

CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHILDHOOD IN THE  
WORKS OF ETHEL TURNER AND  
MARY GRANT BRUCE:  
PILGRIMS AND PETER PANS

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# **Constructions of Childhood in the Works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce:**

## **Pilgrims and Peter Pans.**



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### Abstract

This thesis investigates the way in which children's literature acts as a site for the construction of discourses about childhood, and how the situating of children's literature within wider paradigms of childhood involves the circulation of competing discourses and opposing models of childhood. This leads to an examination of how texts produce different versions of childhood and the values and ideologies these entail. The works of Australia's earliest major children's writers, Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce, and in particular their best known novels, *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* (from the Billabong series) are used to illustrate this contestation and provide examples of the two main discourses I have identified, which I call the Pilgrim and the Peter Pan models of childhood. The narratives constructed by these two models produce certain roles and power relations for children and reproduce certain value systems.

My analysis is based on Fairclough's concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, which regard text and discourse as active forces in the social construction of knowledge. Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics, as a functional and semantically-based grammar, also facilitates analysis of how texts construct social relations. To demonstrate how the language of the text constructs the social relations determined by the Pilgrim and Peter Pan models of childhood, I have used a transitivity analysis to investigate how the selection of material or mental processes, and of certain types of participant, determine and construct characterization. I have also used a mood analysis to reveal some of the power structures operating and coming into conflict with each other as different discourses are activated in the text. Other aspects of narrative such as focalization round out the analysis of how these models function, showing how the novels of these two authors thus participate in and reaccentuate widely circulating discourses of childhood, which effectively construct versions of childhood which disempower children and circumscribe the identities and narratives available to them.



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### **Declaration**

I declare that the material presented in this dissertation is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted previously, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Signed: ... Signature Redacted .

Margery Ruth Cass



## Introduction

This thesis investigates the way in which children's literature acts as a site for the construction of discourses about childhood, and how the situating of children's literature within wider paradigms of childhood involves the circulation of competing discourses and opposing models of childhood. This involves an examination of how texts produce different versions of childhood, and the values and ideologies these entail. I have selected the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce to illustrate this contestation and provide examples of the two main discourses I have identified, which I call the Pilgrim and the Peter Pan models of childhood. I argue that the narratives constructed by these two models produce distinctive sets of roles and power relations for children and reproduce fundamentally differing value systems.

Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce were Australia's earliest major children's writers, dominating the juvenile market for more than fifty years. Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians*, first published in 1894, is one of the best known of all Australian novels, but Mary Grant Bruce's Billabong series, beginning with *A Little Bush Maid* (1910) was also hugely popular in its time. Recent republishing of these novels has generated debate about their literary status, producing conflict between nationalistic discourses that value their contribution to an Australian sense of identity, and literary discourses disputing their right to be called "classics". I believe that this debate conceals a deeper contestation of meaning, one that arises from differing assumptions about the nature of children and childhood itself.

To investigate these assumptions I have drawn upon Fairclough's concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, which regard text and discourse as active forces in the social construction of knowledge. Discourses provide a terminology for expressing the meaning and values of an institution, and in so doing organize it in certain ways.

By allowing a finite range of issues to be discussed, discourses can exclude other possible sets of values and topics. Thus all discourses are ideological, as language always actively constructs knowledge and shapes perception. In any text an interplay of discourses is generally found, and the writer's task is to produce a text in which the tensions between various discourses are resolved or hidden. Intertextuality is the mechanism which enables discourses or elements of discourses to cross institutional boundaries and colonize or contest new areas. As readers make sense of a new text, previous texts and utterances are actualized, and it is in the tensions between discourses that ideology can be seen shifting and re-shaping. To analyse these tensions I make use of Fairclough's concepts of manifest and constitutive intertextuality. Manifest intertextuality involves specific references to other texts. Constitutive intertextuality involves more complex configurations of discourse conventions such as the alteration of style, genre and activity type. Fairclough's choice of the word interdiscursivity to represent this process is intended "to underline that the focus is on discourse conventions rather than other texts as constitutive" (*Discourse and Social Change* 104).

In Chapter One, I analyse various reviews and evaluations of *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books, as these are the novels that have attracted most attention due to their initial popularity and their recent re-publication. By looking at the criteria used to evaluate them I identify several discourses that are operating and try to show where there are tensions between them. I argue that the assumptions of certain discourses such as Leavisite discourses of literary criticism predispose reviewers to favour books in which a certain picture of childhood is presented, and to devalue others operating within different ideologies.

In Chapter Two I identify the two different models of childhood that I see represented in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong series: the "Pilgrim" model and the "Peter Pan" model. I investigate their characteristics using Fairclough's notions of



manifest intertextuality and interdiscursivity to trace some of the texts and discourses that gave rise to them. My selection of the terms “Pilgrim” and “Peter Pan” derives from manifest intertextuality in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books, but in tracing the ideological implications of each discourse I have also drawn on *Visions of Childhood: Influential Models from Locke to Spock* by Cleverly and Phillips, who identify seminal “Puritan” and “Romantic” discourses in the work of John Wesley and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Starting with John Wesley’s sermons and Rousseau’s *Emile*, I analyse the characteristic narratives of each discourse and how the value system of each relates to their power structures. As religious discourses become entwined with educational discourses and subsequently literary discourses, aspects such as gender roles and narrative conventions impact on ideology, resulting in various value shifts. Neither *Seven Little Australians* nor the Billabong books merely reproduce an existing discourse, rather they draw upon strands of several discourses to construct their own particular versions of childhood. Spelling out the implications of the Pilgrim and Peter Pan models of childhood involves looking not only at archetypal characters, but also at the construction of time and place, the types of conflict involved, the types of power structures operating, both overt and implied, the relationships formed between the narrator and reader and between the readers and characters, and the underlying assumptions about human nature.

Chapters Three and Four analyse *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* more closely to see how the texts themselves construct these models of childhood. In Chapter Three I look at the Pilgrim and Peter Pan characters and how they are constructed as individual entities. My starting point here is focalization, which is described by Cohan and Shires as “a triadic relation formed by the narrating agent (who narrates), the focalizer (who sees), and the focalized (what is being seen and thus, narrated)” (95). “What focalization achieves for narration [is] the textual inscription of a position for the reader in relation to the story” (97). I examine how the two texts position the reader in different ways by constructing particular sets of

relations between the narrator and reader and characters. This involves some discussion of evaluation, as well as the types of action and conflict that constitute the plot of each story, and how this relates to the construction of character types.

Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics has been selected as a tool for closer analysis of the representations of different character types, because it illustrates how the social role that each individual occupies is constructed by and through language. Each text is seen as being constructed by the process of the speaker making choices that actualize the meaning potential of the context of situation. Each situation type has a configuration of semantic resources typically associated with it and these can be analysed in terms of field, tenor and mode. Systemic-functional linguistics is based on the concept that these three components of context of situation are realized by the three metafunctions of the semantic system: the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. The ideational metafunction deals with the content or cultural experience of a text, the interpersonal metafunction with the roles and relationships being constructed, and the textual metafunction has an enabling function in that it allows language to be formed into text to actualize ideational and interpersonal meanings.

Chapter Three uses a transitivity analysis to investigate how the selection of material or mental processes, and of certain types of participant, determines and defines particular character types. Factors such as who participates as Actor, whether mental processes are cognitive, affective or perceptive, and how frequently relational processes are used all help clarify the finer details of how the Pilgrim and Peter Pan characters operate.

In Chapter Four I focus on the interpersonal metafunction and the social context in which the Pilgrim and Peter Pan characters operate, in particular the power structures found within the family. This entails some discussion of how the text constructs a



family environment, and how the discourses involved give priority to characters of a particular age and social class and within a certain definition of gender roles. Next I draw on Poynton's model of Tenor to discuss some of the more overt manipulations of Power within the family.

One mechanism of power and control is humour, and my analysis of the use of humour in the novels shows how the families in *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* can construct and contest hierarchies or maintain more equal power relations. I demonstrate that the different ways in which humour functions is related to the operation of the two different models of childhood. In addition I analyse some father-daughter dialogue involving the main characters in each story in order to show some of the complexities in the operation of power, in particular the way power fluctuates as the texts activate different discourses.

Overall, this thesis will show how my proposed Pilgrim and Peter Pan models of childhood derive from long-standing religious, educational and literary discourses, how they emerge in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong series as these texts participate in and re-accentuate particular aspects of various discourses, and how the power relations deriving from the value systems of certain discourses impact on the positions constructed for children and childhood and children's literature.

## Chapter One

### **Literature Review and Critique - Identifying Discourses in Modern Commentary on the Works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce.**

#### 1.1 Critical Discourses

The critical discourses dealing with the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce form the starting point for this thesis, as its central argument that *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books operate within different models of childhood, derived from different ideologies and thus reflecting different value systems, needs first to be contextualized in terms of the assumptions about childhood operating within modern critical discourses. The types of commentary to be covered in this chapter include reviews of recent releases of Ethel Turner's and Mary Grant Bruce's most popular books, the blurbs and the overall presentation the publishers have selected for these novels, histories of Australian literature and Australian children's literature, a selection of Australian "classics" and more indepth studies of Australian children's literature, in particular Brenda Niall's *Seven Little Billabongs* which focuses specifically on the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce. These writings reveal a range of approaches to children's books, different views as to their function and purpose, and different methods of discussing and evaluating them, all of which contribute to the construction of a certain position for the child as reader, and in so doing reinscribe their own system of values. The view of readers and texts underpinning this thesis can then be appreciated as offering a different perspective and some new insights into the writings of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce and to some wider aspects of children's literature.

In discussions of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce, three main threads tend to emerge, each one a site for contestation between competing discourses. Firstly, Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce are categorized together and examined together, for many reasons: they were both Australian, middle class, well educated, prolific writers



who catered for the same young, predominantly female audience, and with the overlapping timelines of their careers, “between them they dominated the juvenile market in Australia for more than fifty years” (Niall, *Seven Little Billabongs* 2). However, in any comparisons of the merits of the two, Ether Turner’s work is generally valued over Mary Grant Bruce’s. Secondly, now that sufficient time has elapsed, their best known novels are being called “classics”, a contentious claim that again requires the merits of each to be assessed, with the same result that the Billabong books tend to be found lacking. Thirdly, their moral content and suitability for children is examined and called into question, and the novels that were once popular as Sunday school prizes are now frequently criticized for inappropriate moral values. These issues reveal some of the conflicts between discourses which seek to establish an exclusive list of classics, discourses which attempt to elevate Australian children’s books to “classic” status, and discourses concerned with protecting children from harmful influences while encouraging them to learn and to appreciate their cultural heritage.

The discussion in this chapter will focus on these various types of critical discourses and how they promote their values and structure certain ways of thinking. All are primarily discourses of literary criticism in that they deal with the literary value of these children’s books; however, following Fairclough’s recommendation that discourses should be described by identifying both the topic that is being spoken about and the position that is being spoken from (*Discourse and Social Change* 128), we can examine specific educational discourses which can be traced back to the influence of Rousseau, Australian nationalistic discourses dating from the patriotism of the *Bulletin* and literary discourses in that tradition known as Leavisite.

Further discussion of the broader theoretical concept of discourse and its interrelatedness to ideology and intertextuality will be reserved for Chapter Two.

## 1.2 Leavisite Discourses

Many critics of the novels of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce, although not avowedly working within Leavisite paradigms, display traces of Leavisite discourses in their criticism. The most obvious characteristic of Leavisite literary discourses is their tendency to create literary canons, that is, to decide which particular works have the greatest literary merit and to exclude others entirely as “not literature”. Any discussion that centres on whether the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce can be considered as members of the Australian children’s literature “canon” is characteristically Leavisite in approach. Furthermore, F. R. Leavis emphasized the importance of appropriate moral content. He saw good literature as combining technical aesthetic excellence with an “awareness of the possibilities of life” (Selden, *A Reader’s Guide to Literary Theory* 23) that transcends time and fashion. Thus one indicator of a classic work of literature is its longevity. However, the complexities of appreciating and evaluating such works mean that the majority of readers are not entitled to set themselves up as judges. An ordinary person reading for pleasure is far removed from the critic whose business it is “to attain a peculiar completeness of response [in order] to enter into possession of the given poem ... in its concrete fulness” (Selden, *A Reader’s Guide to Literary Theory* 22). This division can mean that the opinion of an ordinary reader is devalued to the point where excessive popularity may almost automatically exclude a book from “literature” status.

H.M. Saxby, author of *A History of Australian Children’s Literature*, is one of those who regard popularity as an indicator of poor quality. “Best seller” for Saxby is a term of condemnation.

Here are all the ingredients of a juvenile “best-seller”; and until after the second world war when organizations such as the Children’s Book Council were formed, there seems to have been little done to combat such inferior fiction. (167)

Elaborating on what constitutes inferior fiction, he says,

But one wonders why books such as *Poppy Treloar* were ever published.

The plots are escapist and unreal; the literary style impoverished and quite undemanding of the reader. Perhaps that is why they have been popular with children. (166)

Here, the very concept of children's literature becomes at least, a compromise, at worst, a contradiction in terms. If young readers prefer simple, accessible writing and highly conventionalized narrative then their taste is for "inferior fiction," and needs to be combatted by educated adults. Even so, the adaptation of an elitist concept of literature to a group whose reading skills are necessarily immature must entail some watering-down of the Leavisite values of vitality, richness and complexity.

A similar anti-popularity discourse can be seen in the comments of Barbara Buick, who claims, "The Billabong books today represent a major headache for librarians fighting to preserve the quality of their collections from the pressures of rose-spectacled parents" (*An Indigenous Children's Literature* 342). As well as criticizing the presence of the Billabong series in libraries, Buick wonders at the "inexplicable republishing" of Ethel Pedley's *Dot and the Kangaroo*, while regretting that, "There is not one respectable edition of any of [Turner's] books in print today" (343), and that the works of Louise Mack, another "writer of significance" (343), are now out of print.

The indicators of quality that Buick recognizes are realism, originality, perception, vitality and richness. Ethel Turner, who is placed on a "higher rung of literary achievement" than Louisa May Alcott, is praised for "the richness of her thinking", the "immense vitality" in her books, and the way in which she "examined and probed the attitudes and foibles of her time and place" (342). It is this examination of foibles that Mary Grant Bruce apparently lacks. Referring to the Billabong series, Buick says



there are “no stories so myopic of the struggles of life on the land during those drought and depression years,” and describes Bruce as “the writer of the greatest Australian cliché of all time” (342).

This metaphor of vision depicts the literary transmission of ideas. The starting point is the author’s perception, which may be “myopic” in the case of poorer writers, or “more observant” in the case of the better ones. This then becomes a quality of the book, which can “have a vividness” or “seem pale”. The vivid books “speak with force to children of the 1960s” while the others are appreciated only by those who share the same “rose-spectacled” view as the author. Thus, a series of binaries are constructed: reality/ escapism, perception/ myopia, originality/ cliché, vividness/ paleness. In this discourse, literature’s purpose is to confront a possibly harsh reality. The talent of authors can be seen in their accurate and insightful perception of reality, the originality of their ideas and the vividness of their writing. This requires a certain sort of reader who is able to participate by hearing the authors’ messages clearly, sharing their visions and having sufficient sensitivity to appreciate their literary style. This view implies a perception of communication as essentially a one-way process in which meaning is constructed primarily by the writer rather than the reader.

### 1.3 Nationalistic Discourses

Before returning to Saxby, whose assessment of the relative merits of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce draws on educational as well as literary discourses, it is interesting to note how Leavisite discourses come into conflict with nationalistic discourses, making the concept of “Australian literature” problematic in the same way as “children’s literature” is.

*The Australian Collection* is a large format, full colour review of Australia’s greatest books, as selected by Geoffrey Dutton. Ninety-seven titles are listed, of which nine are

children's books, including *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid*. As an indication of the type of books selected, the other seven children's books are *Dot and the Kangaroo*, *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepoot and Cuddlepoot*, *The Magic Pudding*, *Storm Boy*, *Ash Road*, *Bottersticks and Gumbles*, and *The Nargun and the Stars*. The introduction states, somewhat defensively, "They are all, in their different ways, classics", while conceding, "Not all the books discussed here are of the highest literary merit. Such a standard would be impossible to attain in the literature of a young country" (8). This disparaging strain is continued in the discussion of *A Little Bush Maid*. "*Seven Little Australians* is a greater novel than *A Little Bush Maid*, and *Dot and the Kangaroo* has a greater poetic sympathy with the bush" (88). All Mary Grant Bruce is credited with is providing "A convincing picture of a coherent, deeply satisfying and distinctive Australian country life" (90), which seems to indicate that realism and Australianness are the qualities that earn her books "classic" status, although realism is not a quality she is often praised for. There is also a third quality, popularity, which places Mary Grant Bruce in a doubtful position. Geoffrey Dutton expresses a typically Leavisite point of view when he says, "Immediate popularity, of course, is no guarantee of merit in a book. But enduring popularity is" (8). Judgement must therefore be suspended until sufficient time has passed to test this. Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians* receives a far more positive assessment from Dutton. It is "a profound and moving Australian novel as well as being a successful children's book .... in the history of Australian literature it is a psychological study far ahead of its time" (54). Once again the criteria of Australianness and popularity are mentioned, but it is the profundity and psychology of the novel that evidently determine its higher worth.

Characterising Australia as a "young country" effectively excuses its lack of literary standards, implying both the recognition that universal literary standards do exist and the assumption that, given time, the "young country" will mature and produce more literature of quality. On the other hand, Australia's comparative lack of literary

tradition means that there is merit simply in being Australian and representing distinctively Australian people and landscapes. Furthermore, the youthfulness of Australia and its need to establish a literary identity distinct from that of other countries gives some legitimacy to the force of popularity. Australians, after all, must be the experts in recognizing and appreciating the Australianness of any piece of literature. Thus this nationalistic strain of discourse acts to empower Australian readers as judges and critics, although retaining the Leavisite concept of “classic” means a tension between the two discourses still exists.

For the publishers, of course, any such tension has to be minimized, as the concept “Australian Classic” becomes a selling point. New editions of *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong series have been issued that proclaim them classics both in words and in presentation, and heavily emphasize their Australianness. Cornstalk Publishing (of HarperCollins) have brought out *Seven Little Australians* in a hardback edition (1991) illustrated in colour, with a cover that features a head and shoulders portrait of each of the seven children enclosed in a small oval frame and surrounded by distinctively Australian flowers: wattle, bottlebrush, flannel flowers and eucalypts, among which can be seen honey eaters and possums. The dual nature of a classic, increasingly historical but forever modern and relevant, can be seen in the contrast between the oval portrait frames and old-fashioned clothing details such as smocking and ribbons, and the more modern informality of the tousled hair and relaxed faces of the children. The space in the centre contains the words:

Ethel Turner’s  
Endearing Children’s Classic  
Seven Little Australians

which draws together the three central ideas of Australian, Children and Classic.

The Billabong series does not get quite the same lavish treatment from Angus and Robertson, as they are printed in paperback with no illustrations other than those on



the front covers. In part the lack of illustrations signals that the reading audience will be slightly older than for *Seven Little Australians*, but it also means the reading of these books is less of a special event, as their presentation is similar to that of any other paperback. The “classic” motif is again present, however, with the little blue oval-shaped logo “Bluegum Classic” appearing on both front and back covers, and the claim that, “The fifteen enormously popular Billabong books have become Australian classics” on the back. The blurb continues with a reference to the “three generations of young readers” and the lasting quality of the themes: “families, friendships and feeling haven’t changed at all”. The cover illustrations are more informal than the collection of posed portraits used for *Seven Little Australians*, being conventional pictures showing characters talking together or riding horses and so on. The style of drawing also give a fairly modern impression, with a lack of fine detail that glosses over most historical differences. Clothing details are vague - on the cover of *Back to Billabong*, Tommy appears to be wearing a T-shirt - and the horses and bush settings are fairly ahistorical. Army uniforms do appear, as does a bi-plane, and a vintage car, both very much in the background, but in most cases the pictures blur any historical boundaries. A more obviously old-fashioned note is struck by the band of Art Nouveau waratahs that runs across the front cover back cover and spine, identifying the Billabong series. Its style might not be very suited to the later books which were written in the 1930s, but as the books’ original publication dates extended from 1910 to 1942 a wide range of styles would be needed to represent all of them fairly and it is only compatible with the historical aspect of the concept of “classic” that the identifying mark should anchor them in the earliest period. Again, this device ties together the concepts of “Australian” and “classic”.

A similar emphasis on heritage can be found in Brenda Niall’s *Seven Little Billabongs: The World of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce*. It is an in-depth study of the authors’ lives and works, but with the subject matter carefully defined to exclude consideration of literary merit or even social accuracy. Niall takes as her

starting point the overwhelming popularity of these two writers, stating “One might argue about their qualities, but not about their success” (4). She argues that the main point of interest in their work is the way in which their books evoke a sense of place and consequently a sense of identity for Australians. “Their accuracy as a composite portrait of Australians in the days of colony and empire is perhaps of less interest than the fact that they presented for so many years acceptable versions of the way we were” (4). Niall does not attempt to evaluate literary merit or argue the case for regarding these works as classics, but the entire book, in unfolding the writers’ lives and delving into the detail of their novels, positions them as a significant part of the heritage of Australia. To a certain extent the book addresses an audience which is presumed to be familiar with and fond of Ethel Turner’s and Mary Grant Bruce’s novels, but more importantly it is the positive way readers have interacted with these books that makes them special. The biographical section on Mary Grant Bruce concludes with an obituary in which a reader says, “We grew up with Norah .... She was so much more than a character in the pages of a book - she was *Us*, as we liked to fancy ourselves in supreme moments of idealism”(56).

Where the reader becomes involved in vicarious experience to such an extent as to blend his or her sense of identity with that of a character in a book, then the book, or, in the case of Billabong, the series of fifteen books, becomes very powerful.

Mary Grant Bruce had a lot to answer for. She and Norah did more to mould our character than home and church, State and school combined.

(cited in Niall, *Seven Little Billabongs* 56)

This seems to be overstating the case, but in terms of measuring the success of a book, what seems to matter is characters and situations a reader can enjoy and identify with, resulting in total immersion in the world of the novel. This does not adhere to the Leavisite binary which values realist over escapist fiction. In this view, successful fiction *is* escapist fiction, because that is how it functions for the reader.

#### 1.4 Educational Discourses

The way in which a reader should enjoy a story forms a point of intersection between the Leavisite literary discourses and educational discourses, as both regard some form of enlightenment as an important aspect of the reading process.

H.M. Saxby in his *History of Australian Children's Literature* defines quality writing for children in educational terms, while being careful to distinguish his concept of education from a more didactic approach.

Where the writer of children's books in the past aimed to instruct, to preach, and to accelerate the change from child to adult, the writer of today, if he has integrity, seeks to bring delight by meeting the child's present needs and interests, thus enriching his experience and understanding of life - and if he is an exceptional writer to "surprise by joy" and so provide a glimpse of the ineffable. (5)

This dichotomy between a heavy-handed, interventionist approach to education and the enhancing of natural development advocated by Saxby seems to be the same division identified by Cleverley and Phillips who trace these two discourses back to John Wesley and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These are discussed further in the discussions of intertextuality in Chapter Two. At this point what is being considered are the implications for the evaluation of children's literature and the positioning of the child as reader.

Saxby explains, "The aim will be to seek those books which can bring this special quality of Joy" (6), where Joy, a term borrowed from C.S. Lewis, describes a "kind of awakening - it could almost be termed an epiphany" (4). In this approach, Joy is



shown to be a product of an individual reader's interaction with a text. C.S. Lewis mentions Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* as productive of Joy for him as a young reader, a book which Saxby admits "may have left many a reader unscathed" (4).

There are, however, limitations on how much the reader's own enjoyment can determine the quality of the text. Saxby draws a clear distinction between the true epiphany and mere wish fulfilment. He implies that young readers may enjoy Ethel Turner's books for the wrong reason. "The reader may indulge his fantasy wish to punish harsh parents and misunderstanding adults by causing them pain and by proving himself a martyr" (79). Ethel Turner herself is seen as possibly being guilty of indulging unacceptable wishes. "The reader suspects, at times, an almost pathological interest in sadism" (81).

Contrasted with these unhealthy attitudes is the preferred approach. "Speaking of her stories, Mary Grant Bruce once said, "They have grown out of the simple everyday things that happen to Australian children living in the Australian bush." Because of this the stories have integrity" (98). Saxby also represents Mary Grant Bruce's lack of literary status as a virtue. "It would be unfair to Mrs Bruce to attempt to establish her as a literary figure. She herself never pretended to be more than a "popular" writer" (97). This relates to the simplicity of her style. "All Mary Grant Bruce's stories are told in a straightforward fashion, devoid of padding. Her style is easy, competent, interesting and economical. It is free from annoying mannerisms, and the reader is never aware of any intrusion of the author herself.... Unlike Ethel Turner she is never 'cute' in her dialogue" (96). In literary discourses simplicity may be given a certain aesthetic value, but in this approach simplicity is related more to the educational philosophy that learning should be child-centred and unforced. A non-intrusive narrator is valued for this reason, and a lack of literary pretension thus becomes a virtue as well. There is an implication that children's books should not be assessed by

the same literary criteria as adults' and there is a valuing of health, simplicity and lack of any overt operation of power that aligns this approach with Rousseau's educational discourse. Although the child appears to be privileged in being able to identify the books that convey "Joy", it is the adult who must determine whether that joy is in fact healthy and worthwhile.

Educational discourses can be very specific about what children should or should not be exposed to. Bev Roberts, in her review, "Too Jolly by Half", bases her criticism of the Billabong books on moral grounds, working on the unstated assumption that children could be harmed by exposure to racist or sexist attitudes and that the function of a good book should be either to protect them against such attitudes or educate them into more positive values. This approach places the adult in the position of critic, censor and controller of children's reading, and Roberts is careful to emphasize the responsibility of this position, "We often bestow these books on contemporary children for nostalgic rather than critical reasons" (58). The implication is that children are passive, uncritical readers, as well as being inexperienced in terms of their moral education and probably unable to recognize outdated, inappropriate modes of behaviour.

The moral standards upheld by Roberts do, however, seem a little inconsistent. In discussing the book's sexism, she criticizes both Norah's initial role as "archetypal tomboy" and "honorary male", and her later transition to "ideal wife and mother". She comments on the "vaguely incestuous" marriage of Norah and Wally from which nearly all romance was excluded, and the "rather Mills and Boonish conclusion to *Billabong's Luck*" which allows Jim and Tommy the briefest of romantic interludes. She mentions the "gallery of racial stereotypes" and the "unacceptable and occasionally offensive comments" that make the books unsuitable for contemporary children, but decides in her conclusion they are still worth reading for "those with a passion for horses". Most interestingly Roberts describes the series as "terribly

moralistic”, remarking that “the Lintons seem not only unbearably smug but tedious, like earnest born-again proselytisers embarrassing a dinner party” and describing the narrative style as “the voice of the elderly pedantic headmistress” (59). This is seen as a problem of presentation rather than content. Her assessment of the book’s moral standards is that they are just barely adequate. “It’s not that there’s anything wrong with the beliefs and values: simple, basic Baden Powell stuff about doing one’s best, the right thing, being straight and fair and decent” (59), but that the problem is, “There’s so much of it”. In expressing her dislike of overt statements of moral values, Roberts could almost be one of the Lintons themselves. Although morality always plays a part in the stories, the Lintons downplay their virtues with a reticence and embarrassment that echoes Roberts’ concerns.

Both Roberts and Mary Grant Bruce seem to share the opinion that moral values can and should be imparted to children without too much open discussion. Both regard the characters and events of a story as indicators of moral standards and dislike “preaching”. In other words, both dislike the open exhibition of power in writing for children which gives a patronizing or authoritarian effect, but at the same time both believe that children should be protected from undesirable influences, though in Mary Grant Bruce’s case it was an avoidance of sexual issues, while Bev Roberts did not want children exposed to racist attitudes. The changing cultural contexts over the last sixty years have meant that the community is now sensitive to different kinds of immorality and injustice, but the underlying adult-child relationship has remained very similar, and the author of children’s books is expected to take on the role of responsible, protective adult, as would a parent or teacher.

However, to Roberts, the main question to be answered is whether, in the light of their ideological position, the Billabong books can be considered classics. The fact that they are being simultaneously being proclaimed as classics and purged of racist references is to her a fundamental contradiction. She argues, “Surely the true marks of a classic



are its endurance across time and social change, the transcendent qualities and power of its writing” (60). The problem with this definition in this context is that because they are children’s books, the Billabong series can never be put to this test. Adult readers might be supposed to be able to cope with the sometimes negative descriptions of Aborigines and Africans, to bring a knowledge of historical context to bear in determining just how progressive the Lintons were for their time, and to come away without having their own beliefs and standards eroded, but as long as adult-child relationships dictate that children are to be treated as passive, uncritical, and therefore vulnerable readers, children’s books will not allow children the challenge of responding to unfamiliar cultures.

“Billabong Revisited” is a review by Richard Rossiter of the same re-issuing of the Billabong series. Like Roberts, he examines the problems of censoring ideologically outdated books, but with more emphasis on the importance of the totality of the picture. He sees the protectiveness which orders the removal of racist epithets as liable to create an ignorance about social conditions that may in the end be counter-productive. The attack on Jim and Wally by a Kaffir rickshaw man in *From Billabong to London* is cited as an example in which indigenous people are made to seem more primitive and sub-human than in the original, because actions which could once have been seen as reasonable resentment of white treatment have become unprovoked, gratuitous violence with the changing of the context to remove “racism”. As Rossiter says, “The censorship of white racist attitudes results in a text which reinforces concepts of white superiority” (80).

At the time of reviewing, Rossiter was working from proofs, as the books were not yet published, and *Captain Jim* was the only one to contain an “Afterword” giving details of the book’s social and cultural context. Rossiter praises this approach, saying, “If this model were repeated in each of the novels, then there would be very little that is currently deemed derogatory that could not be addressed, and thus the likelihood of

offense would be mitigated and the integrity of the novels in their original form would be preserved” (81). This approach seems to acknowledge the possibility of a more active child reader who can re-evaluate the tone of the book in the light of information from the Afterword.

### 1.5 Conclusion

All the evaluations of the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce discussed in this chapter operate within various combinations of discourses of education, national pride or Leavisite literary criticism. Most of these discourses, in particular the Leavisite literary discourses, involve assumptions about childhood and moral growth that are in keeping with the discourses in *Seven Little Australians*, but are at odds with the Billabong books. I see the Billabong books as functioning within a discourse that is significantly different from most of the discourses used so far to evaluate them. Niall and, to some extent, Saxby are able to give a positive assessment of Bruce because of the value they assign to the judgement of the individual child reader. The degree to which the child is regarded as an active and autonomous agent varies even within educational discourse, as will be seen in Chapter Two, but in addition, the different weighting given to various moral values in the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce again means the Turner novels are evaluated more positively. Chapter Two of this thesis will identify the different discourses that *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books have sprung from, and the power structures and value systems these discourses construct.

## Chapter Two

### **Discourses of Childhood: Intertextuality**

Norman Fairclough's concept of intertextuality has been selected as a tool to investigate some of the characteristics of the type of children's story written by Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce. The ways in which their constructions of childhood participate in long-established discourses will be the focus of this chapter, and their re-workings of the various paradigms and the implications of these re-workings for the positioning of the child as protagonist and the child as reader will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

#### 2.1 Ideology, Discourse and Intertextuality

As the concept of intertextuality depends on and interrelates with the concepts of discourse and ideology, these two need to be discussed first to provide the framework within which intertextuality can operate. This model of an interlocking, interactive relationship between ideology, discourse and intertextuality is taken from Fairclough's *Language and Power* and *Discourse and Social Change*.

Ideology is the broadest of the three concepts, as it is concerned with how knowledge works with power to maintain existing social structures and enforce social inequalities. Karl Marx's dictum that "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (O'Sullivan et al, *Key Concepts in Communication* 108) emphasizes the importance of the social construction of knowledge, so that the ruling class, by controlling the production of meaning, is able to circulate ideas through all levels of society in such a way that they are not challenged but simply accepted. Thus a particular set of ideas can come to be regarded not just as true, but as natural and inevitable, even invisible in the sense that they are not open to questioning. Thus



Fairclough calls ideology “the key mechanism of rule by consent” (*Language and Power* 34). The ruled participate in the perpetuation of inequality by sharing in the ideas that allow them to be ruled.

Various institutions such as the legal system and the education system are needed to control the functioning of society, and each develops its own particular set of meanings to be circulated and naturalized. These take the form of discourses, which Gunther Kress defines as “systematically organized sets of statements which give expression to the meaning and values of an institution” (*Linguistic Processes* 7). As with ideology, it is just as important to close off areas of meaning as it is to create meanings. Discourses “define, describe and delimit what it is possible to say (and - by extension - what it is possible to do or not to do ) with respect to the area of concern of that institution” (*Linguistic Processes* 7).

It was Foucault who developed the idea of discourse as an active and powerful force in society. It is precisely because discourses seem natural and self-evident that they are so effective in controlling the social world (Schirato and Yell *Communication and Cultural Literacy* 102). In providing a terminology for classifying a particular set of subject matter, discourses organize it in certain ways, and by allowing a certain range of issues to be discussed within it, discourses can exclude other possible sets of values and topics. In this view, all discourses are ideological, as language always actively constructs knowledge and shapes perception, instead of being a transparent medium through which knowledge can be perceived. Marx’s notion of ideology focused on *false consciousness*, knowledge which operated specifically as oppression, but that implied the inverse side of his argument: that there were natural and historical laws that needed to be recognized as true and universal. In short, Marxist discourse, like any other discourse, functioned so as to naturalize its meanings.

However, discourses are rarely met with in their pure forms. What is generally found in any text is an interplay of discourses, although as Kress points out, a text regarded by its producer as successful will be one in which the interplay of discourses is minimized and meaning is presented as natural. That is, the text constructs a reading position from which the text's meanings are seen as straightforward and unproblematic, and encourages the reader to adopt that position. Kress explains, "The writer's task is to produce texts in which the tensions between various discourses are always resolved, either by producing a text in which they are not (or barely) visible, or by clearly placing contending views in a hierarchy of evaluation that strongly suggests to the reader how she or he is to read that text" (*Communication and Culture* 114).

What writers and readers are contending with here is intertextuality, defined by Schirato and Yell as "the process of making sense of texts in reference to their relations with other texts" (*Communication and Cultural Literacy* 92). It is in these tensions between discourses that ideology can be seen shifting and re-shaping, and intertextuality is the mechanism which enables discourses or elements of discourses to cross institutional boundaries and colonize or contest new areas. Intertextuality is the technique whereby text producers can construct texts from chunks and fragments of other texts, arranging pre-fabricated packages of meaning drawn from different discourses and assembled into the unity of a new text. Text readers likewise bring their knowledge of previous texts and their experience of how texts work and how meanings are constructed, and use these patterns to make sense of a new text. This chain of meaning-making links all language use. As Foucault observes, "There can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others" (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* 98). Bakhtin's definition of utterances as "populated and indeed constituted, by snatches of other's utterances, more or less explicit or complete" (cited in Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* 101) also recognizes the concept of intertextuality, although the term itself was actually coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966. Kristeva used the term intertextuality to highlight the relationship between text and

social context whereby not only is the text built from past texts, but “the text responds to, reaccentuates and reworks past texts, and in so doing helps to make history and contributes to wider processes of change” (Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* 102).

Readers are most likely to be aware of intertextuality when it takes the form of specific references to other texts, such as quotations from well known books and films or the speech reportage found in newspaper articles. This is known as manifest intertextuality, and Fairclough gives examples of the types of intertextual chains that can be formed in this way, ranging from those with tight conventional links such as the transformation of a doctor-patient consultation into written medical records, to those where manifest intertextuality starts to mingle with interdiscursivity, such as the proliferation of texts that can occur when “a major speech by President Gorbachev” is “transformed into media text of various types in every country in the world, into reports, analyses and commentaries by diplomats, into academic books and articles, into other speeches which paraphrase it, elaborate it, answer it, and so on” (Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* 131). These variations involve alteration of style, genre and activity type as well as simple quotation, so they incorporate elements of constitutive intertextuality, or what Fairclough prefers to call interdiscursivity.

Kristeva’s discussion of intertextuality identified its horizontal and vertical dimensions, horizontal being the syntagmatic structure of turn-taking in a dialogue, and vertical being the paradigms or range of choices available in the wider textual and discursive context (Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* 103). Authier-Revuz and Mainguenucau introduced the terms manifest and constitutive intertextuality to distinguish between quotations or other specific references and more complex configurations of discourse conventions. The elements which characterized various orders of discourse are identified by Fairclough as genre, activity type, style and discourse. These elements may be used by text producers in a straightforward way, or



reaccentuated with irony or parody, or used in unconventional mixes. Fairclough's choice of the word interdiscursivity to represent this process is intended "to underline that the focus is on discourse conventions rather than other texts as constitutive" (*Discourse and Social Change* 104).

The discourses I will be examining here are discourses about childhood, constructed from several different ideological points of view. Fairclough suggests that discourses should be identified both by their field or subject matter, and by the framework in which their subject matter is constituted, for example, "feminist discourses of sexuality" (*Discourse and Social Change* 128). Thus, discourses dealing with childhood should be distinguished according to the institution or set of values that gave rise to them, and the three which join in children's literature are the institutions of religion, education and the family. Religious discourses of childhood place the child within an overall system of moral values constructed according to the conventions of Christianity and the Church, and dealing with the issues of good and evil. There are also philosophical discourses of childhood which consider a similar ethical problem, but from a more academic and less authoritarian perspective, and educational discourses of childhood which incorporate religious and philosophical elements to deal with issues of knowledge and learning. Family discourses about childhood are more complex and subtle because of the pervasiveness and variability of the family as an institution in society. The cultural norms that operate in that institution are constantly questioned by religious, political and educational discourses.

In analysing how these discourses of childhood produced the models of the Pilgrim and Peter Pan (models which have great intertextual potency) we need to look first at which institutions produced the concepts of childhood that generated these models and what needs or motives were driving them.

## 2.2 Religious and Philosophical Discourses: Wesley and Rousseau

Childhood, it has been pointed out, is a relatively modern concept. In medieval society, according to Phillipe Aries, the idea of childhood did not exist. The concept of childhood as a distinct stage in human development emerged gradually during the 16th and 17th centuries (Cleverley and Phillips, *Visions of Childhood* 6). Cleverley and Phillips in *Visions of Childhood: Influential Models from Locke to Spock* outline two discourses dating from this time that deal with the nature of the child and the type of education children should receive. On one side is the Puritan evangelical tradition as exemplified by John Wesley, and on the other the Romantic movement headed by Rousseau. Both discourses place great importance on the formative nature of childhood and the necessity of correct training to equip the child for adulthood and eventually to have some positive effect on society as a whole. However, the underlying assumptions about human nature are diametrically opposed, the Puritans regarding children as naturally sinful, along with the rest of mankind, and the Romantics regarding all humans as children of nature and therefore most natural and good in their innocent, child-like, untouched state.

Either way, children in their current state in society were unsatisfactory and needed to be moulded by adults into a more acceptable form. Children's literature therefore had its origins in the adult desire to control, improve and educate their young. John Rowe Townsend points out that this was of course dependent on economic factors and the availability of technology, so that until the printing press made books relatively affordable "the writing of books to amuse children would have been an economic as well as a psychological impossibility" (*Written for Children* 3). He goes on to say "I do not know of any survival from the age of manuscript that can be called a children's story. But there were manuscripts that embodied lessons for children: especially the "Courtesy books" which flourished in the fifteenth century" (*Written for Children* 3).

The quotation he includes from Symon's *Lesson of Wisdom for All Manner Children* is in the heaviest type of control language: a list of negative imperatives - "Thou shalt not"s in the style of the ten commandments.

Child over men's houses no stones fling

Nor at glass windows no stones sling

Nor make no crying, jokes or plays

In holy Church on holy days.

(cited in Townsend, *Written for Children* 4)

The techniques used to educate the young depended on whether children were regarded as having a natural tendency towards evil or towards good. This in turn depends on how adults perceive themselves and their assessment of their own learning over the years, whether they think they have lost some knowledge or feelings or attitudes they once had that cannot be recovered, or whether they feel they have acquired knowledge and attitudes that now benefit them. If "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" and "Heaven lies about us in our infancy" (Wordsworth, *Selected Poetry and Prose* 164-165) then education consists of trying to prevent contamination; it is an act of protection, keeping out the world and society that cause repression, frustration and evil. All evil, according to this model, is the result of alienation from nature and the pressures arising from the formation of cities and civilization. The type of control necessary for this sort of education is an indirect but all-pervasive control, as it must be directed at the surrounding environment rather than at the child being educated. The freedom thus produced is an illusion. "Let him (the child) always think he is master when you are really master," Rousseau advised (cited in Cleverley and Phillips 35). The child seemingly operates without restraint or correction, but the environment in which he or she is allowed to do so is secretly controlled or manipulated by some unseen power.



Authority in the Puritan system of education is more overt and direct. The first step in reducing children's natural tendency towards evil is to get them to recognize themselves as weak, evil and wicked, and to recognize the authority of their parents, the Bible and God. John Wesley's recommendation "Whatever pains it costs, break the will, if you would not damn the child" (cited in Cleverley and Phillips 29) echoes Proverbs 23: 13-14 "Do not withhold discipline from a child, if you beat him with a rod he will not die. If you beat him with a rod you will save his life from Sheol." In this view, immediate physical punishment is preferable to eternal and probably inevitable punishment in Hell. The parent or teacher inflicting the punishment thus acts on behalf of God, sharing his authority in a smaller way. The evil in children arises not from alienation from nature but from alienation from God and, again in a smaller way, disobedience of their parents. The process of education is analogous to the process of receiving salvation from God. The concept of salvation is central to the discourses of Wesley and other reformists. Salvation is the desired object, the goal and purpose of all education for every person, just as Reason is for Rousseau.

In analysing various discourses, I will be making use of the actant model proposed by Greimas, which identifies six broad character roles that operate in all narratives. (Toolan, *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction* 93). I find this provides a clear and simple way of labelling who does what to whom, but more importantly it also provides a useful starting point for analysing how power operates, by identifying who acts as subject, who has the passive role of object, and what super helper is needed behind the scenes to exert control. This model has been used by Vestergaard and Schroder to analyse advertising, but it is also applicable to broader narratives and discourses such as Wesley's and Rousseau's. Greimas proposes three pairs of roles: giver/receiver, subject/object, helper/opponent. The subject is the protagonist of any narrative, the doer of most action. The object may be a person, for example, the bride the prince will marry at the end of the story, or a more abstract goal of some sort, such as cavity-free teeth, to use the advertising example. In many cases the subject of the

story is also the beneficiary as s/he receives the object at the end of the story courtesy of the giver, who may also be referred to as the sender, or superhelper. In myths and folk tales the superhelper may be a fairy or other being with magical powers. In addition there are more ordinary helpers who assist the subject with his or her actions, and opponents who try to prevent the subject attaining his or her object, either because of rivalry or some other kind of enmity.

The individual who is the subject of John Wesley's sermons is usually called "the sinner", and what s/he seeks (the object) is salvation. This can be seen as the abstract concept of being saved from damnation, or it can be what constitutes salvation, that is, the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart, "The life of God in the soul of man; Christ formed in the heart" (Wesley, *Forty-Four Sermons* 25). This means that the object is very closely associated with the superhelper. In many modern narratives, Toolan has pointed out, the role of the super helper becomes attenuated and the subject achieves his or her goal largely through his or her own efforts (94). However in this narrative, great stress is laid upon the powerlessness of the subject and his or her total dependence on the super helper, God. Grace is a free gift from God. "For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand" (Wesley, *Forty-Four Sermons* 1). The only thing the sinner can do is accept God's gift by believing in Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour. Even when s/he has become the beneficiary by receiving the Holy Spirit, and is now known as a Christian, s/he is still totally dependent on God. The opponent in this model is Satan, along with the sinner's own wickedness and weakness, and the helpers are all those preachers, evangelists and teachers who help spread the word of God.

One of the main implications of this model for children and education is a heavy emphasis on responsibility both for the teacher and for the pupil. The teacher has the awesome responsibility of standing in for God in transmitting his message and representing his authority. John Wesley asks, "Do you put forth all your strength in the



vast work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your might? exerting every faculty of your soul, using every talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermost of your power?" (*Forty-Four Sermons* 45). Pupils have their own responsibility of total submission. Wesley asks "Are you humble, teachable, advisable; or stubborn, self-willed, heady, high minded? Are you obedient to your superiors as to parents?" (*Forty-Four Sermons* 47).

The other important implication of this model is the passive nature of the learning process, due mainly to the enormous power difference between the subject and super helper. God is all-powerful; the sinner/Christian is incapable of achieving anything of his or her own volition. What is more, this is a power gap that can never be closed. No matter how thorough the sinner's repentance and redemption, the Christian is still totally dependent on God and the gift of God's grace. Even when the discourse shifts from purely religious to more broadly educational, so that the object becomes acquisition of knowledge rather than reception of the Holy Spirit, the balance of power remains similar: a powerful teacher representing God and holding authority in trust from him and a receptive, obedient student waiting to receive enlightenment.

Another aspect of this discourse which could be said to devalue learning, or at least, devalue the importance of the learner in learning, is in the nature of the knowledge of God. Mere theoretical knowledge, belief in an abstract concept is not enough for Wesley. To be known properly, God must be known actually, the way you would know a friend because of his or her physical presence in your life. This concept of the physical reality of the arrival of the Holy Spirit (based on the description of the day of Pentecost in Acts) led to some extreme behaviours.

It was quite common for sinners to be seized with a trembling and shaking, and from that to fall down on the floor as if they were dead; and many of them have been convulsed from head to foot, while others have retained the use of their tongues so as



to pray for mercy, while they were lying helpless on the ground or floor.

(Kirby 165)

The reception of the Holy Spirit depicted here is a very highly charged emotional and physical experience. Its physical nature convinced people of its reality; its emotional nature enhanced a feeling of commitment to God. John Wesley did try to combat an anti-intellectual tendency in his religious movement with exhortations to keep learning (Kirby 272, 278), but two factors - the tangible nature of knowledge (of the Holy Spirit) and the total helplessness of all sinners to redeem themselves - meant that intellectual learning was placed in a very limited perspective.

In comparison with Wesley's views on learning, Rousseau's educational philosophy, as propounded in *Emile*, is more active, more ongoing, and more intellectual, although it has some fundamental similarities in roles and power relations. The goal is the acquisition of Reason and the super helper is Reason itself, a similar pattern to Wesley's and probably a characteristic of religious discourse in general. In any narrative the superhelper would be the source of power and authority, as well as aid, but in religious discourses the desirability added by the moral dimension - the identification of God with goodness and love, or of Reason with happiness and freedom - means that the desired objective has to be some form of closeness with the super helper - a sinner receiving God's Holy Spirit, or a pupil growing into a user of pure Reason. But whereas sinners are required to identify their own sinfulness and pray to God for forgiveness and grace, the pupil, *Emile*, in Rousseau's treatise is not allowed to be aware of what he is doing. The goal he should pursue is that of meeting his own needs through his own efforts, and the goal of the tutor, his helper, is to lead him towards Reason until he has acquired it without realizing it.

This element of unconsciousness is important in establishing and maintaining the right sort of power relations. In this model, growth is natural and almost effortless (compared to the cataclysmic changes involved in Wesley's model); it cannot be

forced or accelerated. Rousseau uses a plant metaphor to describe it: "If we try to invert this order [of Nature] we shall produce a forced fruit immature and flavourless" (*Emile* 54). So what is the role of the tutor? It is not so much to assist the pupil's progress as to prevent his progress in the wrong direction. "The education of the earliest years should be merely negative. It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error" (*Emile* 57). The child needs time to accumulate the necessary sensory experience before reason can develop. "Since everything that comes into the human mind enters through the gates of sense, man's first reason is a reason of sense experience" (*Emile* 90). The tutor provides a "well regulated liberty" (*Emile* 56) in which the child learns "to calculate the effects of all his movements and to correct his mistakes by experience," (*Emile* 97) and having learnt that "your freedom and your power extend as far and no further than your natural strength" (*Emile* 47), does not desire anything that his reason tells him is unattainable. "True happiness," says Rousseau, "consists in decreasing the difference between our desires and our powers, in establishing a perfect equilibrium between the power and the will" (*Emile* 44). This means that the tutor has to avoid any exercise of authority, not providing the pupil with anything, or helping or correcting, but letting the pupil work everything out for himself or herself, when s/he is ready. "Children should never receive punishment merely as such; it should always come as the natural consequence of their fault" (*Emile* 65). Thus they learn to obey reason, not people or society.

However in *Emile*, all these "natural consequences" are very carefully engineered. The tutor has to provide an environment in which the right lessons will be learnt, which involves creating situations in which the need Emile perceives can be met by his emerging skills or knowledge. Without using overt authority, the tutor nevertheless exerts an all-pervasive power (and Andre Boutet de Monvel notes in the introduction, "Emile should be read as a speculation of principles, not as a guide to practical methods," (*Emile* vii)) that derives from his association with the ultimate power,



reason. Once Emile is twenty, the tutor says, “It is true I allow him a show of freedom, but he was never more completely under control, because he obeys of his own free will.... he knows how to obey reason” (*Emile* 298). The tutor thus has a dual nature: he is the companion who is inseparable from his pupil and seems to learn side by side with him (“I am convinced he will never learn anything thoroughly unless we learn it together” (*Emile* 163)) but he is also the representative of reason and as such beyond the reach of human rebellion. “Do not kick against the stern law of necessity,” (*Emile* 47) Rousseau warns, and the tutor imposes his will without argument. “If there is something he should not do, do not forbid him, but prevent him without explanation or reasoning” (*Emile* 55).

Eventually Emile is capable of taking on the role of tutor for his own son. He has in effect graduated, by growing into the natural man who uses only reason, but he is still child-like in that he is unspoilt by the influences of Society. He was born good, (“There is no original sin in the human heart” (*Emile* 56)) and his education, by strengthening his body and his mind, has given him the power to remain good. “All wickedness comes from weakness. The child is only naughty because he is weak; make him strong and he will be good; if we could do everything we should never do wrong” (*Emile* 33).

Aspects of these two discourses have filtered through many texts and many years to appear in the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce. The religious and philosophical definitions of human nature and the nature of God, the roles to be followed in educational practices, the implications for family structure and the relationships between children and parents, the growth of the genre of children’s literature and the appearance of specific patterns in it such as absent parents and archetypal characters such as Peter Pan, all have intertextual and interdiscursive links with Wesley and Rousseau. The specific textual references in *Seven Little Australians* to the children’s writers “Charlotte Yonge and Louisa Alcott and Miss Wetherell”



(54), and through them links to Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as well as the references in the Billabong books to J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* show how strongly these particular models of childhood have established themselves in children's literature, but before this manifest intertextuality is discussed, the effects of interdiscursivity should be examined, as the integration of these models into educational and family discourses has resulted in some ideological shifts, in particular a separation of gender roles and a re-directing of Rousseau's ideas into a more Christian orientation.

### 2.3 Gender Roles in Family and Educational Discourses

Because religious discourses are generally prescriptive across a broad range of areas, as they apply their principles to all facets of life, they tend to establish and colonize other areas of discourse. Christian discourses of the family began in the Bible and continued as a sub-branch of religious discourse thereafter, always bound to mainstream religious discourse by the use of the family metaphor to describe the relationship between God and the Christian church. God being identified as the Father, fathers received much of their status and authority through being associated with God and being built into the power structure upheld by the church.

The Bible was also the starting point for religious discourses of education, although in defining childhood and the nature of children it is less clear-cut than in establishing the respect due to a father. Jesus' warning that "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven," (Matt 18:3) and his invitation "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven," (Matt 19:14) seem to allow for the discourses that represent childhood as a time of innocence and pure goodness, but there are numerous instances, such as the Proverb previously quoted, that seem to indicate the opposite: that childhood is a time for stern training and correction.

By the time of Wesley and Rousseau, two different educational discourses were emerging, deriving from these two different points of view and associated with two different sets of power relations between adults and children. Teachers in the one model become strong authority figures, and in the other more simply mentors, guides or facilitators rather than imparters of knowledge.

The teacher/parent is a position of strong power, where the teacher is the holder and imparter of knowledge, and has various types of force at his or her disposal, while the child as pupil has neither force nor knowledge, and must submit to force in order to acquire knowledge. This is not a static relationship, however. As the student learns, the power imbalance lessens, and eventually at some point there would theoretically be a moment of graduation when the student earns the right to become a teacher and in turn pass on his or her knowledge to others.

As well as the accumulation of delegated authority by parents and teachers, there are at least two types of power operating to manipulate the students in the authoritarian model. The first is physical coercion either used directly by the parent, teacher or even conceivably by the ultimate authority, Nature or God. The second is a more social force, the pupil's sense of obligation to the teacher for his or her efforts. Respect, gratitude and co-operation are all required of the child whose teacher or parent can effectively produce the necessary feelings of indebtedness and reliance. This construction of obligation is an important part of much educational religious discourse. The argument is that God's sacrifice in sending his only son, and Jesus' sacrifice in being crucified put all humans under an immense obligation to love and worship them. *The Wide, Wide World* by E. Wetherell is one of the earlier children's books that operates within this discourse. The main character, Ellen, like Alcott's March sisters after her, takes *The Pilgrim's Progress* as her guide, and the novel traces her development as a Christian. Here a kind gentleman inquires about her commitment to God.

“Have you ever made any fit return to God for His goodness to you?”

“No sir,” said Ellen in a low tone.

“And yet there has been no change in His kindness.... He took our burden of sin upon Himself and suffered that terrible punishment - all to save you and such as you. And now He asks His children to leave off sinning and come back to Him who has bought them with His own blood. He did this because He loved you: does He not deserve to be loved in return?”

Ellen had nothing to say: she hung her head down further and further.

(Wetherell, *The Wide, Wide World* 63)

As this extract illustrates, a favour done demands a favour in return, and the larger, more comprehensive the original favour, the greater the sense of obligation. To refuse to be put in that position is next to impossible. It cannot be done without appearing rude, ungrateful, petulant and immature.

The teacher using this type of power has to place himself or herself in the sacrificial role. The act of teaching has to be seen to involve considerable effort, even suffering, for the student to be placed under sufficient obligation. The division of teaching into two roles, the punishing and the sacrificial, has a tendency to become a division into gender roles, according to the types of power that it is appropriate for each sex to wield. Female teachers or mothers take the sacrificial role and male teachers or fathers the punishing role.

George Eliot's comment (made in regard to *Jane Eyre*) that “All self-sacrifice is good,” (Laski, *George Eliot and her World* 46) seems to be the pinnacle of the sacrificial religious discourses which were so pervasive throughout the Victorian period and beyond. World War I saw sacrificial discourses applied to men, with much reiteration of “Greater love hath no man than this,” but in a more general social context it was females who were encouraged to be martyrs, as daughters, wives and



mothers. Every role involved service, but service alone was not enough. Credibility depended on serving until it hurt. Anything else was reprehensibly selfish and unwomanly.

Both teacher and pupil or mother and child are disempowered by this approach. Both have to accept significant loss of freedom, pleasure and leisure in order to gain the trade-offs of acceptance, appreciation and intimacy. Furthermore, the relationship thus established becomes permanently binding. The moment of graduation that could have been the culmination of the students' career, the point at which they have learned all that the teacher can teach, is subtly effaced, because the obligation incurred by the teacher's sacrifice goes on. *The Girl's Own Annual* (vol 47, published c.1926) includes an article entitled "Are Mothers Really Appreciated?" which illustrates the interdependence of this relationship. This article concentrates on the mother-daughter relationship, where the daughter, in eventually becoming a mother herself, becomes closer to her own mother. Men are to a certain extent written out of this article by comparing them unfavourably to a mother's love in the opening paragraphs and not mentioning them at all thereafter.

Mother love is stronger than men. Man shrinks, love never falters,  
man faints, love will only grow stronger. Men about to die cling  
to it. (109)

But after abstracting "love" in this way, the writer then pins it down to specific motherly behaviours: going without sleep to soothe a frightened child, hiding her own grief so as not to grieve her children, and so on. All of the work involved is represented as making "sacrifices upon the altar of their care" (108), and it is very necessary that this should involve both mental and physical suffering. "They would not get along just as well if we were less anxious" (111), but at the same time, mothers are "the happiest, most blessed group" (111) because of their joy in their children. In making this joyful, loving sacrifice, mothers are the representatives of God. "God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers" (109). All these factors: the

love, the hard work, the suffering, and the suggestion of religious authority, mean that the mother-child relationship becomes permanently binding. Even adults will “always remain something of a child” (109) in their relationship with their mother. “A child is always a child and a mother is eternally a mother” (111).

#### 2.4 Discursive Shift: The Victorian Good Child

By Victorian times, the discourses depicting children as inherently good had come to be predominantly Christian discourses. Wordsworth had contributed to this process with the philosophy summed up in “Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.” Humphrey Carpenter identifies William Blake and William Wordsworth as key figures in foreshadowing the Victorian mythologizing of childhood as a state of innocence, because of their concept of the visionary simplicity of children (*Secret Gardens* 7-9), which removed the notion of the pure, uncontaminated child from Rousseau’s Nature-dominated world and repositioned it in a more overtly Christian framework. In his study *Secret Gardens: The Golden Age of Children’s Literature*, Carpenter identifies the theme of a “search for Arcadia, a Good Place, a Secret Garden” (13), as an attempt by late Victorian and Edwardian children’s authors to find a substitute for conventional Christianity. Rejecting the message propagated by evangelist tracts, “That idle and thoughtless children would soon die an unpleasant death and then suffer everlasting torment in Hell” (2), writers such as Charles Kingsley, George Macdonald, Kenneth Grahame and J. M. Barrie instead portrayed worlds where children, or child-like characters, could live in innocence and be preserved from the horrors of the adult world. In this discourse, Carpenter claims, “Growing up becomes synonymous with the loss of Paradise” (9).

The poet Henry Vaughan, writing at around the same time as John Bunyan, was one of the first to equate childhood with Eden. His poems “The Retreat” and “Childhood” depict the innocence of childhood as a sacred state and the loss of it as infinitely to be

regretted. "The Retreat" spells out some of the characteristics of this perception of childhood - firstly that sin is learnt or acquired, not innate, and there is a time of innocence before this occurs:

Before I taught my tongue to wound

My conscience with a sinful sound, (Vaughan, *Selected Poems* 28)

secondly, that children's souls are less hampered by their earthly bodies, allowing them a stronger instinct for sensing eternity:

But felt through all this fleshly dress

Bright shoots of everlastingness, (28)

and thirdly that, although they do not experience God directly, they can see him more clearly or sense him more closely than adults:

Could see a glimpse of his bright face. (28)

All this is perceived by an adult who has lost these faculties and longs to rediscover them:

O how I long to travel back

And tread again that ancient track! (28)

Moving the concept of the child as innately good from Rousseau's context to a Christian context involves more than simply replacing the superhelper Reason with the superhelper God. Rousseau's dictum that, "The child is only naughty because he is weak. Make him strong and he will be good" (*Emile* 33), gets lost along the way. The opponent in this narrative is no longer civilization and all the weakness and corruption that attends it, but Time and the inevitable passage to adulthood. Strength ceases to become relevant because of the doctrine of man's helplessness in regard to sin, and the need to rely totally on God. Rousseau's vision of a seamless process of learning, which produces as its end product a man who uses Reason perfectly and is uncontaminated by civilization, has no counterpart in Christian discourse, which sees sin as bound to enter at some stage. An early death is the only thing that can save a child from growing up and learning about sin; no amount of education will do this. A



sinner can then be saved, of course, but there is a world of difference between the saved sinner and the innocent child totally unaware of the nature of sin. The whole focus of the discourse changes from the education of the child to the nostalgia of the adult for the innocence of childhood. Instead of an active subject, the child, proceeding towards an achievable goal, Reason, we have a subject, the adult, whose goal, childhood, is not only unattainable but is being borne daily further away by the ever-rolling stream of Time.

This discourse of unattainable childhood emerges in Blake and Wordsworth and reaches its height in the Victorian era, when Charles Dickens, with such characters as Paul Dombey, Little Nell and Tiny Tim, eulogized childhood as a time of innocence and potential for sainthood. The spectre of early death helped keep these children uncontaminated by the world, and any small amount of religious instruction they received was supplemented by their instinctively visionary faith in the beauty of the world they were going to. However, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* turned these discourses around with a scathing picture of a child saint as hypocrite.

I have a little boy, younger than you, who knows six Psalms by heart:  
and when you ask him which he would rather have, a ginger-bread-nut  
to eat, or a verse of a Psalm to learn, he says: "Oh! the verse of a Psalm!  
Angels sing Psalms," says he; "I wish to be a little angel here below."  
He then gets two nuts in recompense for his infant piety.

(65)

The backlash beginning against the idealized Victorian good child became a complete discourse shift in the Edwardian era. Jackie Wullschlager identifies it thus: "The Victorian child is a symbol of innocence; the Edwardian child of hedonism. In fiction, the former is good, the latter has a good time" (*Inventing Wonderland* 109). There is still a significant focus of adult regret of the loss of childhood, but it is no longer innocence that is valued, but the freedom of childhood, its light-hearted frolics and

carefree joys. This simplifies the discourse to some extent, because freedom and happiness can be rediscovered in a way that innocence can not. But what happens in *Peter Pan* and other literature of the time is a realization of the impossibility of remaining young, resulting in the discourse separating into at least two distinct strands. Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Grey* and Rider Haggards's *She* both present characters whose seeming youthfulness masks something sinister and evil, and *Peter Pan* manages to combine a celebration of the joys of remaining forever young with an exploration of the negatives this would necessarily involve. The play *Peter Pan* was first staged in 1904, and quickly became a great success. Barrie then published a novel version in 1911; which was also popular (Carpenter 177 - 179). All references to *Peter Pan* in the following sections are to the novel rather than the play.

## 2.5 Narratives in *Peter Pan*

Exactly why Peter Pan wouldn't grow up is important as it establishes a different valuation of childhood to the Victorian writers who saw it as an all too brief time of perfection and holy innocence. The childhood of Peter Pan is neither admirably good nor reprehensibly evil, but it is a time of freedom from this mundane adult world, a time of adventure and imagination.

On the magical shores of Neverland children are forever beaching  
their boats to play. We have all been there and we can still hear the  
sound of the surf breaking on the island shore. But some of us will  
never land there again because we are grown up now.

(Barrie, *Peter Pan* 11 )

Here the narrator identifies himself with grown-ups who have lost the capacity for living in an imaginary world. This loss is represented as being a natural and inevitable process that occurs for all adults, just as all children have the capacity to play in a magical Neverland. What is interesting is the way adults then become subject to envy

and desire because although excluded from Neverland, they can remember it and “still hear the sound of the surf breaking on the island shore” (11). In some ways this parallels children observing the adult world but being unable to participate actively in it, but whereas children are heading towards the world they are observing, adults are presumably moving further and further away from Neverland through time, and can never return.

The complexities of *Peter Pan* can be partly explained by treating the story as two separate narratives. “The mix of ingredients is unique. On the one hand, here is the boy’s adventure story laced with dreams of military glory.... On the other, the story is a fantasy filled with imaginings both elegiac and erotic” (Wullschlager, *Inventing Wonderland* 127).

Peter Pan is a unique individual, neither human nor fairy. The implications and difficulties of his mode of existence are continually foregrounded and problematized throughout the story, and in the end are left as an unresolved paradox. The main point about Peter Pan is that he won’t grow up. Side by side with this is his existence in an imaginary world, Neverland, rather than the real world. So far, so good, because grown-ups and the real world are represented as distinctly unattractive. There is however one exception: mothers. Mrs Darling, Wendy’s mother, is represented as very attractive, and although Peter lost his mother and is ambivalent in his feeling towards mothers, he asks Wendy to be his mother, and enjoys being her son, much to the chagrin of Tinkerbell, who feels rejected. There are strong Freudian overtones in his uneasy need for his mother’s love and his need to kill a father-figure (Captain Hook). Although he wants a family, coping with family relationships is too much an intrusion of the real world for him, and he eventually rejects it. As with any type of activity, the only mother-child relationship he wants is a play one, just as his adventures are pretend adventures and his food is often pretend food. However, in spite of his eventual rejection of a real-life mother, he receives the privilege of the one



special kiss that was always hiding on Mrs Darling's pretty mouth, and he enters into a succession of mother-son relationships with Wendy's daughter, grand-daughter and so on. So he is perpetually in a pretend relationship that imitates and rejects the real one.

Another ambivalence is the need for children to believe in him. Towards the beginning of the novel, Peter tells Wendy that a fairy dies every time a child says, "I don't believe in fairies." Later, Peter rescues Tinkerbell from death by getting all the children of the world to assert their belief in fairies. However, although fairies depend for their existence entirely upon the imagination of children, they are separate from it, and are not created directly by it, but arise from some other source, some sort of folk memory or *spiritus mundi*. Peter Pan himself, although ostensibly not a fairy, also arises from this source and also depends on children believing in him. And because Peter lives in the imaginary world, belief and existence are one and the same for him. This can be seen in the way that he loves stories, says anything that comes into his head, and can't distinguish between real and pretend food, but it can also be seen in his tendency to forget things, as anything not currently in his imagination does not exist. So at the end of the book, when he visits Wendy a year after all their adventures, she finds he has forgotten Tinkerbell. Tinkerbell is therefore dead, and Peter remarks carelessly, "There are so many fairies, I expect she is no more" (105).

The implication that Peter himself could disappear without trace once children stop believing in him is driven home in the closing statement of the book. "That little girl will also be Peter's mother one day, and so it will go on, so long as children still believe in fairies" (108). What it boils down to is that children need to believe in something that doesn't exist otherwise they will be guilty of murdering something that doesn't exist. This seems to be another manifestation of the technique of guilt manipulation. The choice offered is either compliance or conviction for wanton cruelty. But instead of requiring gratitude and respect for adult authority, adults here

are requiring that children somehow compensate for their sense of loss in having grown out of childhood. Instead of taking the Wesleyan stance of educating children promptly so they can have the protection of a few adult virtues (temperance, patience, etc.), the narrator of *Peter Pan* seems to be exhorting children not to grow up even though they know they must.

Barrie himself reworked the concept of eternal youth in the play *Mary Rose* (1920) in which there is still some equation of youth with joy, but the alienation of youth from an ageing world produces loneliness and tragedy. Mary Rose's eternal youth is, like Peter Pan's, associated with a fantasy world and cannot transfer to the real world, but whereas the adventures in Neverland form a large part of *Peter Pan*'s narrative, the world Mary Rose visits is never revealed, and as she cannot recall it, it is only hinted at through its effects on her. When she visits it first at the age of eleven she returns almost imperceptibly changed. Her mother, Mrs Morland, later explains it thus, "I have sometimes thought that our girl is curiously young for her age - as if - you know how just a touch of frost may stop the growth of a plant and yet leave it blooming - it has sometimes seemed to me as if a cold finger had once touched my Mary Rose" (Barrie, *Mary Rose* 67). As a married woman with a small child she disappears into the other world again and does not return for twenty-five years. When she is eventually found, "They said there was such a joy on her face as she slept that it was a shame to waken her" (164). Her awakening delivers her back into a world where her parents and husband have aged and her little child has vanished (he has run away to sea). The implications of the loneliness, confusion and alienation she must feel are not spelled out, instead the action shifts to a time after her death when her ghost searches the family home for her lost baby. Even though her now grown up son has returned, Mary Rose cannot recognize the adult. Her loneliness seems permanent and incurable, until finally her spirit is allowed to make its way to heaven.

The story of *Mary Rose* is in many ways a logical extension of some of the ideas in *Peter Pan*: that staying young is not possible in the real world, but could happen in another world, that that other world would be less good or less real than this world in some important way, and that trying to bridge that gap between the two worlds would produce serious disjunctures of time and emotions, and would ultimately result in tragedy. *Mary Rose* is not a children's story; it is an antidote for adults who want to keep enjoying children's stories and need to be reminded of their proper sphere. The character and symbol of Peter Pan was picked up and used in literary discourses, but with the focus on the simpler side of the narrative: the magical qualities of Neverland as a place of perpetually exciting adventures.

## 2.6 Interdiscursivity in *Peter Pan* and the Billabong Books

In spite of the discourse shifts that have occurred in children's literature over the years, it is still possible to see some common threads of discourse running through Rousseau, *Peter Pan*, a large range of children's adventure stories, and the Billabong books. Section 2.7, dealing with the pilgrim narratives, can draw on more precise intertextual references, as Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* was both early and seminal. Using Peter Pan as the label for a type of discourse means that there is less manifest intertextuality in the texts used; rather there are interdiscursive links to educational discourses and narrative conventions.

There are fewer overtly didactic books in the Rousseau tradition than in the Wesleyan, as the discourse is promoted through a less overt, more student-centred style of teaching. Rousseau thought novels had very little educational value. Carpenter notes that, "According to *Emile*, just about the only tolerable book was *Robinson Crusoe*," (*Secret Gardens* 7) which is the story of a man placed in the situation Rousseau regarded as most educational: marooned alone on an island, he had to develop survival skills without any teacher to help him. Yet its educational value does not stop



*Robinson Crusoe* being an adventure story with broad appeal to all age groups. Even before the children's literature genre became established, it was a popular book with child readers. The island adventure became established as a distinct genre and was taken up by R. M. Ballantyne in *Coral Island* (1857) and later by Robert Louis Stevenson in *Treasure Island* (1883). The genre eventually became increasingly formulaic and simplistic and extended to younger age groups. In 1942 Enid Blyton started her highly popular Famous Five series with *Five on a Treasure Island*.

The appeal of an island setting was multi-faceted - tropical islands had exotic appeal to European readers, but the completeness of an island as a self-contained world was what contributed most to a successful children's narrative. For children to be active subjects in a story, they need a space where they can operate with a certain degree of autonomy, and the island setting provides this. The combination of exotic setting, active involvement in physical adventure, and perhaps a fairy-tale reward of hidden treasure made the stories attractive to children, and the opportunity for improving one's general knowledge was not forgotten by the adult writers. Townsend notes a similar benefit in school stories. "A boarding school is in many ways a self-contained world in which boys or girls are full citizens.... The school story thus gets over one of the first problems of any realistic literature for children: how to make the characters full participants in the life of their community" (85). Whether the setting is an island, a school or a cattle station, children can be positioned as active protagonists in a physical environment, unlike the Pilgrim narratives which tend to restrict them to more internal mental or emotional spheres of action.

It is worth noting in passing that, although island adventure stories tend to operate within Rousseau-type discourses in which Nature is an effective teacher and children are naturally good and able to become more so as they acquire strength and skills, this genre can occupy quite a different area of discourse. In a set of discourses about children where the possibilities were firstly that children were either born inherently

good or inherently evil, and secondly that the authority responsible in some way for human nature was either God or Nature, three out of the four possible combinations have already been discussed. The fourth, that children are inherently evil and that Nature is the force that makes them so, came as a shock to the public with the publication of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, where the boys' primitive fears, unresponsive to rational explanations, eventually produce acts of horrific cruelty. Perhaps it needed the atrocities of the twentieth century and its two World Wars for this discourse to have any currency. In this narrative, Nature is the opponent, and civilization, or more particularly, the processes of democratic government are the superhelper, but without adults to enforce them, their power fades, and only the rescue of the boys by adults at the end of the book saves Ralph from almost certain death.

Some aspects of the discourse of Peter Pan are pre-empted in Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*, essentially displaying the same characteristics of a restrictive definition of childhood (not on time or age terms, but on imagination and quality of mind terms) and a rigorous exclusion of adults, but also giving indications of the power exerted by adults in enforcing this separation of roles. Just as Peter Pan's position is constructed as ambivalent (with regard to families and adults), the children represented and addressed in *A Child's Garden of Verses* are shown as holders of certain types of power and at the same time unable to hold power.

The concept which links *Peter Pan* and *A Child's Garden of Verses* is the concept of the land of imagination which is accessible only to children. When a child wants to escape the mundane everyday world it is very simple:

I have just to shut my eyes  
To go sailing through the skies -  
To go sailing far away  
To the pleasant Land of Play.

(Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses* 93)

Adults are excluded from this world of imagination and can only watch and remember.

Now in the elders' seat  
We rest with quiet feet,  
And from the window-bay  
We watch the children, our successors, play.

(115)

As well as participating as spectators, adults try to place an obligation on children to retain their child-like qualities.

You must still be bright and quiet  
And content with simple diet,  
And remain, through all bewild'ring  
Innocent and honest children.

(59)

Thus children's play is a spectacle for nostalgic adults, and to pander to adult's pleasures children are pressured to remain innocently child-like, but this situation contains the paradox that they are to retain their innocence by being aware of the need to retain it and consciously guarding their innocent qualities.

The Billabong books have a different strategy for approaching the Peter Pan discourse. The characters actively encourage each other not to grow up, not by focusing on avoiding the contamination of the adult world but by focusing on the strength of the child and in particular the capacity for play. The categories of adulthood and childhood are collapsed into one, as are work and play (this being possible in the special world of Billabong). A strong emphasis on the simultaneous busy-ness of work and the happiness of play keeps the characters youthful.



It was difficult to say where play ended and work began on  
Billabong, since anything to do with horses always presented  
itself to the boys - and Norah - as "a lark".

(*Billabong's Daughter* 10)

A few fragments of manifest intertextuality provide explicit links between *Peter Pan* and the Billabong books. The references to *Peter Pan* in the Billabong books are all comments made by the main character, Norah, or her thoughts about her husband-to-be, Wally, progressively identifying him more and more closely with the character Peter Pan. In *From Billabong to London*, the fourth book of the series, the Lintons see the statue of Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens "and Norah found a quaint hint of Wally in the carved face of the boy "who wouldn't grow up"." (313) In *Back to Billabong*, the sixth book of the series, Norah claims, "Wally will simply never grow up.... He's like Peter Pan" (115). By the eighth book of the series, *Billabong Adventurers*, Norah and Wally are about to get married and Norah's previous statement is rephrased as, "Wally never will be grown-up .... He is Peter Pan" (19). But although Wally is now totally identified with Peter Pan, the resemblance is only in the one characteristic of not growing up. The complexities of the original Peter, his magical abilities, his self-absorption, his ambivalent attitude to mother-figures, his poor memory - none of these are mentioned or seen in Wally's character. In effect, what the Billabong books do produce their own version of the Peter Pan narrative; using only the "Boys' Own Adventure" aspects of the Peter Pan story. Combining this with the Romantic model of childhood previously discussed means that whereas *Peter Pan* puts the emphasis on not growing up, the Billabong characters do not have any growing up to do. Billabong provides the Neverland environment in which children do not have to grow up, although unlike Neverland, Billabong is represented as real, and not growing up is a state of mind rather than a magical state of being. Thus, there is

considerable modification and re-shaping of the Peter Pan discourse in the Billabong novels.

## 2.7 Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity in *The Pilgrims Progress*, *Little Women* and *Seven Little Australians*

The intertextuality in *Seven Little Australians* works in an initially very obvious way because of its foregrounding in the opening chapter. There are specific references to other works of children's fiction: titles, quotations, references to broader cultural practices and traditions, and very close parallels to one of the dominant works in the field of children's literature, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. Even the storytelling style, with its intrusive narrator constructed as having ownership of the characters and the story, is a familiar convention, and although the narrator attacks some of the standard attitudes found in children's literature, this criticism highlights the novel's position within a continually fluctuating field of discourse.

Before you fairly start this story, I should like to give you just a word of warning. If you imagine you are going to read of model children, with perhaps a naughtily-inclined one to point a moral, you had better lay down the book immediately and betake yourself to *Sandford and Merton*, or similar standard juvenile works. Not one of the seven is really good, for the very excellent reason that Australian children never are.

(9)

With this statement the narrator of *Seven Little Australians* acknowledges the established discourses of children's literature and distances herself from them. "But in Australia a model child is - I say it not without thankfulness - an unknown quantity" (9). However, activating two opposing discourses results in a certain amount of unresolved tension. The house of the Woolcot family is known as Misrule, a name

familiarized by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and dating back to pagan festivals of Saturnalia, and the derivation of the nickname “Judy” is traced to the traditional English Punch and Judy puppet shows, which also have a pagan flavour of violence and chaos. “She was always popping and jerking herself about like the celebrated wife of Punch” (14).

But alongside these hints at anarchy are the ties to the domestic morality of *Little Women*. The initial descriptions of the characters are remarkably similar to those in chapter one of *Little Women*, as can be seen from the following table.

Character Descriptions in *Little Women* and *Seven Little Australians*.

<i>Little Women</i>	<i>Seven Little Australians</i>
Margaret/Meg the eldest, 16 very pretty, plump and fair plenty of soft brown hair a sweet mouth white hands of which she was rather vain	Meg the eldest, 16 a sweet, rather dreamy face a long, fair plait a powdering of pretty freckles that occasioned her much tribulation of the spirit
Jo, 15 very tall, thin, and brown sharp grey eyes a decided mouth her long thick hair was her one beauty never seemed to know what to do with her long limbs which were very much in her way	Judy, 13 very thin very bright dark eyes small, determined mouth mane of untidy curly dark hair small, eager, freckled face never seen to walk, seldom looked picturesque
Amy, the youngest pale and slender a regular snow maiden yellow hair curling on her shoulders blue eyes	Nell, 10 a little fairy like figure gold hair clustering in wonderful waves and curls around her face soft hazel eyes and a little rosebud of a mouth

As the characters and narrative in *Seven Little Australians* will be discussed in greater depth in later chapters, at this point only the similarities with *Little Women* will be



dealt with. The story in both cases is told by a narrator who addresses the reader directly, mostly in the first and last chapters, when introducing and farewelling the characters, and who occasionally passes judgement on characters' actions, thoughts or feelings. Both novels follow the adventures of a family group, but tend to focus on one individual at a time. The adventures tend to centre on a moral crisis faced by each individual - temptation to vanity, deceit, or other faults. In both books the father is largely an absent figure, Mr March because he is away at war and Captain Woolcot because he doesn't associate much with his children. Both books start with a few humorous incidents, then have as their climax a serious medical crisis - Beth's scarlet fever, Judy's fatal injury from a falling tree - and then finish with some romance in the last chapter for the eldest girl.

Some of these similarities - the episodic structure, the moral focus, and narratorial style - are part of the wider conventions of children's stories, but the naming and describing of individual characters in *Seven Little Australians*, and the selection of particular adventures keep the connection with *Little Women* conspicuous.

*Little Women* in its turn, is full of the same sorts of generic similarities and textual and cultural references to other children's books. The four March girls write and perform plays based on various other dramas and romances, they form a Pickwick Club in honour of Charles Dickens and in the first chapter they make a decision which becomes central to the whole novel: they decide to be pilgrims like Christian in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Thereafter, several chapters are given titles such as "Jo Meets Apollyon" and "Meg Goes to Vanity Fair" that show the story's structure following this theme and when the family is happily reunited on the father's return, Beth sings one of the hymns from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "He that is down need fear no fall" (Alcott, *Little Women* 202).

*The Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory in which a man, representing all Christians, travels from his original home, a state of sin and ignorance, to God's kingdom. The adventures he meets on the way - the Hill of Difficulty, Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle, and many others - all symbolize a Christian being tempted from the path of righteousness. The last obstacle is a river representing death. This story illustrates the individual nature of inner struggle. Although all the difficulties are met with in a physical form and although Christian frequently has companions with him, he still must face every danger alone. When crossing the river of death for example, Hopeful can feel the ground firm under his feet, while Christian, who is right beside him, cannot, and sinks in deep water (164).

This aspect of pilgrimage can be seen in the way *Little Women* and *Seven Little Australians* tend to focus on one character at a time and deal with his or her inner struggles which are generally struggles of the conscience with temptation of some sort.

As well as the loneliness of the pilgrims, another characteristic of this type of story is the nature of their progress. Every event is seen as a place they travel through, and the completion of the event is signalled by arriving on the other side. Childhood itself becomes a place of transition, a passage leading from babyhood to adulthood, a place of struggle, and a one-way street. To reach the other side, the pilgrims need to draw on some inner strength, or hitherto undiscovered virtue, or some words of comfort and encouragement from a guide or helper. Once discovered, this strength or virtue becomes part of their character and they go on to meet the next obstacle better equipped. This can also work in reverse if the character has been led astray instead of progressing along the straight and narrow path. Bunty's lying, for example, makes things worse for him next time round, and Jo's anger against Amy is the cause of the near tragedy in the next chapter. *Seven Little Australians*, although it does not refer to

the children specifically as pilgrims, makes use of much of the discourse, such as the path metaphor.

“Be careful of Judy” had been almost the last words of the anxious mother when, in the light that comes when the world’s is going out, she had seen with terrible clearness the stones and briars in the way of that particular pair of small, eager feet.  
And she had died, and Judy was stumbling right amongst them now...

(31)

*Little Women*, as was previously mentioned, consists of a series of incidents in which the girls have adventures that parallel the adventures Christian had in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. In each book, each separate adventure is an interesting story in itself, on an external, everyday level, but it also has significance for the moral development of the characters involved, and this significance is explained by a mentor figure who discusses with the characters the mistakes they made and how they ought to improve. John Bunyan discusses and justifies his choice of an allegorical narrative style in a prefatory poem entitled “The Author’s Apology for his Book”, and in so doing acknowledges the forces of intertextuality at work.

I find that Holy Writ in many places  
Hath semblence with this method, where the cases  
Do call for one thing, to set forth another  
Use it I may then,

(15)

Although its presence in the Bible, for example in the parables of Jesus, legitimizes this method, John Bunyan strengthens his argument by pointing out how using narrative for didactic purposes can make the instruction more effective by encouraging the reader to respond in positive ways. It grabs attention, “It seems a novelty” (16), it inspires action, “It will make the slothful active be” (15) and it stimulates memory, “Art thou forgetful? Wouldest thou remember/ From New Years day to the last of



December? Then read my fancies; they will stick like burs" (15), and above all it is genuine entertainment without the sinful component many forms of entertainment carried, "Wouldst thou be pleasant, yet be far from folly?" (16)

Traces of this approach are rarely far from children's literature. The author in selecting suitable material for the children's story aligns himself or herself with the moral mentor who is to explain the events' application to the characters' lives, and the narrator, who may be conflated with the author by the text, frequently also takes on the role of mentor instead of, or as well as, entrusting it to one of the characters in the book. There are of course reactions to this approach. Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* is probably the most famous parody of didactic children's literature - but the social construction of adult-child relationships as entailing strong educational responsibility on the part of adults and a certain degree of need and obligation on the part of children has remained fairly constant for many years. Humphrey Carpenter in *Secret Gardens: The Golden Age of Children's Literature* identifies Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* as a book that is very rare in its lack of moral purpose. "It has been loved by children and hated by adults because it is full of fun and virtually amoral." More typical modern children's stories, he claims, "Have a carefully conceived moral structure beneath the surface" (1).

The pilgrim story framework rests on the assumption that people are naturally bad, but have the potential to be good. This is the attitude that forms the basis of the many religious tracts that were among the first stories intended specifically for children, and is part of the theological framework in religious discourse. If goodness were easy or natural, there would be no story. As a narrative, however, this structure is self-limiting. The struggles which are the source of conflict and therefore the source of interest in the story are limited by the character developing through each one until the further you read, the less interesting each struggle becomes. The conflict inherent in

this type of story is that although the end is desirable, the characters are more interesting the further they are away from it.

The opening chapter of *Seven Little Australians* signals clearly that this book will challenge the prevalent discourses of children's literature of the time. The fact that some of the challenging has been pre-empted by *Little Women*, among others, is overlooked, but *Little Women*, which, as has already been pointed out, has close intertextual connections with *Seven Little Australians*, in no way fits the *Sandford and Merton* mould of "model children, with perhaps a naughtily inclined one to point a moral." In fact, the best loved character in *Little Women*, Jo, is the one with the most obvious faults, and the concept of naughtiness as a likeable quality is stated specifically by Jo in *Good Wives* when she discusses Laurie with Beth, saying, "Don't make a saint of him. I'm afraid I couldn't like him without a spice of human naughtiness" (125).

This admission that naughtiness is likeable redefines the concepts of right and wrong, good and bad. Good becomes saintly, super-human, unnatural. Bad becomes naughtiness, a natural and spicy part of human nature. When instead of bad being opposed to good, spicy is opposed to wholesome, the whole equation changes. Spiciness is much more appealing and appetising than wholesomeness, which is plain and bland and boring. The type of actions involved in spiciness are mischievous rather than bad, they involve flouting conventions, challenging authority, breaking rules, perhaps, but no real harm is done. Characters get into "scrapes" instead of being tempted to sin. The consequences are embarrassment and humour instead of trespass and perdition. The more trivial the adventures, too, the more the story can be spun out and the process of growing up slowed down. Both *Little Women* and *Seven Little Australians* take advantage of this construction of moral values.

## 2.8 Values and Binaries in the Billabong Books

In the Billabong books, childhood is not a progression towards adulthood, but an ideal state of being that combines the best of both worlds. Even while young, the Billabong children have a considerable degree of autonomy. They can ride their horses, go camping, rescue people and animals, and fight bushfires, all with a minimum of adult intervention. They are depicted as being responsible and having “sense” enough to deal with anything in a capable manner. After surviving the horrors of World War I, they return to enjoy similarly light-hearted adventures with the same combination of carefree attitudes and light-hearted responsibility. The books explain that it is the mixture of work and play that produced the successful integration of adulthood and childhood.

The depiction of childhood as an idealized state implies a perception of human nature as basically good. Unlike the pilgrims, who have to struggle long and hard for goodness, the Peter Pans of Billabong are naturally good without trying. And whereas the Pilgrim narratives treat naughtiness as a loveable, child-like quality, using the food metaphors previously discussed, the Billabong books use a different metaphor: Norah had grown “just as the wild bush flowers grow, hardy, unchecked, almost untended” (*A Little Bush Maid* 12). This image is very much part of Rousseau’s discourse. Goodness is associated with Nature, which is associated with strength. Fun and happiness come from a robust enjoyment of Nature. The ambivalence of Peter Pan’s magically perpetuated childhood is rejected in favour of a more achievable combination of strength and happiness.

The country itself, Australia, plays a significant role in constructing the concept of goodness. In *Seven Little Australians*, the parent-child relationship of mother country to colony is strongly emphasized, and Australia’s rebellious naughtiness is the sign of a healthy desire for independence. In the Billabong books, however, although England



and Australia's relationship is foregrounded in the war segment of the series, in the first three novels of the series the binary of city-country is the one that plays the formative role. The country is fertile, strong, natural, simple, healthy and good, while the city is sterile, unnatural, weak, complex, sickly and bad. *Mates at Billabong* works through all these characteristics thoroughly in the character of Cecil. Shades of the Lawson-Patterson debate can also be seen here. But for the purposes of defining goodness, the crucial change is the position of strength, that is, which side it is aligned with in the binary. The Billabong books associate it, via healthiness and naturalness, with goodness, whereas *Seven Little Australians* links it to badness via rebellion and mischief.

## 2.9 Conclusion

The discourses originating with Wesley and Rousseau have thus undergone considerable development by the time of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce. The significant changes I have discussed in this chapter are those relating to moral values, power structures and narrative conventions. Rousseau's view of the child as naturally good and needing only the acquisition of strength and reason to stay that way relates to power structures where there is no overt coercion, but control is exerted through manipulation of the environment to exclude undesirable influences. Consequently narratives operating within this discourse favour settings such as islands, magical lands or remote cattle stations, where the "real" world does not intrude. Childhood itself is valued as a time of innocence and a state to be prolonged as much as possible - a view treated with some ambivalence in the works of J. M. Barrie, but simplified in the Billabong books.

Wesley's perspective of the child as naturally bad produces stronger, more overt power structures and an emphasis on change and development. Settings become

places of transition and metaphors for the changes taking place within the individual. Working against this pressure for change, however, are the sacrificial discourses which perpetuate the adult-child relationship, and narrative conventions which encourage a re-evaluation of bad as interesting and good as uninteresting to the point where the character no longer has an active role to play in the narrative. Thus there is a certain amount of tension between the original religious and educational discourses, and the literary discourses of the novels themselves.

### Chapter Three

#### **Character Types: Pilgrims and Peter Pans**

The soul-searching pilgrim travelling the lonely and difficult road to redemption, and the carefree Peter Pan forever enjoying adventures in a world outside of time are the two main figures whose narratives are echoed in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books. Although the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce seem so similar at first glance, because of their participation in similar nationalistic Australian discourses and similar children's novel conventions, their underlying assumptions about the nature of childhood are derived from these two different narratives, and so are informed by two different ideologies.

Chapter Two, through an examination of the interdiscursive relations between *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books on the one hand, and other children's literature on the other, looked at beliefs about the nature of childhood, the sorts of relations constructed between children and parents and children and teachers, and some of the intertextual chains directing readers how to participate in children's books. One set of discourses required children to be obedient, submissive learners, to recognize the authority of their parents and of God as contrasted with their own weakness and sinfulness, and to visualize childhood as a journey of self-development, where every incident brought the opportunity for growth. The other set of discourses required the child to be happy and carefree, to have no awareness of adult authority, and to learn and grow in a natural, unforced manner that did not remove any of the positive characteristics of childhood. In the extreme version this discourse required children to stay forever young to compensate in some way for adults who had lost their youth.



The journey metaphor for childhood used in the first set of discourses produces a certain type of story - a linear narrative where a sequence of episodes takes the characters through time and change. *The Pilgrim's Progress* provided the blueprint for this type of story. The second set of discourses produces stories which revolve around a protected place in some way separate from the normal adult world. This place is also a metaphor for childhood, and so it becomes a place of excitement, of imagination and adventures, but not of change. All the adventures that occur cannot change the place itself or the characters that belong there, and the narrative becomes cyclic: the end is a return to the beginning. Neverland and Billabong are both places representing this view of childhood.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Pilgrim and Peter Pan models of childhood originated in religious and educational discourses, and the roles and relationships these discourses constructed for children and their parents or teachers are reproduced in the relationships of the Pilgrim and Peter Pan stories, both in the representation of child and adult character roles, and in the relationships constructed between the narrator, the characters and the reader. In the Pilgrim narratives, the narrator is visible and represents adult control, authority and judgement. In the Peter Pan narratives the narrator is less visible, less judgemental, and the characters are constructed as more autonomous.

In this chapter I will examine how two particular texts construct these narratives and character types and relationships, beginning with the broad relationships between narrator, characters and reader, and then focusing on the construction of particular character roles. The first area of investigation in this chapter, focalization, will deal with perspectives and points of view, and how the reader is positioned to identify with certain characters and their values or thoughts or actions, and thus allocated positions of varying power or powerlessness. Secondly, I will discuss narrative patterns, focusing on the nature of conflict and the degree of activity or passivity in characters'

roles, as well as the evaluation phase, the attributes assigned to various characters and the values associated with them - the importance of attributes in each type of narrative, the types of attributes selected as appropriate and signalled as desirable, and the mode of attribution and who is allowed to assign attributes to particular characters. Lastly, I have included a transitivity analysis to give an indication of the sorts of actions that take place in each story, or the sorts of actions that form the basis for each story, as well as the allocation of roles to various characters and the selection of who becomes a doer or a receiver and who operates in the physical sphere or the internal, mental sphere. This section includes a brief discussion of systemic-functional linguistics and how it theorizes the link between text and social context.

### 3.1 Focalization

There are many aspects of a text that function to position the reader. The use of a mental process rather than a material one, for instance, aligns the reader with a specific character's point of view, and judgemental attributes such as "light-souled as ever" (Turner, *Seven Little Australians* 173) align the reader with a particular narrator's scale of values. Rather than use the term "point of view", however, I will be discussing "focalization" as defined by Cohan and Shires, as this is a concept that embodies a more text-based perspective.

The difficulty with the traditional division of narration into first, second or third person points of view is that no matter how anonymous the text tries to be, a first person is always implied: any text must have a speaker. In narrative, even without any overt identification of an "I", any manipulation of *ordre*, *durée* or *fréquence* reveals the mediation of a speaker. Benveniste recognized the centrality of mediation in a text in his classification of narration according to two types of mediation: *discourse*, in which mediation is clearly announced, and the speaker and hearer readily identifiable, and *history*, in which the mediation is hidden and the speaker apparently absent

(Cohan and Shires 93). However, as signs of mediation can be found even in texts that attempt to be pure “History” or “Story”, it is more useful to look at the interrelationship of the narrating agency of a text and its point of view. This addresses two problems: who supplies the narration, and whose vision determines what is being narrated (Cohan and Shires 94).

Cohan and Shires explain focalization as “a triadic relation formed by the *narrating agent* (who narrates), the *focalizer* (who sees), and the *focalized* (what is being seen and thus, narrated)” (95). Between each element in the triad, there can be relations of similarity or difference, and a narration can change from one pattern to another many times in the course of a text. “What focalization achieves for narration (is) the textual inscription of a position for the reader in relation to the story” (97 ).

The main aspect of focalization that creates a difference between *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* is the amount of distance between the narrator and the focalizer. In *Seven Little Australians* there is a clearly delineated narrator controlling and directing the story, acting initially as both narrator and focalizer. In *A Little Bush Maid* the narrating agency is more concealed and some fairly long chunks of narrative are delivered by the actual characters (Jim’s story about Norah rescuing the sheep, and the Hermit’s story about losing his boot). This sets up the characters as narrators in their own right. The effect created is one of autonomy for the characters in *A Little Bush Maid* and dependency for the characters in *Seven Little Australians*.

In looking at how focalization positions the reader in a text and attempts to control his or her responses, it becomes apparent that some texts offer more positions than others and require the reader to make more changes of alignment, as well as foregrounding different aspects of their value systems. Where there are few shifts, and the story is focalized through one main character, the reader can identify with that character and enjoy the story as a mode of vicarious experience. This tends to obscure the narratorial



function, and the unsophisticated reader may not notice the turns of phrase and narrative structures that imply the narrator's values and assumptions. Especially if the main character is not particularly introspective, there may be nothing to encourage the reader to notice or question these values: they are effectively naturalized.

With an intrusive narrator, the reader is made aware there is both a narrator and a focalizer, and that there may be tensions between them. The reader may be invited to share in the thoughts and feelings of the character who is the focus of any particular episode, and after identifying with them, have to shift perspective as the narrator passes judgement.

Meg used to curl herself up in a big easy chair that had drifted to her room because its springs were broken and dream long beautiful, hopeless dreams of a love with "Long black lashes and a soldierly carriage". Of course it was highly reprehensible to have such thoughts at the tender age of sixteen, but then the child had no mother to check that erring imagination, and she was a daughter of the South.

(Turner, *Seven Little Australians* 62)

The narrator may even make the reader the focalizer by positioning the reader as Subject/Actor and saying what s/he can see or hear. This strategy of shifting focalization allows *Seven Little Australians* to create controversy on every possible subject. Every chapter's storyline deals with an issue such as parental authority, the rights of children, sexuality, and national identity, and presents the reader with an array of focalizers: the various characters' individual perspectives, the narrator's judgements, even construction of the reader's supposed responses. Values and issues are heavily foregrounded: the reader is required to respond actively and possibly grow in understanding even as the characters do. On the other hand, the reader's active response may be negative. Overstatements from the narrator such as, "Of course it was

highly reprehensible to have such thoughts at the tender age of sixteen” (62) may provoke disagreement from the modern reader more often than agreement.

In *Seven Little Australians*, the narrator is identified as the author, and the reader is addressed directly in Chapter One, and again in Chapters Twenty-One and Twenty-Two (the final chapters). The narrator establishes ownership of the story, of the process of writing and of the characters themselves - “Let me tell you about my seven select spirits” (11), “I will ... introduce them to you” (11), “I will lay down my pen now, lest I sadden you” (175), “I should like to tell you of my young Australians again, slipping a little space of years” (175). The narrator also sets up a relationship with the reader in setting expectations - “If you imagine you are going to read of model children ... you had better lay down the book immediately” (9), and in showing consideration for the reader’s comfort - “I hope you are not quite deafened yet” (16), establishing agreement in matters of children’s behaviour - “They had found her out long ago, as children will” (15), and answering presumed reader’s questions - “the mother, you ask?” (11).

The first chapter of *Seven Little Australians* requires the reader to join the narrator in taking up a “fly on the wall” position as an invisible observer. The narrator and reader are depicted as being able to move through the physical space in the story and observe, but not be observed by the characters - “If you can bear a deafening babel of voices and an unmusical clitter-clatter of crockery I will take you inside the room and introduce them to you” (11). The introductions then consist of descriptions of the children followed by, “I hope you are not quite deafened yet, for though I have got through the introductions, tea is not nearly finished, so we must stay in the nursery a little longer. All the time I have been talking, Pip has been grumbling at the lack of good things” (16). After this point the narrator recedes quietly and the characters take centre stage. Most of the story is then focalized through Meg, Judy and Bunty. The

narrator becomes strongly evident again in the frequent evaluation phases of the narrative and re-emerges, pen in hand, immediately before the main climax (Judy's fatal injury). "It is so hard to write it. My pen has had only happy writing to do so far, and now!" (164). The final chapter concludes with the narrator's direct address to the reader: "Until then, farewell and adieu" (175).

Mary Grant Bruce's method of establishing ownership of her characters is different from Ethel Turner's, although both methods function to align the reader with the values and judgements of the narrator. Ethel Turner establishes herself as the creator and writer of *Seven Little Australians* immediately and explicitly in the opening chapter and reiterates her ownership in the closing chapter, with occasional narratorial intrusions throughout the story to remind the reader that the characters are fallible and that the writer has control and passes judgement. Mary Grant Bruce waits until the eleventh book of the Billabong series before explicitly identifying herself as author and narrator of the story, and even then it is not done within the novel, where it would be the voice of a narrator in a work of fiction, but as a separate foreword by the author, signed and dated, "Mary Grant Bruce, Bexhill-on-Sea, 1933" (*Billabong's Luck* 7). Her claims to ownership of the story do not belong in the story itself, where they would upset the pattern of omniscient but unobtrusive narrator, with the subtle and diffuse operation of power this entails. The object of the foreword is to make the characters stand by themselves as real entities, originally created by the author, but assuming a life of their own, and operating freely within the world of Billabong, a world permeated with the system of values held by the author and the presumed reader. This presumed agreement on values, and the moral worth of the characters, allows the narrator to avoid standing in judgement.

The foreword begins, "This story is the result of a dream" (*Billabong's Luck* 7), but then goes on to establish that the experience was something more genuine and significant than an ordinary dream. Mary Grant Bruce states, "Whether dream or



vision, the experience was so real to me that I tell it for the few who will believe" (7), and in describing the appearance of the characters claims, "There was nothing dream-like about them; they were very solid and natural" (7). The characters at first express discomfort at the idea of being in another book, "I don't much like all this publicity!" (7), then admit to having had a good time in the previous books, and then describe themselves as real people. "Well, we *are* real," said Jim, "She opened a door and let us come out. We always felt that she just sat by and watched us running our own show" (8). Eventually they decide it is not too much trouble to help "her" write another book. "After all, we have only to be ourselves. That's how she likes us" (9). But even as they discuss their reality, Mary Grant Bruce claims, "They seemed to know I was there.... So I knew that, though they were independent, still they were all my own people, whom I had made" (9). The original making of the characters is presented as a past action, because the actual process of writing the new book requires very little apparent effort from the writer. "In the days that followed it seemed to me that I had only to listen and hear the story and set it down" (10). Once the narrative commences, the narrator reverts to near-invisibility; the characters, especially Norah, become the focalizers, and the Billabong world operates on automatic pilot.

The narrator's assumption that a set of values has already been agreed upon impacts on the narrative structure. An important strategy for naturalizing values in the Billabong books is not to make their acquisition part of the plot. In the Billabong books the characters do not need to grow morally, as they have already absorbed the necessary values and are in full agreement about them. What is right and what is wrong are never called into question, and there are no subtle shades of grey in the characterization, or confronting moral choices in the narrative. Moreover, embedded in the moral code are values that restrict questioning of that moral code, notably a modesty that forbids acceptance of praise, gratitude or compliments, and what is seen as a genuineness of feeling that produces a distrust of wordiness as pretentious and artificial.

Thus while Meg in *Seven Little Australians* is forced to suffer earnest conversations with Alan Courtney and Mr Gillet probing her moral weaknesses, the characters in *A Little Bush Maid* are more concerned with brushing aside any attention to their moral strengths. Here Jim has just killed a snake that was threatening to bite Harry.

“Well done, old Harry!” said Wally. “Stood like a statue, you did!”

“Thanks!” said Harry. “Jim’s the chap to say “Well done” to, I think.”

“Not me,” said Jim. “Easy enough to try to kill the brute. I’d rather do that than feel him round my leg, where I couldn’t get at him.”

“Well, I think I would, too,” Harry said laughing. “I never felt such a desire to stampede in my life.”

(159-160)

In this sequence, Wally, who did not play an active part in the incident, initiates the exchange of compliments by congratulating Harry on his courage and presence of mind. Harry’s “Thanks” is deprecating: he is quick to pass the compliment on to Jim who actually saved him. Jim refuses it and claims his contribution of killing the snake involved less courage than Harry’s predicament. Harry manages to deflect this compliment by admitting how afraid he was. Thus everyone has demonstrated a suitable modesty by their refusal to accept praise, but everyone has in turn shown gratitude for that vital helping hand from their mates which is an essential part of the Billabong ethos.

The inability of the Lintons to articulate their thoughts with any degree of sophistication is also presented as a virtue. Over-refinement of speech is seen as leading to the same sort of problems as other “city” weaknesses: lack of moral fibre, dishonesty, and alienation from other people. In *Billabong’s Luck*, Tommy uses speech as a smokescreen to prevent Jim from finding out about her financial difficulties. “She talked very fluently - about life in France and some chap’s poems”

(35). The famous Dr Johnson, whose old haunt the Lintons visit while in London, is described by Wally as using “such amazing fine language that it made you feel a little light-headed” (*Captain Jim* 47). Much more to their taste are the “curt words of praise” in Major Hunt’s letter at the time of Jim’s promotion. “Quite ordinary boys, and not a bit brainy... but I wish I had a regiment full of them!” (*Captain Jim* 185). Norah and Wally’s wedding in *Billabong Adventurers* presents a series of contrasts between meaningless ceremony and genuine feeling, with fancy words and clothes being paraphernalia that obstruct the expression of true emotions. “There were speeches; lengthy and eloquent by the clergyman, and mercifully brief by everyone else; and finally Norah escaped, to hand over her white frock and veil to Brownie’s loving care, while she thankfully donned the coat and skirt that Jean had likened to “a good, plain cake” (*Billabong Adventurers* 64). Smiles, hugs and eye contact, however, are important. Freddy Paxton looks after Brownie by taking her hand in a “large, consoling grip” (63), Norah smiles as she makes eye contact with Wally and Jim, and “at the last, she clung to her father a moment by the car” (64).

With the values embedded in this way, without direct claims of their worth by the narrator, it is harder for the reader to notice and consciously evaluate them. Even then there seems to be little room for disagreement. As Bev Roberts said in the review discussed in Chapter One, “It’s not that there’s anything wrong with the beliefs and values: simple, basic Baden Powell stuff...” (59). Within the context of the *Billabong* novels, the *Billabong* value system never falters. The characters’ courage, compassion, loyalty and other good qualities are always rewarded with a happy ending. Any artifice is more evident in the portrayal of villains. Brenda Niall concedes that “Mary Grant Bruce had no great imagination for disaster or villainy” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 86), but the simplistic portrayal of “bad guys” is another component that helps place the values beyond question.



### 3.2 Narrative Structures

Chapter Two made brief mention of the episodic structure of the narratives in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books. It was seen that both *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* followed a similar pattern with descriptions of people and places being the focus of the first chapter, the next chapters being a series of humorous incidents only loosely connected, and the climax a life-threatening incident of some sort coming just before a final re-evaluation in the last chapter. These similarities indicate both books are following well-established conventions of story telling, with Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* providing the classic example of this type. With such clear similarities in the types of events chosen to form the basis of each story, it is necessary to look first of all at the purpose of each event or sequence of events and where they fit into the Pilgrim/Peter Pan pattern. Although some events may seem very similar in *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid*, the way they are presented and focalized places the characters and the reader in one of these two paradigms.

The significant identifying characteristic of any story is the type of change that occurs within it. Cohan and Shires explain the basic structure of a story as follows.

The events constituting a story do not occur in isolation but belong to a *sequence*. Every sequence contains at least two events, one to establish a narrative situation or proposition, and one to alter (or at least merely to differ from) that initial situation. As Tzvetan Todorov explains: "An "ideal" narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical.

The different types of disruption that occur in *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* produce two quite different stories, and the second equilibrium which ends each novel needs to be interpreted in the light of the evaluations made by each narrator. Thus, there are important distinctions to be made between the selection of incidents in the two books. The adventures in *Seven Little Australians* echo those in *Little Women*. Without specifically mentioning pilgrims, the narrative shows the children meeting temptations and responding to them. The adventures themselves may be entertaining, but the moral development of the characters is equally important. In *A Little Bush Maid*, however, moral development is relatively unimportant. Instead of temptations, the children meet physical dangers and respond to them.

The opening chapters of both novels introduce and describe the characters and the setting in such a way as to provide hints of the conflicts that are to come. The mischievous nature of Australian children in general and the individual Woolcots in particular, the irascibility of their father, combined with the laxity of discipline at "Misrule," all promise plenty of interpersonal conflict. In contrast, the setting and family situation described in the opening chapter of *A Little Bush Maid* are so idyllic as to provide almost no opportunity for conflict. Even the incident in which Norah tries to wangle her way out of music lesson, when re-evaluated in the light of further developments, can be seen as justifying Norah's instinctive preference for the active, natural life over mechanical, artificial lessons.

Chapter Two of each book initiates humorous conflict of some sort. To a certain extent, these opening incidents can be seen as similar. Both are humorous in a similar sort of way - the inventive, mischievous genius of the children causing chaos. But whereas the Woolcot children's harassment of their father at the dinner table has direct and unpleasant consequences for them, in the shape of parental punishment, the

Linton children's menagerie race, although even more chaotic, is quickly cleaned up once Billy, the aboriginal servant, has been sent to find the pet kangaroo and wallabies, and there are no unpleasant consequences to face, only more happy adventures.

After this first incident, it becomes clear that the paths of the two stories are diverging. The Woolcot children, having been issued a punishment by their father (missing out on a trip to the theatre), embark on a campaign of being good. This continues the tone of the previous chapter by causing chaos and confusion again, but it also allows an increased focus on the children's particular moral strengths and weaknesses. Judy, for example, even while being supposedly good, disobeys her father's instruction to stop mowing the lawn. Disobedience and direct rebellion, or to phrase it more positively, independence of spirit, are to be the causes of all her later problems. Meg proves the domestic skills that come to the fore more clearly in the second book in the series, *The Family at Misrule*, by neatly sewing up the sheet music that needed mending, but Bunty spills some varnish on his father's shirt while polishing boots, and at once hides and denies his mistake. Hiding and denial, or cowardice and lying are to be his important weaknesses later on.

The Billabong characters, on the other hand, having successfully completed one adventure, start afresh with a new scheme for entertainment. Most adventures in *A Little Bush Maid* are initiated deliberately by a character with suggestions such as, "Let's have a race now" (48), "Let's start out at the very daybreak, and get up the River to Angler's Bend" (40), "Would you like to hear how I lost my boot?" (97) or "Would you and Billy like a three day's jaunt on fishing bent?" (181). The starting point each time is a neutral space where the characters are at leisure and no conflict threatens. As a general rule, Billabong returns spontaneously to this state after every adventure. Geographically, the characters return to Billabong at the end of each



adventure, or, from another perspective, the end of each adventure is marked by the return to Billabong.

The Billabong setting plays an important part in the cyclical nature of the Billabong series. The equilibrium with which the narrative starts and finishes is always the same place of peace, stability and togetherness. When the Linton family are overseas during the novels set in World War I, family togetherness provides most of the equilibrium, but by *Captain Jim*, a substitute Billabong, Homewood, has been found for the Lintons. Homewood performs the same functions as Billabong: it provides a secluded, peaceful country environment, it allows for the accumulation of people who need help ("lame dogs" in Linton terminology), and it provides a starting point for adventures and a home base to return to afterwards. Jim's dramatic return in time for Christmas after being presumed dead in battle allows for a perfect family reunion at Homewood. The fact that family togetherness is the most important part of the equation is highlighted in the statement that, "Home was in their hearts and they were together once more" (*Captain Jim* 306).

As well as providing a safe haven, Billabong (taken as a large cattle station, not just the homestead) is also a source of adventures and even dangers. Once into the complication phase of the narrative, aspects of the physical environment such as rivers, fire, rocks and cliffs function as threats and difficulties.

The majority of storylines in *Seven Little Australians* revolve around the childrens' conflict with their father. The opening equilibrium is tenuous: right from the start an atmosphere of discontent is established with the children being shown having a tea of bread and butter while their parents feast on roast chicken downstairs. From then on the father's punishments or his threats of punishment initiate most of the complications. This novel takes the pilgrim discourse and reworks it, questioning the assumptions and inverting the structure.

My belief is that Ethel Turner was a satirist manqué. Her talent for parody and irony was continually stifled by publishers forcing on her their interpretation of public demand. Niall chronicles many of the negotiations and compromises this entailed. She also highlights some of the ways Ethel Turner's stories reversed and deflated contemporary literary conventions. "The image of the child in the early Turner novels needs to be seen in the context of the sentimental excesses of earlier writers; Judy and Bobbie deflate the saintly Alice of *The Wide, Wide World* just as the Little Larrikin parodies Cedric, Lord Fauntleroy" (6). The little larrikin is given the same sweet, innocent appearance, ringlets included, as Frances Hodgson Burnett's Cedric, and then revealed as a street-wise cynic who produces the sweetness of manner that matches his appearance only when a female needs to be cajoled. In *Miss Bobbie*, Bobbie, who is another mischievous Turner child, goes through "short-lived saintly phases (that) are presented as the effect of too much reading of sentimental fiction" (79). In particular she likes to act out Alice's death scene from Wetherell's *The Wide Wide World*, producing a humorous picture of contrasts: "It was an odd little characteristic that Bobbie, with her excessive vitality, always chose to play the part of an interesting invalid, generally a consumptive dying to slow music with an ineffable smile on her face" (105).

Alice's death in *The Wide Wide World* is also seen by Niall as a source for Judy's death in *Seven Little Australians*, but here, although there is reversal, the effect is not to deflate, but to reaccentuate through understatement. Niall claims Turner made this scene "the more effective by reversing the conventions of the saintly girl's farewell," (68-69) and identifies the following alterations: Judy is fretful where Alice is calm and peaceful, "Ellen's five hymns and their twenty-four verses are tedious, and self-defeating for the novelist," while "Meg's few lines, spoken, not sung, from "Abide with Me", after her two false starts, are genuinely moving" (69), "Alice's "Kiss me, dear John", to her brother, is too composed, the silent farewell of Judy to Pip carries

more emotion” (69). These changes remove or reduce any potential for satire, with the object of intensifying the emotion of the scene by its relative simplicity.

Alice’s and Ellen’s piety may seem excessive to modern readers, and the pace of the book too slow, but in terms of consistency of theme and tone it is more unified than *Seven Little Australians*. Powerful emotions in *The Wide Wide World* illustrate the greater power of the faith that can help deal with them, the hymns Ellen sings take the narrative inside her feelings and show her applying concepts of God’s love and the promise of redemption to her grief over the loss of Alice. In short, it displays the classical characteristics of a pilgrim narrative. In *Seven Little Australians*, however, Judy’s death scene alters the entire balance of the story. Any parody of prayers in a death scene would have been highly offensive to Turner’s readers; some pathos seems to be demanded by convention, and in fact the tragedy of Judy’s death has been credited with ensuring the popularity of *Seven Little Australians* (Yarwood 86), but in reverting to convention the story loses its earlier spirit of mischief. In addition, Niall notes some inconsistencies in the portrayal of Captain Woolcot, claiming his “scenic performances were out of keeping with the general tendency of the book to avoid heroics and deflate literary conventions” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 71). Niall’s diagnosis is that “Ethel Turner had grown up on a solid diet of sentimental fiction, in whose absurdities she continued to delight even when she began to deflate them” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 63). Another perspective would be to regard the inconsistencies in *Seven Little Australians* as competing discourses with the differences between them left unresolved. The implications of reinstating narrative conventions such as the tragic ending will be discussed further in Chapter Four.



### 3.3 Evaluation

An important element in looking for the Pilgrim or Peter Pan structure is the closure of narrative segments, as this is where the reader is invited to compare the finishing point with the starting point and ascertain the difference between them, and may also be given some narratorial comment as to the significance of this incident. Toolan claims that this type of narratorial comment, or evaluation, is “the pre-eminent constituent by means of which the narrator’s personal involvement in a story is conveyed” (156). He explains:

Evaluation consists of all the means used to establish and sustain the *point*, the contextual significance and tellability, or reportability, of a story. It may take very many forms and appear at almost any point in the telling, although it is often particularly clustered around the “hinge” or climactic point of the action, just before - and in effect delaying - the resolving action or event. (156)

This next section will look at the last couple of chapters of both *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid*, where a final crisis occurs and is resolved, ending the story, and examine the way several elements work to construct children either as Peter Pans or Pilgrims: firstly, the structure of the narrative - the type of events chosen and the characters chosen to participate - secondly, the evaluative comments whether presented directly or indirectly, by the character or through the narrator’s remarks, and thirdly the activating of other discourses through intertextuality.

The medical crises which form the climaxes of both *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid*, although initially seeming so similar, do differ in crucial ways. In *Seven Little Australians* it is one of the central characters, Judy, who is the victim, in *A Little Bush Maid*, it is a much more peripheral character, the Hermit. Consequently,

the characters in *Seven Little Australians* alter or grow more as a result of this incident than Norah in *A Little Bush Maid*. The outcome in *Seven Little Australians* is tragic - Judy dies - while in *A Little Bush Maid* it is happy - the Hermit not only survives, but turns out to be a long lost friend of David Linton and is happily reunited with both his family and the Lintons. The Woolcots are left feeling sad and guilty - had they all done the right thing by Judy? - while Norah is happily justified for her belief in the Hermit's innocence. The Woolcots are forced into changing or at least acknowledging their need for change, while Norah, who has done the right thing all along, only has to stay the way she is.

In *Seven Little Australians* the narrator highlights these changes with explicitly evaluative comments. The narrator of *A Little Bush Maid* uses character dialogue to perform the evaluative function. Mr Linton is given the last word in *A Little Bush Maid*, "Somehow, I fancy that under all the varnish I'll find my little bush maid" (254). This adheres to Rousseau's ideal of the Natural. The fear that civilization will corrupt man's natural goodness is answered here with the triple concept of the "little bush maid." These three words imply youth, rustic simplicity and purity, and together they combine into a positive force that repels the false veneer of civilization and provides a permanent basis for virtue. In *Seven Little Australians*, the narrator re-emerges strongly in the last chapter and gives a long list of the changes experienced by each character. No one was perfect to start with, and no one is perfect at the end, but all the changes resulting from Judy's death are positive, reinforcing the links into the sacrificial discourse framing this event. Bunty in particular has reformed. "He did not tell quite so many stories in these days; that deep sunset had stolen even into his young heart" (174).

The attributes used in the introductory sections of *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* show a subtle difference in focus, despite their many similarities. Both novels describe the characters first, before commencing any action, and both books

make a point of including age in the descriptions, along with general appearance, but whereas *Seven Little Australians* restricts descriptions to appearance and personality, with only brief comments on characteristic actions such as keeping a diary or pinching the baby, *A Little Bush Maid* goes into great detail on situation and circumstances, giving a fairly complete picture of life on Billabong.

In *Seven Little Australians* the description at the beginning is balanced by description at the end, in which the narrator compares, contrasts and evaluates how the characters have grown. Thus we find comparatives: “older”, “never quite so young again”, “prettier every day”, “chubbier and more adorable”, and “dearer to his heart”, where the comparatives create a cohesive link that ranges across the whole story. Some changes, such as Meg’s maturity, Pip’s sudden fits of depression, and Bunty’s increasing honesty, can be traced to the tragedy of Judy’s death, others are more general and inevitable, such as Nell’s beauty and Baby’s new stockings, but the overall tendency is to invite comparison with the first chapter, and reiterate the narrator’s voice as the one who has control over the story.

*A Little Bush Maid* does not have any similar balance. The description which in Chapter One was in the hands of a narrator, though a less intrusive narrator than the one of *Seven Little Australians*, becomes minimal as the story progresses, and the only description or evaluation in the final chapter is done by the characters themselves, as Norah is thanked for her rescue of the Hermit and plans are made for her future. Mr Linton concludes the novel with his assessment: “I fancy that under all the varnish I’ll find my little bush maid” (254). This evaluation is the opposite of those in *Seven Little Australians* which emphasized growth and change. Here the emphasis is on stasis, which is obviously a virtue if, as in Norah’s case, you are nearly perfect already. Any change, even the formal education she is being offered, and which is depicted as necessary, is a possible threat of corruption. At best, all it can offer is varnish; at



worst, it might attack or destroy those qualities of youth, innocence and the variety of rural values (practicality, mateship, courage) that make her special.

Although Mr Linton has the final word in this case, in many novels of the series it is Norah who does the final summing-up, with the evaluation being directed at Billabong rather than at herself.

“But - it’s Billabong!” said Norah happily.

*(Norah of Billabong 256)*

“We’re all mates - always - no matter what happens,” she said.

“Don’t you worry about me, Daddy - I’ve got my job.”

*(From Billabong to London 320)*

“We’ll be three adventurers together,” she said. “Somehow, it seems a pity to split up the firm again; it never makes a really satisfactory arrangement.... Suppose we all find the little old car and go home quietly to Billabong!”

*(Billabong Adventurers 250)*

### 3.4 Systemic-Functional Linguistics

Halliday’s systemic-functional linguistics has been selected as a tool for the analysis of the representations of different character types because of the insights it can offer into how a text operates to construct characters, and actions, and roles, and interactions. In any text, systemic-functional linguistics identifies and analyses three metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual. Recognizing the multiple functions of the one set of words is crucial in making connections to ideology.

The discussion of the concepts of intertextuality and discourse in Chapter Two established that language does not merely reflect or reproduce reality, rather it actively constructs knowledge and shapes perception. This idea derives originally from the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf, who argued that “An accepted pattern of using words is often prior to certain lines of thinking and modes of behaviour” (Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic* 25). Kinship terms are just one example of words that classify people in certain ways and entail a range of ways of behaving and relating to them, as well as imposing certain taboos. The social role that each individual occupies is constructed by and through language, thus language has a central role in constructing each developing child as a social being and an individual (Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic* 5). In studying language therefore, Halliday claims, “We have to proceed from the outside inwards, interpreting language by reference to its place in the social process” (*Language as Social Semiotic* 4).

The notion of context of situation was first developed by Malinowski in 1923 and refined by Firth in 1957. In *Language as Social Semiotic* Michael Halliday describes context of situation as “An ecological matrix that is constitutive of the text” (122), and sees each text as being constructed by the process of the speaker making choices that actualize the meaning potential of the context of situation (122). Specifying what this involves, each text can be analysed in terms of its register, which Halliday defines as “The configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type. It is the meaning potential that is accessible in a given social context” (111). More simply, register consists of what is taking place, who is taking part, and what part language is playing, which are known as the components of field, tenor and mode (31).

Halliday’s systemic-functional linguistics is based on the concept that these three components of context of situation are realized by the three metafunctions of the semantic system, the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. The

ideational metafunction is “The component through which the language encodes the cultural experience, and the speaker encodes his own individual experience as a member of the culture” (112). The interpersonal metafunction is “The participatory function of language. This is the component through which the speaker intrudes himself into the context of situation, both expressing his own attitudes and judgements and seeking to influence the attitudes and behaviour of others” (112). The textual metafunction is “The component which provides the texture; that which makes the difference between language that is suspended *in vacuo* and language that is operational in a context of situation. Hence the textual component has an enabling function with respect to the other two; it is only in combination with textual meaning that ideational and interpersonal meanings are actualized” (113).

Halliday’s focus on the functions of language does away with Saussure’s distinction between *langue* and *parole*, by “Focusing attention simultaneously on the actual and the potential, interpreting both discourse and the linguistic system that lies behind it in terms of the infinitely complex network of meaning potential that is what we call the culture” (*Language as Social Semiotic* 4).

The ideational metafunction focuses on the subject matter and the social action of a particular text through the analysis of transitivity, which reveals such things as what sorts of processes are occurring and in what circumstances, and which people or things are doers of actions and which are passive recipients. The interpersonal metafunction deals with the relationships between people, especially between speaker and audience, and how power operates in these relationships. The textual metafunction looks at how the text is made to be text, what devices and techniques link it together to form its textuality. My focus in the following section will be on the ideational metafunction (specifically, transitivity), in order to analyse the construction of social action (characters and their actions) which form the subject matter of the



novels. In Chapter Four I will be focusing specifically on the interpersonal function and the construction of social relations within these novels, especially power relations.

### 3.5 Transitivity Analysis: Process Types

The benefit of a transitivity analysis should be to help clarify what is focalized in each story: what participants, processes and circumstances constitute the social action of these texts. The previous discussion of focalization and narrative structure brought out some points that we could expect to see reflected in the transitivity analysis - the presence or absence of the narrator, whether the narrator emerges as an actual participant and if so, in what type of role, the internal or external nature of the action, which should be reflected in the choice of mental or material processes, and the amount and type of change occurring for each character, which has already been discussed in the section on evaluation, but may also be seen in any shifts of the types of processes used or the types of participants involved.

The extracts I have chosen to look at are from the climax of each story, the point where Judy in *Seven Little Australians* is injured by a falling branch and fights for her life, and the point where the Hermit in *A Little Bush Maid* has typhoid fever and fights for his life while Norah goes for help. The situations are remarkably similar, but the focus is significantly different. In the major crisis of the book, Meg and Judy in *Seven Little Australians* are powerless and waiting for rescue, even while knowing that Judy is beyond help. In *A Little Bush Maid*, however, in a similar crisis, Norah is the character who rides to the rescue, bringing the medical help that saves the Hermit. Meg and Judy submit to their suffering and are changed forever - Judy dies peacefully and Meg finds a new perspective on life. Norah, on the other hand, simply remains herself.

Full transcripts of the passages analysed can be found in the appendices, however I have included tables giving a breakdown of the various processes types in the body of this chapter for ease of reference.

Material Processes in *Seven Little Australians*  
(extract from Chapter Twenty-One)

Actor	Material Process	Actor	Material Process
curlew’s note	broke	half the book	danced
Meg	sat up	one (hymn)	bring
(Judy’s) eyes	dilated	she (Meg)	opened
(Judy’s) lips	trembled	I (Judy)	to rest
a whisper	cut	she (Judy)	shut
(Meg)	help	Nell	was holding
(Meg)	look	Baby	" (ellipsed)
Nellie	flew	they	went
(God)	make	shadows	smote
Meg’s lips	moved	she	to cross
-	receive	her feet	touched
we	had gone	Pip	brushed
(Meg)	hold	Pip	fell
speech	came	the light	flickered
phrase	fell	she (Judy)	gave
tears	streamed	the wind	blew
chest	rose	she	slipped away
chest	fell		

Material Processes in *A Little Bush Maid*  
(Extract from Chapter Fifteen)

Actor	Material Process	Actor	Material Process
they	swung	we	will gain
she	must save	(you)	come
(she)	to guide	he (Dick)	looked
father	sat	eyes	met
he (Dick)	stared	we	had better walk
he	trying to pierce	you	take

timber	blurred	he (Dick)	poured
he (Dick)	did not bother	he	handed
he	to wait	their eyes	met
Norah	looking	words	cloaked
(Norah)	sparing	comfort	stole
(you)	to find	she (Norah)	gulped
the plain	slipped	(drink)	sent
(they)	forded	they	rode
creek	sank	horses	brushing
his canter	required	Dick	pulled
weariness	began to steal	Norah	shook
Dick	glancing	(Norah)	to hurt
he (Dick)	pulled up	Dad	came
we	will go	(us)	let's canter
-	knocking	Banker	jumped
Norah	checked	heel	went
we	ought to hurry	Norah	pulled
Dad	is waiting	the creek	swung
you	have got		

Mental Processes In *Seven Little Australians*  
(Extract from Chapter Twenty-One)

Senser	Mental Process	Sub-Type
I (Judy)	can't think	cognition
I (Judy)	forget	cognition
I (Judy)	can't think	cognition
I (Judy)	wish	affect
we	had learnt	cognition
I (Judy)	don't want	affect
I (Judy)	want	affect
you	like	affect
(Meg)	think	cognition
she (Meg)	think	cognition
I (Judy)	don't want	affect
he (God)	won't expect	cognition
Meg	remembered	cognition
we	are forgetting	cognition
you (Judy)	can't ...remember	cognition
she (Judy)	could not see	perception
they	could feel	perception
she (Judy)	heard	perception



Mental Processes in *A Little Bush Maid*  
(Extract from Chapter Fifteen)

Senser	Mental Process	Sub-Type
she (Norah)	disdained	cognition
she	knew	cognition
Norah	thought	cognition
(Norah)	to approve	affect
-	to believe	cognition
you	know	cognition
Norah	mused	cognition
you	will like	affect
he	to see	perception
anyone	could fail to like	affect
Dick	saw	perception
you	don't ... think	cognition
you	know	cognition
I (Dick)	know	cognition
I (Dick)	don't think	cognition
you	are thinking	cognition
you	must think	cognition
I (Dick)	think	cognition
she (Norah)	read	cognition
he (Dick)	felt	affect
she (Norah)	knew	cognition
my father	did ... know	cognition
he (Hermit)	didn't know	cognition
I (Norah)	couldn't understand	cognition
he (Dad)	knew	cognition
the Hermit	to know	cognition
Norah	hating	affect

The overall ratio of material to mental processes turns out to be fairly similar in both passages, with *Seven Little Australians* having only a slightly higher proportion of mental processes. Instead, the significant difference here is the higher proportion of relational processes in the *Seven Little Australians* passage, where they outnumber the mental processes, while in the *A Little Bush Maid* passage the reverse is true: mental processes outnumber relational processes. When mental processes are divided into

their three sub-types of perception, affection and cognition, another difference becomes apparent: there is a much higher proportion of cognitive processes in *A Little Bush Maid* than in *Seven Little Australians*. Furthermore, once the Actors of material processes are identified, it can be seen the proportion of non-human Actors is noticeably higher in *Seven Little Australians*. All of these differences add up to distinctively different styles of storytelling, different construction of characters, and different underlying ideologies.

The high proportion of relational processes in the *Seven Little Australians* passage results mainly from the dialogue between Judy and Meg, where much of the scene's emotive content is presented as attributive processes. Judy's reiteration of "Oh Meg, I'm frightened, *Meg*, I'm so frightened.... Meg, I'm so frightened" adds urgency to the distress of the scene. Other attributive clauses such as "How lonely I'll be" and "I'm not weary," describing Judy's state of mind, are counteracted by Meg's assurances, which are also relational clauses: "There's Mother, Judy dear - you won't be lonely." Judy's being and wanting dominate the first half of this scene. As well as being frightened, she has a list of wishes and wants:

"I wish we'd gone to Sunday-school."

"I don't want to go."

"I want to be alive."

"I don't want to rest."

Thus the combination of relational and mental processes provide an intense focus on Judy's distraught state and her frantic desire for comfort.

It is unusual in the Pilgrim discourses to find a character in a death scene not depicted as either saintly or sinful. Pilgrim narratives such as *Little Women* can find humour in the daily situations of children succumbing to small temptations and fairly harmless sins, but to die unrepentant and therefore unredeemed would be the ultimate tragedy. Only Beth is good enough to die in *Little Women*. But Judy is obviously uneducated in

religious matters - apparently even their first mother didn't take them to Sunday school - although they must have attended church often enough for Meg to have learnt the three hymns she recites from memory. But set against Judy's fear and ignorance of death, and her previous acts of rebellion and disobedience, are her deep love for her family and the heroism that made her save her little brother's life. Meg's final words: "There's Mother, Judy, dear - you won't be lonely. Can't you remember Mother's eyes, little Judy?" are obviously intended to indicate Judy will shortly be reunited with her mother in heaven, but Judy, who has been so vocal about not wanting to die, is not given any dialogue to indicate a change of heart, as the conventions of the discourse would demand. Instead, at this point she stops talking, and the atmosphere changes.

Another group of relational processes in the *Seven Little Australians* passage occurs in the final sequence, after Meg has recited "Abide with Me". Judy is close to death, and the scene becomes very still. Here, the use of relational processes shifts the emphasis from the initial action to the situation that results from it. Thus instead of a possible sentence such as "Meg put her arms around Judy", the text uses, "Meg's arms were around her", and instead of, "Bunty touched her hair with his lips", it uses "Bunty's lips were on her hair." (Also, earlier on in the chapter, "His eyes were on his sister's hair.") This does not actually conceal who has done the action, but it takes the action out of the story. In effect, the characters are frozen momentarily, so the reader can see them grouped in a tableau, rather than seeing them moving and doing. This heightens the stillness of atmosphere created for Judy's death scene, and emphasizes the powerlessness of the children as they wait for Judy's death.

This effect is heightened further by the use of material processes that are intended metaphorically. This creates a transparent effect - the reader can see the action occurring and the human Actor performing it, but knows that it is metaphorical, and that physically the characters are sitting there all the time, still frozen in their tableau. "They went with her right to the Great Valley.... her feet touched the water.... she



slipped away”, are all metaphorical material processes, and the metaphor is taken directly from *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, with images of the Valley of the Shadow of Death and the river. It is worth noting that the intertextuality here is conventionally biblical. Gordon Wakefield asserts that Bunyan’s use of a river symbolizing death at the end of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* derives from the image of the river Jordan in Deuteronomy and is not “a christianizing of the Charon myth” (92,138). The effect of this passage is to intensify the loneliness of Judy’s situation. Although her siblings can be with her and actually touching her, they cannot share the experience of dying. Both Judy and the other children are Sensors for mental processes, but what they can hear and feel is sharply differentiated. “They could feel the wind from the strange waters on their brows; but only she who was about to cross heard the low lapping of the waves.”

The powerlessness of the children can also be seen in the use of body parts rather than humans as Actors in material processes. When Judy is on the point of death, the phrase used is “Her feet touched the water.” This has the effect of denying that the actions are at all intentional or even conscious on the character’s part. “Her tongue uttered no word”, is used instead of a phrase such as “Meg uttered no word”, and, “The tears streamed down her cheeks, her chest rose and fell”, is used to describe Judy crying. In these clauses, although the action is not deliberately performed by the character, the reader can still see it taking place, only some ambiguity is created as to whose power or will directs the action. Other non-human Actors can also be used to create a similar effect, for example, “Half the book of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* danced across Meg’s brain” is a metaphor for a mental process: “Meg thought of many hymns,” but in removing Meg from the role of Sensor any connotation of logic or intelligence is lost, leaving an impression of the total confusion of Meg’s thoughts. Structures such as this indicate the children are not entirely in control of their own actions at this point. In combination with other factors I see this as contributing to the staged effect - an impression that the characters have not chosen what to do, but have

been given a script and are presenting a performance of it. Although there is no narrator clearly present as a participant, there is a narratorial voice directing and controlling the action.

The changes in the representation of Judy throughout this passage are dramatic. A little earlier, when she rescued the General, she was Actor in a series of material processes: "She looked up," "She started after him," "One ringing cry Judy gave," "She leaped across the ground"(164). Then, in the passage I have analysed, her power to act is reduced step by step. First she has some behavioural processes: "Her eyes dilated, her lips trembled." She is not Actor here, and cannot control her own eyes and lips. Then she talks to Meg, using the repeated attributive processes ("I'm so frightened"). She continues with material processes which are combined with mental processes in verbal groups where the mental process provides the phase. "I don't want to go", "I don't want to rest." Again, the words "go" and "rest" are metaphorical for "die". Judy may not seem helpless or submissive here, but all her activity is in the mental sphere - wishing and wanting. She cannot act in or affect the material world at this stage, and even her activity in the mental sphere will soon be ended. The mental sphere is where all growth and change takes place in the Pilgrim narratives, and in this scene, as in most chapters of *Seven Little Australians*, we see a change occurring - Judy's protests, "I don't want to rest" are silenced by Meg's recital of the hymn, "Abide with Me" and thereafter she does not speak and the narrative switches to the metaphorical material processes such as going into the Great Valley. Judy is still able to be a Senser for a mental process ("She... heard the low lapping of the waves"), but for material processes the actions are outside of her control ("Her feet touched the water"). Finally, in the last two sentences, with the arrival of her favourite brother, Pip, she revives enough to resume, very briefly, the role of Actor in the physical world. "She kissed him with pale lips once, twice; she gave him both her hands, and her last smile." Finally there is a return to metaphorical material processes as the chapter finishes on the words "She slipped away."



The passage from *A Little Bush Maid* does not have any comparable progression. Norah is an Actor in material processes and a Senser in mental processes. However, she does not dominate the passage: the material and mental processes are shared fairly equally between her and Dick. The use of equality in the Billabong books will be discussed further in Chapter Four. The lower proportion of relational processes keeps the focus on action rather than description, and outward rather than inward-directed dialogue. Norah and Dick's conversation is centred on how quickly they can bring help to Dick's father, the Hermit, while Meg and Judy's conversation was centred entirely on helping Judy cope with her imminent death. So even though there is an interlude in this passage where the process types and participants do change, the change is not permanent or part of a progression.

Norah is growing tired; Dick notices, and suggests they slow down. There are some attributive processes in the dialogue as they argue this point. Norah protests, "I'm as right as rain." Dick tactfully claims he is tired, "I'm a bit of a new chum myself where riding's concerned." In the narrative, instead of attributive clauses such as "Norah was growing tired," her weariness becomes the Actor in phrases such as "A great weariness began to steal over his rider," and "The pallor creeping upon the brave little face." Here we see the same technique of a non-human Actor being used to indicate a loss of power by the character involved, only in this case, the effect is counteracted by Norah's actions. "Norah checked her pony unwillingly" and "Norah said impatiently." Thus a tension is created between the actual weariness and Norah's own determination not to succumb to it: both are alternately given the role of Actor. Once she accepts the drink Dick offers, the non-human Actors appear again. "A sense of comfort stole over Norah," and (the drink) "sent a feeling of renewed strength through her tired limbs," but again these are interspersed with clauses where Norah is Actor, or one of the Actors: "She gulped down the drink," and "They rode on in silence." Unlike Judy's gradual descent into death, Norah's weariness, although to a certain extent beyond her



control, is temporary, and is combatted by her own conscious actions. The end of the passage sees Norah still occupying Actor roles in physical material processes: "Side by side they cantered steadily", and "Norah pulled her pony in."

The dominance of cognitive mental processes in this passage is interesting. Mental processes can be divided into three sub-types - cognitive (thinking, knowing, remembering), affective (wishing, wanting, liking, hating), and perceptive (seeing, hearing, feeling). The *Seven Little Australians* passage has a mixture of all three types, fairly evenly balanced, however, in *A Little Bush Maid* cognitive mental processes predominate. This effect may be a little exaggerated in this sample because the content of this passage deals with the Hermit who is delirious and the discussion between Norah and Dick about whether he knows anyone in his current state. But there still seems to be some minimization of affective mental processes, with other process types occasionally being substituted. The major example of this is, "She read his meaning through the kindness of the words that cloaked what he felt. Above her weariness a sense of comfort stole over Norah". So instead of such phrases as, "She appreciated his kindness", or "She felt better", we have "words cloaking", "meanings being read", and the "sense of comfort stealing".

This would seem to imply that both types of narratives share the assumption that emotions and feeling bring growth and change, an assumption derived from the Wesleyan discourses discussed in Chapter Two with their emphasis on knowing God "in the heart", but whereas Pilgrim narratives embrace change, Peter Pan narratives avoid it and so tend to avoid the emotions that might cause it. There is only one type of change that is often featured in the Billabong books - and this scene is one example of it - making new friends. This type of change is external: the characters themselves do not develop, or grow, or acquire new attributes. There seems to be an implication that thinking and learning are less crucial in changing a character's personality,

especially if they can be directed outward, to the physical world, and the character can avoid introspection.

### 3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to show how the character roles of the “Pilgrim” and the “Peter Pan” are realized in the narrative and lexico-grammatical structures of the text, and to identify the characteristic values and relationships that can be seen emerging through this realization.

In *Seven Little Australians*, which exemplifies the Pilgrim model, the various episodes in the story centre around conflict between characters and conflict within characters. The focus is on people’s feelings and people’s faults. The main characters, Judy, Meg and Bunty, all undergo painful and humiliating experiences as a result of their sins or errors, and eventually emerge as changed people. The reader is guided by the narrator to share the characters’ feelings, but also to disapprove such faults as cowardice and vanity. (Rebelliousness is in a different category, however - in some discourses it has the qualities of a virtue.) To different extents the characters are self-aware and consciously apply fairly rigorous moral standards to their behaviour and/or have other characters point out their failings for them. The reader likewise is encouraged, through shifting patterns of focalization, to be self-aware and to share and/or evaluate the characters’ and narrator’s standards.

The characters thus operate in a world where processes of feeling and believing are more important than processes of doing. Judy’s death scene presents a vivid picture of Judy’s feelings as she dies, and her brothers and sisters feelings as they helplessly watch it happen. They are put in a situation where they cannot physically do anything to save her and so the focus is on dealing with the death in an acceptable way. At no time in the novel do the characters have the opportunity to make any significant

difference to the world they live in. As children, their most suitable role is to learn to be good.

In *A Little Bush Maid* conflict is drawn from the physical environment and the characters take action to overcome the various sorts of danger that threaten. The foregrounding of values and morals that occurs in *Seven Little Australians* is replaced by strategies that diffuse the moral content throughout the novel. The narrator rarely intrudes, the characters act as focalizers and rarely reflect on their own actions or evaluate their own moral standing, their actions are generally right and justified by successful outcomes. At the point of crisis in the book, Norah's heroic dash through the scrub saves the Hermit. She has something physical to do, it is directed at helping another person rather than improving herself, and she does it successfully. A sense of Norah's autonomy is created through allocating her the role of Actor in material process clauses, and not having the narrator pass negative value judgements on her. Her performance is evaluated by the other characters, not the narrator, she is thanked and admired for the rescue, and her father expresses the hope that she personally will not change. The invisibility of the narrator makes it seem as if the characters are correspondingly more powerful, but their power depends on their position in the ideal world of Billabong.



## Chapter Four

### **Mates and Mentors: Power Relationships in the Family.**

The previous chapter looked at the character types of the Pilgrim and the Peter Pan as individuals. In this chapter I want to place them in their social context and examine the construction of the family and tenor relationships within the family, and the effect of the discourses and narratives of childhood discussed in Chapter Two. Elements to be considered will be the role of the parents, relationships between parents and children, relationships between siblings, types of parental or familial discipline, the disciplinary function of humour and its use in the manipulation of approval and acceptance, and different types of decision-making processes. I will also look at who is excluded from the family and consequently from the story, and why. Through a systemic-functional analysis of selected passages I will demonstrate how dialogue between characters constructs power differences, and highlight the contrast between the straightforward hierarchies of the Pilgrim model and the “mateship” based democracy of the Peter Pan model as these are enacted in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books.

#### 4.1 Age Roles

Constructing a text is a process of exclusion as much as inclusion. The decision as to what belongs in a text necessarily involves deciding what must be left out, and in the case of children’s literature, this reflects the moral slant of the particular educational discourse that is operating. All books written for children by adults participate in educational discourses to some extent in that they are providing something the target audience is unable to provide for itself and thus they are assuming some degree of responsibility for the development of their audience.

Both the Billabong books and the *Seven Little Australians* series operate on the convention that the main characters in a novel need to be in the same age range as the target audience. Even in the time span of one novel having main characters that are children is not always easily achievable, and when a sequel follows, and then a series, the difficulties multiply. The fact that both authors go to considerable trouble to find a solution indicates how important the convention is for the positioning of children in literary discourses for and about children, but the different ways in which it is achieved show the fundamental differences in moral values between the Pilgrim and the Peter Pan discourses, with the Pilgrim emphasis on learning and growing being opposed by the Peter Pan emphasis on static perfection and happiness.

Sequels have their own particular problems, in that once a novel has reached a successful conclusion, its conflict has ended, and to find a new but similar story for the same set of characters is difficult. Convention demands a similar story, but some types of conflict simply cannot be repeated because of the change they work on the characters. For children's stories especially, the problems are complicated by the age factor. In the course of the first story the characters may have grown to the upper limits of the age range considered suitable, and the narrator then has the choice of two less-than-perfect options: to continue the story with an adult as the protagonist, or to change the focus to some of the younger characters.

The Billabong books take the option of following Norah, Jim and Wally into adulthood, while also portraying them as children. The opening of each book reconstructs these three as being perpetually young, even when they have left school, survived World War One, married and had children. *Billabong's Daughter*, the eighth book of the series, describes the characters on their return to post-war Billabong.

Then, with the ending of the long strain, when home stretched glad arms to receive them again, Time seemed to put back the marching hands of his clock so that they might find their vanished playtime.

The years slipped from them: it seemed a kind of dream that there had been fighting, suffering, stern hard work.

(9)

Although Norah, Jim and Wally form the core of all the books, almost every novel introduces new characters. The fact that most plot lines centre around rescue of some kind means new characters are needed to benefit from the Linton's assistance. Some, like Bob and Tommy Rainham and Bill Blake, are permanently incorporated into Billabong's extended family. Niall points out, "As nearly everyone who comes to Billabong wants to stay, there is some risk of a permanent clutter of people; there cannot be jobs or adoption for all, a few are allowed quietly to disappear (*Seven Little Billabongs* 94). Consequently, if the characters introduced and helped in a previous novel quietly fade away, and Norah and Jim and Wally are portrayed as perpetually youthful, each novel can in effect wipe the slate clean and proceed as if time had not passed.

In the Misrule series, time passes quite rapidly. The second book, *The Family at Misrule*, is set five years after *Seven Little Australians*, and the third book, *Little Mother Meg*, four years after that. The final book, *Judy and Punch*, returns to the time of *Seven Little Australians* to cover Judy's exile at boarding school. Both *The Family at Misrule* and *Little Mother Meg* commence by reintroducing the characters, giving their current ages and nicknames. Bunty, at the beginning of *The Family at Misrule*, is now called John (and incidentally has aged seven years to everyone else's five), Baby has become Poppet, although in chapter seven her real name is revealed as Winifred, the General has become Peter, although his baptismal name is Francis Rupert Burnand Woolcot, and Nell occasionally likes to call him Rupert (3-6). Although they are ostensibly the same characters (with the addition of a new baby), the rapid increases in age and the alteration of names gives a sense of discontinuity. It is clear that this will



be a new story, with a new set of characters, as the younger ones are given a new identity to enable them to enter the real action of the novel.

The rapid increases in age are matched by rapid character development. Niall notes that by the end of *The Family at Misrule* “there are three mature Woolcots (Meg, Nell, Pip) and not much more for Ethel Turner to write about” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 73). Although the story continues in *Little Mother Meg*, many of the Pilgrim characteristics of the narrative begin to fade. Meg’s worries about her child’s health and her husband’s financial difficulties seem to involve no further moral growth on her part. Niall claims “*Little Mother Meg* is a failure which probably would have been permanently put aside if Ward, Lock had not been so insistent on “more about Misrule” ” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 76). This perception of *Little Mother Meg* as a failure is partly due to the natural finishing point in Pilgrim narratives. Although Meg is still a major character in the story well into her twenties, she plays a less active role in actual events. It is not so much her age as the fact of having “grown up” emotionally and morally that restricts the sphere of her activity. “Meg comes more and more to resemble the infallible eldest sister of Victorian fiction.” (Niall *Seven Little Billabongs* 72). As a mentor to her younger siblings Meg occupies the peripheral role of helper instead of the subject role she played in *Seven Little Australians*. As for Judy, Niall considers “Ethel Turner was acute enough to see the dangers of letting Judy grow up; the decision to kill her at thirteen was the only sensible one” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 65 ). In other words, the conventions of a Pilgrim narrative are so limiting that there is no conceivable place for a spirited, rebellious adult. Judy grown-up implies Judy “adult, responsible and almost unrecognizable” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 65) like Jo March in *Good Wives*, regardless of her character at thirteen.

## 4.2 Social Class

Children's books of this era, and indeed up until the Second World War, tended to restrict the main characters to a certain social class. John Rowe Townsend can find only one example of British writing for children prior to World War Two that features a working class family, Eve Garnett's *Family from One End Street*, and even that seems to him "to be too condescending to be altogether commendable" (149), although its extension of the range of the children's story makes it the forerunner of many later works. Ethel Turner was considered to be treading dangerous ground by making the main character of *The Little Larrikin* an orphan who, although of respectable origins, "gravitates to the slum children and adopts their language and habits" (Niall, *Seven Little Billabongs* 100 - 101), making him "Ethel Turner's most subversive, and most consciously "Australian" creation" (Niall, *Seven Little Billabongs* 99). This book foregrounds issues of class and challenges the conventional discourses represented by Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. The differences of opinion between Turner and her publishers over what was suitable for children are chronicled in Niall's *Seven Little Billabongs* and Yarwood's *From a Chair in the Sun: The Life of Ethel Turner*. Neither *Seven Little Australians* nor *A Little Bush Maid* challenge the conventions of social class. Instead they provide a very clear illustration of how class can be naturalized by processes of exclusion.

The later Billabong books gradually make significant changes to the status quo. Niall has shown how Billabong's Aboriginal servant, Billy, and the Chinese gardener, Lee Wing, "at first anti-heroic, comic figures, gradually win recognition for themselves, and move up from the lowest levels of the station hierarchy" (*Seven Little Billabongs* 158) to "the inner circle of Linton retainers, where questions of race and class are by tacit consent ignored" (159). Niall notes that the housekeeper, Brownie, has three grown-up sons, who are mentioned in *Norah of Billabong* as being "on the land" and in a later novel as having gone through the war unhurt, "and it remains one of the

puzzles of the series that they never visit Billabong” (*Seven Little Billabongs* 97). In making the servants part of the Billabong family it is necessary to forget that they might have another family. Lee Wing’s relatives are overseas, Billy’s are dead, Brownie’s are simply left out of the story. The same applies to other “adopted” family members. The Rainhams are migrants, Bill Blake is more or less abandoned by his family at boarding school. Billabong is sufficient for all of them, and before the end of the series they have all occupied subject roles in the narrative, roles that are generally directed at restoring peace, harmony and prosperity to Billabong. The social and class structures remain unchallenged and unable to be questioned because the stories show the system supposedly working and providing everyone with the ideal environment.

As well as placing the children of Misrule and Billabong in a class where having servants is taken for granted (requiring the children to do only the minimum of household chores), both *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* employ the fairly conventional narrative device of having the children’s mother die before the novel commences. This is a common device in children’s stories, for reasons that may be very complex, but one of its obvious benefits is that the children can realistically be expected to have more freedom. Both *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books increase this effect by minimizing the children’s schooling. A governess is mentioned briefly in the opening chapter of *Seven Little Australians* only to be excluded from the rest of the novel. Norah’s education is described in the opening chapter of *A Little Bush Maid*, but most of the novel then takes place while Jim is home on holidays with his friends Wally and Harry, so again, no schooling is seen to occur. This combination of narrative conventions - an upper class family, an absent or dead mother, and minimal focus on education - allows for an impression that the resulting freedom and leisure are a natural part of childhood. The difference is that on Billabong the freedom is represented as idyllic, while at Misrule the freedom and lack of moral guidance is dangerous.



#### 4.3 Gender Roles and Moral Codes

The moral code being enforced in *Seven Little Australians* is itself a method of control as it segregates the sexes by enforcing different gender roles, allocating the powerful roles to adult males and dependent roles to women and children. The art is in making the roles and thus the morals attractive. Exaggerating gender differences and then tying them in to successfully attracting the opposite sex is an effective ploy, as one of the most potent rewards in society is attracting a “prestige” mate. Success, respect and affection are tied to the accepted moral attributes, rejection and ridicule to the moral attributes considered inappropriate for a person of a particular age or sex. A six-year-old boy, for example, should be brave enough to take a beating without crying. If he does cry, ridicule is waiting to bring him back into line. For a girl however, physical punishment is less acceptable - the reader is invited to admire Judy’s bravery at the age of thirteen in facing up to a possible beating: “Judy went very white but obeyed instantly” (*Seven Little Australians* 46). Physical courage is exceptional in a girl but essential in a boy. Cowardice is the most despicable and ridiculed quality for a boy.

For a girl, on the other hand, vanity and what today might be considered a healthy sexuality are the attributes most severely treated in this text. Nell is singled out as praiseworthy for not being vain in spite of her beauty, and Meg is subjected to vast amounts of humiliation for her efforts at wearing stays and sending notes to young men. Interestingly, once Meg has lost her interest in fashion and flirting, as her grief over Judy’s death swamps everything else, she is rewarded by being seen as attractive. Alan Courtney admires her in church: “Alan looked at her from his pew - the little figure in its sorrowful black, the shining hair hanging in a plait no longer frizzed at the end, the chastened droop of the young lips, the wistful sadness of the blue eyes” (173). Virtue is not allowed to be its own reward. After criticizing Meg for going out of her way to get the attention of young men, the text tacitly acknowledges that the attention

of young men is in fact highly desirable, but should only be achieved as a result of conformity to appropriate standards of modesty. With Meg in a passive role, not seeking but being sought, and conveying noble grief rather than sexual attractiveness, her romance with Alan can proceed - albeit cast in wholesome, non-sexual terms. "And the firm frank friendship became a beautiful thing in their lives, strengthening Meg and making the boy gentler" (174). Note the use of the word "boy" for Alan here. He has been identified as the older brother of an eighteen-year-old. Although a female of twenty (Esther) can be a married woman with an eighteen-month-old baby, a male of at least nineteen should be a "boy" interested in friendship only.

The Billabong books also tend to minimize the themes of adolescence and romance in general, and when Norah and Wally eventually marry after being the best of mates for seven novels, their relationship remains resolutely mate-like and asexual. Jim has a more conventional romance with Tommy (her masculine nickname providing a reminder of the mateship theme).

In the Billabong books mateship is the overriding moral value, incorporating as it does not only friendship but love, loyalty, compassion, courage and reticence. It is a masculine standard and although women may conform to it (and want to because of its high status) femininity is a disadvantage. Long, curly hair always has to be bundled out of the way, the convention of riding sidesaddle is dismissed at the start, a disregard of beauty is essential and the virtue men most admire in women - silence - is displayed by Norah in Chapter One of *A Little Bush Maid* and never forgotten.

It has been contended that Norah becomes less of a tomboy as the series progresses (Roberts 59), but there are few incidents to prove this. Motherhood rather than marriage is the turning point and Norah manages to be a very mate-like mother. Her ordeal in *Son of Billabong* (book 14 of the series) where her three-year-old son is missing, presumed dead, is harrowing, but it is the father, Wally who bears the brunt

of the emotional stress. Norah instead of being the distraught mother is the tower of strength. All the “female” weaknesses featured in the Turner novels - gossip, vanity, sentimentality, and jealousy - are never hers.

The treatment of sexual issues in these two sets of texts illustrates two different methods of informing child readers that certain types of behaviour are inappropriate at their age. *Seven Little Australians* foregrounds the issue by showing sixteen-year-old Meg starting to interact with members of the opposite sex, labelling her behaviour negatively as “flirting”, juxtaposing it with more appropriate models such as Judy’s boyish mischief, and references to Miss Alcott’s and Miss Wetherell’s “wholesome fare” (54), and finally punishing her with intense humiliation, and praising and rewarding her eventually modest behaviour. However this overt criticism, correction and praise is rendered ambivalent by several factors: the suspiciously small age gap between Meg and her young step-mother, the example of Meg March in *Little Women*, who accepts Mr Brooke’s marriage proposal at the age of seventeen, and the way in which *Seven Little Australians* itself acknowledges the possibility of romantic love for a girl of sixteen by depicting Alan Courtney’s admiration of her in the final chapter.

The Billabong books are much more rigorous and subtle in their disapproval of sexual issues for girl readers: they exclude them completely. Norah is initially positioned as an honorary boy, able to participate in all the boyish activities her brother and his friends enjoy, and better than city boys at riding and bushcraft. The first seven novels in the series then continue to treat the relationship between Norah, her father, Jim and Wally as pure “mateship” and carefully present the virtues of honesty, loyalty, courage and consideration, while excluding any romantic love. The external focus of the Peter Pan narratives helps by keeping characters’ feelings secondary to the main, physical adventure, but in addition, Norah’s active roles distance her from conventional romantic discourses. She is generally the rescuer of other people, apart from the one incident in *Billabong’s Daughter* where Wally rescues her.



Norah and Wally do eventually marry in the ninth book of the series, *Billabong Adventurers*, but their actual courtship in *Billabong's Daughter* is minimal, and the marriage is depicted as being as close to the original mateship relationship as possible. Instead of discreetly omitting the honeymoon as if it were something to be avoided, which would obliquely acknowledge the sexual nature of their relationship, *Billabong Adventurers* uses the honeymoon as the background for yet another adventure. Brenda Niall (*Seven Little Billabongs* 181-182) and probably many readers of today find the descriptions of the newly married couple lacking in credibility. "They said their prayers together like little children, and Wally was soon asleep" (*Billabong Adventurers* 93).

#### 4.4 Tenor and Power

As discussed in Chapter Three, Halliday identifies three metafunctions in language: the ideational, which deals with subject matter, the interpersonal, which deals with the roles and relationships constructed by language, and the textual, which looks at the elements that structure language into text. My focus in this chapter is on the second metafunction identified by Halliday, the interpersonal, which offers insight into the social relations and the operation of power constructed between participants, that is the characters in a text or the narrator and reader. In giving, requesting, or receiving information or goods and services, the speakers position themselves in certain roles and construct various relationships with each other. Simply examining the patterns of speech functions: that is, the distribution of questions, statements, demands and offers, can be very revealing of the way a culture or a particular text in a culture allocates power and responsibility, duty and obligation. Other aspects of mood such as modes of address and modality also indicate the construction of power and other relationships.

Cate Poynton, in *Language and Gender: Making the Difference*, uses three dimensions to analyse the roles and relationships, or tenor, seen in a text. Her three dimensions are derived from the two dimensions suggested by Brown and Gilman: the horizontal dimension of solidarity and the vertical dimension of power (76). Poynton prefers to split the horizontal dimension into two aspects, “distinguishing between a social distance or intimacy dimension called CONTACT and an attitudinal dimension concerned with attitude or emotion towards the addressee (or towards the field of discourse) called AFFECT” (76). Each dimension presents a system of choices, although most choices are between positions on a continuum rather than simple yes/no choices. Poynton also draws attention to the fact that the notion of “choice” has its limitations, explaining it as “a matter of the options that the language as a system makes available for realising meanings and, in the case of contextual variable, which the society makes available” (78). “The options of the tenor network are to be understood, then, as those culturally meaningful alternatives in relating to people that are manifested, or realised, in culturally significant communicative behaviour” (79).

The dimension of Power is probably the most significant in the examination of ideology as it relates to who has control, and the degree and type of control. Power relations may range from being equal to being very unequal, and different types of power may be utilized - the basic physical power of *force*, the power of socially-constructed roles providing recognized *authority*, the more various and flexible factors such as wealth and class which provide *status*, and the power deriving from particular knowledge or skills that constitutes *expertise*. Some potential markers of status, such as age, gender and race, are regarded by Poynton as being outside of this system because they impact on all three dimensions of tenor - Contact and Affect as well as Power - and so should be discussed as pertaining to ideology, but it could be argued that all indicators of status are necessarily products of their culture and its ideology.

Contact and Affect are the two horizontal dimensions of tenor, relating to social distance and attitude. Contact includes time factors, such as frequency and extent, and social factors such as role diversification and orientation (person-oriented or task-oriented). The last dimension, Affect, may vary from being very marked to being absent altogether, and, if marked, may be positive or negative. Poynton also distinguishes permanent Affect, which permeates the whole relationship, from transient Affect which affects only one isolated episode. Selection of Affect will generally depend on choices that have already been made in Power and Contact.

In realizing a set of choices for each particular social context, Poynton suggests that certain characteristic patterning occurs. "Each of the three tenor dimensions seems to activate somewhat different sets of linguistic choices and to do so with characteristic patterning of the realisations. Such patterning can be structural or interactional" (79). Reciprocity is the characteristic pattern indicating fairly equal power relations, and can be seen in reciprocity of address terms, interruption rights and nomination of new topics. These choices tend to occur on the discourse stratum or at clause rank within lexico-grammar. The patterning of proliferation found in Contact, however, is principally realized through lexical choices. Proliferation refers to the range of options available; the closer the Contact the larger the range, the more distant the Contact the more narrow and ritualized the range. In Affect, amplification, the repetition of equivalent elements to increase the strength of the Affect expressed, is a commonly used pattern. "Affect is realised primarily at group rank and below within lexico-grammar and also, most importantly, on the phonological stratum in terms of variation in intonation, rhythm, rate of speech, etc" (80). In the passages analysed, it can be seen that descriptions such as those of Captain Woolcot speaking "in a loud voice", "very coldly", and "in the same unemotional voice" (117), are used to convey these aspects of Affect.



My analysis of these elements in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books will demonstrate that power distribution within a Pilgrim narrative is unequal, with a clear authoritarian structure, but is subject to change, while in the Peter Pan pattern developed in the Billabong books, power distribution is both more equal and more static. This is because the nature of a Pilgrim is to progress, while the nature of a Peter Pan is to be unaffected by the passage of time. In both models, however, power is associated with some form of moral validation, with power being the privilege of the morally right.

#### 4.5 Power Structures in the Family

As discussed in the analysis of intertextuality in Chapter Two, power structures in the Pilgrim narratives are overt with a clear hierarchy. Moral codes are overtly stated and form the focus of various narrative episodes. Authority figures act to uphold these moral codes, characters who are protagonists in narrative struggle with them, and generally progress to some better understanding of, or conformity to these standards. In *Seven Little Australians* the rebelliousness of the children, as described in the first chapter, is gradually quelled by various mishaps, until at the end of the novel the “lurking sparkle of joyousness and rebellion and mischief” (9) is replaced by “the chastened droop of the young lips, the wistful sadness of the blue eyes” (173) resulting from the final sadness of Judy’s death which gives the children a heightened consciousness of right and wrong.

The degree of distance between the children and their father is one aspect of power that is clearly established in the first chapter of both novels, indicating how crucial it is to the family structure and thus to the total world of the novels. In *Seven Little Australians* the power imbalance is expressed several times in the great physical distance Captain Woolcot establishes between himself and his children. The Captain

does not let his children dine with him, (in contrast with Australian fathers in general, the narrator points out) and has had felt put over the nursery door to try to stop their noise reaching the dining room (unsuccessfully) (11). In any case, as a military man he is “much from home” (14). He has suggested sending the children to boarding school, and for him to take one of his daughters riding in the dog cart with him is a mark of great favour, limited to his prettiest daughter, Nell, and not at all a usual occurrence (14). The opening episode of the novel shows the children daring to go to the adult dining room to ask for roast chicken only because a guest is present to shield them from their father.

Because of the moral progression in the Pilgrim narratives, authority and power are constantly, if gradually, shifting. Any character who has wrestled with a moral issue and come out on top has gained in power by moving one step further along the path to moral perfection. The right to become a teacher can be reached at almost any stage where there is someone further back along the path needing help. A parent can teach a child, but an older sibling can also teach a younger sibling. When the circumstances are right a younger sibling (for example, Beth in *Little Women*) can even act as mentor to an older sibling. This moral-based power is reversible, as moral status can be lost as well as attained, and a loss of moral status through any sort of misdeed reduces moral authority and consequently power.

In any case, power is not to be wielded directly if one is female. A father figure can be punitive, but a mother figure is more likely to be sacrificial. This has been discussed in Chapter Two. A woman can best wield power by serving, and, as a result of her service, suffering in some way. The suffering provides validation of her moral status and consequently authority, and creates an obligation for the child or person being served to co-operate in order to alleviate or at least respect that suffering. But since the obligation is established by the act of suffering, the amount of duty owed increases with the amount of suffering - meaning it can be virtually infinite. The conversation

between Mr Gillet (even though he is male) and Meg in *Seven Little Australians* illustrates this manipulative model.

Mr Gillet starts by appearing to blame his alcoholism on not having some redeeming female influence, and hints that Meg could replace his deceased sister.

“You remind me of a little sister I had who died.... Perhaps if she were alive now I should not be quite so contemptible.” (160)

Meg accepts the sisterly role and lets him keep her hair ribbon, but when he relapses she withdraws and he has to spell out how this type of relationship should work.

“You have brothers ... some day they will go a little astray - for it is only women like you, Miss Meg, and angels who can keep to the path always. Don’t be too hard on them. Don’t make an effort to show them the difference between your whiteness and their blackness. They will see it right enough, but they won’t like you to draw their attention to it. Try and look gentle and forgiving - they’ll feel quite as miserable as you could wish them to feel.” (160)

He continues with examples to convince her that as a female she must never be critical or punitive as her “power” lies in being loving and forgiving.

“Suppose Pip did something very wrong some day, and the world flung stones at him until he was bruised all over. And suppose, feeling very wretched, he came home to his sisters. And Meg, because wickedness was abhorrent to her, threw a few more little stones, so that the pain might teach him a lesson he could not forget. And Judy, because he was her brother and in trouble, flung her arms round him and encouraged him, and helped him to fight the world again, and gave him never a hard word or look, thinking he had had plenty. Which sister’s influence would be greater, Miss Meg?” (160)



By displaying his pain, Mr Gillet has succeeded in making Meg feel guilty for supposedly being the cause of it. Out of respect for his suffering she now has to take on a suffering, sympathetic role herself - a role which is binding as long as the feeling of guilty responsibility can be maintained. The ribbon becomes a symbol of his dependence on (and power over) her and her responsibility towards him.

She rummaged in her pocket and brought out the ribbon.

"Will you take it again?" she said - "oh, *please*, just to make me feel less horrid. Oh, please take it!"

She looked at him with wet, imploring eyes, and held it out.

He took it, smoothed its crumpledness, and placed it in his pocket-book.

"God bless you," he said, and the tone made Meg sob. (161)

In looking for evidence of these types of power structures in the text, one would expect to find for the paternal, punitive, authoritarian power markers of distance, lack of reciprocity and high proportion of imperatives used by the power figure and high modality ("you will", "you must"). For the maternal, sacrificial power structure the power indicators would be more subtle and complex: more indicators of affect and closeness (endearments), lower modality, incongruent realization of imperatives and so on. The segment of dialogue between Captain Woolcot and Judy analysed later in this chapter illustrates the authoritarian power structure, but also shows it being undermined, while the conversation between Mr Gillet and Meg shows the more manipulative, "maternal" model setting up a binding relationship by establishing intimacy and obligation.

Power structures and moral codes in the Peter Pan books are much less overt and hierarchical. There is still a very definite moral code, but it is not clearly propagated and enforced by an authority figure. It is pervasive and a strong force in governing the character's actions, but it is rarely foregrounded by becoming the focus of a narrative

episode. Characters do not agonize over whether they have told a lie or whether they have been unforgiving; instead their crises revolve around physical danger and rescues of some kind.

The moral codes in Peter Pan narratives are thus not overtly positioned as *being* the story and the Peter Pan characters consequently do not need mentors or authority figures to guide them through it, but authority's sanction for the moral code emerges in the evaluation phase of the narrative, where the character's courage or compassion or quick-wittedness can be praised. These should not be attributes the character has acquired during the course of the story, but natural parts of the character's personality. Courage especially needs to be foregrounded to a certain extent to create interest in the story - there has to be a certain amount of risk and danger to overcome - but generally the tendency is to naturalize or to make it appear that although these qualities are desirable (unarguably so, since they effected the rescue), they are not particularly uncommon or special, and that they are the means to an end rather than the end itself, the end being a happy existence that leaves room for plenty more adventures in the equivalent of Neverland.

The moral code here acts to preserve a certain state of affairs. It provides the equilibrium the story returns to (the contented, loving family) and the means by which the story returns there (the courage and selflessness in the face of danger), instead of being the imbalance that destroys the original equilibrium (as temptation does in the Pilgrim narrative, where human nature is regarded as inherently bad).

The no-progression rule applies to authority as well as to morality in the Peter Pan narrative. There are no changes in authority; all the main characters are active and autonomous, and are not subject to any particular authority. There is a camaraderie among the protagonists. You would expect to see this manifested in a high degree of reciprocity, an even distribution of interrogatives, imperatives, and declaratives or

even an absence of imperatives, indicators of closeness, for example, endearments, and other indicators of positive Affect. The dialogue between Norah and her father analysed later in this chapter shows these elements in operation.

The closeness between Norah and her father is established in the first chapter of *A Little Bush Maid*. “Day after day they were together” (14), involved in all the varied work of the cattle station, and “they understood each other perfectly” (14). They are described as mates: “Norah’s principle mate was her father” (14), which might seem to imply equality, but a power difference quickly becomes apparent in the same paragraph. “She was a wise little companion too; ready enough to chatter like a magpie if her father were in the mood, but quick to note if he were not, and then quite content to be silently beside him, perhaps for hours”(14). So in spite of their closeness, Norah is the one who has to suppress her natural inclination to chatter in order to retain her closeness with her father.

Unlike Captain Woolcot, Mr Linton of the Billabong books neither threatens nor punishes his children in *A Little Bush Maid*. The menagerie race incident early in the novel is the only one that might have called for disciplinary action, and Mr Linton is conveniently not around to see the results. When the two gardeners start fighting, Jim is quick to intervene with reminders of his father’s authority. “Look here, if father catches you fighting there’ll be the most awful row - and I’ll be in it too, what’s worse. Clear out, for goodness sake, before he comes along, and don’t get in each other’s road again!” (35). Jim thus places himself second in the chain of command, giving orders to the servants by virtue of being the boss’s son, but also finding himself in danger of his father’s displeasure for allowing a situation (the menagerie race) that caused the fracas in the first place. These hints of a hierarchy with Mr Linton as its head start to disappear even in *A Little Bush Maid*, and for most of the series images of mateship and partnership are substituted. As my analysis in Chapter Three showed, Norah and the other children take most of the subject roles in any physical activity,



and the analysis later in this chapter will demonstrate that Norah is also an active participant in decision-making processes.

#### 4.6 Humour and Sibling Relationships

Among the brothers and sisters in the two novels, a certain closeness is constructed, and a large part of this derives from humour, in particular the banter between characters, which operates differently in each novel. Both *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books use comic elements as an integral part of their formula and work them into similar narrative patterns. Both select humorous incidents and include the occasional humorous comment from the narrator early in the novel, and then alternate between the dramatic and the humorous before progressing to the most dramatic or even tragic incidents of the climax. Some minor elements of humour are then allowed back into the final chapter. Thus both sets of texts use humour as a device for creating interest while lowering tension, a well-established literary practice.

The differences between the two texts occur in the type of humour that is used and the effect it has on the relationships between the characters, and in particular the power structures operating. Predictably, bearing in mind the Pilgrim and Peter Pan models, the satirical humour of *Seven Little Australians* creates power differences and hierarchies, while the light-hearted banter of *A Little Bush Maid* creates cohesion and camaraderie.

Firstly, the relationship between the narrator and the reader is made closer and cosier by the inclusion of humorous asides, but with the difference that in *A Little Bush Maid* this is done initially and then to a large extent phased out, as the narrator becomes more and more invisible, and in *Seven Little Australians* this is done in such a way as

to create closeness with an adult reader rather than a child reader, or more accurately, to position the reader in a judgemental rather than in a more simply voyeuristic role.

It should be noted that for modern readers and critics where *Seven Little Australians* fails is in its humour. The spirited character of Judy is generally admired, and some critics manage to appreciate the Victorian melodrama of her death, but the scene where six year old Bunty is whipped by his father tends to provoke severe personal criticism of the author, such as Saxby's comment that "The reader suspects, at times, an almost pathological interest in sadism" (81). Bunty's cries of pain are elongated with numerous hyphens: "Boo-hoo! ah-h-h-h- you're killing me, hoo-boo, I was only d-doin' it - oh - hoo - ah-h-h-, d-doin' it to p-please - boo-oo-oo, to p-please you!" (34), but the fact that this is to be taken as a humorous exaggeration rather than an indication of genuine pain is seen in his reception by his siblings after the punishment is over. "They couldn't help laughing a bit; Bunty was always so irresistibly comic when he was hurt ever so little" (34).

More frequently, readers are invited to laugh at characters caught in embarrassing situations. The Captain is embarrassed by his children coming to the dining room to ask for chicken, and later by Judy leaving the baby at his military barracks. Both of these incidents threaten his despotic authority and misplaced dignity as a father. Meg is embarrassed when Alan Courtney meets her after dark when she was expecting his brother Andrew, and Pip is laughed at by Tettawonga for being proud of having shot two rabbits. In each case the embarrassment is potentially beneficial as it makes the character aware and ashamed of a particular fault or failing.

Humour is more overtly a part of the operation of power when used by Meg's friend, Aldith. Aldith's cool mockery of Meg is an effective method of control: "You're just twelve, Marguerite," the young lady said calmly: "You're not a bit more than twelve. You'd better get a doll again, and a picture book with morals" (69). In this particular

case, Aldith's influence is corrupting, because she is trying to force Meg into inappropriate behaviours for a girl of sixteen, but her actual methods are legitimized by Judy's use of identical strategies. Meg is even sensitive to Judy's ridicule when Judy is absent. "She could fancy the scorn in her sister's large clear eyes, the ringing laughter such a tale would evoke, the scathing, clever ridicule that would fall on her shrinking shoulders" (69). Judy's mockery is seen as laudable because it is directed at vices such as vanity, dishonesty and hypocrisy. When her ineffectual stepmother Esther criticizes the girls for looking shabby, she, too, becomes a target for Judy's wit.

"Is that a dagger that I see before me, the handle to my hand? Come, let me grasp it," she said saucily, snatching one of the pins from Esther's dress, fastening her own with it, and dropping a curtsy" (23).

Judy's moral power is eventually reinforced along entirely different lines by her tragic death, while Aldith's is counteracted by Alan Courtney, who also relies (initially) on the technique of ridicule and embarrassment.

In the Billabong books, the embarrassment comedy of *Seven Little Australians* is not used. Where the real action is mental, occurring in the mind or soul of the character involved, the humour tends to occur in the same realm, thus humiliation and embarrassment can be sources of humour. However, when the action is physical, and the real threats or dangers in the novel are physical, as in the Billabong books, the humour tends to be physical humour - the characters punching each other light-heartedly, or waking each other by means of a wet sponge in the face, having chaotic "menagerie races", and catching old boots when out fishing. Humorous deceptions or mistakes also sometimes occur: Jim dressing up, somewhat ineptly, as Father Christmas in *Captain Jim*, and the announcement of Davy's safe return in *Son of Billabong* being mistaken for the announcement of the birth of a new baby, also in *Billabong's Daughter*, the difficulties of describing Tommy's burglar with the wart on the end of his nose (not hose). These last two are telephone conversations. Because the



telephone is an intrusive element of technological change it is a suitable target for a Billabong joke.

The banter between the characters in the Billabong books, as well as adding humour, acts to create cohesion and closeness. The aspects of the moral code that can be seen operating here are: firstly, the importance of closeness in mateship, secondly - perhaps of equal importance - the reticence that should operate to stop the closeness becoming sentimental, and thirdly, the strong work ethic. Banter contains continual reminders that inclusion in the group requires adherence to the rule that hard work should be constant, and thus much of the banter is mock criticism, such as abusing someone for their laziness or bossiness.

“Not dressed? - you laziness!” Jim flung at her.

“Well, you aren’t either,” was the merry retort.

“No, but we’ve got no silly hair to brush!”

*(A Little Bush Maid 43)*

The humour derives from the incongruity that no one on Billabong is ever lazy or bossy, but the reminder is always present: participation in the ethics of hard work and democratic mateship are essential if you want to remain part of the group. The banter is always conducted in a friendly, light-hearted tone, but it can include (mock) threats of (mock) violence, or be associated with physical rough and tumble.

“Look at old Harry!” jeered Wally. “He’s quite excited. Does your mother know you’re out, Hal?”

“I’ll punch you, young Wally,” retorted Harry. “Just you be civil.”

*(A Little Bush Maid 48)*

Thus the characters remind themselves of the values they share and ensure that the group remains close, busy, democratic and stiff-upper-lipped.

#### 4.7 Power Relationships: Father/Daughter dialogue

This section will be used to compare two father/daughter dialogues, a segment from Chapter Thirteen of *Seven Little Australians* and a segment from Chapter Fifteen of *A Little Bush Maid*. Appendix D contains the extracts to be analysed, and Appendix E gives a break-down of the speech functions in each passage. Both of these extracts occur in similar places in their respective narratives: a crisis, or turning point, towards the end of the novel. Both involve a dialogue between the main character (a girl) and her father. Both involve a crucial decision that is represented as a question of life or death, in one case whether or not to send Judy back to boarding school, in the other, whether Norah or her father should ride for help to save the Hermit. But although the narratives are similar, the presentation of the main characters as either Pilgrims or Peter Pans means that the type of conflict and the outcomes are very different. In *Seven Little Australians* the conflict is between two people, Captain Woolcot, the authoritarian father, and Judy, his rebellious daughter, and the point of contention is Judy's disobedience. In *A Little Bush Maid*, although the dialogue is a discussion, almost an argument, between father and daughter, the source of conflict is not the relationship between them, but an external factor: the environment - specifically, the combination of isolation and disease that threatens to kill someone, and the argument arises from David Linton's internal conflict. There is no disagreement over the solution - someone must ride to get a doctor, and there is no disagreement over the roles of father and daughter - the father has the right to make decisions and the responsibility to protect his daughter, but it is these two elements of his role that are in conflict.

Another important difference between the two passages is the amount of physical danger involved and who is threatened. Both situations do threaten death: the spots of blood Judy coughs into her handkerchief indicate that she is (possibly) dying, and

Norah's offer to ride alone through fifteen miles of deserted bush is represented as life-endangering, at least in the mind of an anxious father. "(Mr Linton) pictured Bobs putting his hoof into a hidden crab-hole - falling - Norah lying white and motionless, perhaps far from the track" (233). This situation is set up as a potential double crisis - two lives are at stake here - Norah's and the Hermit's - but, as is suitable for a Peter Pan narrative, Norah survives without suffering anything worse than extreme fatigue (which causes her to faint) and the Hermit is the one who almost dies, "The great river flowed very close about his feet" (241), but fortunately recovers and is happily reunited with his family and cleared of disgrace. His danger does not affect Norah directly and is not allowed to transform her character in any way. Her belief in his innocence is important, but unchanging. In the case of Judy's sickness, the description of her recovery seems to indicate her personality has not changed: "In three weeks she was about the house again, thin and great-eyed, but full of nonsense and even mischief once more" (122), but for the next few chapters the overall picture is of greater family closeness - the Captain thinking more of his children, Meg deserting her shallow friend Aldith entirely to be with her sister, and Judy is shown loving "the General" much more than the initial description in Chapter One and her dumping of him in Chapter Four would suggest. There is a progression from "Couldn't we leave him somewhere?" (40) to, "It almost hurt her sometimes, the feeling of love for this little fat dirty boy" (163).

The conversation between Captain Woolcot and Judy is very one sided. Judy's contribution is minimal, consisting only of "No, Father" said twice. What is interesting though is the way that the power shifts in this scene in spite of the clear tenor of the dialogue. The power difference constructed in the dialogue is neatly undercut and then reversed by the dramatic revelation of Judy's illness, which uses intertextuality to draw on the sacrificial discourses discussed in Chapter Two.



The construction of power is very clear cut, even overstated. Captain Woolcot speaks nine times to Judy's two. He initially calls her by her nickname, "Judy", then reverts to her correct name of "Helen" to indicate greater distance and negative affect. When he asks her a direct question and she doesn't answer, he repeats it with the emphasis of her name, and receives a "No, Father" in reply. To drive the point home he follows with the same question rephrased, "No excuse or reason at all?" which, given her previous answer, severely limits her options for answering, forcing a repetition of the "No Father". After that admission he asks no more questions, which means she has no opening to speak, and is not likely to interrupt at this stage. Captain Woolcot then issues a series of instructions phrased as declaratives rather than imperatives, for example, "You will come straight back with me this moment" instead of "Come straight back with me this moment." Using the declarative in this way increases the distance between the speakers even further. He seems to be talking at her rather than to her. The clear message is that the Captain has total control over Judy's future. He uses the future tense without adding "must"s or "should"s. "I shall take precautions to have you watched at school.... You will not return home for the Christmas holidays and probably not for those of the following June." The "probably" is interesting as it should lower the modality somewhat, but because of the context it doesn't. Instead it reads as if the Captain has power to make up any punishment he chooses, even going beyond what could be considered reasonable.

After constructing this firm power base through dialogue, how does the text then overturn it? This happens in several ways: it puts Judy's action in a realm that the Captain cannot control, it draws on religious discourses of suffering and sacrifice, and it places the Captain in a position of being obliged to recognize and act to alleviate Judy's suffering.

Judy at this point in the story is suffering from an acute inflammation of the lungs, but no one is yet aware of it. The harshness of her father's words is shown as causing Judy

great physical anguish - "The room swam before the girl's eyes, there was a singing and a rushing in her ears" - and when he orders, "Come at once", she catches her breath. This in turn causes her prolonged fit of coughing, and her coughing prevents her obeying the instruction. She is not disobeying, but she is physically unable to obey.

The emotive language the narrator has been using to describe Judy's appearance, the "look of absolute horror on her face", "the scarlet colour" that fades, leaving her "white to the lips", and the "worn, strained look" that fails to touch her father has been indicating that the father's authority is being misused and is causing undue suffering on Judy's part. So even while the dialogue is establishing the father's authority, the text through narrator's comment is criticizing it and preparing the reader's hopes and expectations for some sort of a reversal.

Crisis point is announced with the words, "It was as bad as a death sentence". This may seem a melodramatic description for being sent to boarding school, but it highlights the importance of being included in the family, and the power of the family to reward and punish. The corporal punishment allocated to boys inflicts physical pain but still allows a sense of belonging, and promises eventual participation in the power structure of the family. For girls, as members of the weaker sex, corporal punishment is not seen as being appropriate, but an exclusion method such as sending the child to boarding school is seen as appropriate in spite of the fact that its effects are more long-term and far-reaching. Boarding school here means Judy's separation from love, companionship, respect from her siblings, and her identity as one of the family. In fact the text has already demonstrated this symbolic death sentence by not following her to boarding school the first time, but leaving her entirely outside of the story (the main storyline focusing on Meg and Bunty for this space of time) until she returns to Misrule. In terms of the story, Judy does not exist unless she is with her family, and her identity as the leader of the children would be eroded by her continued absence. It

can also be noted that in her death scene, later in the novel, the tragedy is depicted largely in terms of her separation from her siblings.

The reality of the death sentence that Captain Woolcot pronounces means he is effectively guilty of intending to murder his daughter. At this point interdiscursive links are created through several strands of similarity between this scene and sacrificial religious narratives deriving from the trial and death of Jesus. Judy's powerlessness comes to be represented in terms of being a sacrificial victim, but this is a role which contains a paradox, as the powerlessness is an important source of power. Her demeanour shares some of the key characteristics seen in biblical references to Jesus and his trial. The Bible emphasizes the silence and meekness of the victim, "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7, *The Holy Bible* 648), and the injustice of the situation, "In his humiliation justice was denied him" (Acts 8:33a, *The Holy Bible* 120). For both Jesus and Judy, a death sentence is pronounced in spite of there being no real justification for it, and further physical suffering is inflicted, eventually ending in death, and that death is then redemptive in some way.

Judy's sacrificial narrative does not proceed directly to its conclusion at this point. In the last chapters of the novel Judy dies an heroic sacrificial death while saving her youngest brother from a falling tree, and is regarded as a saviour thereafter: "The dear life had been twice given, and the second time it was Judy's gift, and priceless therefore" (174). In this confrontation with her father the narrative stops at the point when the symbolic emotional death sentence becomes a physical death sentence as indicated by "the horrible spots of scarlet on Judy's handkerchief" (118). This is the reversal: the Captain's sentence of death by separation is effectively revoked from the moment he realizes that a real death sentence has been passed by a higher authority. There is also the implication that this death sentence is the result of his previous



cruelty in sending her away to boarding school in the first place. It is now his duty to repent of his harsh treatment and start making amends before it is too late.

The difference between the *Seven Little Australians* passage and the *A Little Bush Maid* passage is very marked. Power, Contact and Affect are all treated differently: there is a much smaller imbalance in Power, closer Contact and more positive Affect.

Terms of address show the close Contact and positive Affect. Norah addresses her father as “Daddy” four times, and “Daddy, dear” once. Mr Linton calls Norah “Norah” once, “dear” twice, and then uses endearments indicating even more positive Affect, “My little girl” and “My little wee mate”. This gives a very even balance in terms of the number of times vocatives are used and the amount of positive Affect. Mr Linton’s extra endearments show his worry and concern for Norah’s safety while establishing the responsibility of his “powerful” father role. This power difference makes the relationship closer by heightening the care and concern involved.

This passage shows a course of action being decided on and plans being made to carry it out. Compared to the *Seven Little Australians* passage, this is done quite democratically, with Norah allowed a far greater share in decision-making than Judy ever was, but the father/daughter relationship is still clearly differentiated in terms of Power, Contact and Affect.

Initially, Mr Linton is in control of the most information. His series of declarative clauses lays out the situation and his perception of the problem, ending with an admission, “I don’t quite know what to do. I can’t leave you here...” Norah’s response, “You must let me go” is an imperative, “Let me go” realized as interpersonal metaphor, and she subsequently offers her solution to the problem, with a (shorter) series of declaratives outlining her solution and Mr Linton eventually grants permission: “I’ll have to risk you, my little girl.” Norah is the first one in this segment

to use imperatives (not transformed). “Don’t you worry Daddy, dear. Just tell me what you want.” She takes the initiative in giving the instruction directly and her father follows her instruction by giving her a list of things to do - a series of imperatives. In terms of power it now looks as if Norah is being ordered around, but as she was the one to give the instruction, “Tell me what to do” she is still in control as she initiated the sequence and demanded the active role.

Another indicator of Norah’s power is the fact that she is in the right. She is the one who has correctly assessed the situation and perceived what is required. Her father initially was wrong, misled by his fears for her safety. Norah, like Emile, does not kick against the stern law of necessity, she is able to give an accurate assessment of the situation and of her ability to deal with it, thus adhering again to Rousseau’s ideal.

After outlining the plan there is a brief interchange of imperatives:

“Remember I won’t have a moment’s peace until I know  
you’ve got safely home.”

“Don’t bother about me.”

“Bother! Now hurry!”

The organizing of the rescue operation shows Billabong democracy in action, but the last short exchange of imperatives is not to do with the practicalities of the situation, it is to do with reinforcing the affectionate closeness of the relationship between Norah and her father. The processes here have changed from the material processes used for the organizing segment to the mental processes necessary for creating the close, cohesive family bond: remembering, bothering, knowing, and the relational process “I won’t have a moment’s peace”, used as a metaphor for a mental process of worrying. As was noted in the discussion of process types in the previous chapter, mental processes in *A Little Bush Maid* tend to be cognitive rather than affective. Affect is indicated instead through vocatives such as “My wee little mate.”

The futility of the instructions, “Don’t bother about me” and “Remember I won’t have a moment’s peace until I know you’re safely home,” is a sign of the pressures created by the role reversal occurring in this passage. Mr Linton, the father, is forced into assuming a passive role, waiting and watching over an invalid, while Norah, the young daughter, is active, riding miles through the bush for help. In terms of the novel’s narrative this is not much of a reversal; Norah has already taken on an active, heroic role in rescuing the sheep (76 - 78) and the tiger trainer (199 - 200), while Mr Linton has taken a back seat for most of the action. In terms of wider interdiscursivity, however, this is more of a statement. *A Little Bush Maid* in 1910 has constructed a very strong role model for young girls, a capable and decisive heroine who instead of being restricted to stays and hair ribbons is actively and quite realistically saving lives.

#### 4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to show the differing social contexts and family relationships constructed around the figures of the Pilgrim and the Peter Pan.

The inward looking Pilgrim, whose emotions and sufferings eventually produce positive moral change, needs either to guide or be guided by other characters. The more light-hearted, fun-loving Peter Pan, whose adventures and new friends only make Neverland a happier place, needs a sense of solidarity with other characters, and stable relationships that don’t threaten any change. Both *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books provide these structures in the environment of a motherless family. For the Lintons this is not so much of a problem, as the Billabong ethos is diffused through all the main characters equally, but in the case of the Woolcot children having no mother means they are left without a moral guardian, as their father is harsh and distant and their young stepmother is sweet but ineffectual. Thus two



different types of power structures can be seen: the democratic solidarity of Billabong and the struggling hierarchy of Misrule.

In *A Little Bush Maid* equal power relations can be seen in the high degree of reciprocity as characters exchange instructions, suggestions, endearments and insults. All the main characters become involved in initiating activities such as going fishing, going to the circus or having a menagerie race, and the passage analysed in depth shows Norah and her father exchanging imperatives as they organize how the Hermit is to be rescued. Endearments such as “my little wee mate” are frequently used between Norah and her father to indicate closeness and affection, while amongst peers terms of address are more likely to be mock insults intended to convey affection with humour, and to create a sense of cohesion by emphasizing the moral code wherein attributes such as laziness are so unthinkable they can only be regarded as a joke.

In *Seven Little Australians* power is more unequal and more subject to change as the characters gain and lose power according to their status within the family and also their moral status. When mockery is used it tends to function as genuine criticism and is aimed at changing someone’s behaviour by inducing a sense of shame. Reciprocity is low - most characters when faced with mockery submit quickly. The relationship between the Woolcot children and their father is distant. He does not share in activities such as fishing trips with them as Mr Linton does with his children, and when he speaks to them it is usually to reprimand. However, his power as their father is in fact undermined by this distance which has caused his total lack of understanding of their characters, and is further undermined by the interweaving and reaccentuating of various discourses within the text. Nationalistic discourses align Australia with youth, mischief and rebellion, and England with age, authority and sorrow, thus valuing the children’s mischief over their father’s misguided authority. The power difference between Judy and her father, which is so clear in their dialogue with its low reciprocity, considerable distance and formality and negative affect, is actually

undercut by the emphasis on Judy's helplessness. Religious discourses are activated as rebellion disappears to be replaced by submission and obedience. Judy quickly comes to appear blameless, then victimized as her father imposes a "death sentence," then vindicated as her father realizes she may in fact be close to death. His moral authority is reversed as he is put in the wrong and his parental authority is negated as his power to punish is snatched away.

## Conclusion

In this thesis I have tried to show how the discourses of religion, education and children's literature operating in and around *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books construct versions of childhood which disempower children and circumscribe the identities and narratives available to them. As the texts themselves participate in and reaccentuate these wider discourses their apparent challenging of prevalent discourses of their era and their construction of a strong position for the child protagonists are ultimately subsumed by discourses and power structures that restrict children to certain limited roles and spheres of activity. This process occurs both within the texts themselves and in the critical discourses that position and evaluate them.

Chapter One of this thesis, by analysing how various reviews and histories of Australian literature categorize and evaluate Ethel Turner's and Mary Grant Bruce's novels, shows that literary discourses imply there is a clear distinction of some sort between their work in spite of the many superficial similarities. The distinction is generally represented as one of quality, however I see this as being an indicator of certain types of discourse. As popular early Australian children's writers, Turner and Bruce are frequently grouped together in histories and selections of Australian literature, but opinions of their quality, that is, their adherence to certain literary formulae, are sharply divided. However, different critics select different qualities for comment. The tensions between the different critical discourses means that some qualities such as Australianness become contentious or ambivalent, as the discourses value or devalue them. Both writers, but more especially Ethel Turner, are generally



admired for the Australianness which is considered (by Australian critics and publishers promoting national heritage) a worthwhile quality in itself. The Australianness of the Billabong books is defined in terms of the city/country binary, with Billabong providing the archetypal rural Australian lifestyle: clean, healthy activity, wide open spaces, liberty and independence and rugged simplicity. This is not valued for any particular accuracy in representation, but for the way these books “presented for so many years acceptable versions of the way we were” (Niall, *Seven Little Billabongs* 4). Young Australian readers had Australian role models to complement or balance the more numerous British and American role models. The “acceptable version” of Australia produced by Ethel Turner in *Seven Little Australians* was more contentious, as it worked from a parent/child binary with Britain represented as the conservative, authoritative parent, and Australia as mischievous, rebellious child. This at least is what is constructed in the opening chapter of *Seven Little Australians* - subsequent reaccentuating and repositioning of discourses lessens the impact of that model, but its assertiveness and national pride was, and is, highly valued by writers such as Saxby, Dutton and Niall.

Aspects of Australian identity that are now seen as negative due to subsequent cultural value shifts, such as the corporal punishment of young children in *Seven Little Australians* or the attitudes towards Aborigines in the earlier Billabong books, lower the overall evaluation of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce. Discourses emphasizing the importance of Australian heritage come into conflict here with certain types of educational discourse. Ethel Turner is suspected of having “an almost pathological interest in sadism” (Saxby, *A History of Australian Children’s Literature* 81), while Billabong is described as a “gallery of racial stereotypes” (Roberts, “Too Jolly by

Half" 59). Criticizing an author for participating in the standard community values and discourses of her time would be less appropriate if the books were for adults, but because these are children's books the discourses that evaluate them have a strong protective flavour. Parents and teachers or other adults wanting to ensure the children in their care are properly nurtured and protected evaluate books on the criterion of suitability. Thus, the new edition of the Billabong books has been edited by Barbara Ker Wilson to remove racism, and Richard Rossiter's criticism of this is based on the same fundamental position: that children need to learn appropriate lessons from their reading material. Anything that is seen as having the potential adversely to affect a child's moral development lowers the perceived standard of quality in the book.

This valuing of moral content as part of the overall value of the book is characteristic of the Leavisite discourses that have dominated literary criticism. Interestingly, this comes to mean that books for children cannot be judged by children. Child readers are not seen as having the capacity to judge quality in a novel, meaning that their tastes and preferences can be disregarded and that suitably educated adults should assume responsibility for making such judgements. Being a child means being within a developmental process that cannot be judged or even properly perceived until it is completed and adult status achieved. A child cannot direct his or her own development because s/he cannot perceive it in its entirety or fully appreciate its importance. Within this model of childhood, children's literature functions to draw its readers on to appreciate higher values than they would otherwise be aware of. This works most effectively when the characters in the novel also undergo some sort of moral development or spiritual growth or intellectual enlightenment, and it is here that the division between the two sets of novels shows most clearly. *Seven Little*

*Australians* and the three subsequent books in the same series do portray characters growing and developing; the Billabong books do not. Over the course of fifteen novels in the Billabong series none of the main characters grows or changes significantly, resulting in criticisms of flat characterization and lack of realism. I believe it is more helpful to look at the Billabong books as belonging to a different discourse, one where growth and change are valued negatively. Critics who look for moral growth and character development are applying an opposing set of standards, standards that align with and are only able to value the Pilgrim type discourses, making the result a foregone conclusion.

Several critics also object to the excessive cheerfulness of the Billabong books, seeing it as escapist and therefore indicative of a lack of insight and perception from the author. Barbara Buick's comment that there were "no stories so myopic of the struggles of life on the land during those drought and depression years" ("An Indigenous Children's Literature" 342) shares in this discourse. Again, it is unhelpful to apply values from an opposing discourse. Instead, it is more productive to look at the meanings and values constructed around Billabong's Utopian existence and try to understand their ideological implications. And Billabong has a very powerful presence: Niall notes that "It is indicative of the sense of safety given by the Billabong world that the death of a pony is made to shock the reader almost as does the death of Judy in the more vulnerable world of *Misrule*" (*Seven Little Billabongs* 94).

Consequently, Chapter Two identifies two discourses, the Pilgrim discourse and the Peter Pan discourse, which distinguish *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books. Analysis of a range of intertexts leads to an analysis of the narratives and value



systems which constitute these two discourses, and demonstrates that they are evident both in the interdiscursivity and the manifest intertextuality within the *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books.

The Pilgrim and Peter Pan discourses emerging in *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books align closely with the description of the educational and religious discourses of John Wesley and Jean Jacques Rousseau, identified by Cleverley and Phillips as representative of the Puritan and Romantic discourses. Analysing Wesley's and Rousseau's discourses in terms of Greimas' actant model highlights the differences I perceive in the character roles, power structures and value systems of the two narratives. Wesley's religious discourse places the "sinner" in the role of subject and makes salvation his or her goal. Salvation is obtainable only as a gift from God, which means that the subject has a goal he or she simply cannot reach without help. Parents, teachers, ministers and evangelists may all act as helpers, God is the superhelper and the enemy is Satan, though there is also an internal enemy in the originally sinful nature of all people, making the subject in this narrative doubly powerless.

In Rousseau's discourse, the super helper is not God, but Reason, and the goal is not obtaining salvation as a gift, but achieving reason through the exercise of one's own faculties. Rousseau's pupil is predisposed towards reason much more than Wesley's sinner is predisposed towards virtue. The role of the subject would therefore appear to be stronger than in the Puritan discourse, except that the pupil should not be fully aware of the learning process. Reason is closely aligned with Nature and physical necessity and must not be contaminated by any touch of civilization. The teacher who

is the helper in this process must never play a direct role in actual instruction, reward or punishment, but ensure that the pupil is always in a carefully controlled environment where he or she can learn appropriate lessons at appropriate stages of development. Without direct human intervention the process may be slow, but in Rousseau's view learning nothing is preferable to learning wrong or damaging things.

Thus these two discourses place different values on learning and on childhood. In the Puritan model the highest priority is placed on salvation, and obtaining it should not be delayed. Children, along with the rest of humankind, are naturally sinful and need to be encouraged to move forward out of that state as soon as possible. So positive change and development are valued. But there is no constructive action the sinner can perform apart from recognizing his or her own sinfulness and powerlessness and submitting to the will of God. Self-awareness is vital, the need for autonomy is low. In Rousseau's discourse change is much less valued, and childhood is seen as a state that can be safely prolonged, as its innocence is much closer to Nature than the false veneer of civilization provided by premature or faulty education. In the Puritan discourse the child is taught to recognize his or her own sinfulness and desire change, while in the Romantic discourse it is the adult who values the untouched nature of childhood. Children cannot share in this view of childhood, because awareness or self-consciousness would destroy the very innocence that is being valued. Self awareness is destructive, but autonomy is highly valued, because it is the acquisition of strength and Reason that will eventually transform the natural goodness of childhood into the permanent goodness of the ideal adult.

In expressing their educational ideals these discourses use certain metaphors that strongly influence narrative structure. The Pilgrim novels aligned with a Puritan discourse of childhood and moral development represent learning as a journey, a hard and difficult path along which everyone grapples with their faults in isolation, and development comes through emotional crises and climactic confrontations. In contrast, the Peter Pan narratives, as interpreted by the Billabong books, represent development as a plant or a flower whose growth must not be forced or accelerated, but allowed to occur naturally in a healthy, protected environment, a narrative consistent with the Romantic discourse of Rousseau.

However, before appearing in the works of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce these discourses underwent certain changes as religious discourses affected educational discourses, which in turn affected literary discourses, resulting in various value shifts, changes in character roles, and the production of certain narrative conventions.

In persuading sinners to repent and turn to God for redemption, Wesley's and Bunyan's discourse uses two methods of persuasion: firstly the representation of God as a judge who will eventually punish sinners by consigning them to hell, and secondly the representation of God and Jesus as sacrificial victims who deserve some recompense for their suffering, Jesus because he suffered the agony of crucifixion in order to save humankind, and God because he gave his only son. Parents, teachers or other mentors can perform similar roles when educating their children, choosing either to function in the judge role by wielding power through threats of future punishment or the kinder alternative of inflicting corporal punishment now in order to reduce the likelihood of eternal punishment, or to function in the sacrificial victim role which



involves taking on suffering in order to help the child, while making the child aware of the obligation this imposes. The gendered identities constructed by discourses of the family meant that this less powerful, more manipulative role came to be the preferred role for mothers or other female teachers, and could also be occupied by children, once a value shift had allowed the concept of the good child.

Henry Vaughan and William Wordsworth helped appropriate the concept of the innocent child for Christian discourse. They saw children as having a natural goodness and purity that came from being somehow closer to heaven than adults. When translated into narrative, this had the effect of placing saintly children in sacrificial victim roles, which tended to involve suffering of some sort, followed by an early death. Victorian writers such as Charles Dickens made full use of this model, so much so that by the time of Louisa May Alcott a backlash was beginning. The character of Jo in *Little Women* epitomized the new child; full of faults such as a hot temper and a non-conformist attitude, but all the more lovable because of them. *Little Women* and similar children's books rely heavily on having characters who have to struggle with their own faults; this is what characterizes the Pilgrim narrative. But the re-valuing of "bad" as "entertaining" or "lovable" has its limitations. The underlying narrative of reform means that at some stage the character eventually has to have progressed far enough not to deserve any further role in the story. Even characters who were once endearingly naughty such as Judy in *Seven Little Australians*, may find themselves raised to hero or saint-like status by dying young, or marginalized into reliable, predictable adults as happens to Jo March in *Little Men* and *Jo's Boys*. Thus there is a certain tension within children's books where the demands of narrative for imperfect

characters and conflict to give structure to the plot distort and delay the changes and personal development required by the underlying religious discourses.

An alternative approach was the Peter Pan method, also part of the backlash against the idealized Victorian good child. This discourse explored the possibilities of perceiving childhood as a separate state of being instead of a stage in a continuum leading inevitably to adulthood. Although J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* is suffused with the awareness that this is an impossibility, the Billabong books counteract this by returning to Rousseau's vision of Nature as the teacher, and a naturally good, potentially strong child whose essentially child-like qualities can remain intact through to adulthood, given the right circumstances and education.

Chapter Three examined how *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* construct Pilgrim and Peter Pan narratives and character types through an investigation of focalization, narrative patterns, evaluation and transitivity. In the examination of focalization what emerges as important is that in *Seven Little Australians* there is an external narrator who is clearly aligned with the author and who controls the narration and particularly the evaluation. In *A Little Bush Maid* although the narrator is occasionally visible in the first chapter, no explicit "I - You" relationship is set up with the reader, and the narrator becomes more invisible as the story proceeds. Several chapters of *A Little Bush Maid* include stories told by the characters, giving them the role of narrator, and in the final chapter the role of evaluator is given to the characters - the Stephensons and Mr Linton in this novel, but more frequently Norah in later Billabong books. Already we see the characters in the Billabong books as appearing to have a greater degree of autonomy than those in

*Seven Little Australians*, who are not only subjected to frequent evaluation by the narrator, but are generally evaluated negatively and condescendingly.

The implications of the amount of shifting found in the focalization of a text have also been discussed. A lack of any obvious shifts naturalizes the narration process, by rendering it invisible. Shifts in narration foreground and problematize narration and confront the reader with difficulties such as being required to identify and empathize with a character and then agree with or participate in the narrator's criticism of that same character. Storylines in *Seven Little Australians* are also chosen so as to highlight these shifts by selecting issues where values are heavily involved - issues of national identity, sexual identity, rebellion and conformity. This foregrounding has the effect of allowing the reader enough awareness to be able to make up his or her own mind. The Billabong books, on the other hand, go to great lengths to conceal how their value systems are constructed. The set of values permeating the world of Billabong and shared by all its characters is rarely overtly examined, but is evident in all their actions and in the way the stories always crown their efforts with success. In contrast to *Seven Little Australians* where the painful process of acquiring virtues such as modesty, courage or honesty forms the central strand of the plot, the plots in the Billabong books revolve around helping people less fortunate than the Lintons themselves, which means their generosity and courage and modesty are usually quite effective at achieving the desired outcome. The other value that operates to conceal itself is the distrust of words. The Billabong folk prefer actions, and regard words very much as Rousseau did: as ways of evading, being artificial, dishonest or corrupt.



The types of disruption and equilibrium that operate in the narrative of *Seven Little Australians* and *A Little Bush Maid* also help establish the Pilgrim and Peter Pan pattern. Both novels share the same episodic pattern with initial episodes being light and humorous, and later episodes being more dramatic and dangerous, but the origin of the conflict creates a clear distinction between the two, with the interpersonal conflict in *Seven Little Australians* creating an internal focus on personalities and power distribution, and the conflict in *A Little Bush Maid* providing a more external focus on the perils of the Australian bush - a place of adventure and excitement. Both of these approaches do imply certain restrictions. The Pilgrim characters need to be concerned primarily with their own individual development and are not allowed to exercise power over their world. The Peter Pan characters are more powerful in their active involvement in the physical world, but this world is not the "real" world, it is a carefully constructed environment which conceals power structures.

At the lexico-grammatical level this difference can be seen in the way the Billabong novels focus on material processes with the child protagonist as Actor, which constructs a picture of the child operating actively in a physical environment, while *Seven Little Australians* uses a greater variety of Actors and a higher proportion of relational and mental processes, giving an impression that the children lack control over their own actions, and need to direct their attention inwards. This is supported by the higher proportion of affective mental processes, which as a catalyst for personal change and development are vital in *Seven Little Australians*, but less important in *A Little Bush Maid*, which has a higher proportion of cognitive mental processes.

*Seven Little Australians* begins as a parody of Pilgrim discourse and ends with its reinstatement. It is mainly the Judy segments of the story that provide the parody, in promising to invert the Pilgrim narrative power structures by drawing on nationalistic discourses of youth rebellion and independence. However, as the story progresses the Pilgrim narrative re-emerges once it becomes apparent there are only two alternatives for Judy and both of them spell death - either physical death or a growing-up which entails the death of the child. The parody is unable to posit an alternative, possibly because, as we see in Chapter Four, sacrificial victim discourses are invoked to allow Judy a victory over her father. In an earlier scene she triumphs over her father with a comical Irish role play. The adherence to the convention of making the story more serious and dramatic as it progresses means Pilgrim narratives have to be invoked and reinstated.

Chapter Four demonstrated how the Pilgrim and Peter Pan models are manifested in family power structures. The family in both *Seven Little Australians* and the *Billabong* books provides the social framework in which the Pilgrim and Peter Pan narratives take place, and the interactions which define the Pilgrim and Peter Pan character roles. The intertextual analysis in Chapter Two predicted that Pilgrim narratives would show the pilgrim characters progressing throughout the novel as they grew closer to the standards demanded by authority figures, which could involve some shifting in roles and relationships as the pilgrims earn the right to help guide others. The Peter Pan narratives on the other hand should be fairly static in terms of family power structures. Peter Pans cannot assume authority roles because the operation of power is never explicit: there is only the illusion of autonomy within a protected environment and this is constructed by an outside force, the invisible narrator.

The operation of power can also be seen in certain narrative conventions that determine who is included and who is excluded from the action of the novel. Both *Seven Little Australians* and its sequels and the Billabong books use conventions that naturalize a perception of childhood as a state of freedom and leisure. Both the Billabong and Misrule households have servants to do the bulk of the domestic work but in terms of the narrative they are almost invisible. Both sets of novels focus on children rather than adults. There is no definite age range, but children must be old enough to act on their own initiative and young enough to sustain narrative interest. Both sets of children are conveniently exempted from any formal education for the duration of the novel, and perhaps most crucially both are motherless. This is where the freedom of childhood is assigned a value. The moral authority of the mother in the Billabong books becomes diffused through all the main characters; none of them are ever morally wrong or deviate from the Billabong value system. However, in *Seven Little Australians* the loss of the mother leaves all the children stranded in a moral wilderness without guidance or protection.

The different ways that the two sets of books use humour is also indicative of the differing power structures in the Pilgrim and Peter Pan models. In *Seven Little Australians*, humour is a tool for criticism and control. Judy is adept at using mockery to make others conform to her standards, and in her absence Aldith and later Alan Courtney also use sarcasm to influence Meg. The character who is ridiculed is made to feel a sense of shame, which is important in the Pilgrim discourse as an awareness of one's faults is the first step towards improvement. Some of Judy's ridicule is directed at her father and step-mother and functions to undermine their authority, but only to a



limited extent, as the light-hearted tone of the earlier chapters makes way for the later melodrama. In the Billabong books, a light-hearted tone is part of the overall flavour, and is generally reinstated in the final chapter, after any dramatic episodes have been resolved. All the characters direct humorous, mocking remarks at each other, but without the denigrating effect found in *Seven Little Australians*. Instead, all the insults are intended to be fictitious, and the humour arises not from an upsetting of the established order, but from a playful reinforcing of Billabong's standards by referring to supposed lapses through such remarks as "You laziness!" Instead of creating power differences, this banter, because of its high degree of reciprocity, creates a closeness and a camaraderie between the characters. Instead of shame, the impression given is that the faults mentioned as insults are totally foreign and alien to the world of Billabong.

The analysis of passages of father/daughter dialogue demonstrated the different ways power differences can be structured. Judy's ultimate challenge to her father's power comes not through light-hearted mischief, intentional disobedience or mockery, but through a subverting of his authority through her assumption of a sacrificial role. Her powerlessness as a child is extended to the point where it becomes a source of power, as her suffering due to illness induces regret and remorse for her father, and this is taken to its logical conclusion when she finally dies in the act of saving her little brother. This clearly frames her as a saviour figure, and her death is redemptive for her other family members as a combination of guilt and gratitude makes them more aware of their own inadequacies.

Norah's relationship with her father demonstrates the ostensibly more democratic Peter Pan approach. Their argument about who should go and get help is decided by the reality of the situation. Norah is right because she has correctly perceived what is needed, and her father was initially wrong because he clung to outdated ideas of feminine weakness. Their interchange of imperatives and endearments indicates closeness and a sharing of authority, but the ultimate authority rests with Nature - in particular the specific environmental circumstances that limit their options to one course of action only.

Both the Pilgrim and the Peter Pan discourses function to restrict the range in which children can operate and the amount of power they can wield. At the same time, each constructs a certain illusion of power that is then limited by the narrative. In other words, both discourses share the tacit assumption that reading novels can provide children with more powerful roles than they are given in the social contexts of their real life, and that experiencing these more powerful, active roles is an important educational strategy. Underlying this is the further assumption that because of their weakness and immaturity, children cannot be allocated positions of power, and so what literature provides is a temporary substitute or placebo.

In both discourses then, the initial position of strength constructed for the child protagonists, and by extension for the child readers, is undercut by other discursive strategies. *Seven Little Australians*, by operating within but initially rejecting some of the values of Pilgrim discourse, positions its children as having the strength associated with youthful rebellion and mischief. *A Little Bush Maid* gives Norah the strength of the wild bush flowers - fresh, young, natural, and practical. As *Seven Little*

*Australians* eventually reinscribes the Pilgrim discourse, the children can then be trapped in several ways: they can be limited to the internal, mental actions concerned with their inner selves, they can be excluded from subject roles in the narrative once they have “grown - up” or developed beyond a certain point, they can be excluded from the narrative more dramatically by being allocated a sacrificial role which demands death, or, again using sacrificial discourses, they can be trapped in a perpetual mother-child or mentor-pupil relationship based on guilt and obligation. Peter Pans are equally trapped by: the separation between Neverland/Billabong and the real world, the invisibility of power structures and value systems that never posit an alternative or allow themselves to be challenged, and the paradox of being pressured to be consciously aware of the need to remain a child when one of the defining characteristics of childhood is its unselfconsciousness. The Peter Pan novels themselves are then subjected to further constraint by the refusal of discourses of literary criticism to admit their narratives as “literature”.

Throughout this thesis I have tried to show how children’s books act as a site for competing discourses about childhood and different possibilities for constructing children’s identities. It can be seen that both *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books act as a site for control through the use of the lure of apparent empowerment, but that the fundamental differences between the Pilgrim and Peter Pan discourses mean that they are unable to value each other - either as perspectives on human nature, or as works of literary value. My analysis of *Seven Little Australians* and the Billabong books illustrates some of the tensions between discourses that emerge as the various discourse elements cross institutional boundaries, colonize



different genres, challenge different values and assumptions, and re-shape the ideologies of childhood.

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## Appendix A: Extracts for Transitivity Analysis

### Extract from *Seven Little Australians* Chapter Twenty-One

A curlew's note broke the silence, wild, mournful, unearthly. Meg shivered, and sat up straight. Judy's brow grew damp, her eyes dilated, her lips trembled.

"Meg," she said, in a whisper that cut the air; "oh, Meg, I'm frightened. Meg, I'm so frightened."

"God!" said Meg's heart.

"Meg, say something. Meg, help me, look at the dark, Meg. Meg, I can't die. Oh, why don't they be quick?"

Nellie flew to the fence again; then to say, "Make her better, God, oh, please, God!"

"Meg, I can't think of anything to say. Can't you say something, Meg, aren't there any prayers about the dying in the Prayer-book - I forget. Say something, Meg."

Meg's lips moved, but her tongue uttered no word.

"Meg, I'm so frightened! I can't think of anything but, "For what we are about to receive," and that's grace, isn't it. And there's nothing in Our Father that would do either. Meg, I wish we'd gone to Sunday-school and learnt things. Look at the dark, Meg, oh Meg, hold my hands."

"Heaven won't - be - dark," Meg's lips said.

Even when speech came, it was only a halting, stereotyped phrase that fell from them.

"If it's all gold and diamonds, I don't want to go." The child was crying now. "Oh, Meg, I want to be alive! How'd you like to die, Meg, when you're only thirteen. Think how lonely I'll be without you all. Oh, Meg, oh Pip, Pip, oh Baby, Nell."

The tears streamed down her cheeks, her chest rose and fell.

"Oh say something Meg - hymns - anything!"

Half the book of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* danced across Meg's brain.

Which one could she think of that would bring quiet into those feverish eyes that were fastened on her face with such a frightened, imploring look?

Then she opened her lips:

"Come unto Me, ye weary,

And I will give you rest.

Oh, bl -"

"I'm not weary, I don't want to rest," Judy said in a fretful tone.

Again Meg tried:

"My God, my Father, while I stray,

Far from my home on life's rough way,

Oh, teach me from my heart to say -

Thy will be done."

"That's for old people," said the little tired voice. "He won't expect me to say it."

Then Meg remembered the most beautiful hymn in the world, and said the first and last verses without a break in her voice:

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,

The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.  
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.  
Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

"Oh, and Judy dear, we are forgetting, there's Mother, Judy, dear, - you won't be lonely. Can't you remember mother's eyes, little Judy?"

Judy grew quiet and still more quiet. She shut her eyes so she could not see the gathering shadows.

Meg's arms were around her, Meg's cheek was on her brow, Nell was holding her hands, Baby her feet, Bunty's lips were on her hair. Like that they went with her right to the Great Valley, where there are no lights, even for stumbling childish feet.

The shadows were cold, and smote upon their hearts; they could feel the wind from the strange waters on their brows; but only she who was about to cross heard the low lapping of the waves.

Just as her feet touched the water there was a figure in the doorway.

"Judy!" said a wild voice; and Pip brushed them aside and fell down beside her.

"Judy, Judy, Judy!"

The light flickered back in her eyes. She kissed him with pale lips once, twice, she gave him both her hands, and her last smile.

Then the wind blew over them all, and with a little shudder, she slipped away.

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Extract from *A Little Bush Maid* Chapter Fifteen

Mile after mile they swung across the grey plain.

Norah did not try to talk. She disdained the idea that she was tired, but a vague feeling told her that she must save all her energies to guide the way back to the camp hidden in the scrub, where the Hermit lay raving, and her father sat beside the lonely bed.

Neither was her companion talkative. He stared ahead, as if trying to pierce with his eyes the line of timber that blurred across the landscape. Norah was glad he did not bother her with questions. She had told him all she knew, and now he was content to wait.

"It must be hard on him, all the same," thought Norah, looking at the set young face, and sparing an instant to approve of the easy seat in the saddle displayed by her new "governess". "To believe that your father was dead all these years, and then suddenly to find him alive, but how far apart in every way! Why you hardly know," mused Norah, "whether you'll like him - whether he'll be glad to see you! Not that any one could fail to like the Hermit - any one with sense, that is!"



Mile after mile, the plain slipped away beneath the even beat of the steadily cantering hoofs. The creek, forded slowly, sank into the distance behind them; before, the line of timber grew darker and more definite. Jim's pony was not far inferior to Bobs in pace and easiness and his swinging canter required no effort to sit, but a great weariness began to steal over his rider. Dick Stephenson, glancing at her frequently, saw the pallor creeping upon the brave little face.

He pulled up.

"We'll go steady for a while," he said. "No good knocking you up altogether."

Norah checked her pony unwillingly.

"Oh, don't you think we ought to hurry?" she said. "Dad's waiting for these medicines we've got, you know."

"Yes, I know. But I don't think we'll gain much by overdoing it."

"If you're thinking about me," Norah said impatiently, "you needn't. I'm as right as rain. You must think I'm pretty soft! Do come on!"

He looked at her steadily. Dark shadows of weariness lay under the brave eyes that met his.

"Why no," he said. "Fact is, I'm a bit of a new chum myself where riding's concerned - you mustn't be too ashamed of me. I think we'd better walk for a while. And you take this."

He poured something from his flask into its little silver cup and handed it to Norah. Their eyes met, and she read his meaning through the kindness of the words that cloaked what he felt. Above her weariness a sense of comfort stole over Norah. She knew in that look that henceforth they were friends.

She gulped down the drink, which was hateful, but presently sent a feeling of renewed strength through her tired limbs. They rode on in silence for some time, the horses brushing through the long soft grass. Dick Stephenson pulled hard at his pipe.

"Did - did my father know you this morning?" he asked suddenly.

Norah shook her head mournfully.

"He didn't know any one," she answered, "only asked for water and said things I couldn't understand. Then when Dad came, he knew him at once, but the Hermit didn't see even to know that Dad was there."

"Did he look very bad?"

"Yes - pretty bad," said Norah, hating to hurt him. "He was terribly flushed, and oh! his poor eyes were awful, so burning and sunken. And - oh! - let's canter, Mr Stephenson, please!"

This time there was no objection. Banker jumped at the quick touch of the spur as Stephenson's heel went home. Side by side they cantered steadily until Norah pulled her pony in at length at the entrance to the timber, where the creek swung into Angler's Bend.

"We're nearly there," she said.

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## Appendix B: Transitivity Analyses

Analysis of extract from *Seven Little Australians* Chapter Twenty-One

(Note: Quotations from hymns have been omitted in this analysis)

A curlew's note	broke	the silence,	wild, mournful, unearthly.
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Attribute

Meg	shivered,
Behaver	Process: behavioural

and	sat	up straight.
	Process: material	Circumstance

Judy's brow	grew	damp,
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

her eyes	dilated,
Actor	Process: material

her lips	trembled.
Actor	Process: material

"Meg,"	she	said,	in a whisper
Verbiage	Sayer	Process: verbal	Circumstance

that	cut	the air;
Actor	Process: material	Goal

"oh Meg,	I	'm	frightened.
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Meg,	I	'm	so frightened."
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

"God!"	said	Meg's heart.
Verbiage	Process: verbal	Sayer

"Meg,	say	something.
	Process: verbal	Verbiage

Meg,	help	me,
	Process: material	Goal

look	at the dark,	Meg.
Process: material	Circumstance	

Meg	I	can't die
	Actor	Process: material

Oh,	why	don't	they	be	quick?"
		Process	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Nellie	flew	to the fence again;
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

then	to say
	Process: verbal

"Make	her	better,	God - oh, please, God!"
Process: attributive	Carrier	Attribute	

"Meg,	I	can't think	of anything	to say
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	Process: verbal

Can't	you	say	something,	Meg?
	Sayer	Process: verbal	Verbiage	

aren't	there	any prayers about the dying	in the Prayer-book
Process: existential		Existent	Circumstance

I	forget.
Senser	Process: mental

Say	something,	Meg."
Process: verbal	Verbiage	

Meg's lips	moved,
Actor	Process: material

but	her tongue	uttered	no word.
	Sayer	Process: verbal	Verbiage

"Meg,	I	'm	so frightened!
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

I	can't think	of anything but "For what we are about to receive,"
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon
		Process: material

and	that	's	grace,	isn't	it.
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute	Process: Attributive	Carrier

And	there	's	nothing	in Our Father
		Process: existential	Existent	Circumstance

that	would do,	either.
	Process: relational	

Meg,	I	wish
	Senser	Process: mental

we	'd gone	to Sunday-school
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

and	learnt	things
	Process: mental	Phenomenon

Look	at the dark,	Meg.
Process: material	Circumstance	

Oh, Meg	hold	my hands."
	Process: material	Goal

"Heaven	won't - be -	dark,"
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Meg's lips	said
Sayer	Process: verbal

Even when	speech	came
	Actor	Process: material

it	was	only a halting, stereotyped phrase
	Process: Attributive	Carrier



that	fell	from them.
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

"If	it	's	all gold and diamonds
	Carrier	Process: Attributive	Attribute

I	don't want	to go."
Senser	Process: mental	Process: material

The child	was crying	now.
Behaver	Process: behavioural	Circumstance

"Oh Meg,	I	want	to be	alive!
	Senser	Process: mental	Process: attributive	Attribute

How	'd	you	like	to die	Meg,
	Process	Senser	Process: mental	Process: behavioural	

when	you	're	only thirteen?
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Think	how lonely	I	'll be	without you all.
Process: mental	Attribute	Carrier	Process: attributive	Circumstance

Oh, Meg, oh Pip, Pip, oh, Baby, Nell."

The tears	streamed	down her cheeks,
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

her chest	rose	and	fell.
Actor	Process: material		Process: material

"Oh,	say	something,	Meg -	hymns - anything!"
	Process: verbal	Verbiage		Verbiage

Half the book of <i>Hymns Ancient and Modern</i>	danced	across Meg's brain.
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance.

Which one	could	she	think of
Phenomenon	Process	Senser	Process: mental

that	would bring	quiet	into those feverish eyes
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

that	were	fastened	on her face with such a frightened, imploring look.
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute	Circumstance

Then	she	opened	her lips:
	Actor	Process: material	Goal

[hymn omitted here]

“I	’m	not weary,
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

“I	don’t want	to rest,”
Senser	Pocesss: mental	Process: material

Judy	said	in a fretful tone.
Sayer	Process: verbal	Circumstance

Again	Meg	tried:
	Sayer	Process: verbal

[hymn omitted here]

“That	’s	for old people,”
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

said	the little tired voice.
Process: verbal	Sayer

“He	won’t expect	me	to say	it.”
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon		
			Process: verbal	Verbiage

Then	Meg	remembered	the most beautiful hymn in the world,
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

and	said	the first and last verses	without a break in her voice:
	Process: verbal	Verbiage	Circumstance

[hymn omitted here]

“Oh, and Judy dear,	we	are forgetting:
	Senser	Process: mental

there	's	Mother,	Judy, dear, -
	Process: existential	Existent	

You	won't be	lonely.
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Can't	you	remember	Mother's eyes,	little Judy?"
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	

Judy	grew	quiet and still more quiet.
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

She	shut	her eyes
Actor	Process: material	Goal

so	she	could not see	the surrounding shadows.
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

Meg's arms	were	around her,
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Meg's cheek	was	on her brow,
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Nell	was holding	her hands
Actor	Process: material	Goal

Baby	her feet,
Actor	Goal

Bunty's lips	were	on her hair.
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Like that	they	went	with her	right to the Great Valley,
	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance	Circumstance

where	there	are	no lights	even for stumbling childish feet.
		Process: existential	Existent	Circumstance

The shadows	were	cold
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

and	smote	upon their hearts;
	Process: material	Circumstance



They	could feel	the wind from the strange waters	on their brows;
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	Circumstance

but only	she
	Senser

heard	the low lapping of the waves.
Process: mental	Phenomenon

who	was about to cross
Actor	Process: material

Just as	her feet	touched	the water
	Actor	Process: material	Goal

there	was	a figure	in the doorway.
	Process: existential	Existent	Circumstance

"Judy!"	said	a wild voice;
Verbiage	Process: verbal	Sayer

and	Pip	brushed	them	aside
	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

and	fell	down beside her
	Process: material	Circumstance

"Judy, Judy, Judy!"

The light	flickered	back in her eyes.
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

She	kissed	him	with pale lips, once, twice,
Behaver	Process: behavioural	Goal	Circumstance

she	gave	him	both her hands, and her last smile.
Actor	Process: material	Beneficiary	Goal

Then	the wind	blew	over them all,
	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

and	with a little shudder	she	slipped	away.
	Circumstance	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

Analysis of Extract from *A Little Bush Maid* Chapter Fifteen

Mile after mile	they	swung	across the grey plain.
Circumstance	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

Norah	did not try to talk.
Sayer	Process: verbal

She	disdained	the idea
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

that	she	was	tired
	Carrier	Process: attributive	attribute

but	a vague feeling	told	her
	Sayer	Process: verbal	Receiver

that	she	must save	all her energies	to guide
	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Process: material

the way back to the camp hidden in the scrub
Goal

where	the Hermit	lay	raving
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

and	her father	sat	beside the lonely bed.
	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

Neither	was	her companion	talkative.
	Process: attributive	Carrier	Attribute

He	stared	ahead,
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

as if	trying to pierce	with his eyes	the line of timber
	Process: material	Circumstance	Goal

that	blurred	across the landscape.
(Actor)	Process: material	Circumstance

Norah	was	glad
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

he	did not bother	her	with questions
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

She	had told	him	all she knew
Sayer	Process: verbal	Receiver	Verbiage
			Phenom    Senser    Process: mental

and	now	he	was	content	to wait
	Circumstance	Carrier	Process:attributive	Attribute	Process: material

“It	must be	hard	on him,	all the same”
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute	Circumstance	

thought	Norah
Process: mental	Senser

looking	at the set young face
Material	Circumstance

and	sparing	an instant
	Process: material	Goal

to approve	of the easy seat in the saddle
Process: mental	Phenomenon

displayed	by her new “governess.”

To believe	that	your father	was	dead	all these years
Process: mental					
		Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute	Circumstance

and then	suddenly	to find	him	alive	but how far apart in every way!
	Circumstance	Process: material	Goal	Attribute	Attribute

Why	you	hardly	know
	Senser	Circumstance	Process: mental

mused	Norah
Process: mental	Senser



whether	you	'll like	him
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

whether	he	'll be	glad
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

to see	you
Process: mental	Phenomenon

Not that	any one	could fail to like	The Hermit,	any one with sense, that is!
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	Senser

Mile after mile	the plain	slipped	away	beneath the even beat of the steadily cantering hoofs.
Circumstance	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance	Circumstance

The creek,	forded	slowly,	sank	into the distance behind them
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance	Process: material	Circumstance

before,	the line of timber	grew	darker and more definite
Circumstance	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Jim's pony	was	not far inferior to Bobs in pace and easiness
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

and	his swinging canter	required	no effort to sit
	Actor	Process: material	Goal

but	a great weariness	began to steal	over his rider
	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

Dick Stephenson	saw	the pallor creeping upon the brave little face
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

glancing	at her	frequently
Process: material	Circumstance	Circumstance

He	pulled up.
Actor	Process: material

We	'll go	steady	for a while
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance	Circumstance

he	said
Sayer	Process: verbal

No good	knocking (up)	you	up	altogether
Attribute	Process: material	Goal		Circumstance

Norah	checked	her pony	unwillingly
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

Oh	don't	you	think
		Senser	Process: mental

we	ought to hurry?
Actor	Process: material

she	said.
Sayer	Process: verbal

Dad's	waiting	for these medicines	you	ve got,
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance		
			Carrier	Process: attributive

you	know.
Senser	Process: mental

Yes,	I	know.
	Senser	Process: mental

But	I	don't think
	Senser	Process: mental

we	'll gain	much	by overdoing it
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance
			Process: material

If	you	're thinking about	me
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

Norah	said	impatiently
Sayer	Process: verbal	Circumstance

you	needn't.
Senser	Process: mental

I	'm	as right as rain.
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

You	must think
Senser	Process: mental

I	'm	pretty soft!
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

Do come on!
Process: material

He	looked	at her steadily
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

Dark shadows of weariness	lay	under	the brave eyes
Attribute	Process: attributive	Circumstance	Carrier

that	met	his.
Actor	Process: material	Goal

"Why no"	he	said.
Verbiage	Sayer	Process: verbal

Fact	is
Identified	Process: identifying

I	'm	a bit of a new chum myself
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

where	riding	's	concerned -
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

You	must not be	too ashamed of me.
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

I	think
Senser	Process: mental

we	'd better walk	for a while.
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance



And	you	take	this.
	Actor	Process: material	Goal

He	poured	something	from his flask into its little silver cup
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

and	handed	it	to Norah.
	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

Their eyes	met
Actor	Process: material

and	she	read	his meaning	through the kindness of the words
	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	Circumstance

that	cloaked
Actor	Process: material

what	he	felt.
Phenomenon	Senser	Process: mental

Above her weariness	a sense of comfort	stole	over Norah.
Circumstance	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

She	knew	in that look
Senser	Process: mental	Circumstance

that	henceforth	they	were	friends.
	Circumstance	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

She	gulped down	the drink
Actor	Process: material	Goal

which	was	hateful
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

but	presently	sent	a feeling of renewed strength	through her tired limbs.
	Circumstance	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

They	rode on	in silence	for some time,
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance	Circumstance

the horses	brushing	through the long soft grass.
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

Dick Stephenson	pulled	hard	at his pipe.
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance	Circumstance

Did - did	my father	know	you	this morning?
Process	Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	Circumstance

he	asked	suddenly.
Sayer	Process: verbal	Circumstance

Norah	shook	her head	mournfully.
Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance

“He	didn’t know	any one”
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon

she	answered,
Sayer	Process: verbal

“only	asked	for water
	Process: verbal	Verbiage

and	said	things
	Process: verbal	Verbiage

I	couldn’t understand.
Senser	Process: mental

Then	when	Dad	came
		Actor	Process: material

he	knew	him	at once,
Senser	Process: mental	Phenomenon	Circumstance

but	the Hermit	didn’t seem even to know
	Senser	Process: mental

that	Dad	was	there.”
		Process: relational	Circumstance

“Did	he	look	very bad?”
Process	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

"Yes - pretty bad,"	said	Norah,
Verbiage	Process: verbal	Sayer

hating	to hurt	him
Process: mental	Process: material	Goal

"He	was	terribly flushed,
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

and oh!	his poor eyes	were	awful,	so burning and sunken.
	Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute	Attribute

And - oh!	let's canter	Mr Stephenson, please!"
	Process: material	

This time	there	was	no objection.
		Process: existential	Existent

Banker	jumped	at the quick touch of the spur
Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

as	Stephenson's heel	went	home.
	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

Side by side	they	cantered	steadily.
Circumstance	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

until	Norah	pulled (in)	her pony	in	at length	at the entrance to the timber,
	Actor	Process: material	Goal		Circumstance	Circumstance

where	the creek	swung	into Angler's Bend.
	Actor	Process: material	Circumstance

"We	're	nearly there,"
Carrier	Process: attributive	Attribute

she	said
Sayer	Process: verbal



**Appendix C: Material and Mental Processes**

**Material Processes and Actors**

Extract from *Seven Little Australians* by Ethel Turner (Chapter Twenty-One)

Actor	Material Process	Actor	Material Process
curlew's note	broke	half the book	danced
Meg	sat up	one (hymn)	bring
(Judy's) eyes	dilated	she (Meg)	opened
(Judy's) lips	trembled	I (Judy)	to rest
a whisper	cut	she (Judy)	shut
(Meg)	help	Nell	was holding
(Meg)	look	Baby	" (ellipsed)
Nellie	flew	they	went
(God)	make	shadows	smote
Meg's lips	moved	she	to cross
-	receive	her feet	touched
we	had gone	Pip	brushed
(Meg)	hold	Pip	fell
speech	came	the light	flickered
phrase	fell	she (Judy)	gave
tears	streamed	the wind	blew
chest	rose	she	slipped away
chest	fell		

**Material Processes and Actors**

Extract from *A Little Bush Maid* by Mary Grant Bruce (Chapter Fifteen)

Actor	Material Process	Actor	Material Process
they	swung	we	will gain
she	must save	(you)	come
(she)	to guide	he (Dick)	looked
father	sat	eyes	met
he (Dick)	stared	we	had better walk
he	trying to pierce	you	take
timber	blurred	he (Dick)	poured
he (Dick)	did not bother	he	handed
he	to wait	their eyes	met

Norah	looking	words	cloaked
(Norah)	sparing	comfort	stole
(you)	to find	she (Norah)	gulped
the plain	slipped	(drink)	sent
(they)	forded	they	rode
creek	sank	horses	brushing
his canter	required	Dick	pulled
weariness	began to steal	Norah	shook
Dick	glancing	(Norah)	to hurt
he (Dick)	pulled up	Dad	came
we	will go	(us)	let's canter
-	knocking	Banker	jumped
Norah	checked	heel	went
we	ought to hurry	Norah	pulled
Dad	is waiting	the creek	swung
you	have got		

### Mental Processes, Sensors and Sub-Types

Extract from *Seven Little Australians* by Ethel Turner (Chapter Twenty-One)

<b>Senser</b>	<b>Mental Process</b>	<b>Sub-Type</b>
I (Judy)	can't think	cognition
I (Judy)	forget	cognition
I (Judy)	can't think	cognition
I (Judy)	wish	affect
we	had learnt	cognition
I (Judy)	don't want	affect
I (Judy)	want	affect
you	like	affect
(Meg)	think	cognition
she (Meg)	think	cognition
I (Judy)	don't want	affect
he (God)	won't expect	cognition
Meg	remembered	cognition
we	are forgetting	cognition
you (Judy)	can't ...remember	cognition
she (Judy)	could not see	perception
they	could feel	perception
she (Judy)	heard	perception

### Mental Processes, Sensors and Sub-Types

Extract from *A Little Bush Maid* by Mary Grant Bruce (Chapter Fifteen)

Senser	Mental Process	Sub-Type
she (Norah)	disdained	cognition
she	knew	cognition
Norah	thought	cognition
(Norah)	to approve	affect
-	to believe	cognition
you	know	cognition
Norah	mused	cognition
you	will like	affect
he	to see	perception
anyone	could fail to like	affect
Dick	saw	perception
you	don't ... think	cognition
you	know	cognition
I (Dick)	know	cognition
I (Dick)	don't think	cognition
you	are thinking	cognition
you	must think	cognition
I (Dick)	think	cognition
she (Norah)	read	cognition
he (Dick)	felt	affect
she (Norah)	knew	cognition
my father	did ... know	cognition
he (Hermit)	didn't know	cognition
I (Norah)	couldn't understand	cognition
he (Dad)	knew	cognition
the Hermit	to know	cognition
Norah	hating	affect



## Appendix D: Extracts for Tenor Analysis

### Extract from *Seven Little Australians* Chapter Thirteen

“Judy,” he said in a loud voice.

The closed eyelids sprang open, the mist of sleep and forgetfulness cleared from the dark eyes, and she sprang up a look of absolute horror on her face.

“What are you doing here, may I ask?” he said, very coldly.

The scarlet colour flooded her cheeks, her very brow, and then dropped down again, leaving her white to the lips, but she made no answer.

“You have run away from school, I suppose,” he continued in the same unemotional voice. “Have you anything to say?”

Judy did not speak or move, she only watched his face with parted lips.

“Have you anything to say for yourself, Helen?” he repeated.

“No, Father,” she said.

Her face had a worn, strained look that might have touched him at another time, but he was too angry to notice.

“No excuse or reason at all?”

“No, Father.”

He moved toward the opening. “A train goes in an hour and a half, you will come straight back with me this moment,” he said, in an even voice. “I shall take precautions to have you watched at school since you cannot be trusted. You will not return home for the Christmas holidays, and probably not for those of the following June.”

It was as bad as a sentence of death. The room swam before the girl’s eyes, there was a singing and rushing in her ears.

“Come at once,” the Captain said. Judy gave a little caught breath; it tickled her throat and she began to cough.

Such terrible coughing, a paroxysm that shook her thin frame and made her gasp for breath. It lasted two or three minutes, though she put her handkerchief to her mouth to try to stop it.

She was very pale when it ceased, and he noticed the hollows in her cheeks for the first time.’

“You had better come to the house first,’ he said less harshly, “and see if Esther has any cough stuff.”

Then in his turn he caught his breath and grew pale under his bronze.

For the handkerchief that the child had taken from her lips had scarlet, horrible spots staining its whiteness.

Extract from *A Little Bush Maid* Chapter Fifteen

When Norah returned, laden with two cans, her father met her with a very grave face.

"That's my girl," he said, taking the water from her. "Norah, I'm afraid he's very ill. It looks uncommonly like typhoid."

"Will he - will he die, Daddy?"

"I can't tell, dear. What's bothering me is how to get help for him. He wants a doctor immediately - wants a dozen things I haven't got here. I wish that blessed black boy hadn't gone! I don't quite know what to do - I can't leave you here while I get help - he's half delirious now."

"You must let me go," said Norah quietly. "I can - easily."

"You!" said her father, looking down at the steady face. "That won't do, dear - not across fifteen miles of lonely country. I - " The Hermit cried out suddenly, and tried to rise, and Me Linton had to hold him down gently, but the struggle was a painful one, and when it was over the strong man's brow was wet. "Poor old chap!" he muttered brokenly.

Norah caught his arm.

"You see, I must go, Daddy," she said. "There's no one else - and he'll die! Truly I can, Daddy - quite well. Bobs'll look after me."

"Can you?" he said, looking down at her. "You're sure you know the track?"

"Course I can," said his daughter scornfully.

"I don't see anything for it," Mr Linton said, an anxious frown knitting his brow. "His life hangs on getting help, and there's no other way. I'll have to risk you, my little girl."

"There's no risk," said Norah. "Don't you worry, Daddy, dear. Just tell me what you want."

Mr Linton was writing hurriedly in his pocket book.

"Send into Cunjee for Dr Anderson as hard as a man can travel," he said shortly. "Don't wait for him, however; get Mrs Brown to pack these things from my medicine-chest, and let Billy get a fresh horse and bring them back to me, and he needn't be afraid of knocking his horse up. I'm afraid we're too late as it is. Can he find his way here?"

"He's been here."

"That's all right, then. Tell Anderson I think it's typhoid, and if he thinks we can move him, let Wright follow the doctor out with the express-wagon - Mrs Brown will know what to send to make it comfortable. Can you manage Bobs?"

"Yes - of course."

Mr Linton put his hand on her shoulder.

"I've got to let you go," he said. "It's the only way. Remember, I won't have a minute's peace until I know you've got safely home."

"I'll be all right. Daddy - true. And I'll hurry. Don't bother about me."

"Bother!" he said. "My little wee mate." He kissed her twice. "Now - hurry!"

## Appendix E: Speech Functions

### Speech Functions in Extract from *Seven Little Australians*

Verbiage	Speaker	Function
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Judy	Father	(non-finite)
What are you doing here, may I ask?	Father	question
You have run away from school, I suppose.	Father	statement
Have you anything to say?	Father	question
Have you anything to say for yourself, Helen?	Father	question

No, Father	Judy	(non-finite)
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No excuse or reason at all?	Father	question (non-finite)
-----------------------------	--------	--------------------------

No, Father	Judy	(non-finite)
------------	------	--------------

A train goes in an hour and a half,	Father	statement
you will come straight back with me this moment.	Father	command
I shall take precautions to have you watched at school since you cannot be trusted.	Father	offer

You will not return home for the Christmas holidays, and probably not for those of the following June.	Father	statement
Come at once.	Father	command
You had better come to the house first, and see if Esther has any cough stuff.	Father	command

### Speech Functions in Extract from *A Little Bush Maid*

That's my girl.	Father	statement
Norah, I'm afraid he's very ill.	Father	statement
It looks uncommonly like typhoid.	Father	statement

Will he - will he die, Daddy?	Norah	question
-------------------------------	-------	----------



I can't tell, dear.	Father	statement
What's bothering me is how to get help for him.	Father	statement
He wants a doctor immediately - wants a dozen things I haven't got here.	Father	statement
I wish that blessed black boy hadn't gone!	Father	statement
I don't quite know what to do.	Father	statement
I can't leave you here while I get help.	Father	statement
He's half delirious now.	Father	statement

You must let me go.	Norah	command
I can - easily.	Norah	statement

You!	Father	(non-finite)
That won't do dear, not across fifteen miles of lonely country.	Father	command - rejection
Poor old chap.	Father	(non-finite)

You see, I must go, Daddy.	Norah	offer
There's no one else	Norah	statement
and he'll die.	Norah	statement
Truly I can Daddy, quite well.	Norah	offer
Bobs'll look after me.	Norah	statement

Can you?	Father	question
You're sure you know the track?	Father	question

'Course I can.	Norah	statement
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I don't see anything for it.	Father	statement
His life hangs on getting help	Father	statement
and there's no other way.	Father	statement
I'll have to risk you, my little girl.	Father	offer

There's no risk.	Norah	statement
Don't you worry, Daddy, dear.	Norah	command
Just tell me what you want.	Norah	command

Send into Cunjee for Dr Anderson as fast as a man can travel.	Father	command
Don't wait for him, however.	Father	command
get Mrs Brown to pack these things from my medicine chest	Father	command
and let Billy get a fresh horse and bring them back to me,	Father	command
and he needn't be afraid of knocking his horse up.	Father	command
I'm afraid we're too late as it is.	Father	statement

Can he find his way here?	Father	question
---------------------------	--------	----------

He's been here.	Norah	statement
-----------------	-------	-----------

That's all right then.	Father	statement
Tell Anderson I think it's typhoid,	Father	command
and if he thinks we can move him let Wright follow the doctor out with the express wagon -	Father	command

Mrs Brown will know what to send to make it comfortable	Father	statement
Can you manage Bobs?	Father	question

Yes - of course.	Norah	(non-finite)
------------------	-------	--------------

I've got to let you go.	Father	offer
It's the only way.	Father	statement
Remember, I won't have minute's peace until I know you've got safely home.	Father	command

I'll be all right, Daddy - true.	Norah	statement
And I'll hurry.	Norah	offer
Don't bother about me.	Norah	command

Bother!	Father	(non-finite)
My little wee mate.	Father	(non-finite)
Now - hurry!	Father	command



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