together Boy's growing awareness of slavery Life for some children in C18th	Boy- Mungo – 11-LOWER Girl – Abena- 11 LOWER/Slave	3 rd Person 2 voices, POV Mungo & Abena; two stories which come together	YA
Sally Gardner	2007	<i>The Red Necklace</i> London: Orion Children's Books	1789 HF	Paris; London; Paris	French Revolution; Yann a performer falls in love with girl Sido he finds locked in a room; helps her escape. In London she's cared for; he's adopted and educated to be a gentleman	Male – Yannik Margoza – LOWER to UPPER Male – Tetu (a dwarf) Male Topolain Female – Sido de Viileduval - UPPER	3 rd person POV - Yann	YA
Celia Rees	2008	<i>Sovay</i> London: Bloomsbury Publishing	1794	England ; Paris	equality –rights of man use of malicious & manipulative practice – spying etc. to achieve ends. Challenges to Liberty and	Female – Sovay – 16- MIDDLE	3 rd person POV Sovay and through dialogue	YA

					freedom; Self-seeking individuals plot to overcome those with liberal ideals			
Feona J. Hamilton	2008	<i>The Brewer's Boy</i> Raleigh: Boson Books and e-book	1750	Islington, London	Attempts to impose hegemony on others; one brewer to remove rival; role of boy in preventing ; mystery/spying	Boy- 10 – founding – Daniel; LOWER stableboy; cared for by Dick owner of Peacock Alehouse	3 rd person POV Dan & through dialogue	9+
Julia Golding	2008	<i>Black Heart of Jamaica</i> London: Egmont	1792	Philadelphia; Kingston, Jamaica	Feminist – independence; freedom Kidnapping; treacherous dealing Slaves fight for freedom	Cat; Pedro; Billy; Hawkins; Usual characters + stage group	1 st person POV Cat; others through dialogue	11+
Sally Gardner	2009	<i>The Silver Blade</i> London: Orion Children's Books	HF 1750	London; Paris	Sequel to <i>The Red Necklace</i> Yann-now working in Paris as a magician helps people escape from France to England	Yann – UPPER (good) Kalliovski –UPPER (evil) Sido	3 rd person told through Yann's POV and Kalliovski	YA
Sally Prue	2009	<i>Wheels of War</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press	1745	North West England	Surviving war – household servants Retreat of Jacobite army to Scotland	Servants left behind determined to protect property; LOWER	3 rd person	11+
2010								
Julia Golding	2011	<i>Cat's Cradle</i> London: Egmont	1792	London; Cambridge; New Lanark	Cat travels to New Lanark; Crompton's factory & housing	Cat in search of her family	1 st person, Cat; POV Cat others through dialogue	11+

Appendix C: Table representing children's and young people's historical novels set in the First World War by male and female writers and published in the period 1934 - 2014							
Writer/Illust.	Date	Title/publisher	Location	Theme/s	Characters	Point of view	Rdrs
Barbara Sleigh (1906-1982)	1967	<i>Jessamy</i> London: Collins	London	Time-slip from present of 1960s –WWI acts as background loneliness; selfhood	Female (9-11) – middle class	External	9-13
Penelope Farmer (b.1939)	1969	<i>Charlotte Sometimes</i> Windus & Chatto	Outer London	Anti-war; loss of loved ones; importance of education for girls	Female (11); middle	External	9-13
K.M. Peyton (b.1929) Illust. Victor Ambrus	1969	<i>The Edge of the Clouds</i> Oxford University Press	Southern England	Equality; gender	Female (18) ; middle	External	YA
K. M. Peyton (b.1929) Illust. Victor Ambrus	1969	<i>Flambards in Summer</i> Oxford University Press	Essex	Equality: class and gender - democracy	Female(21); Christine; middle	External	YA
1970->							
Bruce Carter/ Richard Hough (1922-1999)	1970 1972	<i>B Flight</i> Hamish Hamilton Harmondsworth: Puffin	Lake District; London; France	1916: Will (16) experiences of flying, fears, fun, death	Male – Lower/middle class	External omniscient	9-13
Frederick Grice (1910 – 1983) Ill. Doreen Roberts	1971	<i>The Black Hand Gang</i> London: Oxford University Press	Co. Durham	1918; Home front, effects on school- boy; father POW	Male- Lower class	External	9+
Ronald Welch (Ronald Fenton) (1909-1982)	1972	<i>Tank Commander</i> (Seven Stories Archive)	Western front	Western Front development of tank warfare	Male – Carey - upper class	External omniscient	11+
Penelope Farmer; Illust. Jael Jordan	1975	<i>August the Fourth</i> Berkeley, California: Parnassus Press	Wiltshire	Anti-war	Female; middle class	First person narration;	9-13
Alexander Fullerton (1924-	1976	<i>The Bleeding of the Guns</i> M. Joseph	North Sea	At sea; Battle of Jutland	male; upper	External narration	11+

2008)							
Alexander Fullerton (1924-2008)	1978	<i>Patrol to the Golden Horn</i> M. Joseph	Mediterranean	Commander of a submarine; Dardanelles	male; upper	External;	YA
Marjorie Darke (1929-2009)	1978	<i>A Long way to Go</i> Harmondsworth: Penguin Books	London	Equality: race, class, gender Anti-war	Focalised through Female (17/18) and twin brother – Luke- lower class	External narration;	YA
1980->							
Alison Leonard (b.1944)	1980 1982	<i>An Inch of Candle</i> Angus & Robertson Ltd William Collins & Co Ltd	Country village – north England	Anti-war; conscientious objectors Religious conflict	Female; middle (16)	External narration;	11-13
Mary Treadgold (1910-2005)	1981	<i>Journey from the Heron</i> London: Jonathan Cape Ltd	London	anti-war Irish Home rule	female (12); lower class	External narration;	11-13
Michael Morpurgo (b.1943)	1982 2007	<i>War Horse</i> London: Kaye & Ward Ltd Re-issued London: Egmont UK Ltd	Dorset; Western front	Anti-war; War and treatment of horses	POV Horse	Omniscient	9+
Elsie McCutcheon	1983 1984	<i>Summer of the Zeppelin</i> J.M. Dent and Sons; Harmondsworth: Puffin	Suffolk village	Anti-war Stress/trauma on women	female (12); lower class	External omniscient narration focalised mainly through girl	9-13
Ruth Elwin Harris (b.1935)	1989 2002	<i>The Dividing Sea</i> London: Julia MacRae Books London: Walker Books Ltd	Somerset, France	3 rd in Quartet	Female(17); Male(18); middle class	External narration; Alternates:	YA
1990->							
Alick Rowe (1939-2009)	1990	<i>Voices of Danger</i> London: Methuen	England; the Somme	Ill treatment and war destruction linked music	Male-middle class	External focalised through one boy about his and friend's	9-13

						experiences	
Marjorie Darke (1929-2009)	1990	<i>A Rose from Blighty</i> London: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd	France	Equality of class in nursing at front	Female; lower class Female; middle class	External narration	YA
Linda Newbery (b.1952)	1990 1992	<i>Some other War</i> Armada Books London: Barnowl books	Essex; France	Equality: class; gender Anti-war	Male Female; twins (18-); lower class	External narration; letters provide other viewpoints	YA
Linda Newbery	1991	<i>The Kind Ghosts</i> London: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd	France; London; Essex	Equality: class, gender Anti-war	Female; lower class	External omniscient;	YA
Pat Barker (b.1943)	1991	<i>Regeneration</i> (1 st in <i>Regeneration</i> trilogy)	Craiglockhart, Edinburgh	Trauma and anti-war views;	Middle/ upper though 1 character lower	External	YA
Mary Rayner (b. 1933) Ill. Michael Foreman	1992	<i>The Echoing Green</i> London: Penguin	Country village	Anti-war Remembrance	female; Lower class – child’s perspective of effect of war	External narration;	9 – 13
Michael Foreman (b.1938)	1993	<i>War Game</i> PICTUREBOOK Pavilion Press	Flanders	futility of war; English and German soldiers fraternising Christmas 1914	Male; lower class	varied	9-13
Pat Barker	1993	<i>The Eye in the Door</i> (2 nd in <i>Regeneration</i> trilogy) Guardian Fiction Award	London	Explores Male sexuality in last year of war	Male upper, middle & lower	External	YA
Pat Barker	1995	<i>The Ghost Road</i> (3 rd in <i>Regeneration</i> trilogy) Booker Prize 1995	War front	men and death	Prior lower/middle class Male; Psychological commentary from Dr Rivers	1st person –	YA
Michael Morpurgo	1997 2011	<i>Farm Boy</i> London: Pavilion Books Ltd London: Harper Collins	Devon Flanders	Sequel to <i>War Horse</i> ; frame; Grandfather tells story of Albert’s enlisting to find Joey	male – lower class	1st person-	9-13
2000->							

James Riordan (1936-2102)	20012002	<i>When the Guns Fall Silent</i> Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press	Portsmouth Somme	Theme: anti-war; socialist; Somme	2 males (brothers) Lower class	External	11+
James Riordan	2001	<i>War Song</i> Oxford University Press	Portsmouth; France	Theme: destruction caused by war to families. One sister munitions; other nursing. Father traumatised	2 females (sisters) Lower class	External	11+
Iain Lawrence (b.1955)	2001 2002	<i>Lord of the Nutcracker Men</i> USA: Random House London: Collins	Male; middle	Effect of war on children; art reflects feelings; trauma	; male – middle class	External	8+
Linda Newberry (b. 1952)	2002 2003	<i>The Shell House</i> London: Random House, David Fickling Edn London: Random House: Red Fox Edn	Cambridgeshir e; France	Dual time narrative: present and WWI. Masculinities	Male; Lower in present; Middle in past	External	YA
Marcus Sedgwick (born 19	2003	<i>Cowards</i> London: Hodder Children's Books	England; Western War front	Narrative? More factual. Treatment of COs	Male –class ?	External	9+
Michael Morpurgo (b. 1943)	2003	<i>Private Peaceful</i> London: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd	England; Western Front	Anti-war; Trauma	Two brothers- lower class	External;	11-16
Michael Morpurgo; Ill. Michael Foreman	2004	<i>The Best Christmas Present in the World</i> PICTUREBOOK London: Egmont	Dorset; Western front	Anti-war; conveyed through letters; memory	Male- middle(?) Letters from soldier during war	1st person; pictures: external narration	7+
Marcus Sedgwick	2005	<i>The Foreshadowing</i>	Brighton and western war front	Anti-war	Female- Sasha Fox – middle 16+	1st person	13+
Dennis Hamley	2006	<i>Ellen's People</i>	Southern England; France	Follows all war; issues of class; nationality	Female – Lower; Ellen 16+	1st person ; present continuous narration	11+
2009	A.S. Byatt	<i>The Children's Book</i>		Follows families (mainly middle class) from 1880s to end of WWI			YA/ Crossover
2010->							
Lynn Huggins-	2010	<i>One Boy's War</i>	Durham; war	Anti-war 'journal' narrative	Male – 15 - lower	1st person;	7+

Cooper Illust. Ian Benfold Haywood		PICTUREBOOK Frances Lincoln	front	with letters		Illustrations external;	
Pat Barker	2012	<i>Toby's Room</i>	Home counties; London	Relationships' women and war	Female; Middle-artist/pacifist Toby	External; mainly focalised through sister; but also Toby; Paul	YA
Paul Dowswell	2012	<i>Eleven Eleven;</i> Pub. Bloomsbury	France/ Belgium	Challenges attitudes to war 'brutal, violent and staggeringly effective' Sch Lib.	Male-American flyer; German soldier; British soldier	External	11+
Sam(antha) Angus	2012	<i>Soldier Dog;</i> Pub. Macmillan	France/ Belgium	Brutality of war; messenger dog crossing no-man's-land.	Stanley Ryder (15) and his dog	External	11+
Terry Deary	2013	<i>World War I Tales: The Last Flight</i>		Story of Alfred Adams photographer shot down by Red Baron – ends up as POW	Diary form	1 st person	7-11
		<i>The War Game</i>		Albert – trained, trenches, Christmas Day			7+
		<i>The Bomber Balloon</i>		Presents both sides' views of war	Millie- Lower		7+
		<i>The Pigeon Spy</i>			Joe- American farm boy - LOWER		7+
Rebecca Stevens	2014	<i>Valentine Joe</i>	Ypres	Time-slip. Rose goes into past of WWI and Joe a 15 year old soldier	Rose – 12 years Dog – Tommy Joe - 15		