

Rethinking Disability and Care in the Works of Dinah Mulock Craik (1826-1887)

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Thesis Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the representation of disability, and the 'caring relationships' which surround disabled characters, in the novels of the popular nineteenth-century author Dinah Mulock Craik (1826-1887). I suggest that the examination of care in fictional narratives has been overly influenced by neoliberal ideologies which focus on the individual and self-determination. In my readings of Craik's life and writing I integrate contemporary ethics of care into an historicist examination of Craik's representations of disability in order to destabilise this ideology. By employing an ethic of care which focuses on relationality, whilst remaining alert to individual human rights, this thesis focuses on the relationships of care and the interdependency of disabled living within which Craik positions her disabled characters.

Care and caring relationships are often viewed as problematic due to the heavy burden of responsibility placed on women and the negative connotations associated with so called 'Institutions of Care' into which disabled people have been placed. These attitudes have subsequently influenced both feminist and literary disability scholars, as they seek to rediscover and reassess narratives by, and about, people with disabilities which destabilise dominant ideas about dependence and vulnerability. However, in doing so a fiction of independence has been created which not only negates the vulnerability of the human condition but also denies the complexity and validity of caring relationships. In this thesis I critique this focus on independence by employing an ethic of care to navigate Craik's representations of disability and interdependency.

Scholarship, to date, on Craik has largely followed the path of feminist literary criticism and critical disability studies. Chapter One plots this trajectory in order to highlight the gaps this thesis seeks to address. Craik's engagement with care and disability was influenced by her lived experience of caring for family members and her support of various charities. As such her life provides the opportunity to examine the complex figuration of care in daily experience. In Chapter Two I analyse Craik's diaries and letters, through the lens of care ethics, thereby providing a platform from which I embark on a critical analysis of a number

of her novels. My analysis of her novel *Olive* (1850) in Chapter Three, explores Craik's engagement with maternal care through the role of the nonbiological 'allomother'. In doing so I argue Craik exposes the pressures placed on women, as a result of the Victorian construction of the ideal mother figure, and allows her disabled protagonist access to a maternal role. Chapter Four examines the way in which an ethic of care, when combined with an ethic of justice, allows the disabled male protagonist in *A Noble Life* (1866) to act as an increasingly autonomous individual living within a network of care, a representation that highlights the interdependency of disabled living. Finally, in Chapter Five, I analyse Craik's children's stories, and discuss how Craik moves a consideration of care from the private sphere of the home into the public sphere, arguing that Craik promotes a vision of a society that is built on care, and which anticipates many of the concerns held by twentieth-century care theorists.

Ultimately, I argue that Craik's novels provide an insight not only into nineteenth-century debates on care but also into the often contentious debates surrounding disability and care that occur today. In this thesis my examination of Craik operates as a kind of historiographical case study tracking the evolution of how care has been understood and valued over time, through an examination of both Craik's work and critical receptions of it. Approaching these texts through the lens of critical disability studies and an ethic of care produces a productive reading strategy that opens up important discussions on disability and ethical caring, as well as re-evaluating the contribution of a writer often dismissed as merely 'sentimental'.

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Cover Image: *Dinah Maria Craik (née Mulock)*, by Sir Hubert von Herkomer, Oil on Canvas, 1887, © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Acknowledgments

Writing a PhD thesis, especially in the humanities, is often considered to be a solitary activity where students work in isolation in libraries, in offices, and at home, to turn their vast amount of research and reading into a coherent argument. This could not be farther from the truth. These acknowledgments reflect the interdependency of life as a PhD candidate and give me the opportunity to thank those without whom this thesis could not have been completed.

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My parents, Celia and Eric Miller, get a special mention in the preface to this thesis but they also deserve mentioning here for I am indebted to them for instilling in me their love of books and their social conscience.

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Authorship Declaration: Sole Author Publications

This thesis contains the following sole-authored work that has been published or which is under consideration for publication.

Published

Theresa Miller, "Rethinking Care: Disability and Care in Dinah Mulock Craik's *The Little Lame Prince and his Travelling Cloak*," *Limina*, 21.1 (2015), available at <http://www.limina.arts.uwa.edu.au/volumes/21.1/miller>

The published work forms a part of chapter three.

Under Consideration

Theresa Miller, "Rethinking Disability and Narratives of Care in Dinah Mulock Craik's *A Noble Life*," in *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Disability: Looking Towards the Future*, eds. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Katie Ellis, Mike Kent, and Rachel Robertson. Routledge, anticipated publication date 2018.

This work arises from chapter four.

Preface

This thesis has its genesis back in 2012, the year of the London Olympics and Paralympics. Whilst visiting my parents in England that year I became aware of a number of competing discourses surrounding disability taking place in the public sphere. On the one side there were numerous positive discussions including, for example, the Olympic committee's efforts to increase accessibility for disabled people to public transport and venues; the increased presence of disability on television screens as the official broadcaster for the Paralympics recruited and trained sports commentators with disabilities; and the growing popularity of shows such as *The Last Leg*. On the other side however, were the numerous pejorative comments describing the disabled as deserving and undeserving which appeared, in part, to stem from the government's attempts to balance the finances as it clawed its way out of recession. These comments would be familiar to anyone conversant, or indeed merely interested, in nineteenth-century culture and history as they echo the phrase 'the deserving and undeserving poor'.

Historically, the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act created a new system of welfare designed to replace home relief with the workhouse. This new system was not designed to be easy but rather to act as a deterrent to those whom the Reverend J.T. Belcher described as 'the idle and profligate'.¹ The buildings were designed like prisons, families were split up with men, women, and children being segregated. This segregation also extended to the categories of the deserving and undeserving poor whereby those who were poor, through no fault of their own, such as illness,

¹ Jeremy Black and Donald M. Macralid, *Nineteenth-century Britain* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 138.

accident or age, or because there was no work available for them were considered deserving whilst vagrants and drunks were deemed to be undeserving. Unmarried mothers also fell into this latter category. Imagine then my surprise and horror to hear this language being used to describe disabled people in the UK in 2012, nor was I alone in having noted this stigmatising use of language.

Kayleigh Garthwaite notes, in 2011, the language used by the then minister for employment, Chris Grayling, in relation to people who claim incapacity and sickness benefits stating that ‘terms such as ‘culture of worklessness’, ‘dependency’, ‘workshy’, and ‘unwilling’ are often used without question when talking about those who receive these benefits.² Garthwaite goes on to highlight newspaper headlines that draw reader’s attention to ‘State-funded idleness’ or how benefits are to be cut in a ‘crackdown against workshy’.³ Similarly, Emma Briant, Nick Watson, and Gregory Philo note a change in the language used to describe disability and disabled people arguing that whilst sympathetic and ‘triumph over adversity’ language had dropped between 2004 and 2010 there was a distinct increase in pejorative language that described disabled people as undeserving shirkers, with one newspaper article from 2010 going as far as to suggest that those claiming incapacity benefits were responsible for Britain’s deficit crisis.⁴ Briant et al do note that there was a tendency for newspapers to make some concessions for those they saw as ‘deserving’ claimants but this language only reinforces the narrative of the deserving and undeserving disabled.

² Kayleigh Garthwaite, “‘The Language of Shirkers and Scroungers?’ Talking about Illness, Disability and Coalition Welfare Reform,” *Disability & Society* 26, no. 3 (2011): 370.

³ Garthwaite, 371. Both these headlines are from *The Daily Mail* but other newspapers cited by Garthwaite include *The Sun* and the *Daily Express*.

⁴ Emma Briant, Nick Watson, and Gregory Philo, “Reporting Disability in the Age of Austerity: The Changing Face of Media Representation of Disability and Disabled People in the United Kingdom and the Creation of New ‘folk Devils,’” *Disability & Society* 28, no. 6 (2013): 779-880.

I present this information here, not only so that I may explain how this thesis came into being, but also to highlight the social value and importance of this work. Prior to this visit to the UK I had not considered examining disability in literature nor had I been particularly alert to the language used in discussing disability, despite having been a nurse and both my parents having a disability. But arriving in the UK in 2012 I found myself overwhelmed by the media's engagement with representations of disability. Yet whilst the tabloid newspapers were offering descriptions of benefit fraud and underserving claimants, Britain's 'superhumans' – Team GB's Paralympic athletes — were making their mark on television screens across the country. This narrative of the deserving and undeserving led me back to the nineteenth-century and, in particular, to the author Dinah Mulock Craik. I knew Craik had written one novel featuring a disabled character but could there be others. To my astonishment there were several. In addition to this there was an entire branch of scholarship I was unaware of dedicated to examining literary and cultural representations of disability. In relation to nineteenth-century literature I also discovered, what Julia Miele Rodas has described as, a 'powerful, almost ubiquitous presence of disability'.⁵ In this thesis I hope to add to, and build upon, the growing body of work within the humanities which answers Rodas's call to seek out and interrogate the numerous representations of the disabled body that are to be found in literature.

As Rosemarie Garland-Thomson states, disability is as much a part of our society as gender, race and class being 'the most human of experiences, touching

⁵ Julia Miele Rodas, "Mainstreaming Disability Studies," *Victoria Literature and Culture*, 34, no. 1 (2006), 373.

every family – and if we live long enough- touching all of us.’⁶ This project has always sought to examine the way in which the disabled body is represented in literature. Initially I aimed to discover the autonomous disabled person in Craik’s writing. If the disabled are constructed as undeserving and dependent I wanted to show an alternative image which reflected their worth, their independence, and their autonomy. The initial title, ‘Gaining the World’s Acceptance: Self-Determination and Disability in the Work of Dinah Mulock Craik (1826-1887)’, was inspired by Deborah Kent’s essay ‘In Search of a Heroine’.⁷ Here Kent discusses how, as a child with a visual impairment, she sought out heroines in literature whom she could relate to, heroines who created ‘independent lives enriched by deeply rewarding work and friendship [and who] without resentment, ... live[d] beyond the confines of convention, and gain[ed] the worlds acceptance and respect.’⁸ Kent may have struggled to find these heroes but Craik, although not always successful, was certainly attempting to create characters who reflected the lived experience of human bodily variation, who, whilst living with a disability, were able to actively engage in the world around them and lead independent and rewarding lives.

However, as the project progressed I began to realise that our constant focus, in the west, on the independent individual was obscuring the reality of the human experience. Autonomy is a myth.⁹ We are all interdependent, we are relational beings, and disability can affect us at any stage of our lives. As a consequence the focus of the thesis shifted onto the care of those living with a disability. The

⁶ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory,” *NWSA Journal*, 14, no. 3, (2002), 5

⁷ Deborah Kent, “In Search of a Heroine: Images of Women with Disabilities in Fiction and Drama,” in *Women with Disabilities: Essays in Psychology, Culture and Politics*, eds. Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 90-110.

⁸ Kent, 109.

⁹ Martha Albertson Fineman, *The Autonomy Myth* (New York and London: The New Press, 2004).

realisation that I had come full circle from my initial training as a nurse to now discussing theories of care in this thesis led to a period of intense reflection. As I contemplated what I had been taught under the philosophies of a nursing care, as opposed to the medical and social model of disability I was now investigating, I began to realise how similar nursing and medical models of care were despite many lectures on nursing theory that suggested otherwise. The patient-centred approach to nursing I had been taught in the late 1980s still sought to normalise the disabled body wherever possible, and whilst we paid lip service to the idea of caring for the whole patient, as opposed to the 'appendectomy in bed three', I was nevertheless part of a system that saw its purpose as being to correct and minimise bodily variation. Later, in 2015, discussions surrounding society's responsibility to care for those with a disability took place in the lead-up to Britain's first solely conservative budget in eighteen years. Alongside these discussions were the reports into neglect at Mid-Staffordshire Hospital and Winterbourne View. The two events not only signal the importance of my work examining representations of care, but also highlighted the way in which we often position ourselves as having progressed in relation to care and the treatment of those with physical, sensory, and mental impairments compared to our near relations, the Victorians.

I have much to thank my parents for, but in relation to this project I have the evidence of their lived experience of disability, interdependency, reciprocity, and care which has served as a constant reminder to me of the relational nature of our human existence. Growing up Mum suffered debilitating migraines that would see her in bed for days. On these occasions Dad looked after Mum, cleaning her vomit bowl, getting her medications, and making sure my sister and I were fed and ready for school. When I was about five Mum contracted an unknown virus that left her

temporarily unable to walk and requiring hospitalisation for a few weeks. My sister and I were shipped off to relatives, my sister to our Aunt and I to my Nan. These women cared for my sister and me whilst Mum couldn't, attending to our physical and emotional needs at this time. As a young teenager, my Dad was forced to retire early due to ill health. By my late teens he required a wheelchair for mobility over distance. Dad could still drive but Mum would push him in his wheelchair when it was needed. In my early twenties Mum had a stroke leaving her with a right sided hemiplegia. The role of carer and cared for now changed. Mum required the wheelchair and Dad needed to push. Ironically the change in Mum's health improved Dad's mobility – the arthritis that had previously prevented him from walking any distance was now improving as he became more mobile in order to care for Mum. And now, as I write this thesis, the roles are reversing again, as Dad's vision, which has been poor for many years, has deteriorated to the point that he is now registered blind. The constant shifting of these roles for Mum and Dad seems quite normal. They do what must be done. Now as they get older they need the support of other services outside the home, cleaners, gardeners, and taxi drivers for example who all work with them to maintain their self-sufficiency. What is clear though, is that they cannot achieve this on their own, they require a network of care to support them. What is important is that they direct and determine what care they receive.

As I moved my focus from the individual to the networks of care within which disabled people live and which, when working well, function to bolster self-determination and autonomy I became aware of how controversial the topic of care can be for disability scholars. Furthermore, I came to understand that even within the field of care ethics there are multiple ways in which care is conceived. It is my hope that in this thesis I will be able to do justice to the different strands of inquiry I

use and pull them together into a coherent examination of care as I grapple with the concept, as it was represented by one nineteenth-century author, Dinah Maria Mulock Craik.

Introduction

Any real society is a caregiving and care receiving society and must therefore discover ways of coping with ... facts of human neediness and dependency that are compatible with the self-respect of the recipients and do not exploit the caregivers.

Martha Nussbaum¹

One cannot ... have care *and* empowerment, for it is the ideology and the practice of caring which has led to the perception of disabled people as powerless.

Jenny Morris²

In 1866 the author Henry James published a review of Dinah Mulock Craik's³ novel *A Noble Life* in which he noted her interest in the disabled character, commenting on her 'lively predilection for cripples and invalids by which she has always been distinguished', and adding that 'it is no more than right that the sickly half of humanity should have its chronicler'.⁴ There is, in James's comments, more than a hint of irony in his observation of the frequency with which Craik portrays characters with physical impairments, yet this aspect of Craik's writing brings to life the 'care giving and care receiving society' that Martha Nussbaum envisages.⁵ In her

¹ Martha Nussbaum, "The Future of Feminist Liberalism," in *The Subject of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Dependency*, eds. Eva Feder Kittay and Ellen K. Feder (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 188.

² Jenny Morris, "Care or Empowerment? A Disability Rights Perspective," *Social Policy & Administration*, 31, no. 1 (1997), 54.

³ Many of Craik's novels were published before she married whilst she was Dinah Maria Mulock and were either titled as such, by her initials D.M.M, or, more commonly, were published as being written 'by the author of *John Halifax*'. When these books were reprinted after her marriage the publishers used her married name. Throughout this thesis I will refer to the author Dinah Maria Mulock Craik as Craik, thereby following the convention of current scholars such as Martha Stoddard Holmes and Karen Bourrier.

⁴ Henry James, "A Noble Life," *Notes and Reviews* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1968), 67-172.

⁵ However, given Talia Schaffer's recent work on Henry James in which she notes that, having grown up in a family in which caregiving was a regular part of life James was well versed in illness and caring, perhaps this

forty-six year career as a writer Craik wrote numerous novels, children's stories, essays, travel books, and poems. Whilst today Craik remains largely unread, beyond academic circles, her popularity in the mid-nineteenth century was such that she was able to build her house, The Corner House, at Shortlands, Kent, with the proceeds of her writing.⁶ Her novel *A Life for a Life* (1859), whilst not as well received as some of her other works by the literary critics of her day, was one of two books most in demand from public libraries in England; the other was George Eliot's *Adam Bede*.⁷ Likewise, in 1863, her novel *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856) outsold all but Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁸

Despite the fact that, like many nineteenth-century women writers, Craik's work has been overlooked, she is currently enjoying a renaissance within academic literary circles. This rediscovery of Craik is in part a result of the burgeoning field of literary and cultural disability studies. Scholars such as Martha Stoddard Holmes, Karen Bourrier, and Tabitha Sparks each engage with disability as it is represented in Craik's novels *Olive* (1850), and *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856).⁹ A special issue of *Women's Writing* (2013), devoted to Craik, also demonstrates the value of her work across a number of areas including disability studies, feminist literary studies, post-colonial studies, and children's literature. Yet despite this rediscovery of Craik little

statement should be re-evaluated and read with less irony. Could it be that James is simply acknowledging the fact that it is only appropriate that those who are sick or disabled have their stories told? For further information see, Talia Schaffer, "The Silent Treatment of The Wings of the Dove: Ethics of Care and Late-James Style," *The Henry James Review* 37, no. 3 (2016): 234.

⁶ Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik* (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1983), 16.

⁷ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 105.

⁸ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 50.

⁹ See for example, Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Tabitha Sparks, "Dinah Mulock Craik's *Olive*: Deformity, Gender and Female Destiny," *Women's Writing*, 20, no. 3 (2013): 358-369, doi: 10.1080/09699082.2013.801124; Karen Bourrier, "The Spirit of a Man and the Limbs of a Cripple': Sentimentality, Disability, and Masculinity in Charlotte Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe*," *Victorian Review* 35, no. 2 (2009): 117-31, doi:10.1353/vcr.2009.0019; Karen Bourrier, *The Measure of Manliness: Disability and Masculinity in the Mid-Victorian Novel*, (University of Michigan, 2015).

attention has been given to the way her work engages with the topic of care, despite representations of care and caring relationships appearing repeatedly throughout her work. In this thesis I use the phrase ‘narratives of care’ to describe any representation of care, and the respective networks and relationships that go along with the act of caring, as it appears in literary texts, be they novels, essays, letters, or diaries. In this respect my work is positioned within a literary and cultural framework which recognises the way in which literary works function alongside other kinds of ideas, attitudes, and ideologies to organise and document human relations. I am aware that within the medical and health sciences the term, ‘narratives of care’, is more broadly used, as Rita Charon discusses in her book *Narrative Medicine* (2006), to describe those narratives that derive from the stories of patients, practitioners, and carers, and which recount their experience of illness and disability.¹⁰ However, I would argue that the phrase, as an umbrella term, is large enough to accommodate both modalities and in this thesis my focus is on the literary representation of care.

Craik is, by no means, the only nineteenth-century author to have engaged with care and relationality, indeed it has been successfully argued that the nineteenth-century novel is ‘the medium par excellence for an exposition of a sympathetic politics of care’.¹¹ However, Craik’s persistent interest in disability and care throughout her life makes her, and her work, a significant subject for a sustained examination of how the two intersect. In both Craik’s fictional work and her essays we see a diverse range of caring relationships portrayed, including

¹⁰ Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2006), 3-4.

¹¹ Talia Schaffer, *Romance’s Rivals: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 169.

daughters caring for mothers, siblings caring for each other, servants caring for masters, and rulers caring for their people. We see care performed throughout the lifespan, illustrating both the ongoing vulnerability of the human body and the real potential for disability and illness to affect us all at some stage in our lives. We see interdependency and nested relationships of care portrayed on the page, and we see Craik challenge gendered perceptions of care by representing men who perform caring acts and women who are incapable of caring. In this thesis I therefore argue that it is possible to read, in the works of Craik, an attention to care that reflects nineteenth-century concerns about the individual's responsibility to care for their fellow man (and woman). By reading these texts through the lens of an ethic of care I analyse Craik's representations of the inequality of power in relationships of care as well as the reciprocity seen between the cared-for and the care-giver; and I explore the way in which Craik portrays care as women's work whilst simultaneously engaging with the capacity of men to provide care. Further, I discuss the way in which Craik saw an ethic of care as being as vital as an ethic of justice in both public and private life;¹² and I examine Craik's representation of the life-long nature of disability, illness and vulnerability in order to demonstrate the ongoing need for care in society. By weaving together the threads of critical disability studies and feminist care ethics with a literary analysis of Craik's fictional and non-fictional writing, I thus examine care, and the many and varied relationships of care, found in

¹² It is my intention to discuss an ethic of justice and an ethic of care in more detail in chapter 1. However, in brief, I take my definition of these terms from Carol Gilligan who, in her work *A Different Voice* (1982), defines an ethic of justice as one which valorises the rational individual, the separate self, and the autonomous agent as opposed to an ethic of care which emphasises connection and the web of relationships within which society functions. Whilst I believe these ethics should function together within society they have been separated out and positioned in binary opposition to each other, resulting in the rational and individualistic ethic of justice becoming the hegemonic discourse in society and the relational ethic of care being devalued and associated with women. Any framework that continues to separate these two ethics perpetuates the patriarchal voice and refuses to see the benefit to society that can be achieved through the combination of the two. Throughout this thesis I will provide examples, from Craik's work, of how these ethical positions can function together for the benefit of individuals and groups.

Craik's depictions of disabled, invalid, and vulnerable characters. In doing so I reveal the historical roots of contemporary thinking about care.

Dinah Mulock Craik: A Brief Biography

Born on the 20th April 1826 to Thomas Mulock and his wife Dinah Mellard Mulock, Craik was the eldest of three children, her brothers Tom and Ben being born in 1827 and 1829 respectively. For a while, Craik's father worked as a non-conformist preacher, however his volatile and charismatic preaching style frequently led to periods of financial and emotional instability for the family, as he regularly upset the very congregation on whose goodwill he depended for his income.¹³ Recent scholarship on the Mulock Family Papers by Karen Bourrier reveals how Craik's childhood was frequently overshadowed by the increasingly volatile and violent behaviour of her father, who was committed, as a pauper lunatic,¹⁴ to the Staffordshire County Lunatic Asylum between 1832 and 1840, as well as for several other shorter periods later in Craik's life.¹⁵ For a brief period, Craik's mother augmented the family's income by keeping a small school at which Craik taught. It was during this period that Craik began to write, although at this stage not professionally. In 1839 Craik's maternal grandmother died and, shortly after, with the inheritance his wife gained, Thomas moved the family to London. Once in London, the boys were sent to school and Craik studied languages with them. In 1843 she also attended the school of design at Somerset House to study

¹³ Karen Bourrier, "Narrating Insanity in the Letters of Thomas Mulock and Dinah Mulock Craik," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39 (2011): 205.

¹⁴ A pauper lunatic was defined as someone who was both mentally unstable and unable to subsidise their own care. The law distinguished between those who were maintained in the asylum by the parish and poor rates (pauper lunatics) and those whose families were able to pay for themselves. That Craik's father was committed as a pauper lunatic shows the extent to which the family struggled financially during this time.

¹⁵ Karen Bourrier, "Narrating Insanity in the Letters of Thomas Mulock and Dinah Mulock Craik," *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 39 (2011): 203-22.

drawing.¹⁶ More importantly, it was during this period that, through her father's acquaintances, Craik met a number of men and women who worked professionally as writers. One of the most significant in the development of Craik's literary career was Mrs Samuel Carter Hall who, with her husband, had published over five hundred novels, children's stories and anthologies of poetry.¹⁷ At the weekly parties the Carter Halls held, Craik met both artists and authors and was exposed to the wider world of London literary culture.

Before long, with the help of her new friends, Craik was publishing poetry and children's stories, the earliest of which was published in *The Staffordshire Advertiser*, signed D.M.M.¹⁸ Her literary career had begun. From 1841, the young Craik published her work through a variety of periodicals including *Chambers*, *Lady Blessington's Annuals*, and the publications of *The Religious Tract Society*, much of which was aimed at young readers. The publication of *The Ogilvies* in 1849 not only helped to establish Craik's reputation as a professional novelist who wrote for an adult readership, but also put her on the path to a financially successful literary career. Her letters show her to have been an astute business woman who personally engaged with publishers in negotiations about copyright, finances, and contracts, and whilst this could be seen to contravene Victorian ideologies of the separation of the spheres, Craik was nothing if not careful to craft her public identity so that it conformed to the nineteenth-century ideal of woman. Throughout her life Craik was held in high regard by many of the leading figures of the literary and artistic worlds

¹⁶ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 5.

¹⁷ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 4.

¹⁸ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 8.

and nowhere was this more clearly witnessed than in the days following her death in 1887.

When Craik died suddenly on the 12th October 1887, she left behind not only her husband George Lillie Craik and their adopted daughter Dorothy, but also a myriad friends, colleagues, and fans around the world, who mourned the loss of ‘one of the most popular and best loved of modern novelists’.¹⁹ Her funeral was attended by many prominent members of the worlds of art, literature and music, thus reflecting the multiplicity of her interests, along with a large number of the regular communicants of the Church with whom Craik regularly worshipped. The pre-Raphaelite artist Holman Hunt and his wife Edith were present, along with the publisher George Macmillan and his family; Sir G. Grove, the original director of the Royal Academy of Music; and the Blacketts, the original publishers of her novel *John Halifax, Gentleman*.²⁰ Floral tributes were sent by Lord Tennyson, Mrs Oliphant, long-time friend Sir Noel Paton and the artist Hubert von Herkomer, who had only recently completed her portrait.²¹ The regard afforded to Craik at her funeral was also reflected in the formation of a committee dedicated to commissioning a memorial to her and her life’s work and which stands, to this day, within Tewksbury Abbey.²²

Yet despite the obvious respect Craik garnered from high profile members of the world of art and literature, the tide was already changing against Craik’s work, as readers turned from novels of sentiment to novels of

¹⁹ “A Gifted Novelist,” *The Echo*, Friday October 14, 1887, [no page number].

²⁰ “The Funeral of Mrs Craik,” *Daily News*, October 17, 1887, [no page number].

²¹ Frances Martin, “Mrs Craik,” *The Athenaeum*, October 22, 1887, 539. The portrait in question can be seen on the cover of this thesis.

²² “Proposal for Memorial for Mrs G. L. Craik”, *Supplementary MacMillan Papers: Vol III*, British Library, London.

sensation. As one obituary in the *Echo* states, 'the tide of fashion in regard to works of fiction has somewhat changed in late years, and there is a decided reaction from the school of homely domestic life, but we venture to affirm that 'John Halifax' at least, is one of those works which the world will not let die'.²³ And certainly, of Craik's many novels, it is *John Halifax, Gentleman* that has endured more than most.

John Halifax, the Independent Ideal

One hundred years after Craik's birth, at twelve noon on the 20th April 1926, the nave of Tewkesbury Abbey was filled with people gathered to pay their respects to the author. The 'Craik Centenary', as it was billed, marked the 100th anniversary of Craik's birth and consisted of Holy Communion in the Abbey at noon followed by a public luncheon in the Town Hall and an evening lecture with readings from one of her novels.²⁴ In his speech at the luncheon, presided over by the Mayor of Tewkesbury, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Professor of English Literature at Cambridge, described how as a young man he had gone on a pilgrimage to Tewkesbury in 'boyish devotion to a book – to that Victorian classic' which he was certain everyone in the room had in mind.²⁵ The book to which he referred, and which Tewkesbury had taken to its heart due to the many scenes in the book that were based on locations in the town and surrounding area, was *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856), Craik's most enduring novel. Even today, in the small Gloucestershire town of Tewkesbury, The Bell Inn lays claim to not only featuring in *John Halifax, Gentleman*, but also to being the place where Craik stayed whilst she wrote the novel. Being

²³ "A Gifted Novelist", 1887.

²⁴ The event was reported in *The Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* in May 1926 but was mistakenly reported as the century of Craik's death.

²⁵ "The Craik Centenary," *The Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine*, May 1926, 70.

situated across the road from Tewkesbury Abbey this claim, despite no evidence being found to support it, nicely links the pub to the author and ensures the legacy of Craik endures to this day as fans of the book pilgrimage to Tewkesbury to pay homage to *John Halifax*.²⁶

In essence *John Halifax, Gentleman* tells the rags to riches story of a young man as he progresses from street urchin to prosperous mill owner. Mark Spilka notes the way in which Craik's ideal businessman, who was both a gentleman and a Christian, endured as late as 1964, when *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* was still listing *John Halifax, Gentleman* as a 'Victorian best seller ... still read for its vivid picture of a life regulated by ... hard work and self-discipline'.²⁷ Whilst *John Halifax* was Craik's fifth novel for an adult readership, it was to become the one with which she would be most associated, as all of her subsequent novels were billed as penned by 'The Author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*'.²⁸ When, in 1858, her publisher released an edition of one of her novels as 'Mulock's *Head of the Family*', Craik responded angrily in a letter stating how this type of publicity was 'very objectionable to me, as I have always resented putting my name to any of my books'.²⁹ Whether Craik's desire to keep her name out of the public sphere was a matter of maintaining

²⁶ In her blog on 'Literary Tourism' dated May 27th 2013, Karen Bourrier notes that whilst the Tewkesbury tourism office is not inundated today with requests for information about Craik and *John Halifax*, readers were being directed to the various sites of Tewkesbury used in *John Halifax* as recently as 1977, via Dorothy Eagle's book *The Oxford Literary Guide to the British Isles*. Karen Bourrier, *The Floating Academy*, available at <https://floatingacademy.wordpress.com/2013/05/27/literary-tourism/>.

²⁷ Mark Spilka, "Victorian Keys to the Early Hemingway: Part 1: 'John Halifax, Gentleman,'" *Indiana University Press* 10, no. 1 (2014): 128.

²⁸ Rory Moore, "A Mediated Intimacy: Dinah Mulock Craik and Celebrity Culture," *Women's Writing*, 20, no. 3 (2013): 396.

²⁹ Dinah Mulock Craik to Mr Chapman, 1858, *M. L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists; 1806-1958 (mostly 1830s-1930s)*, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

standards of nineteenth-century female respectability, or because she sought to distance herself from her volatile father, has been the subject of discussion.³⁰

However, as *The British Quarterly Review* suggested in 1866, Craik's use of the title 'Author of *John Halifax*' could be seen less as a device to conceal her identity, and more as an attempt to align herself with a book the reading public admired, for 'it seems rather to identify her with that particular book ... which the public is willing to receive as representative of both her style and character.'³¹ Certainly, as The Very Rev. H. Gee, D.D., Dean of Gloucester Cathedral noted during his sermon at the Craik Centenary service in 1926,

Her [Craik's] real fame rests, of course, upon the Tewkesbury novel, *John Halifax, Gentleman*. The book is an undoubted classic of the Victorian age, and it will probably appeal to a wide circle of home-loving and God fearing English-speaking people, and will appeal to them for many years to come.³²

Published three years before Samuel Smiles' classic text *Self Help* (1859), *John Halifax, Gentleman* captures the liberal philosophy of the mid-nineteenth century, and early scholarship on the novel similarly adopted this framework. As Holly Furneaux observes in relation to the scholarship on *John Halifax*, much of the work has been concerned with individual identity formation and self-development, examining John as a man of business who single-handedly builds his own wealth and success and, in doing so, balances the negative connotations of trade with Christian ethics and values.³³ Likewise, Rory Moore suggests that *John Halifax, Gentleman* functioned as a 'source of comfort for innumerable middle class readers happy to

³⁰ Bourrier, "Narrating Insanity in the Letters of Thomas Mulock and Dinah Mulock Craik", 205; Rory Moore, "A Mediated Intimacy: Dinah Mulock Craik and Celebrity Culture," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013), 391; Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 13.

³¹ "The Author of *John Halifax*", *British Quarterly Review*, 44, no. 77 (1866), 45.

³² "The Craik Centenary – Tuesday, April 20th, 1926", *Tewkesbury Parochial Magazine* May (1926): 70.

³³ Holly Furneaux, "Negotiating the gentle-man: male nursing and class conflict in the 'high' Victorian period," in *Conflict and Difference in Nineteenth Century Literature*, eds. D. Birch, and M. Llewellyn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 116.

achieve success amid the struggles of daily life through hard work'.³⁴ In addition to this, Silvana Colella notes how *John Halifax* can be read as sharing many of the same ideologies as Victorian business manuals including the 'common emphasis on the basic rules of self-help: punctuality, honesty, hard work, [and] patience'.³⁵ Such readings, I suggest, not only reflect nineteenth-century ideologies of duty, Christian responsibility, and 'self-help', but similarly reflect Western liberal society's continued valorisation of the individual, independence, and liberty, and in doing so help to reinforce those values. The ongoing emphasis on these themes is underlined by the fact that *John Halifax* is the only one of Craik's novels that has rarely been out of print since its first publication.³⁶ It is against this backdrop, and our continued quest to valorise the independent individual, that I position this thesis.

Chapter Outline

Much of the scholarship to date on Craik's writing has focused on the individual. In this thesis I examine the relational, interdependent, networks of care that surround and support the many disabled characters in Craik's work. To achieve this I position my analysis of Craik's work at the intersection of critical disability studies and feminist ethics of care and in doing so I aim to weave the threads of each tradition together to create a comprehensive analysis of care in Craik's narratives. It is not my intention in this thesis to develop a new theory of care, but rather to use existing theories as a framework to interrogate and analyse the way in which care is represented in

³⁴ Moore, 388.

³⁵ Silvana Colella, "Gifts and Interests: John Halifax and the Purity of Business," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 35, no. 2 (2007): 399.

³⁶ Sally Mitchell, "Afterword: Dinah Mulock Craik for the Twenty-First Century," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 406, doi:10.1080/09699082.2013.801128.

literature. In doing so I respond to Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's call for scholars of both feminism and disability studies to integrate their perspectives in order to broaden both fields of inquiry, challenge assumptions about disability, and expand our understanding of the ways in which the scholarly fields of disability and gender intersect.³⁷ One of the topics Garland-Thomson situates at this intersection is care. In Chapter One I will thus present a review of the scholarly work that has been carried out on Craik and her writing to date and position this work against the trajectory of feminist literary and critical disability studies before discussing how I understand care in relation to Craik's work.

In Chapter Two I explore Craik's letters and diaries, alongside a number of her essays, to re-examine Craik's biography through the lens of an ethic of care. As Tracey Seeley notes, Craik 'invokes the personal', regardless of the topic with which she is engaging.³⁸ Indeed, frequently Craik's personal experience was the authority by which she felt compelled to speak. Like many authors, Craik's writing reflects Daniel Schwarz's assertion that authors write, not only to express their ideas and emotions, but also as a way of reflecting on the values which drive human beings to live the lives they choose.³⁹ By revisiting Craik's life, and accordingly her lived experience of care in this chapter, the extent to which her personal philosophy of care influenced her writing will become clear. The insights she gained throughout her life in regard to human responses to care, disability, and vulnerability are

³⁷ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 3 (2002): 1-32.

³⁸ Tracey Seeley, "Victorian Women's Essays and Dinah Mulock's Thoughts: Creating an Ethos for Argument," *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism* 19, no. 1 (1996): 104.

³⁹ Daniel Schwarz, "A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*, eds. Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia: 2001), 4.

reflected again and again in her writing. In this chapter I therefore examine not only Craik's personal encounters with care but also the way that care enabled women – including Craik – to gain access to the public sphere. By utilising the idea of caring power, proposed by Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan, which they argue rose in significance throughout the 1800s,⁴⁰ I seek to highlight how Craik's personal experiences of care, as they appear in her letters and diaries, were later reflected in the public works of this prolific writer time and again.

In Chapter Three I examine *Olive* (1850), Craik's novel which, as Martha Stoddard Holmes points out, features a cast of characters who have some form of disability or illness.⁴¹ These characters reveal the way in which disability, illness, and vulnerability extend throughout the lifespan and how, as disability scholars such as Garland-Thomson note, disability affects us all at some point in our lives. Not only does this novel highlight the way in which disability, illness, and care feature in everyday life, but it also highlights the role of mothers in the provision of this care. In contrast to the popular trope of the absent mother in the Victorian novel, *Olive* abounds with representations of mothers. However, unlike her contemporary, Sarah Stickney Ellis, whose popular conduct book *The Mothers of England* (1843) restricts the definition of 'mother' to biological mothers, Craik also explores the role of mothering as it is carried out by non-biological or 'allomothers'. In this chapter I use Sara Ruddick's *Maternal Thinking* (1989) to guide my examination of maternal thought in *Olive*, along with Eva Feder Kittay's *Love's Labour* (1999) to explore the various caring relationships in this novel. As I examine the way care is represented

⁴⁰ Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), 18-19.

⁴¹ Martha Stoddard Holmes, "Victorian Fictions of Interdependency: Gaskell, Craik, and Yonge," *Journal of Literary Disability* 1, no. 2 (2007): 32.

throughout this novel, be it through reciprocated, sequential, interdependent or, at times, unequal relationships of care, I discuss the way Craik engaged with the topic of mothering and maternal thinking in order to reveal how care and disability feature in daily life.

In Chapter Four I move the discussion of care on to a consideration of men, as I examine the role of men in caring relationships. Craik believed that men have the capacity to care just as much as women and this is evident in a number of her novels as *A Noble Life*, *John Halifax*, *Gentleman*, and *Head of the Family* each feature a male character who performs various caring roles. In this chapter I examine Craik's novel, *A Noble Life* (1867) which features a male carer whose sole job is to care for the novel's protagonist. Through a close reading of the way Craik represents care in this text I will examine how the combination of an ethic of care and an ethic of justice is crucial to ensure that the care delivered is just, in accordance with the needs and wishes of the cared for, and supports the character to live an autonomous life within a network of care.

Finally, I examine three of Craik's children's stories and explore the way Craik moved her consideration of care from the private sphere of the home into the public realm. Utilising Kathleen Lynch and Judy Walsh's concept of 'Nurturing Capital', along with Sara Ruddick's ideas on maternal thinking and peace, this chapter examines the way in which Craik employs narratives of care and disability to teach children about the value of caring for others. As I move through these three children's stories, *How to Win Love: or, Rhoda's Lesson* (1848), *Michael the Miner* (1847), and *The Little Lame Prince and his Travelling Cloak* (1875), I show a progression of caring ethics that starts with a stereotypical view of disability as a

tool through which young girls learn specific gendered roles, and which ends with a progressive ideology that positions care as a public concern. In moving her consideration of care from the private sphere of the home into the public sphere, Craik engaged with ideas about peace and pacifism that anticipates Nel Noddings' arguments in *Peace Education* (2011).

Throughout this thesis it is my intention to reveal the important ethical discussions that can be entered into when we consider, not only the representation of disability in literature, but also the networks of care both disabled and able-bodied people find themselves in as they vacillate between the roles of the 'cared for' and the 'care giver'.⁴² Not only does Craik's work abound with representations of disability, but her cultural context also saw numerous social, political, and legislative changes that encouraged a change in attitude towards the vulnerable, changes which registered a nineteenth-century conviction that, as Raymond Williams notes, 'the effort towards civilization is actually promoted by a genuine altruism' towards one's fellow man [sic].⁴³ In this thesis I therefore examine how such genuine altruism was manifested in the work of Craik, particularly through her engagement with the relational dynamics of caring for, and by, disabled people. Ultimately, I argue approaching these texts through the framework of an ethic of care is a productive reading strategy which not only opens up important discussions

⁴² In using the words 'disability' and 'disabled people' in this thesis I acknowledge that, whilst these were not the language used in the nineteenth-century they are today, according to Simi Linton, the preferred term for use in disability studies. This terminology highlights the social construction of disability which distinguishes between the physical impairment a person lives with and the disability they experience as a result of the social and cultural barriers they face in their daily lives. This model of disability is useful for literary and cultural disabilities studies as it enables us to negotiate and examine the disabling barriers that arise from representations of disability. See, Simi Linton, "Reassigning Meaning," in *The Disability Studies Reader* (3rd Edition), ed. Lennard Davis (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 223-236,

⁴³ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1971), 80.

on disability and ethical caring, but also enables us to re-evaluate the contribution of a writer often dismissed as merely 'sentimental'.

From Sentiment to Disability and Beyond:
Dinah Mulock Craik and the Changing Face of Scholarship

Perhaps it is the time frame - 125 years since Dinah Craik's death, when the last of the things people inherited from their grandparents are being cleared out of the attic - as well as the Internet's enormous help in locating information, but several other new artifacts [sic] and connections have turned up recently ... Within the past year, photographs of Dinah Craik taken by her brother have emerged from storage at the Art Institute of Chicago; one is now on exhibit in the permanent collection galleries. The transcription, translation and indexing of Vincent van Gogh's letters reveals seven mentions of Craik's name.

Sally Mitchell⁴⁴

I noted in my introduction that until the 1970s Craik's work had gone relatively unremarked by literary scholars. The rediscovery of Craik by feminist literary scholars in the 1970s, at a time when feminist literary criticism was in its foundational stage, thus provides an opportunity to reflect upon the early work on Craik before positioning her work within the changing landscape of feminist studies as it moved from the archaeological unearthing of lost female authors to scholarship which sought to embrace the diversity of female experience. Whilst early scholarship noted the sentimentality of Craik's work along with the important cultural understanding to be gained through the examination of such authors, subsequent study on Craik stagnated for several years.⁴⁵ It was not until much later,

⁴⁴ Sally Mitchell, "Afterword: Dinah Mulock Craik for the Twenty-First Century," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 409-410, doi:10.1080/09699082.2013.801128.

⁴⁵ Elaine Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment: A Case Study in Victorian Female Authorship," *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 2 (1975): 5.

in 2013, that Craik's writing was celebrated in an edited collection of the periodical *Women's Writing*, in which Sally Mitchell suggested that 'a newly understood Craik' was becoming available for scholars to study which would lead to further insights into her poetry, fiction and essays.⁴⁶ As the epigraph shows, new information is coming to the fore on a regular basis that will not only encourage a greater understanding of Craik, the period within which she wrote, and the themes and topics she wrote about, but also the popularity of her works. The reference in the epigraph, for example, to the letters of Vincent Van Gogh reveals that not only were a number of Craik's novels translated into Dutch but also that Van Gogh was well versed in her work, citing a number of her novels and poems in letters to his brother Theo.⁴⁷ The scholarship on Craik is thus changing and evolving and in this chapter I will provide a detailed analysis of the thematic changes that have taken place in this field of study and will suggest how this trajectory has led to my examination of disability and care in Craik's work.

Finding her Voice: the Literary Styles of Dinah Mulock Craik

Craik began writing at an early age and throughout her career ventured into numerous forms, writing novels, short stories, poetry, children's stories, and essays. As a professional writer she would frequently work on more than one project at a time and during the 1850s, in between writing the novels by which she made her name, she wrote a number of essays and short stories addressing the problematic 'woman question', one of which, 'Bread Upon the Waters', was sold to raise funds for

⁴⁶ Sally Mitchell, "Afterword: Dinah Mulock Craik for the Twenty-First Century," 410.

⁴⁷ "Vincent Van Gogh: The Letters," last modified November 2014, <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/search/simple?term=craik>, accessed 8th August 2016.

the Governesses' Benevolent Institution.⁴⁸ Craik's commitment to the rights and responsibilities both of the working woman and those directed towards them, was followed up in 1857 with a series of essays, initially published in *Chambers Magazine* but later collected together to form *A Woman's Thoughts on Women* (1858). These essays reveal Craik's thoughts on a number of issues relating to women, including the importance of work, the relationship between female servants and their mistresses (a topic revisited in 1862 in her novel *Mistress and Maid*), the importance of female friendship, the fallen woman in society, and growing old. Published together with her 1883 essay 'On Female Sisterhoods', this collection presents us with a vision of a utopian female society reminiscent of those seen in the work of eighteenth-century writers such as Sarah Scott, whilst predating those of the late nineteenth-century 'New Woman' writer, George Egerton. Whilst Craik vehemently denied any association or engagement with nineteenth-century feminists or, as she would later refer to them in a letter to Oscar Wilde, 'the shrieking sisterhood', her work certainly echoes many of the ideas canvassed within contemporary feminist scholarship.⁴⁹

Her final novel of the 1850s, *A Life for a Life* (1859), saw Craik experiment with a different narrative technique. Taking the form of two diaries, the novel develops both male and female voices as the narrative alternates between the diaries of Max Urquhart, a thirty-nine-year-old doctor who served in the Crimean

⁴⁸ Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik* (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1983), 5.

⁴⁹ Dinah Mulock Craik to Oscar Wilde, 17th July 1887, in *M. L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists; 1806-1958 (mostly 1830s-1930s)*, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, AM17690. Wilde had written to Craik asking her to write for a new magazine he was to edit for Macmillan called *Ladies' World*. Craik agreed, stating that her influence, if indeed she had any, arose from her ability to remain aloof from cliques especially those women "who are called, not unjustly, the shrieking sisterhood". The term is originally attributed to Eliza Lynn Linton who used the term in an article in the *Saturday Review* in 1870. In using the term, Craik aligns herself with Linton, a working woman who, throughout her life, maintained an anti-feminist stance.

war, and Dora Johnson, the twenty-five-year-old daughter of a clergyman. As Lynn Linder points out, the dual narrative voices Craik achieves through the use of these complementary diaries highlights the gendered differences between men and women in society but also represents 'the inherent human traits and desires that transcend such cultural gender assumptions'.⁵⁰ Whilst the novel was popular with the reading public it did not receive the same critical success as previous novels; but Craik herself clearly thought highly of the novel. Not only did it reflect her own personal views of men and women, views which she revisited in her 1887 essay 'Concerning Men', but later in her life she would attempt, albeit unsuccessfully, to turn the novel into a play.⁵¹

Throughout the 1860s Craik's novels continued to address some of the contemporary issues affecting the lives of women. *Mistress and Maid* (1862) explores the genteel poverty of three sisters and the need for women to enter the workforce when they have no male relatives to protect or support them financially. *Christian's Mistake* (1865) addresses the emotional journey taken by the newly married woman, including the psychic trauma she experiences through the loss of her individuality. *A Noble Life* (1866), which features Craik's most physically disabled character, also addresses, tangentially, a woman's right to inherit property, an issue she explores more deeply in *A Brave Woman* (1869) which was specifically written as propaganda in support of the *Married Woman's Property Act*. Each of

⁵⁰ Lynn M Linder, "Dual-ing Diaries, Intersecting Identities: Victorian Subjectivity and Dinah Mulock Craik's *A Life for A Life*," *Victorians Institute Journal* 39 (2011): 205.

⁵¹ Craik first mentions her dramatization of *A Noble Life* on the twenty-sixth of January 1884. It would appear to be a task she enjoyed and records that it is close to being in print on the nineteenth of September. Whilst she records on the ninth of December 1884 that her publisher Mr Chapman approached her about Madison Square Theatre in New York taking the play. Sadly, it would appear that the play never came to. For further information, see Dinah Mulock Craik, "Dairies 1874-1887", Dinah Mulock Craik Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas, Austin. All subsequent quotes from the diaries are from this source.

these novels therefore seeks to address the ambiguity of a woman's position in society and in many ways reflects Craik's own life. As a working woman herself who, until her marriage to George Craik in 1865, was also a single working woman, Craik had experienced many of the situations she wrote about and understood the financial uncertainty faced by many women at this time.

Following the adoption of her daughter Dorothy in 1869, Craik's literary output slowed somewhat and Craik again turned to writing for children; her enduringly popular children's story *The Little Lambe Prince and his Travelling Cloak* (1875) was published at this time. Whilst this story has not received the same degree of critical attention as her most enduringly popular novel *John Halifax*, it nonetheless has remained a firm favourite with the public. The last edition of *The Little Lambe Prince* was published in 1992 and a theatrical version was staged in 2000.⁵² Despite a reduction in output, and the public's turn away from domestic and sentimental fiction, Craik continued to write fiction and non-fiction, adult and children's literature, until her sudden death in 1887.

Like many nineteenth-century women writers, Craik's work fell out of popular appeal in the twentieth century and was seriously neglected until feminist scholars reawakened an interest in her work in the 1970s. Since that time, whilst the criticism remains scant, that which has been carried out can be seen to follow the trajectory of feminist literary scholarship, as it progressed from its early project of identifying lost and neglected women writers, necessary to challenge the androcentrism of the literary canon, towards its current embrace of identities beyond dominant white, middle-class, Western and heteronormative constructions

⁵² In 2000 Jonathon Ward adapted the story into a play and performed it as part of the family series at the Henry Street Settlement/Abrons Arts Center in New York.

of femininity. Those female writers who found their way into text books and onto literature courses at this time and, more importantly, stayed there, were often those who either in themselves or through the characters they created, reflected the concerns of contemporary feminism. Thus, authors such as Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot were embraced for their revolutionary style of writing and proto-feminist ideals, whilst others, who perhaps reinforced gendered stereotypes, were accorded significantly less attention. In the case of Craik, early feminist scholarship thus recorded her as one of the second generation of female novelists, following in the footsteps of the Brontë sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and George Eliot;⁵³ but her writing attracted only limited engagement from feminist scholars because it was considered conservative, sentimental and domestic.⁵⁴ With the enduring condemnation of sentimental literature and the ongoing view of it as either excessively emotional or critically unsophisticated, and despite Jane Tompkins' work which saw the resurrection of American sentimental literature, scholarship on Craik, at this stage, went no further.⁵⁵

However, continuing to attend primarily to those texts by women writers which support the precepts of modern feminism is problematic within a branch of scholarship which also aims to explore all female experience. Certainly, in relation to nineteenth-century women's writing, the focus on identifying extraordinary women writers who lived unusual lives and wrote against patriarchal constructions of woman and society has arguably created a feminist canon, consisting of authors such as Austen, Mary Shelley, the Brontës, Eliot and Barrett Browning, which

⁵³ Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own. British Women Writers, from Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing* (London: Virago Press, 1978), 16.

⁵⁴ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, 17.

⁵⁵ Carolyn Burdett, "Introduction," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 16, no.2 (2011): 187.

consequently silences those women writers whose narratives of domesticity and care are perceived to reinforce the image of the 'angel in the house' that scholars have worked hard to critique. As Gilbert states, it is time to move beyond the 'outmoded binaries' of feminist and anti-feminist texts.⁵⁶ One significant area in which this needs to be addressed is, I suggest, with regard to those texts written by women who represented women in traditional female roles, such as those associated with care. There is no doubt that there continues to be important and valuable work to be done in this area, retrieving lost writers, exploring non-fictional forms of writing that represent the lived experiences of women, and moving beyond the white, Western canon created during the establishment of the discipline. In the following section I will thus review the scholarly writing on Craik's literature to date and position this within the evolving discourse on feminist literary analysis and the emerging area of critical disability studies.

Reviewing the Literature: Contextualising Craik – The Early Years

Early feminist scholars, such as Elaine Showalter and Ellen Moers, adopted what has been described as a 'gynocritical approach' to literature and, in seeking to resurrect lost women writers, mention Craik, albeit briefly, in their key texts.⁵⁷ Whilst Showalter's text *A Literature of Their Own* has not been without its critics, it was an important product of first-wave feminist literary criticism, which helped to build the foundations of this field of scholarship, a field which most work on Craik has, to some extent, built upon.⁵⁸ Showalter notes, in an article examining the impact

⁵⁶ Pamela K. Gilbert, "Feminism and the Canon: Recovery and Reconsideration of Popular Novelists," in *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel: Rereading Nineteenth-Century Women Writers*, ed. Tamara S. Wagner (New York: Cambria Press, 2009), 33.

⁵⁷ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*; Ellen Moers, *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976).

⁵⁸ Elaine Showalter, "Twenty Years on: 'A Literature of Their Own' Revisited," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 31, no. 3 (1998): 402.

of her text twenty years after its publication, that she considered it important to write about 'continuities between generations of women writers' in order to develop a 'female literary lineage'.⁵⁹ It was within this female literary lineage that Showalter placed Craik, in the second generation of nineteenth-century women writers, along with Charlotte Yonge, Margaret Oliphant, and Elizabeth Lynn Linton. Showalter described these women as following 'in the footsteps of the great, consolidating their gains, but [who] were less dedicated and original'.⁶⁰ The 'greats' according to Showalter are 'all the women who are identified with the Golden Age of the Victorian authoress: The Brontës, Mrs Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot', women who were breaking new ground and creating new professional opportunities for women writers.⁶¹ However, this division and classification, whilst initially useful, has positioned women writers within certain boxes which have been difficult for some to escape. Whilst the first generation went on to form the new feminist canon, those women of the second generation, including Craik, remained neglected by literary scholars in part, I would suggest, because of the perception that their work accepted conventional views about women and their 'proper' sphere, rather than challenging or examining these assumptions.

At this time Mitchell and Showalter both noted how first-wave feminist literary scholars tended to cast scorn upon these 'second generation' Victorian writers.⁶² For Showalter it was because they 'opposed organised movements for

⁵⁹ Showalter, "Twenty Years on: 'A Literature of Their Own' Revisited," 399–413.

⁶⁰ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, 16.

⁶¹ Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, 16.

⁶² Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik* (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1983), in contributing to the ongoing project of inserting women writers into literary history, has produced what remains the only scholarly monograph on Craik. This work remains the definitive text for scholars on Craik, providing not only a thorough biography on the author but also a review of Craik's fiction and non-fiction writing. Adopting a literary historical approach to Craik's work, Mitchell positions Craik within the historical context of the nineteenth-century and examines how this impacted on both her writing practices and the topics with which she chose to engage.

women's rights', led exemplary lives that upheld the Victorian feminine ideal, and wrote novels that celebrated 'the domestic, the bourgeois, and the conventional',⁶³ whilst for Mitchell it was because of a tendency, by first-wave feminist literary scholars, to critically dismiss the domestic novel for its excess of emotions and its lack of realism.⁶⁴ Certainly, the idea, posited early in the development of literary studies, that some novels and novelists were 'middlebrow' and therefore provided no intellectual challenge to their readers, whilst others considered 'highbrow' were capable of producing literary works of art, had the effect of excluding many women writers from literary scholarship.⁶⁵ But this distinction between highbrow and middlebrow literature or Showalter's 'greats' and the second generation of writers such as Craik is not simply the product of scholarship for in the case of Craik and George Eliot, it was established by the authors themselves.

When, shortly after the publication of Eliot's novel *A Mill on the Floss* (1860), a French reviewer favourably compared Eliot to Craik, Eliot's quick response helped to establish the comparison between the two writers, 'Miss Mulock - a writer who is read only by novel readers, pure and simple, never by people of high culture. A very excellent woman she is, I believe - but we belong to an entirely different order of writers'.⁶⁶ The overwhelming tenor of this comparison is one which positions Eliot as a 'legitimate literary artist' and Craik as a woman 'unable to achieve recognition

⁶³ Elaine Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment: A Case Study in Victorian Female Authorship," *Feminist Studies*, 2, no. 2/3 (1975): 5.

⁶⁴ Mitchell, "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s," *Victorian Studies*, 21, no. 1 (1977): 31.

⁶⁵ Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, 1932, cited in J. Russell Perkin, "Narrative Voice and the 'Feminine' Novelist: Dinah Mulock and George Eliot," *Victorian Review* 18, no. 1 (1992): 25.

⁶⁶ George S. Haight, ed. *The George Eliot Letters*, 9 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-1978): 302. See also, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," *Westminster Review*, October 1856, 442-61 and Dinah Mulock Craik, "To Novelists - and a Novelist," *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1861 for the literary debate the two writers engaged in regarding the quality of writing by women writers.

as a serious writer.⁶⁷ Furthermore, whilst Craik, was admiring of Eliot's work, she was critical of the way Eliot represented certain topics in her work, namely the ending of her novel *Mill on the Floss* which she discussed in her essay 'To Novelists – and a Novelist' published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in April 1861.⁶⁸ According to Craik the novelist had a responsibility to their readers to not simply recreate the world but to penetrate beneath the surface and show the world as it could be. Craik's argument with Eliot was in the way she handled the death of Maggie Tulliver which Craik saw as failing to provide readers with any hope for the future:

Take it from another point of view. Ask, what good will it do? – whether it will lighten any burdened heart, help any perplexed spirit, comfort the sorrowful, succour the tempted, or bring back the erring into the way of peace; and what is the answer. Silence.⁶⁹

Whilst, as Mitchell notes, critics and scholars frequently dismiss or distrust the optimism upon which Craik's argument rests⁷⁰, it is nevertheless, part of the human condition that we need hope. Furthermore, the emotional tenor of Craik's writing was, at this time, being denigrated as sentimental and unrealistic. Yet, whereas we see George Eliot killing off her fallen woman in *Adam Bede* (1859), Craik chooses instead to offer an alternative, more hopeful future. In *A Life for a Life*, published the same year as *Adam Bede*, Craik posits a future in which her character is supported by other women so that she may create a life for herself and her child. However, whilst *Adam Bede* was universally praised for its truthful representation, *A Life for a Life* failed to achieve the critical acclaim Craik had hoped for despite the fact that it too represented a truth experienced by many women.

⁶⁷ J. Russell Perkin, "Narrative Voice and the 'Feminine' Novelist," 24.

⁶⁸ Craik, 'To Novelists – and a Novelist', *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1861

⁶⁹ Craik, 'To Novelists – and a Novelist', 444.

⁷⁰ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 105.

It is therefore possible to see, beneath the surface of many of these seemingly idyllic domestic novels, novels which as Showalter notes many scholars saw as antifeminist, a deeper engagement with the daily problems and issues faced by Victorian women. For Showalter, many women writers of the mid-nineteenth century frequently employed sentimental narratives as a way of articulating the conflicts in the female role whilst also providing 'an escape valve for the emotions it left unresolved.'⁷¹ Similarly, for Mitchell, these novels provide not so much an insight into the contemporary scene experienced by women but rather can be read as indicative of how 'women felt about the society in which they lived.'⁷² It is from this perspective that the association of disability and women came to be discussed by first-wave feminist literary scholars.

Early readings of disability in Victorian literature saw the disabled character as a literary device which was used metaphorically to represent the position of women in nineteenth-century society. Both Showalter and Mitchell noted the popularity of the disabled character in Craik's writing, and whilst neither specifically discussed the multiple representations of disability in Craik's novels, Mitchell did, however, note the importance of disability, stating that a 'crucial feature in Craik's map of interior territory is illness, disability and the figure of the weak or damaged human'.⁷³ Like many literary critics at the time, Mitchell read such weak and damaged figures metaphorically, as signifying the 'pain of helplessness [and] the lack of power and social position' experienced by women in the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ Reading disability as a metaphor for the struggles and confinement

⁷¹ Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment: A Case Study in Victorian Female Authorship," 5.

⁷² Mitchell, "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s," 31.

⁷³ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 112.

⁷⁴ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 112

experienced by women was a key component of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's argument in their valuable work *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) in which they use the language of illness and disability metaphorically to describe various aspects of the act of female authorship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁷⁵ For Gilbert and Gubar, women writers of the late twentieth-century were able to approach their writing with energy and authority because their 'foremothers struggled in isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness, [and] obscurity that felt like paralysis' in order to overcome the social and professional barriers they experienced in being authors.⁷⁶ More recently, Cora Kaplan continued this theme, when she noted that Craik 'specialized in using physical disability to represent both passive femininity and passive masculinity'.⁷⁷ Whilst I do not argue with such a reading, I would suggest that this tendency to read disability metaphorically may, as Kim Hall expresses, inhibit our ability to build an inclusive future for women's studies, as it has the potential to devalue the lived experiences of people with disabilities.⁷⁸ Although Mitchell and Showalter read disability metaphorically they nevertheless recognised and valued both the subject matter chosen by women writers such as Craik and readers' responses to their texts. As such their work anticipated that of Jane Tompkins who, in her 1986 book *Sensational Designs*, set out to recover the political seriousness of women's writing

⁷⁵ Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 57.

⁷⁶ Gilbert and Gubar, 51.

⁷⁷ Cora Kaplan, "Gender Identities and Relationships," in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English Vol. 3. The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820-1888*, ed. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor (Oxford University Press, 2012), 509-24.

⁷⁸ Kim Q. Hall, "Feminism, Disability, and Embodiment," *NSWA Journal* 14, no. 3 (2002): vii-xiii.

in mid-nineteenth century America and opened the way for further scholarship on Craik.⁷⁹

Despite Tompkins' work focusing on American literature from 1790-1860, many of the challenges she raises can be similarly applied to English literature of the mid-nineteenth century. When Tompkins states that in order to understand the neglected texts she approaches in her work it is necessary to have an understanding of the 'cultural realities that made these novels meaningful,'⁸⁰ she adopts a new historical approach to her analysis of literature that seeks to cast light on the social and cultural context within which the novels were written and enjoyed. Tompkins focus on New Historicism, as a methodological approach, is one which has likewise stimulated the majority of research on Craik as scholars, having been alerted to her work by first-wave feminist literary scholarship, now move to position her within the cultural context and milieu of the day.

New Historical Literary Studies – Craik as a writer of her time⁸¹

Towards the latter 1990s recognition of Craik's work received a minor boost as a new generation of scholars began to examine her work's engagement with a number of nineteenth-century debates. Building on the earlier historical retrieval of Craik, and the work of cultural materialists, this wave of literary analysis saw

⁷⁹ Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs. The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790-1860* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁸⁰ Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, xiii.

⁸¹ In choosing this subtitle I deliberately avoid using the term 'New Historicism' to describe this wave of scholarship as to do so suggests that the early work conducted on Craik by feminist literary scholars, such as Showalter, was not historical when in fact a major part of their work was the rewriting of women into history. Whilst the term 'New Historicism' is generally considered to have been coined in the 1980s by the critic Stephen Greenblatt in his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) similar practices, namely the reading of literary fiction alongside non-literary texts and the examination of issues such as power and patriarchy, existed earlier. For further information on the way feminist historical reading not only predated but also helped influence New Historicism see, Judith Lowder Newton, "History as Usual?: Feminism and the 'New Historicism'," *Cultural Critique* 9 (1988): 87-121.

scholars reposition Craik's work within the context of the mid-nineteenth century and reconnect her work to political and social movements of the day. In doing so, scholars were able to relocate Craik within a number of feminist discourses despite her own avowed distancing from such movements.⁸² One of the first areas to receive thoughtful deliberation was Craik's engagement with legal issues, namely, the Married Women's Property Act, adoption, and the deceased wife's sister bill. As Kieran Dolin has noted, the nineteenth century witnessed a groundswell of legislative reform as legislators strove to deal with the overwhelming and unprecedented changes British society was experiencing as a result of the Industrial Revolution.⁸³ It should therefore be of little surprise to anyone that legal issues should make their way into the fiction of the day. Dolin points out how many women writers engaged, in particular, with the proposed Married Women's Property Act in the aftermath of the Caroline Norton case through the writing of pamphlets, essays, and indeed novels.⁸⁴ Craik was no exception to this and her novel *A Brave Lady*, originally serialised in *Macmillan's Magazine* between 1869 and 1870 was directed at raising awareness for the Married Women's Property Act.⁸⁵

There was an intensely personal connection between Craik's life and the legal topics she chose to write about. Her mother's estate was carefully administered in order to prevent her father from getting hold of it and *A Brave Lady* has been read as the most autobiographical work Craik wrote.⁸⁶ Further, in 1869 Craik adopted her

⁸² Craik to Oscar Wilde, 17th July 1887.

⁸³ Kieran Dolin, *A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120.

⁸⁴ Dolin, 126-130.

⁸⁵ To date Deborah Wynne is the only scholar to write on *A Brave Lady* and does so merely to draw the novel to the attention of George Eliot scholars who may be interested in observing the similarities between this novel and Eliot's *Middlemarch*. See Deborah Wynne, "George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dinah Mulock Craik's *A Brave Lady*," *Notes and Queries*, October (2004): 160-62, for further information.

⁸⁶ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 72.

daughter Dorothy, an event which no doubt led to the publication of her novel *King Arthur, A Love Story* (1886). As Tess O'Toole notes, Craik attempts in this novel to address widely held fears about adoption and does so, in part, through the inclusion of an American character who is positioned to be able to make a pitch for institutional adoption because of his experience of adoption in America.⁸⁷ Finally, Craik's novel *Hannah*, serialised in *Saint Pauls* shilling monthly magazine between February and December 1871 and which addresses the inadequacies of the 1836 Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, foreshadows her personal experience of accompanying her friend, the pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt, to Switzerland in 1875 so that he could marry his sister-in-law Edith Waugh after the death of his wife.⁸⁸

Each of these novels reflect Craik's view that the novel was a powerful tool through which social change could be achieved. In her essay, 'To Novelists – and a Novelist' (1861) Craik asserts her belief in the power of the novel stating:

The essayist may write for his hundreds; the preacher preach to his thousands; but the novelist counts his audience by millions. His power is threefold – over heart, reason, and fancy. The orator we hear eagerly, but as his voice fades from us its lessons depart; the moral philosopher we read and digest, by degrees, in a serious, ponderous way; but the really good writer of fiction takes us altogether by storm.⁸⁹

Like many Victorian novelists including Anne Bronte, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Charles Kingsley, Craik saw the novel as a means through which social change could be achieved. These 'novels of purpose' whilst not new to the nineteenth century took on new meaning from the 1850s as the term came to

⁸⁷ Tess O'Toole, "Adoption and the 'Improvement of the Estate' in Trollope and Craik," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 52, no. 1 (1997): 63.

⁸⁸ See Elisabeth Rose Gruner, "Born and Made: Sisters, Brothers, and the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill," *Signs* 24, no. 2 (1999): 423–47 for more information on how this subject was dealt with in Victorian literature.

⁸⁹ Dinah Mulock Craik, "To Novelists-and a Novelist," *Macmillan's Magazine* 3 (1861): 442.

encompass 'all novels that sought to intervene in the contemporary world.'⁹⁰ As Amanda Claybaugh notes, for the authors of 'novels of purpose' their novels were not 'self-contained aesthetic objects but rather ... active interventions into social and political life'.⁹¹ It is clear from the above quote that Craik believed this to be true and used the novel as a way of disseminating information on topics she considered important and in need of reform.

Further to this, the historical approach to critically analysing Craik's texts has also opened up discussions of race and religion in Craik's novels, most notably in relation to *Olive* (1850), where postcolonial readings have provided valuable interpretations of her work.⁹² Juliet Shields' analysis of Craik's 1850 novel *Olive* for example, combines a postcolonial analysis of the text with a metaphorical reading of disability. Here, Shields situates *Olive* amongst late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century concerns about race, imperialism, and slavery, examining the hybridisation of British identity through inter-racial relationships. In Shields' reading, disability is represented as the burden the children of interracial unions must bear. For Olive, the daughter of the Scottish Angus Rothesay and the English Sybilla Hyde, this burden is manifested through the physical deformity of her spine, whilst for Crystal, the illegitimate daughter of Angus and the West Indian woman of mixed-race Celia Manners, it is a volatile and fierce spirit which borders on mental instability⁹³. However, whilst Shields' work engages with disability, her reading could be seen to perpetuate the tendency to read disability metonymically, this time as a metaphor

⁹⁰ Amanda Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 34.

⁹¹ Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose*, 36.

⁹² Juliet Shields, "The Races Of Women : Gender , Hybridity , And National Identity In Dinah Craik's *Olive*," *Studies in the Novel* 39, no. 3 (2007): 284–300; Alisha R Walters, "Affective Hybridities: Dinah Mulock's *Olive* and British Heterogeneity," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 325–43; Kiran Mascarenhas, "The Half-Caste: A Half-Told Tale," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 344–57.

⁹³ Shields, "The Races Of Women : Gender , Hybridity , And National Identity In Dinah Craik's *Olive*," 288.

for the problems associated with interracial unions, both at an individual and at a national level.

In addition to such perspectives on Craik's work, this historical approach has enabled Craik's personal life to be re-examined as scholars delve into the archives.⁹⁴ For example, Craik's professional networks have been surveyed in order to highlight her position within networks of professional writers, illustrators and publishers,⁹⁵ all of which have led to Craik's work being identified as politically engaged and thus feminist.⁹⁶ However, it has been the emergence of a new school of enquiry, arising from a centre of activism in much the same way that gender studies and critical race studies arose from the feminist and civil rights movements, that has led to the most intensive resurgence of scholarship on Craik and her work. As critical disability studies began to gain traction within the humanities, scholars who sought to engage with the social construction of disability, and to understand disability as a marker of identity, began to move away from reading disability as largely metaphorical and sought to achieve a more nuanced discussion of the disabled body which, in part, examines the lived experiences of those with disabilities.

Critical Disability Studies and a New Era for Craik

The emergence of the disability rights movement in America, and the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, saw writers and scholars begin to

⁹⁴ Karen Bourrier, "Narrating Insanity in the Letters of Thomas Mulock and Dinah Mulock Craik," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39 (2011): 203–22; Karen Bourrier, "Dinah Mulock Craik and Benjamin Mulock," *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism* 33, no. 3 (2011): 174–87; Martha Stoddard Holmes, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Pre-Raphaelites: Pages from Pettit's Annual Diary," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 297–307.

⁹⁵ Joanne Shattock, "Professional Networking, Masculine and Feminine," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 44, no. 2 (2011): 128–40, doi:10.1353/vpr.2011.0017; Catherine Delafield, "Marketing Celebrity: Norman Macleod, Dinah Mulock Craik, and John Everett Millais in Alexander Strahan's Good Words," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 46, no. 2 (2013): 255–78; Karen Bourrier, "Finding a Transatlantic Audience: Reading Dinah Mulock Craik's *Mistress and Maid* in Good Words and Harper's Magazine," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 49, no. 1 (2016): 100–122.

⁹⁶ Deborah Wynne, "George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Dinah Mulock Craik's *A Brave Lady*"; Charlotte Frew, "The Marriage to a Deceased Wife's Sister Narrative: A Comparison of Novels," *Law and Literature* 24, no. 2 (2012): 265–91.

explore disability as a social construct. Susan Wendell, for example, reflects on this in the introduction to her book *Rejected Bodies*, when she discusses how her own personal experience with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) and chronic, disabling pain, led her to read about other women's experiences with disability, which ultimately led her to develop an undergraduate course focusing on women and disability.⁹⁷ Women began writing about their experiences with illness and disability and the impact of this on their friendships, their children, and their human rights. *With Wings: An Anthology of Literature by Women with Disabilities* is one example of how feminism was, at this time, moving away from examining the singular experiences of the white, middle-class, able-bodied feminist to embrace the voices of many women of all ages, races, social backgrounds and sexualities.⁹⁸ Further to this, Lennard Davis drew the attention of scholars, across multiple disciplines, to the importance of destabilising the concept of what constitutes a normal body, in order to embrace a vision of the body as changeable, imperfect and unruly.⁹⁹ As many of Craik's novels, short stories, children's fiction, and essays contain a character who lives with either a physical, sensory, or mental impairment, this turn towards a recognition of disability as a form of identity has led scholars to re-examine Craik's work as a particularly valuable source of historical representations of disability. Whereas the scholars of the 1970s and 1980s noted the disabled characters in Craik's work and read them metaphorically as representing the lack of agency nineteenth-century woman experienced, literary and cultural scholars now began to challenge these metaphorical readings. As Lennard

⁹⁷ Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996).

⁹⁸ Martha Saxton and Florence Howe, eds., *With Wings: An Anthology of Literature by Women with Disabilities* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1987).

⁹⁹ Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 23-24

Davis points out, the problem with reading disability metaphorically is that it involves the practice of 'looking away'.¹⁰⁰ As a marginalised identity which can, and does, affect us all at some point in our lives, disability is systematically ignored. The reliance on metaphorical readings of disability exacerbate this situation. To illustrate this Davis uses an example from *Jane Eyre* to elucidate his point, by highlighting how reading Rochester's blindness as a metaphor for castration, as a number of critics have done,¹⁰¹ may work within feminist or psychoanalytical readings of the text but fails to 'look directly at blindness' as an embodied experience.¹⁰²

Since the later 1990s, a number of pivotal works have been published which have helped to develop the scholarship of literary and cultural disability studies. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's landmark text *Extraordinary Bodies* provided a succinct view as to how disabled bodies could be theorised within literary and cultural studies and provided examples of how this could be achieved through her analysis of American novels.¹⁰³ Shortly after, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder released their foundational text *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*, which not only charts the way in which disability has been represented throughout history in literature but also provides a new term for our critical vocabulary.¹⁰⁴ *Narrative Prosthesis* works from the premise that 'a body deemed lacking, unfunctional, or inappropriately functional needs compensation, and

¹⁰⁰ Lennard J. Davis, "Seeing the Object as in Itself It Really Is: Beyond the Metaphor of Disability," in *The Madwoman and the Blindman: Jane Eyre, Discourse, and Disability*, eds. David Bolt, Julia Miele Rodas, and Elizabeth J. Donaldson (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012), x.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Richard Chase, "The Brontës; or Myth Domesticated," in *Forms of Modern Fiction*, ed. William O'Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), 102-13; Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*.

¹⁰² Davis, "Seeing the Object as in Itself It Really Is: Beyond the Metaphor of Disability", x

¹⁰³ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York and Chicester: Columbia University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁴ David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

prosthesis helps to effect this end'.¹⁰⁵ Through this compensation and metaphorical fixing of the deviant body disability becomes invisible, as the 'textual prosthesis alleviates discomfort by removing the unsightly from view'.¹⁰⁶ In this text, Mitchell and Snyder seek to expose such prosthetic devices, thereby drawing our attention to processes of erasure and subsequently reinstating the disabled body, along with its 'discomforting presence', into literary discourse.¹⁰⁷ Mitchell and Snyder's discussion of the five key methodologies used by disability scholars within the humanities is also particularly useful for their discussion of the contributions made to literary disability studies by 'new historicism'.¹⁰⁸

As we saw with the beginning of feminist literary studies, the early days of 'new historicism' within disability studies adopted an archaeological approach to unearth representations of disability that would help to challenge our view about human bodily variation and the way in which disability can be viewed as 'a product of specific cultural ideologies'.¹⁰⁹ One area, which has proved to be particularly fruitful for revealing multiple representations of disability, has been eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature with scholars not only examining the potentially negative associations of disability and female confinement but also uncovering more enlightened examples that reveal communal life and invalid autonomy.¹¹⁰ More

¹⁰⁵ Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 6.

¹⁰⁶ Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 8.

¹⁰⁷ Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 8.

¹⁰⁸ The other key areas of disability representation Mitchell and Snyder discuss and which help to guide scholarship in this field are 'Negative Imagery', 'Social Realism', 'New Historicism', 'Biographical Criticism', and 'Transgressive Reappropriation'.

¹⁰⁹ Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 26.

¹¹⁰ For more information see Diane Price Herndl, *Invalid Women: Figuring Feminine Illness in American Fiction and Culture, 1840-1940* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum, eds., *"defects": Engendering the Modern Body* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Cindy Lacom, "The Time Is Sick and Out of Joint": Physical Disability in Victorian England," *PMLA* 120, no. 2 (2005): 547-52; Julia Miele Rodas, "Mainstreaming Disability Studies?," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 34, no. 1 (2006): 371-84; Adrienne Phelps Coco, "Diseased, Maimed, Mutilated: Categorization of Disability and an Ugly Law in Late Nineteenth-Century Chicago," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 1 (2010): 23-37; Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York and

specifically, the disabled body in Victorian literature, not only spoke to the era's concerns about independence and self-governance, but also to associated concerns surrounding disease, heredity, education, and inheritance.¹¹¹ For many nineteenth-century authors the disabled character therefore functioned as a textual prop which allowed the author to reinforce social mores and shore up normality elsewhere in the narrative.¹¹² Tiny Tim, for example, is not traditionally read as Charles Dickens' condemnation of the poor treatment of disabled children in Victorian society, but rather as a narrative device through which a sense of goodwill and human kindness towards his fellow man is awakened in Scrooge.

In 2005 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson highlighted three facets of scholarship necessary to further discussions within disability studies – retrievals, reimaginings, and rethinking.¹¹³ That these aspects mirror those experienced by feminist literary studies tends to confirm their utility in critical disability studies. Narrative retrievals for example, seeks out writing that in some way captures the disabled experience, thereby emphasising the diversity of representations, experiences, and voices.¹¹⁴ Examples of such retrieval work include Martha Stoddard Holmes' ground-breaking work *Fictions of Affliction*.¹¹⁵ Not only does this work demonstrate the importance of retrieving disability from the historical archive and rethinking the way in which narratives of disability can be read, both of which are important components in Garland-Thomson's feminist disability studies project, but it also situates

Chichester Columbia University Press, 1997), for an example of how disability has been interrogated within nineteenth-century studies.

¹¹¹ Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, 2009), 4-5.

¹¹² Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, 6-8.

¹¹³ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Feminist Disability Studies," *Signs* 30, no. 2 (2005): 1560.

¹¹⁴ Garland-Thomson, "Feminist Disability Studies," 1560.

¹¹⁵ Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture*.

disability as a 'historical category' rather than a metaphorical one.¹¹⁶ Whilst much of the early work on Craik stemmed from the retrieval project of feminist literary criticism, this more recent wave of scholarship has retrieved her representations of the disabled body in an attempt to 'dislodge the pervasive notions we all learn about disability and shake up our assumptions about what constitutes happiness, attractiveness, suffering dignity or a liveable experience.'¹¹⁷ The project of retrieval was given a further boost when, in 2006, Julia Miele Rodas noted the need, within literary and cultural studies, to critically examine disability. In particular she noted 'the powerful, almost ubiquitous presence of disability in Victorian literature' adding how, as a result of this strong presence 'it seems strange that there has been so little scholarship specifically investigating the role of the disabled figure in Victorian literature and culture.'¹¹⁸

Craik has benefited greatly from the retrieval project and in recent times scholarship on Craik has been decidedly influenced by such perspectives. In 2013 Karen Bourrier edited a special edition of the journal *Women's Writing*, devoted entirely to Craik. The articles in this edition reveal the extent to which critical disability studies has influenced recent scholarship on this particular author. Of the nine articles published in this edition (including the introduction and afterword), two focus specifically on disability, using critical disability studies to examine the representation of the disabled body, the use of prosthetics, and the intersection of disability and narrative form in Craik's writing.¹¹⁹ Bourrier notes in her introduction

¹¹⁶ Garland-Thomson, "Feminist Disability Studies," 1564.

¹¹⁷ Garland-Thomson, "Feminist Disability Studies," 1559.

¹¹⁸ Julia Miele Rodas, 'Mainstreaming Disability Studies', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 34, no. 1, (2006): 373.

¹¹⁹ Kylee-Anne Hingston, "Prostheses And Narrative Perspective In Dinah Mulock Craik's *The Little Lame Prince*," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 370-86, doi:10.1080/09699082.2013.801125; Tabitha Sparks, "Dinah Mulock

to this collection that ‘the majority of scholars at this critical moment are coming to Craik’s work through a disability studies perspective’.¹²⁰ Whilst this remark is not reflected in the articles chosen for publication in this special edition its veracity is more broadly evident as I will show shortly.

In this special edition we see Tabitha Sparks present an alternative reading, or as Thomson would say, a reimagining, of the nineteenth-century marriage plot in which she suggests that disability in Craik’s novel *Olive* enables Olive to ‘shape-shift into a number of conventionally exclusive destinies, including professional artist and wage earner, wife and mother’.¹²¹ To reimagine disability is to ‘rewrite oppressive social scripts’ that inform our understanding of disability.¹²² Whereas traditional readings of marriage and motherhood in *Olive* suggest, as indeed Stoddard Holmes notes, that regardless of how close disabled characters may get to the plot of love, courtship, and marriage ‘disabled women characters almost never become biological parents’,¹²³ Sparks suggests that Craik’s ending of *Olive* not only leaves open the possibility of biological children in Olive and Harold’s future, but to read Olive as childless negates her role as step-mother to Harold’s daughter.¹²⁴ In doing so Sparks reimagines a future for Olive that, despite her disability, has the potential to include motherhood, thus challenging the social and ‘attitudinal barriers’ that questions the ability of disabled women to be mothers.¹²⁵ In chapter three of this thesis I extend upon this discussion by looking at the role of mothers more broadly in this novel, in

Craik’s *Olive* : Deformity, Gender and Female Destiny,” *Women’s Writing* 9082 (2013): 1–12, doi:10.1080/09699082.2013.801124.

¹²⁰ Karen Bourrier, “Introduction: Rereading Dinah Mulock Craik,” *Women’s Writing* 20. 3 (2013): 292.

¹²¹ Tabitha Sparks, “Dinah Mulock Craik’s *Olive*,” 360.

¹²² Garland-Thomson, “Feminist Disability Studies,” 1567.

¹²³ Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Afflictions*, 6.

¹²⁴ Sparks, “Dinah Mulock Craik’s *Olive*,” 367.

¹²⁵ Garland-Thomson, “Feminist Disability Studies,” 1567.

order to examine the way both biological and non-biological mothers function in the provision of care in this novel.

Craik's children's stories have also come under the spotlight for their representation of disability, in particularly her story *The Little Lane Prince and his Travelling Cloak*.¹²⁶ Kylee-Anne Hingston, in her reading of Craik's children's novel *The Little Lane Prince*, uses prosthetic theory to reimagine disability in the text. Using not only Mitchell and Snyder's theory of narrative prosthesis but also an examination of the material prosthetics used by the prince, Hingston argues that rather than eradicating disability through the normalising effects of the various prosthetics, Craik's fairy tale draws the reader's attention to the social rather than the physical experience of disability.¹²⁷

Yet despite the growing attention to disability within Craik's novels there remains little interest in Craik's representation and engagement with care and vulnerability, despite the frequency with which these feature in Craik's novels. To date, Martha Stoddard Holmes' work on interdependency in *Olive* is the only work to acknowledge Craik's engagement with care. In her article "Victorian Fictions of Interdependency", Holmes notes the problematic nature of words such as dependency in contemporary culture and suggests that this flows from our unwillingness to examine our feelings towards the fiction of independence.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ See also, Alan Richardson, "Reluctant Lords and Lane Princes: Engendering the Male Child in Nineteenth-Century Juvenile Fiction," *Children's Literature* 21, no. 1 (1993): 3-19; Lily Philipose, "The Politics of the Hearth in Victorian Children's Fantasy: Dinah Mulock Craik's *The Little Lane Prince*," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1996): 133-39; Emiliano C. Ayala, "'Poor Little Things' and 'Brave Little Souls': The Portrayal of Individuals with Disabilities in Children's Literature," *Reading Research and Instruction* 39, no. 1 (1999): 103-17; Jane Stemp, "Devices and Desires: Science Fiction, Fantasy and Disability in Literature for Young People," *Disability Studies Quarterly*, accessed May 28, 2015, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/850/1025>; Ann Dowker, "The Treatment of Disability in 19th and Early 20th Century Children's Literature," *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 2004, www.ds-q-sds.org.

¹²⁷ Kylee-Anne Hingston, 371.

¹²⁸ Martha Stoddard Holmes, "Victorian Fictions of Interdependency: Gaskell, Craik, and Yonge," *Journal of Literary Disability* 1, no. 2 (2007): 29-41.

Engaging with Eva Feder Kittay to reinforce her argument, Stoddard Holmes points to the danger of isolating certain members of society through our constant reliance on a narrative of independence. As Kittay states, 'our mutual dependence cannot be bracketed without excluding both significant parts of our lives and large portions of the population from the domain of equity'.¹²⁹ Certainly, the bracketing off of certain nineteenth-century authors as exemplars of proto-feminist female independence has, I suggest, exacerbated the neglect of both interdependency and the role of caring in our society. As Susan Wendell notes 'dependence on the help of others is humiliating in a society which prizes independence'.¹³⁰ However, as she goes on to argue, it is also time that we questioned our cultural obsession with independence and acknowledged our mutual interdependency.¹³¹ Thus, moving beyond representations of independence to examine the networks of care and interdependency seen in nineteenth-century narratives may help us, as Kittay exhorts, to 'find a knife sharp enough to cut through the fiction of our independence' by revealing communities of interdependence which valorise care. In doing so we move into Thomson's third category, rethinking, as we begin to theorize what it means to need care in a world which privileges independence.

Situating Care within Critical Disability Studies

Care is, as Judith Philips points out, fundamental to our daily social interactions and individual identities.¹³² As a practice which is performed in our daily lives, care involves both thought and action and requires that these two things

¹²⁹ Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labour. Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), xii.

¹³⁰ Susan Wendell, "Towards a Feminist Theory of Disability," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis (New York: Routledge, 1997), 347.

¹³¹ Susan Wendell, "Towards a Feminist Theory of Disability," 348.

¹³² Judith Philips, *Care*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007), 4.

be interrelated and applied towards a specific end.¹³³ Throughout our lives the degree of vulnerability and independence we experience changes as we move between the roles of cared-for and care-giver. Just as disability can be viewed as ‘the most human of experiences’¹³⁴ so too can care. When we begin to acknowledge the reciprocal and ongoing nature of care, by recognising the way in which care takes place across and throughout our lifespans, we begin to shift our focus away from cultural mythologies of the independent modern subject towards an acknowledgment of the interdependency of all human beings.¹³⁵ Indeed, if we rethink our able-bodied privilege and consider ourselves as ‘temporarily able-bodied’, a term coined by the disability movement, we begin to acknowledge the vulnerability of the human body and to recognise that we all, at some point in our lives, are likely to experience a physical, mental or sensory impairment which is likely to require a degree of care and support from others.¹³⁶

Yet whilst care is a commonly used word, and an integral part of our daily lives, it is also a complex, contentious, and problematic topic for many in our society. When the act of caring is going well it involves numerous positive emotions and feelings. It inspires trust in the relationship between ‘cared-for’ and ‘care-giver’, along with compassion, empathy, friendship, and a mutual interest in the wellbeing of the other. If care is part of a working relationship, involving financial remuneration, one might also expect to see in the ‘care-giver’ a sense of pride and satisfaction in performing the work of care well and to the satisfaction of the ‘cared-

¹³³ Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 108.

¹³⁴ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory,” *NWSA Journal* 143 (2002): 5.

¹³⁵ Judith Philips, *Care*, 4.

¹³⁶ Judy Rohrer, “Towards a Full-Inclusion Feminism: A Feminist of Deployment Analysis Disability,” *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 43.

for', and in the 'cared-for' an ability to direct and oversee the care they receive. However, when the caring relationship goes wrong, as it did so dramatically in two recent high profile cases that shocked the UK, feelings of disgust, anger, fear, powerlessness and shame are frequently exposed. The cases of Winterbourne View (a care facility for adults with intellectual disabilities) and the Mid-Staffordshire Hospital both highlighted shocking levels of systematic abuse and misuse of power within systems that were believed and trusted to deliver care to vulnerable members of our families and society.¹³⁷

It is not hard to see, therefore, how for many working within the disability movement the word 'care' is viewed as a socially and politically loaded term, a byword for dependency and disempowerment.¹³⁸ The 'spectres of institutionalisation, medicalization and paternalistic charities', along with the legacy of oppressive regimes and the institutionalised abuse of power, thus haunt understandings of 'care' within the field of disability studies.¹³⁹ And as the comments from Nussbaum and Morris, quoted in the epigraph to the introduction reveal, the work of feminist care ethicists and disability scholars surrounding care have, over the past thirty years, diverged so dramatically that, as Morris suggests, the two struggle to co-exist.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ In 2011 an undercover reporter for the UK documentary series *Panorama*, uncovered systemic abuse and human rights violations within a care facility for adults with intellectual disabilities in Bristol. The reporter collected video footage that revealed staff pinning residents to the floor, residents being slapped, taunted, teased, and effectively tortured. Twelve staff were arrested following the broadcast. In July 2010 a public inquiry began in relation to reports of poor care leading to an increased death rate amongst patients at the Stafford Hospital run by the Mid Staffordshire NHS hospital trust. The inquiry found that patients' basic care needs such as assistance with hygiene, toileting, and eating were frequently not met, pain was not adequately managed, misdiagnosis was not uncommon, and family members were frequently called upon to perform nursing and cleaning duties.

¹³⁸ Nick Watson et al., "(Inter)Dependence, Needs and Care: The Potential for Disability and Feminist Theorists to Develop an Emancipatory Model", *Sociology*, 38, no. 2 (2004): 335.

¹³⁹ Christine Kelly, *Disability Politics and Care: The Challenge of Direct Funding* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2016), 4.

¹⁴⁰ Jenny Morris, "Care or Empowerment? A Disability Rights Perspective," *Social Policy & Administration* 31, no. 1 (1997): 54, doi:Doi 10.1111/1467-9515.00037.

Furthermore, it would be naïve to suggest that all feminists have enthusiastically embraced care theory. For example, whilst many readers consider the work of psychologist Carol Gilligan,¹⁴¹ one of the first exponents of feminist care ethics, to have correctly identified care and relationality as central to the different ways in which men and women approach moral issues, others find the work objectionable for the way it too closely links women and care.¹⁴² One of the earliest objections to an ethics of care stemmed from the way in which critics saw it as reaffirming women's role in the home without providing a foundation from which this could be challenged.¹⁴³ Others criticise the use of the mother-infant trope in describing the paradigm of caring human relationships for overly romanticizing motherhood, not adequately representing the vast experiences of women, and reinforcing sex stereotypes.¹⁴⁴ Still other commentators have expressed concern about the unequal distribution of care, noting the comparatively poor remuneration of caring work and the way in which the burden of care remains on poor women and other marginalised groups in society.¹⁴⁵ Yet what these criticisms reveal are the important discussions that must take place at the intersection of care ethics, feminist theory, and political science.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 1982).

¹⁴² Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2008), 158.

¹⁴³ See for example, Claudia Card, "Caring and Evil." *Hypatia* 5.1 (1990) 101-8; Victoria Davion, "Autonomy, Integrity, and Care" *Social Theory and Practice* 19.2 (1993) 161-82; Bill Puka, "The Liberation of Caring: A Different Voice for Gilligan's 'Different Voice'." *Hypatia* 5.1 (1990): 58-82.

¹⁴⁴ See for example, Sarah Lucia Hoagland, "Some Thoughts about Caring." *Feminist Ethics*, Ed. Claudia Card. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1991); Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Women: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1988)

¹⁴⁵ Peta Bowden, *Caring*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); Diemut Grace Bubeck, 'Justice and the Labour of Care', *The Subject of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Dependency*, eds. Eva Feder Kittay, Ellen K. Feder (Lanham, Maryland: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2002), pp. 160-185.

¹⁴⁶ Many care scholars position their work in some way at this intersection. Far from essentialising stereotypical gender roles feminist care ethics can be used to challenge hegemonic structures of power and work towards developing alternative ways of living. See for example, Selma Sevenhuijsen, *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care: Feminist Considerations on Justice, Morality and Politics*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); Olena Hankivsky, *Social Policy and the Ethic of Care*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005); Tove Pettersen, *Comprehending Care*, (Lanham, Boulder New York: Lexington Press, 2008);

Each of the ethicists I engage with in this thesis works in some way at this intersection. Not only do they each bring to the conversation the unique language of their disciplinary backgrounds and personal experiences but they also acknowledge the fundamental aspect of care to our everyday life. Virginia Held, for instance, demonstrates the relevance of care ethics to political, social and global questions by conceptualising care as a cluster of values and practices that have the potential to deal with the power and violence that imbues many relationships.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Joan Tronto sanctions a feminist care ethic designed to thwart the accumulation of more power by those who would exploit it,¹⁴⁸ whilst Sara Ruddick uses care ethics to theorise mothering and develop a unique approach to fostering peace.¹⁴⁹ Likewise, Nel Noddings draws together these strands to argue for a need to teach peace in our schools.¹⁵⁰ Finally, Eva Feder Kittay reveals the importance of this intersection to disability studies as she develops, in her work *Love's Labor*, a dependency based account of equality that is rooted in care for the disabled.¹⁵¹

In acknowledging the importance of care in our daily lives feminist care ethics not only reveals the human condition to be one of relationality, connectedness, and interdependence but also highlights the importance of caring work in the both the public and private realm. Yet for disability scholars care continues to be haunted by the spectres of oppressive regimes and the institutionalised abuse of power.¹⁵² Whilst feminist care ethicists speak of vulnerability and interdependence, disability scholars speak of autonomy and

¹⁴⁷ Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: The Personal, Political, Global*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 46.

¹⁴⁸ Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*.

¹⁴⁹ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1990).

¹⁵⁰ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁵¹ Kittay, *Love's Labor. Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency*.

¹⁵² Kelly, *Disability Politics and Care*, 5.

independence. Given the dominant cultural narrative of the disabled body as weak, vulnerable, and dependent, it is not surprising that disability scholars have sought to focus on the independence and autonomy of the individual, thereby seeking out narratives and representations that reflect this portrayal. For disability scholar Jenny Morris, for example, care is an ideology which must be ‘thrown off’ in order to liberate disabled people from ‘a form of oppression and an expression of prejudice’.¹⁵³ Morris, an advocate for the social model of disability, rightly notes the paternalism at the heart of ‘caring-for’ disabled people and the subsequent silencing of their voices in the caring relationship. The problematic aspect of service provision whereby disabled people are ‘assumed to be unable to exert choice and control’ over their own lives is also central to Morris’s argument with care, and with good cause, as it jeopardises the rights of individuals to achieve self-determination. However, the consequence of such negative views, as Teppo Kroger notes, is that concepts of care and caring have been, to a large extent, abandoned by disability scholars.¹⁵⁴ In addition to a general abandonment of care there is also, I would suggest, a misunderstanding of the principles of an ethic of care which results in the areas of disability and care being seen as incompatible when in fact they both seek to achieve caring justice for all as Nussbaum reveals.¹⁵⁵

Both care and justice play a central role in moral thinking despite the fact that they are often thought of as occupying different spheres of life – care seemingly involved in the private world of emotional care and our engagements with others, whilst justice occupies that space concerned with our autonomy from others and the

¹⁵³ Morris, “Care or Empowerment? A Disability Rights Perspective,” 54.

¹⁵⁴ T Kröger, “Care Research and Disability Studies: Nothing in Common?,” *Critical Social Policy* 29, no. 3 (2009): 399, doi:10.1177/0261018309105177.

¹⁵⁵ Martha Nussbaum, “The Future of Feminist Liberalism,” in *The Subject of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Dependency*, ed. Eva Feder Kittay and Ellen K Feder (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Littlefield Publishers, 2002), 188.

'just and rational application of rules and principles'.¹⁵⁶ And yet it is this very binary understanding of care as something which is in opposition to justice that perpetuates misunderstandings of care and prevents the two ethical positions from working harmoniously together. The social construction of care as 'women's work' not only serves to reinforce this binary, but also functions to push discussions of care behind closed doors – women care in the privacy of their homes as opposed to the public and masculine coded sphere of justice. However, to continue to think in terms of care and justice as binary opposites is unhelpful in furthering our understanding of disability and care. Rather, we need to consider how the two can, and do, function together for it is the combination of an ethic of justice, focused on the rights of the individual, with an ethic of care, focused, in part, on interdependence and relationality that will best serve those in need of care.

To help achieve this unification of care and justice the bioethicists, Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, have identified four separate but interrelated phases of care which provide a good starting point for thinking about caring relationships. These phases, according to Fisher and Tronto, are caring about, taking care of, care giving, and care-receiving.¹⁵⁷ Of these four elements it is the final one that is most important in respect to ensuring justice and care combine, for it is here that the focus of the caring relationship is turned towards the one receiving the care. Until this point the focus of care has been on the one giving the care – an individual or group perceives a need for care to exist and goes about implementing this care. However, what if the perception is wrong, what if the care then implemented is unwanted, inadequate, or incompetent? In these cases the care is unjust and the

¹⁵⁶ Michael Slote, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (Abingdon and New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007), 1.

¹⁵⁷ Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 106-107.

relationship inequitable. It is this aspect of care that is rightly problematic and has led many disability scholars to be suspicious of care or abandon it entirely. This final phase of caring highlights the importance of being responsive to the needs, wishes, and expectations of the one receiving the care, thereby ensuring that justice is incorporated into the caring relationship.

In addition to these four phases Fisher and Tronto also provide us with a definition of care which seeks to encompass these different aspects of care and caring and which reflects the complex 'life sustaining web' of connections within which care takes place. They suggest that caring can be viewed as:

[an] activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex life-sustaining web. ¹⁵⁸

This definition of care, I propose, is useful in that it includes the way in which we might care for, and reshape, our environment in order to accommodate human bodily variation. Caring for bodies through, for example, the provision of prosthetics and mobility devices, or our environment through universal design, enables diverse bodies and able-bodies to co-exist in our world. Furthermore this definition reminds us of the relational nature of life, the 'life-sustaining web' which emphasizes interdependence over independence for, as Mitchell and Snyder state, 'the *interdependency* of disability living constitutes an important factor' in achieving independence and autonomy.¹⁵⁹

Like Kittay, Tronto calls for a re-imagining of society and the human condition as one of 'interdependence' rather than 'independence'. Yet, as Martha Albertson Fineman highlights, 'the spectre of dependency is incompatible with our

¹⁵⁸ Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*, 103

¹⁵⁹ Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis*, xii.

beliefs and myths' which go towards constructing the ideal autonomous citizen.¹⁶⁰

Recent trends, however, reflect a turn away from this mythical autonomous individual and a turn towards a growing interest in the areas of care ethics and vulnerability studies. The 'Vulnerability and the Human Condition Initiative' at Emory University, for example, brings together scholars from across a range of disciplines including law, gender studies, social sciences, medicine, and the humanities to discuss vulnerability and dependency, which the initiative argues unites us in our humanity.¹⁶¹ Certainly within literary studies there has, since the 1990s, been a turn to the ethical criticism of texts.¹⁶² This turn to ethics has, as David Parker notes, been fuelled largely by the work of philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum, Cora Diamond, Frederick Olafson, and Richard Rorty, who have turned to literature to help them answer their philosophical questions.¹⁶³ Furthermore, scholars such as Daniel R. Schwarz, suggests that this ethical turn is capable of helping us to refocus our attention on how humans live.¹⁶⁴ As Schwarz suggests,

human behaviour is central to most literary texts and should be a major concern of analysis. Although the modes of characterization differ, the psychology and morality of characters must be understood as if the characters were metaphors for real people, for understanding others helps us to understand ourselves.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Martha Albertson Fineman, *The Autonomy Myth* (New York and London: The New Press, 2004), 34.

¹⁶¹ See <http://web.gs.emory.edu/vulnerability/> for further information on the work carried out by this center.

¹⁶² See, for example, Leona Toker, ed., *Commitment in Reflection: Essays in Literature and Moral Philosophy* (New York, 1994); Jane Adamson, Richard Freadman, and David Parker, eds., *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy, and Theory* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack, eds., *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001); Stephen K. George, ed., *Ethics, Literature, and Theory: An Introductory Reader* (New York, Toronto, Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005).

¹⁶³ David Parker, "Introduction: The Turn to Ethics in the 1990s," in *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy, and Theory*, ed. Jane Adamson, Richard Freadman, and David Parker (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14.

¹⁶⁴ Daniel R Schwarz, "A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*, ed. Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 3.

¹⁶⁵ Schwarz, "A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," 4.

This approach to analysing and producing meaning from literature is important when reading narratives of care in Craik's writing. Through the actions of Craik's characters and their involvement in relationships of care, both positive and negative, we may be better positioned not only to understand our own responses to vulnerability and the fundamental nature of care in our society, but also to begin to challenge the ongoing cultural myth of the autonomous individual. For despite this recent turn towards a critical engagement and examination of relationality and interdependency, the focus on independence and the individual remains strong within analyses of nineteenth-century literature. Indeed, in a 2015 paper entitled 'Reinventing the Nineteenth-Century Novel' Professor Isobel Armstrong called upon scholars of the Victorian novel to move beyond this focus on the individual and the Bildungsroman to examine the role of the displaced and disposed in the novel.¹⁶⁶

Moving Forward – Disability, Care, and Interdependency in Craik's Novels

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, through my thematic review of the scholarship on Craik, disability studies has certainly helped to propel the retrieval and reimagining of Craik's body of work. For the rest of this thesis I seek to 'rethink' Craik's work, and her representation of disability, by analysing it in relation to her engagement with care. In developing my ideas about care I take my understanding of feminist care ethics to be a moral theory which interrogates the assumption of the autonomous individual and challenges the

¹⁶⁶ Isobel Armstrong, "Reinventing the Nineteenth-Century Novel," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the British Association of Victorian Studies, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, University of Oxford, 12 May 2015).

gendered understanding of care in our society. Feminist care ethics, as Kittay, Ruddick and Gilligan have variously argued, focuses on the interconnectedness of society, the inherent vulnerabilities and dependencies we all bear simply by being human, and the capacity for care to extend beyond the gendered domestic sphere into a non-gendered public and political sphere, and I take this understanding with me as I analyse Craik's writing. I have also been influenced by the work of Martha Stoddard Holmes, which examines interdependency in the work of Craik as well as other nineteenth-century women writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Yonge.¹⁶⁷ As Stoddard Holmes explains, nineteenth-century literature not only features some of the most damaging representations of disability but also presents us with an array of representations featuring networks of care that reveal disability and vulnerability to be an integral part of daily life. In reading Craik's work, both fictional and non-fictional, through the lens of feminist care ethics I build on this important work by Stoddard Holmes, to demonstrate the value that can be gained from examining representations of care.

By positioning my analysis of Craik's work at the intersection of critical disability studies, literary theory, and feminist ethics of care, I aim to weave the threads of each tradition together to create a comprehensive analysis of care in Craik's narratives. From critical disability studies, I draw on the field's aims to re-imagine disability by destabilising stereotypes, challenging our assumptions about those who live with a disability, retrieving lost voices, highlighting the social construction of identity and disability, and exploring the politics and

¹⁶⁷ Stoddard Holmes, "Victorian Fictions of Interdependency: Gaskell, Craik, and Yonge," 29-41.

dynamics of giving and receiving care. In relation to nineteenth-century literature, where disability has often been read as a metaphor for the confinement of women within the domestic/private sphere, Kim Hall's call for a specific feminist disability studies which 'examines the way disability has often been used ... as a metaphor for women's oppression in ways that further marginalise and stigmatise disabled women' is particularly useful, as it provides the opportunity to interweave feminist work on care, disability and literature.¹⁶⁸ In order to critically engage with the discourse of care I draw on Kittay's essays on dependency and equality,¹⁶⁹ Sara Ruddick's theory of maternal care,¹⁷⁰ and Joan Tronto's work on the ethics of care.¹⁷¹ In doing so, I examine the way in which Craik herself struggled with the gendered aspects of care, to create narratives which both support and yet simultaneously challenge, reinforce and yet also destabilise the role and value of care within nineteenth-century society. Craik's portrayal of care and caring relationships requires further investigation in order to better understand nineteenth-century attitudes towards care which, I suggest, have formed the foundation of many contemporary attitudes surrounding care and disability.

In the following chapter I explore Craik's letters and diaries, alongside a number of her essays, in order to re-examine Craik's biography through the lens of an ethic of care. By revisiting Craik's life, and accordingly her lived experience of care in this chapter, the extent to which her personal philosophy of care influenced her writing will become clear. The insights she gained throughout her life in regard

¹⁶⁸ Hall, "Feminism, Disability, and Embodiment", x.

¹⁶⁹ Kittay, *Love's Labour. Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency*.

¹⁷⁰ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1990)

¹⁷¹Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*.

to the many and varied human responses to care, disability, and vulnerability are reflected again and again in her writing.

The Threads That Bind Us:

Dinah Mulock Craik and a Personal Philosophy of Care

Ye cannot live for yourselves; a thousand fibres connect you with our fellow men, and along these fibres, as along sympathetic threads, run your actions as causes, and return to you as effects.

The Rev. Henry Melvill ¹

Scenes of caring for the sick, ailing, and disabled, especially within the confines of the sick-room, appear frequently in nineteenth-century literature. These scenes, according to Miriam Bailin, function as a narrative device which enable the protagonist to move from a crisis point that results in social isolation, to the 'consoling community of the sickroom'.² Furthermore it also demonstrates one of the features of Evangelical Christianity in which pain was seen as a part of God's plan for the moral redemption of mankind.³ In Bailin's description of the sickroom as 'a consoling community' the invalid is no longer alone but rather surrounded by, and frequently in command of, a network of family and friends. Such a description reflects the interconnectedness of society, posited in Reverend Melvill's 1855 sermon, in which he states that we cannot live for ourselves alone but rather that we are connected by 'a thousand fibres'⁴. These sympathetic fibres, which connect us to our fellow man, and which reflect nineteenth-century ideas of sociability manifest

¹ The Rev. Henry Melvill, *The Preacher in Print: The Golden Lectures* (London: James Paul, 1855), 884. This quote is frequently, and wrongly, attributed to the American author Herman Melville.

² Miriam Bailin, *Life in the Sickroom: The Art of Being Ill* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5.

³ Bailin, *Life in the Sickroom*, 5.

⁴ Melvill, *The Preacher in Print*, 884.

themselves in Craik's writing through her representation of care. In Craik's work, both fictional and non-fictional, we see this focus on care extend beyond the sick room. Whether it be the filial care of the daughter to her mother, as is seen in *Olive* (1850) and her serialised story 'My Mother and I' (1874); the care that exists between siblings in *Agatha's Husband* (1853) and *Head of the Family* (1852); or the care of a servant to his master seen in *Michael the Miner* (1846) and *A Noble Life* (1866), care appears in multiple forms. Many of Craik's fictionalised accounts of care can also be found reflected in her own life which abounds with examples of interdependency and networks of care. In this chapter I seek to explore, through an examination of Craik's letters and diary entries, along with some of her essays, the way in which the concepts of care and sociability played a part in Craik's life, both through her engagement with various philanthropic causes and her personal experience of disability, illness, invalidism, and interdependence.

Whilst this chapter seeks to examine Craik's biography it is not my intention to rewrite her biographical history, as this has previously been well documented by both Sally Mitchell and Karen Bourrier. Rather I aim to reinterpret aspects of Craik's life, to re-read it through the lens of an ethics of care, and in doing so expand our understanding of the topics she engaged with in her writing. Before examining Craik's personal engagement with care, however, it is worthwhile to consider the socio-historical context within which Craik lived, as both a woman and a writer, so as to better understand the various ways in which she engages with the act of caring. By reflecting on Michel Foucault's essay 'The Subject and Power', in which he discusses the rise of what he terms 'pastoral power',⁵ along with Annemieke van

⁵ Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8 (Summer 1982): 777-795.

Drenth and Francisca de Haan's study on the rise of 'caring power' in the 1800s,⁶ I will position Craik within a period which saw women adopt caring roles not simply because of the gendered separation of the public and private spheres but because it enabled them to become active agents in society, attending to the needs and welfare of their fellow-human beings and, often inadvertently, becoming political agents of change. To frame this chapter, and my discussion of care as it applies to Craik's personal philosophy and lived experience of care, I employ Joan Tronto's four phases of care – caring about, taking care of, care-giving and care-receiving, in order to highlight the diverse, complex, and sometimes problematic nature of care.⁷

The Rise of Caring Power in the Nineteenth-Century

On the morning of Tuesday 12th June, 1855, the Reverend Henry Melvill, Chaplain in Ordinary to her Majesty the Queen, stepped up to the pulpit in St. Margaret's Church, Lothbury and delivered his sermon. Entitled 'Partaking in other men's sins', the sermon spoke of the impact each individual has on his fellow man, and whilst the theme of the sermon was sin, the message can also be applied to care for it demonstrates the profound understanding the Victorians had in respect to sociability and relationality. Melvill's description of the threads that connect us as 'sympathetic fibres' focuses attention on the way in which these connections are ones of compassion, understanding and care. For without a doubt, one of the defining features of the Victorian era was that of care for the other. Often overshadowed by the spirit of industrialisation and individual 'self-help', care can be seen reflected in the widespread programmes of reform and the general 'busyness'

⁶ Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999).

⁷ van Drenth and de Hann, *The Rise of Caring Power*.

of good works seen throughout the period. The abolition of slavery, prison reform, and Lord Shaftesbury's extensive program aimed at social improvement all came to fruition in the nineteenth century and ran parallel to the Christian ideology of duty towards one's fellow man. When Charles Kingsley delivered his lecture to the supporters of the Kirkdale Ragged School in 1870, he used the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan to emphasise the need to care for others. Kingsley asked his audience that evening:

What do you consider to be your duty towards these children? ... You all know the parable of the Good Samaritan. You all know how he found the poor wounded Jew by the wayside, and for the mere sake of their common humanity, simply because he was a man ... bound up his wounds, set him on his own beast, led him to an inn, and took care of him ... Is yours the duty which the Good Samaritan felt? – the duty of mere humanity? That, - and I think, a little more.⁸

Focusing on the common humanity found between the wounded Jew and the Samaritan to highlight the duty of care which each individual has to his fellow man, Kingsley, like Melville, seeks to expose the importance of connections between individuals, to draw them together, rather than focus on them as autonomous and solitary beings. By imploring all members of society to accept their responsibility to each other, Kingsley and Melville demonstrate the shift in pastoral power Foucault identifies as having taken place in the late eighteenth century, and which moved the responsibility of care from ecclesiastical institutions to the wider social body of the modern state.⁹

Whilst it is not my aim, in this chapter, to explore the underlying complex web of economic and political ideologies that inspired the proliferation of caring

⁸ Charles Kingsley, "Human Soot," in *Charles Kingsley, His Letters and Memories of his Life Edited by his Wife*, Vol. II (Henry S. King and Co. 1877), 322.

⁹ Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 777.

works, such as that referred to in Kingsley's lecture, the recognition of a common humanity and the duty to care for others were key features behind these actions.¹⁰ As Martha Albertson Fineman states, in a way which echoes the sentiment of Henry Melville, it is our vulnerability and dependence on others that makes us human and draws us into community with others.¹¹ Despite the nineteenth century's focus on the individual, human relationality is reflected throughout the period as many authors variously engaged with the topics of care and reform. For women this focus on a shared humanity as a fundamental part of philanthropy enabled them to utilise the act of caring in order to facilitate a move from the private to the public sphere.¹² Foucault's thesis on the shift from pastoral power, based in ecclesiastical institutions and the church, to a new and more socially engaged pastoral power located in the social body can be usefully applied to help account for the explosion of philanthropic works carried out by institutions and individuals, especially women, at this time. Whilst Lauren Goodlad has noted that Foucault's work on pastorship can be beneficial in examining Victorian Britain as it is 'sufficiently flexible to describe the aims and achievements both of ... staunch individualists ... and humanitarian critics,' she also cautions against importing Foucault's ideas without acknowledging the differences that existed between the social and political systems of Britain and Continental Europe that was Foucault's focus.¹³ Goodlad's concern is valid and so, in

¹⁰ See, for example, Lauren Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003) and Daniel Siegel, *Charity and Condescension: Victorian Literature and the Dilemmas of Philanthropy* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio State University, 2012), for a detailed discussion of the way *laissez-faire* economic theory and the religious liberalism of early nineteenth-century dissenters combined to foster this explosion of caring works in Victorian Britain.

¹¹ Martha Albertson Fineman, *The Autonomy Myth* (New York and London: The New Press, 2004), 35.

¹² During this time a number of lectures were delivered advocating for a greater focus on women's role in the public sphere. Philanthropic and charitable work was considered one way of blurring the boundaries of the public and private spheres by allowing women to transfer the gendered activities of the domestic sphere into the public and social spaces of the hospital, the prison, the workhouse, and the homes of the poor. See Dorice Williams Elliott, *The Angel out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2002), for further information.

¹³ Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State*, 19.

my engagement with the idea of pastorship that follows, I will remain alert to the way in which Foucault's thesis diverges from the British context as I focus my attention on British examples of philanthropy and care.

According to Foucault, pastoral power had its roots in Christianity which 'brought into being a code of ethics' radically different from that which had been used previously to control subjects.¹⁴ Focusing on the role of the priest or pastor, pastoral power was employed through four key strategies. Firstly, the ultimate goal of pastoral power is to assure the individual that they will receive salvation in the next world.¹⁵ Secondly, unlike royal power, which requires a sacrifice from its subjects in order to save the throne, proponents of pastoral power must be prepared to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of their flock.¹⁶ Thirdly, pastoral power looks after both the community and the individual, and finally, in order for pastoral power to succeed, proponents need to be cognisant of the individual's innermost thoughts and secrets.¹⁷ With the advancement of Enlightenment philosophy in the eighteenth century, the church's control over the social body diminished. However, as Foucault points out, whilst religious institutions may have lost their vitality and control, the function they held, especially in relation to pastoral power, continued, only now it found its location outside of ecclesiastical institutions.¹⁸ Foucault's analysis of pastoral power, in this essay, however, focuses on Catholic France where the systems of power differed greatly from 'Protestant, liberal Britain, with its wide variety of voluntary, local, and ad hoc practices' and religious views.¹⁹ In

¹⁴ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 783.

¹⁵ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 783.

¹⁶ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 783.

¹⁷ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 783.

¹⁸ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 783.

¹⁹ Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State*, 19.

nineteenth-century Britain religion continued to play an important role in social change and pastoral care with evangelical and non-conformist groups leading the way in, for example, the abolition movement and prison reform. Despite these differences, a new version of pastoral power came into play in Britain that reflected these changes.

In this newly adapted version of pastoral power the aim was no longer to lead people into salvation in the next world, but rather to ensure their salvation and well-being in this world. Health, security, and education, for example, all assumed a portion of the pastoral role previously controlled by the church. Officials and monitors of pastoral care developed in non-religious public institutions such as the police, hospitals, and schools, as well as individual benefactors and philanthropists.²⁰ Whereas the earlier model of pastoral care had been located solely in one body, that of the church, now it could be found spread out across multiple institutions, such as the family, medicine, psychiatry, education, and the law. Rather than weakening the strength of pastoral power, though, this divestment of power across multiple institutions spread the control of power across the entire social body. Policemen, social workers, doctors, and educators became 'secular shepherds' tending the needs of their flock.²¹ One of the great figures of the day, in whom we can see this shift to a new pastoral power is Lord Shaftesbury (1801–1885), a man who, as Richard Turnbull notes had 'an intense personal interest [...] in the welfare of humanity'.²² During his political career Lord Shaftesbury reformed legislation around asylums, child labour, factory working hours, mines, chimney sweeps and

²⁰ Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 784.

²¹ van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 15.

²² Richard Turnbull, *Shaftesbury, The Great Reformer* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010), 71.

education and was posthumously honoured for his work for humankind.²³ Through figures such as Lord Shaftesbury we can see that there remained a Christian duty to one's fellow man, however the power to effect change now lay in the hands of man, not God. In addition, the shift in the dynamics of pastoral power enabled women to become agents of power as they entered the public realm to tend to the welfare needs of those within their communities. Women such as Octavia Hill grasped this opportunity to 'promote social betterment by collective means'.²⁴ To better describe this role, especially as it was adopted by women, van Drenth and de Haan coin the term 'caring power', in order to both emphasise the role of 'lay' men and women as agents of power and to underline the importance of care in this new power relationship.²⁵

According to van Drenth and de Haan, the rise in pastoral power saw women become increasingly engaged in a number of large political issues of their day as they began to advocate for the rights, freedom, and education of a number of oppressed groups.²⁶ The movement for the abolition of slavery, for example, was largely generated by members of the Quaker and evangelical religious movements including the writer and philanthropist Hannah More; Elizabeth Fry, also a Quaker, made her life's work one of prison reform; Florence Nightingale took caring power to the Crimean in her quest to ensure safe and professional nursing care for British soldiers; whilst later in the nineteenth century Josephine Butler, an evangelical

²³ The statue in Piccadilly Circus, more commonly known as the statue of Eros, was in fact erected in 1893 to commemorate the philanthropic works of Lord Shaftesbury and is officially titled 'The Angel of Christian Charity'. The suggestion has been made that the statue is that of Eros's brother, Anteros, who represents reflective, mature, and self-less love, rather than the frivolous and romantic love of Eros. See Richard Dorment, "Alfred Gilbert: Biography and Entries," in *Victorian High Renaissance*, eds. Richard Dorment, Gregory Hedburg, Leonée Ormond, Richard Ormond, and Allen Staley (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1978), 181.

²⁴ Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State*, viii.

²⁵ van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 15.

²⁶ van Drenth and de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power*, 162.

Anglican, was especially concerned with the welfare of prostitutes and ran a long campaign to abolish the Contagious Diseases Act, an act which frequently resulted in the physical harm and unfair imprisonment of young women suspected of being prostitutes. Each of these women, and they are but a few amongst the myriad of women who practiced caring power throughout the nineteenth century, saw in others a shared humanity that drove them in their work to achieve individual dignity for the other. By harnessing traditional expectations of women's roles, and employing them in the public realm for society's benefit, these women were able to achieve a degree of personal freedom and self-determination. Whilst the recognition of a common humanity and the duty to care for others were key features behind these actions, pastoral power nevertheless provided a significant opportunity for women to engage in work beyond the private sphere of the home.

Despite the tendency to discuss the nineteenth century in relation to its focus on the autonomous individual, reflected in part by the popularity of the *Bildungsroman* genre and texts such as Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help*, human relationality was a key feature of the century. As Goodlad notes, whilst Victorian Britain was a liberal society, influenced by laissez-faire economic principles, this belief was not universal. Other tenets, be they based on the romantic-influenced liberalism of post-revolution France or the 'religious-inflected liberalism of many nineteenth-century Evangelical and dissenters' similarly influenced policy makers.²⁷ This complex interplay of individualism and social conscience is reflected, not only in the many laws that were passed during this time, designed to improve the living and working conditions of the working classes, but also in the way writers variously engaged

²⁷ Goodlad, *Victoria Literature and the Victorian State*, ix.

with topics which had at their core, care and reform.²⁸ Numerous representations of social problems in need of reform were widely distributed, ensuring, as Amanda Claybaugh notes, that 'reformist ideas would move beyond the committee meeting or lecture hall and pervade culture more generally.'²⁹ Whilst these issues were addressed in a variety of literary forms including poetry, essays, and letters to editors, they are perhaps best known today through their representations in novels.

From the late 1830s, the 'condition of England' novel, or 'the novel of purpose', became a popular tool through which writers, male and female, engaged with the problems facing the country.³⁰ The rapid growth of industrial cities combined with the laissez-faire economic management philosophy of factory owners, resulted in poor living and working conditions for large portions of the population. For workers and their families living in cities such as Manchester, the high density population, coupled with poor housing and sanitation, effectively saw them living in slums, whilst the working conditions to which they were exposed in the mines and factories were untenable. In addition, a series of poor harvests resulted in food poverty and starvation. As such 'the factory question', 'the hungry

²⁸ See for example, Frances Trollope, *Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw*, 1836; Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism*, 1839; Francis Trollope, *Michael Armstrong: Factory Boy*, 1840; Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, *Helen Fleetwood*, 1841; Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Cry of the Children*, 1843; Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby*, 1844; Frederick Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, 1845; Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 1848; Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Sons*, 1848; Charles Kingsley, *Yeast*, 1848; Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*, 1849; Charles Kingsley, *Alton Locke*, 1850; Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851; Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, 1854; Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, 1855; Charles Kingsley, *The Water-Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby*, 1863; Annie Besant, 'The "White Slavery" of London Match Workers', *Link*, 1888; Ada Nield Chew, 'A Living Wage for Factory Girls in Crewe', *The Crewe Chronicle*, 1894

²⁹ Amanda Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 2.

³⁰ James Richard Simmons, Jr. notes that, whilst this genre of novel has been ascribed a variety of names, the 'condition of England novel' is the most inclusive of all the subjects covered by this genre. See James Richard Simmons, "Industrial and 'Condition of England' Novels," in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford, UK; Carlton, Australia; Berlin, Germany: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2002), 336–52. However, more recently, Amanda Claybaugh describes these, and many other nineteenth-century novels as 'novels of purpose' in that they were written with the intention of having some effect on the reader which would later distil to an effect in the world. This reflects Craik's personal view of the novel as a powerful agent of change and so, in this thesis, it will be more useful to follow Claybaugh's example and use the term 'novels of purpose'.

forties', and Chartist uprisings became significant subjects for novelists such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Kingsley, and Charles Dickens. As James Richard Simmons, Jr, notes, novelists not only found an audience keen to learn more about the plight of the working classes but also sought to use the novel as 'a method of teaching' their readers about the 'real condition of England' under which their fellow humans were living.³¹ Certainly Craik was of this view as she wrote in her 1861 essay, 'To Novelists — And a Novelist', that the modern novel was one of the most important moral agents within the community, noting how:

The essayist may write for his hundreds; the preacher preach to his thousands; but the novelist counts his audience by millions, His power is threefold – over heart, reason, and fancy. The orator we hear eagerly, but as his voice fades from us its lessons depart; the moral philosopher we read and digest, by degrees, in a serious, ponderous way: but the really good writer of fiction takes us altogether by storm. Young and old, grave and gay, learned or imaginative, who of us is safe from his influence?³²

Through their various engagements with these subjects, along with their sympathetic portrayal of human vulnerability and care for the other, Victorian novelists display the idea of caring power as revealed by van Drenth and de Haan.

Yet this engagement was not without its contradictions. Paradoxically, whilst many Victorians would not have regarded themselves, politically, as liberals they were however, responsive to the idea of liberating the individual from state interference.³³ Craik, for example, wrote that 'Heaven helps those who help themselves'³⁴ reflecting the liberal ideology of a free society in which the individual

³¹ Simmons, "Industrial and 'Condition of England' Novels", 336. It is worth noting that whilst the novel was the dominant form of entertainment for the Victorians, poetry also played an important role with poems such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's, *The Cry of the Children* providing a powerful portrait of child labour and suffering.

³² Dinah Mulock Craik, "To Novelists-and a Novelist," *Macmillan's Magazine* 3 (1861): 442.

³³ Goodlad, *Victoria Literature and the Victorian State*, viii.

³⁴ Dinah Mulock Craik, "A Woman's Thoughts about Women," in *Christina Rossetti Maude, Dinah Mulock Craik On Sisterhoods, A Woman's Thoughts about Women*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 75.

is unimpeded by state intervention. Despite this she was also alert to the importance of caring for others as we see in her letters, diaries, and essays, to be discussed later in this chapter. The way Craik vacillates between notions of the liberal individual on the one hand and relationality on the other is a common feature of Victorian writing. Goodlad, for example, notes how authors such as Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Harriet Martineau, and, later in the century, H.G. Wells also grappled with this clash of ideologies.³⁵ Furthermore, as Brigid Lowe argues, the Victorian novel, even when its apparent message is individualistic, proves an excellent vehicle 'for an exposition of a sympathetic politics of care'.³⁶

A Taxonomy of Care

In order to fully understand care, as it is represented in literature and more specifically the work of Craik, it is necessary for me to employ a system of classification. The range of ways in which care, and as a consequence caring power, can be enacted are so numerous that in order to make meaningful any analysis of them, a system of classification is necessary. Whilst there are other taxonomies of care which could be used here I utilise Tronto's four phases of care. Whilst these phases are closely aligned to those proposed by Nel Noddings in her book *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education*, in which Noddings utilises the phases, caring-for, and caring-about³⁷ I have chosen to focus on Tronto's phases as she does not distinguish care as a specific feature of moral decision making for women only but rather presents a less gendered discussion which recognises care as

³⁵ Goodlad, *Victoria Literature and the Victorian State*, xii.

³⁶ Brigid Lowe, *Victorian Fiction and the Insights of Sympathy: An Alternative to the Hermeneutics of Suspicion* (London: Anthem Press, 2007), 241.

³⁷ Nel Noddings, *Caring. A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1986), xiv.

a universal act capable of being performed by both men and women. Furthermore, Tronto includes the vitally important phase of care-receiving which acknowledges the recipient of the care in the process. This final aspect of consideration in the caring process is crucially important when discussing disability and care as it provides the key to ensuring the autonomy of the cared-for in the relationship. These four elements of care, 'caring about', 'taking care of', 'care-giving', and 'care-receiving', succinctly describe the various ways we engage with the act of caring in daily life. On their own, however, they do not ensure that the care is delivered ethically. In order for us to be alert to the ethical considerations of care we must also be cognisant of the 'four ethical elements ... attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness' which Tronto claims arise from the aforementioned elements of care.³⁸

Whilst I will expand in more detail, when examining Craik's personal engagement with care, Tronto's four phases can be summarised as follows. Firstly, 'caring about' involves an individual being attentive to a situation and as a consequence recognising that there is a need for care in a particular situation. In order to do this it is often necessary to imagine oneself in the place of the other in order to recognise their need. In his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1738-1740), the Scottish philosopher David Hume notes how 'no quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than the propensity we have to sympathise with others'.³⁹ Hume's work is important, in relation to care theory, as it

³⁸ Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 127.

³⁹ David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (The Floating Press: 2009), 490, accessed March, 7, 2017, ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uwa.edu.au/lib/uwa/detail.action?docID=435863>.

is through this recognition, whether we choose to call it empathy or sympathy, that the shared humanity which exists between individuals is identified and the 'threads that bind us' draw us closer together as we recognise ourselves in others.

Having recognised that something can be done about an unmet need and acknowledging a desire to, in some way, assume some responsibility for meeting this need, the question then becomes one of what exactly should be done to meet the need for care. In Tronto's four phases of care this decision falls within the two elements of 'taking care of' and 'care-giving'. There is a fine line between these two phases but that line can be drawn, as indeed Tronto does, by insisting that care-giving requires direct contact with those requiring the care. In this way we might view, for example, the donations of money to fund a soup kitchen as taking care of the need whilst making and serving the soup at the kitchen, care-giving. This distinction becomes useful when we attempt to examine care and philanthropy in Victorian Britain. Much of the philanthropy in the nineteenth century involved the donation of money to build schools, hospital wings, libraries and so on, or the bequeathing of vast collections to the nation for the intellectual and cultural growth of the empire. The evidence of this remains today in the names of iconic buildings such as the Tate Britain art gallery, in London, and the John Rylands Library in Manchester, for example. As valuable and beneficial as these donations and bequests are they do not, however, satisfy Tronto's requirements for care-giving as they fail to address meeting the need for care directly. Rather the provision of financial support enables another to attend to the care work and the benefactor remains at arm's length.

Tronto makes this distinction because, as she argues, ‘money does not solve human needs, though it provides the resources by which human needs can be satisfied.’⁴⁰ Whilst one could argue that giving money may well be seen as care-giving in certain circumstances there is always the requirement that the money be converted into something else — food, clothing, housing, education etc. — before the need can be met. Furthermore, by focusing on the provision of money it is possible to end up valuing the money rather than the care, an act which is already undervalued in western society. In addition to this, the donation of money for charitable causes, particularly in the nineteenth century, was frequently looked upon in a sceptical manner and attributed either to ambition or a desire for social recognition and acceptance.⁴¹ The motivation behind philanthropic actions was a topic frequently discussed at this time.

In her essay ‘Benevolence – or Beneficence’ Craik takes up this topic and asks her readers to question why they engage with certain charitable acts. Craik uses the example of a man giving a beggar on the street money and asks the question ‘[w]hy does he give it?’⁴² In her answer Craik suggests the motivation has more to do with the man’s own need to be appreciated, ‘a kind action gratifies our self-love, and makes us generally comfortable’, than genuine concern for the man on the street.⁴³ This charitable act, which consists of doing good ‘but in a vague and careless way, and more for its own pleasure than for another’s benefit’, Craik describes as benevolence and in this essay she contrasts it with beneficence, which requires

⁴⁰ Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 107.

⁴¹ Keir Waddington, *Charity and the London Hospitals, 1850-1898* (Rochester, New York: Royal Historical Society, 2000), 24.

⁴² Craik, “Benevolence – or Beneficence” in Dinah Mulock Craik, *Sermons out of Church* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875), 120.

⁴³ Craik, “Benevolence – or Beneficence”, 120.

‘powers of administration and patient investigation; clear judgment and capacity for work.’⁴⁴ As such we see in this essay Craik’s awareness of the ethical considerations which, as Tronto argues, go along with the act of care. By highlighting the work that goes into delivering quality care, including such things as the importance of thoroughly assessing a need, thinking through the consequences of providing care, and ensuring the care-giver has the ability and skills to deliver the necessary care, Craik anticipates many of the concerns care ethicists today continue to raise in respect to relationships of care.

However, whilst financial donations were, in the nineteenth century, as popular and problematic as they are today, the figure most associated with philanthropic care in the nineteenth century is that of the benevolent lady visitor, the paradigmatic image of public charity. For many Victorian woman direct action, or charitable care-giving, was a popular recourse through which to address the unmet needs they identified. Indeed charitable work was one of the few avenues considered suitable for middle-class women to engage with in the public sphere. A letter, published in the *Daily Press* of 1860, from the campaigner for women’s education, Emily Davies, notes, with some irony, middle-class women’s engagement with the public sphere, stating:

It is averred that “public life” is injurious to women: they are meant for the domestic ... what is meant by this? ... Fathers who would shake their heads at the idea of taking their daughters into their counting houses, allow them to stand behind a stall at a bazaar ... [these are] far more public scenes where indeed, publicity is essential to success.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Craik, “Benevolence – or Beneficence”, 127.

⁴⁵ Emily Davies, *Letters to the Daily Press* in *Proceedings of the British Academy: Victorian Values*, ed., T.C. Smout (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 201.

Whilst Davis notes the public nature of selling goods for charity at the church bazaar re ('taking care of') many women adopted a less visibly public avenue and engaged in 'care-giving' through their work as home, hospital, or prison visitors or through teaching literacy in Sunday schools. Yet whilst direct philanthropic action fostered positive and supportive observations from some commentators, it was also a topic which inspired derisive and satirical comments from others. While Anna Jameson, for example, referred to the widespread participation of middle-class women in philanthropic work as part of an 'awakened public consciousness',⁴⁶ others, such as Charles Kingsley, argued against the condescension of lady visitors, warning it had the potential to do more harm than good by reinforcing paternalism and took women away from their responsibilities towards their own households and staff.⁴⁷ Others, such as Louisa Twining (1820-1912), herself an active philanthropist and campaigner for charitable visitations, wrote of the need to balance the desire to help with respect for the poor saying, 'if the feelings of the poor are not respected, but, on the contrary, a patronising, condescending tone adopted, we have no hesitation in saying that such visits do more harm than good,'⁴⁸ Furthermore, a number of authors parodied the philanthropic lady through their literary representation of the figure.⁴⁹

Whilst Jane Austen can be seen to be challenging the motivation of charitable care as early as 1815 in her novel *Emma* in which she suggests that the actions of Emma Woodhouse are for the benefit and self-promotion of the benefactor more than anyone else, it is in the mid-nineteenth century that the figure is satirised to the

⁴⁶ Anna Jameson, *Sisters of Charity Catholic and Protestant. Abroad and at Home* (London: Longman, 1855), 199.

⁴⁷ Siegel, *Charity and Condescension: Victorian Literature and the Dilemmas of Philanthropy*, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 6.

⁴⁸ Louisa Twining, *Deaconesses for the Church of England* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1860), 9-10.

⁴⁹ Dorice Williams Elliot, *The Angel out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England*, 2.

extreme. The most famous examples would be Charles Dickens' characters Mrs Jellyby and Mrs Pardiggle from *Bleak House* (1853) who represent two aspects of the lady visitor that commentators of the day found troublesome. In Mrs Jellyby we see the philanthropic lady so engrossed in her charitable care of others that she neglects her own family whilst in Mrs Pardiggle we see the self-absorbed figure failing to hear and acknowledge the needs of her charges. As Siegel notes it is probably fair to assume that these figures were in the minds of other critics as they wrote their essays warning against certain aspects of charitable care.⁵⁰ Certainly Kingsley's portrayal of the charitable lady who neglects her household can be seen reflected in Mrs Jellyby whilst Louisa Twining's belief that the manner of the visitor was paramount in the charitable relationship appears to be echoed in the rudeness of Mrs Pardiggle. As Siegel asserts, Dickens voices a concern that was prevalent from the 1850s onwards, that charitable care and philanthropy was centred on its own glory above all else.⁵¹ Such a critique draws our attention to the voice that is, so far, unheard in the relationship, that of the one receiving the care.

The final phase of care, according to Tronto, is care-receiving, the recognition that the one receiving the care will, in some way, respond to that care and that that responsiveness will be acknowledged and acted upon.⁵² This phase shifts the emphasis, and thereby the power, from the one providing the care to the one receiving. In this phase it is the one receiving the care who has the power to say whether or not the care provided has met the need. Until this point, as Tronto points out, there is an assumption that the need has been identified and addressed by the

⁵⁰ Siegel, *Charity and Condescension*, 170, n.6.

⁵¹ Siegel, *Charity and Condescension*, 16.

⁵² Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 107.

care-giver correctly, yet the only way of ensuring that the need and the care match is to ask those to whom the care is directed. This is of particular importance when discussing care in relation to disability, as it is often the lack of this phase of care that results in disabled people losing their independence and self-determination. Whilst the previous phases clearly reflect an ethic of care centred on gaining an awareness of our shared humanity, it is this final phase that links an ethic of care to an ethic of justice, ensuring that the human rights of the individual receiving the care are taken into consideration. It is this final phase that crucially allows the voice of the cared-for to be heard, however, this final phase of care is something which has only been specifically acknowledged in the latter part of the twentieth century, and even then is rarely given the attention it deserves, for those living in the nineteenth century it was not a consideration. Care, charity and philanthropy, were given to those in need but in a top-down, paternalistic manner with the views of the receivers of care seldom sought.

It is from within this context, with these complicated and often contradictory discussions of care, charity and philanthropy, that Craik lived and worked as a writer. Surrounded by a liberal society that advocated helping others to help themselves, whilst simultaneously promoting charitable work as a suitable avenue for middle-class women, and growing up within a family which understood the complexities of care as it unfolded in everyday life, Craik's life, and her engagement with the various social causes she chose to support, reflects the paradoxical discussions between self-help and care that took place in the nineteenth century. For the remainder of this chapter I will explore how Tronto's four phases intersect with Craik's personal life, examining how they blur, overlap and, in some cases, are

eliminated from the caring process entirely, as I re-read Craik's biography through the lens of an ethic of care.

Dinah Mulock Craik and 'caring power'

Examining Craik's life can be a somewhat difficult task. Not only is there limited information available to biographers but that which is available is often obscured by the conservative portrait of her, painted by Herbert Von Herkomer shortly before her death, and Margaret Oliphant's hagiographic obituary. The story of Craik, as a young woman for example, carrying her dying mother away to safety, and taking on her shoulders the responsibility of care for her younger brothers has achieved mythic status in her biography. Not only was the story told by admirers and friends of Craik's throughout her life but it was also immortalised in Oliphant's obituary in which Oliphant describes Craik as an 'heroic creature' who 'in a blaze of love and indignation, carried [her] ailing and delicate mother away, and took in her rashness the charge of the whole family'.⁵³

In addition to this not only did Craik personally dislike literary biographies but she also burnt much of her correspondence and forbade friends from writing her biography.⁵⁴ Consequently the writing of a thorough biography on Craik has been difficult. To date, Sally Mitchell's 1983 monograph on Craik remains the only scholarly biography on the author and as Mitchell points out it was not an easy task:

The biographical information has been particularly difficult to set in order, partly because Craik disliked literary biography, was reticent about her own circumstances, systematically destroyed letters, and forbade her friends to produce memoirs. Furthermore, those acquaintances who did write about

⁵³ Margaret Oliphant, "Mrs Craik," *Macmillan's Magazine*, 57 (1887), 82.

⁵⁴ Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik* (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1983), preface.

her – often in the prefaces to new editions of *John Halifax, Gentleman* – invented or at least coloured events to suit their own purposes.⁵⁵

Recent work by Karen Bourrier and Martha Stoddard Holmes, both of whom examine Craik's surviving letters and diaries, has succeeded in expanding our knowledge of Craik but as Bourrier points out, much of the recent scholarship on Craik has tended towards an examination of her literary representations of disability, national identity, and class and enfranchisement whilst avoiding her life altogether.⁵⁶ The chapters that follow mirror this trend as they focus on the literary representations of disability and care in Craik's writing. However, given that it is my intention in this thesis to examine the networks and communities of care within Craik's novels, through the lens of care theorists who focus on the relationship between individuals rather than the individual themselves, my focus, in this chapter, is to explore the way in which these same qualities and values impacted on, and influenced, the author. As Daniel Schwarz observes, authors write to express their ideas and emotions, 'the way humans live and the values for which they live are of fundamental interest to authors and readers.'⁵⁷ Whilst Craik never self-identified as having a disability, her diaries and letters nevertheless record periods of personal illness, dejection, and invalidity and also reveal the extent to which caring about and caring for others was a part of her life.

In an undated letter to her publisher Mr Chapman,⁵⁸ for example, Craik comments on how she has returned home due to poor health and how 'all knocking

⁵⁵ Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, preface.

⁵⁶ Karen Bourrier, "Narrating Insanity in the letters of Thomas Mulock and Dinah Mulock Craik", *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 39 (2002): 203.

⁵⁷ Daniel R Schwarz, "A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*, ed. Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 4.

⁵⁸ Whilst the letter is undated I would speculate that it was written sometime between 1851 and 1859. Firstly she mentions her children's story *Alice Learmont: A Fairy Tale* in the letter, which was published in 1851. Secondly, the letter records her as living in Melville Terrace, Camden, where we know she lived after her brother

about in town is forbidden me'.⁵⁹ This is, in itself, not unusual. The cult of invalidism abounds throughout the nineteenth century and has even been posited as a means of countering the era's obsessive focus on industriousness and self-development in that it sanctioned relaxation.⁶⁰ Nursing and caring for the sick was as sanctified an act as the suffering associated with illness itself and was attended to by men and women alike – Charles Darwin, for example, is reported to have accrued more working hours in the sick room, as both a patient and a carer, than Florence Nightingale,⁶¹ and both Walt Whitman and Louisa May Alcott wrote of their experiences of nursing the wounded during the American Civil War.⁶² In this light Craik's experience is representative of the way in which illness and disability affects us all as the most human of lived experiences.

Not only do her diaries and letters record periods of illness in herself, she can also be seen throughout her life, to care for numerous individuals who were experiencing physical, sensory, and mental impairments. Craik's father quite possibly lived with some form of bipolar disorder and as a child Craik would have witnessed his violent outbursts towards his wife.⁶³ Her brother Tom, having given up on a career as an artist to work on a merchant ship, died after falling from the ship onto the dry dock and breaking both his legs.⁶⁴ Her brother Ben appears to have struggled with depression and despondency on a number of occasions during his

Ben moved to Australia in 1850. And finally, as she took a lease on a property called 'Wildwood' near Hampstead in 1859 I can only speculate that the letter was written between these dates.

⁵⁹ Dinah Mulock Craik to Mr Chapman, *M. L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists; 1806-1958 (mostly 1830s-1930s)*, Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

⁶⁰ Bailin, *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction*, p.12.

⁶¹ Bailin, *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction*, p. 2.

⁶² See for example, Walt Whitman, "The Wound Dresser," in *Imagine What It's Like*, ed. Ruth Nadelhaft and Victoria Bonebakker (Honolulu: The University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 553–55; Louisa May Alcott, "A Night," in *Imagine What It's Like*, ed. Ruth Nadelhaft and Victoria Bonebakker (Honolulu: The University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 556–90.

⁶³ Bourrier, "Narrating Insanity in the Letters of Thomas Mulock and Dinah Mulock Craik," 203.

⁶⁴ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 8.

life, escalating after his time on the Crimean Peninsula. Her godson, the poet Philip Bourke Marston (1850-1887), lost his sight as a result of childhood illness and Craik devoted a good deal of her time supporting the local school for blind children. Her close friend, the author and editor Frank Smedley (1818-1864), lived with physical impairments which restricted his mobility and activities of daily living and inspired the character of the Earl in Craik's novel *A Noble Life*.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Craik's husband is frequently reported as having had a traumatic amputation of his leg as a result of a train accident.⁶⁶ When listed in this manner it might appear, by today's standards, that Craik's circle were particularly unlucky, yet such an array of disabled friends and family members is not only representative of the era but also reflects Thomson's comment that disability 'touch[es] every family and –if we live long enough – touch[es] all of us'.⁶⁷ Craik's letters and diaries, along with a number of her published essays, provide us with a useful starting point from which to examine this assertion.

Caring about the 'Woman Question' – Craik and the Working Woman

From 1874 until 1887 Craik kept a diary which provides us with some valuable information on the importance of care to Craik. Whether Craik kept a diary or journal at other times in her life I cannot say with any degree of certainty but it is possible, given her propensity for destroying letters, that she may have done the same with diaries. Regardless, as Susanne Bunkers and Cynthia Huff have pointed

⁶⁵ Emily Hall's Diary for Thursday May 30th 1867, held at the Local Studies Office at the Bromley Central Library, notes: "The "Noble Life" is entirely drawn from Life—Frank Smedley being really the original of the Earl of Cairnforth. He was the only child of rich parents, & was fm the moment of entering on existance [sic] the most miserable cripple: even to the extent of his face showing it. He was fond of society, & wrote a great deal & well tho' how she said was always a mystery to her, as his hands were so utterly crippled'. I am grateful to Karen Bourrier for drawing my attention to this entry.

⁶⁶ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 14.

⁶⁷ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," *NWSA Journal*, 14, no. 3 (2002), 5.

out, diaries are a valuable source through which to engage with the daily, embodied tasks of women's lives.⁶⁸ In addition to this, Rebecca Hogan speaks to the inclusivity of women's diaries not because they record all events which take place on any given day but because they do not privilege extraordinary events over the ordinary.⁶⁹ Whilst Craik's diary entries do not take the form of great literary soliloquies or internal monologues, worthy of being published in their own right they do present us with an incredibly modern view of life which would no doubt be familiar to many women in the twenty-first century. In Craik's diaries we see, for example, ordinary events such as a child's party positioned alongside state funerals.

Craik's diaries are small pocket books, that today might be referred to as a 'week-to-page' format, and which she uses almost as an aide-mémoire. Andreas Kitzmann suggests that, in the nineteenth century, diaries took one of two physical forms — the pre-formatted diary and the 'pure page' diary; which format was selected ultimately affected the way diary writing was engaged with by the individual. Kitzmann suggests that preformatted diaries 'with their tidy fields in which to record the day's financial transactions, keep lists of things to do, various "wise words" and comparatively small places for personal entries' results in what he refers to as a 'special dynamic' that conforms to the construction of woman as ordered as opposed to the pure page diaries which allow for greater freedom and individuality as the writer must assume control over how the blank pages are to be filled, ordered and organised.⁷⁰ Although I agree with Kitzmann in regards to the

⁶⁸ Susanne Bunkers and Cynthia Huff, "Issues in Studying Women's Diaries: A Theoretical and Critical Introduction," in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, eds. Susanne Bunkers and Cynthia Huff (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 5.

⁶⁹ Rebecca Hogan, "Engendered Autobiographies: The Diary as a Feminine Form," *Autobiography and Questions of Gender* 357 (1991): 103, doi:10.1080/01440359108586434.

⁷⁰ Andreas Kitzmann, *Saved from Oblivion: Documenting the Daily from Diaries to Web Cams*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2004), 31.

different engagement and response elicited by these different styles of diaries I would dispute his assertion that the pre-formatted diary reinforced a certain social construction of woman. In these very small spaces Craik would record financial transactions, birthdays, death, anniversaries, illnesses, books being sent to the publisher and amounts paid for stories, topics which reflect both the private and the public aspects of her life. Craik's writing is cramped into the small space the diary allows her, spilling over into the next day and is more suggestive of her struggle to be confined within the space society allows her than her acceptance of it. As Bunkers and Huff have argued, the diary as a repository of information brings into play 'issues of historical, social and self-construction'.⁷¹

Reading Craik's diaries reveals not only the vast literary and artistic networks within which she moved as both female author and philanthropist or, indeed, how a literary career, for a female author in the nineteenth century, was constructed, but also reveals Craik to have been a thoroughly modern woman who not only balanced work and family life in a way that would be familiar to many women today, but also championed the cause of women and displayed great care and concern in their right to work. For example, the event Craik describes as taking place on the twenty first of July 1885 in which she records 'a party of forty one poor girls from Lambeth – in our wood' may well be the same event that *Harper's Bazaar* recalls in their obituary for Craik which they describe as annual tea parties for the working girls from a shop in London.⁷² In addition to this the obituary also recalls Craik's frequent support of the Working Women's College which had been

⁷¹ Bunkers and Huff, "Issues in Studying Women's Diaries," 1.

⁷² "Some Reminiscences of Mrs D.M. Craik", *Harper's Bazaar*, XX: 45,768.

established, in part, by her long-time friend, and one time house mate, Frances Martin.

This concern for the working woman is also reflected in her letters where we see a woman who is both keen to help other women achieve their professional dreams and supportive of those already in work. In a letter to Mr Cummings (William Haymans Cummings, 1831-1915) dated 28th June 1876, Craik is seen requesting advice and support for a young woman of her acquaintance who wishes to become a professional singer. At the time Craik wrote this letter, Cummings was a well-received tenor, and had been an acquaintance of hers for a number of years. Craik's diaries record him dining with her in February 1875 and his obituary in *The Musical Times* notes that he was Professor of Singing at the Royal Academy of Music from 1878 – 1896.⁷³ As such Craik is approaching someone with experience and, no doubt contacts, in the field. Craik's letter suggests she has taken this young woman under her wing, and whilst she paints a picture of a young woman who, coming from a poor Jewish family, has worked since she was sixteen years old she also highlights her 'lady-like' manner and good education. But above all Craik seeks advice, for this young woman, as to her ability to succeed in the profession. Craik writes, 'The girl herself has worked for her daily bread ever since she was 16 – she is now 22. Is it too late? If you heard her sing, could you say whether she had a chance in the profession?'⁷⁴ Having negotiated her own entry into the professional sphere of writing, without the protection of a male patron or father, but having been assisted herself by writers such as Mrs Samuel Carter Hall, the woman whom Mitchell

⁷³ "William Hayman Cummings, Born August 22, 1831, Died at 'Sydecote', Dulwich, June 10, 1915," *The Musical Times* 56. 869 (1915): 395. It is also of note that Cummings taught singing at the Royal Normal College for the Blind at Norwood with which Craik was involved.

⁷⁴ Dinah Mulock Craik to Mr Cummings, 28th June 1876, *M.L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists*.

describes as Craik's 'literary angel',⁷⁵ Craik now uses her position and contacts to support another young woman who sought a profession. It is also possible that Craik recognised a shared humanity between herself and the young girl which drives her to seek help on her behalf. The two women seem to share a sense of being on the outside of societal expectations for respectable young women. Not only do both *need* to work but whilst Craik carries the shame of her Father's mental illness and his incarceration in the debtor's prison, the young singer, like Mirah Cohen in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, is Jewish in a society that generally reviled and derided members of the Jewish faith. Despite Craik's own assertion that she was opposed to 'the shrieking sisterhood',⁷⁶ her enthusiasm and support for female community can be seen here and is similarly reflected in a number of her essays in which she posits a utopian female community centred on care. As Anna Stenson Newnum states, Craik's call for women to be self-reliant and not dependent on men was by no means a call for women to abandon each other.⁷⁷

Taking Care of One Another – A Sympathetic Response to Sisterhood

In her 1884 essay titled 'A Holiday Afloat' published in *Good Words* Craik expands on her version of a caring sisterhood. In this essay, a cross between travel writing and personal memoirs, Craik recounts the week she spent with six young women on a house boat on the River Thames. The six girls, aged between fifteen and twenty-five, came from different social backgrounds. Craik's daughter Dorothy was amongst the party as was a young artist whose sketches of the holiday accompany Craik's essay. Of the six Craik specifically mentions Katie whom she describes as

⁷⁵ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 8.

⁷⁶ Dinah Mulock Craik to Oscar Wilde, 17th July 1887, *M.L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists*.

⁷⁷ Anna Stenson Newnum, "Single but not Solitary: Dinah Mulock Craik's Vision of a Protestant Female Community", *Women's Writing*, 20, no. 3 (2013), 310.

their 'maid-of-all-work'.⁷⁸ However, despite the title Craik gives to Katie, it is clear she does not intend to treat her as a maid any more than she expects the other girls to be waited upon. On the group's arrival to the houseboat the girls are expected to make up their beds. However, it soon becomes clear that many of the girls have no idea how this should be done:

"Ma'am", said Katie, who was beside me when I peeped into one cabin, which was one confused heap, "hadn't I better do the rooms? The young ladies don't quite understand it".

Katie, the best of little housemaids, was heartily thanked, and her offer accepted.

"But, girls, remember it is for the first and last time. After to -night you must learn to do your rooms yourselves".⁷⁹

And learn they did, for Craik's engagement with these young women, and consequently the caring work she practiced, was direct and practical. As the week progresses Craik tells of how the girls not only learnt how to do housework but also to take pride in their work. As the artist 'worked' at producing the sketches and Craik 'worked' at writing the story, the other girls wrote letters home, played music, sang and attended to the daily work of cleaning and gathering food. The importance of sisterhood to Craik, is clearly reflected in this essay. Katie is not merely a servant but one of the young women on the boat, and one who has skills she is able to share with the other women, all of whom must pull their weight and share the daily work on board. This is Craik's utopian female society where all women have something to offer and something to do whilst also supporting and caring for each other.

⁷⁸ Dinah Mulock Craik, "A Holiday Afloat", *Good Words*, 25 (1884), 597.

⁷⁹ Craik, "A Holiday Afloat", 598.

Through this essay we see that Craik has assumed responsibility for these young women and is caring for them in a way which could be described, broadly speaking, as familial. The concept of care has long been associated with the family. The Bible for example, teaches 'honour thy father and thy mother' (Deuteronomy, 5:16) and has asked the question 'Am I my brother's keeper' (Genesis 4:9). Even though his group is not a biological family, Craik can be seen to assume the role of mother, while the girls perform roles similar to daughters and sisters. Craik's concern for the role of women in society, especially that of the single woman, took place amidst the literary discussions of the mid-nineteenth-century surrounding 'the redundant woman'. In her series of essays *A Woman's thoughts about Women*, Craik evokes images of sisters and sisterhood to recommend female friendship as an important feature of daily life for single women:

... to see two women, whom providence has denied nearer ties, by a wise substitution making the best of fate, living, sustaining, and comforting one another, with a tenderness often closer than that of sisters, because it has all the novelty of election which belongs to the conjugal ties itself – this, I say, is an honourable and lovely sight.⁸⁰

Whilst it is clear from this passage that Craik views marriage as the ideal for women, she is in no doubt that, when this is not possible, women should seek support from each other. For Craik the role of women is not only to be found in caring for their family, as she did for her brother Ben, but also in caring for each other – loving, sustaining, and comforting each other – as sisters. Not only are these aspects of 'taking care of' and 'care-giving' evidenced within the body of her essay 'A Holiday Afloat', but also Craik can be seen to be 'caring about' her audience in the way in which the essay is published, for Craik uses her writing as a medium through which

⁸⁰ Dinah Mulock Craik, *A Woman's Thoughts about Women*, 174.

she is able to evoke a sympathetic response in her middle class female readers who may also be in a position to take care of the young women in their own circles.

Throughout the essay there is a strong sense that Craik is teaching her reader the importance of learning to find pleasure in the simple tasks of daily life, a philosophy which links to the religious ethos of the periodical *Good Words*. Craik published in *Good Words* from the periodical's instigation in 1860, with *Mistress and Maid* being advertised in the first issue as a new serial written by 'the author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*', and Craik continued to publish in the magazine, although not exclusively, throughout her life. Catherine Delafield suggests that Craik was specifically chosen by the editor of *Good Words* because of her ability to 'dramatize and popularise religious teaching' as well as her increasing reputation as an advocate for women.⁸¹ For the editor, Norman Macleod, *Good Words* was attempting to change the way families read on the Sabbath, even describing the work as 'a bold experiment revolutionising to some extent the popular religious literature' of the day.⁸² Through publishing in this periodical Craik was specifically hoping to reach out to working women, especially those in domestic service such as Katie in 'A Holiday Afloat' by exploiting the expectation that the periodical would be circulated throughout a household, firstly amongst the family above stairs and then secondly to the staff below. In her preface to the two-volume edition of *Mistress and Maid* (1863), Craik asks her readers to share the tale asking that 'mistresses will send it down to the kitchen, that benevolent ladies who are Sunday school teachers and district visitors will lend it among the poor' and that in doing so 'it may thus reach

⁸¹ Catherine Delafield, "Marketing Celebrity: Norman Macleod, Dinah Mulock Craik, and John Everett Millais in Alexander Strahn's *Good Words*," *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 46, no. 2 (2013): 259.

⁸² Alexander Strahan, "Norman Macleod," *Contemporary Review*, 20 (1872): 295.

the class for whom it was specifically written, and with a view to whom it was originally published in 'Good Words'.⁸³ In so doing Craik is not only taking care of working class women and servants by being attentive to their need for education but also by taking some responsibility, through her choice of publication method, that these needs will be met and implemented by her middle class readers.

Caring for Family and Friends – Craik and the Direct Act of Care-Giving

The numerous ways in which Craik cared for her friends and family can be found recorded in her diaries. Every year Craik marked the anniversary of her parents' deaths in her diary, as well as that of her brothers Ben and Tom, frequently noting how old each would have been and what the weather had been like that day. Each year begins with a comment about her adopted daughter Dorothy and, through the progression of these entries, we see Dorothy grow from a child to a young woman on the verge of marriage. According to the biographical information available Craik took the infant Dorothy into her care on the first of January 1869, after having found her abandoned in the road. Whilst Mitchell's biography states that the infant would have been about nine months old at this time, placing her date of birth somewhere around March or April 1868, Craik always marks January the first as Dorothy's birthday.⁸⁴ Seldom does Craik make reference to the circumstances that led her to find Dorothy but on December thirty first, 1886, Craik's last New Year's Eve, she writes 'Dense fog – frost and snow. The coldest New Year's Eve since 18 years ago – when my child was found in the snow. As she sat by the fire – between her Mother and her future husband, I thought – how wonderful

⁸³ Craik, *Mistress and Maid* (London: Hurst and Blackett: 1863), v-vi.

⁸⁴ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 17.

are His ways!’⁸⁵ Craik’s adoption of Dorothy at a time when concerns about the biological inheritance of character traits and a belief in eugenics was commonplace, highlights Craik’s independence whilst simultaneously demonstrating her desire to build a family for herself and directly take care of an abandoned child.⁸⁶

On the nineteenth of January 1875 Craik records a heartfelt conversation between herself and her seven year old daughter Dorothy. Having been away from home all day Craik writes the following:

In town all afternoon – away from my child. At bedtime she suddenly said, ‘Mother do you love me?’ – ‘If I had been your own child would you have loved me better?’ – ‘I couldn’t ... would you have loved your own mother any better than me?’ – she, ‘no, no’ and she hugged me so tight. ‘Now Mama – we won’t have any more of this nonsense’.⁸⁷

This brief exchange between Craik and her daughter not only shows Dorothy’s awareness of her adoption, and a remarkably precocious confidence for a seven year old, but also reflects Craik’s view that mothering extends beyond a biological relationship. In another example on the sixteenth of January 1877 she refers to Dorothy and Freddy writing how she is ‘so happy with my two children’, whilst on new year’s eve 1875 she records how she has gone over her will noting ‘it [her estate] will all come (after George) to my child and the other children’. Throughout her diaries Craik refers to taking care of a number of children, often referring to them as ‘my’ children, and appears to have relished hosting parties for children and her role as godmother. Alongside these many maternal reflections Craik’s diaries also reveal a series of close friendships with some of the leading literary and artistic characters of the era. One of the more remarkable of these relationships which also

⁸⁵ Dinah Mulock Craik, “Pettit’s Annual Diary, 31st Dec 1886”, *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection* (Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin).

⁸⁶ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 17.

⁸⁷ Dinah Mulock Craik, “Pettit’s Annual Diary, 19th Jan 1875,” *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection*.

highlights the way Craik personally took care of her friends involves the artist William Holman Hunt.

Craik and Hunt

From 1875 until her death, Craik and her family were intimate friends with the pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt and his family. Craik had met Holman Hunt many years earlier through her brother Tom who, before entering the merchant navy, had been an art student at the Royal Academy at the same time as many of the young men who would later become known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.⁸⁸ Hunt records seeing Tom sketching at the British Museum in his autobiography, commenting how he frequently had 'his sister Dinah, the authoress of John Halifax ... by his side.'⁸⁹ The friendship, if it continued after Tom's premature death, is not recorded in any of the surviving letters, but in 1875 the association was resurrected in Craik's diaries following Hunt's request for Craik to chaperone himself and Edith Waugh to Switzerland to get married. According to English Law at this time a man could not marry his deceased wife's sister however, Hunt wished to marry Edith, the sister of his late wife Fanny, and elopement was the only option available to the couple. This was a topic Craik had previously written about in her novel *Hannah*, serialised from February to December 1871, in the shilling monthly magazine *Saint Pauls*.⁹⁰ What role this novel played in encouraging Hunt to ask Craik to chaperone the couple is unknown, but as Craik's diaries show, she received a letter from Hunt on the twenty-sixth of October 1875 requesting she accompany the couple to Switzerland to attend their wedding and with the blessing of her husband,

⁸⁸ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 9.

⁸⁹ William Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2nd Ed., ed. Marion Edith Waugh Holman Hunt, 2 vols. (New York: Dutton, 1914), vol. 1, 105.

⁹⁰ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 73.

Craik and her daughter Dorothy leave England with the wedding party on the fifth of November.

Martha Stoddard Holmes has documented these events thoroughly and notes that they are not mentioned in Hunt's biography.⁹¹ However, for Craik the details are intricately described and mark the start of a relationship between the Hunts and the Craiks which continued for many years. Yet whilst Craik's accompaniment of the Hunts to Switzerland is an important event in showing the extent to which Craik was engaged with political issues affecting women at that time, the way in which their friendship developed highlights the lengths to which Craik went to take care of her family and friends. The lives of these two families were deeply entwined. For the rest of her life Craik records that the Hunts were frequent visitors to their home, how their children played together, and how she would visit Hunt's studio to see his work, often before it was placed on display for the public.

Like the events which surround Craik's chaperoning of Hunt and Edith's marriage in Switzerland, the ongoing friendship between the Craiks and the Hunts is recorded in her diaries and has been documented by Holmes who again notes how the events recorded in Craik's diary do not appear in Hunt's biography. Whilst Hunt records briefly the illness he suffered on his return from the Middle East, Craik's diary records the daily anxieties and concerns that come with taking care of someone with typhoid and their family. From the thirteenth of November 1878 to the tenth of January 1879, the period when Hunt was acutely unwell Craik records in her diary his progress. Whilst most of the information Craik obtains is from letters Edith sends, Craik did go to visit the Hunts on the 14th November and spent what she

⁹¹ Martha Stoddard Holmes, "Dinah Mulock Craik And The Pre-Raphaelites: Pages From *Pettitt's Annual Diary*," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 297-307.

records as 'a terrible day' with them. Her entry for that day ends with a plea, 'God help him!' which not only reflects the strength of their friendship but also the extent of concern Craik had for Hunt's health.⁹² Five days later Craik notes how she takes the Hunt's two-year-old daughter, Gladys Millais Mulock Holman Hunt, along with her worn out nurse, into her own home to care for them whilst Hunt was ill with typhoid.⁹³

By the 10th January Hunt is showing signs of improvement and he and Edith move in with the Craiks for six weeks so that he can recuperate from his illness. Again Craik's diaries record the daily progress that Hunt makes, how he sat up to dinner for the first time since his illness started, when he took his first walk in the garden, and how he amused the children with tales of his adventures in the middle east.⁹⁴ As Holmes notes, these details differ greatly from Hunt's brief description of his illness in which he was restored to health solely by his attentive physician Sir William Gull. No mention of Craik's part in the event is recorded. In Holmes' words, 'Gull and Millais are the only ... characters in this small plot'.⁹⁵ Yet Craik's diary entries reveal the extent to which Craik took care of the Hunt family for a period of three months as well as the sadness the Craik family felt when the Hunts left. One month after the Hunts leave the Craik's home George (Craik's husband) is still bereft at the absence of his friend, as Craik writes in her diary on the nineteenth of March, 'George quite mast broken at losing Holman Hunt. Can't get over it at all!'⁹⁶ Through the presentation of these events in her diary we not only learn of the deep affection

⁹² Dinah Mulock Craik, "Pettitt's Annual Diary, 14th November 1878," *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection*

⁹³ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Pettitt's Annual Diary, 19th November, 1878," *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection*. Gladys was Craik's god-daughter and named after Craik and her other god parent, the artist John Everett Millais.

⁹⁴ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Pettitt's Annual Diary, 13th January, 1879," *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection*

⁹⁵ Holmes, "Dinah Mulock Craik And The Pre-Raphaelites: Pages From *Pettitt's Annual Diary*," 303.

and friendship these two families had for each other but also the extent to which taking care of family and friends was a part of this relationship. Craik's diaries, as Holmes points out, challenge us to rethink the self, not as an individual in isolation from others but as a relational self, whose life is enmeshed with others and lives in connection with other relational beings.⁹⁷

Craik and Ben

Like diaries, letters have also been used as a source to mine for personal information on an individual, a source of biographical information as Rebecca Earle notes, or as a lens through which to analyse a particular era.⁹⁸ As Olga Kenyon highlights, women's letters fulfil numerous additional functions. They inform, entertain, convey news, keep up friendships, educate, offer advice, offer love, and finally express care.⁹⁹ In addition to this, as P.D. James notes in her forward to Kenyon's book, 'no literary form is more revealing, more spontaneous or more individual than a letter',¹⁰⁰ and this is certainly true of Craik's letters which provide a fruitful source of information on the importance of, and diverse range of, caring relationships in Craik's life both within and beyond her family. A number of Craik's letters provide valuable insight into her relationship with her brother Ben, who Craik had a close relationship with throughout his life. Bourrier's work, analysing the Mulock Family Papers, has revealed the extent to which the relationship between Craik and her brother Ben was one of mutual support.¹⁰¹ The interdependency between these two siblings is evident in these letters and challenges the previous

⁹⁷ Holmes, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Pre-Raphaelites: Pages from Pettitt's Annual Diary", 306.

⁹⁸ Rebecca Earle, 'Introduction: Letters, writers and the historian', in *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-writers, 1600-1945*, ed. Rebecca Earle (Aldershot, UK and Brookfield, USA: Ashgate, 1999), 2.

⁹⁹ Olga Kenyon, *800 Years of Women's Letters* (Stroud, UK: The History Press, 1992), x.

¹⁰⁰ P.D. James, foreword to *800 Years of Women's Letters*, vii.

¹⁰¹ Karen Bourrier, "Dinah Mulock Craik and Benjamin Mulock", *Prose Studies*, 33, no. 3 (2011): 176.

view of Ben, first recorded by Margaret Oliphant in her obituary and resurrected by Elaine Showalter and Sally Mitchell, as an unsavoury character, whose behaviour had to be covered up by his sister. In these previous narratives Ben is presented as a drifter, unable to settle into any stable work who, according to Oliphant 'appeared and disappeared, [was] always much talked of, tenderly welcomed, giving her anxieties much grudged and objected to by her friends, but never by herself'.¹⁰²

A preliminary glance at some of the correspondence between Craik and her brother Ben certainly reinforces the view of Oliphant. Ben struggled to find work and worked overseas, first in Australia where he attempted farming and gold mining, before going to the Crimean Peninsula as an engineer, and finally to Bolivia as a photographer. The relationship between Ben and Craik can also be seen to follow the traditionally gendered divisions of care in the nineteenth century in that most of the care Craik receives from Ben is moral and financial. For example when Ben goes to the Crimean Peninsula Craik notes, in a letter to her publisher Mr Parker, 'I have been too ill to earn anything for a long time – But now my brother is able to help me'.¹⁰³ On his return Ben takes work in Liverpool and Craik gives up her London residence to live with Ben in Linacre Grange. From here Craik continues to write and communicate with her publishers however, her own health continues to trouble her for as she notes in 1858 she left London not only to live with her brother but also for her health.¹⁰⁴ Within a year, however, Ben moves to London to take up work as a photographer and again Craik follows. It is also worth noting, as Bourrier points out, how on each occasion Craik follows her brother to support his career.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Oliphant, "Mrs Craik," *Macmillan's Magazine*, 87.

¹⁰³ Dinah Mulock Craik to Mr Parker n.d., *M.L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists*.

¹⁰⁴ Dinah Mulock Craik to unknown recipient, April 18th 1858, *M.L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists*.

¹⁰⁵ Bourrier, "Dinah Mulock Craik and Benjamin Mulock," 182.

Despite Craik being, by this stage, a successful writer, the gendered division of care between the siblings still reflects traditional constructions of the family.

The gendered nature of the nineteenth-century man as being the economic provider of the family is evidenced in the surviving letters, and the burden of work as part of this masculine identity clearly weighed heavily on Ben who commented to his sister in 1857 ‘one must have work of some sort. Work-work – is not there all eternity to rest in?’¹⁰⁶ Whilst Ben’s identity is constructed around his ability to work, Craik’s is negotiated through her ability to care for Ben, giving up her life in London to follow him to Liverpool, whilst also maintaining her professional life as a writer. However, Bourrier’s work on the relationship between Craik and her brother Ben, chronicles the interdependent relationship between the two and notes the way in which Ben supported Craik financially and emotionally, acting as the ‘emotional mainstay’, throughout her early adult life and writing career.¹⁰⁷ In doing so she establishes a reasoned counter argument to that put forward by Showalter and Mitchell. The letters that remain provide evidence of mutual financial, physical, and emotional support between the siblings in a reciprocal relationship of interdependency.

On the 17th June 1863 Benjamin Mulock died at the age of thirty four. His early death, as a result of an accident, put an end to a short life punctuated throughout with periods of melancholy and depression, examples of which are scattered throughout Craik’s letters. In one of his letters from Australia, dated June 15th 1851, Ben remarks how he is pleased that Craik now knows of the particulars of

¹⁰⁶ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 10th May 1857, *The Mulock Family Papers*, (Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles).

¹⁰⁷ Bourrier, “Dinah Mulock Craik and Benjamin Mulock,” 183.

certain events leading up to his move to Australia, for she 'will now be able to find some excuse for my various fits of misanthropy etc. - all my miseries were not imaginary.'¹⁰⁸ The event, to which Ben refers, appears to be related to a relationship with a young woman named Julia, for Craik asks Ben if he would have been happy marrying Julia to which Ben writes, in response, 'it is a degree of happiness which I can scarcely imagine.'¹⁰⁹ Whether the move to Australia was a timely escape from the sadness Ben felt at being unable to marry Julia at that time or whether it was for the purpose of raising sufficient wealth to be able to marry her is unknown, but Ben does note that Craik's letter gives him hope that even if he must wait years for Julia it would be worth the wait to have 'one of the greatest desires of [his] life fulfilled at its termination'.¹¹⁰ Whatever Ben's motivation for going to Australia, the move appears to have been a positive one as he notes that he had been happier, since arriving in Australia, than he had been during the previous five years. In this same letter Ben also notes how he not only feels both physically and mentally stronger but also how he no longer views the world as 'a place which was only a sort of intermediate purgatory, and which the sooner one got out of the better, but as on the whole rather a desirable residence than otherwise.'¹¹¹ That Ben should note how his sister's letter gives him strength, hope, and something to live for suggests the degree of despondency he was experiencing before he left England and the extent of the care and moral support he received, even at this great distance, from his sister.

Yet whilst Australia may have been beneficial to Ben's health, his time in the Crimea, working as an engineer with the Army Works Corps, is less likely to have

¹⁰⁸ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 15 June 1851, *The Mulock Family Papers*.

¹⁰⁹ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 15 June 1851, *The Mulock Family Papers*.

¹¹⁰ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 15 June 1851, *The Mulock Family Papers*.

¹¹¹ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 15 June 1851, *The Mulock Family Papers*.

been conducive to his mental health. In a letter dated August 18 he writes, 'we are not now more than 12 miles from Sebastopol and we can see the flashes of the guns and occasionally the explosion of a shell.'¹¹² Later in the same letter he notes the strangeness of being a spectator 'for the first time of real warfare' adding no doubt for the benefit of his sister, 'although it is at a considerable distance.'¹¹³ Yet despite this distance of twelve miles or so the shots and shelling was sufficient to impact on daily life with Ben commenting on how, on one occasion, as soon as the sermon began he 'heard the first gun and they continued at intervals' throughout.¹¹⁴

For Ben the Crimea was not a 'land flowing with milk and honey but with shot and shell'.¹¹⁵ The impact of the Crimea left a lasting legacy on Ben, even though he was not directly involved in the fighting, for as his father, Thomas Mulock, notes in a letter to his daughter dated 3rd October 1856, 'I see the haste of Balaclava operates on his mind'.¹¹⁶ And whilst Ben recovered sufficiently to go to Bolivia to work in 1859, by 1862 he was back in England and soon after in the care of his sister.

According to the official biography of the extended family written by a cousin, Alleyn Lyell Reade, Ben approached Craik on the 27th February 1863 saying, 'sister, I am going mad – you must take care of me,' which Craik did until his death four months later.¹¹⁷ On March 13th 1863 Craik wrote to her friend Mrs Field saying, 'you may have heard, my brother has had a severe illness but is now very much better – and on Monday we go to the water cure at Ben Rhydding, which I trust will quite restore

¹¹² Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 18 August (no year), *The Mulock Family Papers*. Whilst no year is stated on the letter it is likely to have coincided with the Battle of Sebastopol given Ben's comments and therefore have been written sometime in 1854-5.

¹¹³ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 18 August (no year), *The Mulock Family Papers*.

¹¹⁴ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 18 August (no year), *The Mulock Family Papers*.

¹¹⁵ Ben Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 18 August (no year), *The Mulock Family Papers*.

¹¹⁶ Thomas Mulock to Dinah Mulock Craik, 3rd October 1856, *The Mulock Family Papers*.

¹¹⁷ Alleyn Lyell Reade, *The Mellards and their Descendants, including the Bibbys of Liverpool, with Memoirs of Dinah Mulock Craik and Thomas Mellard Reade* (London: Privately printed for the author at Arden Press, 1915), 85.

him'.¹¹⁸ For the remainder of Ben's life Craik invested a great deal of time and energy into caring for her brother as his health fluctuated between periods of improvement and relapses into suicidal despondency. Writing to her relatives to inform them of Ben's death, Craik tells of how she kept Ben under close observation, akin to suicide watch, when he was at his worse and then allowed him to go among the other patients when he was feeling better.¹¹⁹

However, this narrative, as it is presented in Alleyn Lyell Reade's history of the family, also highlights the practice of care-giving, and the burden of care which was placed upon Craik at this time. The full narrative of Ben's death, which Craik retells to her relatives, is presented by Reade as follows:

Mr Broad would tell you of us at Ben Rhydding, but he would not see the worst, for I kept Ben always beside me, when his worst states came on – when he felt better he went among the other patients. He was not actually insane, but his mind had sunk into utter despair – he had to be watched continually lest he might harm himself. I watched him for seven weeks – til I broke down – and then a great friend of his, a young Brazilian doctor, took my place. He got so much better that they planned a tour, and left for London, I being in lodgings in Scotland. I had been obliged to let Wildwood. In London Ben got worse, and I had at once to put him in an Asylum, and waited here, close by, til I saw how he went on. He seemed better, and the vigilance of the servants relaxed – he was left alone for one minute – and escaped. In an hour afterwards he was picked up in the high road – the wheel of a heavy wagon had struck him on the head. His jaw-bone and face-bones were broken – still the injuries were slight. He was perfectly himself, quiet and patient, had first rate doctors and nurses, and I was in the next room night and day, tho' not allowed to speak to him. All sank, and died in half-an-hour. I was beside him, but he never knew me ... I hope you will forgive me, remembering the awful misery I have suffered these four months – ending thus. My poor boy – he suddenly came home to me on the 27 Feb. And said, "Sister I am going mad – you must take care of me" – and I did. And now he is at rest, and I thank God ... I shall never return to London any more. I go back when I have

¹¹⁸ Dinah Mulock Craik to Mrs Field, 13th March 1863, *M.L. Parrish Collection of Victorian Novelists*.

¹¹⁹ Reade, 84.

seen my aunts and papa, to my lodgings in Scotland, to try and recover all this.¹²⁰

Concepts of care abound in this brief extract. The familial care provided by Craik through her constant observation and surveillance is contrasted with that provided by paid employees who leave Ben alone long enough for him to escape their care. The care Ben receives at Ben Rhydding, known for its water cure and attention to the mind as well as the body,¹²¹ and at which Ben begins to improve, is juxtaposed with that of the London asylum from which Ben escapes and which remains nameless. It is possible to read in this extract, if not a lack of care, then at least a differing of opinions amongst the staff as to the care which Ben required at the asylum. Whilst no specific details of the asylum or the medical attention Ben received there are given, the very fact that the ‘vigilance of the servants relaxed’ suggests that either there was a lack of attentiveness and responsibility among the staff or that there existed a difference of opinion as to the amount of supervision and observation Ben required. As Tronto argues, whilst care can, and should, be a well-integrated process which smoothly blends the four phases care discussed earlier, conflict can, and does, occur within the process.¹²² That the staff at the asylum relaxed their vigilance and attention whilst caring for Ben, that Craik was no longer able to keep Ben beside her, and that Ben was able to escape the asylum are all indicative of a potential conflict either amongst the care-givers, or between the care-

¹²⁰ Reade, 85.

¹²¹ Ben Rhydding was a popular and well-respected hydrotherapy centre in West Yorkshire established in 1844. A number of treatises on the care delivered at Ben Rhydding were written in the mid-nineteenth century including J.P. Nichol, *Memorials from Ben Rhydding concerning the place, its peoples, its cures* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1852); *Ben Rhydding: the principles of hydrotherapy and the compressed air bath*, by ‘A Graduate of the Edinburgh University’, (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1858); and The Rev. R Wodrow Thomson, *Ben Rhydding, The Asclepia of England* (Ilkley: John Shuttleworth, 1862). Further information on the water cure can be found in Robin Price ‘Hydrotherapy in England 1840-1870’, *Medical History*, 25, no. 3 (1981): 269-280.

¹²² Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 109.

givers and Ben, as to how best he should be treated. Alternatively Ben's ability to escape the asylum could point to a lack of the resources required to adequately practice good care. Finally, in this extract, it is possible to infer, from Craik's own breakdown, the impact of the physical and emotional burden of caring on the care-giver.

For the last four months of Ben's life Craik is directly involved in Ben's care and assumes the role of Kittay's ideal dependency worker. As Kittay argues, dependency work, caring, and mothering is largely, although not exclusively, the role of women.¹²³ In this extract we see Craik fulfilling these roles as she keeps Ben close, 'always beside [her]' under surveillance during his moments of crisis.¹²⁴ At these times Ben was at risk of self-harm and, given Craik's determination to stress how Ben is 'not actually insane', most likely suicidal. Yet Craik does not simply out-source Ben's care to the staff at Ben Rhydding but instead appears to stay with him during his time there, sharing the care and the suicide watches. Kittay also notes the likelihood of the dependency worker to suffer negative personal and/or professional consequences as a result of the essential caring work they undertake. For Craik the decision to care for Ben at the hydrotherapy centre in Yorkshire not only required her to sub-lease her property in London and place her writing career on hold, but ultimately led to her own breakdown and the need to leave London after Ben's funeral to 'try and recover' from the emotional and physical trauma caring for Ben had caused. In this extract, Craik's grief and exhaustion, as a result of caring for her brother, is palpable yet through it all she not only appears to be attempting to soften

¹²³ Eva Feder Kittay, *Loves Labours*, 40-41.

¹²⁴ Reade, 85.

the news for a family already stigmatised through her father's mental instability but also seek their forgiveness for Ben's death, asking her Aunts to remember the suffering she too has experienced.

Whilst the extract highlights the gendered aspects of caring, with Craik assuming the majority of the responsibility, Craik is also relieved in her caring duties, albeit temporarily, by her brother's friend. This acknowledgement that men can provide care as well as women highlights the complexity of care, discussions of which have the potential to fall back on to the false dichotomy that women are characterised by an ethic of care and men by an ethic of justice.¹²⁵ The concept of interdependence, to which Bourrier alludes in the relationship between Ben and Craik, cannot be locked into earlier binaries of public and private or male and female ideas of care.¹²⁶ This aspect of care will be explored further in later chapters as I analyse the representation of care in a selection of Craik's novels.

Craik and the Blind – A case study of four phases

In addition to her involvement with working women, Craik was also involved in 'caring-about' and caring for the blind. As a sighted supporter of the blind, Craik's writing about the blind can be both insightful and frustrating as it manages to simultaneously highlight both a positive challenge to the era's dominant narrative of dependency whilst still retaining the negative language of spectacle and paternalistic care. In doing so Craik's writing reveals some of the contradictions seen in discussions about the blind in the mid-nineteenth century. Craik's early fictional portrayals of the visually impaired, for example, conform to many of the stereotypes

¹²⁵ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1990), 41.

¹²⁶ Bourrier, "Dinah Mulock Craik and Benjamin Mulock," 183.

of the period. In her novel *Olive* (1850) Craik uses blindness as a punishment for the vain and self-centred mother Sybilla Rothesay, thus employing a moral account of disability. Only after Sybilla loses her sight does she gain the 'insight' to see her daughter as a beautiful and capable young woman rather than a deformed and ugly child. Likewise in *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856) Craik represents her character Muriel Halifax, the blind daughter of the title character, with stereotypical features such as angelic goodness, spiritual insight and a gift for music.¹²⁷ Away from her fiction, however, Craik can be seen to provide a different and more empowering image of the blind which over time can be seen to move through Tronto's four phases.

Craik's essay 'Blind,' written in 1860, contributed to the public debate on the condition and education of the blind which took place in the 1860s.¹²⁸ Charles Dickens had written a similar essay a year earlier, and both gave their readers details of the respective authors' visit to the Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind.¹²⁹ Whilst similar in content to Dickens's, Craik's essay differs in her description of a porter from the association whose job was to travel across London delivering goods purchased by patrons of the Association's shop in Euston Road. Whereas Dickens simply mentions the man's existence and how, though sightless, he 'walks without a guide about the streets of London,'¹³⁰ Craik provides a more personal account of the young man. Not only does she emphasise the man's brisk, confident step and active, bright appearance which, for her, belied the fact that he was blind, but she also tells of her personal meeting with him and of the

¹²⁷ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Blind," *Macmillan's Magazine* 3 (1861): 53-57.

¹²⁸ For further information see, Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000), 64-92.

¹²⁹ Charles Dickens, "At Work in the Dark," *Household Words* 19 (5 May 1859): 321-324.

¹³⁰ Dickens, "At Work in the Dark," 321.

conversation that follows. Her description of the young man who ‘pursued his way with such determined independence’¹³¹ is quite different from her earlier fictional representations and the multitude of other images which have contributed to the construction of a blind identity based on pity and a need for charity.

Yet whilst Craik’s image is certainly a more positive description than was usual for the period, allowing for autonomy and self-reliance in the young man, it remains inflected with a sense of his helplessness which contributes to the social construction of dependence. Craik’s insistence on physically helping the man by literally leading him to his destination, despite his protestations that ‘he could find it easily’ and Craik’s retort to her readers that ‘heavens knows’ how, highlights the ongoing privileging of vision and Craik’s inability to authentically read the situation, seeing the man’s blindness as dependency which needs her intervention.¹³² Craik goes on to describe how she lay in wait for the man to return so as to observe the spectacle of a blind man navigating his way through the streets ‘marching as fast and fearlessly as though he saw every step of the road’.¹³³ As Bourrier notes when discussing Dickens’s visit to Laura Bridgman, a famous blind and deaf woman in America, the blind were often presented as tourist attractions, with the sighted being invited to gaze upon them as they went about demonstrating their various skills.¹³⁴ Craik’s observing of the porter not only mirrors the intrusive gaze of the tourist which can be seen to vacillate between pity, awe, and wonder but it also

¹³¹ Craik, “Blind,” 53.

¹³² Craik, “Blind,” 53.

¹³³ Craik, “Blind,” 53.

¹³⁴ Karen Bourrier, “Reading Laura Bridgman: Literacy and Disability in Dickens’s *American Notes*,” *Dickens Studies Annual* 40 (2009): 38.

highlights how Craik struggled to find the shared humanity that would enable her to care for, rather than pity, this man.

Ultimately, Craik begins to feel uncomfortable with her surveillance of the man and goes on with her own business. Later accounts of Craik's work with the blind, however, take on much more nuanced and caring characteristics as Craik begins to reimagine blindness less as a source of dependency and more as a variation in the way in which humans encounter the world. It is worth noting that Craik's godson, Philip Bourke Marston, born in 1850, began to go blind from the age of three. Whether the change in Craik's representation of the blind, from stereotypical characters of pity to more independent and autonomous individuals, is a direct result of her personal experience of watching her godson gradually lose his sight is not known, Craik records very little about Marston's blindness. What is recorded reveals the problematic nature of care-giving that can occur when the one for whom the care is directed is not consulted, but I will return to this shortly. However, regardless of this it is likely that Marston's blindness, combined with the fact that Craik's home at Shortlands, Kent was situated near the Royal Normal School for the Blind, may have sparked her interest in 'caring-for' the children that attended the school.

Craik's diary entry for July 12th 1877 records her visiting the blind school with two friends and promising to write an article in support of the institution.¹³⁵ Again on June 3rd 1879 she simply writes 'visit to Blind School'.¹³⁶ On neither occasion does she record which blind school she has visited, however it is likely that

¹³⁵ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Pettit's Annual Diary, 12th July 1877," *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection*.

¹³⁶ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Pettit's Annual Diary, 3rd June 1879," *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection*.

it is the Royal Normal School for the Blind.¹³⁷ In January 1881 Craik writes her article, 'Light in Darkness' which appears in *Good Words* in December 1882. This article features the biography of Mr Campbell, the founder and head of the Royal Normal College for the Blind who was himself blind from birth.¹³⁸ This second article, which Craik writes in support of the blind, is significantly different from her first. Whilst the characteristic discourse of pity and pathos remains present in her writing, along with a focus on the compensatory senses of hearing and touch she also, in this second article, makes the progressive decision to give Mr Campbell his voice. Whilst Craik sets the scene and moves the narrative along so it becomes an enjoyable and interesting piece for her readers, the biography is in places autobiographical with Mr Campbell telling his own story. Craik writes:

He [Mr Campbell] has given me varied 'jottings of child-life' and 'jottings of school life', from which I have taken these extracts, of course condensed, for a practiced literary hand can usually put into six words exactly the same thing which others express in twelve, but it has been mere condensation, not alteration, and I call my readers' attention to it, and have been glad to use it thus instead of rewriting it, just to show in what a strangely picturesque and graceful manner a blind man can put things.¹³⁹

This is quite a change from Craik's first piece in which she secretly observes the blind porter, unable to believe he is capable of managing on his own.

On the 17th June 1882 Craik writes in her diary, 'had sixteen children to a hay-party – they rode in the wagon and were wildly happy.'¹⁴⁰ These children were from the Royal Normal School for the Blind and since Craik's first visit to the school in

¹³⁷ It is possible that the school she visits on these occasions is the Royal Normal College for the Blind as it is here that Mr Campbell, the subject of 'Light in Darkness' works.

¹³⁸ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Light in Darkness: A Biographical Sketch," *Good Words*, 23 (1882), 48-52.

¹³⁹ Craik, "Light in Darkness," 51.

¹⁴⁰ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Pettit's Annual Diary, 17th June 1882," *Dinah Mulock Craik Collection*.

1877 this event became at least an annual affair organised by Craik. These parties could be seen as Craik's attempt to become more directly involved in the care of the students at the blind school. In her article 'Light in Darkness' she notes the 'gaiety, the absolute happiness of these blind children, who ran about the field and tumbled in the hay with shrieks of enjoyment, so that to pity them and even to guide them and help them seemed wholly unnecessary'.¹⁴¹ In addition to the care Craik shows the children from the Royal Normal School, the joy the children took in these visits is similarly reflected in Sarah M. Dawson's report of one of the party's which hints at Tronto's final phase of caring: 'care-receiving'. On this particular occasion, when Craik invited a party of thirty eight children from the Royal Normal School for the Blind to her house in Kent for a party, Dawson records how Craik took great 'care' to ensure that every blind person invited had an enjoyable visit and that 'safety, with the greatest amount of freedom should be given to each guest'.¹⁴²

Dawson's chapter, which features in an edited collection of stories about notable people of the day and which was published for an American audience, also depicts an alternative image of Craik to the old matronly image traditionally seen in von Herkomer's painting and Oliphant's obituary. Here we see Craik as a happy, jovial hostess, sitting on a flattened haystack in a field opposite her house, singing songs with her young guests and telling stories of how she watched the strawberry beds for several days in order to ensure 'enough of the fairest and sweetest for her blind friends.'¹⁴³ On an earlier visit, at which Dawson was also in attendance, Craik had invited a number of her personal friends in order to elicit from them support for

¹⁴¹ Craik, "Light in Darkness," 49.

¹⁴² Sarah M. Dawson, "A Day with Mrs Dinah Mulock Craik, Author of "John Halifax", in James Parton ed. *Some Noted Princes, Authors and Statesman of our Time* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1885), 59.

¹⁴³ Dawson, "A Day with Mrs Dinah Mulock Craik," 61.

the school and such a gesture complies with the middle class philanthropy frequently practiced by Victorian women of Craik's social standing. However this second visit is purely for the children's enjoyment. It is, as Dawson describes it, a gala-time for the children.¹⁴⁴ They play in the hay field, take rides on the farmer's wagons, have dinner with Craik, her family, and a few select acquaintances in the dining room, enjoy music and conversation in the drawing room, before heading back out to play in the field and enjoy the strawberries from Craik's garden. However, whilst Craik can be seen to be 'caring-for' the children, for the fourth stage of Tronto's schema of care, 'care-receiving', to be met it is necessary for the children's response to Craik's care to be acknowledged thus recognising the voice of the cared for in the relationship.

This is touched upon in Dawson's essay when she describes an incident which took place in the hall of Craik's home and which highlights the children's response to the care their host took in ensuring they had a good visit. As they walked through the hallway one of the young boys asked that the scene be described to him. The children were encouraged to feel the porcelain tiles on the walls, the joins where the tiles met, the coolness and smoothness of the wall and the tessellated marble table that sat in the hallway. Dawson describes the reaction of one of the boys as follows, 'Johnnie Scolah had a funny way of expressing satisfaction, — a low, prolonged OO; and his beaming face was bright with interest in all that he saw through his sensitive finger-tips'.¹⁴⁵ Johnnie's delight in the 'carefully' planned day that Craik organised highlights his response to the care he has received. The outing Craik delivers for the children of the Blind School recasts them as autonomous

¹⁴⁴ Dawson, "A Day with Mrs Dinah Mulock Craik," 61.

¹⁴⁵ Dawson, "A Day with Mrs Dinah Mulock Craik," 60.

individuals with agency over their actions rather than perpetuating the narrative of dependency her earlier writing had presented. However, in caring for her godson, Philip Bourke Marston, it is possible to see the problems that can arise when the individual's views are not taken into consideration in relation to the care that is being proposed.

Craik had been working with the school for the blind for a number of years when she records in her diaries that she is taking action to help her godson. Craik records how on the fourteenth of June 1880 Marston and a Mr William Sharp visit her for dinner and how she takes them to visit Mr Campbell at the blind college. She notes how Mr Campbell was very kind to her godson and shortly after embarks on a series of measures to help Marston. Whilst her intentions are good she clearly does not ask her godson what he wants or listen to his retorts for following this visit Craik mentions Marston a number of times and specifically in relation to his blindness.

The day after this visit (fifteenth June) Craik writes to Mr Campbell asking for help for 'poor Philip'; on the eighteenth Craik receives a letter from Mr Sharp in which Sharp reports that Philip does not agree to being helped nor does he intend to visit Mr Campbell again. On the twenty-second Craik writes to her friend, the poet Robert Browning, to discuss setting up a petition for Philip. The petition, requesting help for Philip, clearly gains some momentum for on the seventeenth of July Craik writes to the prime minister William Gladstone with a copy of the 'duly signed' petition and on the twenty-second of July Craik receives a letter back from Gladstone stating that he would 'carefully consider Philip's cause'. Finally, on the sixteenth of October Craik writes in her diary:

Ill all day – too ill to do anything – but managed to put in savings bank the money sent me for Philip - £25 in all.

No further mention of Philip Marston is made again but it is worth noting that Craik began writing her essay 'Light in Darkness' on the fifteenth of January the following year. Clearly Craik was very concerned about her godson. She considered there was a need for care as Marston was blind and therefore, in her mind, vulnerable (caring about); she took it upon herself to respond to that need through the petition and the collection of money (taking care of); and she attempted to mediate the actual delivery of care through Mr Campbell and the school for the blind (care-giving).

However, when we consider the final phase of care identified by Tronto, care-receiving, we can see that Marston's response to the care he receives from his God-Mother is not welcome. Relayed to Craik in the letter from Mr Sharp, it becomes clear that Craik has not correctly assessed Marston's needs or considered his wishes. Craik assumes Marston needs help, referring to him as 'poor Philip' suggesting that she sees Marston's blindness as a tragedy. However, these assumptions are not supported by any evidence to suggest that Craik has asked Marston what he needs. In fact it could be said that Marston's needs are ignored in this interaction as Craik uses her power and connections to provide the care 'she' believes Marston needs without ascertaining if Marston wishes to receive the care being offered. Simply because of her engagement with the blind school Craik assumes that she is better positioned to determine Marston's needs. However in doing so the care offered is unjust, paternalistic, and not well received. As Tronto points out good care requires more than good intentions, 'it requires a deep and thoughtful knowledge of the situation and of all the actors' situations, needs, and competencies.'¹⁴⁶ Through the

¹⁴⁶ Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 136.

events that play out in Craik's diaries it is possible to see how Craik's good intentions, in this instance, are not thoughtful. She fails to respond to the cautionary comments of Marston's friend, Mr Sharp, and progresses her plans regardless. Craik effectively ignores Marston's wishes in relation to care thus failing to be responsive to Marston's reaction to the care she is proposing for him. However, as this final phase of care is a late twentieth-century understanding of the ethical implications of care and caring relationships is it fair to judge Craik against such standards? Or more importantly, what can be learnt by applying modern ethical understandings of care to the life and work of this nineteenth-century woman?

Throughout Craik's life we can see that she was frequently engaged in relationships of care in ways which mirror caring relationships today. The interdependent relationship she experienced with her brother Ben gave way, towards the end of Ben's life, to one which placed a significant burden on Craik's own health, whilst in her failure to respond to Marston's needs we can see one of the fundamental problems of care, especially as it is understood within disability studies, whereby the voice of the 'cared-for' is ignored. These aspects of care remain problematic today and the way in which Craik attempts to grapple with these issues, through her language and representations of care, provides us with fruitful material from which to rethink the act of caring. In the ensuing chapters I will analyse the way Craik represented care in a number of her novels and short stories. As I move through the next three chapters I will show how Craik's understanding of care, and especially this final phase, developed until she was able to give voice and agency to the cared-for. By reading Craik's work through the lens of disability and care theory I show how nineteenth-century discussions of care frequently served as a framework through which various markers of social identity such as gender, class,

and disability, could be critiqued and explored. As I move from Craik's life to a consideration of her novels, it becomes clear that, as Talia Schaffer argues, the Victorian novel not only imagined communities of care that surrounded the disabled character but also interrogated the various ways in which care was given and received.¹⁴⁷ This was particularly true of Craik's work and in the following chapter I turn to her novel *Olive* in order to explore the way care is represented through maternal relationships and how these particular narratives of care engage with disability and nineteenth-century constructions of motherhood.

¹⁴⁷ Talia Schaffer, *Romance's Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 160.

“Ye sall be my ain lassie, an’ I’ll be your ain mammie”

Mothers, Allomothers, and Maternal Care in *Olive*

If “the boy is father of the man”, the girl is likewise mother to the woman; and the woman – oh, solemn thought, laden with awful responsibility to each tiny maiden-child that coos and crows at us from her innocent cradle! – the woman is the mother of us all.

Dinah Mulock Craik¹

At the start of her essay, ‘In her teens’, Craik invokes William Wordsworth’s famous poem ‘My heart leaps up’ (1802), modifying the words slightly to make her point by specifically stating that it is the boy, rather than ‘the child’ who is father to the man. With this adaptation of Wordsworth’s celebrated line² Craik suggests that, not only is the girl ‘mother to the woman’, but that ‘the woman is the mother of us all’. This line of thought foreshadows that of Sara Ruddick, as it focuses on the universality of maternal care. As Ruddick notes, ‘mothering is central to many women’s lives and indirectly affects the thinking of countless others who as daughters, sisters, or friends identify with mothers’.³ This recognition that women other than biological mothers think about and have a stake in mothering and maternal work feeds into the concept of allomothering; that is, mothering performed by someone ‘other than’ a biological mother. In using this term I borrow from the sociobiologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy who, in her book *Mothers and Others* uses the term

¹ Dinah Mulock Craik, ‘In her teens’, *The Unkind Word and Other Stories, Vol. II* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 106.

² Sally Shuttleworth notes how this line lay behind the novels of development of the period and became the mantra of the educationalist and child psychologist of the late nineteenth century. Sally Shuttleworth, *Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7.

³ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women’s Press, 1990), 9-10.

to refer to any group member, other than a biological parent, who helps rear young.⁴ While it is more common for sociobiologists to use the term ‘alloparent’, I use the term ‘allomother’ in alignment with Ruddick’s refusal in *Maternal Thinking* to use gender neutral terms.⁵ In doing so I acknowledge the historical and cultural gender dynamics that shape western cultural ideologies surrounding mothering. For despite the fact that one of the insights we gain from care theory is that maternal work can be performed by men and women, historically, just as today, maternal work and care have been disproportionately performed by women. In later chapters I examine how maternal thinking and care are performed by male characters in Craik’s work, but here I focus solely on women in the role of caregivers.

In her 1850 novel *Olive* Craik tells the story of a disabled woman who, as an infant, is ignored by her mother and raised by a servant. In doing so Craik invites us to think about the communities of care within which disabled children are raised. The idea that human beings have evolved as a cooperative species – a species in which individuals other than biological parents assist in the care and provisioning of young – is reflected in this novel. In this chapter I examine what Martha Stoddard Holmes describes as ‘the disabled family’ within which Olive grows up, a family in which non-disabled members experience ‘through interrelations a disabled identity, with all the features, benefits, [and] constraints, of that identity’.⁶ Tom Shakespeare also notes the importance of examining family interactions in relation to disability for not only do parents frequently function as allies of their disabled child but the

⁴ Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 22.

⁵ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 44.

⁶ Martha Stoddard Holmes, “Crippling Colin: Disability in Two Film Versions of *The Secret Garden*,” in *Frances Hodgson Burnett’s The Secret Garden: A Children’s Classic at 100*, ed. Jackie C. Horne and Joe Sutcliff Sanders (Plymouth, UK, The Scarecrow Press: 2011), 227, n5.

demands of caring for a disabled child often result in the whole family living a disabled identity.⁷ Furthermore, in Eva Feder Kittay's recollections of learning about her daughter Sesha's disability and her own mother's insistence that Sesha be institutionalised, we see the trauma and pain that can result when 'maternal love' is conditional upon able-bodied status.⁸ In *Olive* the triangular relationship, or triad, of mother, daughter, and allomother not only enables us to explore the way disability is cared for within a family, providing us with the opportunity to examine the fluidity of dependency across the lifespan, but we can also witness Craik's sustained critique of traditional representations of motherhood which frequently exclude the disabled woman.

Whilst mothers feature prominently in nineteenth-century literature, the way in which they are discussed and represented differs widely between the conduct books of the day and novels from the same era. On the one hand there is the work of Sarah Stickney Ellis (1799-1872), whose tremendously popular conduct book, *The Mothers of England* (1843), argued that mothers carry the moral wealth of the nation in their hands; whilst on the other, is the startling absence of effective mothers in Victorian fiction. From *Jane Eyre* to *Oliver Twist*, *Wives and Daughters* to *Vanity Fair*, mothers are conspicuous either by their absence from the narrative or by their ineffectual care-giving. Barbara Thaden notes several reasons that can explain this phenomenon, including how nineteenth-century psychoanalytical theory on child development advocated the separation of the child from the mother as a necessary stage in a child's growth; the fact that the *Bildungsroman* functions better when the

⁷ Tom Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs* (Hoboken: Routledge, 2006), 188.

⁸ Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labour. Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 152.

protagonist is an orphan and therefore not bound by familial ties and constraints but is instead freely able to pursue his or her own identity and way in the world; and the view that the major female novelists of the day were not mothers and therefore not interested in exploring this ideological territory.⁹ Elaine Showalter similarly claims that the absence of mothers in nineteenth-century novels stems from the absence of mothers in the lives of the novelists. However, in speculating that writers such as George Eliot and Charlotte and Emily Brontë came to identify, in the absence of a biological mother, with a strong father figure, and that this resulted in them choosing to reject the feminine tradition of the domestic novel, and write in a masculine style, under a male name,¹⁰ Showalter ignores the role of women such as Aunt Branwell who acted as an allomother to the Brontë children for twenty one years following the death of her sister and the children's mother.¹¹ Thaden also makes the suggestion that a good, and living, mother simply does not make for interesting reading.¹² When this is taken into consideration alongside Adrienne Rich's proposition that the absence of mothers in Victorian fiction arises from mothers, in a patriarchal culture, having nothing to offer their daughters as they have 'neither power nor wealth to hand on' and can at most 'teach their daughters ... the tricks of surviving,'¹³ we start to see a troublesome neglect of mothers.

⁹ Barbara Z. Thaden, *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction: Rewriting the Patriarchal Family* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 1997), 4.

¹⁰ Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own. British Women Writers, from Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing* (London: Virago Press, 1978), 50.

¹¹ Furthermore, Showalter does not include Anne Brontë in her reference to the Brontë Sisters possibly because Anne does not conform to Showalter's claim. Anne Brontë's two novels both feature mothers, in fact *Agnes Grey* (1847) whilst ostensibly about a governess, and frequently read as somewhat biographical, could be read as a treatise on mothering. Furthermore, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) not only addresses the lack of legal protection afforded to mothers in, respect to the custody of their children, but also examines the extent to which a mother will go in order to protect her child. Far from the figure of the mother being absent in her novels, unlike those of her sisters, Anne Brontë actively engages with the maternal in her work.

¹² Thaden, *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction*, 4.

¹³ Adrienne Rich, "Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman", *On Lies, Secrets and Silence: Selected Prose 1979-1985* (New York: Norton, 1986), 91.

Certainly it can be said that the dramatic tension in a narrative is heightened when the protagonist is orphaned or when the good mother is replaced by a wicked step-mother. However, such interpretations are problematic for a feminist care understanding of motherhood. Not only do they point to a biological essentialism in the way representations of the mother are read which sees the role as beginning with the reproductive capacity of women rather than, as Ruddick argues, the reality of a child in the world, but they also deny the power of maternal thought, that aspect of critical thinking which arises from being committed to meeting the needs of a child through 'works of preservative love, nurturance, and training'.¹⁴ Furthermore, such interpretations of the maternal role contribute to the neglect of mothers in Victorian narratives, as they suggest that even when they do appear, they have nothing worth offering to either their offspring or the narrative. Yet perhaps such interpretations are indicative of our own twentieth-century preferences and prejudices towards certain novelists and narratives; as Thaden points out, despite the popularity of the absent mother in nineteenth-century literature, novelists such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Margaret Oliphant, and Caroline Norton were each offering unique insights into motherhood and maternal care.¹⁵ Certainly, the matriarchal nature of *Olive* would suggest that some authors, at least, considered the role worthy of discussion.

Craik was nineteen when her mother died, considerably older than the Brontë children, who were aged between twenty months and five years, but only a few years older than Eliot, whose mother died when she was sixteen. Yet, it can hardly be suggested that Craik followed Showalter's assertion and came to identify

¹⁴ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 17.

¹⁵ Thaden, *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction*, 5.

with or depend upon her father. Rather, it would appear that Craik subsequently sought maternal support from a wide range of women including aunts and older women who acted as friends and mentors. Perhaps it was these relationships with other women that led Craik to write a novel which stands in stark contrast to its peers, as it abounds with mothers and allomothers. As Carolyn Dever suggests, the void left by the dead or absent mother in Victorian novels opens up a space whereby other women are able to reconfigure both the maternal role and conventional roles for women.¹⁶ In *Olive*, Craik provides a space where multiple women attempt maternal practice with varying degrees of success. At various times, we see allomothers taking the responsibility of caring for a child upon themselves, making this work a 'regular and substantive part' of their lives,¹⁷ whilst at other times we see biological mothers struggle to successfully perform motherhood. In this way, Craik highlights both the difficult nature of maternal work and the weight of responsibility that a writer like Ellis placed solely on women. By collectivising maternal care through these triads of mothers, daughters, and allomothers, Craik provided a counter-narrative to that of Ellis, which seeks to depict community as a way to alleviate the 'awful responsibility' of motherhood.

Mothers and their place in Victorian Society

The view that the social, physical, spiritual, and moral wellbeing of a child rests solely in the mother-child relationship stems largely from the writing of Rousseau who, in his novels *Emile* and *Julie*, offers some specific advice on raising children.¹⁸ Whilst his views on women have been variously considered to be either

¹⁶ Carolyn Dever, *Death and the Mother from Dickens to Freud: Victorian Fiction and the Anxiety of Origins* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4.

¹⁷ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 17.

¹⁸ Mary Seidman Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment: Women Writers and Rousseau*. (New York: State University of New York, 1997), 25-26.

patriarchal¹⁹ or protofeminist²⁰ it is important to remember that many of his views on motherhood arose out of concern for the exceedingly high infant mortality rate in France at this time.²¹ Rousseau's advice that women should stay at home and breastfeed their children, for example, was not merely the musings of a misogynistic writer who believed women should remain within the domestic sphere, but was in fact in keeping with medical opinion of the day which had, for several decades before the publication of *Emile*, advocated breastfeeding to reduce infant mortality.²² In addition to this, Rousseau believed that women's refusal to embrace the maternal role had not only led to the collapse of the family but also contributed to the moral corruption of French society whereby 'the whole moral order deteriorates'.²³ By encouraging women to embrace the maternal role, thereby staying at home to raise their children rather than sending them away to be raised by others, not only could family life be rejuvenated but so too could the moral regeneration of society as a whole be assisted.

However, just as Goodlad notes the differences between nineteenth-century France and England that must be taken into consideration when employing Foucault's critique of power and 'panoptical institutions'²⁴ in the analysis of

¹⁹ See, for example, Eva Figs, "Rousseau, Revolution, Romanticism, and Retrogression", in *Patriarchal Attitudes* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 92-110; Sarah Kofman and Mara Dukats, "Rousseau's Phallographic Ends", *Hypatia, A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 3.3 (Winter 1989): 123-136; Joan Landes, "Rousseau's Reply to Public Women", *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) 66-89; Susan Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992); Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1989).

²⁰ See, for example, Jean H. Bloch, "Women and the Reform of the Nation", in *Women and Society in Eighteenth Century France*, ed. Eva Jacobs et al. (London: Athlone Press, 1979), 3-18; Gita May, "Rousseau's 'Anti-Feminism' Reconsidered", in *French women and the age of enlightenment*, ed. Samia I. Spencer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 309-317; Helena Rosenblatt, "On the 'Mysogyny' of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Letter to d'Alembert in Historical Context," *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 1 (2002): 91-114.

²¹ Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment* 22.

²² Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment* 26.

²³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or, On Education*, Introduction, Translation, and Notes by Allan Bloom (USA: Basic Books, 1979), 45.

²⁴ Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society*. 2.

nineteenth-century English literature, so too must we be alert to the social, political, and cultural differences between French and English practices when analysing representations of motherhood in Victorian texts. As Thaden points out, whilst Rousseau claimed that mothers could ‘effect a revolution on the face of the earth’²⁵, a view that resonates with feminist care ethics today,²⁶ the Victorians remained uncertain about the role of the mother. Whilst Queen Victoria, for example, presented an image of perfect motherhood as matriarch to a large family, her private letters to her eldest daughter Princess Vicky often revealed otherwise, including her personal dislike of infants.²⁷ Furthermore, despite all the books, pamphlets, and essays that were written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries urging women to stay at home and care for their own children, this view of motherhood was not fully accepted until the mid-twentieth century.²⁸ Many Victorians, for example, remained unconvinced that good mothering was responsible for healthy, happy, upright, and moral adults, believing instead that it was the child’s responsibility to respect their parents and treat them kindly, regardless of how badly those parents had treated them.²⁹ As Nancy Armstrong suggests, the family unit as we recognise it today, whereby children are socialised by their mothers, acquired its power in literature first and ‘existed mainly as a fiction’ before it became reality.³⁰ Not only did middle-class Victorian mothers rarely attend to the physical care of their children, preferring instead to leave this role to wet nurses,

²⁵ Thaden, *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction*, 17.

²⁶ See, for example, Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, and Nel Noddings, *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012) for discussions of how maternal thinking and feminist care ethics can be revolutionary and foster peace.

²⁷ “Letter from Queen Victoria to her daughter Princess Vicky, 4th May 1859”, *Dearest Child: Letters Between Queen Victoria And The Princess Royal Previously Unpublished*, ed. Roger Fulford, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc, 1992), 191.

²⁸ Thaden, *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction*, 6.

²⁹ Thaden, *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction*, 17.

³⁰ Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 217.

nannies, and governesses but, until the passage of the Infant Custody Act of 1873, women had little to no legal rights where their children were concerned. A father could send his children away to live elsewhere, deny his wife access to them, or appoint a guardian, other than their mother, to look after the children.

These conflicting discourses surrounding mothers and motherhood undoubtedly influenced the representation of mothers in nineteenth-century fiction for, as Thaden notes, rarely does a good mother feature in Victorian fiction.³¹ In fact more often than not the mother figure is absent, if not from the start of the novel, then from very early in the story. Yet despite this the literary representation of the middle-class mother (for it was, as Claudia Nelson points out, middle-class ideology that dominated discussions of the family)³² was influenced by Rousseau's idealised vision. Reflected in the diverse range of childcare books published during this period and which bombarded mothers with information and advice on childrearing, we can see Rousseau's vision of motherhood appear again and again.³³ As Elizabeth Gaskell noted in relation to these texts, 'books do differ', but generally the advice on offer included hints on feeding, bathing, dressing, disciplining, and loving children.³⁴ Amongst these works can be found Ellis's *The Mothers of England* which defined the role of mother as one of vital importance to Victorian society, echoing Rousseau as

³¹ Thaden, *The Maternal Voice in Victorian Fiction*, 4.

³² Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 6.

³³ See, for example, Lydia Child, *The Mother's Book* (Boston: Carter, Hendee, and Babcock, 1831); James Cameron, *Three Lectures to Christian Mothers* (Edinburgh: William Innes, 1841); Mrs L. H. Sigourney, *Letters to Mothers*, 6th Ed., (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1845); Thomas Bull, *The Maternal Management of Children* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1854); Pye Henry Chavasse, *Advise to a Mother on the Management of her Offspring*, 5th Ed., (London: Jon Churchill, 1860); Martha Careful, *Domestic Hints to Young Mothers* (London: Dean and Sons, 1862).

³⁴ J.A.V Chapple and Anita Wilson, eds., *The Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland* (Bodmin, England: Keele University Press, 1996), 52.

she advised women of their 'deep responsibilities ... a nation's moral wealth is in your keeping'.³⁵

As the author of this influential Victorian treatise on mothering, Ellis herself appears to have had an idealised early childhood, growing up in a comfortable Quaker family where she was taught the essential skills of practical housewifery as well as encouraged by her father to read widely in a variety of literature. As a girl she developed a love of nature and natural beauty, trained horses, enjoyed art and was encouraged to develop an independent mind.³⁶ Her upbringing certainly seems to have been relaxed and easier than was perhaps the norm for young women in the early nineteenth century. However, it has been suggested that the death of her mother when Ellis was four years of age had a deep and profound impact on her life.³⁷ Certainly this experience appears to have influenced her later writings and the importance she placed on the mother's role within the middle-class family. For unlike Charlotte and Emily Brontë or George Eliot who, as Showalter has argued, rarely wrote about mothers as a result of losing their own, Ellis embraced not only the maternal but also other female roles including wife and daughter as, between 1839 and 1843, she wrote a series of conduct books directed at the women of England. Her first book, *The Women of England, their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839) was an instant success and was followed by three others: *The Daughters of England, their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (1842); *The Wives of England, their Relative Duties, Domestic*

³⁵ Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility* (The Caxton Press, Newfate St. and Angel St., London: Fisher, Son and Co., 1843), doi:10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004 13.

³⁶ "Ellis, Sarah (1799–1872)," H. S. Twycross-Martin in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. David Cannadine, Oxford: OUP, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.uwa.edu.au/view/article/8711> (accessed February 21, 2017).

³⁷ "Ellis, Sarah (1799–1872)," H. S. Twycross-Martin in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

Influence, and Social Obligations (1843); and *The Mothers of England, their Influence and Responsibility* (1843). By breaking her successive work into three books, Ellis sought to address 'the different eras in woman's personal experience'.³⁸

Essentially, like Rousseau, Ellis believed that it was the duty of women to provide a positive influence on those within their domestic sphere, which would ultimately improve society. However, Ellis does not always agree with Rousseau. One area where she diverges from Rousseau relates to the biological nature of mothers. For Ellis, mothering was a biologically endowed responsibility. Whilst she comments on how she had originally intended to include a chapter on hints for step-mothers in her book *The Mothers of England*, she ultimately decided not to, as the 'subject more immediately under consideration', by which we might read biological motherhood, 'grew from importance' and prevented this from being included.³⁹ This is somewhat ironic as Ellis herself was not a biological mother but was both an allomother and a step-mother, having cared for her sister's children after her death and, after her marriage to the Rev. William Ellis in 1837, becoming step-mother to his four children. However, Ellis clearly understood her audience and by the end of the 1830s had established herself as 'the semi-official portraitist of an aspiring middle-class domesticity.'⁴⁰ Including non-biological mothering did not conform to the narrative she was seeking to present. This emphasis on biological mothering diverged from the thought of Rousseau who, anticipating twentieth-century care ethics, argued that it was not the biological fact of being a mother that was important but rather the daily physical contact of childrearing that fostered the

³⁸ Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Daughters of England* (Fisher, Son and Co., 1842), preface.

³⁹ Ellis, *The Mothers of England*, preface.

⁴⁰ Karen Chase and Michael H. Levenson, *The Spectacle of Intimacy: A Public Life for the Victorian Family* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 67.

affective ties between a mother and child.⁴¹ This observation was not lost on Craik who, in her novel *Olive*, not only presents her reader with a disabled protagonist, but also suggests multiple ways for women to 'mother' beyond the biological. In doing so Craik can be seen to challenge the essentialist nature of mothering which Sarah Stickney Ellis put forward and instead presents an image of motherhood that can be seen to anticipate Ruddick's argument that anyone can mother.

'Why should heaven have punished me thus?' Disability and Motherhood in *Olive*

In essence, *Olive* tells the story of a young woman's journey from neglected infant to wife and (step) mother. Along the way *Olive* assumes various roles including devoted friend, female artist, family breadwinner, caring daughter, and saviour of souls, until she finally settles on 'angel of the house'. The novel begins with the birth of Olive, the child of Sybilla and Angus Rothesay, a daughter who is born with a slight curvature of the spine. With Angus away in Jamaica, Sybilla is able to hide Olive's 'deformity', as it is referred to in the novel, for five years, a deception she commits out of fear that her husband will reject Olive.⁴² Yet this is exactly what Sybilla does, having very little to do with the child until Olive is twelve, when the nurse who has cared for Olive all these years dies. Over the ensuing years, due to financial problems and later the death of her father, Olive and her mother are forced to move several times. Their first move, as a result of financial mismanagements by Captain Rothesay, is to the English parish of Oldchurch. Here Olive meets her first friend, Sara Derwent, and realises for the first time in her life that her physical

⁴¹ Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment*, 26.

⁴² Dinah Mulock Craik, *Olive*, ed. Cora Kaplan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6. All subsequent references are to this edition and page numbers will appear in the body of the text.

impairment makes her different from other girls and the subject of pity and ridicule. Later, after Captain Rothesay's death, Olive and her mother move to a suburb of London where Olive works as an artist in order to pay back the debts her father left to a man called Harold Gwynne, when he died. It is here that Olive meets brother and sister Michael and Meliora Vanbrugh and a wilful young girl by the name of Christal Manners, who Olive later finds out is her half-sister. When Christal's '*ma mie*'⁴³, Celia Manners, dies, Meliora assumes responsibility for Christal, organising to send her to school in France. Meanwhile Michael, himself an artist, acts as mentor and teacher for Olive as her artistic career develops. When Michael and Meliora move to Italy, Olive and her mother move to a small cottage at Farnwood.

As the years pass, Sybilla's eye sight gradually deteriorates, to the extent that she becomes virtually blind and relies heavily on her daughter for care. At Farnwood, Olive meets the widower of her childhood friend, Sara Derwent, Sara having died shortly after the birth of their daughter Alison. Sara's husband, Harold Gwynne, is the same man Olive's father had died owing money to, and whose debt Olive has paid off through her art. At this time Christal returns from Paris and Olive assumes responsibility for her in Meliora's absence. After many years at Farnwood, Sybilla dies and sometime after this event Olive finds and reads a letter, addressed to her and written by her father, that tells how Christal Manners is his daughter and Olive's half-sister. Christal's mother was in fact the Jamaican/English woman called Celia Manners, whom Captain Rothesay had met in Jamaica and who had followed him back to England with their daughter. Olive decides not to share this news with her half-sister Christal, but when Christal eventually finds out she attacks Olive,

⁴³ Ma mie, French for my pet, or my darling.

leaving her injured and unconscious, before fleeing to France, where she is saved from a suicide attempt by Harold, who Olive has tasked with the job of finding Christal and bringing her home. Christal's story ends with her self-imposed exile in a convent in Scotland, where she refuses to see Olive. The novel ends with the marriage of Olive to Harold Gwynne and, as a consequence, Olive becoming step-mother to his daughter Alison.

Olive has frequently been compared to *Jane Eyre* and there are certainly a number of parallels.⁴⁴ Sally Mitchell, for example, has described *Olive* as '*Jane Eyre* twisted one degree tighter because of Olive's disability'⁴⁵ whilst Cora Kaplan has noted the way in which certain characters in *Olive* mirror those in *Jane Eyre*, Celia and Christal Manners for example are the fictional relatives of Bertha Mason, whilst Angus Rothesay mirrors Rochester.⁴⁶ Both novels share a central discussion on the consequences of miscegenation; Christal's violent behaviour, suicide attempt, and self-imposed exile from society have not only been read as echoing the violently unpredictable behaviour of Bertha Mason, but also as expressive of a mid-nineteenth-century obsession with the viability of 'hybridized offspring'.⁴⁷ Likewise, both novels feature women who ultimately save men from themselves, in Jane's rescue of Rochester from his own profligate behaviour and Olive's rescue of Harold from his crisis of faith. However, whilst *Jane Eyre* is notable for its lack of mothers, *Olive* abounds with them.

⁴⁴ Sally Mitchell, Elaine Showalter, and Cora Kaplan all compare *Olive* to *Jane Eyre* stating that *Olive* was written as a response to *Jane Eyre*. This noted comparison is useful as it allows me to compare the role of the mother in these two novels.

⁴⁵ Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 30.

⁴⁶ Cora Kaplan, "Introduction", *Olive*, x.

⁴⁷ Alisha R Walters, "Affective Hybridities: Dinah Mulock's *Olive* and British Heterogeneity," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 335.

Since Craik was rediscovered by feminist literary scholars in the 1970s, the majority of critical readings of *Olive* have focused, to some extent, on the central character's disability. Both Mitchell and Showalter, for example, provide a feminist critique of the text, reading disability in Craik's novel as reflecting the way in which women were 'crippled' through their lack of education, opportunities to work, access to finances and property ownership.⁴⁸ For Showalter, the 'sickly half of humanity' to which James referred were specifically unmarried women who were unequipped to deal with the society they found themselves in or, as Showalter describes them, 'freaks in a society that had no use for them'.⁴⁹ In contrast, Antonia Losano suggests that Olive's deformity frees her from the 'aestheticizing gaze' of men, thereby enabling her to enter the public sphere to become a professional artist⁵⁰. Whilst professional work as an artist was available for middle-class women it was not without its problems, as unrestricted access to public spaces was not as easily gained for women as it was for men. For Losano, Olive's disability enables her to access these spaces without fear of reproach. Likewise, Tabitha Sparks' argument that Olive's deformity allows her to 'shape-shift' into various roles, not all of which conform to the traditional gendered separation of the spheres, reinforces Losano's reading of Olive, as one of the roles Olive transforms into is that of the professional artist.⁵¹ In addition to these readings, *Olive* has also been read as an anti-Catholic narrative;⁵² a commentary on mid-nineteenth-century debates regarding race and

⁴⁸ Elaine Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment: A Case Study in Victorian Female Authorship," *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 2 (1975): 5-23; Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own. British Women Writers, from Charlotte Brontë to Doris Lessing*, (London: Virago Press, 1978).

⁴⁹ Elaine Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment: A Case Study in Victorian Female Authorship", 11.

⁵⁰ Antonia Losano, *The Woman Painter in Victorian Literature* (Columbia: Ohio State University, 2008).

⁵¹ Tabitha Sparks, "Dinah Mulock Craik's Olive: Deformity, Gender and Female Destiny," *Women's Writing* 9082 (2013): 360.

⁵² Jane Sturrock, "Catholic Anti-Heroines: Craik, Sewell and Yonge," *Women's Writing* 11, no. 1 (2004): 89-98.

national identity;⁵³ and a melodrama centred on the marriage plot that draws the reader's attention to the 'dangers of success at normative feminine roles',⁵⁴ each of which uses Olive's deformity as a critical component of their analysis. However, it should be noted that behind these various readings is a description of disability that reinforces certain negative stereotypes that critical disability studies seeks to expose and problematise.

A reading of *Olive*, through the lens of critical disability studies, clearly reveals the negative ways in which disability has been represented in this and other literary texts. Whilst Olive's impairment is minor, described as 'a slight curve at the upper part of the spine, between the neck and shoulders' (6), the very presence of such a physical disability results in Olive being repeatedly compared to other women. The stigmatising language used to describe her functions to separate Olive from the other women in the novel who are represented as upholding normative feminine virtues, such as beauty and motherhood. Throughout the novel Olive's disability is juxtaposed with the beauty of other characters, namely her mother Sybilla and her childhood friend Sara Derwent. Whilst Olive is described as 'the phantom of the pale, deformed child' (19) Sybilla is likened to 'a flesh-and-blood fairy – a Venus de Medici transmuted from the stone' (9). When Sybilla hears of her child's physical impairment she worries about how to tell her husband, fearing that he would 'turn away in disgust, and answer that it had better died' (15). The language used to describe the way Olive's parents initially react to her disability serves to stigmatise and dehumanise Olive. Both Sybilla and Angus initially repel

⁵³ Juliet Shields, "The Races of Women: Gender, Hybridity, and National Identity in Dinah Craik's *Olive*," *Studies in the Novel* 39, no. 3 (2007): 284–300, and Walters, "Affective Hybridities: Dinah Mulock's *Olive* and British Heterogeneity."

⁵⁴ Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 51.

Olive, with Angus being unable to look at his daughter, 'putting his hands before his eyes, as if to shut out the sight' (23). As Bill Hughes notes, this aversion to the presence of disability is often a response to our own feelings of vulnerability.⁵⁵ For Sybilla, there is the fear that her husband will not only reject the child but also herself. Moreover, this turning away functions as a disabling gaze which seeks to remove Olive from the scene, to eliminate her presence. It is, as anthropologist Robert Murphy notes, a 'pattern of avoidance' that over time has the power to erode an individual's dignity and self-esteem.⁵⁶ Ignored and avoided by her parents for much of her early childhood, Olive would not have experienced unconditional love were it not for the maternal care of her nurse, Elspie.

Throughout Olive's early childhood she is portrayed as weak, growing 'more delicate every year' (19) and as possessing 'a feeble, trembling voice' (20). As a child she is denied the society of peers and the limited schooling she does receive is gained at home from occasional teachers. When Olive finally makes her first friend, at the age of sixteen, the friendship arises from feelings of pity rather than genuine affection. As Hughes argues, pity is a 'hierarchizing emotion' in that it places the one who feels pity in a position of superiority over the one towards whom the pity is directed.⁵⁷ As such, whilst this is Olive's first friendship it is also one that is founded on inequality. Sara Derwent, the beautiful yet rather vapid first friend for Olive, not only mentions to an old school friend in a letter how she had found 'such a dear, loving gentle, thing; a girl, not pretty – even slightly deformed' (59) but also ridicules, humiliates, and stigmatises Olive. Whilst at a party Sara laughs at the

⁵⁵ Bill Hughes, "FEAR, PITY AND DISGUST: Emotions and the Non-Disabled Imaginary," in *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies*, ed. Nick Watson, Alan Roulston, and Carol Thomas (NY: Routledge, 2012), 69.

⁵⁶ Robert Murphy, *The Body Silent*, (New York: W.W Norton, 1987), as cited in Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Staring* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 83.

⁵⁷ Hughes, "FEAR, PITY AND DISGUST: Emotions and the Non-Disabled Imaginary," 71.

thought that Olive could steal anyone's lover, remarking 'she, who will probably never have one in all her life – poor thing' (66) before going on to point out to Olive that her 'defect' is hardly noticeable, except 'perhaps with strangers, especially with men, who think so much about beauty' (67). From early in the novel we see disability presented as a punishment, a burden, and a fate worse than death, with the disabled character represented as pitiable, an object of ridicule, and denied full participation in the community.⁵⁸ In addition, these responses are not restricted to the able-bodied characters in the novel, for Olive herself succumbs to self-pity and defeatism. After the party, for example, Olive realises for the first time in her life that her physical bodily variation makes her 'different to other girls', causing her to fall into a reflective and despairing mood. As a consequence of this realisation Olive asks her mother 'am I then so painful to look upon? Shall I, indeed, cause people to dislike me wherever I go?' (68) The assumption that her disability will cause her life to be worthless, or at least worth less than that of other women, weighs heavily on Olive's mind. For the first time in her life she considers herself to be a burden and sees in herself 'a poor deformed being, shut out from all natural ties – a woman, to whom friendship would be given in kindly pity; to whom love ... would be denied for evermore' (69).

Not surprisingly, one of these natural ties, to which Olive refers, is motherhood, and in *Olive* we see the maternal plot complicated by Olive's disability. The discomfort felt in imagining disabled women as mothers exists in society today

⁵⁸ Colin Barnes provides a useful list of negative disability stereotypes in his 1992 report on media representations of disabled people. This list includes such stereotypes as the disabled person as pitiable and pathetic; sinister and evil; their own worst enemy; incapable of participating in community life; a burden; and the supercripple. For the full list see Colin Barnes, "An Exploration of the Principles for Media Representations of Disabled People the First in a Series of Reports," *The British Council of Organizations of Disabled People and Ryuburn Publishing Limited*, 1992.

just as it did in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ As Martha Stoddard Holmes points out in relation to Victorian fiction, ‘no matter how close they [disabled women] get to the traditional Victorian heroine’s plot of courtship, love, and marriage, disabled women characters almost never become biological parents’.⁶⁰ However, Olive’s disability achieves more than the mere suggestion that disabled women cannot or should not have children. Rather, it works to expose the inadequacies of heteronormative families and offers an alternative way into the role of motherhood through the figure of the allomother.

‘A Charming Scene of Maternal Felicity’ – Maternal Care in *Olive*

In *Olive*, Craik tells the stories of three biological mothers, Sybilla Rothesay (mother of Olive), Sara Derwent (mother of Allie), and Celia Manners (mother of Christal). Other than Sara Derwent, who dies shortly after childbirth, thereby conforming to the popular maternal trope of the absent mother, these women struggle with the role of mother, especially as it was imagined by Ellis. The scenes of motherhood we see represented between these biological mothers and their daughters, for they all have daughters, fail to approach the ‘charming scene of maternal felicity’ that Sybilla’s doctor believes he has entered upon one of his visits to check his patient and her baby. In *Olive*, Craik twins each biological mother with an allomother who assumes responsibility for the former’s child; Sybilla is twinned by Elspie, Olive’s nurse; Sara is twinned by Olive, who becomes Allie’s stepmother; and Celia is twinned by Meliora, who oversees Christal’s education after Celia’s

⁵⁹ In her study examining the experiences disabled women had of pregnancy and motherhood, Carol Thomas found that disabled mothers were at particular risk of being judged as inadequate mothers and many lived in fear of having their children removed by the authorities because they were not good enough mothers. See, Carol Thomas, “The Baby and the Bath Water: Disabled Women and Motherhood in Social Context,” *Sociology of Health & Illness* 19, no. 5 (1997): 622–643, for further information.

⁶⁰ Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 6.

death. However, in doing so Craik is not so much establishing a simplistic binary division between the good mother and the bad mother but rather creates a sympathetic portrayal which challenges the morally polarised images of motherhood and points to the difficulties mothers often experience in caring for their children. Furthermore, she also highlights the importance of relationality in raising children and the role allomothers play in establishing this. For the remainder of this chapter I will focus on the disabled family of care surrounding Olive by examining the interdependency and relationality of the triad of maternal care that exists between Sybilla, Elspie, and Olive.

Sybilla, Elspie, and Olive

The first biological mother the reader encounters in *Olive* is Sybilla. She is a young mother, only eighteen years old, when she gives birth to Olive, and with no family of her own and a husband whom she barely knows, away in Jamaica where he is earning his living. Sybilla has little support or guidance in her new role. Initially Sybilla delights in the arrival of her daughter, albeit in the way a child takes delight in a new toy; however, the news that her child has a physical deformity, causing a curvature of the spine, results in her rejection of Olive. Sybilla is not only beautiful herself, described as possessing a rare and exquisite beauty, but she has also grown up to consider beauty the greatest good. She was, the reader is told, 'in love with loveliness; not merely in herself but in every human creature' (14). As such, Sybilla's love of beauty in herself and others is challenged by the knowledge that her daughter has been born with a physical 'deformity'. In the juxtaposition of Sybilla and Olive through their physical descriptions readers are directed to feel pity towards Olive, for she is a small suffering victim in need of care, who has been

abandoned by her mother. However, through these early descriptions of the maternal relationship between Sybilla and her daughter Olive, I argue that Craik is challenging the popularist notions of motherhood found in Sarah Stickney Ellis's work *The Mothers of England*, which could also be described as having an artificial beauty in its overall tone.

In *The Mothers of England* we find Ellis discussing the beauty that exists in the relationship between mother and child. For Ellis, the birth of a child is a joyful moment, 'founded chiefly upon a kind of indefinite hope which fills the mother's breast' and which causes the mother to think about her child's future.⁶¹ For Sybilla, however, whose daughter has a physical impairment, the joy and hope that Ellis speaks of are replaced by fear and shame. Sybilla responds to Olive's curvature of the spine as 'the curse of hopeless deformity' that she is 'doomed' to live with all her life (14). Olive will be, as far as Sybilla is concerned, a 'deformity on the face of the earth, a shame to its [Olive's] parents, [and] a dishonour to its race' (14). This response is shaped not only by Sybilla's profound attachment to beauty and perfection, having gloried in her own and those of others for so long, but also, as both Cora Kaplan and Alisha Walters argue, in nineteenth-century attitudes towards miscegenation and nationhood.⁶² For while, as Kaplan notes, most nineteenth-century ethnographic writers were 'focused primarily on distinguishing darker skinned races from each other and ... from European types' one voice, the Scottish anatomist Robert Knox, sought to apply these discussion of race to the people of Britain.⁶³ As such both Kaplan and Walters consider the marriage between English

⁶¹ Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility*, 5.

⁶² For further information on this see Cora Kaplan, "Introduction", *Olive*, xv; and Alisha R. Walters, "Affective Hybridities: Dinah Mulock Craik's *Olive* and British Heterogeneity," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 325-43, doi:10.1080/09699082.2013.801122.

⁶³ Kaplan, "Introduction", *Olive*, xvi.

Sybilla and Scottish Angus as one of 'mixed race' in which Craik, as Kaplan argues, can be seen to map the 'cultural and racial divisions between Celt and Anglo-Saxon' onto their marriage.⁶⁴ Ultimately, the joyfulness that Ellis speaks of, when 'a child is ushered into life', is not experienced by Sybilla.⁶⁵

Ellis goes on to suggest that mothers look back to their own childhood experiences for examples of what she effectively categorises as good and bad maternal care.

By the many retrospective glances she has at different times thrown back upon the course of her own life, she will no doubt have been able to perceive many defects in the management and training by which she was herself conducted from infancy to youth ... the rocks and shoals upon which her own bark may at different times have nearly suffered shipwreck; as well as the safer channels through which she has at other times been enabled to pass unharmed.⁶⁶

However, Sybilla is herself an orphan and so has little to look back on. To accommodate for this lack of maternal lineage, Elspie tells the stories of the women on Captain Rothesay's side of the family. For Ellis, such 'frivolous or low conversation of an ignorant nurse'⁶⁷ has the potential to rob Sybilla of the time she needs, as a new mother, to reflect on her own upbringing. Ellis is particularly suspicious of the 'family histories' servants and nurses tell to 'fill up the long hours of their attendance in a sick-room',⁶⁸ yet it is these very stories that help to provide a matrilineal legacy for Olive, as the unearthly and ethereal Sybilla is soon contrasted against her husband's female ancestors. Through her provision of a family tree for Olive that provides her with a female line that includes a number of strong, powerful, and transgressive women, Craik is clearly challenging Ellis' idea that lowly

⁶⁴ Kaplan, "Introduction", *Olive*, xvi.

⁶⁵ Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility*, 5.

⁶⁶ Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility*, 5.

⁶⁷ Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility*, 6.

⁶⁸ Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility*, 7.

and ignorant nurses have nothing of value to say. The women Elspie speaks of include Lady Christina Rothesay, who was pronounced a witch; Lady Isobel who, in a Rapunzelesque moment, lowered her lover down from her bedroom window with her long golden hair, only to hear later that he was killed by her brother, after which time Isobel placed a curse on all descendants with golden hair; Jean Rothesay, who died by an arrow aimed at her husband; and Katherine Rothesay, who hid two of Bonnie Prince Charlie's soldiers after Culloden and stood guard, brandishing pistols, ready to protect them. Despite Sybilla feeling frightened by these 'awful women' (11), they foreshadow aspects of Olive's life. Olive will love, protect, and sacrifice during the course of her life but, more immediately, her physical impairment will position her, in her mother's eyes, as cursed.

Once Sybilla is informed of Olive's disability she rejects her daughter almost entirely. Olive's presence is merely tolerated by Sybilla, who refuses to engage with her, goes to balls and parties, and ultimately abandons 'all a mother's duties, and the poor feeble spark of life ... to Elspie's cherishing' (15). Indeed, according to maternal health experts Brockington, Aucamp, and Fraser, the rejection of a child can be defined when one of the following situations is established: the mother expresses dislike, resentment or hatred for her child, expressed in terms like, 'I wish it had been stillborn', or 'it has ruined my life'; the mother has expressed the desire for *permanent* relinquishment of care; or the mother has experienced a wish that the child disappear or die.⁶⁹ Clearly from this description Sybilla has abandoned Olive. Not only does she consider Olive's impairment as shameful and as a punishment but there is also the suggestion that Sybilla may have wished the child dead, for whilst

⁶⁹ I. F. Brockington, H. M. Aucamp, and C. Fraser, "Severe Disorders of the Mother-Infant Relationship: Definitions and Frequency," *Archives of Women's Mental Health* 9, no. 5 (2006): 250, doi:10.1007/s00737-006-0133-0.

she does not utter the words herself she imagines her husband, on first seeing Olive, saying that the child 'had better died' (15).

This description of Sybilla, rejecting her daughter, has the power to position her in the role of the 'bad mother'. The idealised good mother casts a long shadow, as Ruddick notes,⁷⁰ and the good mother, as personified by Ellis, certainly leaves Sybilla deficient in terms of the maternal care she displays towards her daughter. Even if we consider the fact that throughout the nineteenth century middle and upper class mothers relinquished the care of their children to others, Sybilla's refusal to acknowledge Olive remains an extreme and neglectful act. However, the juxtaposing of the good and bad mother is never that simple and, as Ruddick argues, can in fact be damaging to the maternal role by making mothering appear natural and easy, thus undermining the complexity and difficulty of the role.⁷¹ The physical reaction Sybilla has to being told, rather bluntly by a doctor, of Olive's disability actually mirrors Kittay's description of her own response to being informed of Sesha's disability. Just as Kittay describes the physical pain she experienced on learning of Sesha's disability and how her 'body convulsed against this indigestible morsel',⁷² so too Craik describes Sybilla as collapsing 'into a sort of fever' that lasted for several days (15).

Furthermore, if we consider Holmes's 'disabled family' we can see Sybilla acquiring a disabled identity in that, through her connection with Olive as her biological mother, she fears facing the stigma, rejection, and isolation disability can bring. How can Sybilla embrace the good mother when society, and quite possibly

⁷⁰ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 31.

⁷¹ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 32.

⁷² Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labour. Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 149.

her husband, will lay the blame of Olive's disability at her feet? At a time when a congenital disability, such as Olive's curvature of the spine, was widely believed to be due to 'maternal impression', the belief that if a woman saw something traumatic during her pregnancy this would be imprinted onto the foetus, Sybilla cannot help but feel in some way responsible.⁷³ As she reads the letters her husband wrote to her during his absence the sentiments of joy he'd expressed about the birth of his daughter exacerbate Sybilla's misery: 'every sentence smote her with bitter regret, even with shame, as though it were her fault in having given to the world the wretched child' (18). Yet regardless of Sybilla's rejection there remains a child in the world, which as Ruddick states is the starting point for maternal care. With Sybilla refusing to care for her daughter, the responsibility falls to Elspie, the old nurse who has worked for the Rothesay family for many years and also raised Olive's father, Captain Angus Rothesay, when he was a boy.

In Elspie's mind, her responsibility for Olive goes beyond that of an employee, as she declares that she will be Olive's mother. Indeed, when Craik describes Elspie as being 'like Naomi of old' (15) she effectively likens her to the biblical character in the book of Ruth, who is both cared for by Ruth and cares for Ruth's son. In doing so, Craik acknowledges the maternal role Elspie plays in Olive's life, who like Naomi 'laid the child into her bosom and became nurse unto it' (15).⁷⁴ The story of Ruth and Naomi has been described by Phyllis Tribble as one of women's survival in a patriarchal environment.⁷⁵ Given how matriarchal *Olive* is, the use of this biblical story would have been particularly noteworthy for Craik's nineteenth-century

⁷³ John M. Keating, *Cyclopaedia of the Diseases of Children, Vol. 1* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Co., 1890), 205 & 215.

⁷⁴ This quotation, used by Craik, is taken directly from Ruth 4:16. The following verse reinforces the maternal role Naomi plays as it states, 'And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi: and they called his name O'Bed'.

⁷⁵ Phyllis Tribble, "Two Women In A Man's World: A Reading of the Book of Ruth," *Soundings* 59.3 (1976): 251.

readers. In addition to this the story presents an ancient precedent for women, other than the biological mother, taking care of the fundamental needs of children in order to secure their survival. As Ruddick notes, children have needs that must be met if they are to survive in the world. These needs, or 'demands' as Ruddick calls them, relate to the fact that children need 'their lives to be preserved and their growth fostered'.⁷⁶ Anyone who takes the responsibility of meeting these needs upon themselves and makes attending to these needs a part of their working life is, according to Ruddick, mothering.⁷⁷

In light of this definition, Elspie clearly performs the role of mother to Olive in Sybilla's absence, as without this initial care Olive would have died. The care Elspie provides at this time functions as 'preservative love', the most fundamental of maternal requirements and one which is occasionally denied to disabled infants.⁷⁸ Craik's use of Naomi to describe Elspie's care of Olive also foreshadows both Olive's reciprocal care of Elspie, and the recurrence of allomothers later in the novel. In assuming the maternal work associated with caring for Olive, Elspie declares Olive her own daughter and herself Olive's mother when she says:

'Your mither casts ye aff, ye puir wee thing. Maybe ye're no lang for this world, but while ye're in it ye sall be my ain lassie, an' I'll be your ain mairie, evermair' (15).

In taking on this role and declaring that she will be Olive's mother forever, Elspie embraces the maternal work necessary to protect and nurture the child. The 'poor feeble spark of life' that is the infant Olive, is, for now, entirely 'left to Elspie's cherishing' (15). Whilst the language Craik uses to describe Elspie's reactions to

⁷⁶ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 17.

⁷⁷ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 17.

⁷⁸ Kittay, *Love's Labours*, 163.

Olive are designed to evoke the reader's pity and sentiment, the way Craik deals with the reality of a disabled infant in the world is remarkably progressive for her time. Never, in this novel, do we see discussions centred on leaving the child to die – this will come later in *A Noble Life*; rather here Craik appears to be anticipating Ferguson and Asch who state that 'the most important thing that happens when a child with disabilities is born is that a child is born'.⁷⁹

One of the first actions Elspie performs in her new role is to take Olive to be baptised. In this scene we see Elspie standing before the minister 'holding the desolate babe in her protecting arms' (16). The act of holding is one of the characteristics Ruddick notes as necessary for meeting the demand of protection.⁸⁰ For Ruddick, holding is not simply the physical act of holding a child in one's arms, but also encompasses the virtues that accompany this 'fundamental attitude of protectiveness'; it is a way of seeing aimed at maintaining harmony and involves the 'skills necessary for sustaining a child in safety'.⁸¹ In holding Olive, Elspie is not only attending to all that is necessary to preserve Olive's life but is also working towards holding a family together. There is a relational aspect to Elspie's maternal holding of Olive as every evening, she takes Olive to her mother and demands that Sybilla acknowledge her daughter with a kiss. Further, when Captain Rothesay returns from Jamaica, Elspie reunites father and daughter, pointing out to him the family resemblance between Olive and himself. Throughout his years away, Elspie has told Olive so much about her father that 'the image of the absent father [had become] an

⁷⁹ P.M Ferguson and A. Asch, "Lessons from Life: Personal and Parental Perspectives on School, Childhood, and Disability," in *Schooling and Disability – Eighty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II*, ed. K.J. Behage (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 109 cited in Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labour. Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 147.

⁸⁰ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 78.

⁸¹ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 79.

image of love' (28) and gradually, over time, and with the guidance of Elspie, Captain Rothesay begins to love and value his daughter.

When Elspie becomes unwell, the protectiveness and care that Elspie has shown Olive for twelve years is reciprocated. Olive 'tended her nurse lovingly and cheerfully, made herself quite a little woman for her sake, and really half enjoyed the stillness of the sick-room' (39). As I have previously noted, scenes of the sickroom are a common feature in nineteenth-century literature and create what Miriam Bailin describes as a consoling community, in which the invalid is surrounded by an entourage of friends and family.⁸² However, the sickroom which housed Elspie was not home to a consoling community of family and friends but rather was frequented primarily by Olive. Yet this solitude provides a space within which Olive matures. The caring duties she performs within the sick room are those traditionally associated with women and in participating in the provision of care Olive begins to grow emotionally. As Olive guides her nurse back to bed, for example, issuing orders in 'a tone of almost womanly firmness' (40) we see how the act of caring for another and the transition from girl to woman have been linked. Cora Kaplan has noted how the role of nurse and nurturer are central to Olive's story, especially in her relationships with her mother and, later, with Harold Gwynne.⁸³ Likewise, Holmes notes the way in which the relationship between Olive and her mother is grounded in interdependency.⁸⁴ However, it starts here with Elspie. Elspie's tutoring of Olive in maternal thinking and care, which Olive then demonstrates via her reciprocal act of caring for Elspie when she is ill and dying, establishes in Olive the nurturing skills

⁸² Bailin, *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction*, 5.

⁸³ Cora Kaplan, "Introduction," xiv.

⁸⁴ Martha Stoddard Holmes, "Victorian Fictions of Interdependency: Gaskell, Craik, and Yonge," *Journal of Literary Disability* 1, no. 2 (2007): 32.

she uses later in the novel. Without Elspie's care, Olive would not have lived to become nurse and nurturer to others.

One of the main themes in debates about care ethics, as Pettersen points out, is the way in which altruistic care is consistent with western culture's traditional expectations of women.⁸⁵ However, when we remember Olive's disability, Craik's representation of care in this scene becomes notable as it is also the first of a number of occasions where we see Olive, the disabled character and therefore the one most likely to be positioned in the role of care-receiver, turning the tables and acting as the care-giver. This move is a somewhat progressive one, on Craik's part, as it can be seen to foreshadow contemporary debates about care, especially those from within the disability movement, which seek to overthrow the view that the cared-for is always passively under the control of the care-giver.⁸⁶

Olive cares for Elspie in the absence of any adults until she can no longer manage alone. When Elspie's fever gets so bad that Olive needs the help of the servants, she must overcome childish fears of the ghosts and spectres that haunt the castle in order to go out into the corridors alone and seek help. The act of heroism and courage Olive exhibits, for 'Dante's terrors in the haunted wood were not greater or more real than poor little Olive's' (42), reveals the lengths to which Olive will go to reciprocate the care she has received from Elspie, in spite of her fears. When Sybilla returns home, she enters upon a scene of death and sadness. Olive has fainted at the sight of Elspie, who 'save for the purple face and loud, heavy breathing,

⁸⁵ Tove Pettersen, "Conceptions of Care: Altruism, Feminism, and Mature Care," *Hypatia* 27, no. 2 (2012): 374, doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.2011.01197.x.

⁸⁶ This concern is discussed further in chapter four where I examine the importance of combining an ethic of justice with an ethic of care to maintain the autonomy and self-determination of the disabled individual, thereby challenging the control and power the able-bodied carer has over the disabled person.

had all the unconsciousness of death' (43). Sybilla too is saddened, and grieves over Elspie's deathbed before taking her daughter to her own sitting-room and laying her on the sofa. When the maid comes in to tell Sybilla that Elspie has died Olive turns to her mother and says, 'Now I have no one to love me but you' (44). Yet whilst Sybilla is saddened by the death of Elspie, there is also a sense of relief, for now she is suddenly free to finally hold onto her daughter:

The feeling was strange, perhaps even wrong; but as Mrs Rothesay clasped her child, it was not without a thrill of freedom and exultation that Olive was all her own now (44).

The freedom to hold her on child, that Sybilla now feels, and which leads to a revival in her maternal feelings, stems from the death of Elspie and her release of Olive. Ruddick notes how some mothers, in their need to protect their children, can hold on too tight. Whilst the act of holding is preservative, designed to minimise risk and maintain harmony, it can become, according to Ruddick, 'degenerative' when it is too tight or too close.⁸⁷ Perhaps, in holding Olive and protecting her so well for her first twelve years, Elspie had inadvertently kept Sybilla at arm's length, distancing her from her own child; for now Sybilla holds her daughter and Olive, looking up at her mother, sees something she has never seen before, her mother's face 'shining with maternal love' (44).

Through Craik's representation of maternal care in the figures of Sybilla and Elspie we see a portrait of the mother quite at odds with that described by Ellis yet which foreshadows the work of contemporary care theorists like Ruddick. In Elspie we see Craik anticipating the arguments of Ruddick and recognising that biology does not predetermine maternal care, whilst her depiction of Sybilla exposes the

⁸⁷ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 79.

difficulties many biological mothers have in assuming maternal responsibilities. Whilst Ellis remarks that motherhood is both a time of joy and of serious thought, that 'if ever, in the whole course of woman's life, she is called upon to think seriously, it is when she first becomes a parent',⁸⁸ Craik appears to acknowledge the often difficult start many women have to motherhood. Through Sybilla Craik reveals how one woman fails to experience the 'joyfulness of a child being ushered into life,' which Ellis writes of,⁸⁹ and instead portrays a woman who finds herself in the position of an unhappy mother, with 'shattered health', disappointed expectations, and a complete indifference towards her daughter, all of which leads to what Craik describes as Sybilla's 'utter abandonment of all a mother's duties' (15). Such an exposition of the difficulties faced by new mothers contrasts with the idyllic image of motherhood Ellis paints. Nevertheless, after Elspie's death Sybilla does take on a maternal role, and Olive responds by taking on the role of the dutiful daughter, attending to her mother as she ages and loses her sight, and nursing her in her old age.

For Craik, this dutiful role toward one's parents is discussed in her essay, 'What is self-sacrifice?', and stems from the religious teaching, 'honour thy father and thy mother'.⁹⁰ However, the duty is not to be performed unquestioningly or without reciprocation, for not only does Craik acknowledge the difficulty one might encounter in honouring a bad parent but she also stresses the reciprocity of the relationship between child and parent:

I think every high or honorable instinct in human nature will feel there is hardly a limit to be set to the devotion of a child to a good parent – righteous devotion, repaying to failing life all that its own young life once received of care

⁸⁸ Ellis, *Mothers of England*, 8.

⁸⁹ Ellis, *Mothers of England*, 5.

⁹⁰ Ephesians, 6: 2.

and comfort and blessing. And no good, or even moderately good parent is ever likely to allow this devotion to pass into self-sacrifice. Surely, as long as consciousness and reason lasted, all true fathers and mothers would prevent, in all possible ways, the complete absorption of the younger life into theirs.⁹¹

In this passage Craik constructs care in such a way as to highlight the giving and receiving of care, as an ongoing aspect of life. For Craik, care is a reciprocal process whereby the roles of care giver and care receiver vacillate throughout life as age and infirmity take hold in the parent and a growing desire to repay the 'care and comfort' received in their childhood develops in the son or daughter.⁹² Whilst Olive does not receive much maternal care from Sybilla in her infancy, as she gets older, the two do develop a close and loving relationship helped, in part, by the fact that Elspie has fostered sufficient love in Olive that she is able to attend to her filial duties regardless of her parents' earlier rejection. In the weeks and months that follow Elspie's death, Olive remembers her nurse fondly but now 'the full tide of living love ... flowed towards Mrs Rothesay as it had never done before, and perhaps never would have done but for Elspie's death' (46). In return, Sybilla's heart 'thirsted for that flood' (46) which has the effect of washing over any past hurts, thereby enabling the two to move forward in their roles of mother and daughter. As Sybilla and Olive move together in this new phase of their life we see them together in what Kittay describes as a nested relationship of care, in which the needs of both are attended to.⁹³ As Holmes argues, the transformation that takes place within Sybilla which sees

⁹¹ Dinah Mulock Craik, *Sermons out of Church*, archive.org (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875), 35-36, <https://ia601405.us.archive.org/5/items/sermonsoutchurc00craigoog/sermonsoutchurc00craigoog.pdf>.

⁹² I say son or daughter quite deliberately here for Craik's description of a true gentleman or 'gentle man' as being one who is 'generous, unexact, courteous of speech and kind of heart' and who possesses the 'protecting strength of manhood, which scorns to use strength except for protection' reappears in her novel *King Arthur: Not a Love Story* (1886) in which the adopted son, Arthur, reciprocates his mother's love and care by tenderly attending to her needs as she grows old and frail.

⁹³ Kittay, *Love's Labour*, 66.

her reciprocate Olive's love and affection, thereby bringing the two closer together as mother and daughter, is based on the interdependence of these two women.⁹⁴

The familial ties between Sybilla and Olive are strengthened when, soon after Elspie's death, mother and daughter find themselves victims of the financial mismanagement and speculations of Captain Rothesay and are forced to leave the ancestral home in Scotland to a smaller home in the English parish of Oldchurch. In their new abode Olive and her mother present a picture of a domestic idyll. Olive discusses the drawings in her sketchbook, designed to accompany her favourite poems, and occasionally recites those poems Sybilla requests. Craik's choice of Tennyson's 'The Miller's Daughter' as one of the poems requested by Sybilla, demonstrates the extent to which Sybilla is growing emotionally. 'The Miller's Daughter' tells the tale of a happy marriage and the love that endures as the couple grow old. The lines cited in chapter eleven of *Olive* come towards the end of Tennyson's poem and reflect the way in which the lives of the husband and wife have, over the course of their life together, become one:

Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine;
My other dearer life in life,
Look through my very soul with thine (54).

In the poem, this verse is followed by one which reflects upon the loss of a child, an event which brought the couple closer together. As Olive reads this poem aloud she cannot help but notice a look of sadness on her mother's face. Unlike the characters in the poem, who grow closer in their marriage, Sybilla and Captain Rothesay have drifted apart. Yet, just as the dead infant in the poem brings Tennyson's couple closer, Olive too will ultimately reunite her parents even though it is only for a brief

⁹⁴ Holmes, "Victorian Fictions of Interdependency: Gaskell, Craik, and Yonge," 32.

period before Captain Rothesay's death. And once again, it is through caring for another that Olive grows further into the role of 'angel in the house'.

When news arrives that her father is critically ill at a friend's house, it is Olive who must tell her mother. Recovering from the shock herself, we are told that in this moment, Olive becomes a woman, 'one of those of whom the world contains few – at once gentle and strong, meek and fearless, patient to endure, heroic to act' (100). In this description, Craik both reinforces adjectives so frequently used to describe disabled female characters ('gentle', 'meek', and 'patient') and simultaneously works to subvert them, by adding that Olive is also strong, fearless, and heroic. Indeed, Olive is becoming like those fearless ancestors Elspie described at her birth. When Olive tells Sybilla of Captain Rothesay's illness, Sybilla collapses and Olive nurses her mother in her arms. In this moment the two become aware of the strength of their love and the importance of their relationship. For Olive, these feelings of filial devotion mingle with a 'sense of protection and of watchful guardianship' (103), whilst for Sybilla she is reminded of her earlier neglect of Olive, saying:

My daughter – ah! I remember, I fainted, as I did long years ago, when they told me something about my daughter. Are you she – that little girl whom I cast from my arms? and now I am lying in yours! ... Take care of me Olive! – I do not deserve it, but take care of me! (103)

In this passage we see Sybilla acknowledging her past neglect and asking for, albeit in a rather circuitous manner, Olive's forgiveness, but we also see Sybilla's vulnerability and fear. When she rejected Olive as an infant it was in part due to fear that her husband, Captain Rothesay, would abandon her. Now, with the impending death of Captain Rothesay, Sybilla fears for her future again, and having always looked to her husband for guidance and support she now turns to her daughter. Whereas Sybilla has never grown from girl to woman, always being dependent on

someone, Olive, whilst only sixteen, now becomes the mother to Sybilla; 'the parent and child seemed to change places. Olive watched, guided, and guarded the passive, yielding sorrow stricken woman, as it were, with a mother's care.' (106).

Olive is able to attend to Sybilla in this manner, because of the maternal care she received from Elspie. Through this care, Olive has learnt how to be a daughter, a vital lesson to learn, according to Toni Morrison, if one is to become a woman:

[If a girl] never learns how to be a daughter, she can't never know how to be a woman ... You don't need your own natural mother to be a daughter. All you need is to feel a certain ... careful way about people older than you are ... A daughter is a woman that cares about where she came from and takes care of them that took care of her.⁹⁵

Whilst Morrison's statement may leave many of us questioning our worthiness as daughters she nevertheless, like Ruddick, separates out biology from the act of caring. A woman does not need to be raised by her biological mother in order to learn how to be a daughter. Rather, like Olive, she needs to be raised by those who value her worth as a unique human being and whose care is reciprocated when necessary. As a daughter, Olive remembers that it was Elspie who raised her and took care of her as a child, and she reciprocates this care when Elspie is dying. With the news of her father's illness, Olive becomes a woman and, as a consequence, mother to Sybilla, able to utilise the maternal wisdom she received from Elspie in order to care for her. In words which anticipates the scholarly language of feminists today, Craik describes the relationship between Sybilla and Olive as 'a new theory of maternal and filial bond' (106) whilst also acknowledging that this relationship between a mother and daughter is a commonly occurring relationship. Craik writes:

⁹⁵ Toni Morrison, *Tar Baby* (New York: Knopf, 1981), 281 cited in Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, 39.

If we look around on those daughters who have best fulfilled that holy duty ... are they not women of firm, steadfast nature – able to will and to act? Each of them could say, ‘I am as a mother unto my mother. I the strongest now, take her ... like a child to my bosom – I shield her, and I cherish her, and am to her all in all. (106).

There is, in this extract, a strong sense of the reciprocity to which Morrison points. And whilst, as Craik notes, it was a common occurrence for Victorian daughters to care for their mothers, her description of these women as strong and autonomous foreshadows the work of Ruddick, who suggests that learning how to be a daughter includes learning how to respect maternal thinking, to listen attentively when mothers speak, to value their sacrifices, whilst holding on to any hard-won gains daughters have achieved.⁹⁶ For Olive this last element is achieved when mother and daughter move to London and Olive works professionally as an artist to support them both financially and to repay the debts she was left with when her father died.

It is whilst Sybilla and Olive are living in Oldchurch, however, that they meet Sara Derwent, a young woman who Craik describes as ‘the sort of girl of whom we meet some hundreds in a lifetime - the class from whence are taken the lauded “mothers, wives, and daughters of England”’ (58), thereby situating Sara as conforming to the type of woman described by Ellis in her conduct books.⁹⁷ From the start, Sara is described in opposition to Olive. When Olive first sees Sara she considers her to be ‘very picturesque’ and ‘positively beautiful’ (56) whilst the language previously used to describe Olive serves to position her less as ‘beautiful’ and more within the category of the ‘sublime’. Whereas Sara causes pleasure for

⁹⁶ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 39-40.

⁹⁷ Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Women of England and Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (London: Fisher, Son and Co., 1839); Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Daughters of England* (Fisher, Son and Co., 1842); Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Influence and Responsibility* (The Caxton Press, Newgate St. and Angel St., London: Fisher, Son and Co., 1843).

those who see her, Olive causes pain, 'almost amounting to disgust' (63). Olive's deformity is such that Sara's younger brothers stare and point at her in much the same way as the street dogs bark at *Richard III*.⁹⁸ Sara's description of Olive suggests that, on her side at least, the friendship is not only based on pity, rather than genuine affection, but also serves as little more than a convenient distraction whilst in 'that dull place, Oldchurch!' (59).

In describing the two girls in such a way, and by seemingly drawing on the language of Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), Craik positions Olive within the tradition of Romanticism, connecting her to nature and the Romantic poets she reads, and positioning her as an alienated individual standing, like Caspar David Friedrich's wanderer, on a precipice about to enter adulthood and all that this brings. As Burke describes, 'whatever is fitted in any sort to execute the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible ... is a source of the sublime.'⁹⁹ Olive's physical disability not only triggers feelings of pain in those who see her, most notably in her mother Sybilla, but also triggers the passion Burke associates with the sublime, that of astonishment resulting in people staring at her physical difference. I will return to this idea of staring, as it is associated with the physically disabled body, in the next chapter but here we see it in the response of Sara's younger brothers who delight in being able to observe Olive's difference from the safety of their own garden. The object of fear and terror, in this case Olive's body, is rendered less

⁹⁸ William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katherine Eisman Maus (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 1.1:24.

⁹⁹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. With an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste, and Several Other Additions.*, ed. Basil, MDCCXCII. [1792] A new edition (Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale. University of Western Australia., 1792), 47, accessed 12th March, 2017.

frightening when observed at a distance. In contrast, Sara is associated with beauty, her physical appearance giving rise to positive emotions and pleasure in those who see her. In Burke's description of beauty he defines the quality as that which causes love, or other similar emotions.¹⁰⁰ Certainly Sara Derwent inspires love and admiration in those who meet her, including Olive who repeatedly refers to Sara as beautiful. However, Craik goes on to destabilise this apparently binary description of the two girls, thus challenging the traditional gendered roles Ellis sets down in her conduct books.

As a 'daughter of England', Sara is 'sincere, good-tempered, affectionate; [and] not over-clever' (58). Like Ellis's daughters, Sara is accomplished at music and practises her performances for many hours, for 'to play like a professor ranks amongst the highest attainments of female education'.¹⁰¹ Olive has no knowledge of music, preferring instead to listen to her friend play while she paints. Like music, the ability to draw was seen by Ellis as an essential part of a young woman's education, training her eye to see and to preserve the likeness of loved ones in miniatures and sketches, for 'enduring gratification'.¹⁰² It was not, however, accepted as appropriate employment by women for financial gain, which Olive goes on to pursue. Indeed, the botanical images, portraits, and copies of originals which Ellis suggests the 'daughters of England' should attempt are exactly the subject matter that Olive's future art tutor despises. For Olive, 'strengthened by her almost masculine power of mind' moves beyond the 'mere prettiness of most women-painters to the grandeur of sublimer Art' (127).¹⁰³ Olive's association with the sublime, be it through her

¹⁰⁰ Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 135.

¹⁰¹ Ellis, *The Daughters of England*, 100.

¹⁰² Ellis, *The Daughters of England*, 118.

¹⁰³ For further information on the female artist in *Olive*, see: Antonio Losano, *The Woman Painter in Victorian Literature* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008).

choice of subject matter for art or the language used to describe her has the potential, as Garland-Thomson argues, to 'sculpt the disabled subject into a grotesque spectacle' for the able-bodied gaze.¹⁰⁴ Yet Craik's focus on care invites the reader to redirect our attention away from the visual difference of Olive's body and towards the lived experience of growing up as a disabled child, one part of which is socialisation.

Until moving to Oldchurch, Olive has led a sheltered life. Apart from an occasional teacher, Olive's circle of acquaintances extended no further than Elspie, her parents, and the characters in the books she read, and which fed her 'wild imagination in Art and Poetry' (55). However, with this move to Oldchurch not only is Olive introduced to the Derwent family but she is also exposed to the expectations placed upon young women and the daunting realisation that she does not fit within this norm. For Sybilla, who has now become attuned to her responsibilities as Olive's mother, her daughter's socialisation with people outside the home raises emotions of fear and happiness. When Olive is invited to attend her first ball Sybilla is both concerned and pleased for her daughter. She wants her daughter to 'see a little more of society' yet simultaneously she worries that Olive 'is not made for the world, or the world for her' (62). Kittay argues that a part of raising children is preparing them for the larger world, the world beyond the immediate family that has accepted the disabled child for who they are.¹⁰⁵ To be accepted by others is important for all children but especially so for those with a disability. As Sybilla helps Olive dress for the evening, the love she feels for her daughter has made Olive's disability appear

¹⁰⁴ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York and Chicester: Columbia University Press, 1997), 26.

¹⁰⁵ Kittay, *Love's Labour*, 166.

less obvious; the child she turned away from at birth is now accepted by Sybilla who has not only learnt to love Olive but also admire her. In her maternal care of Olive, Sybilla now works to ensure Olive is accepted by others. Like Kittay, who talks of the care she takes in getting Sesha dressed ready to go out, Sybilla spends time attending to Olive's dress as she 'fastened her white dress and arranged the golden curls so as to fall in a shower on her neck' (63) in an attempt to disguise Olive's curvature of the spine. Noticing that Olive's 'slight deformity' was still evident Sybilla fetched a white fur stole and placed it round Olive's shoulders, disguising the physical impairment so that when Olive looked at her reflection in the mirror she sees 'her own figure, so effectually disguised, that the head, with its delicate and spiritual beauty seemed lifting itself out of a white cloud' (63). In ensuring that Olive is presented to the world as well dressed as possible Sybilla seeks to normalise Olive's physical impairment in order to foster acceptance of Olive by others. There is, as Kittay notes, a sadness in a parent having to normalise a child who they love regardless of their disability and who is accepted for who they are, but this normalisation is, Kittay argues, 'a realistic response to the repugnance (as harsh as that word is) of so many people towards disability'.¹⁰⁶ Whilst Sybilla still feels the pain of Olive's disability, she no longer turns away from it in disgust. Instead she seeks to mitigate the pain, both for herself and for Olive, by seeking to ensure for Olive what Kittay describes as 'socialization for acceptance'.¹⁰⁷

As Sybilla ages, her eye-sight gradually deteriorates, until she eventually becomes blind. As with the blinding of numerous characters in Victorian literature, most notably Rochester in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Romney in Elizabeth Barrett

¹⁰⁶ Kittay, *Love's Labor*, 166.

¹⁰⁷ Kittay, *Love's Labor*, 165.

Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), Sybilla's loss of vision helps her to see Olive's beauty more clearly: 'in the grey shadow of a form ... she pictured the likeness of an Olive ten times fairer than the real one' (140).¹⁰⁸ Throughout Sybilla's life, Olive continues to care for her, painting verbal pictures of the outside world for her mother to enjoy. On one particular occasion Olive notes, 'I must bring mama here and paint the view for her' (160), drawing a parallel between her work as an artist and the visual descriptions of the landscape she gives her mother. As a result of Olive's care, Sybilla lives an engaged life, visiting friends, receiving visitors, and enjoying listening to people read poetry – an activity she also enjoyed before she lost her sight – with Tennyson appearing to be a particular favourite.¹⁰⁹

Towards the end of her life Sybilla becomes increasingly frail and Olive nurses her until she dies. Chapter thirty-two is devoted entirely to the death of Sybilla and whilst it is true that the Victorians delighted in death-bed scenes, and this chapter presents no exception to the rule, it perhaps owes more to Craik's personal experience of her own mother's death than it does to the influence of Little Nell.¹¹⁰ For instead of a death scene in which we see a young woman watched over by men, Craik presents a scene populated entirely by a mother and her daughter.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Mary Wilson Carpenter, "Blinding the Hero," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3 (2006): 52–68; Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Kate Flint, "Blindness and Insight: Millais' *The Blind Girl* and the Limits of Representation," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 1, no. 1 (1996): 1–15; Naomi Schor, "Blindness as Metaphor," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11, no. 2 (1999): 76–105; *The Madwoman and the Blindman: Jane Eyre, Discourse and Disability*, eds. David Bolt, Julia Miele Rodas, and Elizabeth Donaldson (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012) for further information on blindness and insight in Victorian literature.

¹⁰⁹ On two occasions Sybilla asks for Tennyson to be read with 'The May Queen' (1833) and 'The Miller's Daughter' (1842) being cited, both of which address, to a greater or lesser degree, the loss of a child. With *Olive* being published in 1850, the same year that Tennyson became poet laureate, it is feasible that Craik is paying homage to the poet by citing his poems. In later years Craik was to become friends with Tennyson's younger sister Matilda and mentions dining with 'the Tennyson's' a number of times in her diaries.

¹¹⁰ The death of Little Nell in Charles Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) is one of the most famous death-bed scenes in Victorian fiction and represented, according to Margarete Holubetz, a model upon which many other Victorian writers modelled their literary death scenes on. See, Margarete Holubetz, "Death-bed Scenes in Victorian Fiction," *English Studies* 67, no. 1 (1986): 14, doi:10.1080/00138388608598423.

Indeed, this relationship is emphasised, with Sybilla referring to Olive as 'my child' eight times, whilst Olive replies, calling Sybilla 'my mother' (207). Throughout this chapter we see small practical activities taking place within the death scene. We hear Sybilla describe her pain (205) and ask for some wine (208), and we see the servant and Sybilla persuade Olive to leave the sickroom to take some coffee (207). When Olive gets tired, Sybilla notices, saying, 'My child, you are tired. Lay your head down here beside me' (208), enacting the maternal role she so infrequently was able to assume during her life. When Sybilla dies, the roles of mother and daughter have been repositioned so that Olive loses her mother: 'I have seen my mother die' (212) she tells Harold Gwynne in the morning and in her ensuing period of grief and mourning, Olive continues to remember and speak of Sybilla as her mother.

The maternal care Olive has experienced now from both her allomother Elspie and her biological mother Sybilla has taught her how to be a mother and when, at the end of the novel, Olive marries the widowed Harold Gwynne and becomes step-mother to his nine-year-old daughter Alison, she is able to more than adequately take on the role. Towards the end of the novel Craik portrays a sentimental scene of motherhood in which Olive and Alison comfortably assume their new roles, hugging each other as Alison calls Olive 'my sweet, dear, new mamma!' (325). As Olive and Alison embrace, and Olive thrills at being called 'Mother', she recalls her own mother and resolves to be 'a faithful and most loving mother' to Alison (326). In this moment Craik can be seen to contrast Olive with her literary predecessor Jane Eyre, who whilst initially thinking she might teach Adele at home soon finds this 'impracticable' and sends her away to boarding school, as her

'time and care' is now required by Rochester.¹¹¹ Furthermore, like the daughter Toni Morrison describes who remembers where she came from, has a careful way of thinking about and dealing with older people, and cares for those who took care of her, Olive also becomes the good daughter-in-law, as she vows to take care of Harold's mother, so that 'while she lived ... [she] should never want the devotion and affection of a daughter' (326).

Cora Kaplan argues that whilst *Jane Eyre* closes with 'biological motherhood' Craik 'implicitly limits Olive's maternal opportunities' to that of step-mother.¹¹² However, whilst this is true, as there is nothing in the plot to suggest that Olive ever has her own biological child, I would suggest that the idea that Craik 'limits' Olive's access to motherhood is essentialist as it restricts our understanding of mothering to one which is biological. As I have shown, Craik's representation of mothers, and the maternal role, in *Olive* is far more complicated than this. The transformation of Sybilla from a selfish, neglectful mother into a mother who is able to reciprocate her daughter's love takes place as a result of the care Olive shows her mother, revealing the full force of Craik's assertion that 'the girl is ... mother to the woman'.¹¹³ Furthermore, Olive's experience as a daughter, through the maternal care of Elspie and, eventually, Sybilla, along with her mothering and care of Sybilla, educates Olive in the maternal thinking necessary for her to assume the role of step-mother later in her life. Despite the literary narratives that marginalised or erased mothers, and the separate spheres ideology that hid mothers from public view, in *Olive* Craik ensures that maternal care is very much central to the narrative. Here Craik presents a

¹¹¹ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 450.

¹¹² Kaplan, "Introduction," *Olive*, xxiv.

¹¹³ Craik, "In her teens," 106.

matriarchal tale full of mothers, be they biological or allomothers, that are directly involved in the preservative care, socialisation, and nurturing of children and others. Through these tales of motherhood and care I argue that Craik exposes both the complexities of motherhood that Ellis's idealised mother obscures, and also the way in which interdependency is the norm rather the exception. In the following chapter I will examine how Craik further destabilises heteronormative family structure through her representation of men who assume a caring role in non-biological families, and how autonomy is achieved for a disabled male character through the combination of an ethic of care and an ethic of justice.

'I am a Man now – or ought to be'

Achieving Autonomy through Care and Justice in *A Noble Life*

Physically, he [the Earl] was entirely helpless; the little forked stick was still in continual requisition; nor could he write except with much difficulty; but he had the faculty of arrangement and order, and the rare power ... of guiding and governing, so that what he could not do himself he could direct others how to do, and thus attain this end so perfectly.

Dinah Mulock Craik¹

In *Olive* Craik uses narratives of care to imagine a situation whereby the disabled woman, a figure usually excluded from narratives of marriage and motherhood, is able to enter these traditional nineteenth century ideals of womanhood through allomothering and her engagement with maternal care. Similarly, in *A Noble Life* (1866), Craik utilises a network of care in such a way that her disabled male protagonist is able to be associated with traditional notions of masculinity despite his disability. Critical accounts of the disabled male, as he is represented in literature, have tended to feminise the character.² Not only is the disabled male character incompatible with our ideas of 'normative masculinity' whereby physical characteristics such as strength, activeness, and virility, dominate, but he also challenges Western values centred on independence. As Michael Davidson observes, for many able-bodied people, 'disability is *synonymous* with

¹ Dinah Mulock Craik, *A Noble Life*, ed. Clare Walker Gore (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2016), all future references to this text will be from this edition and in the body of the text.

² See, for example, Elaine Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment: A Case Study in Victorian Female Authorship," *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 2 (1975): 8; Sally Mitchell, "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s," *Victorian Studies* 21, no. 1 (1977): 38; Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik* (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1983), 112; Alan Richardson, "Reluctant Lords and Lame Princes: Engendering the Male Child in Nineteenth-Century Juvenile Fiction," *Children's Literature* 21, no. 1 (1993): 7; Patricia Srebrnik, "The re-subjection of 'Lucas Malet': Charles Kingsley's daughter and the response to muscular Christianity," *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 201.

dependency'.³ Furthermore, as Julie Stephens perceives, within Western culture there remains a strong anxiety surrounding human dependency and the associated issue of caregiving.⁴ Despite the renewed interest in Craik and her writing on disability, *A Noble Life* continues to be largely ignored, despite it featuring what is arguably Craik's most disabled character; and I would suggest that the strong and pervasive cultural anxiety surrounding dependency, of which Stephens speaks, helps to explain this ongoing neglect.⁵ However, whilst the story may, as Sally Mitchell describes, be 'embarrassing to read' because it 'touches levels of consciousness we would rather not face' and makes us feel 'uncomfortable in the presence of deformity ... [and] sensitive about staring so openly at a cripple',⁶ it nevertheless provides us with the opportunity to examine the way a disabled man is able to utilise his network of care in order to support his independence and autonomy. In this chapter I therefore examine how Craik's protagonist, the Earl of Cairnforth, achieves independence through a combination of an ethic of justice which recognises the human rights of the Earl, and an ethic of care that supports these inalienable human rights whilst also acknowledging the individual needs of the Earl and the important role care plays in achieving autonomy through the interdependency of disability living.

'I will be a Man' – disability and the problematic nature of the feminised man

When *A Noble Life* was published in 1866, the feminine qualities of the protagonist were noted by reviewers. *The Spectator*, for example, observed the

³ Michael Davidson, "Introduction," *Journal of Literary Disability*, 1, no. 2 (2007), i. emphasis in the original.

⁴ Julie Stephens, *Confronting Postmaternal Thinking: Feminism, Memory, and Care* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 1.

⁵ Stephens, *Confronting Postmaternal Thinking*, ix.

⁶ Sally Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 64-65.

'womanliness' of the main character, reporting that 'no man can quite put himself in the mental attitude of such a figure, and his womanishness therefore does not jar, rather lends to his figure the necessary quality of perfect resignation'.⁷ Likewise, the *Saturday Review* focused on the feminine nature of the Earl, writing how:

Miss Mulock has lately written a book which is not the less welcome because it is an anachronism. In it she unfolds the virtues of a crippled Earl, who nobly devotes his life to securing the happiness of all around him. This he does in so admirable, and at the same time so feminine, a manner, as to remind one of a type of character that has latterly dropped out of fiction. An angelic being with a weak spine [...] was a favourite creation of our lady-novelists of the pre-Braddonian period [...] and expressed two of the most creditable feminine instincts – the instinct to improve the world by means of those moral teachings which may be conveniently conveyed through some such mouthpiece, and the instinct to admire moral, as distinct from material, power.⁸

Not only does this review highlight certain character traits and align them with prevailing attitudes surrounding femininity, thus feminising the disabled male character, but it also notes the popularity of this character for some women writers. The parallels drawn by these reviewers which serve to link the body of the disabled man with femininity is not, however, unique to the nineteenth century. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson has, for example, traced the conflation of 'female' and disability back to Aristotle's *Generation of Animals* in which the female body is described as being a deviation from the norm and equated with the bodies of 'disabled men'.⁹ Nevertheless, the literary representation of the angelic disabled male character with a weak spine does appear to have reached a zenith during the nineteenth century, with Mitchell suggesting that the character's popularity peaked in the 1860s.¹⁰ As

⁷ Anonymous, "A Noble Life," *The Spectator*, January 27, 1866, 106.

⁸ Anonymous, "Novels Past and Present," *Saturday Review*, 21, no. 546 (14th April 1866): 438-439.

⁹ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1997), 27.

¹⁰ Sally Mitchell, "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's recreational reading in the 1860s," 38.

the *Saturday Review* notes, the character was a particular favourite among women writers at this time, as a number of feminist literary scholars have similarly noted.

These scholars provide a number of reasons for the popularity of the disabled male character. Elaine Showalter points out the inevitability of the woman, ill at ease with the role society has assigned her, imagining herself as an invalid or defective man.¹¹ In her reading of disability in Craik's novels, Showalter reads Craik's disabled, invalid and impaired male characters metaphorically as women, crippled and thwarted by the limitations placed on them by society.¹² Similarly, Sally Mitchell interprets both Phineas Fletcher (the invalid friend of the titular character in *John Halifax, Gentleman*) and the Earl as representing an 'essentially feminine predicament.'¹³ Furthermore, Mitchell extends this association by asserting that 'a woman unhappily powerless in a patriarchal society can hardly avoid feeling that she is a crippled and helpless specimen of mankind'.¹⁴ For Mitchell, the disabled hero in women's writing served two functions: firstly, he provided 'a manageable object for the heroine's affections' and secondly, he functioned as an 'alternate persona, who provides the [female] daydreamer with a gender role in which more interesting adventures are possible'.¹⁵ Diane Price Herndl, in her work on the American novelists Edith Wharton and Ellen Glasgow, provides an alternative reading of invalid male characters, arguing that they become invalids because they stay within the domestic sphere and are therefore denied the opportunity to engage with a modern, urban space.¹⁶ These men essentially live, she argues, a feminine life

¹¹ Elaine Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment," 11-12.

¹² Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment," 11.

¹³ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 65.

¹⁴ Mitchell, *Dinah Mulock Craik*, 65.

¹⁵ Sally Mitchell, "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's recreational reading in the 1860s," 38.

¹⁶ Diane Price Herndl, *Invalid Women: Figuring Feminine Illness in American Fiction and Culture, 1840-1940* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 181.

‘trapped in a routine and unstimulating home, unable to escape’.¹⁷ Finally, and in a way that reinforces the previous readings, Cora Kaplan considers how Craik’s physically disabled characters serve to represent passivity in both genders and not solely passive femininity.¹⁸

In each of these interpretations we can see disability read metaphorically and in a negative manner which, as Jay Dolmage notes, has the potential to hide an individual’s humanity by focusing solely on bodily difference.¹⁹ With disability, the continued reliance on metaphorical readings of disablement and disfigurement has the potential, as Naomi Schor writes, to ‘void words of their charge of pain and sorrow, dread and death, and invest them with the language of stigma and shame and burden them with negativity’.²⁰ Furthermore, as David Mitchell argues, because disability primarily serves to represent those ‘things gone awry with bodily and social orders’, in this case those social controls that governed the behaviour of women in the mid-nineteenth century, the many tropes of disability also have a ‘cumulative impact on cultural attitudes’ towards disability and disabled people.²¹ Therefore, whilst these readings are important, in that they help to advance feminist literary criticism, they are not without flaws which need to be addressed.

Metaphorical readings of the disabled man as feminised, weak, and dependent can be seen to perpetuate the myth of a ‘normative’ and hegemonic masculinity. As Jenny Morris notes, to be masculine is popularly conceived as not

¹⁷ Price Herndl, *Invalid Women*, 182.

¹⁸ Cora Kaplan, “Gender Identities and Relationships,” in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Vol. 3. The Nineteenth-Century 1820-1880*, eds. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne-Taylor (Oxford, New York: OUP, 2012), 518.

¹⁹ Jay Dolmage, “Between the Valley and the Field: Metaphor and Disability,” *Prose Studies*, 27, no. 1-2 (2005): 112.

²⁰ Naomi Schor, “Blindness as Metaphor,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11, no. 2 (1999): 77.

²¹ David Mitchell, “Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor”, in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, eds. Sharon Snyder, Brenda Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York: MLA, 2002), 24.

being vulnerable.²² By drawing attention to the disabled male character's vulnerability and highlighting what is lacking in these representations, namely the attributes of 'strength, activeness, speed, virility, stamina and fortitude',²³ critics deny these characters access to 'normative' masculinity. Moreover, as the disability and feminist scholar Susan Wendell notes, the cultural associations of disability with passivity, dependency, and helplessness overlap with cultural expectations of femininity, yet clashes with cultural expectations of masculinity.²⁴ By continuing to read women as impaired men, and disabled men as feminised, the narrative of woman as 'less than' or 'lacking' in some way is reinforced, and conceptions of masculinity in terms of strength and invulnerability are also fortified.

Furthermore, these metaphorical readings prevent us from actually discussing disability and disabled living. By aligning the disabled male body with femininity, not only do we deny disabled men their subjectivity, positioning them solely as a metaphor, but we also, as Tom Shakespeare argues, fail to recognise the important differences in the lived experiences of disabled men and women and the various ways in which disabled men might negotiate and redefine masculinity.²⁵ In societies that valorise independence, the lives and stories of those individuals who need support or assistance in order to live independently are often ignored. Yet for both disabled men and women, independence is not necessarily about doing things alone but rather about being able to make decisions and choices as to how support,

²² Jenny Morris, "A Feminist Perspective," in *Framed: Interrogating Disability in the Media*, ed. Ann Pointon and Chris Davis (London: British Film Institute), 22.

²³ Robert Murray, *The Silent Body* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1987), 94-95.

²⁴ Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (New York, London: Routledge, 1996), 62.

²⁵ Tom Shakespeare, "Cultural Representation of Disabled People: Dustbins for Disavowel," in *Disability Studies: Past Present and Future*, ed. Len Barton and Mike Oliver (Leeds: The Disability Press, 1997), 231-232.

care, and assistance can be gained and implemented.²⁶ As Paul McIlvenny notes, in his work examining how disabled men perform masculinity in graphic novels, it is often a case of getting others to do for him what he can't do himself.²⁷ That the disabled man (and, I would add, woman) must get others to do things for him challenges Kaplan's reading of the disabled male characters in Craik's novels as representing passivity. Whilst Ruskin wrote in *Of Queen's Garden*, that 'the man's power is active ... He is the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender',²⁸ he does not say how this is to be achieved or that it must be done alone. Indeed, this ability to direct others in the provision of care and support is the essence of the interdependency of disabled living. As Eva Feder Kittay argues, we need to rethink the need for care and support, not as a sign of dependency but rather as 'as a sort of prosthesis that permits one to be independent'.²⁹ Whilst parallels can be drawn between nineteenth-century discussions on the role of women and the way Craik describes the Earl in *A Noble Life*, to continue to rely on such metaphorical readings denies the lived experiences of disabled men, including the one upon whom the book is said to have been based, the author and editor Frank E. Smedley (1818-1864).³⁰

²⁶ Jenny Morris, "Impairment and Disability: Constructing an Ethics of Care That Promotes Human Rights," *Hypatia* 16, no. 4 (2001): 8, doi:10.1353/hyp.2001.0059.

²⁷ Paul McIlvenny, "The Disabled Male Body 'Writes/Draws Back': Graphic Fictions of Masculinity and the Body in the Autobiographical Comic *The Spiral Cage*," in *Revealing Male Bodies*, ed. Nancy Tuana et al. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 101.

²⁸ John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, ed. Deborah Epstein Nord (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 77.

²⁹ Eva Feder Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependency, and Disability," *Ratio Juris* 24, no. 1 (2011): 50, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9337.2010.00473.x.

³⁰ Personal correspondence Karen Bourrier 17th April 2013, extract from Emily Hall's Diary for Thursday May 30th 1867, "Wasted all the afternoon with visitors— Mrs Craik who is pleasant—a story in her "noble Life" [sic] of a little child is quite true ... The "Noble Life" is entirely drawn from Life—Frank Smedley being really the original of the Earl of Cairnforth. He was the only child of rich parents, & was f^m the moment of entering on existence [sic] the most miserable cripple: even to the extent of his face showing it. He was fond of society, & wrote a great deal & well tho' how she said was always a mystery to her, as his hands were so utterly crippled. Latterly he lived to be about 46 he was less able to enjoy the small amount of life that had been vouchsafed to him, as on one occasion he was thrown out of a carriage--& being quite unable to help himself at all, he fell on his head, and received a fracture of the skull: from wh^h. he never quite recovered."

The Appropriation of a Disabled Life

A close friend of Craik's, Smedley lived with a physical disability that required him to use a wheelchair for most of his life and, according to Margaret Oliphant, was 'supposed to be kept together by some framework of springs and supports'.³¹ As a result of this disability he was prevented from attending school and was, instead, schooled at home by tutors and his uncle. In his novels there is no evidence of his bodily difference. His most popular novels, *Frank Fairleigh: Or Scenes from the Life of a Private Pupil* (1850) and *Lewis Arundel: or The Railway of Life* (1852) tell tales of hunting and horse-racing, duels and poaching, and wild adventures in both the town and country. When the young Edmund Yates went to visit Smedley to discuss the publication of a new periodical which Smedley would be editing, he was surprised to see, not the man he thought he knew, and with whom he had shared many literary adventures, 'a tall, strongly-built man, of about forty years of age, bald, with a fringe of hair, large breezy whiskers, strong bony hands, and general muscular development' but rather a man, 'suffering under some malformation, ... [sitting] in his wheel-chair – a little man, with a peculiar, clever face'.³² Yates goes on to write that it is possible, in the work of some authors, to see their lives 'written in their book, but Frank Smedley's works reveal no glimpse of his actual life'.³³ Certainly, Craik's protagonist in *A Noble Life*, like Smedley, utilises his imagination to create a world of quests and escapades for the stories with which he occupies his young friends, and reminds one of the adventure tales written by Robert Louis Stevenson

³¹ Margaret Oliphant, *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, ed., Elizabeth Jay, (Peterborough, Ontario; New York, USA; Ormskirk, Lancashire; Rosella, NSW: Broadview Press, 2002), 43.

³² Edmund Yates, "In Memoriam," in *Gathered Leaves: Being a Collection of Poetical Writing of the Late Frank Smedley*, ed. Edmund Yates (London: Virtue Brothers and Co., 1865), xi.

³³ Edmund Yates, "In Memoriam", xiv.

whose life-long struggle with bronchial illness is not reflected in his writing.³⁴ Yet it is possible, as Yates noted, to find evidence of Smedley's lived experience of disability and pain in some of his poetry. His novels may have depicted his ideal life but his poetry gave an insight into his real life. In his poem 'The Prayer of the Weary Heart' there is a melancholy sense of tiredness and exhaustion that has accompanied his life, both physically and mentally, reflected in the repeated call for the rest which only comes through death.

Oh give me rest! for youth is gone,
And middle-age comes darkly on,
Experience has been hardly bought.
Ambition palls, and Fame is nought;
With chary measure Faith is given,
And Hope is dead, and Love's in heaven.

I pant for rest.³⁵

In *A Noble Life*, whilst Craik maintains the sentimental mode of writing, it is possible to see an attempt to reflect the embodied experience of disability, through her efforts to represent the pain and weariness the Earl experiences, and the impact others have on his physical and emotional wellbeing.

However, whilst Yates focuses on the man himself, mentioning Smedley's cousins only as they appear in the dedication to *Frank Fairleigh* as having encouraged Smedley on the path towards writing the novel, Sarah Ellis, in her obituary for Smedley, notes the support network that enabled him to write. She notes, for example, how the correspondence Smedley enjoyed with his three female

³⁴ Like Smedley, Stevenson's experience of illness is not reflected in his novels but rather his poetry, where he wrote of being a sick child in his poem, 'Tales of the Counterpane,' published in *A Children's Garden of Verse* (1885).

³⁵ Frank E. Smedley, "The Prayer of the Weary Heart," in *Gathered Leaves: Being a Collection of Poetical Writing of the Late Frank Smedley*, ed. Edmund Yates (London: Virtue Brothers and Co., 1865), 113, lines 8-14.

cousins, the ones to whom *Frank Fairleigh* is dedicated, was a chief pleasure in his life. Rather than merely referring to them as ‘the ladies, his cousins’ however, Ellis names them, solidifying their presence in the network of care and support: Menella Bute Smedley (the author and poet who lived with Smedley for many years and acted as his housekeeper and amanuensis),³⁶ Millicent Crompton, and Fanny Walton. Likewise Ellis mentions Smedley’s two aunts, Eliza and Anna Smedley, who would assist with transcribing texts and supporting Smedley with various aspects of his editorial work.³⁷ By naming these women and making their presence in Smedley’s life evident, Ellis, like Craik, is drawing the reader’s attention to the interdependency of disabled living.

Whilst, for Mitchell, the knowledge that *A Noble Life* is based on a real man adds to the embarrassment of reading this novel, I argue that such knowledge reinforces the need to move away from solely reading the disabled male character as feminised and towards a more nuanced reading that acknowledges interdependency. However, whilst I do not agree with Mitchell in this instance, from a disability studies perspective there are problems associated with Craik appropriating Smedley’s identity and essentially ‘outing’ him as a disabled man when he had hidden this part of his identity from his readers. Henry James’s review of the novel suggests that the narrative was based on the life of a real man. Whilst there is no mention of Smedley’s name James does note that whilst the author of *A Noble Life* has treated the subject with ‘fair justice’ it is, however, a shame that as ‘the history of a wise man’s soul was in question’ a wiser author had not undertaken

³⁶ John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction, 2nd Edition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 593.

³⁷ S.E Ellis, “Frank Smedley,” *Fortnightly Review* 1, no. 97 (1865): 275.

to relate it.³⁸ With the novel being published less than a year after Smedley's death there is something of the panegyric about the text, as though Craik was attempting to celebrate and praise the life of her dear friend. But the fact that she writes the novel as a historical piece, setting the story in Scotland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, could be seen as an attempt to distance Smedley's life from the story Craik has written, thereby avoiding any unwanted association or comments from friends and family members still alive.

This is pure speculation on my part, but there is evidence that shows people were aware of the association between the Earl in *A Noble Life* and Frank Smedley.³⁹ As such this appropriation of Smedley's life, most likely without his permission, not only highlights the lack of control disabled people frequently experience in their lives but also reveals the struggle for control over representations of the disabled body disabled people continue to experience today. However, in *A Noble Life* Craik supplements what could be a sentimental and pitiful description of disability by concentrating on relationships of care. Rather than focusing solely on the physical restrictions of the individual and what is lacking in the disabled male body, most notably the character's lack of physical activity, Craik examines the way in which care, when combined with an ethic of justice, enables the Earl to achieve autonomy through a focus on the interdependency of disabled living.

³⁸ Henry James, "A Review of *A Noble Life*, By the Author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*," *Nation*, 2.276 (1 March, 1866).

³⁹ See page 179, footnote 30, for an extract from the diary of Emily Hall which demonstrates her awareness that Frank Smedley was the inspiration for this character.

***A Noble Life* - In search of care and justice**

A Noble Life tells the story of Charles Edward Stuart Montgomery, the last Earl of Cairnforth, who is born with severe physical impairments. With his father dying before he is born, followed by his mother, shortly after his birth, the orphaned child is placed in the 'care' of his guardian, the family lawyer Mr Menteith, who is supported in his role by Dr Hamilton, Mr Cardross (the local Minister of Religion), and Janet Campbell, a young widow, who assumes the role of wet nurse. As the story progresses, the reader is told of his growth and development from a dependent, passive and feminised 'object' of medical treatment and social protection to a young man with free will and self-determination. In this regard the novel can be seen as an example of the nineteenth-century genre of the *Bildungsroman* or novel of education. Yet whilst the novel focuses on the individual and his personal attainments, more importantly it explores the relationships between characters and how these shape the Earl's development.

The first description the reader receives of the Earl occurs the day after the death of his mother, when the reader accompanies the minister to see the Earl for the first time. Arriving at the castle to see the infant, Mr Cardross is met by Mr Menteith, the Earl's guardian and lawyer, and taken to see the baby. At the lawyer's instructions, Janet Campbell carefully lifts the child out of his crib and places him on her lap so that Mr Cardross can see him clearly. The doctor has ordered Mrs Campbell not to attempt to dress the infant and so the disabled body of the child becomes a spectacle, on display for these able-bodied men to gaze upon. At this stage the Earl is described as 'it':

It lay on her lap, the smallest, saddest specimen of infantile deformity. It had a large head – larger than most infants have – but its body was thin, elfish and distorted, every joint and limb being twisted in some way or other [...] Whether it had the power of motion or not seemed doubtful; at any rate it made no attempt to move, except feebly turning its head from side to side. It lay, with its large eyes wide open, and at last opened its poor little mouth also, and uttered a large pathetic wail.’ (p. 26, emphasis added)

During this first encounter the pronoun ‘it’ is used 17 times. This repeated use of a pronoun usually associated with inanimate objects or animals strips the child of his personhood and presents him as an ‘object’ which is misshapen, feeble and deformed. The use of the word ‘elfish’, which in modern literature often describes a male fairy, but which has also variously been used in the nineteenth-century context to describe a creature of non-human origin, believed to be of dwarfish form, and capable of inflicting all manner of ill-will onto human beings, functions to take this dehumanisation further. There is something of the grotesque about the image, the open mouth for example, and the twisted limbs. Pity, fear, and disgust, are all evoked in this quote, emotions which, as Bill Hughes argues, ‘contribute ... to the social distance between disabled and non-disabled people’.⁴⁰

The vulnerability of the earl’s body as he lies unclothed and exposed on the nurse’s lap forces Mr Menteith to think of his own children. ‘I’m a father of a family myself’ he tells the nurse and Mr Cardross, ‘I’ve six of them; but, thank the Lord, ne’er a one of them like this’ (26). It is not the similarity between this child and his that draws Mr Menteith to comment about his own children but rather their difference. The vision of the Earl’s body is an uncomfortable reminder that human life is frail and vulnerable. To counter this image, Mr Menteith must bring to mind an image of his healthy children and give thanks to God that they are not like the Earl. The fear and

⁴⁰ Bill Hughes, “Fear, Pity and Disgust: Emotions and the non-disabled imaginary”, in *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies*, eds. Nick Watson, Alan Roulston, Carol Thomas (New York: Routledge, 2012), 67.

disgust, experienced by Dr Hamilton and Mr Menteith are such that it becomes impossible for them to see how the Earl can possibly grow up to achieve the sort of life they consider worthwhile and worthy. As such it is possible to see the way in which the voices of justice and reason, so deeply embedded within western liberal traditions, are not only clearly heard in the dialogue of the doctor and the lawyer, as they discuss what to do with the infant, but also how much these voices are influenced by the emotions of fear, pity, and disgust.

The severity of the young Earl's physical impairments are such that, at this stage, it appears that he will be dependent on others for some, if not all, of his daily needs. As such his autonomy, and by extension his dignity, are threatened. This loss of control over the body is fearful for those who value independence, and likely to evoke emotions such as fear, anxiety and disgust. The messiness of daily life, the spills and leaks of a body not in control, trigger fear and disgust in the able-bodied. For Dr Hamilton, such a life is unimaginable. As Eva Feder Kittay notes, 'dignity is coupled with the capacity for autonomy'⁴¹ and here the threat to the earl's autonomy results in the doctor making the overwhelming assumption that the Earl's life will be miserable, suggesting it would be better to deal with the child in the same manner as the Spartans dealt with their weak and deformed infants.⁴² Reason would have it, according to the doctor, that death would be better than the 'greater misfortune of living' (28). When faced with such physical impairments the doctor is unable to envisage a place for a child such as the Earl in this world.

⁴¹ Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependency, and Disability," 50.

⁴² In ancient Sparta, infants were inspected by the community elders and subjected to a series of tests. If the child looked robust and healthy, it was allowed to live. If the child was deformed or ill-looking the infant would be left to die.

This was not an uncommon point of view in the nineteenth century. Francis Martin, in her biography of the blind activist Elizabeth Gilbert, notes similar concerns coming from an unidentified and so-called ‘friend’ of the Gilbert family who is said to have “prayed for the removal, at nine years old, of a singularly happy and engaging child” simply because she was blind.⁴³ Whilst eugenic thinking reached its height (in Britain at least) during the Edwardian period, the nineteenth century saw the birth of such beliefs, reinforced by the publication of Francis Galton’s 1869 book *Hereditary Genius*, and his subsequent coining of the term ‘eugenics’ in 1883.⁴⁴ Although we may consider ourselves to have progressed beyond such sentiments today, debates such as these continue within the bioethical discussions of philosophers such as Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer who question whether all human life is of equal worth in their controversial book, *Should the Baby Live?*⁴⁵ Yet, as Jenny Morris notes, drawing our attention to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), everyone has the right to life.⁴⁶ The question should not be who has the right to live, but rather, what changes must society make in order to support the human bodily differences and vulnerabilities that exist within society. To deny our fellow human these rights is, as Morris argues, ‘to undermine our own humanity’.⁴⁷

For the lawyer, it is the Earl’s mental capacity that causes him consternation. Concerned that the Earl will be mentally incapable of managing his estate finances, the lawyer proceeds with discussions about wills, trusts, trustees, property and the

⁴³ Frances Martin, *Elizabeth Gilbert and Her Work with the Blind* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co, 1887), 21.

⁴⁴ Victoria Brignell, “The Eugenics Movement Britain Wants to Forget,” *The New Statesman*, December 9th 2010, accessed March 3rd 2017, available at <http://www.newstatesman.com/society/2010/12/british-eugenics-disabled>.

⁴⁵ Helga Kuhse and Peter Singer, *Should the Baby Live? : The Problem of Handicapped Infants* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press: 1985), 18.

⁴⁶ Morris, “Impairment and Disability: Constructing an Ethics of Care That Promotes Human Rights,” 15.

⁴⁷ Morris, “Impairment and Disability,” 15.

need to protect the Earl from ‘penniless, grasping, altogether discreditable relatives’ currently overseas (28). As Patrick McDonagh notes, in examining gender and learning disabilities in nineteenth-century literature, men with learning disabilities were all too often understood to be deficient and lacking an essential component of masculine identity, which was usually distilled as an ability to manage finances.⁴⁸ The disquiet expressed by the lawyer is reinforced by Mr Cardross, when he asks, ‘There is one worse doubt which has occurred to me. Do you think, Dr Hamilton, that the mind is as imperfect as the body? In short, is it not likely that the poor child may turn out to be an idiot?’ makes this concern visible (28). Whilst Wordsworth may have noted ‘a certain want of comprehensiveness of thinking and feeling’ as the root cause behind the ‘loathing and disgust which many people have at the sight of an idiot’⁴⁹, the use of the term idiot, as McDonagh notes, has been used to establish a ‘contrast group’ against whom rational modern man can assert his claim to reason, respect, and justice.⁵⁰

In the discussions between these men, representatives of the institutional power bases of religion, medicine and law, we can hear the voice of reason that is integral to the social contract. Furthermore, this voice has been the basis for major ideological perspectives in western culture for centuries, underpinning cultural and legal views on the rights of the individual and concepts of equality. In this light, how can the Earl, whose cognitive abilities are in doubt and whose physical impairments will limit his independence, possibly be able to contribute to society? Even today the

⁴⁸ Patrick McDonagh, “Diminished Men and Dangerous Women: Representations of Gender and Learning Disability in Early and Mid-Nineteenth Century Britain,” *British Journal of Learning Disabilities* 28 (2000): 50.

⁴⁹ William Wordsworth, “Letter to John Wilson (on the poem The Idiot Boy)”, cited in Eva Feder Kittay, “Centering Justice on Dependency and Recovering Freedom,” *Hypatia* 30, no. 1 (2015): 285.

⁵⁰ Patrick McDonagh, *Idiocy: A Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 2.

notion that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’⁵¹ is not always applied to disabled people. Equality does not equate to equity and as Morris argues, disabled people are often denied their universal human rights because of society’s failure to recognise different needs and respond to them appropriately.⁵² The initial actions, taken by the Earl’s guardians, reflect this failure as they seek to normalise the Earl’s body thereby eliminating difference.

After much discussion, the Earl is taken to live with the doctor, in order to receive medical treatment. What this treatment entails the reader is not told – we are neither witness to the Earl’s trip nor do we hear of it through letters – but an impression can be gained from the frontispiece of the 1743 book *Orthopaedia: or the Art of Correcting and Preventing Deformities in Children*, which shows a bent and twisted tree bound to a straight stake.⁵³ This image has come to represent the field of orthopaedics which, derived from the Greek, literally means ‘straight child’. As Henri-Jacques Striker explains in his influential text *A History of Disability* (1999), straightening out children both physically and morally was a key component of nineteenth-century orthopaedic and medical practices.⁵⁴ The Earl may therefore have been subjected to, for example, straightening beds, electric shock treatment, neck braces, corsets or a range of other ‘normalisation devices’.⁵⁵ Whatever the treatment was, Craik prefers not to inform her reader of the specifics, instead choosing to highlight the great pain and suffering the Earl experienced at the hands

⁵¹ Article One, *The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, available at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

⁵² Morris, “Impairment and Disability: Constructing an Ethics of Care That Promotes Human Rights,” 12.

⁵³ Nicolas Andry, *Orthopaedia: or the Art of Correcting and Preventing Deformities in Children*, 1743, published on the cover of Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum, ed., *“defects”: Engendering the Modern Body* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

⁵⁴ Henri-Jacques Striker, *A History of Disability*, trans. William Sayers (USA: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 115.

⁵⁵ Henri-Jacques Striker, *A History of Disability*, 115.

of the doctors. As the Earl himself later describes, in relation to his time with the doctor, he was little more than a passive recipient of care, whereby he would 'lie on a sofa all day, and have doctors coming about me and hurting me' (49).

The depiction of the 'care' provided at this stage of the novel clearly involves the disempowerment of the subject and as such aligns with that which is rightly problematic for disability scholars. The Earl's voice is absent and his autonomy impeded by the lawyer and the doctor. It can be argued, at least initially, that the Earl is an infant and therefore has no voice, either physically or metaphorically, however, as the Earl gets older his guardians continue to prevent him from participating in the usual socialisation activities one might expect for young boys and which the Earl himself seeks. This segregation from his peers prevents the Earl from sharing in the social life of his community and, as a consequence, results in the care being unethical. For, as Jenny Morris argues, if care does not 'enable people "to state an opinion," "to participate in decisions which affect their lives," and "to share fully in the social life of their community," then it will be unethical'.⁵⁶

In her discussion of disability and human rights, Morris suggests that what is needed is an *ethic of care* which recognises that everyone has the right to express preferences in their treatment and care, including children; an ethic, as Morris describes, that 'while starting from the position that everyone has the same human rights, also recognizes the additional requirements that some people have in order to access those human rights'.⁵⁷ Morris's view is, obviously, a twenty-first century one, arising in part from her personal experience with the disabled people's movement in Britain, yet despite this we can see glimmers of her argument arising

⁵⁶ Morris, "Impairment and Disability," 15.

⁵⁷ Morris, "Impairment and Disability," 15.

in *A Noble Life*. Granted this is a nineteenth-century novel and, as such, Victorian attitudes towards children, along with the old adage that children should be ‘seen and not heard’, may well have led the doctor and the lawyer to think differently in their approach towards the Earl than we might today.⁵⁸ However, that said we can also see, in this novel, how Craik appears to be working through similar ethical considerations. Through her dramatization of the network of care surrounding the Earl and the characters of Mr Cardross, his daughter Helen, and Malcolm, it is possible to see Morris’s ideal in which an ethic of care engages with the rights of the individual.

Like Morris, Kittay also notes, the moral harm that results from removing individuals from their social networks, thereby severing them of ‘valued connections’ and argues that this is a harm an ethics of care attempts to avoid.⁵⁹ In *A Noble Life*, such an ethos of care begins to happen when it is decided by numerous doctors and the young Earl that further treatment will achieve nothing and so, on the Earl’s request, he is taken back to his home. At this point a different voice, to borrow Carol Gilligan’s term, can be discerned, which not only recognises the Earl’s differences but also works towards accommodating them in order to enable his rights and dignity to be achieved. The combination of an ethic of justice, focused on the rights of the individual, with an ethic of care, focused, in part, on interdependence and relationality, is exactly what Morris calls for when she notes the universality of human rights, whilst simultaneously calling for attention to the additional requirements and needs disabled people have, and which must be

⁵⁸ That said there are numerous occasions today when the courts are called to intervene between medical practitioners, children, and their parents, in order to determine who has the right to decide upon treatment and care. The forced sterilization of young women with disabilities is one such example.

⁵⁹ Kittay, “The Ethics of Care, Dependency, and Disability,” 53.

addressed, in order for them to gain access to those human rights. Such rebalancing of justice and care is also the message behind Gilligan's seminal work *In A Different Voice* (1982). When Gilligan spoke of a 'different voice' she sought to draw attention to a voice that is frequently silenced, that which is attentive to social relations. Whilst these attributes are frequently aligned with women, and positioned in opposition to the rational and reasoning public male voice, this relational voice exists within all humans. An 'ethic of care' highlights the relational nature of life in order to emphasise interdependence over independence, and repositions care and vulnerability as central components of the human experience shared by all human beings. Thus, when combined with an ethic of justice, it usefully allows us to reimagine independence not as self-sufficiency but rather, as Morris points out, the ability to have choice and control over how the necessary help is provided.⁶⁰ As David T. Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (2000) state, 'the *interdependency* of disability living constitutes an important factor' in achieving independence and autonomy⁶¹ and this becomes clear as the novel progresses and the pain and suffering the Earl experiences as a result of the doctor's treatments, along with his isolation and exclusion from society, are offset by the Earl's developing autonomy and the relationships of care he builds around him.

One of the first things that needs to be addressed, before the Earl can return home, is the question of his education. Whilst in Edinburgh the Earl's personal care had been attended to Janet and Malcolm. Whilst the 'fond fidelity' (35) of these two servants is infinite and they attend to the Earl's physical needs with great care, a

⁶⁰ Jenny Morris, "Care or Empowerment? A Disability Rights Perspective," *Social Policy & Administration* 31., no. 1 (1997): 56, doi:Doi 10.1111/1467-9515.00037.

⁶¹ David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), xii.

tutor is now required as the Earl is ten years old. In this matter Mr Menteith approaches Mr Cardross and asks if he will take on this role. Although uncertain as to what and how he will be able to teach the Earl, Mr Cardross agrees to the undertaking. It is through Mr Cardross that we first hear the voices of care and justice combined for, in his instructions to the new staff at the castle, he advises that there shall be no special celebration of the Earl's return until 'we see what the earl would like' (35). This recognition that the Earl has a choice in how he wants things to be done is crucial in achieving a just and ethical form of care and illuminates Joan Tronto's notion of 'care-receiving'. In making his observation Mr Cardross is positioned in opposition to both the doctor and the lawyer, who have failed to hear the Earl's voice. For as the young Earl says to Mr Menteith, on his arrival at his castle, 'I like to see the world. If you and Dr Hamilton would have let me, I think I would so have enjoyed going to school like other boys' (38), suggesting that the young Earl had made requests in the past that these two men had overruled.

Later in the novel, when the earl comes of age, we again see the minister employing an ethic of care, as he decides the Earl should be treated no differently from his ancestors and that the highland community, his friends, tenants, loyal servants, and assistants should all celebrate his birthday just as generations of Cairnforths before him. Here we see the minister engaging in what Kittay describes as 'moral deliberations'; a way of thinking through situations that requires 'not reason alone but also empathy, emotional responsiveness, and perceptual attentiveness'.⁶² Through tutoring the Earl over the past eleven years, the minister, watching him grow, and talking through the situation with his daughter Helen,

⁶² Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependency, and Disability." 53.

decides that the Earl should be 'helped to act and to feel as like other people as possible' on the occasion of his birthday (77). Through his moral deliberations, the minister supports the Earl to become a moral subject – a relational self – 'constituted in part by relationships' that are important to the individual's identity.⁶³ Throughout his life the Earl develops a number of close relationships which, in varying degrees, all help to shape his identity. The most important of these relationships however, is his friendship with Helen Cardross, the minister's daughter. The oldest child and only daughter of Mr Cardross, Helen has, since the death of her mother a year ago, assumed the functions of mother in her home, caring for her six younger brothers as well as her father. Whilst Craik's representation of Helen can be seen to follow nineteenth century gendered discussions of mothering as Helen assumes the maternal role with both her brothers and the Earl, it is her complex reaction to the Earl's body on their first meeting that proves to be an instructive lesson for the family.

When Helen first meets the Earl she is described as approaching him in a 'gentle, motherly way' (43), yet this is quickly followed by a moment of abjection where Helen, when offering her hand for the Earl to shake, quickly withdraws it upon seeing the 'poor, helpless, unnatural-looking fingers [that] were feebly advanced an inch or so to meet hers!' (43). At the sight of the Earl's hand Helen experiences a 'sick sense of physical repulsion' (43) towards him. As an accepted form of public touch and communication in western cultures the handshake has the capacity to break down boundaries and connect individuals. However, when Helen removes her hand, offered in friendship and withdrawn in disgust, her refusal to

⁶³ Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependency, and Disability", 53.

touch the Earl stigmatises him through the establishment of a social barrier reminiscent of the isolation and segregation of the diseased and disabled throughout history. Powerful symbolic messages are sent when touch is refused.⁶⁴ As the minister's daughter, Helen is represented as being a role model for the community, as well a surrogate mother to her brothers and therefore needs to lead by example. As such her refusal to touch the earl could establish a precedent within the small Highland community that would result in an isolation of the Earl amounting to quarantine. Is it the realisation of this responsibility that triggers the 'sudden impulse of conscience' for Helen? (43) Perhaps. Whatever prompts the change in her behaviour, the initial repulsion she feels soon gives way to feelings of maternal care, albeit ones which at this stage are channelled through pity, as she proceeds to do what she does with all the children she meets; 'she stooped forward and kissed him' (43).

At this stage in the novel we also see Helen play an important role in educating her younger brothers about how to accept and accommodate the Earl's physical difference, thereby assisting in the creation of a homosocial network previously denied the Earl through his inability to attend school. The brothers are active and energetic boys who enjoy hiking and playing on the loch. When they first meet the Earl, Helen prevents them from staring at him with curiosity as other people are doing and instead ushers them quietly out of the church and off home, where she explains to them that,

they were not to notice anything in the earl that was different from other people – that he was a poor little crippled boy who had neither father, mother,

⁶⁴ Ruth Finnegan, 'Tactile Communication', in *The Book of Touch*, ed. Constance Classen (Oxford and New York, Berg, 2005), 22.

brother, nor sister, that they were to be very kind to him, but not to look at him much, and to make no remarks upon him on any account whatever (44).

In doing this Helen behaves as adults across western society continue to do today in telling children not to stare. As Garland-Thomson argues, 'even though we like to stare, everybody knows we are not supposed to do it' and it is frequently through our mothers that this lesson in social etiquette is learnt.⁶⁵ However, staring at bodies that differ from our own is also our way of getting more information. We stare, as Garland-Thomson argues, 'when ordinary seeing fails'.⁶⁶ For Helen's young brothers, who have never seen a body like the Earl's before, staring provides them with the opportunity to learn about the Earl's lived experience of disability.

Shortly after this initial meeting, the Earl visits the family in their home and the boys are described as being 'awed and shy before their new visitor' (44). The twisted body of the Earl in its physical difference to the boys is a spectacle drawing the boys' focus and silencing their usual lunchtime chatter. This focused visual examination, or staring, is, for Garland-Thomson, different from the often-theorised gaze of critics which she describes as 'an oppressive act of disciplinary looking that subordinates its victim'.⁶⁷ Rather, in her dissection of the act of staring, Garland-Thomson destabilises our cultural understanding of staring (that it is rude, that it is an act of voyeurism or surveillance, that it positions the starrer as a perpetrator and the staree as a victim) thereby giving us permission to stare. In this moment there is potential for learning and understanding to take place. The awe-inspired staring of the boys is described by Garland-Thomson as 'baroque staring' in that it is blatant

⁶⁵ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Staring: How We Look*, (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2009), 5.

⁶⁶ Garland-Thomson, *Staring: How We Look*, 2.

⁶⁷ Garland-Thomson, *Staring: How We Look*, 9.

and unapologetic; quite different from the acceptable staring our parents teach us that allows 'selective looking' rather than 'random gawking'.⁶⁸

Baroque staring then is the wide-eyed looks of wonderment, curiosity, and confusion we often see in small children when they are presented with a body whose physical difference is beyond their personal experience. Such staring is also frequently followed by questions adults would rather avoid. However, to be 'awed' by the person in front of them suggests Helen's brothers are filled with a mixture of fear and wonder. In this instance, baroque staring has the potential to open up new knowledge, placing 'the starrer and the staree in a dynamic relationship'.⁶⁹ Whilst Helen attempts to close down the baroque stares of the boys after the church service, once inside the manse she makes no further comment and gradually as the children begin to talk to the Earl, and this conversation is allowed to evolve organically without adults attempting to silence it out of their own embarrassment, the Earl and the boys begin to learn about each other. When, for example, the Earl tells the boys how he will show them around his garden, the boys' ableist understanding of mobility as involving two functioning legs causes them to question the Earl: 'how can you take us? ... We can run about, but you —' (44). The Earl uses this opportunity to tell the boys how Malcolm assists him: 'I can't run about, that is true; but I have a little carriage, and Malcolm draws it, or Malcolm carries me, and then I can see a great deal' (44). The baroque staring of the children, on this occasion, opens up a dialogue which enables them to gain some understanding of the complexity of interdependency and disability living. As time goes by, and the children spend more time with the Earl and come to enjoy his company, their

⁶⁸ Garland-Thomson, *Staring: How We Look*, 50.

⁶⁹ Garland-Thomson, *Staring: How We Look*, 51.

physical differences, whilst still there, become less noticeable. The baroque stares fade away and 'it is only when strangers happen to see him [the Earl] and were startled by the sight' that the boys are reminded of how physically different he is from them (58).

One of their favourite pastimes, which the boys and the Earl share, is to take a boat out on the loch and let the boat drift as the Earl tells them stories. Whilst some of the stories are fragments from popular stories of the day others are straight from the imagination of the Earl. It is these later tales that engage the children the most and which become their favourites, as they tell of 'wild exploits; wanderings over South American prairies, or shipwrecks on desert islands; astonishing feats of riding, or fighting, or travelling by land and sea'.⁷⁰ Through this storytelling the Earl develops a homosocial group that he would have established had he gone to school, but this group functions within a web of care. Although initially the boys are uncomfortable with the Earl's disability and have to be gently coaxed by Helen to let the Earl join them, her care enables the initial development of this homosocial group, and as the bonds strengthen, the boys begin to extend their own care.

The sociability of these playful adventures on the loch is important for the development of both the Earl and the Cardross boys, as it combines aspects of play with the important learning opportunities play affords. As Dan Goodley and Katherine Runsick-Cole note in their discussion of Piaget's theory of child development, play is frequently the means by which children bring together their experiences, knowledge and understanding; children, according to Piaget, 'are hard-wired to learn, and play is a key activity through which to release these intrinsic

⁷⁰ These tales of adventure reflect those told by the author Frank E Smedley in his novels *Frank Fairleigh* (1850), *Lewis Arundel* (1852), and *Harry Cloverdale's Courtship* (1855).

capabilities'.⁷¹ For the active Cardross boys who enjoy the physicality of play they learn to enjoy quieter activities and when winter arrives, and they can no longer go out in the boat, they continue the storytelling activities indoors where 'a whole circle of young people, and some elder ones too, gathered round his [the Earl's] wheelchair, listening to his wonderful tales of adventure' (58). In addition to this they learn to value the Earl's unique abilities, in this case his skill in storytelling, frequently asking him to write his stories down.⁷² For the Earl's part, he not only gains access to the social life of his community, an important and necessary human right,⁷³ but he also learns that he has skills others don't have, namely the ability to tell a good tale 'out of his head' (58), and that this skill is valued by others. It is also at this point that we begin to hear the Earl's voice and see just how important this is for the Earl's depiction as an autonomous being.

Power and the Voice in Caring Relationships

Up until this point in the novel the Earl's voice had been largely silenced by his guardians who, through their magnanimous decisions about where the Earl should live and what treatment he should be subjected to had failed to take into consideration his wishes or needs. This is reversed however, when we see the Earl visit Mr Cardross and his family for it is here that Craik allows the Earl's voice to be heard strongly as he directs Malcolm and Helen in how to help him.

⁷¹ Dan A. Goodley and Katherine Runswick-Cole, "Emancipating Play: Dis/abled Children, Development and Deconstruction," *Disability & Society* 25, no. 4 (2010): 501, doi:10.1080/09687591003755914.

⁷² Given the novel's close parallels to the life of Frank Smedley who frequently directed his cousins and aunts to write down his stories, this scene provides a missed opportunity to pursue the role of the amanuensis. In the novel Helen never forgets how, when the boys asked this question, the Earl simply looked down at his 'poor helpless fingers'. That Craik chose not to use this opportunity to discuss further the ability of the earl to direct others to do things for him shows the extent to which Craik struggled in balancing enough disability to engage the emotions of her readers with opportunities that show the earl overcoming certain challenges, one of which was writing.

⁷³ Jenny Morris, "Impairment and Disability: Constructing an Ethics of Care That Promotes Human Rights," *Hypatia* 16, no. 4 (2001): 15, doi:10.1353/hyp.2001.0059.

When the Earl begins his lessons with Mr Cardross he is so keen to start that, despite the arrangement that Mr Cardross would visit him at the castle, he asks Malcolm to take him to the manse. When Malcolm, out of politeness and not wishing to cause offence, informs Mr Cardross as to why the Earl has come to visit him, stating 'my Lord didna like to trouble the minister to be walking out this coarse day ... His Lordship thoct that instead o' Mr Cardross coming to him, he would just come to Mr Cardross' (46-48) the Earl quickly corrects Malcolm, and exerts an independence of thought by saying:

No, Malcolm ... it was not exactly that. I wished for my own sake to come to the Manse again, and to ask if I might come every day and take my lessons here ... I'll not be much trouble ... Malcolm will carry me in and carry me out. I can sit on almost any sort of chair now; and with this wee bit of stick in my hand I can turn over the leaves of my books my very own self – I assure you I can (56).

The repeated use of the pronouns 'I' and 'my', in this quotation, clearly inserts the Earl's voice into the narrative in stark contrast to the silencing and dehumanisation of the Earl earlier in the novel. In addition to this, the Earl can be seen to be directing and instructing Malcolm and later Helen as to how he wants things done, demonstrating, as Craik describes it, 'a will of his own' (49). For example, when Malcolm carries the Earl into the manse so he may start his lessons we see the Earl issuing quite specific instructions as to how he should be positioned:

[P]ut me into the child's chair I had at dinner yesterday. Now, fetch me a pillow – or rather roll up your plaid into one – don't trouble Miss Cardross. That will make me quite comfortable. Pull out my books from your pouch, Malcolm, and spread them out on the table: and then go and have a crack⁷⁴ with your old friends at the clachan⁷⁵ – you can come for me in two hours (49).

⁷⁴ Anglicized version of 'craic' meaning a good conversation, banter, exchange of news.

⁷⁵ A small village.

The instructions the earl gives to Malcolm are brief, specific, and direct. The earl knows how best to position his body, the abilities and limitations of his body, and how to instruct Malcolm to achieve what he wants. This ability to direct others in the provision of care and support bears a similarity to that described by Harriet McBryde Johnson in her essay “Unspeakable Conversations”⁷⁶.

In this essay, Johnson describes a meeting she has with the ethicist Peter Singer, a man she describes as one who ‘doesn’t want to kill me. He simply thinks it would have been better, all things considered, to have given my parents the option to kill the baby I once was’.⁷⁷ Johnson’s essay is a valuable resource for opening discussions about disability living. Of particular importance is the way in which Johnson, a disability rights lawyer, talks about giving instructions to her personal assistant, Carmen. When describing her morning stretches, Johnson notes how ‘medical people call it passive movement, but it’s not really passive. Carmen’s hands move my limbs, following my precise instructions, her strength giving effect to my will’.⁷⁸ Later in the essay she describes how she enlists the help of Singer to reposition her elbow. During dinner, Johnson’s right elbow slipped off the table, and as she states, ‘normally I get whoever is on my right to do this sort of thing. Why not now? I gesture to Singer. He leans over, and I whisper, “Grasp this wrist and pull forward one inch, without lifting”’. He follows my instructions to the letter. He sees that now I can again reach my food with my fork’.⁷⁹ Like the Earl, Johnson has learnt

⁷⁶ Harriet McBryde Johnson, “Unspeakable Conversations,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 573–85.

⁷⁷ Johnson, “Unspeakable Conversations,” 573.

⁷⁸ Johnson, “Unspeakable Conversations,” 579.

⁷⁹ Johnson, “Unspeakable Conversations,” 582.

the importance of directing and guiding others, through clear instructions, in order to make the world habitable for herself.

These personal details work in such a way as to give form to Johnson's presence in the world.⁸⁰ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson describes these as 'phenomenological incidents', noting how they are distinctive to living with a disability.⁸¹ Like the moments when the Earl describes the help he needs to be repositioned or fed, these occasions highlight the details of care that occur through touch and physical assistance, as well as how self-determination is achieved for the disabled person, through mutual caregiving, whereby one individual provides respectful and clear instructions, and the other carries them out respectfully. Further, as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson notes, the use of first person narrative in McBryde Johnson's essay helps to privilege McBryde Johnson's voice over those of other people in the essay, including Singer.⁸² Furthermore the use of the third person when discussing Singer has the effect of reversing 'the usual point of view in bioethical discourse and culture in general in which the non-disabled perspective is normative and the disabled perspective is atypical and nonauthoritative'.⁸³ Whilst Craik does not write *A Noble Life* as a first person narrative from the perspective of the Earl, in giving his voice clarity and drawing our attention to how he directs others to do things for him, she is highlighting the disabled experience, drawing it out of the shadows of the dominant able-bodied perspective. Throughout the novel the Earl exerts his independence and achieves his goals through his ability to direct the support and assistance he receives from his network of care, in particular his

⁸⁰ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "A Habitable World: Harriet McBryde Johnson's 'Case for My Life'," *Hypatia* 30, no. 1 (2015): 305, doi:10.1111/hypa.12132.

⁸¹ Garland-Thomson, "A Habitable World," 304.

⁸² Garland-Thomson, "A Habitable World," 302.

⁸³ Garland-Thomson, "A Habitable World," 302.

primary carer, Malcolm. The Earl's statement, 'how could I do without Malcolm?' is less a declaration of his dependence and more a realisation that with the support of Malcolm, he is able to direct others to perform the tasks he cannot perform himself.

When the reader first meets Malcolm he is twenty-one years old and described as a 'big, stalwart young Highlander' (36). Malcolm's physicality is important for his role, as a large part of his work involves the manual handling of the Earl. For example, on numerous occasions in the novel we see Malcolm carrying the Earl, at the Earl's request, to show him the view of the loch where his father drowned, upstairs to visit people, or in and out of the carriage when they travel; or positioning and repositioning him in various chairs when the Earl goes visiting. Craik's description of Malcolm "striding across brush wood and heather and leaping dikes and clearing fences – the very embodiment of active vigorous youth" (37) not only echoes Wordsworth's description of his younger self on his visit to Tintern Abbey, but also links Malcolm to the ideal muscular Christian man, a sketch of which first appeared in the *Saturday Review* of February 1857 describing such a man as one who:

[C]an walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours - who, in the language Mr. Kingsley has made popular, breathes God's free air on God's rich earth, and at the same time can hit a woodcock, doctor a horse, and twist a poker around his finger.⁸⁴

However, whilst Malcolm possesses the strength to physically carry the Earl, and the energy and vigour to walk miles, he attends to his care of the Earl with a 'woman's tenderness', for the reader is told how Malcolm had, 'slipped into all the offices of a

⁸⁴ Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 142.

nurse as well as servant, and performed them with a woman's tenderness, care, and skill' (40).

The description of Malcolm as a nurse only occurs this once in the novel; at other times he is referred to as an assistant. Such language reflects the changes and discussions taking place within nineteenth-century society at this time about nursing and who should and should not be a nurse. Whilst the 1861 census shows that there was still a significant percentage of male nurses working in hospitals, asylums and private homes at this time,⁸⁵ Chad O'Lynn considers this use of language as part of an historical move to devalue the position of men in nursing by referring to them as attendants and assistants rather than nurses.⁸⁶ Certainly it is possible to see in this description the conflation of the role of nursing with women, which began in earnest when Florence Nightingale wrote in 1860 that 'every woman is a nurse'.⁸⁷ Yet regardless of this, Craik's description of Malcolm also reveals her personal belief that there will always be 'women as strong as many a man, and men tenderer than most women'.⁸⁸ Through the representation of Malcolm we can see Craik's belief come to life in the pages of *A Noble Life*.

As the novel progresses the reader learns how Malcolm not only 'watched and tended [the Earl] waited on and fed him in the day, and slept in his room at night' (40), thereby performing duties commonly associated with nursing, but how he also invented adaptive devices. This combination of nursing care and the development of independent living aids is important in creating an ethic of care that

⁸⁵ Arlene Young, "'Entirely a Woman's Question'?: Class, Gender, and the Victorian Nurse," *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 13, no. 1 (2010): 19.

⁸⁶ Chad O'Lynn, "History of Men in Nursing: A Review," in *Men in Nursing: History, Challenges, and Opportunities*, ed. Russell E. Tranbarger and Chad E. O'Lynn (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2006), 6.

⁸⁷ Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing* (London and New York: Appleton, 1860), 3.

⁸⁸ Dinah Mulock Craik, "Concerning Men," *Concerning Men and Other Papers* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co, 1888), 3.

is also attentive to the rights and needs of the individual. The rights of the Earl to enjoy freedom of movement, for example, is supported by the adaptation of his carriage to enable safe and comfortable travel. The freedom of movement the Earl enjoys, as a result of this adaptation, also brings him into closer relationship with his tenants, thereby enabling him to 'share fully in the social life' of his community.⁸⁹ However, through Craik's depiction of Malcolm she allows us to see the multifaceted relationship between the cared-for and care-giver. In her portrayal of Malcolm as a carer who occasionally misreads the situation when assessing the Earl's needs, Craik highlights the fine line carers walk between understanding their client's needs and ignoring their right to free choice. Whilst I would not describe these lapses by Malcolm as resulting in moral harm, to use Kittay's term,⁹⁰ they nevertheless help to reveal the complexity of the caring relationship.

On the occasion of the Earl's coming of age, a party is planned that will allow tenants, friends, and neighbours to celebrate his birthday. The Earl greets his guests in his wheelchair, mixing with the crowd, and ensuring that everyone has sufficient food and drink. At the end of the day only close friends remain and the dinner table is laid out in the dining room, a room seldom used by the Earl who prefers the smaller library which is on the same level as his bedroom, thus giving him greater independence in moving between rooms. As Malcolm brings the Earl into the dining room, he proceeds to wheel him to a sheltered, and what he believes will be a more comfortable seat, at the side of the table. In doing so, he had not taken into consideration the Earl's wishes or asked him where he would prefer to sit. 'Stop',

⁸⁹ Morris, "Impairment and Disability: Constructing an Ethics of Care That Promotes Human Rights," 15.

⁹⁰ Kittay defines Moral Harm as 'the consequence of failures in responsibility and responsiveness', "The Ethics of Care, Dependence, and Disability," 53.

exclaims the Earl, now called Lord Cairnforth, 'Remember I am twenty-one to-day. I think I ought to take my seat at the head of my own table' (81).⁹¹ No harm is caused as a result of Malcolm's action but it does nevertheless demonstrate how his familiarity with the Earl led, on this occasion, to him assuming that he knows where the Earl would like to sit without asking. For a moment Malcolm abandons his usual cooperative and respectful engagement with the earl, and slips into a paternalistic relationship, presuming to know what is best for the Earl which, were it to continue on a regular basis, could threaten the stability of their relationship and the Earl's human rights. In his rebuke of Malcolm the Earl can be seen to be claiming his legal and social rights in society, asserting his autonomy by claiming his place at the head of the table.

As with all caring relationships, the question of who holds the power is important.⁹² The vulnerability of the Earl and his reliance on Malcolm for mobility and personal care highlights the inequality that is present in many caring relationships. As Morris notes, in a way that well describes the care relationship between the Earl and Malcolm, 'vulnerability is created by one person having a greater need for physical assistance than the other person who is in a position to provide it and by the nature of the assistance required.'⁹³ Whilst we only hear of Malcolm attending to the Earl's mobility and feeding, the fact that he watches, tends, and waits on the Earl, and given the fact that he is the only male attendant in the household, suggests that he would also have been responsible for assisting with bathing and toileting, personal tasks that increase the exposure and vulnerability of

⁹¹ At Twenty-one the Earl inherits control of his estate and along with that the title of Lord Cairnforth. To avoid confusion in the reader, however, I will continue to refer to the character as the Earl.

⁹² Judith Phillips, *Care* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 25.

⁹³ Morris, "Impairment and Disability: Constructing an Ethics of Care That Promotes Human Rights," 14.

the human body. As Julia Twigg notes in her research examining the experiences of older people being bathed, 'being naked in the face of someone who is not, contains a powerful dynamic of domination and vulnerability.'⁹⁴ As such, the relationship between Malcolm and the Earl can be usefully examined in order to explore the power dynamics within such a relationship of care.

Class, wealth, and privilege are clear influencers in the relationship between Malcolm and the Earl. Whilst Malcolm is eleven years older than the Earl, the Earl's higher social status and his position as Malcolm's employer allows for his voice to be the dominant one in the relationship. Craik is not ignorant of the fact that the Earl's wealth enables him to live as long as he does, 'had he been poor, in all probability he would long ago have died of sheer suffering' (61). The use of the word 'noble' in the title and throughout the narrative not only alludes to the 'noble mind' of our protagonist but also to his position as a member of the nobility. The Earl's position of privilege and the wealth this affords him enable access to the adaptive devices that enhance his daily living, visits to the various doctors and mechanics, and full-time carers and assistants. Furthermore, had resources been limited, or the Earl's guardians less inclined to hear his voice, institutionalising him because of his physical impairments and denying his right and choice to live at home, the whole community would ultimately have been the poorer. Not only are we encouraged to imagine what life without the Earl would look like through Craik's depiction of the Earl's engagement with his community but Craik also goes as far as to tell her readers explicitly how much the Earl presence means to others. When the Earl goes to London for further treatment both Helen and her father notice his absence and

⁹⁴ Julia Twigg, *Bathing: The Body and Community Care* (London: Routledge, 2000), 21.

remark how dull life is without him and how much they both miss him (62).

Without his presence in the community his friends and tenants would have missed out not only on enjoying the jokes and stories the Earl has a great capacity to tell, but also on the improvements he made to his estate. Arguably it could be said that the improvements the Earl makes to his estate take place because of the empathy the Earl has with his tenants as a result of his becoming aware of their shared humanity.

However, whilst we see the Earl's voice develop clearly throughout the novel Craik's decision to foreground the experience of the Earl over that of Malcolm, whilst not unusual considering her predominantly middle-class readership, does result in a silencing of Malcolm's voice and his experience as a carer. No mention is made, for example, of the working conditions of Malcolm, or Janet for that matter. As such, whilst Craik presents a nuanced and remarkably enlightened picture of interdependent living for the Earl the novel remains infused with Victorian values which privilege the voice of the Earl over that of his servants. Today supporters of the independent living movement would say that the focus should be on the rights and dignity of the Earl as the disabled character and not on his able-bodied carer, yet whilst I agree that the needs of the disabled person must be forefront, the treatment and needs of the carers must not be ignored. To do so is to ignore the humanity of the one attending to the physical needs and to gain independence at the expense of another. 'Where', asks Kittay, 'is the independence and control of the person providing care ... when they are mere instruments of another's independence'.⁹⁵ Whilst we hear nothing of Malcolm's working conditions we can extrapolate, from the information we are given, that Malcolm was treated fairly whilst working for the

⁹⁵ Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependence, and Disability," 54.

Earl as we see him given time to visit his friends and go out walking across the fields and he remains with the Earl until the Earl dies at the age of forty-three.

Furthermore, on several occasions in her other writing, Craik examines the responsibility of masters to their servants which suggests that this was a topic she considered of some importance.⁹⁶

One noteworthy occasion in which Craik silences Malcolm is when the Earl's cousin, Captain Bruce, arrives at the castle. From the beginning of the novel the Bruce's have been described as 'penniless, grasping, [and] altogether discreditable' (28) against whom the Earl must be protected. The description of Captain Bruce when he arrives at the castle on the night of the Earl's coming of age celebrations, foreshadows the disruption his presence will create in the narrative. Captain Bruce is described as being,

about thirty; though at first sight he seemed older, from his exceedingly worn and sickly appearance. His lank black hair fell about his thin, sallow face; he wore what we now call the Byron collar and Byron tie – for it was in the Byron era, when sentimentalism and misery-making were all the fashion (87).

The reference to his Byronic appearance positions Captain Bruce alongside other tortured male characters, such as those famously created by the Brontë sisters, and would have been immediately recognisable to Craik's readers. Through the omniscient narrator, the reader not only hears how Captain Bruce devotes himself to the Earl 'bestowing on him enough, and not too much, of his society' (91) but also how Malcolm is suddenly described as 'only a servant' (91) whose affection for the Earl is not reciprocated. Furthermore, we no longer see Malcolm always at the Earl's

⁹⁶ See for example her essays, "My Brother's Keeper," *Sermons out of Church*; and "Female Servants," *A Woman's Thoughts about Women*; along with her novel *Mistress and Maid* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862) each of which see Craik discussing the responsibilities masters and mistresses have towards their servants.

side but instead the Cousin who is 'always at hand with any assistance required ... a friend who was also a gentleman, yet who did not seem to feel or dislike the many small cares and attentions' necessary to support the Earl (91).

Whilst the friendship between the two cousins is understandable, Captain Bruce is, after all, the Earl's only blood relative and a social equal, Craik suggest an element of obsequiousness about the way the Captain gains the affection of the Earl and his friends. As the narrator informs us, only the more worldly Mr Menteith remains suspicious and 'aloof for some time' (89) but 'at last even he succumb[s] to the charm of the Captain's conversation' (89). As the Captain gradually becomes 'all things to all men' (89) we see the transfer of the caring role from Malcolm to Captain Bruce highlighting the fragility of Malcolm's situation as carer. Whilst it would be true to say that, notwithstanding the closeness of the relationship between Malcolm and the Earl and the ethical sensitivity Craik displays between these two characters, Malcolm is nevertheless a servant, albeit one with personal access to the Earl, and therefore susceptible to the personal whims of his employer. However, when read through the lens of a twenty-first century understanding of care ethics these scenes reveal a devaluing of the care and support Malcolm provides the Earl on a daily basis as they suggest that the caring work he is engaged in is work anyone can do, as long they have the appearance of liking the Earl. This sidelining of Malcolm could be described, to use Tronto's phrase, as 'privileged irresponsibility',⁹⁷ whereby the caring needs of one are defined as being more important than the needs of another because of the unequal distribution of power between the two parties. For as long as

⁹⁷ Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 146.

the Earl's needs are met there is no reason for him to consider the needs of others, in this instance, Malcolm.

Whilst this is a rare occasion in the novel, in which the Earl fails to consider the needs others, the example does demonstrate the way in which the caring relationship can be a site of conflict between the care-giver and care-receiver.⁹⁸ As I have already mentioned care is a relational act and that relationship has, at a minimum, two people involved in it, the care-giver and the cared-for. As such it is essential that the needs of both are attended to. In Kittay's definition of care she identifies the act, when done well, as one which contains the 'three C's' – care, connection, and concern.⁹⁹ The consideration of these three qualities should flow both ways within the caring relationship. Whilst the Earl is in a vulnerable position, relying as he does on Malcolm for support with his daily living, so too is Malcolm vulnerable, as the care-giver, to the power of his employer, the Earl. As Kittay argues:

The moral character of a dependency relation and its nature as a caring or uncaring relation is determined, at least in part, by how the parties in the dependency relation respond to one another, both with respect to the vulnerabilities of the dependent and to the vulnerabilities created for the dependency worker.¹⁰⁰

Malcolm's description, in this chapter, as a servant places him in a low social position and highlights not only the inequality between himself and the Earl but also reinforces his position as one of the Earl's employees. That the Earl neglects to show concern for his devoted servant and replaces him, albeit temporarily, reinforces the vulnerability of Malcolm's position. However, as soon as the Earl is required to

⁹⁸ Tronto, *Moral Boundaries*, 109.

⁹⁹ Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labour. Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 31.

¹⁰⁰ Kittay, *Love's Labour*, 34.

travel to Edinburgh, Malcolm is back in the role of carer. Not only does he know the Earl's requirements, having travelled with him before, but the unexpected trip coincides with a flare up in the Cousin's ill health thus preventing him from travelling. In preventing the cousin from traveling because, as Captain Bruce states, 'the winds of Edinburgh are ruin to my weak lungs, which the air here suits so well' (99) Craik reinforces the untrustworthiness of Captain Bruce and reinstates Malcolm, the trusted and dependable servant and carer to the Earl's side.

From Normalising the Body to Acceptance of Difference

There is one further voice that is challenged, and finally silenced in the novel, and that is the medical, and normalising, voice of the doctor, Dr Hamilton. Whilst the Earl is living comfortably at the castle, and is content with the adaptive devices Malcolm has organised for him, when Dr Hamilton presents the Earl with letter from a 'skillful (sic) mechanic' (43) in London, who believes he can invent an adaptive device that would increase the Earl's mobility, the Earl decides to take the chance as it might enable him to gain a little more independence, 'to live my life with a little less trouble to myself, and possibly to other people' (59). On this occasion, however, the Earl is given a choice as to whether to proceed with the attempt or not, a move which demonstrates that the doctor now recognises his human right to choice and simultaneously acknowledges that he has the capacity and reason to make a decision for himself. Furthermore, the aim of this intervention, rather than being to cure or straighten his body, as the earlier interventions had been, is instead directed towards accommodation and adaptation. Craik's focus on skilled mechanics at a time when orthopaedic surgery, designed to correct the orthopaedic impairment, was gaining in popularity can be seen as somewhat anachronistic. However, as

Bourrier notes, orthopaedic disabilities became a way for nineteenth-century writers to explore how 'suffering could breed sympathy' thereby highlighting a character's ability to empathise with the suffering of others.¹⁰¹ In turn, this allowed authors to explore how a disabled character could fit into his or her community.¹⁰² In this light the use of mechanisation to 'correct' the physically impaired body has a greater capacity to increase the suffering of a character and in *A Noble Life* this literary device usefully increases the emotional content of the novel, for when the Earl returns from London the experiment is deemed to have been a failure (63) and the doctor's voice is silenced.

How this failure manifests itself, however, is not made clear as arguably the trip has been successful. Certainly, in the silencing of the doctor's voice we see the narrative shift from an attempt to normalise the disabled body to one of accommodation and acceptance. Furthermore, the initial letter clearly stated that the mechanic believed he could invent 'some support by which Lord Cairnforth could be made, not indeed to walk – that would be impossible – but to be by many degrees more active than now' (58). When the Earl returns from London his mobility is indeed increased through the use of a self-propelling wheelchair that allows him to wheel himself about for short periods, thus reducing his reliance on Malcolm considerably. As a result, the Earl is no longer a swaddled and cradled infant 'gently and carefully, wrapped in plaid ... [and] look[ing] like a baby, or a very young child' (36) who requires being physically carried about by Malcolm, but rather a young man with a far greater ability to choose where he wants to go. Now,

¹⁰¹ Karen Bourrier, "Orthopaedic Disability and the Nineteenth-Century Novel," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 36, no. 1 (2014): 3, doi:10.1080/08905495.2013.867659.

¹⁰² Karen Bourrier, "Orthopaedic Disability and the Nineteenth-Century Novel," 3.

along with the other adaptive devices Malcolm has created – the forked stick the Earl uses to turn the pages of his books independently, and the modifications that have been made to his carriage so that he can travel pain free – the acquisition of this self-propelling wheel-chair gives the Earl options and independence in his life and plays a part in assisting him to actively manage his estate, as he is now able to meet his tenants more easily. In this light I would consider the experiment to have been a success as it has achieved the Earl's goal of gaining a little independence. However, these adaptations have not been achieved without a great deal of pain and suffering thereby enabling the Earl to be more empathetic to the suffering of others, bringing him into closer contact with his tenants.

The trip is painful, both physically and emotionally, for the Earl. In a move which shows Craik's awareness of the potential problems associated with travelling with a disability the reader is told of the preparations which must be taken before the trip can take place in order to minimise the Earl's discomfort. Craik tells her readers, who would have been accustomed to travelling by train, how

[s]uch a journey was then a very different thing from what it is now, and to so helpless a traveller as Lord Cairnforth its difficulties were doubled. He had to post the whole distance in his own carriage, which was fitted up so as to be as easy as possible in locomotion, besides being so arranged that he could sleep in it if absolutely necessary, for ordinary beds and ordinary chairs were sometimes very painful to him (59).

To travel by post from Scotland to London would indeed have been a long journey and would have required frequent stops to change horses and rest overnight. Craik's description highlights some of the difficulties, not least the potential pain, that the Earl would encounter on such a journey, noting in particular how the carriage was adapted for the Earl to sleep in thereby alleviating the discomfort and pain that would have come from trying to sleep in the beds in inns. The pain and discomfort of

the journey is confirmed later when the Earl returns home and we hear from Duncan, the ferryman, how the Earl screamed when Malcolm lifted him out of the boat (63). Likewise, when Helen attempts to discuss the trip with him, the Earl refuses to talk about it, stating, with tears in his eyes, that it was a very hard and difficult time.

This painful experience results in the Earl determining to shut himself away in his castle, in a self-imposed exile from others. The only people he agrees to see, other than Malcolm who is always close at hand, are Helen and her father. The turning point in the Earl's behaviour, which also triggers his engagement with the wider community, comes when an elderly tenant arrives at the castle seeking help. Normally such matters would be dealt with by Mr Menteith but he has yet to arrive at the castle. Instead the tenant is confronted by the 'diminutive figure' of the Earl who at first he fails to recognise as his lord and master. It is only when the Earl speaks and draws attention to his presence that the old man sees him. Realising that this is the Earl, he apologises and attempts to excuse himself from the room. The Earl, however, has other ideas and asks what is troubling the old farmer. After hearing of his troubles he promises to help. The old man's story of lost sheep and starving children disturbs the Earl who, having lived an isolated life, has had no understanding of the problems his tenants face, and this encounter draws him out of his own suffering. Bourrier's argument that the suffering brought about by orthopaedic disabilities can breed sympathy and draw individuals into community with others helps us to understand this scene as the Earl moves from self-imposed isolation to engaging with his tenants.

The pain the Earl experiences on his trip to London makes him more sensitive to the suffering of the old man and his family, and triggers a desire to get acquainted with his people. When the earl states that he wishes to ‘see what they [his tenants] wanted, and how I could best help them’ (74) he demonstrates an understanding of the importance of assessing needs before implementing change that may be unnecessary or unwanted, a vital step in delivering any service within an ethic of care. Such an understanding distinguishes the Earl from those ‘ladies bountiful’ of whom Craik was critical in her essay ‘Benevolence or Beneficence’ (1875).¹⁰³ In demonstrating concern for his tenants, and issues such as housing and roads on the estate, the Earl not only combines an ethic of care with the rights of his tenants to adequate housing and infrastructure in order to be able to do their jobs safely and efficiently but also hints at the potential to take an ethic of care outside the home and into the public realm.¹⁰⁴ In the following chapter I examine care in the public sphere as I explore the ethic of care Craik employed in her literature for children.

¹⁰³ Dinah Mulock Craik, “Benevolence or Beneficence”, in *Sermons out of Church* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1875), 117-144.

¹⁰⁴ Many care ethicists invite us to consider what a society, whose social policy is governed by an ethic of care, might look like and I will return to this in the next chapter as I examine a selection of Craik’s children stories and how in one of these, *The Little Lame Prince*, Craik uses care ethics to promote the idea of a society based on peace rather than war. See for example, Kittay, “The Ethics of Care, Dependency, and Disability”; Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2009); Joan C. Tronto, “Creating Caring Institutions: Politics, Plurality, and Purpose,” *Ethics and Social Welfare* 4, no. 2 (2010): 158–71, doi:10.1080/17496535.2010.484259; Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2013).

Teaching Children to Care - Narratives of Care in Craik's Children's Literature

If any reader, big or little, should wonder whether there is a meaning in this story deeper than that of an ordinary fairy tale, I will own that there is. But I have hidden it so carefully that the smaller people, and many larger folk, will never find it out, and in the meantime the book may be read [...] for what interest it has, or what amusement it may bring.

Dinah Mulock Craik¹

Whilst Craik wrote predominantly for an adult readership her literary career was effectively bookended by writing for children. Much of her earliest published work was written for a young audience and conforms to the moralistic and didactic style of children's literature popular with many late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century writers which, with its focus on religion, education, and the family, sort to teach the children of the emerging middle-classes appropriate class-based and gendered values.² Later, after the adoption of her daughter Dorothy, Craik again returned to this genre, this time most likely as a direct result of the increasing number of children in her life and her wish to write specifically for them. Like many children's stories, Craik's children's literature contains deeper meanings than those rendered obvious by a first reading. Whilst the lessons to be learnt differ for her male and female characters, the prevalence of disability and the importance of caring for others unifies her children's stories. In this chapter I therefore examine the way Craik employs an ethic of care, in relation to disability, in her children's literature as a way of not only teaching children about human bodily variation, but

¹ Dinah Mulock Craik, *The Little Lame Prince*, (Lexington, USA: Bibliobazaar, 2006), 35.

² Andrew O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child: Children's Literature in the Late Eighteenth-Century* (New York and London: Taylor and Francis, 2003), 1.

also the values of tolerance, acceptance, and perseverance. Furthermore I examine how Craik uses a caring ethic as a device through which she is able to move her consideration of care from the private sphere of the home into the public sphere of civic duty.

Children's literature is often understood as having undergone major changes in the nineteenth century, with so many quality texts for children being published in the latter half of the era that the period gained the title of 'the Golden Age' of children's literature'. However, writing for children had been available for centuries before this time. For example, in his chronology of children's literature, Emer O'Sullivan records the earliest text for children as Aelfric's *Colloquy* (990), a Latin text for pupils at monastery schools.³ Furthermore, Kimberly Reynolds argues that the first picture book for children is generally considered to be the seventeenth-century publication of John Amos Comenius's book *Orbis Pictus* (1658)⁴ and Seth Lerer notes that the first printing press, devoted entirely to children's books, was established by John Newbery in the mid eighteenth-century.⁵ Yet it was in 1865, with the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, that the 'Golden Age' of children's literature is considered to have begun with Harvey Darton declaring, in the 1930s, that *Alice* provided the first 'unapologetic appearance in print, for readers who sorely needed ... liberty of thought in children's books.'⁶

³ Emer O'Sullivan, *Historical Dictionary of Literature and the Arts*, no. 46 (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2010), xiii.

⁴ Kimberley Reynolds, *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6.

⁵ Seth Lerer, *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, From Aesop to Harry Potter* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), 10.

⁶ Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, ed. Brian rev. Alderson, 3rd, 1982 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 260.

However, this way of thinking about children's literature, which suggests that what the child needed somehow influenced the development of children's literature, can be misleading. As David Rudd notes, histories of children's literature have, until very recently, followed the principle that children's literature developed in response to the industrial revolution, the rise of the middle class, and the recognition of children as children and not as miniature adults.⁷ Certainly it can be said that the industrialisation of the printing process saw the cost of producing books decrease, resulting in more people able to afford what had been considered a luxury item, and educational reforms saw an increase in literacy rates. However, to think of books prior to the 'Golden Age' as having a bias towards instruction, with the entertainment aspect of children's literature only coming to the fore with books such as *Alice* and Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* is, as Kimberley Reynolds argues, reductive.⁸ For not only was there much to amuse children in earlier texts, but many of those written during the Golden Age had powerful messages to pass on to their young readers. As the epigraph to this chapter suggests, there is often more to a story than at first appears, and certainly this is the case with Craik's literature for children, which straddles the somewhat arbitrary date of 1865.

In the stories I examine in this chapter Craik uses disability as a motif through which to highlight the importance of care to her young readers. The use of disability as a narrative device within children's literature was common throughout the nineteenth century and continued well into the twentieth century. What is striking about many of these texts, and the ways the authors represent the disabled

⁷David Rudd, "The Development of Children's Literature," in *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature*, ed. David Rudd (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2010), 3.

⁸Reynolds, *Children's Literature: A Very Short Introduction*, 15.

child, is that disability is used as a trope to educate children on appropriate gendered behaviour, in what has been termed as ‘the school of pain’.⁹ Originating in Susan Coolidge’s 1872 text *What Katy Did*, the ‘school of pain’ employed disability as a way of teaching children, especially young girls, tolerance, acceptance, and perseverance.¹⁰ Lois Keith notes this narrative use of disability in numerous stories for children written in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries including *Heidi* (1880), *The Secret Garden* (1910), and *Pollyanna* (1913).¹¹ Furthermore, as Ann Dowker notes, disabled characters in children’s literature rarely grow to become disabled adults, ‘either they die young, or experience a miracle cure’.¹² This treatment of disability is reflected upon by Deborah Kent in her essay, ‘In Search of a Heroine’, in which Kent discusses how, as a child with a visual impairment, she sought out heroines in literature whom she could relate to, heroines who created ‘independent lives enriched by deeply rewarding work and friendship [and who] without resentment, ... live[d] beyond the confines of convention, and gain[ed] the world’s acceptance and respect.’¹³ Kent may have struggled to find these heroes, but Craik certainly created a number of characters who, whilst living with a disability, engaged with the world around them and lead rewarding lives. By having her protagonist in *The Little Lame Prince*, for example, live a full life in which his disability is not cured, Craik not only demonstrated an awareness of human bodily

⁹ Lois Keith, *Take up Thy Bed and Walk: Death, Disability and Cure in Classic Fiction for Girls* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 85-86.

¹⁰ Lois Keith, *Take up Thy Bed and Walk*, 86.

¹¹ Whilst the figure of the disabled child featured in numerous nineteenth-century novels including, for example, Jenny Wren in *Our Mutual Friend*, Maggy in *Little Dorrit*, and Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby*, these novels were not specifically written for the children’s market. In this chapter I specifically explore the disabled character in children’s literature.

¹² Ann Dowker, “The Treatment of Disability in 19th and Early 20th Century Children’s Literature,” *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 2, no. 1, (2004), www.dsqsds.org, accessed 25th May 2015.

¹³ Deborah Kent, “In Search of a Heroine: Images of Women with Disabilities in Fiction and Drama,” in *Women with Disabilities: Essays in Psychology, Culture and Politics*, ed. Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 109.

variation but also of the permanent and lifelong aspects of disability ignored by many other children's writers.

In each of the stories where the author employs the 'school of pain' narrative, disability functions as a device through which children learn how to behave. In *Heidi*, the invalid Klara Sesemann regains her ability to walk when she visits Heidi's mountain home and is maliciously tipped out of her wheelchair by a jealous Peter. Persuaded by the wholesome goodness of her friend Heidi, and her own willpower to persevere, Klara regains her ability to walk. For the titular characters in both *What Katy Did* and *Pollyanna*, their disability, as the result of an accident, provides the vital lesson the girls need to learn the gendered qualities of patience and acceptance. Once the lesson is learnt, the disability resolves itself and the girls both regain their ability to walk. Similarly, in *The Secret Garden*, we see the initially feminised figure of the invalid Colin regain his physical strength and ability to walk when he learns to take risks, go outside, and engage with nature. Colin's lesson differs somewhat to that of the girls in that, as Ann Dowker notes, 'there is more stress on girls learning to be useful to their families, and on boys developing and demonstrating courage'.¹⁴ Such a comment is not confined to children's literature as these are also the lessons Olive and the Earl of Cairnforth were required to learn, as I showed in previous chapters.

However, as Stoddard Holmes argues, in relation to *A Secret Garden*, but which can likewise be applied to the other novels mentioned, this literary treatment of disability not only suggests that disability can be cured by a good attitude, but also

¹⁴ Dowker, "The Treatment of Disability in 19th and Early 20th Century Children's Literature."

'reinforces the idea that permanent disability is a terrible condition.'¹⁵ Each of these novels tends to 'resolve' disability in childhood either through the character being killed or cured. At the end of each story 'normality' is restored, either through the character becoming 'able-bodied' again (*What Katy Did*, *Pollyanna*) or through their elimination from the narrative (*Jane Eyre*, *Little Women*).¹⁶ In my discussion of the children's stories that follow I will show how Craik moved from foreshadowing the 'school of pain' narrative, in *How to Win Love; or, Rhoda's Lesson* (1848), in which she uses similar devices to those mentioned by Keith to teach Rhoda kindness and the importance of love, to creating a disabled community in *Michael the Miner* (1846), in which Craik rejects the pitiful description of deaf children and embraces the use of sign language. Finally, in this chapter, I examine *The Little Lame Prince* (1875), in which the protagonist's disability is neither cured nor overcome but rather leads the character to embrace an ethic of care that enables him to become a peaceful ruler for his people.

Teaching Girls to Care in *Rhoda's Lesson*

Clearly written for young girls, *Rhoda's Lesson* tells the story of twelve year old Rhoda Ashton, a lively and likeable, albeit indulged, young girl who lives with her father and brothers on a farm in the fictional English village of Burntwood. Since her mother's death the household has been managed by her Aunt Sarah, but now she too has died, and Rhoda's life is about to change. The story starts with Rhoda's father

¹⁵ Martha Stoddard Holmes, "Crippling Colin: Disability in Two Film Versions of *The Secret Garden*" in *Frances Hodgson Burnett's The Secret Garden: A Children's Classic at 100*, ed. Jackie C. Horne and Joe Sutcliff Sanders (Plymouth, UK, The Scarecrow Press: 2011), 214.

¹⁶ Whilst I would not consider *Jane Eyre* a children's story Lois Keith considers it as such in her text *Take up they Bed and Walk*. In chapter two of her book Keith discusses *Jane Eyre* and *Little Women*, two texts in which we see an invalid character die in her youth. Both characters are ill rather than disabled and both characters are minor characters. In each novel the death of the minor character contributes to the protagonist's education which helps to restore normality, especially in gendered roles, by the end of the novel.

bringing home a new wife, Mrs Mayne, much to the dismay of the young and emotionally immature Rhoda. Rhoda vows never to call this woman mother, wilfully disobeys her, refuses to welcome her into the family and is generally unpleasant and cruel. To Rhoda this woman is 'the hated stepmother' whom she will never love.¹⁷ However, unlike the wicked stepmothers of Grimm's fairy tales, Rhoda's new mother is known by the community to be kind and loving. The perception of wickedness is Rhoda's alone.

When Rhoda arrives home one day and looks through the window, she sees a scene of domestic bliss. The fire blazes, the table is laid, her father sits in his chair looking happy and content, her new stepmother pours the tea, and her brothers 'already seeming quite at home with their stepmother' gather around the table laughing and chatting (34). Rather than feeling happy for her family Rhoda breaks down in tears, declaring that 'nobody cares for me now' (35). The selfishness and lack of thought for others, which Craik represents Rhoda as possessing at this stage, causes her to hide outside in the rain until her father, worried that his only daughter might have come to harm, comes out looking for her. The uneasy peace that gradually fills the room, however, is soon brought to an end when one of Rhoda's brothers mentions Mrs Mayne's own daughter, Annie.

Whilst Mr Ashton and his new wife have been on their honeymoon, Annie has been staying with an old friend of her mother's. Rhoda already knows Annie from school and whilst Craik does not describe the physical characteristics of either girl, preferring her young readers to engage their imagination in order to "picture them

¹⁷ Dinah Mulock Craik, *How to Win Love; Or, Rhoda's Lesson* [1847] (San Bernardino, California: Bibliobazaar, 2014), 57.

as you will, or take the face of some dear sister or favourite playmate for your ideal of Rhoda or Annie”, she does describe their personalities.¹⁸ For example, whilst Rhoda is described as a “motherless child, being at times foolishly indulged, at others treated with carelessness and occasional harshness” who “grew up much like a wild plant”, Annie grew up with the love and guidance of a kind and patient mother.¹⁹ On her return from visiting the family friend, Annie calls in to visit her beloved teacher Mrs Lee, or as she is affectionately known to the children ‘dear Winny’. To all in the small community Mrs Lee is a childless widow, but she has a past which the reader doesn’t learn about until the end of the story. The only clue Craik provides as to what Mrs Lee’s secret may be is the presence of a small child’s shoe which is occasionally brought out when Mrs Lee is alone, suggesting that Mrs Lee may have been a mother as well as a wife.

Annie talks with Mrs Lee about her new family and expresses concerns about some gossip she has heard regarding Rhoda’s indifference to her and her mother. To calm Annie’s fears Mrs Lee highlights the differences in their upbringing and counsels Annie in exercising patience in her relationship with Rhoda.

You must exercise great patience and forbearance towards her; and to do this, always try to look to the bright parts of her character and think as little as you can of her faults. Whatever they may be, it is not your place to reprove them. And above all, remember how different has been her fortune to yours. Allowed to run wild, with no kind mother to guide her, no-one but Aunt Sarah, who took little notice of her, as I have heard. Whereas you have had that dear mother all your life, to lead you in the right way. Oh, my Annie, every night, before you sleep, you ought to thank God for the blessing of a good mother.²⁰

¹⁸ Craik, *Rhoda's Lesson*, 9.

¹⁹ Craik, *Rhoda's Lesson*, 10.

²⁰ Craik, *Rhoda's Lesson*, 73-74.

The focus on the importance of mothers is clear in this passage and runs throughout the narrative. In this story, Rhoda's father has been seemingly unable to provide for Rhoda the maternal care that Annie has received from her mother and which has taught Annie the value and importance of love and care. The importance of mothering appears in a number of Craik's novels including *My Mother and I* and *King Arthur: Not a Love Story*. However, as I discussed in chapter three maternal care, for Craik, was not solely associated with biological mothers. Nor, for that matter, did she see it as solely a role for women, as I will demonstrate in my reading of *Michael the Miner*. In this way, Craik's writing anticipates the work of care theorists such as Sara Ruddick, who argues that men are capable of mothering as well as women. However, despite Ruddick's assertion that men can 'mother' as well as women, historical and cultural experience has led women to be more successful within the role, and this is clearly the case in *Rhoda's Lesson*.²¹ Without the guiding hand of a mother Rhoda has failed to learn important gendered skills necessary for her to grow into the nineteenth century's social construct of woman. In order to learn these lessons, which include the knowledge of how to be 'mothered' and in turn how to 'mother', she must first enter the 'school of pain'.

The pivotal point in the narrative, which leads to Rhoda's lesson, occurs on a family outing to a ruined castle. The family arrive and all are happy and jovial until Rhoda's new mother advises all the children, boys and girls, not to climb to the top of the tower, as the stairs are unsafe. Determined to disobey her new mother, in order to "show that mother of yours [Annie's] that she shall not rule over me", Rhoda climbs to the top of the tower.²² Concerned that she might fall to her death

²¹ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1990): 41.

²² Craik, *Rhoda's Lesson*, 91.

Annie runs after her and arrives just in time to catch Rhoda as she faints and falls. Annie assists her sister back down the stairs and once there it becomes apparent that Rhoda has seriously injured her ankle and cannot walk. This physical impairment becomes the catalyst for Rhoda's lesson and the reason for her enrolment in the 'school of pain'. As Keith notes, it is whilst enrolled in the 'school of pain' that girls learn patience, cheerfulness, helpfulness, neatness, and to generally make the best of things.²³ And certainly during her time in bed as an invalid, Rhoda not only learns patience and the importance of thinking through her actions but more importantly, she learns the value and importance of love and care.

Throughout the story Rhoda's favourite saying is 'I don't care'. In the course of six short chapters Rhoda uses the expression six times. '*I don't care*' if I get hurt; '*I don't care*' if you think I am silly; '*I don't care*' about other people; '*I don't care*' if I made you worry, and so on. If the admission of Craik at the start of this chapter is to be believed, and there is more to children's stories than meets the eye, then the repetition of this saying deserves investigation. Clearly one aspect of Craik's narrative is to instil in her young readers an ethic of care. The care which Rhoda experiences whilst she is injured, especially that which she receives from her sister Annie, fosters within Rhoda her own sense of responsibility to care about, and for, others. Following her recovery the once passionate Rhoda is now as gentle as Annie Mayne. As Craik describes it, Rhoda's impairment had "made her dependent on so many, had taught her how needful it is to be loved; and to gain love one must learn to deserve it".²⁴ The narrative function of temporarily disabling Rhoda in order that she may learn how to behave in a more gendered and socially acceptable way has

²³ Keith, *Take up Thy Bed and Walk*, 85.

²⁴ Craik, *Rhoda's Lesson*, 123.

succeeded and towards the end of the story Rhoda is able to demonstrate the extent to which this lesson has been learnt.

As the school children prepare to break up for their Christmas holiday each child has decided to take a small gift to give to Mrs Lee as a sign of the love and consideration they have for their teacher. Rhoda has made a small needle case for her teacher but having realised she has left it on her bed she runs to a nearby farm to buy a pot of honey instead. On her way across the fields she encounters a poor man, lying in the hedgerow, nearly frozen to death, and clutching to his chest a young child. "Without a moment's hesitation Rhoda took him [the child] in her arms, wrapped his frozen limbs up under her cloak, and held him close to her warm bosom. He was a light burden [...] for he was so thin and small. Rhoda hardly felt his weight, as she ran with him across the field to the nearest house."²⁵ This instinct of Rhoda's to save the child is, according to Ruddick, the "constitutive maternal act", for without Rhoda's intervention this vulnerable, and motherless, child would die. Rhoda takes the infant to the farmhouse and asks that help be sent to the man. Then with the help of the family there Rhoda tends to the little boy, gradually warming his limbs so as to prevent chilblains, feeding him milk and hugging him close to her chest. After the boy's father has been attended to by the doctor Rhoda, at the father's insistence, takes his child home with her where she tells her parents 'I shall keep the boy myself, and be his little mother' (161).

As a result of her adventure Rhoda never made it to school and as the school day draws to an end, and the children all go home for the holidays, Mrs Lee and Annie head to the Ashton farm to see what has happened to Rhoda. On arriving at

²⁵ Craik, *Rhoda's Lesson*, 154.

the farm they see Rhoda there with the boy, whose identity is now revealed. He is Allan, Mrs Lee's lost son, taken from her by her husband, the man who now lies dying in a neighbour's barn. Mrs Lee is happily reunited with her son and takes both her son and her husband home to care for them although her husband dies soon after. As the story comes to a close, a whole year has passed and it is Christmas time again. Annie and Rhoda are now firm friends as well as sisters and we see them heading home after visiting their grandfather with gifts for the whole family, including a small prayer book Rhoda has especially chosen for her stepmother. Rhoda's time in the 'school of pain' has not only taught her patience and acceptance, but also the importance of maternal love, both in the giving and receiving of such affection. Whilst Craik foreshadowed the gendered lessons of later 'school of pain' texts in this tale for girls, her tale for young boys, *Michael the Miner*, whilst containing all the adventure and bravery one would expect from a Victorian text, also diverts from traditional lessons to represent men in a maternal role, building a community centred around disability.

Signs of Joy – Careful Communication in *Michael the Miner*

Craik's use of disability in her earlier moral tale for young boys is somewhat different from that represented in *Rhoda's Lesson*, for not only is the disability permanent but there are also multiple representations of disability which span across gender and age. In this novel, Craik's use of disability is not confined to children who either never grow up or who somehow 'grow out' of their disability, but rather examines both a life lived with a disability and the temporariness of being able-bodied. In *Michael the Miner* Craik also explores the way in which men, specifically fathers and brothers, engage with 'mothering'. When Michael grows to

become a man, his identity includes aspects of maternal care as he strives to protect and care for his deaf sister and younger brother as well as his injured father.

That *Michael the Miner* is a moral and instructive tale, with an emphasis on religious education, is evidenced in its publication through the Religious Tract Association. Taking advantage of the highly profitable area of children's literature, and seeking to counteract the more sensational elements of children's literature found in chapbooks, The Religious Tract Society had, by 1849, circulated upwards of four million children's books all featuring 'respectable' tales which frequently sought to inspire charity in their young readers.²⁶ The conservative tone of these stories, however, should not undermine the fact that Craik incorporated a progressive and realistic agenda into this text. *Michael the Miner* stands out from the numerous Evangelical children's stories of the early-nineteenth century in whose footsteps Craik followed for a number of reasons, not least of which is the creation of a character who is not only deaf but who also uses sign language. As Jennifer Esmail notes, whilst the blind character makes frequent appearances in nineteenth-century literature, deaf characters, especially those who use sign language, are conspicuous by their absence.²⁷ On the occasions where deafness is represented Lennard Davis argues that the deaf character is often derided and marginalised, unable to communicate orally and therefore seen as less than human.²⁸ Alternatively, characters are represented as having gone deaf with age, and are thus positioned as comic relief in the text. As Esmail notes, such characters are 'generally underpinned

²⁶ William Jones, *The jubilee memorial of the Religious Tract Society: containing a record of its origin, proceedings, and results, A.D. 1799 to A.D. 1849* (London, Religious Tract Society: 1859), 127.

²⁷ Jennifer Esmail, "'I Listened With My Eyes': Writing Speech and Reading Deafness in the Fiction of Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins," *ELH* 78, no. 4 (2011): 991.

²⁸ Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (London and New York: Verso, 1995): 113.

by ageist and ableist humour'.²⁹ In *Michael the Miner*, however, Craik portrays her deaf characters with respect and compassion, representing both the isolation they experience through lack of education and, conversely, the deaf community the two girls form.³⁰ In creating deaf characters who sign Craik precedes the better known characters of Madonna Blyth in Wilkie Collins's *Hide and Seek* (1854, revised 1861) and Sophy Marigold in Charles Dickens's *Doctor Marigold* (1865) by a number of years.³¹

Whilst Craik wrote essays about the blind and, as we saw in chapter two, her diaries record numerous occasions when she entertained or visited children of the Normal School for the Blind there is no evidence to suggest she had this same engagement with the deaf, and *Michael the Miner* is her only story which features deaf characters. Yet the education of the deaf was a topic of much discussion in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Following the establishment of the first school for deaf children in Britain in 1764, the nineteenth century became, as both Mary Wilson Carpenter and Oliver Sacks point out, the dawn of a new era for the deaf, which heralded the knowledge that deaf children could be educated. However the era also saw intense arguments between proponents of manualism (sign language) and oralism (oral language) as strategies for how deaf people should be taught to communicate.³² By the mid-nineteenth-century, as Esmail notes,

²⁹ Esmail, "I Listened with my Eyes", 994.

³⁰ Within critical disability studies deafness is spoken of in two ways. Capital D *Deaf* signifies the socially constructed nature of deafness and the cultural identity of a community united through sign language. Lower-case d *deafness* refers to the physical condition of deafness and is frequently used to identify those who are hearing impaired but identify with the hearing community and choose to use oral language and mechanical devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants to assist hearing.

³¹ In the appendix to her book *Fictions of Afflictions*, Martha Stoddard Holmes lists the Victorian texts that feature deaf characters. These two texts are among the list. Jennifer Esmail later notes in her article "I listened with my eyes" that these two novels are the only Victorian texts that feature a character who uses sign language. Neither Holmes nor Esmail mention Craik's *Michael the Miner*.

³² Mary Wilson Carpenter, *Health, Medicine, and Society in Victorian England* (Santa Barbara, California; Denver, Colorado; Oxford, England: Praeger, 2010), 109; Oliver Sacks, *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 24-25.

changes were already underway which undermined the advances deaf people had made with their education, changes that would ultimately see sign language outlawed.³³ By the turn of the twentieth century all eighty-seven schools for the deaf in Britain were forbidden from using sign language and parents were asked to prevent their children from signing both in and out of school.³⁴

Michael the Miner was therefore written at a time when these debates were gaining momentum and entering the public conversation. In 1834 Harriet Martineau, who from the age of sixteen began to lose her hearing, published her 'Letter to the Deaf' in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* in which she talks of the importance of maintaining social contact with friends and family and of speaking of deafness not 'sentimentally, but ... boldly, cheerfully, and as a matter of fact'.³⁵ Charles Dickens's visit to America in 1842 where he visited Laura Bridgman, the famous deaf-blind woman, was retold in his *American Notes for General Circulation* (1842) where he wrote of how impressed he was with Bridgman, noting how 'beautiful and touching' his meeting with her had been and how much she enjoyed playing and speaking, through her fingers, with her friends and teachers.³⁶ In addition to this, John Kitto (1804-1854), the religious writer and poet who became deaf at the age of twelve as a result of an accident, published his book *The Lost Senses: Deafness and Blindness* in 1845 and, like Dickens, he too reports the story of Laura Bridgman.³⁷ Whether Craik read these texts is unknown; there are no letters or diary entries from this time to suggest that she was familiar with them, however, aspects of the way in which these

³³ Jennifer Esmail, *Reading Victorian Deafness* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio State University, 2013), 3.

³⁴ Carpenter, *Health, Medicine, and Society in Victorian England*, 120.

³⁵ Harriet Martineau, "Letter to the Deaf", *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, April 1834, 174-179 in Harriet Martineau, *Life in a Sick-Room*, ed. Maria Fawley (Ontario and New York: Broadview Press, 2003), 233.

³⁶ Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1868), 17.

³⁷ John Kitto, *The Lost Senses: Deafness and Blindness* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1852)

authors wrote about deafness can be seen reflected in *Michael the Miner*. Regardless, the publication of these texts just prior to *Michael the Miner* demonstrates how deafness, and the education of deaf children, was very much a topic of discussion at this time and was a topic with which Craik was most likely familiar.

Briefly, *Michael the Miner* tells the story of a small family in a mining community in Hungary. The family consists of the father, Deak, who works in the mines, his two sons Michael and George, and his daughter Kaisa, who is deaf and communicates through sign language. As with many nineteenth-century stories the figure of the mother is absent and referred to only when the children are challenged by moral dilemmas, as they ask themselves what would their mother have done or what had she taught them to do in such circumstances. The family live a peaceful life in their small cottage above the township and the mine. Deak and Michael work in the mine, Kaisa attends to the domestic duties of the household, and George, “a pale fragile child” appears, at least initially, to do very little.³⁸ Early in the story a storm destroys the peaceful home of this small family and severely injures Deak’s right arm. By the start of chapter two the family is homeless and destitute. Before long, however, the care and compassion of their neighbours sees the family housed and fed and Michael assuming the role of head of the family, “from a child he seemed to have become a man in the space of forty-eight hours”.³⁹ The story progresses through a series of events which challenge Michael’s moral education and by the end of the story he is rewarded for his honesty and integrity, and able to return the kindness shown to his family at the start of the story by his neighbour. The narrative arc mirrors that of many instructive tales for children from this period whereby

³⁸ Dinah Mulock Craik, *Michael the Miner - A Hungarian Story* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1846): 9.

³⁹ Craik, *Michael the Miner*, 37.

children are tested in some way and rewarded for making wise and sensible choices. However, unlike *Rhoda's Lesson*, where disability is used to reinforce gendered behaviour roles for young women, in *Michael the Miner*, it is used to highlight the universality of care.

The catalyst for action in the story, which shatters the tranquility of domestic life, propels Michael into manhood, and disables Deak, is the storm that destroys the family's home. As the storm waters surge through the house one of the roofing timbers breaks, falling onto Deak and pinning him down, injured. Deak's neighbour Kosluth, a miner himself, helps the children as best he can and gets Deak to safety. Despite having very little themselves, Kosluth's wife takes the children some food and later takes Kaisa into their own hut, to be with her own children, while George sits with Deak and Michael salvages what little he can from the wreckage of their home. When Kosluth returns from work he helps the boys to repair the roof of their hut and between them they find an old stove to help keep them warm, and make a bed for Deak. The Doctor assesses Deak's injuries and informs the family that his arm is broken. Such an injury renders Deak unable to work in the mines, and whilst the arm will mend eventually both Michael and Kosluth know that Deak will probably never be able to return to work. Deak's injury reflects the way in which disability affects us all, as he swiftly moves from able-bodied status to disabled. Moreover, we see how universal the act of caring is and how the roles of carer and cared-for shift during the course of a lifespan. Whilst Michael starts the story being cared for by his father, very soon the roles are reversed and he must take on the role of caring and providing for his family. A similar reversal is seen with Michael's sister Kaisa who, whilst initially being pitied for her deafness and her inability to "join in

the merry laughter of her father and brothers”, ends the story teaching another deaf girl sign language and being engaged as her companion.⁴⁰

It is whilst seeking an audience with the Council of Mines the following day, to request help for the family, that Michael meets Count Radotzky, a Hungarian nobleman, whose daughter is deaf. Unlike Kaisa, however, the Count’s daughter Theresa has never learnt to sign and is therefore unable to communicate. The sadness and anxiety Count Radotzky expresses on account of Theresa’s inability to communicate mirrors that observed by Edward Brewster who, in 1841, wrote that ‘the uninstructed Deaf and Dumb must be causes of unceasing sorrow to their afflicted parents and friends.’⁴¹ For the Count this sadness, in part, derives from his belief that Theresa cannot be educated due to her deafness and that communication with his daughter is therefore impossible. However, when he learns that Kaisa is a happy child, and sees Michael and Kaisa communicating through sign language, he begins to wonder if ‘a child afflicted in the same way might be able to teach her [Theresa] something and make her life less solitary and desolate.’⁴² In both Brewster’s and Craik’s texts we see the language of affliction used to describe deafness. Where they differ, however, is that for Brewster it is the parents and friends of the deaf person who are burdened by the sorrow of the affliction; in fact, Brewster almost appears to be suggesting that the deaf are to blame for causing their friends and family sadness. For Craik, however, there is the hope that, through their shared human experiences and the sympathetic threads that bind the two girls,

⁴⁰ Craik, *Michael the Miner*, 9-10.

⁴¹ Edward Brewster, *An Historical Sketch of the Asylum for Indigent Deaf and Dumb Children, Surrey* (London: Edward Brewster, 1841), iv quoted in Martha Stoddard Holmes, “‘Happy and Yet Pitying Tears’: Deafness and Affective Disjuncture in Dicken’s ‘Doctor Marigold,’” *Victorian Review* 35, no. 2 (2009): 60.

⁴² Craik, *Michael the Miner*, 42.

Kaisa may be able to teach Theresa to communicate, thus alleviating Theresa's sadness, as well as the Count's.

Craik only details three scenes in *Michael the Miner* in which we see Kaisa signing but in each of these Craik can be seen attempting to represent the embodied nature of sign language. When the two girls meet, Craik reflects the complex nature of sign language as it engages not only the physical gesturing of the hands but also the emotive expressions of the face. When Michael explains to Kaisa that the Count is the man who organised financial help so they could rebuild their home and by sending food for the family we see Kaisa respond in sign. Craik describes how Kaisa 'placed her hands before her mouth, then over her heart, then clasped them, looking at the Count with her expressive eyes' (41). As the Count knows no signs Michael must translate for him, although it must be said these signs do appear fairly self-explanatory. However, in requiring Michael to translate for the Count, Craik is effectively showing the importance of sign language as a form of communication which the Count must learn if he is to establish a relationship with his daughter. As the group moves through into the room where Theresa is sitting we again see Kaisa signing and this time it is Theresa who does not understand. Sitting in the centre of the room, Theresa is ignored by her attendants until they see the Count. Despite the wealth of the Count and the opulent surroundings, Theresa is represented as a sad, isolated child. The attendants, laughing and talking amongst themselves, become 'obsequiously attentive to their mistress' (43) when the Count enters the room. However, despite the newfound attentiveness, 'it was evident from the repugnance and fear with which she [Theresa] turned away from them, that they were the tyrants of the unfortunate child' (43). Care and justice clearly do not mesh in this

relationship; there is no trust between Theresa and her attendants, nor is there any joy or laughter, characteristics which, according to Virginia Held, are necessary in quality relationships of care involving children.⁴³

Whilst Craik's representations of sign language may be simplistic they are, nevertheless, effective in communicating the intended meaning and demonstrating non-verbal language. Once Michael has explained to Kaisa, by touching her lips, then ears, then looking towards Theresa, that Theresa is also deaf, Kaisa gently takes Theresa's hand and puts it to her lips indicating that she doesn't speak orally either. At this the joy and laughter necessary for quality care of children enters the room, as Theresa and Kaisa throw their arms around each other and kiss each other. The joyous meeting of these two girls is strikingly similar to the description of Laura Bridgman playing with her friends which John Kitto recalls, and in which he attempts to reduce the differences between deaf and hearing children: 'there are questions and answers, exchanges of joy or sorrow, there are kissings and partings, just as between little children with all their senses.'⁴⁴ Just as Kitto reports how Bridgman was highly affectionate with other deaf and blind children, noting that 'it is to be expected in one to whom the presence of others with whom she can hold some degree of intercourse must be a relief from the awful loneliness of her condition' so too are Kaisa and Theresa affectionate in their new found friendship.⁴⁵ As the two girls sit side-by-side trying to understand each other and express their thoughts through sign, Theresa constantly gives Kaisa affection, toys, and smiles, expressions and actions her father has never seen in his daughter before. When it is

⁴³ Virginia Held, "The Meshing of Care and Justice," *Hypatia* 10, no. 2 (1995): 131, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810284>.

⁴⁴ Kitto, *The Lost Senses*, 213.

⁴⁵ Kitto, *The Lost Senses*, 216.

time for Kaisa to leave, Theresa is so upset that the Count asks that Michael bring her back the next day.

Over time Kaisa spends more and more time with Theresa, teaching her sign language. The care Kaisa shows Theresa during this time not only allows Theresa to become empowered to develop herself but also has a beneficial effect on Kaisa who 'through caring for her friend Theresa' (49) grows and develops her own sense of self-worth and confidence. In return for the care Kaisa has shown Theresa, the Count reciprocates. As he sees his daughter grow in confidence and ability he is now no longer concerned about her ability to learn, and engages teachers, skilled in the education of the deaf, to teach both girls. As such Kaisa, who by now is Theresa's constant companion, learns with Theresa at the castle. However, as with the silencing of Malcolm's voice in *A Noble Life*, Craik struggles to represent Deak's response to having his daughter being essentially adopted by the Count. The Count's paternalism towards Deak and his family is considered all that is needed in exchange for his daughter, as he receives 'with humble gratitude ... all the gifts of Count Radotzky' (49). Whilst the paternalistic attitude represented in the story reflects Victorian attitudes towards charity and middle-class benevolence it also reveals the problematic nature of class inequality in relationships of care, for whether Deak is upset about his daughter living in the castle or not he is in no position to object, given the financial support his family is receiving from the Count. In *A Little Lame Prince and his Travelling Cloak* Craik reconsiders this paternalistic attitude through her engagement with care in the public sphere and the meshing, as Held describes, of care and justice, in her character Prince Dolor.

The People's Idea of a King: *The Little Lame Prince* and a public ethic of care

One of Craik's most enduring and popular texts, *The Little Lame Prince and His Travelling Cloak*, enjoyed popularity well into the twentieth century. Not only was the book re-published throughout the twentieth century, with the latest iteration appearing in 1990, but it was also adapted into a play.⁴⁶ The story takes place in a fantasy world, one that is similar yet at the same time different to that in which the children reading the story would live. Benevolent kings, beautiful queens, malicious uncles, and kindly fairy godmothers feature in the text. Magical cloaks transport the hero across the country, golden spectacles magnify the natural world, and a pair of silver ears allows the prince to hear conversations from afar. The plot itself is a relatively simple and familiar one, a young prince, the rightful heir to the throne, is locked away in a tower whilst his malevolent uncle tells the kingdom he is dead and rules in his place. The twist to this well-worn plot is that the prince is physically disabled.

On the day of his christening the story's protagonist, Prince Dolor, whose name foreshadows the events to come, is dropped by a nurse more interested in her own appearance than the prince's wellbeing and, as a direct consequence of the accident, acquires a permanent physical impairment which limits the use of his legs.⁴⁷ Following a series of events, a plot crisis, and a traditional resolution, the prince reclaims his throne and all live happily ever after. The story can, on the surface, be read as a classic *Bildungsroman*, a novel of education, self-help, and

⁴⁶ In 2000 Jonathon Ward adapted the story into a play which was performed as part of the family series at the Henry Street Settlement/Abrons Arts Center in New York. An attempt was made to contact the centre for further information on this production but it was unsuccessful. Rosemarie Wells's 1990 adaptation published by Dial publishing is problematic from a disability studies perspective as Wells has turned all the characters into animals. This choice effectively dehumanises the disabled character by turning him into a pig. This version is noted in Emiliano C. Ayala, "'Poor Little Things' and 'Brave Little Souls': The Portrayal of Individuals with Disabilities in Children's Literature," *Reading Research and Instruction* 39, no. 1 (1999): 111 and whilst Ayala notes the use of a pig for the main character there is no mention of the fact that Well's version is an adaptation or that the original text features a disabled human being.

⁴⁷ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'dolor' as a rarely used word meaning physical suffering, pain, and sorrow.

overcoming. Yet throughout the story there are also a number of issues relating to care, or a lack of care. The prince's mother dies on the day of his christening, and his father, so absorbed in his own grief, fails to notice his son's physical impairment for two years. When the king subsequently dies the prince becomes a ward of his uncle, the Prince Regent who has promised the king he will, "perform [his] duties as Regent to take all care of his Royal Highness".⁴⁸ However, whilst Craik tells her young reader she has, "nothing to say against uncles in general. They are usually very excellent people", this uncle proves to be an exception and, as Craik describes him, "a cruel uncle" like the one in traditional folk tale *Babes in the Wood* (20). Whereas the uncle's own children are paraded through the kingdom each on their own horse, displaying their able bodies, the Prince is hidden from view within the palace.

The language Craik uses to describe the way people talk about the Prince mirrors that seen in her earlier novel *A Noble Life* (1866). The Prince is described as "a helpless cripple – with only head and trunk, and no legs to speak of," whilst the lords talk of him never being able to "stand to receive his subjects, never walk[ing] in processions [and] who to the last day of his life will have to be carried about like a baby". Concerns about his cognitive abilities are reflected in one of the lords' comments about having heard that, "these sort of children with very large heads, and great broad for-heads and staring eyes, are – well, well, let us hope for the best and be prepared for the worst". This lord cuts himself off before saying more but the description is indicative of the stigmatising and dehumanising language Craik had the lawyer and doctor voice in *A Noble Life*, which similarly revealed a concern about the physically disabled characters cognitive function. Yet, the reader is told, that

⁴⁸ Dinah Mulock Craik, *The Little Lame Prince*, [1875] (Lexington, KY: Bibliobazaar, 2012), 19. All future references to this text will be in the body of the chapter and from this edition.

those people who dared to peer over the wall into the palace garden saw “a pretty little boy, with a bright, intelligent face and large, melancholy eyes – no not exactly melancholy, for they were his mother’s, and she was by no means sad-minded, but thoughtful and dreamy” (20). However, whilst those looking into the palace garden would see the prince playing, he was frequently on his own, with no one to watch over him, and certainly no other children to play with. Not only is the prince an outcast and ‘othered’ because of his physical impairment but he is a constant reminder for the uncle that he is both neglectful and, more importantly a usurper. To eliminate the problem, and in true fairy tale style, the uncle sends the prince away, claiming his health is failing and he needs the fresh air of the mountains. Once Prince Dolor is out of sight the uncle orchestrates a fraudulent report of the Prince’s death, thus enabling a claim to the throne in his own name. In reality however, the uncle usurps the throne and imprisons Prince Dolor in the appropriately named ‘Hopeless Tower’.

The only people, beyond the uncle, who know the truth about Prince Dolor are an old woman, a criminal ‘under sentence of death’ who is released from jail in order to look after the prince and who is ‘allowed to live as long as the child lived – no longer’ (23), and the ‘deaf-mute’ specifically chosen to deliver food and supplies to the tower’s inmates each month as he can ‘neither tell nor repeat anything’ to anyone (23). These three individuals, each of them outcasts from society, are thrown together into a community of ‘otherness’. The man is not only othered by his sensory impairment but also his racial difference, for he is described as being as big and as black as the great horse he rides across the desolate plain towards the tower. The woman, with her ‘sad, fierce look [...] a criminal under sentence of death’ (23) has

her death sentence commuted to life imprisonment in the tower with the young prince. We are not told of her crime but left to imagine the severity of the offense given the sentence she has been dealt. And finally the prince himself, with his 'small, shrivelled legs' (23), cast out of his kingdom because of his physical difference and his uncle's greed. Of these three outcasts, the old woman and the prince form an interdependent community, each depending on the other for their wellbeing and survival. And whilst the relationship is not without its problems being, as it is, grounded in inequality, otherness, and exclusion, it does enable us to examine non-biological relationships of care, for once in the tower the prince is cared for primarily by the old woman who acts as his nurse and teacher. However, as this is also a fairy story, Craik also creates a generous and nurturing fairy godmother who gives the prince a magical cloak which enables him, for a short time, to escape the confines of the tower so as to see the outside world. From this brief appraisal of the plot we can see that since Prince Dolor's birth three nurses have a profound impact on his life – the nurse who accidentally drops the infant, causing his disability, the nurse who cares for him in the tower, and the fairy godmother who shows him life beyond the tower. It is to these three caring figures that my analysis will now turn.

Each of the nurses engaged in the prince's care is female, thus reinforcing the social construction of care as a role performed by women. However, in addition to this gendered aspect class also plays an important role. Of the three nurses there is the 'young lady' nurse who drops the prince at his christening and causes the injury that results in his disability, the 'faithful country nurse' who remembers these events and is subsequently punished for reporting the accident by being dismissed and exiled from the kingdom, and the released convict who accompanies the prince

to live in Hopeless Tower. Of these three women only the young lady nurse, who is a cousin of the uncle, and therefore of a higher social class, is not penalised for perceived or actual transgressions. The class differences between these women and the treatment of the two lower class women reflects the low status of care in a society which frequently results in the exploitation of domestic care workers.⁴⁹ In the case of this text, one care worker is punished for reporting the accident whilst another, a convicted criminal, is conditionally released from jail in order to look after the Prince. Conditions are placed on the context within which she must work, her life depends on the Prince staying alive and under no circumstances is she to tell the prince who he really is. Not only does this context impact on how the care is experienced by the Prince – he notes for example on one occasion how he wants for very little except love – but it also influences the emotional responses of the nurse to the Prince. Whilst there is nothing in the narrative to suggest that the Prince is ill-treated by the nurse – in fact she takes on the duty of teaching him to read and write even though she has not been ordered to do so – the fact that towards the end of the story the reader learns that she has ‘ceased to hate him, and in a sort of way, almost loved him’ (53) suggests that these feelings were not always present.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, in relation to the silencing of Malcolm’s voice, the relationship here between Prince Dolor and his nurse similarly exposes one of the contentious issues in relation to feminist discussions surrounding care, namely the autonomy of carers and the freedom, or lack thereof, with which they enter into a relationship of care. Much of the focus on care and caring

⁴⁹ Kathleen Lynch and Maureen Lyons, “Love Labouring: Nurturing Rationalities and Relational Identities,” in *Affective Equality: Love, Care and Injustice*, ed. Kathleen Lynch, John Baker, and Maureen Lyons (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2009), 56.

relationships, especially from the perspective of the disability movement, focuses on people with a disability and how they achieve independence and autonomy in their daily lives.⁵⁰ These are important discussions to have in order to ensure that disabled people are in control of their care and are not viewed as a 'burden' on others. However, in focusing the attention on the autonomy of the disabled person it is important that the autonomy of the carer is not ignored. As Sheila Mullett points out, care cannot be freely given if one is economically, socially, or psychologically forced into the caring relationship.⁵¹ In Craik's representation of the conditions placed on the nurse's employment, she depicts a problematic the relationship that oppresses as much as, if not more than, her previous imprisonment.

After about thirteen years together in the tower, the old nurse and the prince develop an affection for each other – although it is not the loving relationship that exists between the prince and his fairy godmother. The nurse no longer hates the prince, and the prince develops a sense of pity and compassion for the old woman, who can never leave the tower. This mutual respect leads the old woman to tell the prince who he really is, despite the fact that she has been strictly forbidden to do so. In informing the prince of his actual identity the nurse not only recognises the prince's basic human need to understand his own personal history and identity but assumes the responsibility for responding to this need by sharing what she knows. In doing so she fulfils one of the requirements of care that Tronto views as essential: identifying a need and reaching out to another to take action to address the need.

⁵⁰ Watson et al., "(Inter)Dependence, Needs and Care: The Potential for Disability and Feminist Theorists to Develop an Emancipatory Model," 335.

⁵¹ Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 4th Edition (Philadelphia, PA: Westview Press, 2014), 171.

In contrast, whilst the nurse attends primarily to the prince's physical needs: food, basic education, and hygiene, the fairy godmother attends to his emotional growth and development. The psychologist Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, whilst not, as Paul Jacobs notes, without certain inherent problems for people with disabilities, such as the lack of services to provide fundamental basic care, does provide a useful tool through which we can see the different outcomes achieved by the care provided by the nurse and the godmother.⁵² By using the five categories Maslow describes as being necessary for growth and development in humans — physiological needs, security, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation⁵³ — we can see that whilst the nurse provides for the prince's basic physiological needs the fairy godmother provides the care necessary to support his self-actualisation, as she gives him the love he felt was lacking and helps build his sense of esteem, and emotional development. One of the pivotal incidents in which the godmother helps Prince Dolor on his journey towards self-actualisation is when she tells him about his physical difference and does so, the reader is told, out of love. Whilst out on his magical cloak one day the prince observes a young boy playing in the field with his dog. As he watches the boy run across the common, leap over the hedges and ditches, and tumble down the fields, he becomes aware of the physical difference between the able body of the boy and his own 'feeble, useless legs' (49). In a moment of self-pity the prince begins to wonder why he was born, since he will not grow up like other boys. Rather than attempting to console the young prince by denying his difference the godmother affirms that he will never be able to walk or run like other

⁵² Paul Gordon Jacobs, "Potential Maximization Toward a Micro-Sociological Approach in Disability Studies," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2002): 59–73, accessed July 23, 2015, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/336/420>.

⁵³ A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943): 370–96, doi:10.1037/h0054346, 394-395.

boys, but she goes on to tell him that whilst his 'life will be different from most people's lives; ... it may be a very happy life' (32). This positive affirmation of difference, which I argue is the deeper message within the story to which Craik refers in the epigraph for this chapter, is repeated later in the text when the prince, looking at a bunch of leaves, notes the infinite variety which exists in life and contemplates how 'the plan of the world is infinite similarity and yet infinite variety' (46).

Having explained to the prince the extent of his physical difference the godmother provides him with a magical travelling cloak, which functions as a mobility aid and enables him to go out into the public sphere. The golden spectacles and silver ears which the godmother gives the prince similarly function as prosthetic devices to aid his sight and hearing. Kylee-Anne Hingston, who analysed the story using narrative and prosthesis theory to interpret Craik's understanding of corporeal difference suggests that the narrative arc of the story is one of bodily normalisation, as the prince uses the various prostheses given to him by his godmother as tools for his psychological and moral development.⁵⁴ However, Jane Stemp suggests that Craik's extensive use of prosthetic devices, unusual even in children's literature today, is suggestive of Craik's understanding of the fullness of life that can still be achieved when one has a disability.⁵⁵ Given that her husband had a prosthetic leg and her godson, the poet Philip Marston, was blind, I would suggest that Craik's personal experience of the extent to which physical and sensory impairments could affect an individual's life and how prosthetic aids can, to some

⁵⁴ Kylee-Anne Hingston, "Prostheses And Narrative Perspective In Dinah Mulock Craik's *The Little Lame Prince*," *Women's Writing* 20, no. 3 (2013): 370-86.

⁵⁵ Stemp, "Devices and Desires: Science Fiction, Fantasy and Disability in Literature for Young People."

extent, ameliorate this affect may be seen to shape the narrative. The care the godmother gives the prince therefore assists him to achieve independence and freedom by providing various aids which will enable his enjoyment of life. That the prince is not magically cured of his physical impairment and goes on to live a full and productive life well into adulthood also challenges the 'school of pain' narrative of disability Craik employed in *Rhoda's Lesson*.

Yet despite all this the prince still does know who he was, a question which has played on his mind more and more as the years go by. As he grows up his upper body, 'as if in compensation for his useless lower limbs' (52-53) grows strong and he develops a handsome, 'more manly' face (53). He knows he is a prince, because his nurse refers to him as such, but beyond this he knows nothing until one day he takes it upon himself to ask his nurse, 'shall I ever be king?' (53). Sworn to never 'say a word' to Prince Dolor the old nurse decides she will not be breaking her oath if she picks up a pencil and writes – 'You are a king' (54) and so she does, followed by the entire story of his parents, his uncle, and how he was sent to the tower to die. After she has finished writing the prince's story she turns to him and says, that she too is destined to die in the tower 'unless, indeed, you could get out into the world, and fight for your rights like a man' (54). The nurse's call to action encourages the prince to take the leap into manhood. The following morning, fuelled with the knowledge that he is a king, the prince becomes determined to get to work and asks his magical cloak to take him to see what he needs to see. The cloak shows him the inequalities that exist in his kingdom, and at this stage the story takes a political turn as scenes of small, dirty children picking pockets to survive, little children playing in the gutters all day, people living in squalor and poverty whilst others live behind the walls of

grand houses are depicted. In a direct address to her reader Craik describes the scenes that unfold before the prince in such a way that she could be describing revolutionary France:

When you children are grown men and women – or before – you will hear and read in books about what are called revolutions – earnestly I trust that neither I nor you may ever see one. But they happen, and may happen again, in other countries beside Nomansland, when wicked kings have helped to make their people wicked too, or out of unrighteous nations have sprung rulers equally bad; or, without either of these causes, when a restless country has fancied any change better than no change at all. [...] the horrible evil that went on this night under Prince Dolor’s very eyes – soldiers shooting down people by hundreds in the streets, scaffolds erected, and heads dropping off – houses burned, and women and children murdered – this is more than I can understand. (61)

In one outing Prince Dolor has learned about the inequalities within his kingdom, seen his people rioting, and witnessed military attempts to quell the revolution, all of which results in him asking his godmother the thought-provoking question, ‘can’t the world be made a little more level?’ (57). This questioning, when considered in light of Tronto and Fisher’s definition of care, can be seen not only as a figurative challenging of social inequality but also as a more literal questioning of the physical inaccessibility of a world which does not accommodate bodies that function like the prince’s. ‘Why can’t the world be more level?’ has a very literal meaning for anyone who uses a wheelchair for mobility, or who has been required to push a wheelchair up a steep hill or ramp. Having witnessed the inequality of his people and the brutal regime under which they live he declares that he would like to try to do something to achieve equality among his people, the very people he should ‘care for’ (66).

The overwhelming cacophony of sights and sounds, that assail the prince’s senses on this outing, causes him to retreat to the safety of the tower, only on this occasion, he returns to find his nurse has gone. For five days the prince must care for

himself, learning to dress himself, to sweep the hearth, and prepare a fire. During this time the prince goes from being dependent on his nurse to learning to care for himself. On the sixth day Prince Dolor begins to think that all is lost. He is near the end of his provisions and it is impossible for him to leave the tower as the deaf man who brings the provisions takes the ladder with him. Whilst initially he had been angry with the nurse for abandoning him, he is now reconciled to the fact that he will die, alone, in the tower. However, the nurse has not abandoned the prince. Rather, upon hearing that the King is dead, she determines to set the rightful heir upon the throne and so goes back to Nomansland, with the deaf man. All throughout the journey back to Nomansland she spreads the word that Prince Dolor had been banished, but still lived. Everywhere she went people remembered the prince but 'nobody remembered his lameness – or, if they did, they passed it over as a matter of no consequence' (67). On the sixth day, having spread the news of prince Dolor around the kingdom, and spoken to the royal court, the nurse returns to the tower with a select group of lords, gentlemen, and soldiers to declare Prince Dolor, King of Nomansland. There is something biblical in Craik's reference to 'on the sixth day' for not only was this the day on which, according to Genesis 1:26, God created man, but this is also the day that Prince Dolor becomes 'a man' as he leaves the confines of the tower and becomes king.

At this point in the narrative, care moves from the private sphere of the tower to the public sphere, not simply because the prince physically leaves the tower, but rather as a result of the nurturing capital the prince has acquired from both his nurse and godmother. As King, the prince demonstrates an important outcome of receiving care, which is the capacity to nurture and care for others,

described by Lynch and Walsh as 'Nurturing Capital', whereby the care invested in the king when he was a child results in an increased capacity to care for others.⁵⁶ Wordsworth's phrase, 'the child is father to the man', a phrase Craik uses later in her 1886 novel, *King Arthur: Not a Love Story*, and her 1870 essay 'In her Teens', reflects the way in which the adult life of the prince is shaped by his childhood experiences.⁵⁷ Rather than performing a version of hyper-masculinity by perpetuating the violence of the rioters or the militaristic control of his uncle's soldiers, he fosters peace through an ethic of care which sees him demonstrate compassion. Using Ruddick's four ideals that govern nonviolent peacemaking – renunciation, whereby one renounces violent strategies and weapons; resistance, in which non-violent peace keepers resist the violence of others be it in their policies or their exploitation of others; reconciliation where forgiveness is responsibly given; and peacekeeping, the ultimate goal, in which a community seeks peaceful living – we can see that the Prince seeks to instil an ethic of care in his style of governance.⁵⁸

One of the first actions the new King makes is to pardon his convict nurse and outlaw the death penalty, 'all capital criminals were to be sent to perpetual imprisonment in Hopeless Tower, and the plain around it, where they could do no harm to anybody, and might in time do a little good, as the woman [his nurse] had done' (73). This act of renunciation see the King reject violent means of governing his people namely, in this example, the death penalty. Later, in a move which surprises his people, he recalls his uncle's family who had fled in terror following the revolution, and restored to them their wealth and titles. Furthermore, he finds the

⁵⁶ Lynch and Lyons, "Love Labouring: Nurturing Rationalities and Relational Identities," 50.

⁵⁷ William Wordsworth, 'My heart leaps up', *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2012), 335.

⁵⁸ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, 161.

country nurse who years ago had been exiled for revealing the cause of his impairment. In doing so, he effectively demonstrates the skills of a non-violent peacekeeper, granting forgiveness where it is warranted and rebuilding relationships that had been destroyed by the violent policies of his uncle. Over the years King Dolor's rule is peaceful and happy. In transferring care from the private to the public sphere, it is possible to see in this children's story Craik foreshadowing the contemporary discussion surrounding social care as she challenges the dichotomy that exists between what Ruddick terms as 'private care and public defence'.⁵⁹

With this strategy in mind, it is worth noting that *The Little Lame Prince and his Travelling Cloak* was not the first time Craik had explored the idea of the peaceful, non-militaristic ruler, having approached the subject in her 1870 poem 'The Noble Coward'.⁶⁰ Published in the religious periodical *Good Words*, the poem takes the form of a speech delivered by a king to his people, and is ostensibly about a man and his relationship with God. However, throughout the poem Craik reinforces the idea that leaders are responsible for fostering peace among their people, as opposed to leading them into war. The poem opens with the prologue 'If I were a ruler, I would never make war', and throughout the poem Craik contrasts imagery of war and battle with imagery of peace and sheathed swords. Such motifs confirm her anticipation of modern-day feminist ethics of care, which have been extended by scholars such as Ruddick, Tronto, and Noddings to include a consideration of peace keeping. As Noddings notes, in a way which is anticipated by Craik in both 'The Noble Coward' and *The Little Lame Prince*, 'our best hope [as care ethicists] is to

⁵⁹ Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, 244.

⁶⁰ Dinah Mulock Craik, "The Noble Coward," *Good Words*, November 1870, 799.

work toward the elimination of the factors that encourage war ... to maintain caring relations, and to work hard to restore them when conditions threaten to destroy or undermine them.'⁶¹ In *The Little Lame Prince* the new King works hard, through renouncing violence, reconciling his family with the people of his kingdom, and resisting the hyper-masculine strategies his uncle to rule his kingdom, to achieve a community in which peace is sought and maintained and caring ethics rule.

Throughout Craik's work, as I have noted in previous chapters, the representation of the disabled male character is such that scholars have tended to feminise the character by linking him to the frustrated desires of Victorian women.⁶² However, when we read this figure in conjunction with Craik's other work, especially her non-fiction writing, the invalid male takes on a more nuanced appearance, one which raises questions about gender, identity, and care in society. For example, as Claudia Nelson notes, Craik's representation of Prince Dolor "unites the feminine and the masculine" in one character thereby combining what could be considered the best qualities of both genders.⁶³ Furthermore, reading *The Little Lame Prince* in conjunction with Craik's collection of essays *A Woman's Thoughts on Women* results in Lily Philipose identifying Craik's perception of feminine qualities as vital to support progress in the public sphere. When Philipose states that 'sentimentalists', such as Craik "believed that the qualities women embodied – sensitivity, compassion, and empathy – belonged in the heart of the public sphere" and that these qualities provided "a model of ideal social behaviour that [...] could

⁶¹ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 109.

⁶² See Elaine Showalter, "Dinah Mulock Craik and the Tactics of Sentiment: A Case Study in Victorian Female Authorship," *Feminist Studies* 2. 2 (1975): 8; Sally Mitchell, "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s," *Victorian Studies* 21, no. 1 (1977), 38.

⁶³ Claudia Nelson, *Boys will be Girls: The Feminine Ethic and British Children's Fiction, 1857-1917* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 159.

save Victorian England from the endless cycle of urban decay and moral degeneration”⁶⁴ she echoes, whilst not specifically mentioning, the arguments of Sara Ruddick, who seeks to transpose a feminist ethic of care onto society and policy making for the benefit of all society.

In these children’s stories Craik engages not only with the disabled body and society’s relationship with it, but also the fundamental topic of care. By reading these texts through the lens of care ethics, Craik’s engagement with care and disability can be seen to foreshadow the work of modern-day ethicists such as Virginia Held, Sara Ruddick, and Nel Noddings by discussing the way in which care can transcend the domestic boundaries so as to be employed within the public sphere.

⁶⁴ Lily Philipose, “The Politics of the Hearth in Victorian Children’s Fantasy: Dinah Mulock Craik’s *The Little Lame Prince*,” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1996): 136.

Conclusion

The masculine mind is characterised by the predominance of the intellect and the feminine by the predominance of emotions.

George Henry Lewes¹

As I have argued in this thesis, the way in which Craik represented care not only reflected the social and cultural context within which she lived but also anticipated contemporary theorisations of care. Craik's discussion, for example, of the potential problems that can occur with charitable giving in her essay 'Benevolence – or Beneficence', — the lack of consideration of the other's needs, the inadequate skills in providing appropriate care, or the inadvertent consequence of charity that keeps people dependent on the philanthropy of others —mirrors the concerns expressed by contemporary care theorists such as Nel Noddings and Joan Tronto.² Indeed, in the preface to the 2013 edition of *Caring* Noddings reprises Craik's concerns by pointing to Dickens' nineteenth-century character, Mrs Jellyby, who she considers to represent 'pathologies of care', as she is so engrossed in caring for others that she neglects her own children.³ Likewise, Craik's representation of care as a strategy through which rulers can govern their people demonstrated her appreciation of care as a model of relational understanding that can be extended beyond the home, and is seen today in the work of Noddings and Sara Ruddick as they argue for an ethic of care to be applied to peace education.⁴

¹ George Henry Lewes, "The Lady Novelists" *Westminster Review* 58 (1852): 131-132.

² Nel Noddings, *Caring. A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2013), xv; Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 108-110.

³ Nel Noddings, *Caring*, xv.

⁴ Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (London: The Women's Press, 1990), 161; Noddings, *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*.

The consideration Craik showed to others in both her fiction and non-fictional work, as well as through her letters and diaries, highlights the extent to which the eighteenth-century philosophy of moral sentiment continued to be of importance in the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century, novels that engaged with the emotions and prioritised feelings had developed as a popular form of literature. These 'sentimental' novels reflected the emphasis on compassion and feeling as desirable traits that arose in the works of philosophers such as Adam Smith. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) Smith speaks freely of the emotions and of man's ability to feel sympathy with his fellow man.⁵ To be able to imagine what it must be like in another's situation and, as a consequence, 'become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations',⁶ was an important (if masculinist) aspect of moral thinking and by the 1760s there existed, in Britain, a robust school of thought that founded moral theory 'squarely on the basis of sentiment'.⁷ As Mary Lenard notes, the cultural emphasis at this time was on feeling, expressing the view that action should be influenced by the heart not the head.⁸ As such the principles and practices of benevolence, care, and compassion for others were seen as fundamental in creating a morally responsible society.

However, whilst the sentimental novel of the eighteenth century relied upon the emotional responses of both characters and readers for its effect, with the ability

⁵ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=112409&site=ehost-live>.

⁶ Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 12.

⁷ James Chandler, *An Archaeology of Sympathy: The Sentimental Mode in Literature and Cinema* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013), 4.

⁸ Mary Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 13.

to display one's feelings considered to be a positive character trait, by the end of the century the popular understanding of the term 'sentimental' had turned from one of praise to one of condemnation,⁹ and the sentimental novel began to face criticism for its 'cheap' sentiment.¹⁰ Furthermore, during the course of the nineteenth century the emotional and relational aspects of sentimentality, which had in the eighteenth century been seen as positive attributes in men, came to be associated more with women, and were consequently devalued. Thus, as the nineteenth century progressed, the term 'sentimental' was increasingly used to criticise writers and denigrate their work, especially if they were women. Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century numerous debates were taking place about women's writing. The subjects women wrote about, the value of their work, and the specific qualities women brought to their writing, were all topics for discussion. One of the issues frequently engaged with centred on the emotionality of women and the influence of their emotions on their work. Comments such as that by George Henry Lewes in the epigraph were typical in the suggestion that the female mind was overly influenced by their emotions. In Lewes' essay this 'predominance of the emotions' was argued to produce 'sentiment without observation [leading] to rhetoric and long-drawn lachrymosity',¹¹ a view that was echoed by W.R. Greg in his essay 'The False Morality of Lady Novelists', where he condemns the 'fantastic and flatulent morality' of 'sentimental' women writers.¹²

⁹ John Mullan, "Sentimental Novels" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 236.

¹⁰ Ann Wierda Rowland, "Sentimental Fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, eds. Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 194.

¹¹ Lewes, "The Lady Novelists," 137.

¹² W.R. Greg, "The False Morality of Lady Novelists" *The National Review* 8 (1859): 158.

Problematically, for women writers, whilst the association of women with the sentimental values of sympathy and compassionate feelings were condoned, literary culture had become largely suspicious of these feminised qualities.¹³ Richard Holt Hutton, for instance, considered women incapable of writing what he identified as good poetry, noting that ‘though they have finer spiritual sympathies than men, they have not the same power of concentrating their minds ... and hence, such poetry as they do usually write, is apt to be mere personal sentiment.’¹⁴ Deploying a similar logic, Jane Carlyle praised George Eliot’s first novel *Scenes from Clerical Life* (1858) because of its ‘pathos without sentimentality.’¹⁵ It should also be noted that male writers were not exempt from this logic, with Charles Dickens in particular being subjected to frequent criticism about the sentimental nature of his stories; not only did the literary critic James Fitzjames Stephen refer to his novels as ‘melodramatic and sentimental stock in trade,’¹⁶ but George Eliot similarly accused him of being unrealistic and sentimental in his depiction of daily life.¹⁷ However, whilst Dickens has largely been rescued from the negative association of sentimentalism and is now celebrated as a sentimental writer, many of his female colleagues remain consigned to obscurity.¹⁸ The association of women with emotionality and moral sentimentalism, and the valorisation of women writers who chose to avoid such an association, has, as Lenard argues, contributed to the lukewarm assessment of

¹³ Lenard, *Preaching Pity*, 23.

¹⁴ Richard Holt Hutton, “Novels by the Authoress of ‘John Halifax’” *North British Review* 29 (1858): 467.

¹⁵ Rosemarie Ashton, *George Eliot: A Life* (London: Penguin Press, 1996), 189.

¹⁶ James Fitzjames Stephen, “Mr. Dickens as a Politician” *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* 3 (1857): 8-9.

¹⁷ George Eliot, “The Natural History of German Life”, *Westminster Review*, 66 (July 1856), 30-31.

¹⁸ The labelling of Dickens as sentimental, and his subsequent rescuing from the negative associations of sentimentalism, has been the topic of a number of recent studies. For contemporary scholarship on Dickens as a sentimental author please see, Fred Kaplan, *Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); Mary Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); Valerie Purton, *Dickens and the Sentimental Tradition: Fielding, Richardson, Sterne, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Lamb* (London: Anthem Press, 2012); James Chandler, *An Archaeology of Sympathy: The Sentimental Mode in Literature and Cinema* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013).

nineteenth-century women writers such as Craik and their near exile from the literary canon.¹⁹

Yet as Jane Tompkins argues, sentimental texts by women writers reached an exceedingly large audience in their time, not because they departed from the ordinary and conventional but because of their 'embrace of what is most widely shared'.²⁰ In her text, *Sensational Designs* (1985), Tompkins therefore encourages literary scholars to read texts, particularly those considered domestic or sentimental,

not because they managed to escape the limitations of their particular time and place, but because they offer powerful examples of the way a culture thinks about itself, articulating and proposing solutions for the problems that shape a particular historical moment.²¹

As such, and as I noted in the introduction, Tompkins work encourages scholars to consider the historical context within which a text was written, and to reflect upon the religious, social, economic, and political circumstances that influenced or inspired a writer. Furthermore, as Schaffer argues, the nineteenth-century novel is 'the medium par excellence for an exposition of a sympathetic politics of care'.²² Interpersonal relationships and small communities of care, be they familial or neighbourly, appear throughout the century from Austen to Elliot, and reveal both 'loving helpfulness on the carer's part and grateful affection on the cared-for's part.'²³ And whilst many novels portray an idealised community in which close-knit bonds supported and nurtured group members the Victorian novel also reflected

¹⁹ Lenard, *Preaching Pity*, 10.

²⁰ Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs. The Cultural Work of American Fiction 1790-1860* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), xvi.

²¹ Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, xi.

²² Schaffer, *Romance's Rivals*, 169.

²³ Schaffer, *Romance's Rivals*, 169.

what could happen when the caring relationship went wrong. Abusive carers, neglectful parents, and cruel husbands featured just as frequently as positive relationships of care. Approaching the Victorian novel through an ethic of care, as I have demonstrated in my analysis of Craik, enables us to be alert to the cultural continuities between the past and the present; in the case of Craik, continuities of moral reasoning focused on care.²⁴ As Martha Nussbaum argues, the Victorian novel is an important tool on the grounds that such texts can train us to “identify sympathetically with individual members of marginalised or oppressed groups within our own society” and thereby encourage us to act for their benefit.²⁵

Whilst I am in no way suggesting that contemporary care ethicists have been directly influenced by Craik, the major themes of Craik’s work are nevertheless closely reflected, one hundred years later, in Carol Gilligan’s analysis and critique of Lawrence Kohlberg’s work. Gilligan’s book, *In A Different Voice* (1982), a foundational text in the development of feminist care theory, documents her quest to expand upon the work of her colleague, the psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg.²⁶ Kohlberg argued that moral reasoning, the basis of ethical behaviour, develops throughout childhood as the child progresses through six different developmental stages, and then continues during the course of an individual’s life.²⁷ His research designed to demonstrate this, was carried out solely with boys, and Gilligan is

²⁴ For further information on how the Victorian novel has been read as a tool for sympathetic education, see also Audrey Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000); Rachel Ablow, *The Marriage of Minds: Reading Sympathy in the Victorian Marriage Plot*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007); Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Rae Greiner, *Sympathetic Realism in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012); and *Rethinking Empathy through Literature*, eds. Meghan Marie Hammond and Sue J. Kim (New York, Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

²⁵ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 90.

²⁶ Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1982).

²⁷ Lawrence Kohlberg, “The Development of Children’s Orientations Toward a Moral Order: I. Sequence in the Development of Moral Thought”, *Human Development*, 51.1 (Feb 2008): 8.

particularly critical of this as she considers Kohlberg to have generalised the male experience to all persons, thereby silencing what she see as women's alternative conceptions of morality.²⁸ In her criticism of Kohlberg's research, Gilligan argues that the socialisation of women causes their morality to develop along different pathways to those of men, and this is not reflected in studies which focus solely on the male experience. For Gilligan women develop a morality of care whilst men develop a morality of justice; women see relationships as central to their moral reasoning whilst men strive to achieve autonomy and independence in their moral judgement.²⁹ *In A Different Voice* therefore begins with Gilligan expressing her concern that the 'different voice' women typically use to solve moral problems is not being heard.

Furthermore Gilligan explores how the relational voice of women has been silenced by pointing to the way in which concepts of maturity have been primarily derived from the study of men's lives and as such reflect the 'importance of individuation in their development'.³⁰ In his interviews with young men, in which he asked them what morality meant to them, Kohlberg found, for example, that his participants tended to link morality to justice, fairness, and an individual's rights.³¹ Conversely, when Gilligan asked young women the same question the responses she elicited had less to do with the universality of individual rights and more to do with relationality and the emotional attachments and responsibilities women had with others.³² This focus on relationality has been crucial to the development of feminist

²⁸ Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, 6.

²⁹ Harvey Siegal, "On Using Psychology to Justify Moral Adequacy" in *Lawrence Kohlberg: Consensus and Controversy*, eds. Sohan Modgil and Celia Modgil (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 73.

³⁰ Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, 18.

³¹ Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, 20.

³² Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, 21.

care theory with scholars such as Nel Noddings, Sara Ruddick, and Eva Feder Kittay all building their work around the fundamental principle that '[p]eople live in connection with one another.'³³ As such, the use of care theory, as a framework through which we might approach writers such as Craik, provides us with the opportunity to 'rescue' women writers from a continued negative association with sentiment and sentimentality. For when we interpret nineteenth-century sentimental novels — especially those by women writers — through a framework of care we begin to hear the emotional and relational voice with which they spoke and value it for what it is; not a voice which is lesser than, or subservient to, more celebrated male voices, but instead a different voice, which draws attention to themes of relationality and care rather than autonomy and independence. The sentimentality with which nineteenth-century women writers spoke was neither 'flatulent morality'³⁴ nor 'sentiment without observation'³⁵ but rather reflected a different approach to problem solving and thinking grounded in the specificity of women's experience. Gilligan's discussion thus not only functions to critique the work of Kohlberg but also implicitly challenges the approach of generations of literary critics who have dismissed and feminised sentimentality. If we continue to read texts in ways that privilege ideologies of independence and autonomy, following Kohlberg's priorities, we risk failing to recognise and value the relational and interdependent aspects of being and knowing.

The emotional quality of women's writing in the mid-nineteenth century is often seen in literary accounts of women caring for others – either friends and

³³ Gilligan, "Hearing the Difference: Theorizing Connection," *Hypatia*, 10, no. 2 (1995), 122.

³⁴W.R. Greg, "The False Morality of Lady Novelists" *The National Review* 8 (1859): 158.

³⁵ Lewes, "The Lady Novelists," 137.

family members or groups within the wider community. Lenard's assertion that eighteenth-century moral philosophy resulted in interventions arising from the heart rather than the head, by which we might read emotions rather than reason, is reflected in much of the women's writing from this period. Craik's representation of the disabled body and the way in which these characters are supported through networks of care can thus be seen to uphold the moral philosophy of Adam Smith, while also anticipating Gilligan's understanding of moral reasoning in women, focusing our attention on themes of relationality, interdependence, and vulnerability. While Craik's work may have been deemed sentimental by some critics, when we read with a focus on care we can see how it explores and celebrates the relational aspects of life, thus speaking to its readers 'in a different voice'.

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