Novel Intersections:

The Representation of Factory Children

in Early Victorian Industrial Fiction

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Pei-Hsuan Lo, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Date: 28 Jan. 2014

Abstract

This thesis examines the representation of factory children in early Victorian industrial fiction of the 1830s and 40s. It investigates the multiple ways the factory child is represented and manipulated. Focussing on the hybrid novelistic representations of factory children, the thesis through its examinations aims at an intertextual and intermedial understanding of the mixed mode of the early Victorian industrial novel, in which a variety of ideologies, discourses, formal properties, cultural inheritances, and visual representations intersect. Positioning the fictional factory children within the relationships of the working and middle classes as represented in these novels, this thesis investigates the interrelationships of age, class, and gender, as envisioned in early industrial fiction. The representation of factory children becomes a coordinating point that connects and mediates contradictory social (class, gender, and adult–child) relationships as well as intertextual and intermedial relationships. The factory child figure, then, is not always a 'child' in the strict sense, but may have attained puberty with its transgressive potential; or may serve to embody the infantilization of the working class by the middle class. As this thesis demonstrates, writing about factory children and the transition to writing about working-class women become tactics used by middle-class male and female writers to express their social concern for lower-class people and to negotiate their own rights. Eventually, as Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41) and *The Wrongs of Woman* (1843-44) portray problematic working-class heroines, following them from childhood into womanhood, and empower women across classes with their moral influence, the early Victorian industrial novels with factory children protagonists lead the way to later social novels by women writers with subversive heroines, such as Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853).

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Introduction

The Industrial Revolution and its aftermath in the nineteenth century not only caused great social change in England, but brought about significant literary innovations.[1] The industrial novel, as it was later designated by modern critics, emerged as a distinct subgenre around 1840.[2] This thesis focuses on the earliest group of Victorian industrial novels, published between 1839 and 1844, and examines the multiple representations of factory children which these novels centre upon.

The core texts to be examined by this thesis include Frederic Montagu's *Mary Ashley, The Factory Girl, or Facts Upon the Factory* (1839), Frances Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy* (1839-40), and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41). What fuelled the creation of the early industrial narratives was a campaign for textile factory reform: the 'Ten Hours Movement'. The Ten Hours Movement was a wave of political activism, lasting throughout the 1830s and into the 1840s, which called for legislation to limit the number of daily working hours in mills.[3] As the demand of this popular short-time movement was initially made on behalf of young workers and then females, abuse of

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[1] For studies in social, economic, or labour history of the Industrial Revolution, see, for example, E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970); Kydd, Samuel H. G., ('Alfred'), *The History of the Factory Movement: From the Year 1802, to the Enactment of the Ten Hours' Bill in 1847,* in Two Volumes (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1857); Patrick Karl O'Brien and Roland E. Quinault, *The Industrial Revolution and British Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); John E. Archer, *Social Unrest and Popular Protest in England, 1780-1840* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Jutta Schwarzkopf, 'The Social Condition of the Working Class', in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe, 1789-1914,* ed. by Stefan Berger (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), pp. 109-122; Andrew August, *The British Working Class 1840-1940* (Harlow: Longman, 2007).

[2] The industrial novel is alternatively known as the Condition-of-England, social-problem, or social-reform novel, roman à thèse, or novel of purpose. These different names, with some revisions of the scope of this subgenre, reflect the different considerations of literary critics as to its characteristics. Yet these designations generally indicate the broad public or social concerns of this group of novels, suggesting that they do not constitute a unified genre. The industrial novel is also (partially) included in categories such as social, political, benevolent, humanitarian, sentimental, realist, factory, or labour novel (fiction, or narrative), with varied critical emphases. See note 7 for further reference to literary criticism of industrial fiction, and the following paragraphs for further discussion.

[3] *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature Vol. 1, Abbey Theatre – Caryl Churchill* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 101.

factory children was first targeted and propagandized by activists. [4] Different information, opinions, judgements or arguments appeared in various forms from varied perspectives – religious, medical, journalistic, parliamentary, visual and, of course, literary. I choose these less familiar works of fiction because they are not only industrial novels featuring eponymous factory children but are also the pioneering works which initiated this subgenre in the early Victorian period. Therefore, they make good examples on the basis of which to explore the representation of factory children and the evolution of the subgenre at its early stage.

This thesis argues that the factory child is diversely represented and manipulated in the early industrial fiction to respond to varied issues related to the Ten Hours Movement, and illustrates the discursive contradictions present in the formation of the new subgenre. While the early industrial fiction is an unstable genre in terms of its formal properties and fusion of fictional and non-fictional elements, the factory child is similarly represented in various ways, with a focus on different aspects – physicality, mentality, morality, and spirituality. Not only does the factory child become an icon of the factory movement, but the symbolic image of the 'infant' and the associated infantilization of the working class also bring women and working-class men within the metonymic representation of the factory child. Thus, analysis of the representation of factory children not only deals with the issue of child labour but further investigates the confrontation between different classes and genders during the debates of the 1830s and 40s about the factory system. Moreover, the interdisciplinary study of the early industrial fiction and related literary or non-literary texts will reveal the interaction between the newly-arising subgenre and the social context, which will help to provide a deeper insight into the genre formation.

To take a closer look at the genre of early industrial fiction, this thesis pinpoints the

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[4] Robert Q. Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 5.

characteristic mixed mode of these narratives as evidence of new cultural practices.[5] As the thesis will explicate, in the experimental realm of these fictional works, varied literary and non-literary discourses intersect with pictorial illustrations. This new form of literary expression thus integrates different textual properties and content and constructs new textual relationships. Then, are these industrial narratives really novels? As I shall demonstrate in Chapter Two, early industrial fiction such as *Michael Armstrong* resembles a combination of different genres – melodrama, documentary records, journalistic reports, and even sensational illustrations. The other fictional works under examination demonstrate similar features of the mixed genre, interweaving religious tracts, as Tonna's fiction does, or echoing other socio-historical writings, as in Montagu's work. These examples will be further explored in the following chapters, yet the way the use of fictional narrative effectively connects these different genres – despite inner contradictions and incoherence – is a key characteristic of the genre in question.

This group of industrial 'novels' thus constitutes a particular literary phenomenon in the rapidly changing society at the beginning of the Victorian era. As Robert Gray points out, 'discursive hierarchies were unsettled' during 'the second quarter of the nineteenth century as a period of some cultural uncertainty'.[6] As Steven Marcus also suggests, these literary or non-literary discourses actually all fall into the category of 'cognitive disciplines', which means that they are all part of the formation of human cognition of new social phenomena.[7] Yet Marcus continues to specify that 'what is in this context singular and distinctive about literature is its all-inclusiveness'.[8] In his valuable historical study of the factory debate, Gray employs a great variety of

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[5] Frances Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, The Factory Boy* (1839-40) is considered 'the first industrial novel published in England'. See, for example, Brenda Ayres, 'The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, The Factory Boy', *The Literary Encyclopedia* (27 April 2006). <http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=16894>

[6] Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860*, p. 11.

[7] Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. ix.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. x.

non-literary discourses, as well as visual and fictional representations. He has also 'tried to identify the inter-textualities involved in this range of cultural representations, and the appropriation and transformation of language and metaphor'.[9] Informed by their works but centring upon the 'novel' – its unique form, texture, and formation – I further investigate industrial fiction by means of close textual and intertextual analyses.

In addition, more recent literary studies have paid special attention to the imaginative and narrative capacity of fiction. For example, as Frederic Jameson has argued, the narrative form serves to 'invent imaginary or formal "solutions" to irresolvable social contradictions'.[10] Drawing upon this insight, Michael McKeon demonstrates that the English novel in particular emerged precisely to mediate sticky social problems or contradictions.[11] Priti Joshi also notes that it is in the fictional world that writers can find a narrative voice with which to 'establish cross-class relations', 'to suture the gulf between classes and promote greater social cohesion' by narrating social encounters.[12]

However, it is not only the cross-class relations but also the inter-textual, cross-genre, and even inter-medial relations that I argue the early industrial novel establishes. Explaining the value of 'an intertextual approach' in Victorian studies, Murray Roston emphasizes 'shared themes of the literature, painting, architecture, and crafts of the nineteenth century' and argues that 'in every generation there is a central complex of inherited assumptions and urgent contemporary concerns to which each creative artist responds in his or her individual way'.[13] His work thus outlines interrelationships between literature and visual arts. Sharing Roston's ideas, but

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[9] Gray, p. 11.

[10] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 79.

[11] Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 20-21.

[12] Priti Joshi, 'Michael Armstrong: Rereading the Industrial Plot', in *Frances Trollope and the Novel of Social Change,* ed. by Brenda Ayres (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 38.

[13] Murray Roston, *Victorian Contexts: Literature and the Visual Arts* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), publisher's description.

specifying the theme of factory children, this thesis provides some alternative materials and perspectives in considering the Victorian industrial novel at the point of its emergence, tracing its inheritance from different social and cultural traditions and its interactions with different literary and non-literary discourses as well as with visual representations.[14] In the book she recently edited, Rachael Langford concentrates on the idea of 'textual intersections' and collects essays which 'examine some of the ways in which textual material in nineteenth-century European cultures mediate and meditate on non-literary cultural artefacts and concepts'.[15] Each contribution in this volume 'considers in detail how some non-literary cultural work is embedded in, represented through, and dialogues with a literary one; they thus examine broadly what has, since Julia Kristeva's coining of the concept in the 1960s, been termed intertextuality'.[16] However, as Langford indicates, intertextuality in Kristeva's understanding refers to the 'unconscious' 'connections between the disparate cultural materials', whereas these contributors also 'discuss aspects of intentional authorial reference to other art forms'.[17] Therefore, Langford accentuates the concept of textual 'intersections' – a term and a notion that this thesis also applies – rather than intertextuality in the strict sense. Focussing on the novelistic representation of factory children, this thesis thus conducts examinations leading to an intertextual and intermedial understanding of the early Victorian industrial novel, in which a variety of ideologies, discourses, formal properties, cultural inheritances, and visual representations intersect.

We can also turn to previous scholarship to rethink industrial fiction and the approaches to it. 'The industrial novel' was a term coined by Raymond Williams in 1958.[18] Study of this subgenre, however, can be traced to the groundbreaking work of

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[14] For collections of literary and non-literary discourses about industrial labour, see also David J. Bradshaw and Suzanne Ozment, eds, *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings About Work* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000).

[15] Rachael Langford, ed., *Textual Intersections: Literature, History and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 9.

[16] Langford, p. 10.

[17] Langford, p. 10.

[18] Raymond Williams, 'The Industrial Novels', in *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia

Louis Cazamian in 1903, when he first categorized this group of novels as 'the social novel'.[19] Yet not until the 1950s did this type of novel receive further critical attention.[20] Since then, the industrial novel has been examined by critics from various schools of thought, prominently Marxists and cultural materialists in the 1960s and 1970s, then contextualists, new historicists, and feminist critics from the end of the 1970s onwards.[21] Contemplating the approaches of previous scholars to industrial fiction, Josephine Guy comments that new historicists, in their manner of 'theorising the relationship between literature and history', acknowledge that 'modern values inevitably colour the way texts from the past are identified and interpreted' and thus 'treat all documents of the past as if they possessed an equal status or value' so as to reduce 'potential distortion'.[22] The influence of Catherine Gallagher's new historicist approach

University Press, 1958).

[19] The English version of Cazamian's work was published in 1973. See Louis François Cazamian, *The Social Novel in England, 1830-1850: Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

[20] See James G. Nelson, 'The Victorian Social Problem Novel', in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by William Baker and Kenneth Womack (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2002), pp. 189-207 (p. 190).

[21] For a critical literature review of studies on industrial fiction, see Francis O'Gorman, 'Social-problem Fiction: Historicism and Feminism', in *The Victorian Novel* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Pub, 2002), pp. 149-195. For studies of industrial fiction in the second half of the twentieth century, see also Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); P. J. Keating, *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1971); Ivanka Kovačević, *Fact into Fiction: English Literature and the Industrial Scene, 1750-1850* (Leicester: Leicester Univ. Press; [Belgrade]: University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, 1975); Patrick Brantlinger, *The Spirit of Reform: British Literature and Politics, 1832-1867* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); Helena Bergmann, *Between Obedience and Freedom: Woman's Role in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Industrial Novel* (Göteborg: Univ, 1979); Sheila M. Smith, *The Other Nation: The Poor in English Novels of the 1840s and 1850s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Joseph A. Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Michael Wheeler, 'A Victorian identity: social-problem, religious and historical novels', in 'Chapter 3: Mid-century Fiction', in *English Fiction of the Victorian Period 1830-1890* (London: Longman, 1985), pp. 32-41; Kate Flint, ed., *The Victorian Novelist: Social Problems and Social Change* (London: Croom Helm, 1987); Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); Robert J. Werlin, *The English Novel and the Industrial Revolution: A Study in the Sociology of Literature* (New York: Garland Pub., 1990); Constance D. Harsh, *Subversive Heroines: Feminist Resolutions of Social Crisis in the Condition-of-England Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Joseph W. Childers, *Novel Possibilities: Fiction and the Formation of Early Victorian Culture* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1995); Josephine M. Guy, *The Victorian Social-Problem Novel: The Market, the Individual, and Communal Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); Patricia Ingham, *The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1996); Barbara Leah Harman, *The Feminine Political Novel in Victorian England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

[22] Josephine M. Guy, 'Evaluating the Social-Problem Novel', in *The Victorian Social-Problem Novel: The*

to industrial fiction has been enormously influential in enlivening this critical field, and her work has been formative in developing the underlying critical perspective of this thesis. Bringing the new historicist approach to Victorian studies, Gallagher analyzes the industrial novel within its socio-historical context of industrialization. In so doing, she justifies some narrative contradictions as inherent in the cultural climate in which the industrial fiction is formed.[23] Gallagher's work challenges the judgements of previous scholars – such as Sheila Smith – that social-problem fiction fails with its inconsistent plots and the ineffective political solutions it proposes. Gallagher contributes to increasing the 'value' of industrial fiction through consideration of the social context in which the fiction was written.

Scholars with feminist concerns (such as Helena Bergmann, Joseph A. Kestner, Rosemarie Bodenheimer, Constance D. Harsh, Barbara Leah Harman, and Susan Zlotnick) have further revised the canon and changed our understanding by emphasizing the contribution of women novelists to industrial fiction.[24] They subject to deeper contemplation the gender politics of the industrial novel and beyond. Focussing on language, Patricia Ingham further correlates the 'interlocked coding of class and gender' in her examination of industrial novels, including Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855).[25] While Gaskell appears to be much discussed in feminist circles, the earlier industrial novelists – Frances Trollope and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, on whom this thesis concentrates – have also received critical attention more recently. Joseph A. Kestner, in his chapter 'The Early Decades', gives an overall account of the female social narrative writers and their works before

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Market, the Individual, and Communal Life (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 7. For discussion of the 'Marxist', 'cultural materialist', 'contextualist', and 'new historicist' critics and criticisms, see Guy, pp. 3-12.

[23] See O'Gorman, 'Social-problem Fiction', in *The Victorian Novel* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Pub, 2002), p. 162.

[24] For discussion of some of these critics, see O'Gorman, 'Feminism and the Social-problem Novel', in *The Victorian Novel,* pp. 186-91.

[25] Patricia Ingham, *The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. vii.

1840, among which this thesis draws attention to Hannah More's 'A Lancashire Collier Girl' (1795), Harriet Martineau's 'A Manchester Strike' (1832), Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40), and Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41). [26] Rosemarie Bodenheimer identifies the figure of the chivalric 'female knight' in Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*: the middle-class heroine Mary Brotherton, who is 'at once a social paternalist and critic of male control', with her 'struggle for independence of mind and action' and 'individual acts of rescue and escape'.[27] As I shall show in Chapter Five, Bodenheimer's reading of female paternalism can be extended in relation to the cross-class sisterhood envisioned in Tonna's fiction. Constance D. Harsh includes *Michael Armstrong* and *Helen Fleetwood* in her discussion of 'female empowerment', but she offers little differentiation between 'girls' and 'women' in her discussion of 'victimized women' or 'female suffering', especially when giving examples of novelistic factory girls – such as Trollope's Fanny Fletcher, or Tonna's Sarah Wright, Phoebe Wright, and Helen Fleetwood.[28] The distinction between girl child and woman, I argue in Chapter Five, is crucial for our understanding of the different cross-class female relationships conceived of by Trollope and Tonna. In her reading of Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* and Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* and *The Wrongs of Woman* (1843-44), Susan Zlotnick concentrates on their problematic domesticity, redrawing of gendered boundaries, and transgression of the separate spheres dichotomy.[29] She acknowledges Gallagher's identification of the paradox of domesticity existing both in 'metaphoric social paternalism' and in 'metonymic domestic ideology': they present society as

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[26] Joseph A. Kestner, 'The Early Decades', in *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 22-66.

[27] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 25-26.

[28] Constance D. Harsh, 'Chapter 1. "If she gave way, who was to act?": Feminocentrism and the Road to Female Empowerment', and 'Chapter 2. Victimized Women: "My pain was needed for the fulfilment"', in *Subversive Heroines: Feminist Resolutions of Social Crisis in the Condition-of-England Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 17-46, pp. 46-74.

[29] Susan Zlotnick, '3. Frances Trollope, Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, and the Early Industrial Discourse: Domesticating the Factory; Eroticizing the Factory; Repairing the Factory', in *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 123-67 (p. 130).

similar to the family but insist on the family's isolation from society.[30] She argues that the three novels 'not only link public and private through the mechanism of female influence (the power granted women by the domestic ideology) but also – in a more subversive move – disclose the penetration of the public sphere into the sanctum of the domestic space'.[31] As an illustration, with the heiress Mary Brotherton in *Michael Armstrong*, the 'middle-class daughter's luxury and the working-class child's suffering' are linked; then, in *The Wrongs of Women*, Tonna makes visible 'the relationship between domesticity and commodity fetishization'.[32] Thus the intersecting concepts of gender and class are also at the core of her discussion.

However, while Zlotnick attends to the continuity of ideas between Trollope and Tonna, I shall identify the significant difference between their proposed means to women's empowerment (in Chapter Five). Moreover, while this thesis is indebted to previous scholars for their consideration of the relationship between the text and its socio-historical context, and of the issues of class and gender represented in the industrial novel, careful examination of the conceptions of children and childhood are almost missing in these studies. Only when the discussion of class and gender ideologies is compounded with consideration of children and concepts of childhood can we comprehend the significantly hybrid nature and transitional position of the factory girl, as exemplified by the eponymous heroine Helen Fleetwood (to be discussed in Chapter Four). Only when we recognize the shift of focus from the factory girl to the working-class woman can we better appreciate the new (because more equal) cross-class female relationship envisioned in Tonna's next novel *The Wrongs of Woman*, which replaces the model pair of middle-class female paternalist and dependent factory girl (represented by Mary Brotherton and Fanny Fletcher in *Michael Armstrong*) with

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[30] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 120.
[31] Zlotnick, p. 127.
[32] Zlotnick, p. 133.

the middle-class and working sisters of a reciprocal relationship (to be discussed in Chapter Five).

In developing this argument, I also enter into a dialogue and debate with scholars on the superintending role of middle-class women and their philanthropic acts in the Victorian novel.[33] Noting the Evangelical and secular versions of 'philanthropic paternalism' found in Hannah More and Harriet Martineau, Dorice Williams Elliott maintains that Frances Trollope and Tonna also 'retain a role for philanthropic women … by retooling traditional rural paternalism for an urban setting'.[34] Challenging Elliot's statement, what I discover in Tonna is that, rather than promoting the superior and managerial status of the middle-class mistress, with her Evangelical belief in 'the spiritual equality of the soul', Tonna shows a respectively independent yet interrelated relationship between middle-class and working women.[35] As 'paternalism' is removed, the novelistic factory girl is also transformed into a working woman, in whom Tonna anticipates the potential empowerment of reigning over her own hearth. The domestic capacity thus marks a decisive difference between the function of a girl and that of a woman.[36]

Attention should also be paid to scholarship on the preaching of sympathy,

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[33] See Elizabeth Langland, 'Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 107, no. 2 (1992), 290-304; Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Superintending the Poor: Charitable Ladies and Paternal Landlords in British Fiction, 1770-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Dorice Williams Elliott, 'Servants and Hands: Representing the Working Classes in Victorian Factory Novels', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 28, no. 2 (2000), 377-90; Dorice Williams Elliott, *The Angel Out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002); Dorice Williams Elliott, 'Convict Servants and Middle-Class Mistresses', *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 16, no. 2 (2005), 163-187; Jill Rappoport, *Giving Women: Alliance and Exchange in Victorian Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For historical studies, see also F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

[34] Dorice Williams Elliott, *The Angel Out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002), p. 28.

[35] For the Evangelical idea of 'spiritual equality', see Lynne Vallone, *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 182, Note 4 to Chapter 4. For Evangelical Christianity, see also Thomas Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working-Class Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Elisabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

[36] On domesticism and the Victorian novel, tribute is due to Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

compassion, and sentimentality in Victorian literature and nineteenth-century women's writing. Christine L. Krueger traces the Evangelical and Christian female preaching tradition that empowers women writers like More, Tonna, and Gaskell in the development of nineteenth-century social fiction. [37] Mary Lenard researches the sentimentality and didacticism of Dickens, Tonna, and Gaskell in their social-reform fiction.[38] Brigid Lowe discusses sympathy in novels by Dickens, Gaskell, and Brontë.[39] Carolyn Betensky more recently challenges the concept of Victorian bourgeois compassion, intending to show that social-problem novels are 'attempts to do both of these things at once – to look after the other and to look after the self'.[40] While such scholarship informs us of the role of sentiment in Victorian culture and addresses a different tradition that influences the industrial novel, I further differentiate Tonna's appropriation of sentimentality from Dickens's, in regard to her female sentimentalist reform narrative (in Chapter Four). Here Krueger and Betensky both argue that the purpose of the social novelists is not only to care about others' suffering but also to negotiate on their own behalf (as women of the middle class). Drawing on this feature, but with specific attention to the figuring of the child, the thesis questions and deals with the way the writing on factory children and the transition to writing on working-class women are tactics the middle-class writers use to benefit the objects and/or themselves.

Developing from the idea of infantilization of the working class and the female gender (as already suggested by Robert Gray and Catherine Gallagher), on the one hand the thesis points out the continuity and difference between the representation of

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[37] Christine L. Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[38] Mary Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell, and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999); Mary Lenard, 'Deathbeds and Didacticism: Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna and Victorian Social Reform Literature' in *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers,* ed. by Brenda Ayres (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp. 67-90.
[39] Brigid Lowe, *Victorian Fiction and the Insights of Sympathy: An Alternative to the Hermeneutics of Suspicion*. (London: Anthem, 2007).
[40] Carolyn Betensky, *Feeling for the Poor: Bourgeois Compassion, Social Action, and the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p. 21.

working-class girls and that of working-class women (a later target of the Ten Hours Movement), and on the other hand it discerns the difference between the representation of factory men and that of boys (the classification of adult men as 'free agents' being a major argument of the apologists for the factory system).[41] This thesis sheds lights on the connections between working-class children, adults, and middle-class men and women, with the different agendas of the radical or conservative bourgeoisie or workmen in regard to class relationships. This thesis also brings consideration of studies on girls/children and girlhood/childhood into the debate on the continuing construction of the ideological work of gender and class.[42]

Therefore, one of the major contributions this thesis makes is the investigation into the interaction between and intersection of conceptions of children and childhood and ideologies of class and gender in the Victorian industrial novel. In the process, this thesis identifies and bridges a gap between studies on industrial fiction and on (labouring) children and (endangered) childhood in literature.[43] Indeed, it is in

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[41] Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 31-32.

[42] Tribute is due to Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[43] For studies on children and childhood in literature, see Peter Coveney, *Poor Monkey; The Child in Literature* (London: Rockliff, 1957), the new edition of which is: Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood; The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967); Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Jacqueline P. Banerjee, *Through the Northern Gate: Childhood and Growing Up in British Fiction, 1719-1901* (New York: P. Lang, 1996); Laura C. Berry, *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999); Joseph L. Zornado, *Inventing the Child: Culture, Ideology, and the Story of Childhood* (New York: Garland Pub., 2001); Catherine Robson, *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Monica Flegel, *Conceptualizing Cruelty to Children in Nineteenth-Century England: Literature, Representation, and the NSPCC* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Pub. Company, 2009).
For socio-historical studies on children and childhood, see Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), which explores the invention of childhood; Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, *Children in English Society. Volume II, From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act 1948* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1973), as a study in social history; Thomas Edward Jordan, *Victorian Childhood: Themes and Variations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), presenting the social conditions of Victorian children; Hugh Cunningham, *The Children of the Poor: Representations of Childhood Since the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992); Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (London: Longman, 1995), as an overall introduction which discusses Ariès and his critics and describes the changing attitudes to children over the centuries.
For socio-historical studies especially on child labour in nineteenth-century England, see O. Jocelyn Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour. A History* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912); Marjorie Cruickshank, *Children and Industry: Child Health and Welfare in North-West Textile Towns During the*

examining the representation of factory children in early industrial novels that studies of poor children in literature intersect with studies of industrial fiction. However, few scholars in either field look closely into the representation of factory children – and the burdens it carries of contradictory beliefs surrounding industrial labour, childhood, class, and gender – within the framework of industrial fiction. As this Introduction will continue to illuminate, while studies of Victorian industrial fiction tend to overlook or marginalize labouring children and stress the adults, studies on (poor, working, or victimized) children and (endangered) childhood in literature pay little attention to the related issues of gender and class that are prominently presented in the industrial novel, but often focus on the issue of child welfare. By establishing the link between these two areas of study, this thesis proposes to shed light on the metaphorical and symbolic meaning of the representation of factory children, the strategic use of the child to further the aim of benefiting adults rather than protecting children, and the hidden implications of the adult-child, bourgeois-proletarian, and male-female relationships.

Following the idea of the invention of childhood first crystallized by Philippe Ariès, and moving forward from the research on poor children in literature and social history by Peter Coveney and Hugh Cunningham, more recent scholars have paid special attention to the subject of labouring or victimized children and endangered childhood in Victorian literature.[44] Laura C. Berry offers insightful exposition of 'the rise of the child

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Nineteenth Century (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981); Clark Nardinelli, *Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); Alan Bennett, *A Working Life: Child Labour Through the Nineteenth Century* (Parkstone, Poole, Dorset: Waterfront Publications, 1991); Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-class Children in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester [u.a.]: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994); Hugh Cunningham and Pier Paulo Viazzo, eds, *Child Labour in Historical Perspective 1800–1985: Case Studies from Europe, Japan, and Colombia* (Florence: UNICEF, 1996); Carolyn Tuttle, *Hard at Work in Factories and Mines: The Economics of Child Labor During the British Industrial Revolution* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1999); Peter Kirby, *Child Labour in Britain, 1750-1870* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Katrina Honeyman, *Child Workers in England, 1780-1820: Parish Apprentices and the Making of the Early Industrial Labour Force* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007); Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[44] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); Peter Coveney, *Poor Monkey; The Child in Literature* (London: Rockliff, 1957), the new edition of which is: Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood; The Individual and Society: a Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967); Hugh Cunningham, '4. The Response to Child Labour 1780-1850: The Climbing Boys; Factory Children; Slaves; The Order of Nature', in *The Children*

victim' in the Victorian novel.[45] However, the factory children in industrial novels are curiously omitted throughout the book.[46] In her chapter on 'the exploited child', Penny Brown assembles Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'The Cry of Children' (1844), Hannah More's 'The Lancashire Collier Girl', Martineau's 'A Manchester Strike', Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* and *The Wrongs of Woman*, and other texts.[47] Brown brings together a wide range of women's writings on children, including lesser-known texts, in a comparative and intertextual manner. She also considers the social and historical contexts and offers some biographical information about the writers to inform her textual analysis. Brown's study provides a valuable introduction to a massive collection of women's writings on labouring and suffering children. She also notices the Romantic and Evangelical influences on the portrayal of children in social-problem novels – important aspects which have enriched my own thoughts on and discussion of *Helen Fleetwood* in Chapter Four. However, the result of treating such a variety of works within the limits of a single chapter is that deeper reflection and further argument are curtailed. As Kimberley Reynolds comments, Brown gives no explanation at all 'about the ways in which (or reasons why) women's use of children in fiction differs from men's'.[48] This is one point the present thesis sets out to clarify, as it reflectively portrays relations between the works of male and female writers. By presenting in detail Frederic Montagu's novel of the factory girl *Mary Ashley* and its response to *Michael Armstrong* (in Chapter Three), by carefully considering the connections and differences between 's John Walker's *The Factory Lad*, John Brown's

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of the Poor: Representations of Childhood Since the Seventeenth Century (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 50-96.

[45] Laura C. Berry, 'Introduction: The Rise of the Child Victim and the State of the Novel', in *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 1-27.

[46] She only mentions Barrett Browning's poem 'The Cry of the Children' when discussing child labour (p. 3).

[47] Penny Brown, '3. Apprentices to misery: The exploited child', in *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 62-90.

[48] Kimberley Reynolds, 'Review: Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*', *Critical Survey*, 7, no. 2 (1995), p. 235.

Blincoe memoir, and Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* (in Chapter Two), by contrasting Dickens's sentimental death of Little Nell with that of Helen Fleetwood (in Chapter Four), and by pointing out Montagu's patriarchal and paternalist model of social relationships – the combination of a benevolent mill owner, affectionate mistress/heiress, and meek factory girl – in contrast to Trollope's female paternalist vision and Tonna's Evangelical one (in Chapter Five), the different agendas of class and gender politics underlying the representations are uncovered and analyzed.

Monica Flegel's book is another recent work that adds to the growing body of studies of childhood in the Victorian period, focussing on the construction of the child victim and conceptualization of cruelty to children.[49] However, as Hugh Cunningham comments on her study: 'words stand alone'.[50] Flegel does not discriminate or assess the range of different sources she uses – fiction, poetry, contemporary comments, and journalistic writings all seem the same; moreover, there are no visual representations of poor children included in her interpretation. In contrast, what Flegel's work is weak on is exactly one of the aspects this thesis is strong on. While this thesis discusses the industrial novel in relation to other literary genres and non-literary discourses, the graphic illustrations in different materials are also significantly brought into the analysis. Furthermore, the thesis thoughtfully elucidates their different textual properties and emphasizes the unique mixed form of the industrial novel. In this thesis, it is not just the subject of the representations of the child but also the forms and textualities of these representations that matter.

Turning from the factory girl to working-class women, Patricia E. Johnson examines the dangerous, problematic, and unnarratable figure of the female industrial worker, 'which exposed crucial contradictions between the class and gender ideologies

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[49] Monica Flegel, *Conceptualizing Cruelty to Children in Nineteenth-Century England: Literature, Representation, and the NSPCC* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009).

[50] Hugh Cunningham, 'Review: *Conceptualizing Cruelty to Children in Nineteenth-Century England: Literature, Representation, and the NSPCC*', *Victorian Studies*, 52, no. 3 (2010), 501-03.

of the period and its economic realities'.[51] In her first chapter, 'The Death of the Factory Girl', Johnson specifies the 'three extreme images of the factory girl/woman – saint, whore, victim', which echoes the pair of 'angelic and demonic victims' – Helen and Phoebe in *Helen Fleetwood* – as Harsh notices.[52] Noting that the female worker represents a threat and appears in shocking and repulsive images, I argue for the difficulty faced by male novelists (like Montagu and Dickens) and the privilege enjoyed by female novelists (like Tonna, Gaskell, and Brontë) in representing and sympathizing with the troublesome aspects of the figure. I hope to clarify the ambiguous confusions between the factory girl and the working woman – which neither Johnson nor Harsh does – and point out that in *The Wrongs of Woman* Tonna links fallen milliners and exhausted working women with incapable wives and frustrated mothers, stressing the important domestic roles played by women. Extending sympathy and domestic concern to the aggressive, fallen, and overworking female workers – all seen as pitiable victims wronged by the system – Tonna eventually expounds her cult of domesticity which fortifies female dominance at home, revises the female sphere, and extends female influence.[53] While Harsh has noticed a 'shared, subversive source of personal power' in angelic and demonic female victims, I argue that the subversive seeds of female autonomy are already there in the hybrid representation of the factory girl.[54] As Tonna's works anticipate subsequent novels about working and fallen women by female

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[51] Patricia E. Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social-Problem Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), book jacket.

[52] Johnson, *Hidden Hands*, p. 41; Harsh, *Subversive Heroines*, p. 66.

[53] For studies on women writers, domesticity, and separate spheres, see also Joanne Shattock, *Women and Literature in Britain, 1800-1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Martha Vicinus, *Suffer and Be Still; Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); Vineta Colby, *Yesterday's Woman: Domestic Realism in the English Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Judith Lowder Newton, *Women, Power, and Subversion: Social Strategies in British Fiction, 1778-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981); Susan Sniader Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Harold Bloom, *British Women Fiction Writers of the 19th Century* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1998); Monica Feinberg Cohen, *Professional Domesticity in the Victorian Novel Women, Work and Home* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Diana C. Archibald, *Domesticity, Imperialism, and Emigration in the Victorian Novel* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002).
For historical studies, see also June Purvis, *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945: an Introduction* (Bristol, PA: UCL Press, 1995); Robert Brink Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London: Longman, 1998).

[54] Harsh, *Subversive Heroines*, p. 65.

novelists like Gaskell and Brontë, this thesis also connects and provides a prehistory to the increasing number of studies on working women, and needlewomen in particular, in Victorian literature.[55]

In addition, it should be noted that Frederic Montagu's *Mary Ashley the Factory Girl: or, Facts upon Factories* (1839), one of the primary texts of this study, attracts scarcely any critical attention.[56] It is only occasionally mentioned by scholars in terms of early factory novels on children, alongside Trollope's and Tonna's works.[57] Scholars tend to note background information, such as the facts that this novel is a counterblast to Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, written by a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and that the surname of the heroine obviously mocks Lord Ashley who proposed the Ten Hours Bill

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[55] See Wanda Fraiken Neff, *Victorian Working Women: An Historical and Literary Study of Women in British Industries and Professions, 1832-1850* (New York: AMS Press, 1966); Patricia E. Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social-Problem Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Lynn Mae Alexander, *Women, Work, and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian Art and Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); Martin A. Danahay, *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture: Literature, Art and Masculinity* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate Pub., 2005); Beth Harris, ed., *Famine and Fashion: Needlewomen in the Nineteenth Century* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2005); Katie Regan Peel, '*Unsuitable for Narrative': Working Women in Victorian Literature* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Connecticut, 2008).
<http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/dissertations/AAI3308245>.
For historical studies, see also Ivy Pinchbeck, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (London: Cass, 1969); Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2006).
[56] Nevertheless, there is another interesting vein of literary criticism on Frederic Montagu's *Gleanings in Craven: in a Tour from Bolton-Abbey to Ambleside: In Six Letters to a Friend in India* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., and J. Tasker, Skipton: Bancks and Co., Manchester; J. Cross and J.Y. Knight, Leeds; H. Bellerby, York; and all other Booksellers., 1838), a travelogue. Some have speculated that the Brontës drew upon it when writing *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. See John Malham-Dembleby, *The Key to the Brontë Works. The Key to Charlotte Brontë's 'Wuthering Heights', 'Jane Eyre', and Her Other Works. Showing the Method of Their Construction and Their Relation to the Facts and People of Her Life* (London: The W. Scott Pub. Co., Ltd, 1911); Christopher Heywood, 'The Mark "Brontë" on Frederic Montagu's *Gleanings in Craven*', *Bodleian Library Record*, XVIII: 5 (April 2005), 576-83. This may provide other sources for understanding Montagu's literary works in relation to Victorian women novelists.
[57] See Michael Sadleir, *Anthony Trollope, A Commentary* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927), p. 94; W. H. Chaloner, 'Mrs. Trollope and the Early Factory System', *Victorian Studies*, 4, no. 2 (1960), 159-66 (p. 165); Monica Correa Fryckstedt, *The Early Industrial Novel: Mary Barton and Its Predecessors* (Manchester: John Rylands University of Manchester, 1980), pp. 15-16; Joanne Shattock and Philip Arthur William Collins, *Dickens and Other Victorians: Essays in Honour of Philip Collins* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 102, observing that it was 'published by a Manchester bookseller' and 'was planned in ten monthly parts from August 1839, but collapsed after its second instalment'; Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 148, with a paragraph mentioning its adoption of 'conventions of didactic fiction' and some plot comparisons with *Michael Armstrong*; James Robert Simmons, 'Significant Nineteenth-Century Factory Legislation and Factory Literature: A Brief Chronology', in *Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiographies* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 77.

in 1833.[58] In her study of the predecessors of *Mary Barton*, Monica Correa Fryckstedt claims that *Mary Ashley* is 'a deservedly forgotten novel of whose existence few critics seem to be aware, [which] bears little resemblance to *Michael Armstrong*'.[59] Although her work provides useful historical and social contexts for the earlier women writers and their industrial fiction, and she notes that 'a well-established literary genre of industrial fiction' already existed 'by 1848', Fryckstedt's views nevertheless dismiss many important traits of the early works.[60] Indeed, earlier scholars tend to criticize the valuation of industrial fiction, especially the earlier works before Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848). From an early historian's point of view, William O. Aydelotte remarks that, although these 'realistic' novels were claimed by their writers to expose 'facts', the factual information they provide 'is highly suspect for the scholar's purposes – it is spotty, impressionistic, and inaccurate'.[61] While later critics of industrial fiction, as already discussed, have, from different perspectives, given credit to Trollope and Tonna for their accomplishments, Montagu's work remains obscure.[62]

Yet this thesis will examine Montagu's *Mary Ashley* for three reasons. First, together with Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* and Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood,* it completes a comprehensive trio, within the first group of industrial novels, of works using factory

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[58] For historical studies on Lord Ashley (Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury) and the Ten Hours Bill, see, for example, *Prelude to Victory of the Ten Hours Movement; Two Speeches, One Letter, and a Report, 1844* (New York: Arno Press, 1972); Philip Grant and Anthony Ashley Cooper Shaftesbury, *The Ten Hours' Bill: The History of Factory Legislation ... to Which Is Appended a Warning Address to the Working-Classes by the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury* (Manchester: John Heywood, 1866); Raymond Gibson Cowherd and Arthur Harrison Cole, *The Humanitarians and the Ten Hour Movement in England* (Boston: Baker Library, Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, 1956); Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 62; Eric Hopkins, *Industrialisation and Society: A Social History, 1830-1951* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 37.

[59] Monica Correa Fryckstedt, *The Early Industrial Novel: Mary Barton and Its Predecessors* (Manchester: John Rylands University of Manchester, 1980), p. 15.

[60] Fryckstedt, p. 11.

[61] William O. Aydelotte, 'The England of Marx and Mill as Reflected in Fiction', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 8, Supplement: The Tasks of Economic History (1948), 42-58 (p. 44).

[62] See also studies on individual writers, for example, Pamela Neville-Sington, *Fanny Trollope: The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman* (London: Viking, 1997); Brenda Ayres, *Frances Trollope and the Novel of Social Change* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002); Ella Dzelzainis, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Pre-Millenarianism, and the Formation of Gender Ideology in the Ten Hours Campaign', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 31, no. 1 (2003), 181-91; Ella Dzelzainis, 'Reason vs Revelation: Feminism, Malthus, and the New Poor Law in Narratives by Harriet Martineau and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 2 (2006), <www.19.bbk.ac.uk>.

children as their protagonists. This circumstance makes the thesis a focused case study of the emergence of the new genre. Including Montagu will enable a consideration of the important male contribution to this cultural phenomenon. In addition, the debate between this work (by a male apologist for the factory system) and the other two (by female reformists) displays the vigorous and interactive creative activities taking place at that time. Comparison between the three will also enable their shared or distinguishing features − whether in terms of formal properties, textual characteristics, or content − to be more distinctly perceived.

Second, *Mary Ashley*, together with other apologetic social discourses like Andrew Ure's *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835) and Edward Baines's *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain* (1835), provide an intriguing account of the assessment of factory work as light and even fun for children. The image in such works is of happy factory children growing up in a promising industrial town. Investigation of this representation links with Carolyn Lesjak's recent interrogation of 'the relationship between labour and pleasure' and her 'creation of a new genealogy of the "labour novel"', though tending in an opposite political direction to the one she traces.[63] From this particularly neglected work, this study thus initiates its 'reconceptualization of the industrial novel' right at the emergence of the genre.[64] The seeds are already there. While Lesjak draws on the utopian romance of William Morris in her new genealogy, *Mary Ashley* can actually be deemed a utopian fiction of a prosperous and harmonious industrial England. Besides, as Harsh has already noted, 'in the condition-of-England novel considerations of class and gender unite to create a *utopian fiction*: it may be that cultural instabilities within both terms play a mutually reinforcing role in enabling the creation of a radical social vision out of apparently conservative materials' (emphasis

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[63] Carolyn Lesjak, *Working Fictions: A Genealogy of the Victorian Novel* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 1.
[64] The term is borrowed from Lesjak, p. 3.

added).[65] Here, again, I bring into this discussion the consideration of children and childhood – an early stage of a life containing the promise of unlimited possibility. Indeed, it may be no mere coincidence that the earliest Victorian industrial novels are devoted to factory children at the formative stage of life.

Third, I would like to highlight the 'mixed modes' that *Mary Ashley* manifests and the intertextual relationships it mediates as significant traits of the early Victorian industrial novel. This point also leads to parallel discussions of the other two novels. *Mary Ashley*, in the form of a novel, proves to be a miscellaneous space accommodating different forms of writing – social, scientific, historical discourses, and didactic fiction – as well as illustrations.

The Ten Hours Movement, then, constitutes the social background of the texts to be examined and also actively influences the development of industrial fiction and the representation of factory children. The rise of the Ten Hours Movement in 1830 and its end (normally considered to be 1847 when the Ten Hours Bill passed) therefore provide the basis and framework for the analysis of the industrial narratives. Chapter One will elucidate the rise of the Ten Hours Movement and the contradictory ideologies associated with working-class agency and paternalistic protection at that time. It will also discuss the age definition of the factory 'child'.

The middle three chapters respectively deal with one industrial novel and relevant discourses, in order to discern different social and textual relations and to distinguish different representations of factory children. Chapter Two, centring on *Michael Armstrong*, uses a key concept, namely, the formation of a cooperative body from injured bodies, to highlight the representations of the threatened physical condition of factory children, to investigate the clash between capitalists and employees, and to point out intertextual collaboration.[66] In a metaphorical sense, we shall also see how and why

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[65] Harsh, *Subversive Heroines*, pp. 15-16.
[66] In Chapter Two, discussing *Michael Armstrong*, I especially use the concept of 'a cooperative body' as a metaphor for the human-machine, cross-class, and intertextual relationships. This approach also relates

factory men in melodrama are shrunken into factory children in the industrial novel. This development inspires reflection on the infantilization of the working class as a middle-class writer's strategy for avoiding working-class riots. Trollope's novelistic protagonist Michael Armstrong thus becomes a factory boy who cannot grow up.

Chapter Three examines representations of factory children in discourses that constitute defences of the factory system. It uses *Mary Ashley*, in concert with Andrew Ure's and Edward Baines's scientific and socio-historical discourses, to delineate a positive representation of the fortunate factory child, a typical device for supporting manufacturers' interests. It also analyzes the female apologist Harriet Martineau's tales in *Illustrations of Political Economy*, which supply the Malthusian concepts needed to deny factory children the status of objects of sympathy.

Chapter Four focuses on representation of the factory girl Helen Fleetwood in Tonna's Evangelical novel, which connects the cultural, literary, and social past with the present in this embodiment of a hybrid character, composed of the traditional Angel in the House, the factory girl as social victim, and the new working-class heroine. It focuses on the spirituality or psychology of children. It also examines how the Romantic idea of childhood as 'Original Innocence' and the Christian belief of the child of 'Original Sin' converge in Tonna's representation of the factory children. It looks into Tonna's inheritance and difference from the Evangelical forerunner Hannah More, with her didactic tale 'The Lancashire Collier Girl' used as an example. Furthermore, to analyze Tonna's appropriation of sentimentality and child deathbed scenes, which are popular in Victorian literature, this chapter compares the presentation of the death of Helen with the sentimental death of Little Nell in Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*

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to a recent work, Tamara Siroone Ketabgian's *The Lives of Machines: The Industrial Imaginary in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), which in its first chapter deals with the idea of 'human-machine complex' and focuses on 'the composite, hybrid nature of the human-machine join, as an interconnected and multipart whole' (p. 174), but does not consider the primary texts I examine. As Ketabgian states, her work, also using a variety of literary and non-literary texts, 'offers an alternate cultural history, which traces sympathies between humans, animals, and machines in novels and nonfiction about factory work as well as in other unexpected literary sites and genres, whether domestic, scientific, musical, or philosophical' (p. 2).

(1840) and other child deaths in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sentimental poem 'The Cry of the Children' (1843).

The final chapter scrutinizes the roles and images of working- and middle-class females in the three factory children novels previously examined. It signifies the shift of focus from factory girls to working-class women in Tonna's two novels. It analyzes a threateningly unfeminine factory girl, Phoebe, in Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* and expands into a discussion of undomestic working-class women in her *The Wrongs of Woman*. It also demonstrates how Tonna provides innovative and sympathetic perspectives on unfeminine and (sexually) immoral factory girls like Phoebe, in contrast to the horrifying textual and visual portrayals of ragged female mine workers in parliamentary reports. This chapter thus extends the discussion of Tonna's literary legacy for later women writers. For example, Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial and social novels *Mary Barton* (1848) and *Ruth* (1853) present working- and lower-class women, characters who were hardly narratable before.[67] This chapter focuses on how Tonna revises the female role and empowers all women with their culturally ascribed domesticity, to establish a more reciprocal model of cross-class sisterhood.

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[67] For the concept of unnarratable working women, see Patricia E. Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social-Problem Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).

Chapter One

The Rise of the Ten Hours Movement and the Status of the Factory Child

This chapter investigates the figure of the factory child in the context of the rise of the Ten Hours Movement, a major factory reform campaign commencing in 1830 and finally leading to the passing of the Ten Hours Bill in 1847, which limited the working hours in textile mills (and other textile industries except lace and silk production) for children and women.[1] Historians such as Samuel Kydd, Cecil Driver, J. T. Ward, Robert Gray, B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison have provided detailed descriptions and analyses of the factory movement in the early and mid-nineteenth century. This chapter sets out to illustrate the rise of the Ten Hours Movement in order to contextualize the representations of factory children in this period, which is the analytical focus of the thesis.

This chapter argues that the factory child as represented in the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary debates of the 1830s is in effect a compound image of factory children and (infantilized) adult workers. As the chapter is going to explain, outside Parliament, among operatives and popular agitators, the demand was always for an Act that would 'directly or indirectly limit the labour of adults as well as of children'.[2] As for the parliamentary legislation, since Michael Sadler, head of the Parliamentary Select Committee in the early 1830s, considered limiting factory children's working hours as

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[1] For a general introduction to the Ten Hours Movement and the Ten Hours Act, see, for example, Eric Hopkins, 'The factory system and the mid-century work situation reviewed', in *Childhood Transformed: Working-class Children in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester [u.a.]: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 73-98; James Richard Simons, 'Industrial and "Condition of England" Novels', in *A Companion to The Victorian Novel,* ed. by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 336-52 (p. 344). For more comprehensive historical analysis, see Samuel H. G. Kydd, ('Alfred'), *The History of the Factory Movement: From the Year 1802, to the Enactment of the Ten Hours' Bill in 1847,* in Two Volumes (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1857); Cecil Herbert Driver, *Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946); B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation* (3rd ed. Reprinted, London: Cass, 1966); J. T. Ward, *The Factory Movement 1830-55* (Macmillan, 1962; Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1970); Robert Q. Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Clark Nardinelli, *Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

[2] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 43.

the first step towards improving the welfare of the whole labouring class (or limiting the working hours of all workers regardless of age), concern for adult workers was always part of the representation of the factory child throughout the campaign.[3] This is a significant reference point for the analysis of representations of factory children in the following chapters, which will always in some sense be related to adult labour.

To analyze the compound image of the factory child and adult, this chapter will first examine the role of the factory child in the emergence of the Ten Hours Movement. This situates the child figure in the conflicting strands of thought of different parties – such as the Tories, Radicals, and Whigs – at the early stage of the factory campaign. Then, it looks into the parliamentary debates over the 'free agent' status of factory operatives (children and adults), as well as 'infantilization' of the working class. This analysis will demonstrate the complex status of the factory child, serving as a metonymic figure in relation to the working adult. Moreover, the chapter will discuss Michael Sadler's paternalism and its influence. It will examine the social outlook of paternal government and its advocacy of protective legislation with regard to factory children and the infantilized working class. The status of the parents of factory children and the responsibilities of mill owners towards the factory children will also be considered within this social perspective. Finally, the 'age' problem and the fluid definition or manipulation of factory 'children' in the legislative process will be scrutinized. (For example, the varying age limits [children under 18, 13, or 12 years old] and working hour limits [10, 8, or 12 hours] proposed by different factory bills or acts make a point worthy of exploration.) In this context I shall examine the early Victorian understanding and social meaning of the factory 'child'.

I. The Rise of the Ten Hours Movement

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[3] Michael Sadler (1870~1835), Tory MP for Leeds, introduced a Ten Hours Bill into the House of Commons in 1831. Further discussion of his role in the movement will be provided below.

Although efforts towards shortening working hours for children and even adult workers in cotton manufactories could be traced back to the 1810s and 1820s, with the examples of Sir Robert Peel's bill in 1815 (often referred to as the first Ten Hours Bill), Robert Owen's advocacy of an eight hours day in 1817, and the petition of operative cotton spinners of Manchester for 'a universal ten and a half hours day' in 1818, these isolated attempts did not form part of the Ten Hours Movement.[4]

The real impetus to the Ten Hours Movement came from Yorkshire in 1830, with Richard Oastler's famous letter on 'Yorkshire Slavery'. In September 1830, Richard Oastler, a Tory radical, visited his friend John Wood, an extensive Yorkshire manufacturer endeavouring to improve conditions of factory work. Wood turned Oastler's attention to 'the horrors and vices of the factory system' and cruelties towards children who worked for about 14 to 18 hours a day in mills. Astonished, Oastler promptly wrote a letter on the condition of children employed in woollen and worsted factories to the editors of the *Leeds Mercury*. The letter became a historical document and laid the foundation of the active Ten Hours Movement.[5] From then on, Oastler wrote a series of letters on 'Yorkshire Slavery' (a metaphor for the labour of factory children) and promoted the Ten Hours campaign among the working class by leading Short Time Committees (working-class organizations, normally meeting at public houses) in industrial districts.[6] With the publicity given to 'Yorkshire Slavery' by Oastler's letters to the newspapers, the comparison of factory children to Negro slaves also became a lasting trope. Yet the link between the colonized labouring adult slave and British factory children made a questionable comparison, which will be further probed in the next chapter.

Thus, at its beginning, the Ten Hours Campaign highlighted ill-treated factory

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[4] Hutchins and Harrison, pp. 43-44.
[5] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 44; Kydd, pp. 95-100.
[6] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 33; Clark Nardinelli, *Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 3; Cecil Herbert Driver, *Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler* New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 36-48; Kydd, p. 127.

children to solicit public sympathy and promote reform of the factory system. In his violent letters, Oastler demanded, 'on the grounds of humanity, a ten hours day for all under twenty-one years of age'; public attention was soon called to this issue, and so the popular agitation began.[7]

II. The Factory Child: a Point of Agreement for Disparate Groups

The Ten Hours Movement brought together an assortment of people of disparate groups and conflicting viewpoints – employers, radical operatives, Owenites, Chartists, trade unionists, romantic humanitarians, Tories, Evangelicals, and so on – yet protection of the factory child provided common ground and a point of agreement.

The movement was not politically confined to any party. The Short Time Committees were a strange combination of Socialists, Chartists and Tories. The most prominent leaders in the movement included Oastler, the Rev. G. S. Bull (Vicar of Bradford), the Rev. J. R. Stephens (who also took a leading part in the Chartist movement), John Doherty (general secretary of the Federation of Cotton Spinners and a prominent Chartist), George Condy, and Philip Grant, most of whom were Radicals.[8] As for its Parliamentary leaders, Michael Thomas Sadler, a close friend of Oastler, who took the lead in 1831, and Sadler's successor Lord Ashley, were both Tories. Yet other leaders and supporters, including John Fielden and Charles Hindley, included Radical and Liberal members.[9] Thus, it could be expected that the representations of factory children would involve irreconcilable ideological contradictions between different groups, and the short-time campaign might also entail an entanglement with early Chartist agitation. This complication especially manifests itself in Frances Trollope's fictional representation of *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1839-40) – which is the focus of analysis in the next chapter.

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[7] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 45.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*

The first prominent result of the newspaper controversy was the introduction of a factory bill – usually known as Hobhouse's Bill – by John Hobhouse, the Radical MP for Westminster in 1831. However, the later frustration of the bill due to opposition from manufacturers made the Short Time Committees in industrial districts indignantly strengthen themselves to promote a ten-hour day all the more eagerly. The original draft of Hobhouse's Bill of 1831 proposed a literal ten hours day, limiting 'the hours of all persons under eighteen to eleven and a half hours a day, with one and a half hours for meals', and 'was to apply to woollen and silk, as well as to cotton mills'.[10] This bill was warmly supported by operatives of the West Riding; nevertheless, because of the opposition of woollen manufacturers of the West of England and the Scottish members, the working hours for young persons were eventually extended to twelve, and applied only to cotton mills when it was passed, with no procedures for enforcement.[11] The objection raised by the woollen manufacturers focused on the ruinous effects on their businesses or profits caused by the regulation of working hours. Disappointed with the frustration of Hobhouse's Bill, the Yorkshire operatives, or the Short Time Committees, were roused to campaign for factory legislation more vigorously, holding enthusiastic meetings in the manufacturing towns of the West Riding, and gradually extending the movement to Lancashire, attracting growing numbers of supporters.[12] Yet the political economists and mill owners who opposed regulation still obstructed the path to factory legislation.[13] How the political economists, with their *laissez-faire* policies and theories of freedom of contract between employers and employed, held different viewpoints regarding factory regulation and how the mill owners guarded their businesses and opposed factory reform, through the prosperous representation of the factory town and the 'blessed' factory children, will be further analyzed in Chapter Three.

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 46.
[11] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 46; Kydd, p. 108.
[12] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 47; Kydd, p. 115.
[13] Kydd, p. 116.

On October 20, 1831, Oastler once again published a letter addressing 'Slavery in Yorkshire' in the *Leeds Intelligencer*, in which he not only poignantly noted the failure of Hobhouse's Bill but also called on his readers to restore 'happiness and liberty' to children, and to 'rescue British infants from slavery' by 'encouraging and signing petitions in favour of "ten hours a day" as the limit of your children's work'.[14] Emphasizing 'OUR CHILDREN SHALL BE FREE!', Oastler made good use of inflammatory language in the newspaper to appeal to the wider public to take action to promote factory reform.[15] In the letter he used a clear and succinct slogan to summarize the campaign's policy: 'TEN HOURS A DAY, AND A TIME-BOOK'.[16] Oastler's words thus contributed to the image of the enslaved factory child, a lasting icon of the movement, by constructing a picture of the child factory worker as currently 'unfree'.

After Leeds Tory MP Michael Sadler was solicited by the Short Time Committee of Huddersfield to support Hobhouse's Bill, the working men and employers favourable to factory regulation selected Sadler as their leader in Parliament to press for further legislation.[17] In 1831, encouraged by the support in industrial areas such as Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, Sadler introduced into Parliament a Ten Hours Bill.[18] Sadler's Ten Hours Bill had 'for its object to regulate the labour of Children employed in Mills and Factories in this kingdom'.[19] Despite powerful opposition, there was also increasing feeling in favour of factory intervention. The bill was carried forward to a second reading with Sadler's powerful speech on March 16, 1832.[20]

To deal with strong opposition to Sadler's Bill from the manufacturing interest, a Select Committee (known as 'Sadler's Committee', which sat from April to August

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[14] Kydd, pp. 118-22.
[15] Kydd, p. 122.
[16] Kydd, p. 122.
[17] Kydd, p. 132.
[18] Kydd, p. 146.
[19] Hansard, HC Deb, 15 December 1831, vol. 9, cc255-7. See also B. L. Hutchins and A. Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation* (3rd ed. Reprinted, London: Cass, 1966), p. 33; Samuel H. G. Kydd, *The History of the Factory Movement: from the Year 1802, to the Enactment of the Ten Hours Bill in 1847* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1857), pp. 150-51.
[20] See, for example, Hutchins and Harrison, p. 33.

1832) provided the *Report of the Select Committee on the Bill for the Regulation of Factories* in 1832, largely the work of Sadler and his close friend Oastler, in support of the Bill.[21] The report provides horrifying accounts of witnesses testifying to the ill-treatment of factory children. As many historians have pointed out, Sadler's report was partisan, with witnesses carefully selected, testimonies well prepared, and accounts from manufacturers ignored. Still, Sadler's report influenced modern historians' perception of child labour to a great extent. For example, E. P. Thompson, though acknowledging the partisanship of the report, believes it to be truthful and authentic and maintains that the conditions of child labour were severe.[22]

On the other hand, a Royal Commission favouring factory owners' interests was organized in 1832 to inquire into the conditions of factory employment. Intended as a riposte to the Report offered by Sadler's Committee, the Report by the Factories Inquiry Commission in 1833 collected information on the employment of children in industrial districts in Britain, including favourable testimony and, more notably, accounts of the cruelty, unhealthiness and immorality of child labour.[23] The favourable assessment given by an overseer named Redman, for example, implied that there was nothing wrong with the factory system, and that it was the workers, that is, the working-class parents, who should be responsible for placing their children with masters known for ill-treatment.[24] Yet the findings concerning the negative effects of child labour attracted

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[21] Nardinelli, p. 3.

[22] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: V. Gollancz, 1980), pp. 336-37, in which Thompson states, 'It is true – and a point which is frequently cited – that the evidence brought before Sadler's Committee of 1832 was partisan; and that historians such as the Hammonds, and Hutchins and Harrison (but not Fielden or Engels), may be criticised for drawing upon it too uncritically. With Oastler's help, Short-Time Committees of the workers organised the collection of evidence – notably from the West Riding – for presentation to this Committee; its Chairman, Michael Sadler, was the leading parliamentary champion of the 10 Hour Bill; and its evidence was published before any evidence had been taken from the employers. But it does not follow that the evidence before Sadler's Committee can therefore be assumed to be untrue. In fact, anyone who reads the bulk of the evidence will find that it has an authenticity which compels belief, although care must be taken to discriminate between witnesses, and to note the differences between some of the worst conditions in small mills in smaller centres (for example, Keighley and Dewsbury) as compared with conditions in the larger mills in the great cotton towns.'

[23] Nardinelli, p. 2.

[24] Nardinelli, p. 1.

great attention. Eventually the commission decided to undertake legislative interference 'in behalf of the children employed in factories'.[25] Based on the report, Lord Althorp, leader of the Whigs, produced his own Bill, which became the Factory Act of 1833 (usually known as 'Althorp's Act'). The law, which included the appointment of Factory Inspectors to ensure its enforcement, limited the hours of children between 9 and 13 years to an eight-hour day and forbade the employment of children under 9 altogether. The act further required two hours of education per day for children aged 9 to 13.

Seemingly, Althorp's 1833 Act restricted the working hours of children more rigorously than Sadler's Ten Hours Bill – with two hours fewer for younger children – yet supporters of the Ten Hours Movement were dissatisfied and violently continued their campaign. Why were the advocates of the Ten Hours Movement dissatisfied with Althorp's Act, despite its concern for factory children? It is known that both Sadler's report and the Commissioners' report were partisan. Although Sadler's Bill focused on children's welfare, the ultimate aim was to benefit the whole working class. Yet by means of an 'administrative trick', Althorp's party only limited children's working hours and provided for their education, excluding working adults from benefitting indirectly; this is what irritated the campaigners of the Ten Hours Movement.[26] It was contended that Althorp's Act simply satisfied the 'universal demand for the protection of children from over-work', yet, by letting two groups of children to work in relays, the system enabled the manufacturers to keep adult operatives working for sixteen hours a day.[27] In addition, the Factory Inspectors whose appointment was provided for in the Act were ridiculed by Ten Hours campaigners as 'mere tools in the hands of the manufacturers'.[28] The campaign leaders (Oastler and others) continued to address crowded and turbulent meetings in the manufacturing towns, to express 'a growing desire' for 'a uniform

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[25] Kydd, p. 52.
[26] Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals 1830–1852* (Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 147.
[27] Kydd, p. 55.
[28] Kydd, p. 55.

working day of ten hours for all employed'.[29] Thus, it is evident that the ultimate goal of the Ten Hours Movement was never the welfare of factory children alone, but also that of adult workers. As Hutchins and Harrison further state, based on speeches at the public meetings and evidence given before Sadler's Committee and the Parliamentary Commission of 1833, 'the chief object [of the Ten Hours Movement] kept in view was that, by the limitation of the hours of children and young persons, the hours of labour of adults should themselves be regulated'.[30]

Thus, despite strong interrelations and apparent similarities in the preliminary legislative focuses, the campaigners of the Ten Hours Movement and its parliamentary opponents expressed even stronger conflicts arising from different ideologies of different parties, such as Tories and Whigs. For example, Thomas Babington Macaulay, a Whig statesman and Sadler's rival, stated in a letter of March 1832 that he favoured 'the principle of Mr Sadler's bill' that 'the hours of labour of children ought to be regulated'; however, he moreover pointed out that 'protection ceases as soon as the child becomes his own master'.[31] He said, 'I would limit the hours of labour for a child of thirteen or fourteen. But why the hours of labour of a youth in his twentieth year should be limited, as proposed by Mr Sadler's bill, I cannot understand.'[32] Thus, while the need for protection of children is agreed between the different parties, the 'free agency' of adult male workers is controversial, as is the exact age of independence and adulthood; that is, what constitutes a child.

Indeed, the significant concern for adult working men, which is absent in Althorp's Act but permanently established in Sadler's Ten Hours Bill, marks the greatest divide between the two. In his examination of the factory system, William Cooke Taylor, the son of a manufacturer, held that the Ten Hours Movement was aimed not at children but

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[29] Kydd, pp. 55-59.
[30] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 48.
[31] Kydd, vol. 1, pp. 149-150.
[32] Kydd, vol. 1, pp. 149-150; see also J. T. Ward, *The Factory Movement, 1830-1855* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 58.

at operatives themselves – 'their original object was to raise the price of their *own* labour'.[33] Taylor, using a letter from Nassau William Senior, an influential political economist at that time, pointed out that the adult workers knew that Parliament would not legislate for adults, so they used 'a frightful and (as far as we have heard and seen) an utterly unfounded picture of the ill-treatment of the children' to promote the restriction of work to a ten-hour day for all persons under eighteen, which they knew would in effect restrict the working hours of adults to the same number as well.[34] Thus, with their hope frustrated by the Act, which actually increased adult hours of labour but reduced their pay, the operatives were the more vehement in their demand for a new Ten Hours Bill.[35] As also noted by Kydd, Althorp's Act was 'condemned and disowned by all the supporters of the Ten Hours' Bill movement in and out of parliament', who argued that 'it only afforded protection to those under 14 years of age, all young persons above that about were without protection'.[36] This opposition further indicates the arguable age definition of children or young persons to be protected; also, it signals Tory concern about the extension of protection beyond children and possibly reaching adults. As Gray states, 'demands for regulation could also … be a tactic to shorten the hours of adult men'.[37] Likewise, Nardelli indicates that the opposition to Althorp's Act during the early 1830s came possibly from its failure to restrict adult working hours.[38] Evidence can be seen in the *Report of the Factories Inquiry Commission* (1833-34), in which the Whig noted that 'the passing of the Ten Hours Bill would be the general limitation of the labour of adults within the same hours as those assigned to children and

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[33] Taylor, 'Factories and Machinery', in *Factories and the Factory System from Parliamentary Documents and Personal Examination* (1844), reprinted in David J. Bradshaw and Suzanne Ozment, *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings About Work* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), pp. 227-52, p. 249.

[34] Taylor, in Bradshaw and Ozment, *The Voice of Toil*, p. 249.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Kydd, vol. 2, pp. 65-66.

[37] Robert Q. Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 37. See also Hutchins and Harrison, pp. 65-66, 109-10.

[38] Nardinelli, p. 12.

adolescents'.[39]

It is evident that Sadler chose a gradualist approach to promote the Ten Hours Bill, which pinpointed children first in order to avoid opposition and to attract support from humanitarians and others. As indicated by Hutchins and Harrison, citing an article on the Short Time Bill in the *Manchester and Salford Advertiser* in 1832, the main obstacle to legislative enactment was the theorizing of political economists, who opposed restraining 'free labour'.[40] However, the 'free' status of the designated adult workers was indeed questioned by Sadler and other Ten Hours campaigners, to be further discussed in the next section. Yet it was to avoid this legislative obstacle that Sadler confined the attempts at regulation to children and young persons only, though the real effect must have been to regulate adult labour as well.[41] As Nardelli also shows, the opposition to 'unregulated child labor' by Sadler, Oastler, and other extra-parliamentary leaders such as John Fielden and Joseph Raynor Stephens, was in fact 'a method to bring about the regulation of all factory labour, including that of adults'.[42] The Ten Hours Bill, seemingly aiming to limit the daily working hours of children, actually 'intended to limit the working hours of adults as well'.[43] As Gray observes, 'amelioration was seen in terms both of regulating children's employment, which in a working-class context might itself be understood as the empowerment of adult male workers, and of improved job security and wages for adult men'.[44] It was the indirect effect on adult male labour rather than the direct effects on child labour that was their main concern. This gradual approach was nonetheless thwarted by the Whig tactic.

Therefore, the factory child provided a temporary point of agreement between the different parties and different supporters of the short-time factory acts. Tufnell, one of the Commissioners of the Royal Commission of 1833, was most impressed with 'the

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[39] Nardinelli, pp. 12-13.
[40] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 49.
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] Nardinelli, p. 11.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Gray, p. 33.

different grounds on which the Ten Hours Bill was advocated in Parliament, and in the manufacturing districts', as Hutchins and Harrison noticed.[45] In Tufnell's description, the 'Parliamentary and public ground' for supporting the Ten Hours Bill was humane concern for the cruelty to factory children, who were abused and kept working for long hours; however, in industrial districts no one approached him in support of the Bill on the above grounds.[46] The operatives hoped that the regulation of working hours could bring them more favourable working conditions and enable benevolent employers to compete with more cruel rivals.[47] There thus appears a discrepancy between the public sympathy for the factory child and the Ten Hours campaigners' manipulation of the image of the labouring child. Indeed, by 1832, the image of the abused child became the most important weapon of working-class activists and a symbol of the suffering caused by the capitalists' greed.[48]

It was not until 1847 with the passing of the Ten Hours Act, which restricted the working hours of women and children in British factories to effectively ten hours per day, that the campaign came to an end. The condition of factory children had been an important target of the movement; before its success in 1847, a great deal of effort was taken to influence public opinion about the working hours of children. After Sadler lost his seat in Parliament in 1832, Lord Ashley (Anthony Ashley Cooper, subsequently Lord Shaftesbury), a Tory humanitarian and an Evangelical, took over the leadership of the factory movement and reintroduced Sadler's Ten Hours Bill in the House of Commons. In 1840, Lord Ashley's article on 'Infant Labour' was published in the Tory *Quarterly Review*, which discussed the employment of factory children and argued that the industrial revolution was destroying society and the family.[49] In the same year, Lord

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[45] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 50.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Catherine Robson, *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 60.

[49] Geoffrey B. A. M. Finlayson, *The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, 1801-1885* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981), p. 126.

Ashley helped set up the Children's Employment Commission, which later published its First Report on mines and collieries in 1842, and then the Second Report covering trades and manufactures in 1843.

Between Sadler's Bill (1832) and Althorp's 1833 Act, we can find the protection of factory children becoming a common ground for politically opposed groups. Moreover, even Sadler and Ashley, both of whom supported the Ten Hours Bill, had somewhat disparate ideas about the conditions of factory children. After Ashley took over Sadler's role as parliamentary advocate of the Ten Hours Bill in 1833, fundamentally different concepts in relation to child labour between Ashley and other leaders led to the drifting apart of the movement.[50] To Ashley, the effect of 'regulating child labor on the wages of adult males was a matter of little or no concern': Ashley's concern lay in the 'paternalistic duty of the ruling class to care for those who could not care for themselves'.[51] Although Sadler, Oastler, and Ashley were all Evangelical, they shared different strands of Evangelical beliefs: the pre-millenniarism of Ashley was not typical of general Evangelicalism.[52]

The contradictory viewpoints epitomized in the issue of the factory child in the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary debates also influenced the narratives or fictional works that accompanied the movement, such as *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40) by Frances Trollope and *Helen Fleetwood* (1841) by Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, an Evangelical ally of Ashley. The ideological intricacies and changing concerns reflected in the fictional works will be further analyzed in later chapters.

III. Paternalism, Lack of Free Agency and Infantilization of the Working Class

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[50] For Lord Ashley as the parliamentary successor of Mr Sadler, see Kydd, vol. 1, Ch XIII, p. 345.

[51] Nardinelli, pp. 14-15.

[52] See Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Gray, p. 57. As Gray suggests, 'Moderate patrician Evangelicalism was more influential, and more inclined to economic "orthodoxy", than the pre-millennial strands represented by Ashley' (p. 57). As Hilton states, Ashley was 'a fervent pre-millenarian, obsessed with prophecy and with the imminence of the Second Advent' or 'divine vengeance' (pp. 95, 96).

As already mentioned, the short-time movement, though demanding regulation of juvenile employment first, was intended to regulate the conditions of adult working men.[53] This indicates the implicit yet significant bond between factory children and adults in the first place. This section thus sets out to explore the interrelation between the figure of the factory child and the infantilization of the working men, whose 'free agency' status was a matter of controversy in the 1830s. The analysis will help us examine the representation of factory children in a new light. The argument that adult men were not 'free agents' indeed marks the difference between Sadler's protectionism and his opponents' liberal attitude towards adult workmen. While both the Tory and the Whig agreed that children needed to be protected, the status of adult workmen was a matter for debate.

Sadler's view of the lack of free agency of the working class is clear from his speeches. At the beginning of his 1832 speech, which moved the Ten Hours Bill into its second reading, Sadler emphasized the importance of 'regulating the labour of children, and young persons, not being free agents, employed in our mills and factories'.[54] It should be noted that not only 'children' but also 'young persons' were brought into the field of concern of the regulation, which provides no clear distinction between children, teenagers, and even young adults. Furthermore, in the body of his speech, the argument that workers are not 'free agents' is extended to adults. Sadler points out that the employee, 'whatever be his age, and call him as free as you please', is 'almost entirely at the mercy of' the employer.[55] This is because, due to the unbalanced supply and demand of labour, the employed and the employer do not have equal bargaining power in the labour market. He confirms that 'even adults' are far 'from being free agents, in the proper meaning of the term', and 'dependent for their employment … upon the will

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[53] Gray, p. 5; Nardinelli, p. 11.

[54] Hansard, HC Deb, 16 March 1832, vol. 11, cc340-98.

[55] Michael Thomas Sadler, *Speech of Michael Thomas Sadler, Esq., in the House of Commons, Friday, March 16, 1832 On Moving the Second Reading of the Factories' Regulation Bill* (London: Seeley, 1832), p. 7.

of others'.[56] Thus Sadler denies the free agency status of adult workmen and aims at legislative interference to regulate labour of all ages. Nevertheless, he concludes that 'children, at all events, are not to be regarded as free labourers; and that it is the duty of this House to protect them from that system of cruelty and oppression to which I shall presently advert.'[57] It is evident that he starts with children as the target in his opening statement, then strategically moves to adult working men in the body of his speech, yet returns to the focus on children as his immediate goal in the initial phase of the legislative movement.

However, even when Sadler is dealing with the issue of factory children, the restricted or controlled status of adult workmen continues to linger throughout his speech and the theme even encompasses the status of employers. For example, tackling objections to the protective legislation, Sadler criticizes the objectors' notion that factory children could be considered free 'because their parents are "free agents" for them', and that even parish officers could be deemed as free agents for poor or illegitimate orphan children.[58] Moreover, speaking of employers, Sadler boldly remarks that the masters are 'as little free agents as the children whom they employ'.[59] As there is no legislative protection or regulation at the present, 'humane masters' will easily 'be driven out of the trade' by their cruel competitors.[60] Therefore, Sadler skilfully repudiates the free agency status, not just of children but also of working-class adults and even middle-class employers. All, regardless of age or class, are deemed by Sadler to be restricted and dependent. The legislative protection thus appears not only to protect the employed but also to benefit the employers, whose interests are the main concern of most objectors.

From the above evidence, we can see how Sadler's paternal interference makes the

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[56] Sadler, *Speech in the House of Commons March 16, 1832*, pp. 8-9.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[60] *Ibid.*

government adopt a parental role in relation to both the manufacturing and the working classes, including adults and children. This parental governmental role can be compared and contrasted with the ideal role assumed by working-class parents or middle-class masters in relation to factory children. In other words, there appears to be a power struggle between the government, working-class adults, and manufacturers. To some extent, the figure of the factory child is compounded with the image of the working-class adult infantilized by the paternal government or deprived by the manufacturers.

However, between the infantilized working-class adults and the factory children, although within the same representation of the factory child figure, there appears an inherent contradiction between the different natures of adult males and children. That is to say that, although in the short hours movement both children and adult working men were framed as requiring protection because of a lack of free agency, children were originally considered not to be free agents but to be dependent and subordinate in the family, whereas working men approached legislative regulation as a means to restore, as of right, their own threatened free agency.[61] Thus there appeared a power struggle between working-class operatives and governmental paternalists, a tension within the Tory-Radical alliance underlying their apparent agreement. Though the adult man was deprived of his independent status through the rhetoric of paternalism and infantilization, the radical one sought to retain his free agency through the movement. There is a fine line between the seemingly vulnerable factory child and the possibly aggressive and masculine factory adult. The inherent conflict in the campaign is also seen in fictional representations, such as that of the factory boy and later young man in Frances Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, to be further discussed in the following chapter.

Pinpointing the tension within the Tory-Radial alliance, Gray points out that 'paternalism can be seen as a theatre of negotiated power, and implicit contract between

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[61] Gray, p. 31.

governors and governed'. [62] It is true that many working-class activists, though seemingly sharing the paternalistic language of the ruling class, actually aimed to regain their own patriarchal rights as male breadwinners. Thus, while the idealized form of social relationship in the paternal government's vision resembles a harmonious yet hierarchical family, the radical workers were likely to clash with employers and the state when necessary to regain their 'manly independence and patriarchal protection'. [63] Such is the fragile balancing point in cross-class paternalism.

Indeed, the spectrum of paternalism has different connotations for members of different classes. For employers, some paternalistic factory masters also considered themselves fathers of their employees, the infantilized working-class operatives. [64] This kind of benevolent fatherly image of the factory owner is also represented in narratives like Montague's *Mary Ashley*, to be further discussed in the third chapter.

Moreover, as Gray also notices, gender difference was implied in patriarchal protection. The anxiety about child protection always had 'gender connotations'; concerns about childhood innocence and dependence were 'focused particularly on the female child, and implicitly on adult femininity as well'. [65] Therefore, the factory child figure eventually took in not only adult working men but also working-class women, who became the next target of factory regulation in the 1840s, after factory children. This changing focus of the short-time movement from children to women was also reflected in fiction, particularly Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* and *The Wrongs of Woman*, to be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

IV. Age Definition of Children

Paternalist concern for factory children eventually associated the factory child

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[62] Gray, p. 50.
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] See also Gray, p. 49.
[65] Gray, p. 34.

figure with working-class men and women, all of whom could be considered as objects of protection, being dependent temporarily (as in the case of the male adults) or inherently (like children and women in the Victorian concept) on a father-figure's care. Yet, one point that distinguishes the child from the male adult, who could be his own master and ideally become a free agent, is the age at which one is regarded as a grown-up. The following section will pinpoint the age problem in the factory movement and examine the condition and age definition of factory 'children' in the early Victorian period.

We shall pay attention to the varied definitions of a 'child' and the instability of the term in the nineteenth century, especially in the labour market. As Peter Kirby has observed, nineteenth-century social commentators were inconsistent in their use of the word 'child', which also partly reflects the diverse historic practices of child labour.[66] Apprenticeships in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, for instance, tended to commence at 14, but most apprentices were not thought of as 'adult' workers until they had emerged from their terms, aged between 21 and 24.[67] Moreover, from the biological point of view, as early nineteenth-century children achieved biological maturity about two years later than modern children, biological childhood itself actually lasted longer in the past, which also affected the Victorian understanding of childhood and the age definition of the child.[68] This was important, since attainment of physical maturity, or puberty, seems to have been a critical factor in the entry of children to the labour market, forming a transition 'from dependency to working life'.[69] Early nineteenth-century governments actually tried to establish definitions of 'childhood'. The Children's Employment Commission of 1842, for example, considered those aged below 13 to be 'children' and called those aged 13 to 18 'young persons', while the

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[66] Peter Kirby, *Child Labour in Britain, 1750-1870* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 10.
[67] Kirby, p. 10.
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] *Ibid.*

factory inspectors used a similar classification for much of the nineteenth century.[70] Still, child workers were not registered accurately in the major demographic sources of the early nineteenth century; even in 1841, the census abstracts only provided aggregate occupation statistics for the age groups '20 years of age and upward' and 'Under 20 years of age'.[71] Thus we can conclude that the governmental definition and the biological duration of childhood in the 1840s covers a longer period than childhood in the modern concept, and that the nineteenth-century 'young persons' roughly overlaps with the age group known as 'teenagers' in the twentieth-century concept, though with varied understandings in different labouring contexts.

To further scrutinize the Victorian conception of children, we must return to the eighteenth century, when Rousseau laid the groundwork for the Romantic idea of the child.[72] Childhood for Rousseau extended to the age of 20 or so, during which time the child was to be kept away from society in order not to be polluted.[73] Thus we can see that the desire to protect children or young persons aged under or around 20 had been developed from Rousseau's time. Well into the nineteenth century, as Sally Shuttleworth also indicates, 'the concept of a child, with reference to age, was decidedly elastic' and 'shifting markedly according to context'.[74] Texts of the nineteenth century vary greatly as to the age range of 'childhood' or 'youth'; childhood also seemed to include puberty or adolescence at that time.[75] Thus, it is difficult to obtain a precise age definition of childhood in the nineteenth century, which also reflects 'the Victorians' own confusion and lack of certainty in this area'.[76] Since Shuttleworth points out that the Victorian middle and upper classes tended to extend the protected domain of childhood, despite

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[70] Peter Kirby, *Child Labour in Britain, 1750-1870* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 20, note 5. See also Driver, p. 244.

[71] Kirby, p. 11.

[72] See, for example, Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 5. The Romantic influence on childhood is further discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

[73] Shuttleworth, p. 5.

[74] Shuttleworth, p. 10.

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] *Ibid.*

21 being the age of majority, I would like to examine how they defined the age range of protection for working-class children. In my study, I thus also follow the elastic Victorian concepts of children and childhood, examining literary and social representations of labouring 'children', where they were deemed so in the Victorian context.

As for the nineteenth-century attitude towards poor children, in Kydd's proclamation we find a kind of Christian social responsibility to protect poor children and to sympathize with helpless and hopeful infancy:

> It has been held by the wisest and greatest of British statesmen that the children of the poor have especial claims on society; in the Church they are recognised as 'God's own poor.' Under the constitution their rights in former times were especially conserved, and made 'part and parcel' of the law of the land. Infancy is the period of life which, because of its helplessness and hopefulness, has especial claims on human sympathies – claims sanctified by the words – 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.'[77]

Indeed, Christian language and ideology prevail in the Ten Hours campaign for the protection of factory children. Gray also observes that, as factory reform proliferated in the 1830s and 40s, it claimed a language of 'Christian benevolence and social and moral order'.[78] This will be further manifested in the examination of the Evangelical influence on the Ten Hours Movement, through discussion of Ashley and Tonna in Chapters Four and Five.

To further understand the fluid definition of the child at the time of the Ten Hours Movement, we can examine the campaigners' age definitions of children or young persons for the purpose of entitlement to legislative protection. As revealed in Sadler's 1832 speech, although the initial target of legislation was proclaimed to be children, the object of concern actually includes teenagers and young adults. As Sadler announces,

> The principal features of this [ten hours] bill for regulating the labour of children and other young persons in mills and factories, are these: – First, to prohibit the

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[77] Kydd, p. 15.
[78] Gray, p. 22.

labour of infants therein under the age of *nine* years; to limit the actual work, from *nine to eighteen* years of age, to ten hours daily, exclusive of the time allowed for meals and refreshment, with an abatement of two hours on the Saturday, as a necessary preparation for the Sabbath; and to forbid all night-work under the age of *twenty-one*.[79] (Emphasis added)

As we can see, Sadler's bill divides children, teenagers, and young adults into three groups in regard to work: the youngest children (or so-called 'infants') under nine are prohibited from all work, the middle group ranging from children above nine to teenagers under eighteen are all treated the same and entitled to a ten-hour working day, and all young people including young adults under twenty-one are forbidden to perform night work. On the basis of this classification, we can raise questions about the definition of infant children (designated as under nine by Sadler), the ambiguity of the distinction between children and teenagers (from nine to eighteen years old) who constitute the main group of 'factory children' in the legislative purview, and the extended protection assigned to young adults (under twenty-one).

First, to further understand the age definition and concern for labouring infant children, we can compare the difference regarding ages and working hours in the legislative regulations contained in Sadler's bill and Sir Robert Peel's earlier one. As indicated in Sadler's own speech, Sir Robert Peel's 1815 measure prohibited all children under 'ten' (rather than 'nine' in Sadler's regulation) from working. Thus there was a one-year age difference between the two measures, Sadler's later one allowing children aged between nine and ten to work as well. On this point, Sadler explained, 'The late Sir Robert Peel's bill originally fixed upon the age of ten, which was ultimately reduced to that of nine, where the recent measure leaves it.'[80] Thus Sadler actually conformed to the enforcement of Peel's Act as regards the age definition of infantile children prohibited from work. Yet considering this, Sadler points out that in the 5th of Elizabeth, children under *twelve* were deemed '*non potentes in corpore*', which shows that, despite

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[79] Sadler, *Speech in the House of Commons March 16, 1832*, p. 34.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

the measure, he still considered children aged nine too young to work.[81]

We can draw upon Lord Althorp's 1833 Factory Act for further comparison in distinguishing the different policies for children and adolescents. While Althorp's Act of 1833 forbade employment of children under nine, which was consistent with Sadler's bill, the law limited children and young teenagers between *nine* and *thirteen* only to a relatively short eight-hour working day, plus two hours of education. While Sadler stated that he had intended to propose a remission of an hour each day or six hours each week for children under *fourteen* for education, he eventually dropped this in order not to endanger his current venture.[82] Yet Sadler required children and teenagers between *nine* and *eighteen* to work for ten hours a day. It appears that Sadler's bill shows great concern for teenagers aged between thirteen and eighteen, who were neglected in the regulations of Althorp's Act. As already discussed, the 1833 act revealed an administrative trick by the Whigs to hinder the ten hours bill from benefitting working adults. Although Sadler's bill was also partisan, its age limit for protection was nevertheless consistent with Hobhouse's Act in 1831, which allowed longer working hours, up to twelve, for individuals under eighteen. Robert Hyde Greg, the opponent of factory reform, in his 1837 work reviewed the factory regulations of the early nineteenth century. As Greg observed, the 1816 bill made all children under *sixteen* work twelve hours per working day.[83] Hobhouse's Act of 1831 further entitled all under *eighteen*, advancing from sixteen, to protection. Yet Hobhouse's Act was against mill owners' interests, as Greg indicated, and was scarcely in operation.[84] Thus Sadler later proposed his factory regulation bill, with a limit placed on working hours for individuals under eighteen as well. Nevertheless, in so doing, Sadler intended to limit not only child but

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[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] Robert Hyde Greg, *The Factory Question Considered in Relation to Its Effects on the Health and Morals of Those Employed in Factories, and the 'Ten Hours Bill,' in Relation to Its Effects Upon the Manufactures of England, and Those of Foreign Countries* (London: J. Ridgway and Sons, 1837), p. 6.
[84] Greg, p. 7.

also adult labour to ten hours.[85]

Thus, for Sadler's bill, there seemed little distinction between children and teenagers. As Gray has also observed, 'many of the "children" invoked in ten-hours propaganda' were actually 'teenaged workers', being attached with 'strategic importance'.[86] Behind this is the historians' analysis that teenaged workers actually outnumbered younger children and formed 'a large proportion of such key groups as cotton piecers' and others in factories by the 1830s, when 'the employment of younger children was probably already diminishing'.[87] Thus, the study of the representation of factory children of this period would inevitably include teenagers as well.

Still, there is a point of concern about the varied limits of working hours for these working children and adolescents – ten (demanded by Sadler), twelve (in Peel's 1815 measure and Hobhouse's 1831 Act), and eight hours for individuals under thirteen only (trickily prescribed by Althorp's 1833 Act). As already discussed, the eight-hour limit for young children proposed by Althorp's Act was attacked by supporters of the Ten Hours Bill, one reason being that it excluded the possibility of benefitting working adults. Regarding the ten working hours limit, Sadler explained that Peel originally intended to limit factory children's working hours to ten hours for laborious employment, plus the time for recreation and meals, thus twelve and a half hours in total per day.[88] He also quoted some medical authorities to support the claim that ten working hours were actually already too many for children. Dr Jones, for example, 'asserts that eight or nine hours are the longest period which he could sanction'.[89] Dr Winstanley 'affirms that eleven hours could not be endured without injury'. Sadler further highlights the statement of Mr Simmons, a senior surgeon, that even adults could hardly be capable of more prolonged exertion than 'nine hours in winter and ten in

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[85] Greg, p. 7.
[86] Gray, p. 32.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] Sadler, *Speech in the House of Commons March 16, 1832*, p. 36.
[89] *Ibid.*

summer'.[90] Thus the average working hours approved by the physicians mentioned by Sadler are about eight to ten hours, and moreover Sadler uses medical men's statements to support the understanding of the physical conditions of adults as well as children. Besides justifying his support for amending the working hours from twelve to ten for children, Sadler points out that this measure could be properly applied to adults as well. Therefore, underlying the working hours regulation is the medical understanding of the physicality of children and adults in the nineteenth century, along with the partisan strategies of working-class regulation.

Finally, why did Sadler even propose prohibiting night work for young adults under twenty-one? Besides the concern for physical security, this proposal is possibly related to the morality of female workers. In fact, Hobhouse's Act of 1831 already prohibited night work for all under twenty-one. Concerning night-time labour, Sadler provided accounts of factories where the sexes were mixed together at night, his aim being to point out the great depravity of the workers.[91] He further emphasized that 'women and children' were now indulging in 'revolting indecency', as debauchery greatly increased in many night-working mills, which, in Sadler's words, were, 'little better than brothels'.[92] Sadler had even 'contemplated putting down night-labour altogether'.[93] As we can see, here women's sexual morality is specifically brought into the area of concern, along with children's welfare. The bond between children and women in the Ten Hours campaign became more evident in the 1840s, when Ashley focused on working women and their family role in advocating factory legislation. The female workers were also portrayed in Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* and *The Wrongs of Women*, to be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

As Nardinilli suggests, the factory child is the pertinent 'symbol' of industrial

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[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[92] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

revolution and harsh employment. Nevertheless, with investigation into the debates on factory legislation, we shall find the factory child figure to be more than just a symbol, but rather a complex mixture of real-life children and young persons, together with related adult working men and women, at a point of convergence of different strands of ideology related to class, gender, and childhood. The definition or implications of the factory child were also under construction in the process of legislative debate. This study will therefore examine the factory child as a contested category, with the representations and the construction of its meanings in fiction and non-fiction alongside the Ten Hours Movement.

Chapter Two
Factory Children and Machinery:
From Injured Bodies towards a Cooperative Body[1]

Introduction: Mechanization and the New Human-Machine Relationship

In the second half of the 1830s, while the factory movement carried on under the Tory-Radical alliance, Chartist agitation also largely prospered in the North. The local Chartist organizations to some extent kept some Short Time Committees going.[2] In Parliament, Lord Ashley proposed a ten hours clause in 1837, describing 'the effects of speedier machinery in increasing children's labour'.[3] Although these attempts were defeated, public interest had been further aroused. The novelist Frances Trollope became aware of the factory question and decided to write about it to stimulate public concern.[4] With the assistance of introductions from Ashley to various Ten Hours leaders, in 1838 Frances Trollope and her son Thomas Adolphus visited factory towns, where they were shocked by the 'horrors of uncivilised savagery and hopeless abject misery'.[5] In their interviews with local people in Yorkshire and Lancashire, they found Oastler the most impressive figure, sharing his collection of pamphlets and scrap books and displaying 'the dramatic power of his oratory' in his meetings.[6] These personal investigations and Oastler's papers were woven into Trollope's later novel, *Michael Armstrong*, published in twelve parts in 1839 and 1840, which is considered the first novel of factory life.[7]

This chapter deals with the relationship and interaction between factory children

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[1] In *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), Joseph Bizup discusses the idea of 'a cooperative body' in his first chapter: 'One Co-operative Body: the Rhetoric of the Factory System'. While Bizup uses pro-industrial discourses by defenders of the factory system to illustrate the idea, here I use reformist writings to demonstrate that eventually they also work toward this end.

[2] J. T. Ward, *The Factory Movement 1830-55* (Macmillan, 1962; Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1970), pp. 201-02.

[3] Ward, p. 204.

[4] Cecil Herbert Driver, *Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 403; Ward, p. 206.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

and machinery, as portrayed in a constellation of works surrounding Frances Trollope's industrial novel *Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1839-40). It addresses influences from related literary works (factory drama, poetry, and fiction) and non-literary discourses (memoirs, journalistic writings, social research and medical evidence). It will trace how the representation of factory children and machinery in the 1830s and 1840s was rooted in earlier literature related to the Luddites and how such representations assimilated the contemporary discourse on slavery. This chapter will also investigate how the industrial novel borrowed from earlier literary traditions of melodrama, how it absorbed contemporary journalistic writings and social discourses, and incorporated illustrations, thereby becoming a unique form of mixed text.

The representation of the human-machine relationship in industrial discourse can be roughly divided into three overlapping phases: people breaking machines; machinery smashing people (literally and metaphorically); and eventually 'cooperation' between factory children and machinery. With the collision between factory workers and machinery (such as Luddites breaking machinery and children maimed by machinery), there emerged a new reformative impetus to regulate factories as well as to reconcile social conflicts between different classes. *The First Report of the Factories Inquiry Commission* (1833), though a deliberate riposte to the Report of Sadler's Committee (1832), discussed in the previous chapter, paid regulatory attention to factory children:

> Children employed in factories, as a distinct class, form a very considerable proportion of the infant population. We have found that the numbers so employed are rapidly increasing, not only in proportion to the increase of the population employed in manufacturing industry, but, in consequence of the tendency of improvements in machinery to throw more and more of the work upon children, to the displacement of adult labour.[8]

The report thus also attributes the growing numbers of factory children and dismissal of adults to mechanization. Although some twentieth-century historians, like Eric Hopkins,

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[8] Factories Inquiry Commission, *First report of the Central Board of His Majesty's commissioners appointed to collect information in the manufacturing districts, as to the employment of children in factories, and as to the propriety and means of curtailing the hours of their labour: with minutes of evidence, and reports by the district commissioners* (London, 1833), p. 51.

contend that in 1830 'factory children formed only a small proportion of the total work force in the factories, and only a minute proportion of the sum total of all children at work', the 'peculiarly harmful nature of their long hours of work' and the important role factory children played in the reform movement and 'in the repercussions for other forms of child labour (and adult labour, too)' are validated in a range of historical scholarship.[9] This chapter, then, is going to examine the ideas and depictions of the harmful nature of factory work, especially in connection with machinery, in reformist writings. It will examine the significance of factory children in the social evolution of mechanization and of the factory movement, as well as in the literary development of the industrial novel.

To structure this chapter, I use the novel *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40) as the central thread linking the diverse elements discussed in different sections. Frances Trollope offers a horrifying image of factory children struggling with machinery in her industrial novel *Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy*. Pinpointing the specific working scene of factory children alongside machinery, we can observe how the writer presents a direct clash between vulnerable human beings and the monstrous machines. We can thus probe contemporary worries about 'the machine question'.

In this chapter there is a threefold purpose to the analysis of the evolution of the human-machine relationship (from injured bodies to a vision of a cooperative body) as portrayed by the playwright John Walker, journalist John Brown, novelist Frances Trollope, and social commentator John C. Cobden. First, I shall scrutinize the representations of factory children interacting with machinery. Through this exercise I shall examine the new human-machine relationship as perceived and presented by their works: the play *The Factory Lad* (1832), *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (1832), the novel *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40), and a collection called *The White Slaves of England,*

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[9] Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-class Children in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester [u.a.]: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 73-74. To be specific, Hopkins states that in 1830 'only about 3 per cent of the working population' worked in factories, and that 'the number of children [under fourteen] in the factories' comprised only 'about 13 per cent of all factory workers'.

Compiled from Official Documents with Twelve Spirited Illustrations (1853). I shall also look at how the representations in various materials supplement each other to constitute an overall cultural imagery of the mechanizing decades in the first half of the nineteenth century.[10] Using descriptions of injured human bodies and broken machines, I shall analyze the tension and violence brought about by mechanization. In the later representation of a more sustainable and less bloody human-machine interaction offered by Trollope, we shall see the writer's projection of a cooperative body combining human beings and machinery, forming a vision for a new mechanized era. Second, I shall discuss the way the representations of the human-machine relationship embody class struggles. In parallel with the process of harmonizing the human-machine interaction, the activist or reformist writers strive to achieve a harmonious collaboration between the middle and working classes. Third, as to the formal medium through which the representations are made, I shall show how the industrial novel as a new subgenre is correspondingly in transition during this period, developing from 'fragmented pieces' (combining forms and absorbing elements from literary and social discourses) to likewise become a functional 'single machine'. To sum up, the chapter will demonstrate the unifying concept of an evolution from injured bodies towards a cooperative body in three interconnected and mutually reflective facets: the human-machine relationship, class relationships, and the formation of the industrial novel as a mixed text. The concept is crystallized by the representations of the collision and reconciliation between factory children and machinery, which can be further applied to social class relationships and to the literary development of the industrial novel.

I. From Luddism (1811-17) to the Melodrama *The Factory Lad* (1832)

Pre-existing tensions surrounding the factory system, class conflict, and social

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[10] For historical studies on industrialization and mechanization in the long nineteenth century, see, for example, E. J. Hobsbawm and Chris Wrigley, *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day* (New York: New Press, 1999); Patrick Karl O'Brien and Roland E. Quinault ed., *The Industrial Revolution and British Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

anxieties surrounding industrialism were sharpened with the intensification of mechanized production in the second decade of the nineteenth century. If machinery is the crystallization of industrial prosperity as seen in the eyes of the apologists for the factory system, it is also the embodiment of the factory system's evils which people sought literally to smash.

The historical Luddite attacks took place prominently during 1811 and 1817. Beginning with small riots, as E. P. Thompson indicates, 'in November 1811, Luddism appeared in a much more disciplined form'.[11] Skilled English labourers, mostly textile workers, organized themselves into disciplined bands and, as Steven E. Jones also suggests, 'systematically smashed the kinds of machinery they saw as unfair to their craft and their trade'.[12] The motivation of the systematic actions of the machine breakers, in Jones's viewpoint, derived from their resistance to mechanization, or the advancement of technology.[13] Focussing on the evolution of people's attitudes towards technological development, Jones deals with Luddism in terms of the impact of mechanization on workers' lives.[14] As the introduction of steam engines, new power looms and spinning machines gradually transformed the workforce in factories, skilled male labourers were replaced by machinery and unskilled workers, usually women and children.[15] Anger at the consequent loss of employment and ignorance of the new technology thus brought about resentment of and violence towards machinery. However,

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[11] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 605.
[12] Steven E. Jones explains that the original historical Luddites were skilled English labourers, and mostly textile workers, who 'from about 1811 to 1817 organized into secret bands' and 'systematically smashed the kinds of machinery they saw as unfair to their craft and their trade'. Steven E. Jones, *Against Technology: From Luddites to Neo-Luddism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 3.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] The mechanical advances include: 'invention of the steam engine by the Scots engineer, James Watt (1763-1819); development of the spinning jenny, a machine that could spin several threads simultaneously, by an Englishman, James Hargreaves (sometimes spelled Hargraves, d. 1778); construction of the spinning frame, a water-powered machine that had a much larger capacity than the jenny but could spin only coarse thread, by an English manufacturer, Sir Richard Arkwright (1732-1792); and invention of the spinning mule, a machine that made possible large-scale production of high-quality thread and yarn, by an Englishman, Samuel Crompton (1753-1827)'. See David J. Bradshaw and Suzanne Ozment (ed.), *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings about Work* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), p. 218, note 1.

in Thompson's interpretation, 'Luddism can be seen as a violent eruption of feeling against unrestrained industrial capitalism'.[16] As a Marxist historical work, Thompson's analysis brings out the opposed positions of industrial labourers and capitalists. He distinguishes the Luddite movement also by its political activism in this context.[17] Yet he admits that, in the popular mind, apparently Luddism lingers as 'an uncouth, spontaneous affair of illiterate handworkers, blindly resisting machinery'.[18]

Approaching the subject from alternate historiographical perspectives, Thompson and Jones give different explanations of the motives behind Luddism. Yet both the threat of mechanization to workers' livelihood and the class conflict intensified by the newly-introduced economic system are plausible as factors influencing Luddism. The eventual outcome of the resentment against mechanization, as Jones and Thompson both point out, is that the Luddites organized themselves into disciplined groups and violently attacked machinery. The machinery acted as a catalyst for the explosion. From the collision with machinery, there burst a rebellious and reformative impetus for the workmen to unite and fight for their rights. Although they took action in an unlawful and destructive way, their deeds were a positive affirmation of workers' rights, undertaken on their own behalf.

As mechanization and *laissez faire* economics brought them manifest injury, the industrial workers gradually organized themselves with the aim of wrecking machinery in a systematic way and 'in a body'.[19] In *An Appeal to the Nation* in 1812, Captain Raynes called on the Luddites to 'make a desperate effort to rise in a body'.[20] It reveals an attempt by the workers to become united. It also shows how their emotions were directed against the machinery which abruptly disrupted their employment. Although further historical analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is in this historical

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[16] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class,* p. 601.
[17] *Ibid.,* p. 604.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.,* pp. 600-01, 657.
[20] *Ibid.,* p. 657.

context that I would like to examine the human-machine relationship as presented in literary and non-literary industrial discourses.

With reference to the central idea of this chapter, at first the laid-off workers are metaphorically 'injured bodies' because of mechanization (as we shall also see in *The Factory Lad*). Thus there appears a split between the workers and machinery; they cannot cooperate and coexist. Simultaneously, there is a crack in the master-man relationship, since the mill owner dismisses workers after starting to use the new machines. Yet the workers strive to organize themselves into a 'cooperative body' to break machinery and thus conflict occurs. The machinery is the materialization of the abstract powers of industrial invention and technological advance. Yet in breaking machinery the workers simultaneously protest against capitalism. The machinery under attack is also the embodiment of the workers' oppression, the evils of industrial capitalism and the 'exploitation of the factory system'.[21] Breaking machinery thus symbolizes the proletarians' defiance of the capitalists, as the machinery belongs to mill owners and displaces labourers' work. Such symbolism has its roots in historical phenomena, yet in imaginative literature we can clearly examine its concrete representations. This is the first type of human-machine interaction I am going to deal with: when working-class people (injured, then cooperating with each other) break machines.

John Walker's *The Factory Lad* (1832) is a reasonably well-known factory melodrama on the Luddite theme.[22] The play antedates Frances Trollope's industrial novel *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1839-40) by almost eight years. It was set in Lancashire and presented at the Surrey Theatre in 1832.[23] In parallel with historical

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[21] *Ibid.,* pp. 656-57.

[22] *The Factory Lad*, as a Surrey play, was 'performed only six times when it first came out', but 'it had at least some acting life' as indicated by its presence in *Duncombe's British Theatre* and *Dick's Standard Plays*. Michael R. Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, I. *Dramas 1800-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), pp. 204-05.

[23] 'John Walker's play The Factory Lad was first performed on Monday 15 October 1832 at the Surrey Theatre in Blackfriars, its run of six nights probably average for a production at a theatre with a local community audience.' Robin Estill, 'The Factory Lad: Melodrama as Propaganda', *Theatre Quarterly,* 1

events, the play presents both workmen's violence against machinery and the conflict between labourers and the mill owner. To summarize, the play begins with the young mill owner, because of installation of machinery, dismissing workers hired by the late mill owner. After mutual consolation and conspiracy among the dismissed workers, the play reaches its climax as they break machinery and destroy the factory. As a result, the master is infuriated and tries to apprehend the labourers for trial.

It is intriguing that the play approached once more what was, by this stage, an old social theme of mechanization and Luddism. The play seems to blur the line between different times, as well as cutting across different places (the North and South of England, where the events happened and the play was presented). It grasps the general concept of Luddism: that labourers strenuously resist the installation of machinery which replaces their work. Their anger and hostility is embodied in the workmen's joint action of breaking machinery and in the consequent blazing fire at the mill. The playbill of *The Factory Lad* clearly advertised the theme of the workmen's violent resistance to machinery. Pasted up outside the Surrey Theatre in Blackfriars Road, it highlighted the 'Determination of the men to resist the introduction of Steam and Manufactory by Power Looms'.[24] With 'Destruction of the Factory by Fire!' as a spectacular stunt, it called attention to the presentation of the 'EXTERIOR OF LARGE FACTORY' and its 'interior lighted with gas', claiming that it would be a 'Romantic View by Moonlight, with Factory in the distance, still burning'.[25] As a way of expressing and releasing emotions, the blazing flames of the factory represent the raging anger that explodes inside the workers. The workmen take revenge on the machinery, which is reduced to ashes in the fire, for their loss of livelihood. Such representation also typifies nineteenth-century melodrama's characteristics as 'an intensely emotional genre, in

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(1971), 22-26 (p. 23).

[24] Quoted in James Leslie Smith, *Victorian Melodramas: Seven English, French, and American Melodramas* (London: Dent, 1976), p. 40.

[25] *Ibid.*

which a passion felt is a passion expressed'.[26]

Here we need to examine the appropriation and adjustment of English melodrama to represent domestic social issues and class politics during the nineteenth century as it moved away from an earlier association with Gothicism and the exotic to domestic realism. Yet its features of emotion and tension remain, as well as the dichotomy between good and evil. To begin with, the impetus of melodrama, as Booth explains, came from 'Gothic novels of terror and the supernatural' around 1790.[27] After 1820, he suggests, English melodrama gradually developed its own 'native settings, situations, and character types', with its range of subject matter extending over all walks of life.[28] Although the factory play is not really about the supernatural, the imagery of the 'monster spinning-mills'[29] can be related to or compared with the primitive terror of supernatural power found in the Gothic atmosphere. This similarity accounts for the phenomenon of the realistic depiction of English factory workers' life finding its way into melodrama. The setting and situations of the drama became more realistic, but the melodramatic 'thrills and sensations' were still 'most welcome on the stage'.[30] The burning factory is the exciting spectacle in the play; hence melodrama is a form perfectly adapted to the expression of anger at mechanization.

The intensified class struggle is another prominent theme of *The Factory Lad*. As Michael R. Booth indicates, it is reckoned to be the first treatment in English drama of 'industrial violence and antagonism between master and man'.[31] The tensions of the play centre on the class struggle. The conventional good-evil dichotomy of melodrama

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[26] Dickens, cited in Juliet John, 'Melodrama and its Criticism: An Essay in Memory of Sally Ledger', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 8 (2009) <www.19.bbk.ac.uk>, p. 4. For further reading on melodrama, see Maurice Willson Disher, *Blood and Thunder* (London: Muller, 1949); Simon Trussler, 'A Chronology of Early Melodrama', *Theatre Quarterly,* 1 (1971), 19-21; Michael R. Booth (ed.), *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, I. *Dramas 1800-1850* (Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 1-28.
[27] Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, I. *Dramas 1800-1850*, p. 24.
[28] *Ibid.,* p. 203.
[29] Frances Milton Trollope, *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (London: H. Colburn, 1840), p. iii, preface. Subsequent references are to this edition.
[30] Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, I. *Dramas 1800-1850*, p. 203.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 204-5

is thus represented by the opposition of the virtuous hero (the working-class man) and the heartless villain (the mill owner). As Sally Vernon states, 'the most common melodramatic pattern pits a powerful and cruel oppressor against an innocent and virtuous victim'.[32] As Booth further confirms, 'the moral polarity of melodrama easily shaped industrial themes into a bitter conflict between rich mill owner and villainous foreman on the one hand and employees or poor starving ex-employees on the other', although there are a few cases that look favourably on the master and oppose working-class riots.[33] Class conflict and bitterness was thus built into melodrama.[34] Here we can see how social themes and concerns (in this case 'industrial discontent, unemployment, machine-smashing, the theme of master-against-man') entered into drama, and in return how melodrama shaped and presented the social issues.[35] Melodrama then became 'mainly popular and proletarian in theme and treatment' and 'radical in tone' in the first half of the century, as is exemplified by *The Factory Lad*.[36] It covered social topics such as 'mechanisation and the new industrial capitalists'.[37] It reflected 'popular and radical feeling'.[38] It expressed social problems 'crudely and fantastically'.[39] Thus it made working-class recreation an outlet for their emotions, an escape from life and at the same time a reflection upon life.

Soon melodrama became the 'staple fare of working-class theatres like the Surrey',[40] where *The Factory Lad* staged the burning down of the factory. The Surrey was one of a number of 'minor' theatres on the south side of the Thames.[41] Robin Estill

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[32] Sally Vernon, 'Trouble up at t'Mill: the Rise and Decline of the Factory Play in the 1830s and 1840s', *Victorian Studies*, 20, no. 2 (1977), 117-39, p. 119.

[33] Michael R. Booth, 'Melodrama and the Working Class', in *Dramatic Dickens,* ed. by Carol Hanbery MacKay (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 96-109 (p. 101).

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 100. Here Booth suggests that 'the structure of melodrama has class conflict so built into it that something of this feeling permeates the whole genre.'

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[36] Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, I. *Dramas 1800-1850,* p. 27.

[37] Robin Estill, 'The Factory Lad: Melodrama as Propaganda', *Theatre Quarterly,* 1 (1971), 22-26 (p. 23).

[38] Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, I. *Dramas 1800-1850,* pp. 27-28.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[41] Katherine Newey, 'Climbing Boys and Factory Girls: Popular Melodramas of Working Life', *Journal of Victorian Culture,* 5.1 (2000), 28-44 (p. 34).

indicates that the Surrey Theatre was situated in a working-class area.[42] Here, given 'the strong sense of the interconnectedness of theatre and politics in working-class localities' as Katherine Newey points out, the theatres 'constituted a concentration of public meeting and recreation places' and catered for 'a mobile and politically aware working-class community'.[43] In terms of melodrama for the working class, which 'must have far exceeded the numbers performed for middle-class audiences', Booth offers the comprehensive observation that melodrama '*was* the Victorian working-class theatre'.[44] Therefore, considering the minor theatre as the pivot of the working-class locality, and noting the popularity of melodrama among the working class, we can draw inferences about the influence of *The Factory Lad* on its working-class audiences.

Examining the text of *The Factory Lad* more closely, we can pinpoint the specific confrontation between machinery and workmen in the play and study the remarks about mechanization made by both the working and mill-owning classes, which reveal the threat posed by machinery along with class antagonism. The steam engine enters the play from the beginning in the factory workers' dialogue (p. 207).[45] Working-class resentment against the steam engine is expressed in the words of Allen, the virtuous workman hero:

> 'That steam – that curse on mankind, that for the gain of a few, one or two, to ruin hundreds, is going to be at the factory! Instead of five-and-thirty good hands, there won't be ten wanted now, and them half boys and strangers' (p. 215).

This statement summarizes the attitude of the workmen in this play towards mechanical

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[42] Estill, 'The Factory Lad: Melodrama as Propaganda', p. 23. He further comments, 'Just up the road at the Rotunda (which later became a theatre), the National Union of the Working Classes [an Owenite-socialist organization] held lively public debates every Wednesday; radical free thought lectures were given at other times' (p. 23). Estill further suggests that 'the illegal newspapers [like the *Poor Man's Guardian*] were regularly sold at theatres, as places where large numbers of potential readers were to be found. Maybe at the Surrey … the audiences were radical enough to protect sellers from arrest' (p. 23).

[43] Newey, 'Climbing Boys and Factory Girls: Popular Melodramas of Working Life', pp. 35, 36. For the makeup of the Surrey audience, see also Vernon, 'Trouble up at t'Mill: the Rise and Decline of the Factory Play in the 1830s and 1840s', pp. 123-24.

[44] Booth, 'Melodrama and the Working Class', in *Dramatic Dickens*, p. 100.

[45] John Walker, *The Factory Lad! A Domestic Drama in Two Acts* (London: J. Duncombe, 1832), repr. in *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, I. *Dramas 1800-1850,* ed. by Booth, pp. 201-33. Subsequent references are to this edition.

advancement. The opening accusation laid against the steam engine as a 'curse on mankind' presents its inhuman power as a threat to humanity. The 'gain of a few' versus the 'ruin' of 'hundreds' underlines the opposed positions of the middle and working classes. He points out the threat of mechanization to working-class livelihood and its impact on the workforce structure: dismissal of workmen and employment of children.

Although their laying-off seems to directly result from mechanization, as 'steam be now going to do all the work' (p. 215), the workmen also blame the mill owner. Allen characterizes workmen as 'poor, hard-working, honest men, who ha' been for years toiling to do all for the good of a master, be now turned out o' doors' (p. 215). Here the workmen's anger is directed not only toward machinery but also to the mill owner. The workman also reminiscences about the late manufacturer's paternal affection which has come to an end. Allen's characterization of the virtuous workmen discharged by the young master denotes tension and hostility in the new master-man relationship; it reinforces the class stereotypes of workmen as heroes and the master as villain in melodrama. Even though the play does not really depict working conditions because no scene takes place inside the factory, as Booth argues, 'an elemental class hatred' can be 'so simply and powerfully stated because the hero-villain dichotomy of melodrama is the perfect vehicle for this expression'.[46]

In contrast to the dismissed workers' negative conception of mechanization, we hear the optimistic account of young Westwood, owner of the factory:

> [S]cience has opened to us her stores, and we shall be fools indeed not to take advantage of the good it brings. The time must come, and shortly, when even the labourer himself will freely acknowledge that our improvements in machinery and the aid afforded us by the use of steam will place England on a still nobler eminence... (p. 218)

In an echo of the apologists' vision to be discussed in Chapter Three, here we see praise of technology from the mill-owning class, who believe that improvements in machinery

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[46] Booth, 'Melodrama and the Working Class', in *Dramatic Dickens*, ed. by MacKay, p. 102.

will bring about national prosperity. Thus there is a sharp contrast between the viewpoints of the capitalist and labouring classes in regard to machinery.

The workmen's anger grows after they are laid off, and they decide to fight for their lost livelihood in a meeting called for mutual consolation and conspiracy at a public house. Their morale high, they shout repeatedly, 'Destruction to steam machinery!' (p. 220). For the working-class characters, crushing the machine is a symbolic action, affirming their own rights and crushing the oppression they have long endured. This is manifested in Rushton's exhortation that the workers should 'act in their own right, and crush oppression' (p. 223). As a pauper, poacher, and outcast living on the margins of society, Rushton acts in this play 'both as a spokesman for the factory workers and incites them to incendiarism'.[47] Rushton calls on everyone to take immediate action: 'Now, to the work – to the work! Break, crack, and split into ten thousand pieces these engines of your disgrace, your poverty, and your ruin! Now!' (p. 224) Now that the machinery has become their ruin and the target of their revenge, they must bring about its destruction. Echoing the historical Luddite incidents, here we see a symbolic action of machine breaking embodying political activism. Nevertheless there is a gap between history and dramatic representation in that, while the historical Luddites were organized and disciplined groups acting systematically, the melodramatic workmen are more like reckless rioters acting impulsively. This presentation suggests that melodrama is intended to offer sensational entertainment or even instant emotional relief, rather than to delineate a careful operational plan. In the drama, the working-class characters' heated discussion concludes rashly and is executed immediately. Following their dialogue, the stage instructions call for the workmen to rush into the factory, after which the 'Factory is seen blazing' (p. 224). The burning fire soon attracts the attention and anxiety of the working-class wives and children, provoking the mill owner to apprehend the workmen for trial. Accordingly, the human-machine relationship as

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[47] Newey, 'Climbing Boys and Factory Girls: Popular Melodramas of Working Life', pp. 36, 37.

represented in this melodrama consists of the workmen's violent and rather irrational counterattack upon the machinery, as well as the unjust system it symbolizes. The consequence is the destruction of the factory, injury to the mill owner's business, and a doomed future for the workmen themselves and their families.

In this representation of confrontation between men and machinery, one thing worth noticing is that the machinery and its destruction are actually concealed offstage. The audience can only see on the stage the exterior of the factory catching fire, and imagine, with the help of the dialogue, what might be happening inside. On the one hand, this mode of presentation is reasonable because the machinery, as compared with the factory building, may be more difficult to construct and less spectacular to look at. On the other hand, the hidden state of the machinery has the effect of adding to its mysterious power. It becomes a monster, or phantom, or some supernatural being whose image people have not experienced and do not understand. This effect makes it more formidable. In reality, the machinery, which lies inside the factories, cannot be seen by most people, but only by factory workers or those with authority to enter factories. Even the workmen, once dismissed following mechanization, might not have the opportunity to see it. Thus the 'invisibility' of the machinery conveys human fear of the unknown, arising from the early stage of interaction with machinery.

Thus *The Factory Lad* does not simply imitate social issues but revises them for dramatic production, and furthermore renovates the generic conventions of melodrama. Despite the familiar social theme, what was new in *The Factory Lad*, as Booth claims, was its artistic treatment: '*The Factory Lad* is exceptional for a melodrama in having no comic relief and an unhappy ending'.[48] The poor conditions of the workmen are depicted with severity and the protagonists do not attain a good outcome despite their 'virtue', a finale which subverts the conventional triumph of good over evil in melodrama. As we see at the end of the drama, the factory workers are arraigned as

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[48] Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, *I. Dramas 1800-1850*, p. 204.

incendiaries before Justice Bias. When the final curtain descends, Rushton fires, Westwood the mill owner falls, and then the soldiers level their muskets at Rushton (p. 233). The final tableau offers an ambivalent conclusion. It does not give relief to the working class but increases class distress. As Newey comments, there is neither 'the triumph of last-minute rescue' nor 'the certainty of defeat in death'.[49] It denies the 'dream world of ideal justice and eventual happiness' that domestic melodrama usually offers audiences.[50] Yet it does not suggest complete annihilation. Even by the standards of socially aware domestic melodrama, Booth argues, the radical social consciousness of *The Factory Lad* is advanced, and 'its unrelenting severity and power of serious dramatic expression also place it well ahead of its time'.[51] In transgressing the melodramatic formula, *The Factory Lad* is radical and revolutionary.

With the 'uncompromisingly "open" ending' of the play,[52] the playwright seems to invite and even stir working-class people to carry on with the drama, to take part in it, and to fight for their eventual happy ending in real life. Discussing the ending of *The Factory Lad*, Vernon states that 'the inconclusiveness and pessimism of the final scene suggest that solutions are not easily come by'.[53] As Newey suggests, the characters of the play can be seen 'an idealised version of their audience'.[54] The play was intended to enable the audience to make 'connections between the stage world and the world outside the theatre', thus inviting audience 'identification', 'sympathy', and even real action.[55] Exploring the possibilities of melodrama as a political vehicle, Estill also argues that *The Factory Lad* 'stands up well to examination as a propaganda piece, aimed to encourage working-class indignation and militancy'.[56] Implicitly in this play, as Estill suggests, there is an 'Owenite socialist argument' which contends that 'society

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[49] Newey, p. 38.
[50] Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, *I. Dramas 1800-1850*, p. 203.
[51] *Ibid.,* pp. 204-05.
[52] Estill, p. 22.
[53] Vernon, p. 125.
[54] Newey, p. 36.
[55] Newey, p. 40.
[56] Estill, p. 23.

should and could be based on a system of co-operation and harmony rather than competition and exploitation'.[57] Walker establishes this theme in the play when 'the workmen, as well as being good dutiful craftsmen, proud of the quality of their work, are all considerate and sympathetic towards one another, especially towards Rushton and Allen, and loyal to one another in adversity'.[58] This preference for mutual aid echoes the central theme of this chapter: that there is a trajectory from the injured bodies (here, metaphorically, the discharged workers, along with the wrecked factory as the capitalists' damaged property) towards a cooperative body (that is, a harmonious social body coordinating individuals and even reconciling classes) in early industrial fiction and drama in which machinery plays a key role.

The Factory Lad exemplifies the process through which the clash between machinery and people brought about innovation in literature, while the radical melodramatic representation in turn provoked a rebellious spirit of social reform. *The Factory Lad* thus demonstrates how industrial literature and society shaped and constituted each other mutually. The line between fiction and reality was blurred. As Booth comments, 'melodrama provides the richest material in English dramatic literature for the study of a rebellious class spirit in action, and an illuminatingly different insight into nineteenth-century social history'.[59] Booth also contends that 'in any consideration of English drama, the popular Victorian working-class theatre should be treated with no less respect and no less seriously than the novels of Dickens in the development of English fiction'.[60] Booth's remarks confirm the significance of melodrama both in social history and in literature.[61] Viewing the influence of melodrama on industrial novels, Newey points out that

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[57] Estill, p. 24.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, *I. Dramas 1800-1850*, p. 27.

[60] Booth, 'Melodrama and the Working Class', p. 107.

[61] On industrial melodrama, see Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965), pp. 136-39, and Michael R. Booth (ed.), *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century*, *I. Dramas 1800-1850* (Oxford University Press, 1969-76), pp. 204-05.

> The structural features of melodrama – its combination of domestic feeling with a 'rhetoric of reality', the theatricalised metonymic representation of the recognisable extra-theatrical world, and the plays' focus on workers' lives at the problematic intersection of private feeling and public social organisation – become crucial elements of the 'condition of England' novels of the 1840s.[62]

This analysis illustrates the subtle interrelations between melodramatic representations, private feelings, and social conditions, which also influence the nature of the industrial novel.[63] If the novel of the period was 'in flux, pressed by the stress of industrial and social transformations', the opportunities offered for novelists to experiment with writing on contemporary social and political issues had already been tested by the melodrama.[64] Most obviously, the novelistic characters of hero, villain, and victim come from the prototypes of nineteenth-century melodrama.[65] In my later discussion of Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, we shall further examine the melodramatic elements in the industrial novel.

II. *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (1832) and the Representation of Factory Accidents[66]

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[62] Newey, pp. 40-41.

[63] On melodrama and the nineteenth-century novel, see also Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). Brooks discusses melodrama as being in a sense 'a form of theatricality which will underlie novelistic efforts at representation – which will provide a model for the making of meaning in fictional dramatizations of existence' (p. 13). He states that the 'nineteenth-century novel needs such a theatricality … to get its meaning across, to invest in its renderings of life a sense of memorability and significance' (*ibid.*). See also J. Jeffrey Franklin 'The Novel Versus Melodrama', in *Serious Play: The Cultural Form of the Nineteenth-Century Realist Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 87-92.

[64] Newey, p. 41.

[65] On the interplay of melodrama and the novel in this period, especially in Dickens, see also Juliet John, *Dickens's Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). The fact that Frances Trollope 'attempts to imitate' Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, which was popular at that time, in 'some aspects of her story about a child abused' in *Michael Armstrong* may provide a further link with this. See Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 130; Louis François Cazamian, *The Social Novel in England, 1830-1850: Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 236.

[66] John Brown, *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (Firle: Caliban Books, 1977). Subsequent references are to this edition. It is a reprint of John Brown, *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, an Orphan Boy; Sent from the Workhouse of St. Pancras, London, at Seven Years of Age, to Endure the Horrors of a Cotton-Mill, through His Infancy of His Sufferings, Being the First Memoir of the Kind Published* (Manchester: John Doherty, 37, Withy-Grove, 1832). The memoir was first serialized and then issued in a pamphlet in 1828, reprinted in Manchester in 1832. See also Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social*

If people smashing machinery, as seen in *The Factory Lad* (1832), is one extreme form of the violent clash between men and machinery, machinery crushing people represents the other extreme; and this is what is encountered in *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (1832).[67] As these two industrial discourses of 1832 will respectively demonstrate, while people can damage machines, machinery can also kill or maim human beings. In John Brown's *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (1832), there is an account of child labour drawn from Blincoe's personal experience as a parish orphan sent to Lowdham Cotton Mill near Nottingham and then to Litton Cotton Mill in Derbyshire, a remote and bleak area.[68] It later becomes the model for Frances Trollope's hellish description of Deep Valley Mill in her novel *Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy* (1839-40).[69] Bloody and even fatal factory accidents in which machinery maims children are recorded in the memoir:

> [While attending a drawing frame,] just as she [Mary Richards, quite ten years of age] was taking off the weights, her apron was caught by the shaft. In an instant the poor girl was drawn by an irresistable [sic] force and dashed on the floor. She uttered the most heart-rending shrieks! (p. 36)

John Brown, the middle-class journalist as a narrator, describes the 'deplorable accident' as 'a scene of horror that exceeds the power of my pen to delineate' (p. 36). Then he continues to depict the scene through the eyes of the boy Blincoe, an 'agonized and

Narrative by Women, 1827-1867 (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 52.

[67] The memoir was written by John Brown, a Bolton journalist, from Blincoe's testimony of his experiences as a factory apprentice. See John Brown, *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (Firle: Caliban Books, 1977), Publisher's (Caliban Books) Preface, p. v. See also Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 139; and Mike Sanders, 'Manufacturing Accident: Industrialism and the Worker's Body in Early Victorian Fiction', *Victorian Literature and Culture,* 28 (2000), 313-29 (pp. 315-16).

[68] In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, 'there was a high demand for orphaned or abandoned children who were transported from London workhouses to drudgery as "apprentices" in the mills and factories of the north of England where they learned no real trade and earned only their meagre food and lodgings'. See Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 65. On eighteenth- and nineteenth-century apprentices and the *Blincoe Memoir*, see also Thomas Edward Jordan, 'Child labor', in *Victorian Childhood: Themes and Variations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987). pp. 120-21.

[69] Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860*, pp. 139, 144. See also Kestner, *Protest and Reform*, pp. 52-54, for a more detailed textual examination and comparison of the *Blincoe Memoir* and Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, which illustrates Trollope's appropriation of the source. In Ivanka Kovačević, *Fact into Fiction: English Literature and the Industrial Scene, 1750-1850* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), pp. 99-100, there is also a textual comparison of parallel extracts from the memoir and the factory-boy novel.

helpless beholder', with disturbing details and vivid imaginings of the machine crushing the girl's body (p. 36):

> He saw her whirled round and round with the shaft – he heard the bones of her arms, legs, thighs, etc. successively snap asunder, crushed, seemingly, to atoms, as the machinery whirled her round, and drew tighter and tighter her body with the works, her blood was scattered over the frame and streamed upon the floor, her head appeared dashed to pieces – at last, her mangled body was jammed in so fast, between the shafts and the floor, that the water being low and the wheels off the gear, it stopped the main shaft. (p. 36)

It is a dreadful and sensational account. In contrast to the factory lads who try to split machinery 'into ten thousand pieces', here the machinery seemingly crushes the body 'to atoms', and literally dashes her head 'to pieces', with bones, blood and flesh jammed, mixed and mangled together. Here we see the literally and severely injured body of a factory girl, representing the second type of human-machine interaction: machinery smashing people. Thus, we have seen the two types of extreme destruction: one of the physical structure of the machinery and the other of the physical body of the factory child. The exterior destruction can be deemed a recurrent trope in industrial discourses, reflecting intense inner fear and agony. We shall later see how Trollope appropriates this trope in her novel.

If we juxtapose *The Factory Lad* with the *Blincoe Memoir* (representations of two contrasting extremes of brutality between human beings and machinery), it is intriguing to find that they were published in the same year (1832), and referred to earlier incidents both of which took place in the 1810s. Thus the phases of human-machine interaction, and of its representation, overlap between these two texts. The *Blincoe Memoir* was published in 1832 by 'the trade-union leader, turned printer and publisher, John Doherty', though it first appeared in *The Lion* in five weekly episodes in 1828.[70] Robert Blincoe was born in about 1792, completed his apprenticeship at cotton factories in 1813, and worked as an adult operative until 1817. The appalling accident happened

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[70] Brown, *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe*, Publisher's (Caliban Books) Preface, p. v.

when he, as a parish boy from a workhouse in St Pancras, was sold and transported to cotton mills in the countryside, at a time when most mills needed water power to operate. While *The Factory Lad* is melodrama, Blincoe's *Memoir* was compiled and written by a journalist. It seems that radical sentiments against machinery were then expressed through various media, in different genres, taking literary and non-literary form. The fact that such contrasting, though equally brutal, incidents and images of human-machine interaction coexisted at approximately the same periods also signals that the development of the human-machine relationship is not a linear process. The representation also undergoes different writings and colourings, followed by successive rewritings and re-colourings. The construction of the representation is neither unified nor uncontroversial. It is a dynamic and recursive process.[71]

When we further compare representation of human-machine interaction in the *Blincoe Memoir* with that in the melodrama *The Factory Lad*, we see that in the journalistic text the violent clash between human beings and machinery is materialized in words, however bloody, rather than in shadows inside the mill as shown in the factory play. Now the reader is able to look inside the factory, stepping farther away from the exterior view. Narrative details of the violent accident in which machinery crushes a person vividly unfold before the reader, like a sensational news report.

In the incidents and narrations of machinery smashing people, figures of factory children emerge as a focus. They become the victims, and also witnesses and story-tellers, who recount the 'atrocity tales' from their own haunting personal experiences.[72] As we can see, the narrator uses direct quotations from Blincoe to present the unforgettable and traumatic impression upon his mind: 'I cannot describe',

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[71] In *The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1996), Patricia Ingham discusses the idea that the representation of gender and that of social class in mid-Victorian England were constantly 'in the making', and that 'it was not a unified and uncontroversial process' (p. 2). See also Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989), p. 3. Here I apply similar ideas to the representation of the human-machine relationship.

[72] Sanders, 'Manufacturing Accident: Industrialism and the Worker's Body in Early Victorian Fiction', pp. 315-16.

said Blincoe, 'my sensations at this appalling scene. I shouted out aloud for them to stop the wheels. When I saw her blood thrown about like water from a twirled mop, I fainted' (p. 36). Blincoe's words as quoted here are still very figurative, conforming to the journalist's style, which not only creates a horrific mental image but also shows the girl's transformation into a tool of work – a mop.

Therefore, from *The Factory Lad* to the *Blincoe Memoir*, there is a change in focus from the factory adult to the factory child. While it may be open to question whether nineteenth-century technological advancement contributed to reducing rates of adult labour and increasing those of child labour in textile factories, in terms of representations this change in the protagonists from adults to children makes the working class appear to be passive victims, like fragile children in need of protection.[73] In the *Blincoe Memoir* as well as in reformist novels like *Michael Armstrong*, the focus is on the factory children being injured by machines, rather than on adult labourers destroying machines. Still there is great tension and an imbalanced relationship between human beings and machinery. As for the human conditions, when the protagonists change from strong adult men to children, it implies the dwarfing of human beings by ever more powerful machinery. From a metaphorical perspective, with the representation of the smashed factory girl in the *Blincoe Memoir*, resistance to and dissatisfaction with mechanization is formulated in the defeatist attitude of victimization, expressing the mentality of the powerless. The working-class people are like infants with no strength to react. They can only passively suffer.

Thus explosive anger may be vented through Luddites breaking machines, yet defeated frustration is revealed through machinery smashing children, in an oscillation between two extremes, from the most violent revenge to the cruellest abuse. *The Factory Lad* represents a masculine, corporeal fight against machinery, providing

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[73] For historical study of the child labour rates from the late eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, see, for example, Peter Kirby, *Child Labour in Britain, 1750-1870* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 71-76.

workmen with an outlet for coarse emotions. The *Blincoe Memoir* depicts a cruel physical crushing of children by machinery, in a journalistic account of a factory boy's traumatic memory. The theme inspires drastic emotion – the anxiety about violence growing respectively into explosive anger and intense fear – embodied in two contrasting kinds of interaction with machinery.

The factory child injured in a deadly factory accident provides an impressive highlight of the *Blincoe Memoir*, considered as an instance of industrial narrative. Yet, as Mike Sanders notes, drawing on the research of David Vincent and John Burnett, such incidents are rarely mentioned in working-class writings.[74] As Sanders suggests, it is because 'tales of sudden maiming and injury appear to have held a peculiar fascination for higher class readers' that these accidental injuries, as effectively recounted by John Brown, the 'middle-class radical journalist', have attracted great attention.[75] Nevertheless, in later representations of the suffering factory child, as in Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, there is a shift in focus from the description of unusual accidents to the more typical daily working scene of 'employee exhaustion and overseer brutality'.[76] If we draw a comparison between the *Blincoe Memoir* and *Michael Armstrong,* we see that, though both focus on factory children, there is a point of difference in the kind of human-machine interaction each presents. Although factory cripples and children with deformities, as evidence of previous maiming, appear in industrial novels, the bloody and deadly accident as it appears in the memoir never takes place. For example, in the second chapter of *Michael Armstrong*, when Michael and his brother Teddy (both factory boys) first appear, Teddy is depicted as lame (vol. I, p. 40). In addition, when Trollope describes Michael, she says that 'though his limbs were wretchedly thin and attenuated', they were sufficiently elastic for a piecer (vol. I, p. 188). The industrial novel avoids representations of violent, bloody, and accidental

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[74] Sanders, 'Manufacturing Accident: Industrialism and the Worker's Body in Early Victorian Fiction', pp. 315-16.
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 316.
[76] *Ibid.*

clashes between men and machinery, which seem to be 'one-off' disasters causing sudden, severe and even deadly injuries. Instead, the novel dwells on the more long-term and continuous relationship between factory children and machinery – an alarmingly fragile and dangerous balance – their on-going suffering and consumption, and possible eventual exhaustion.

The reason for this changing focus in novelistic representation, as Sanders reveals, lies in the campaigns of the Factory Act Movement around 1840, in which the 'most powerful symbol of the harm wreaked on working-class bodies' was considered to be 'that of the figure of the malnourished factory-child, deformed or exhausted as a result of unnatural labor, and subjected to intolerable punishments by cruel overseers'.[77] Thus, 'to achieve its propagandist aims', even Trollope's sensational account, which draws heavily on the *Blincoe Memoir*, makes no use of the accident scene but dwells on scenes of factory children working painstakingly alongside machinery.[78] Therefore, depictions of abrupt outbreaks of violent accidents become less common in slightly later industrial discourse. To some extent, the novel's representation is increasingly tamed and rationalized. In Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, the industrial novel, in a subtle continuance and transformation of the social theme and writing style, presents a different relationship between factory children and machinery: a more durable 'cooperation' which I suggest comprises the third phase of the human-machine interaction, introduced in the hope of attaining a new balance after the drastic swings between two unsustainable extremes. Still, the themes persist – struggles between machinery and human beings, in turn implying tension between classes, fear of physical injuries and harm to humanity.

III. Factory Children in the Industrial Novel *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40)

Frances Trollope's *Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*

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[77] *Ibid.*
[78] *Ibid.*

(1839-40) can be viewed as a site where different bodies of fictional and non-fictional discourses, such as melodrama and journalistic writings, are assembled and appropriated into a new creative work. The novel inherits melodramatic elements (stereotyped characters of working-class people as virtuous and honest heroes and the mill owner as the selfish and greedy villain, together with realistic settings but implausibly horrifying plots and sensational descriptions), yet Trollope also draws heavily on the social discourse of the *Blincoe Memoir* and makes a factory boy her protagonist in the novel. Thus *Michael Armstrong* is a curious integration and transformation of the theme, which picks up threads from the *Factory Lad* melodrama and adopts material from the *Blincoe Memoir,* but uses them to form a genre in its own right. The novel itself is constructed like a new piece of machinery, while its content deals with the new machine problem. The novelistic representations also reflect the pursuit of harmonious cooperation, which transcend generic barriers, human-machine differences, and class boundaries.

Following the contemporary agitation for further factory legislation, *Michael Armstrong* was seen as sensational propaganda when it first appeared in twelve shilling parts during 1839-40.[79] Trollope purported to draw the attention of her readers to 'the fearful evils inherent in the Factory System, as carried out in our manufacturing towns' (p. iii, preface). The novel was lavishly illustrated with engravings by Auguste Hervieu, R. W. Buss, and Thomas Onwhyn. Their illustrations, as W. H. Chaloner comments, 'have considerable period charm, being sometimes sentimental and sometimes horrific, in the early Victorian manner'.[80] The pictorial presentations also materialize and reinforce textual descriptions and imaginings. As a literary account of 'the hideous mass of injustice and suffering to which thousands of infant labourers are subjected, who toil

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[79] W. H. Chaloner, 'Mrs. Trollope and the Early Factory System', *Victorian Studies,* 4.2 (December 1960), 159-66 (p. 159). See also its note 1, mentioning that the first part appeared on 26 Feb. 1839 (*Northern Star*, 2 Mar. 1839, p. 1), and that the complete collection was published by Henry Colburn, Great Marlborough Street, London, pp. viii + 387.
[80] *Ibid.*

in our monster spinning-mills' (p. iii, preface), *Michael Armstrong* received some hostile criticism from contemporary periodicals like the *Statesman* and the *Athenaeum,* as well as from figures like Frederic Montagu who, as we shall examine in the next chapter, wrote *Mary Ashley, the Factory Girl* (1839) as a counterblast.[81] Criticism of *Michael Armstrong* as 'an exaggerated statement of the vices of a class' also indicates that Trollope presents social issues imbued with melodramatic expressions of working-class bitterness.[82]

Michael Armstrong, however, found high favour among the members of the Chartist movement, which enjoyed its period of greatest influence and violence in 1839-40.[83] Trollope wrote in a private letter shortly after its publication: 'between ourselves, I don't think any one cares much for "Michael Armstrong" – except the Chartists. A new kind of patrons for me!'[84] The discrepancy between Trollope's originally intended readership (a comparatively more Tory-minded bourgeois group of people like herself) and her new Chartist supporters (mainly working-class radicals) also hints at a need to probe into the features and rationales of her representations of factory children.

We can further explore the readership and reception of *Michael Armstrong* in light of its review in the *Athenaeum*, which points out the link between Chartism and this novel. As the reviewer comments, 'the form and mode of publication (in illustrated shilling numbers)' make the novel primarily an amusement of the working class.[85] The review in the *Athenaeum* states that *Michael Armstrong*, with its

> popular, cheap, and widely diffusible medium, was chosen for the purpose of
> scattering firebrands among the people, for wantonly decrying and discrediting a

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[81] *Ibid.,* p. 165.

[82] From the criticism of a reviewer in the *Statesman*, quoted in the *Bolton Free Press* of 22 Feb. 1840. Quoted in Chaloner, 'Mrs. Trollope and the Early Factory System', p. 165.

[83] For the mixed reception *Michael Armstrong* received, see also Ivanka Kovačević, *Fact into Fiction: English Literature and the Industrial Scene, 1750-1850* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), p. 101.

[84] Chaloner, 'Mrs. Trollope and the Early Factory System', p. 165.

[85] 'Review of *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy.* Nos I. to VI', the *Athenaeum*, no. 615 (London: 10 August 1839), pp. 587-90, p. 588.

class of persons whose operations are intimately bound up with the very existence of the nation, and for adding to that already mounting sum of discontent, which, under the name of Chartism, is matter of such grave and fearful interest to every enlightened lover of our country.[86]

Thus, with the easy accessibility of *Michael Armstrong* for working-class people, and with its 'vulgar' and 'melo-dramatic' style, the Chartist members were excited by this novel.[87] As the reviewer further inquires, 'Can [Frances Trollope] be ignorant of the consequences such statements must produce, when disseminated among an ignorant and excited population, to which her shilling numbers are but too accessible?'[88] As to the threats being incited by Trollope, the reviewer states that 'the most probable immediate effect of her pennings and her pencillings will be the burning of factories, with sacred months, and the plunder of property of all kinds'.[89] This prediction, and well as the 'firebrand' imagery earlier in the review, strongly echoes the factory burning scene in *The Factory Lad*. As this chapter will suggest, although Trollope chose to focus on child labour, the class antagonism between operatives and manufacturers is still present in her novel.

As to the genre or the melodramatic elements of the novel, the review also criticizes *Michael Armstrong* as a 'miserable farce, equalled only by the worst comedies of the quondam German-English school'.[90] The 'misrepresentation of classes', the 'dramatic effect', and Trollope's 'vulgar and superficial notions of persons and things' are severely attacked.[91] For example, akin to the flat, stereotypical or simplified characters in melodrama's virtue-vice dichotomy, in *Michael Armstrong* the manufacturer, Sir Matthew Dowling, is 'the demon-hero of the work' and 'a fictitious personage … laden with all the sin and all the error'; thus he is a 'blood-sucker of his people', who 'has of course killed numberless children in his manufactory', helped by

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[86] 'Review of *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy. Nos I. to VI*', the *Athenaeum*, no. 615 (London: 10 August 1839), pp. 587-90, p. 588.
[87] 'Review of Michael Armstrong', the *Athenaeum*, no. 615 (London: 10 August 1839), p. 588.
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 590.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 590.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 589.
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 588.

the overseer, Joseph Parsons, 'a professional bruiser of children's shoulders, and breaker of bones'.[92] In addition, there is a Dr Crockley, 'a sort of compound of fun and ferocity, but a cold-hearted monster of unmotived cruelty', as the reviewer comments.[93] On the other hand, the boy-hero Michael is 'a regular tract-drawn "good boy," and his mother a regular compound of intolerable privation and impossible meekness and content; clean, sickly, and picturesque, according to the most approved model'.[94] Thus, to the reviewer in the *Athenaeum*, there seems to be an oversimplified and clear-cut contrast between the good and evil characters in the novel. In the review Trollope is criticized for entertaining the working class with 'an abstract and independent loathing, which seeks its gratification in the customary melo-dramatic style, by wanton outrages'.[95] While Trollope intended to bring the truth of the factory system to the public, her melodramatic style seemed to over-simplify the situation, and thus was attacked for distorting the truth. The affective politics of melodrama within *Michael Armstrong* aroused radical agitation that even she did not expect. As Sally Ledger has indicated, melodrama 'had a well-established radical genealogy'.[96] The melodramatic elements and inflammatory style of *Michael Armstrong* may thus have played a key part in attracting radical working-class readers to the text and enhanced its narrative conflict between capital and labour in society, as seen also in the earlier melodrama *The Factory Lad*.

As Elaine Hadley points out, 'a "melodramatic mode" appeared in myriad social contexts during the nineteenth century'.[97] We can view melodrama not just as a theatrical genre or a literary influence but as a 'behavioral paradigm of the nineteenth

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[92] *Ibid.*, p. 588.
[93] *Ibid.*
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 589.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 588.
[96] Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 11.
[97] Elaine Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800-1885* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 3.

century, manifest in the theater, in literature, and in society'.[98] In this way we can create a further link between *The Factory Lad*, *Michael Armstrong*, and the Chartist readers or radical working-class audiences. As the melodramatic mode emerged from the stage drama and entered other literary and social forms in the early nineteenth century, the social responses in fiction and in society mutually constituted and influenced each other, with a similar vein of melodrama. As Hadley states, the melodramatic mode in the early and mid-nineteenth century was 'a polemical response to the social, economic and epistemological changes that characterized the consolidation of market society in the nineteenth century'.[99] The melodramatic mode permeated through heterogeneous groups of people, of different classes and various political parties; it appeared in different forms, including public speeches, pamphlets, and even riots. Thus we can find Ten Hours Movement or Chartist leaders like Oastler and Stephens employing this mode when addressing their meetings, and the Tory reformist novelist Trollope also employing it in her fiction. Nevertheless, when the emotive aspect of *Michael Armstrong* further ignited Chartist agitation, it also complicated the issue of the 'free agency' of the working class both within and outside the novel, a subject to be discussed in the following section.

i. The Factory Lad versus the Factory Child: the Issue of Free Agency

Comparing *The Factory Lad* with Trollope's *Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy*, we can find a change in the age of the protagonist from the adult hero in the earlier melodrama to the child protagonist in the industrial novel of around 1840. In making the child her protagonist, Trollope intended to drop the depiction of class conflict between labouring adults and capitalists and solely tackle the issue of child labour.[100] The

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[98] Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics,* book cover.
[99] Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics,* p. 3.
[100] For other discussions of the influence of industrial fiction like Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* and portrayal of child labour in the drama of the 1830s and 1840s, see David Haldane Lawrence, 'Performing Working Boys: the Representation of Child Labour on the Pre- and Early Victorian Stage', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 24 (2008), 126-40.

complex reasons for the change of focus from the adult to the child are worth inquiring into further. Although both working adults and children suffer, Trollope's sole focus upon factory children in her novel, compared with Walker's stress on working adults in his melodrama, reflects Victorian attitudes toward children (especially poor suffering ones), the literary tradition and cultural imaginary of children and childhood, the social strategy of using labouring children in propaganda of the Ten Hours Movement (as we have seen), the middle-class novelist's avoidance of class conflict, and the inclination of women writers to portray children. The move to the fictional representation of children recursively returns to the debates on the free agency of working-class adults and their potential infantilization within the Ten Hours Movement.

It is widely acknowledged that in the nineteenth century children were viewed as separate entities from adults.[101] The child attracted unprecedented attention, and the figure of the child became immensely popular in literature.[102] Interest in this figure thus produced 'greater sensitivity to the needs of the child', from which arose a need to protect the child and to prevent childhood from being endangered. [103] Fictions 'constructed the child as "an isolated emblem of innocence"'; pressure for passage of child protection laws also 'cordoned off childhood as a realm to be protected'.[104] Considering 'how children became objects of concern' and the era 'when childhood turned into a period of life that needed to be protected', Jacqueline Banerjee supplies an explanation within the Victorian social context.[105] There were 'deep-seated fears' arising from the 'dramatic population explosion which peaked in the second decade' of

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[101] Laura C. Berry, *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 3. I am indebted to Berry for understanding of the Victorian construction of the endangered child. However, it is intriguing that Berry omits factory children in industrial fiction throughout her work.

[102] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 1.

[103] Jacqueline Banerjee, *Through the Northern Gate: Childhood and Growing Up in British Fiction, 1719-1901* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 46.

[104] Kelly Hager, 'Constructing the Child' (Review of Marah Gubar's *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* and Monica Flegel's *Conceptualizing Cruelty to Children in Nineteenth-Century England: Literature, Representation, and the NSPCC*), *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies,* 6.1 (spring 2010) <http://www.ncgsjournal.com/issue61/hager.htm>.

[105] *Ibid.*

the nineteenth century and caused an alarming 'proliferation of poor children'.[106] Thus special attention fell on the 'struggling child', as well as on the difference between 'children of different classes'.[107] In their attention to nineteenth-century child labour laws, Marah Gubar and Monica Flegel historicize 'a notion of childhood that privileges innocence' and a growing sense that 'all children should enjoy a protected period of dependence and development before experiencing the cares … of adult life'.[108] Thus, given the Victorian 'belief in an uncomplicated notion of childhood', labouring children are correlated with abuse, cruelty, and endangerment.[109]

As regards the convention of portraying poor children, Laura C. Berry pays attention to public discourses (social and literary) concerning children working as 'chimney sweeps' and articulating 'child protection' earlier in the nineteenth century.[110] These discourses also exemplify the way 'literary representations of childhood' inspired depiction of 'the abused child as helpless, defenceless, and innocent', which 'served to make the child a worthy subject of social intervention'.[111] William Blake's poems 'The Chimney Sweeper' (1789, 1794) had, of course, previously presented work as the inhumane oppression of miserable children 'in the face of the increasingly dehumanising industrial age'.[112] While Blake, among other writers, 'developed the cult of Romantic sensibility and installed the child as the symbol of primal innocence in danger of corruption by the world', the idea gradually evolved into later Victorian writers' view of children as victims of circumstance.[113] The Romantic concept of the child, as Brown comments, was increasingly pressed into 'service as a vehicle for social

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[106] Banerjee, p. 46.
[107] *Ibid.*, p. 46-47.
[108] Hager, 'Constructing the Child'.
[109] *Ibid.*
[110] Berry, *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel*, p. 2.
[111] Monica Flegel, *Conceptualizing Cruelty to Children in Nineteenth-Century England: Literature, Representation, and the NSPCC* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), p. 4.
[112] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 6. The first of Blake's two chimney-sweep poems exists in *Songs of Innocence* (1789), the second one in the expanded collection, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794). For a short introduction and reprints of these poems, see David J. Bradshaw and Suzanne Ozment (ed.), *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings about Work* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), pp. 382-84.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

protest', as the 'disparity between this image and the reality of nineteenth-century life' became clear.[114] Later on, social reform writings (like Lord Ashley's speeches) and legislative attempts to regulate apprenticeships were 'linked with and supported by' poetic and fictional works.[115] This 'linkage is explicitly materialized in James Montgomery's 1824 anthology, *The Chimney-Sweeper's Friend, and Climbing-Boy's Album*', which includes both tracts and literary works.[116] Berry's observation of chimney-sweep discourses points out an earlier example of a cross-genre representation of poor working children offered as a plea for social action. With a similar aim of protecting children, as Berry notices, 'a pairing of literature and reform writing' was undertaken, and 'generic boundaries' were crossed 'with relative ease'.[117] Both the representation of the child victim and the fusion of different modes of writing for purposes of social reform were continued by Trollope in her factory boy novel and by her contemporaries with their discourses.

Yet a significant difference between the issues of chimney sweeps and factory labour lies in the fact that the latter issue simultaneously addresses hardships of working adults and pauper children – they both suffer under the factory system; there is also mutual influence between the employment (and unemployment) of factory children and of adult men. Thus, the case of factory children's labour is more complicated. Locating the representation of factory children in relation to its social background in the Ten Hours Movement, Mike Sanders offers another perspective from which to examine the focus on the factory child. He suggests that 'the decision to use the figure of the working-class child' was taken in order 'to provoke pity leading to moral indignation in the expectation that this would produce the public outcry necessary to remedy the perceived evil'.[118] Furthermore, the child figure 'immediately disallows a wide range of

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[114] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[115] Berry, p. 2.
[116] *Ibid.*
[117] *Ibid.,* pp. 2-3.
[118] Sanders, 'Manufacturing Accident: Industrialism and the Worker's Body in Early Victorian Fiction', p.

laissez-faire arguments concerning the inviolability of contracts between independent agents'.[119] These statements remind us of the distinction between working men and children in Victorian eyes: the former are regarded as relatively free individuals and the latter absolutely dependent ones in need of protection. Thus, the representation of pitiable factory children is aimed at the scarcely deniable moral responsibility of the middle class. The paternalist intervention of social reform and legislation is thus justified.

Moreover, compared with child labourers, working men are not just free and independent; they are possibly dangerous. Differentiating representations of labouring adults and children, Berry further suggests that avoidance of depicting the adults provides 'a (partial) representational solution' to the problem of 'the presence of hungry bodies' in the early Victorian period.[120] As Berry argues, 'novels and social documents … transform … the dangerous hungers of powerful adults into the blameless and pitiable needs of infant victims'; for 'in substituting innocent children for potentially dangerous adults, these texts might be said to manage the threat by displacing it'.[121] In terms of avoiding social class conflicts, as Banerjee also claims, a source of intense Victorian fear was 'the threat of violence' associated with working-class riots: that haunting spectre of 'a revolution at their own doorstep' aroused by the French Revolution.[122] Therefore, the effect of 'the turn to children' in early Victorian society, 'especially pauper children, is to transform a large and powerful Malthusian body into a petite and manageable one'.[123] As Berry explains, when anxiety about social unrest arises from 'the possibility of an encroaching mob', the 'imaginative resolution' of replacing adults with children may seem appealing 'at least for bourgeois

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[119] *Ibid.*
[120] Berry, p. 10.
[121] *Ibid.*
[122] Banerjee, p. 46.
[123] Berry, p. 10.

writers and readers'.[124] Thus, 'factory reform finds success in advertising the labours of children rather than the hardships endured by adult workers'.[125] Therefore, the novelistic representation of factory children in *Michael Armstrong* inherits a rich source of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literary and non-literary discourses on (innocent, poor, or endangered) children and on the working class; it then in a metaphorical sense decisively reduces the working men in melodrama to victimized children for propaganda purposes.

The representational transformation from dangerous working adults to endangered factory children illuminates the contrast between *The Factory Lad* and *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*. While *The Factory Lad* shows 'an encroaching mob', which represents popular working-class sentiment but increases social turbulence and encourages active rebellion, in *Michael Armstrong* the writer seeks to diminish social unrest by centralizing the harmless and fragile children. When we come to examine the literary protagonist of the factory boy in Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, compared with the factory lad in Walker's melodrama, the change from a lad to a child marks a twist in the situation and indicates the difference in the writers' purposes. The factory lad is one who fights back, who mounts a final attack (albeit an imprudent one) before admitting defeat. The factory boy, on the other hand, who is still masculine yet only a child, seems so feeble that he could only be a sufferer. As Vernon also observes, 'by choosing to emphasize so many violent incidents, Walker has given his workers' protest a flavor of lawlessness'.[126] As we can see, the 'flavor of lawlessness' in the workers' protest and the 'confusion between protest and crime' in *The Factory Lad* are avoided by Trollope.[127] Thus factory children's victimization, exploitation, and consumption tend to be emphasized in the industrial novel. Melodramas such as *The Factory Lad* show the angry and frustrated workmen's violent resistance and revengeful actions. They serve

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[124] *Ibid.*
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] Vernon, p. 126.
[127] *Ibid.*

primarily as the working class's irrational outlet for their violent emotions. In contrast to the machine breaking and factory burning scene in the melodrama, the novelist uses the horrifying scene of factory children working painstakingly alongside the machine in the factory. Here in the novel working-class men are relatively silenced and working-class riots are excluded. Unlike the dramatic representation on stage, which shows more unconstrained outward actions, the novel is better able to devote minute details to depiction of the children's emotional state and their intricate interaction with machinery. The novelist's purpose is to expose the darkness hidden inside the factory, to arouse public fear and sympathy, and further to seek legislative solutions to the associated social problems. Although both wish to provoke social action or reform, the melodrama presents an immediate and unlawful working-class outburst, whereas the novel depicts a more rational, gradual and harmonious middle-class regulation and class reconciliation. Thus, with the child used as an innocent, blameless and harmless victim, there is no room for class conflict between working- and middle-class adult men, and greater space in which to foster possible cross-class understanding and benevolence (as personified by Miss Brotherton, the heiress, in Trollope's factory novel).

The victimized children are 'critical' because they can represent 'a more able negotiation' with the 'rapidly changing' social conditions, in diverse nineteenth-century discourses.[128] As a middle-class writer's strategy for social amelioration, representing suffering children has another advantage in that the child figure 'homogenizes rather than fragments the social community'.[129] This point once again corresponds to the purposes of middle-class writers like Trollope, who seeks to achieve social harmony and keep social order, rather than provoking unlawful acts as Walker does with his factory play. Berry argues that the 'necessary fact of childhood changes the way that this particular subject position functions socially'.[130] She suggests that the child subject is

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[128] Berry, p. 7.
[129] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[130] *Ibid.*

'a focal and unique position' which intersects with different social groups of the period.[131] The representation of children, though a recognizable category as well, is special, for 'everyone can lay claim to membership, at least for a time, in the community of children, because everyone must have been a child'.[132] Thus childhood offers a common ground. Children, in much Victorian discourse, Berry argues, seem 'mutable' through transgressing and obscuring the social boundaries that adults cannot transgress.[133] Therefore, the endangered children can 'represent very particular subject positions' while still staying part of and maintaining the intactness of 'a large and unified group'.[134] Through representation of children, people can imagine 'the possibility of an "equal" who crosses social boundaries in life and generic boundaries in discourse' with comparative ease.[135] This point echoes the early Victorian mixed-genre appeal of labouring children such as chimney sweeps, yet further emphasizes the significance of the child, the unformed 'pulpy infant' (in Carlyle's term), who can effectively transcend not only generic but also social boundaries.[136] Thus, for Trollope, the depiction of the childhood stage of her working-class hero is indispensable both for her social purpose and for her literary experiment.

Berry's concept of the pliant child going through the formative years of childhood, as opposed to the 'fixed and hardened' adult bodies with their 'unchangeable social shape', can be applied to Trollope's creation of her boy hero.[137] In writing *Michael Armstrong*, Trollope originally intended to 'divide her work into two portions': the first focussing on her hero's childhood as a factory apprentice, and the second on his adulthood, when he has 'lived through his toil-worn boyhood' and might have 'embarked in those perfectly constitutional struggles for the amelioration of the

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[131] *Ibid.*
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[134] *Ibid.*
[135] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[136] *Ibid.*
[137] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

sufferings of his class, in which many of the more enlightened operatives have been for some years engaged' (p. iii, preface). The novelist idealizes adulthood as a stage when the grown-up can win improvements in his fellow workmen's lot. Yet it takes a moulding process (childhood) for the boy to grow into a capable, mature, sensible and decent person – an 'enlightened' being conforming to middle-class expectations. Then he can rescue his own class through lawful reform rather than illegal, vulgar, violent rebellion. Here are some elements reminiscent of the *bildungsroman*, 'or novel of self-development, in an age characterised by the bourgeois preoccupation with the individual'.[138] This aspect also hints at an Owenist conception of a 'rational' process of moulding 'working-class individuals into responsible, industrious citizens'. [139] Childhood is conceived by the middle-class novelist as a stage in which a working-class individual can be adapted to better fit the social body. The writer also requires the working class's self-help, self-awakening, and self-realization, which nevertheless take place within the social order desired by the conservative middle class. With the inclusion of both the boyhood and adulthood of her working-class hero, Trollope wishes not only to arouse middle-class concern but also to suggest a more reasonable solution and wholesome formulation for the working class. That solution is cross-class cooperation. We can see in the novel that the middle class (with Miss Brotherton, heiress of a mill owner, as its representative) begins to awaken, to become aware of the actual living and working conditions of the working class, and to take responsibility for improving the working class's lot. Here the workmen's fight against machinery does not exist, but a more constructive resolution is developed. If *The Factory Lad*'s machine breaking shows working-class radical rebellion, the *Factory Boy*'s victimization and growth shows the middle-class paternalist aims of protection, regulation and guidance.

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[138] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 11.
[139] Bradshaw and Ozment (ed.), *The Voice of Toil,* p. 217. For a brief introduction to Robert Owen and his 1815 essay 'Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System: With Hints for the Improvement of those parts of it which are most injurious to Health and Morals', see Bradshaw and Ozment, *The Voice of Toil*, pp. 217-26.

However, if we return to Sadler's gradual approach in the Ten Hours Movement, as discussed in Chapter One, we know that, in the case of reformist political rhetoric, representing factory children is only a strategic move at the initial stage of legislation for the whole working class. To earn a ten-hour working day for factory children also indirectly helps reduce the working hours of the adult men. The 'unfree' status of adult workmen, similar to that of factory children, is already specified in Sadler's speeches. The implicit link between factory children and adults is always there. The original legislative focus on children is mainly contrived to deter opposition to this interventionist act from political economists or supporters of *laissez-faire* policy.

Thus, there is an innate contradiction between the representation of factory children and adult workers in the context of industrial debate in the early nineteenth century. It is both a strategy used by the middle-class writer to avoid class conflict and a strategy deployed by workers in the Ten Hours Movement to gain rights or freedom, even by radical means.[140] As discussed in Chapter One, however, there is an inherent contradiction in the Tory-Radical alliance that underpinned the Ten Hours Movement. As Catherine Gallagher observes,

> working-class radicals maintained on one hand that workers were enslaved and degraded by industrial capitalism, and on the other hand that workers were ready for the franchise. The industrial novels could hardly be expected to escape these deep contradictions that consistently marked both middle-class and working-class criticism.[141]

This point inevitably leads to the issue of working class autonomy as it emerges in Trollope's later writing, which we are going to discuss. It also further elucidates the Chartists' fervent support for the novel *Michael Armstrong*. As Gallagher notes, 'Chartist working-class radicals, like the factory reformers, used the phrase "free labor" ironically when discussing their own status'.[142]

In the process of composition, eventually Trollope abandoned her original project,

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[140] For the complicated and paradoxical idea of freedom at that time, see Gallagher, p. 25.
[141] Gallagher, p. 34.
[142] Gallagher, p. 31.

which was to form the second division of her work, of following her boy hero into adulthood so that he could ameliorate the conditions of his own class. This was because she found, to her disappointment and disapproval, that contemporary working-class people, the 'misguided', 'unfortunate' and 'ill-advised men', 'those in whose behalf she hoped to move the sympathy of their country', were 'busy in scenes of outrage and lawless violence, and uniting themselves with individuals whose doctrines are subversive of every species of social order' (p. iv, preface). Real social scenes were indeed comparable to the melodramatic events portrayed in *The Factory Lad*. As the novel was being published in serial form, the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, leader of the Chartist movement as well as the Ten Hours Movement, was arrested in Ashton-under-Lyne in December 1838. [143] Charged with 'attending an unlawful assembly and with inciting the people to unlawful acts', Stephens was 'tried in August 1839, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment'.[144] Feeling that working-class men had 'stained their righteous cause with deeds of violence and blood', Trollope decided to turn away from adult workmen and close her novel with her hero's 'childhood', so that 'no misconstruction of principles, no misconception of motives can exist with regard to an attempt to ameliorate the lot of the infant labourers' (p. iv, preface). Trollope's later move demonstrates the middle-class writer's abhorrence of unlawful actions and her repudiation of her Chartist supporters. Yet, in view of the implicit link between working-class children and adults, together with the melodramatic mode she employed, this conservative middle-class reformist writer's approach to evasion of class conflict, or at least of association with social riots promulgated by adult working-class men, seems rather ineffective. Although Trollope eventually aims merely at protection of factory children, in so doing she indirectly and unintentionally supports workmen's rights, which are radically presented in *The Factory Lad*, despite their being

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[143] Thompson, Dorothy, *Outsiders: Class, Gender, and Nation* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 74.

[144] *Ibid.*

violently pursued in society. The hostile reception given Trollope's work by the *Athenaeum*, and its suggestion that she was in the pay of the Chartists, demonstrates the innateness of class discord, even in the context of a novel centred on children.

Another reason for Trollope to focus on children, besides dissociation from adult lawlessness, was the justification such a focus provided for women writers to participate in social debate, since caring for children was one of the norms of the Victorian female role. To some extent it could also disguise or soften a female writer's political purposes.[145] As Brown states, 'portrayal of the child and childhood' was an area 'in which many women were able to find a voice in the early nineteenth century'.[146] It was a sphere that women writers easily and conveniently entered and, as Brown further describes, a large number of nineteenth-century women writers 'wrote sensitively, poignantly, … with pity, sympathy and rage, about the … miseries of childhood and, like their male counterparts, used the figure of the child as a vehicle for … social … polemic'.[147] Although male writers like Dickens certainly 'developed the potential for pathos in his child figures' and created 'an intense emotional response in his readers', possibly deriving from 'a latent collective sense of guilt about the plight of their real-life counterparts', women writers were equally ready to take up this challenge and, indeed, 'welcomed the opportunity afforded by literature to contribute their efforts'.[148] Trollope, as well as other women poets and novelists, actively and effectively made use of this opportunity in their representations of factory children.[149]

To sum up, there is a complex set of rationales and implications behind the representation of factory children: adherence to the cultural image of the innocent child, the literary and social representations of endangered childhood, the controversy over factory reform and class conflict (which involved potentially dangerous working men),

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[145] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 2.
[146] *Ibid.*
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[149] For example, Caroline Norton's *A Voice from the Factories: in Serious Verse* (1836), Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'The Cry of the Children' (1843), and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1841).

and middle-class women writers' efforts and strategies to – respectively – tackle (and avoid) the above. As Berry suggests, 'the interposition of the endangered child at moments of social collision' is as visible in the literature surrounding the Ten Hours Movement and factory reform as elsewhere in the nineteenth century.[150] Representation of the struggling child interacting with machinery is thus a concrete yet subdued embodiment of the nineteenth-century social collision. To achieve mutuality and reciprocity across existing (class and genre) boundaries, the child is represented in the hope of discursively realigning social class relationships.[151]

The convergence of the idea of children (and childhood) and the perception of labour (and the labouring class), or indeed the see-saw battle between these themes, complicates the issue of the factory child and makes it special, important and controversial. As a literary strategy, Trollope uses the child figure to neutralize class conflict, focus on child labour, and draw attention and support from paternalists, humanitarians, and philanthropists. However, even when the child figure is appealed to on sentimental and compassionate grounds as a vehicle for transcending class boundaries, the factory child in effect still embodies and possibly reinforces class contradiction, which the link between the working adults and children sustains, and which remains evident in the struggle between machinery and children. When machinery belongs to the mill owners and factory children represent the working class, the imagery of exploited working-class children is constructed by social reformers to elicit public sympathy and thereby further enhance antagonism towards the capitalist class. More support is thus gained from various parties, who come together to condemn the unreasonable exploitation of labouring children for mill-owners' interests. Therefore, even though Trollope abandoned the part of her plot that centred on the factory adult, the underlying class discordance, however hidden and alleviated, is unavoidably present

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[150] Berry, p. 10.
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

in the representation of the factory children.

ii. The Dangerous Balance between Factory Children and Machinery

After thoroughly exploring the multiple significance of the figure of the labouring child, we come to examine Mrs Trollope's textual representation of a factory girl working in the position of 'scavenger' in *Michael Armstrong*:

> The miserable creature … was a little girl about seven years old, whose office as "*scavenger*," was to collect incessantly, from the machinery and from the floor, the flying fragments of cotton that might impede the work. In the performance of this duty, the child was obliged, from time to time, to stretch itself with sudden quickness on the ground, which the hissing machinery passed over her; and when this is skilfully done, and the head, body, and outstretched limbs carefully glued to the floor, the steady-moving, but threatening mass, may pass and repass over the dizzy head and trembling body without touching it. But accidents frequently occur; and many are the flaxen locks rudely torn from infant heads in the process. (Vol. 1, pp. 201-202)

Here, the way the factory girl works alongside the machine is elaborately delineated, yet in a very intriguing manner. Mrs Trollope laboriously describes the movement of the girl's body in contrast to that of the machine. The description presents a quick, alert, and skilful working girl – almost like an acrobat – in her repetitive and experienced performance. While the motion of the machinery is described vaguely as 'steady-moving', passing and repassing over the child, the girl's movements are contrastingly variable. She needs to 'collect incessantly' the flying cotton, to stretch suddenly and quickly, and to glue herself to the floor, and is also seen to tremble involuntarily. In addition, depictions of the physical forms of the machinery and of the girl are contrasted. The machine is designated a 'mass' – a broad umbrella term, an ambiguous and cloudy description, which does not sketch its shape, let alone distinguish its different parts. But the writer specifies not only the different parts of the girl's body but also their different positions and conditions — the dizzy head, the outstretched limbs, and the trembling body.[152]

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[152] Compared with the portrayal of the 'scavenger', Trollope also gives a description of a 'piecer' in a

The contrasting descriptions of the machine and the girl reflect the way the writer conceives of and worries about the child-machine relation. The emphasis on the irreconcilable differences between a human being and a machine implies the difficulty of cooperation between the two bodies.[153] While the machine is a lifeless object which keeps moving nevertheless, the girl is a human being with feelings and a will of her own; but she has to suppress her feelings and will, being trained and forced to react only to the moving machinery. Otherwise her life would be in danger, the tearing of hair providing a sign and a warning. Although it seems like a sustainable relationship, in which the girl remains intact, the balance is dangerous and fragile. The machinery here seems to exercise power, authority and even tyranny over the poor little girl. It is an inhumane process through which the girl is enslaved and mechanized. In a sense, the girl is a dissectible machine composed of different parts, whereas the machine is a cruel and nonchalant monster posing a threat to the child's life and to humanity itself. The girl becomes lifeless while the machine seems lively. The 'distinctions between the factory's human and mechanical components' are blurred and confused.[154] When the writer refers to the girl as a 'miserable creature', the impression is of an enslaved animal engaged with some mechanism in performing a task. It is interesting to note that in the middle of the paragraph the writer uses 'itself' instead of 'herself' when referring to the factory girl. The usage strengthens the impression that the girl is like an animal or a lifeless machine. Therefore the representation conveys ideas of the 'dehumanization' (animalization) and 'mechanization' of human beings, as well as figurative enslavement to machinery.

footnote: 'The children whose duty it is to walk backwards and forwards before the reels, on which the cotton, silk, or worsted in wound, for the purpose of joining the threads when they break, are called piecers, or pieceners' (vol. 1, p. 188), which is in a more explanatory or documentary style, without much involvement of emotion or imagination. It seems Trollope is experimenting with mixed styles and the novel is performing various functions, sometimes sensational and sometimes objective, sometimes melodramatic and sometimes descriptive. Here we can trace Trollope's construction of the hybrid form.

[153] In *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), Joseph Bizup presents the ideas of the 'body in pain' and the 'body without fatigue', following Elaine Scarry and Anson Rabinbach respectively in discussing the debate over the 'factory question' (p. 18). This may provide a contrast between the human body and the machinery.

[154] Bizup, *Manufacturing Culture: Vindications of Early Victorian Industry*, p. 31.

Contemporary social discourses and medical evidence present similar representations of factory children's threatened bodies and lives. Since bodily injuries require medical treatment and attract medical inquiry, medical professionals are engaged in the factory controversy. They take on roles such as treating children's illness at factories (like Dr Crockley in *Michael Armstrong*), testifying in courts of law, or providing commentaries on factory labourers' conditions.[155] Thus, aside from personal interaction with children in factories, physicians provide the discursive debate with statements of a scientific nature. Medical discourses place emphasis on factory children's physical sufferings, deformation, and growth retardation – the long-term deterioration caused by factory labour. Thus fictional and nonfictional descriptions collaboratively create social imagery and associated reformist writings within the ten hours movement. In his famous pamphlet on *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (1832)*,* Dr James Kay points out the 'necessarily debilitating consequences of uninterrupted toil'.[156] As he describes it, 'while the engine runs, the people must work – men, women and children are yoked together with iron and steam … chained fast to the iron machine, which knows no suffering and no weariness'.[157] Echoing the novelistic representation, here again we see the relentless machine yoking children to labour as incessant as that endured under slavery.

Arguing on lines similar to Kay's, Peter Gaskell, a surgeon, wrote books focussing on the effect of 'machinery' on factory workers.[158] In a chapter dealing specifically with Infant Labour, Gaskell contends:

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[155] For discussion on the role of medical commentators in the factory debate, see Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England 1830-1869*, pp.72-85.

[156] J. T. Ward, *The Factory Movement 1830-1855* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 65.

[157] *Ibid*.

[158] See Gray, p. 85. Peter Gaskell published two books on the factory workers' conditions; though titled differently, the second one is actually a new edition of the first one, with some modification. See Peter Gaskell, Esq. surgeon, *The Manufacturing Population of England: Its Moral, Social, and Physical Conditions, and the Changes which have Arisen from the Use of Steam Machinery; with an Examination of Infant Labour* (London, 1833); Peter Gaskell Esq. surgeon, *Artisans and Machinery: The Moral and Physical Condition of the manufacturing population considered with reference to Mechanical Substitutes for Human Labour* (London, 1836).

> It is beyond all question then, for it is abundantly *proved by physiological and pathological considerations*, that factory labour, continued for twelve or fourteen hours, is liable to produce certain distortions of the bony system in children, if there be previous want of healthy growth; that it prevents proper and natural exercise; and that, in conjunction with a continuance of imperfect nurture, and want of domestic comforts, it keeps up an unhealthy condition of the digestive organs, making the body peculiarly prone to take on a variety of chronic diseases; and that it checks growth, the necessary supplies being impaired.[159]

Thus the surgeon declares unambiguously that factory labour is harmful to children's physical health. He supports the concept with additional professional proof and a list of bodily injuries. This statement reminds us of the many wretched and feeble children we see in fictional representations. But here, in a medical discourse, the language is rational, objective, and free from emotion. The surgeon specifies different bodily parts ('the bony system' and 'the digestive organs'), which also reminds us of Trollope's specification of the different parts of the scavenger girl's body. He details possible causes and relevant conditions (long working hours compounded with bad nutrition, continuous lack of open air, proper exercise and domestic comforts) and their effects ('distortions', poor health, 'chronic diseases', retarded 'growth'). The account also recalls a gripping episode in the novel *Michael Armstrong*, when a horrifying epidemic breaks out, numerous children die in Deep Valley Mill, and Michael himself passes out for months and then miraculously comes round. While the medical discourse is cold and detached, the novelistic narration is vivid and animated, though seemingly sensational and exaggerated, as if to present the reader with a haunting image of the real lives of the tortured beings. Therefore, deploying different styles and different genres but depicting similar situations, fictional and non-fictional writings complement each other to present the social scene.

Moreover, following his own statement, Gaskell includes in his note the opinion of a Dr Baillie, taken from the Parliamentary Evidence to the Select Committee, to

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[159] Gaskell, *Artisans and Machinery* (London, 1836), p. 163. Subsequent references are to this edition.

demonstrate support from fellow medical practitioners:

> The opinion of Dr Baillie, one of the most enlightened and judicious physicians who have adorned the annals of British medicine, is coincident with the actual conditions as described above, and is the more valuable, as having been entirely drawn from the general operations of the animal economy.
>
> 'I cannot,' he says, 'say much from experience, but I can say what appears to me likely to arise out of so much labour, from general principles of the animal economy. I should say, in the first place, that the growth of those children would be stunted – that they would not arrive so rapidly at their full growth – that they would not have the same degree of general strength – that it is probable their digestion would not be so vigorous as in children who are more in the open air, and less confined to labour – and that they would probably be more liable to glandular swellings than children who are bred differently.' – *Evidence before Committee*. (pp. 163-64)

Here, firstly, we see how Gaskell uses direct quotations from testimony to support his claim. Elsewhere in his book, the discourses of other doctors and social commentators, such as Dr Kay's Manchester treatise and Dr Ure's *Philosophy of Manufactures*, as well as Parliamentary Papers, are also incorporated in the discussion. Dr Baillie's opinion concerning factory children's physical ill-health is much like Gaskell's. He also adopts a professional, detached and impersonal style, using medical jargon such as 'glandular swellings'. Yet it is intriguing that Dr Baillie does not actually know about factory children himself, but derives his conclusions by inference from his experience of 'animal economy'; and this inference is deemed 'more valuable' by Gaskell. On the one hand, his approach suggests scientific rationalism. On the other hand, the fact that he does not distinguish between animals and children, or actually equates animals with children, echoes the girl-animal image in the novel.

By contrast, on the same subject of physically underdeveloped children, the novelistic representation is passionate and even inflammatory. The novel effectively tells a story in pictures, which enable readers to see how the wretched children look, and which present their bodily features and facial expressions in a language sympathetic to human beings:

hundreds of helpless children, divested of every trace of health, of joyousness, and even of youth! Assuredly there is no exaggeration in this; for except only in their diminutive size, these suffering infants have no trace of it. Lean and distorted limbs – sallow and sunken cheeks – dim hollow eyes, that speak unrest and most unnatural carefulness, give to each tiny, trembling, unelastic form a look of hideous premature old age. (Vol. 1, p. 200)

Here in *Michael Armstrong*, the children look like little old men, or even ghastly goblins, with features that, in every particular, do not resemble a child at all. An unpleasant and defamiliarizing image of children greets the reader. The gripping power of the novelistic representation, so different from the medical ones, also emerges.

Medical men, with their expertise and 'their professional discourses of medical knowledge', occupied a particular status in society at that time and carried some weight in the factory regulation movement.[160] Their representations of unhealthy, distorted and underdeveloped factory children's bodies under the influence of mechanization, though different in tone from the novelistic picture, supplement the overall social and cultural imagery of the endangered child. But we can understand the effects of fictional figuration and novelistic portrayal, when compared with those of medical treatises.

In both the fictional and non-fictional representations, we see the potentially dangerous effects on factory children of working alongside machinery. Although the novels do not show direct, obvious, and immediate cutting or jamming of children's bodies by machinery, the machinery gradually and indirectly, yet forcefully, changes the formation of children's bodies through distortion or underdevelopment. Figuratively, children are transformed into slaves, machines, animals, and little old men, under the oppression of machinery. While the machine itself remains unchanged, the child interacting with it (though intact) undergoes a series of physical adaptations. Although children and machinery can cooperate, machinery still poses the threat of weakening human beings. Thus in a relatively subdued and obscure manner, the deleterious effects of machinery are still conspicuous in these texts of the later 1830s and early 40s, as

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[160] Gray, pp.72-73.

manifested in the alteration of human forms and behaviour. Accordingly, these representations may have served to strengthen the attempt to regulate child labour, which materialized in the legislative campaign to limit factory children's working hours, to fence machines and to limit the operating hours of machinery, as outlined in the previous chapter.

IV. From Factory Children to White Slaves

As we have already seen in the figurative enslavement to machinery presented by descriptions of factory children's conditions, comparisons between factory children and Negro slaves were explicitly drawn in public literary and social discourses surrounding the factory question in the 1830s and 1840s. In her novel, commenting on the 'horrors' that she has detailed in the picture of factory children's conditions, and declaring such child labour to be 'a very fearful crime' in England, Trollope inserts a strong statement (Vol. 2, pp. 164-65):

> THESE HORORS WILL BE REMINDED. But woe to those … with the cuckoo note "*Exaggeration!*" while thousands of helpless children pine away their unnoted, miserable lives, in labour and destitution *incomparably more severe* than any ever produced by negro slavery. (Vol. 2, pp. 164-65)

Trollope expresses the comparison in a very sensational way, using capital letters and italics to reinforce her declaration. From her point of view, the factory children's situation is worse than that of Negro slaves.

To examine the reasons why Trollope compares factory children with Negro slaves, it is important to establish a broader context for her position on slavery in these crucial years of transatlantic debate on the matter. Firstly, in 1836, two years before the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1838, and prior to *Michael Armstrong,* Trollope had written an anti-slavery novel, *Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw.* [161] *Michael Armstrong* was serialized in 1839 and 1840, four years before the passage of the Factory Act in 1844.

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[161] Elsie B. Michie, 'Reassessing the Cleverness of Frances Trollope's Social Fictions' (Review of *The Social Problem Novels of Frances Trollope*, 4 volumes, ed. by Brenda Ayres), *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 5.3 (Winter 2009) <http://ncgsjournal.com/issue53/michie.htm>.

Trollope spent over two years in America during 1827 and 1831, mostly in Ohio, where she witnessed the desperate escapes of African slaves.[162] She also paid personal visits to industrial districts in the North of England to investigate the conditions of child labour. Therefore, some overlap between her concerns over abolition and over factory reform are not unexpected, and indeed specific elements of her anti-slavery novel were introduced into the anti-child-labour one. Also, the *Robert Blincoe* memoir, on which she relied heavily, compares colonial slavery with 'factory slavery'; this may have further influenced Trollope. In the memoir, when describing how Blincoe was sent away from the parish workhouse to the mill, Brown states, 'he was in fact legally converted into a slave' (p. 19). The Negro-slave-trade is now turned into the 'cotton-slave-trade'. After depicting factory children's suffering in the mill, Brown makes an impassioned plea:

> May this exposition of crimes and sufferings inflicted upon the friendless, the orphan, the widow's son, induce honest and upright men, senators and legislators, effectually to curb the barbarous propensities of hard-hearted masters, and rescue their nation from a worse stain, than even the African Slave Trade, horrible as was that odious traffic ever inflicted. (pp. 41-42)

Comparing Brown's statement with Trollope's, here we see both writers connecting domestic factory child labour with overseas slavery in order to make a powerful appeal to the great public of the country. The horrors generated by the factory system could be vividly conveyed by comparing factory life unfavourably to 'the forced labour of black slaves in the British colonies'.[163] Thus factory children become the unprotected victims of monstrous slavery, who are waiting for emancipation.

For the middle class, the slavery analogy provided effective propaganda for child-labour regulation, because abolition was a recent and significant bourgeois moral

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[162] See Trollope, Christine Sutphin (ed.), *The Life and Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlaw: Or Scenes on the Mississippi* (1836), in *Reassessing the Cleverness of Frances Trollope's Social Fictions: The Social Problem Novels of Frances Trollope*, Vol. 1, ed. by Brenda Ayres (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009).

[163] James R. Simmons, *Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiographies* (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2007), pp. 18-19.

crusade at that time. The slave trade was outlawed in 1807, and slavery was abolished in the British colonies in 1833. Thus the analogy called upon the middle class to exercise moral responsibility through ameliorative action on behalf of 'infant slaves' in factories. As Sanders remarks, 'appropriation and refiguring' of such rhetoric and images connects the issue of infant-labour regulation with 'abolition' – 'the great moral crusade of the bourgeoisie'.[164] Thus the connection inspired great concern and activity on the part of the middle class.

Indeed, terms such as 'factory slavery', 'white slavery', and 'infant slavery' became prevalent in reformist discourses in the 1830s. As discussed in Chapter One, a prominent example is Richard Oastler's landmark letter 'Yorkshire Slavery' (1830) to the editors of the *Leeds Mercury*, which made him the moral leader of the Factory Movement:

> Let truth speak out, appalling as the statement may appear. ... a state of slavery, *more horrid* than are the victims of that hellish system – '*colonial slavery*'. These innocent creatures.... Poor infants! ye are indeed sacrificed at the shrine of avarice, *without even the solace of the negro slave; ...* ye are slaves, and slaves without the only comfort which the negro has. He knows it is his sordid, mercenary master's interest that he should *live,* be *strong,* and *healthy. Not so with you.*[165]

Displaying rhetorical similarities to Brown and Trollope with his use of emotive emphasis, Oastler contrasts the condition of factory infants with that of colonial slaves, to make the former's condition appear more horrifying and miserable. As we have established at the beginning of this chapter, Oastler's oratory and his documents also left a deep imprint upon Trollope. Nevertheless, as an abolitionist and a Tory radical who became known as the Factory King, by 1836 Oastler was actually urging workers to use strikes and sabotage. This development recalls the unlawful revolts of the Luddite machine breakers who claimed to be led by a 'King Ludd'. Hence the 'white slave'

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[164] Sanders, p. 316.
[165] Richard Oastler, 'The White Slaves of Yorkshire' (1830), reprinted in Simmons, *Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiographies*, p. 442.

imagery is not only adopted by Trollope in her novel and by John Brown in his working-class memoir, but is also used by Oastler in his radical working-class campaign, which brings to mind the rioters in the melodrama *The Factory Lad*. Multiple links are thus quickly established by the representation of infant factory slaves.

Here an important phenomenon is that the image of 'white slaves', applied to infant labourers in factories, is used by conservative writers seeking harmonious and lawful middle-class regulation, like Trollope, as well as by radical activists promoting unlawful working-class transgressions, like Oastler. Thus, with the white-slave metaphor, the lines between different social groups – radical and conservative, working class and middle class – are blurred and crossed. The metaphor further accounts for the attraction of both Tory and Chartist readership to Trollope's novel *Michael Armstrong*. It reveals the inherent complexity and intertwined nature of Tory paternalism and Chartism, middle-class and working-class radicalism. To some extent, the factory-child-turned-white-slave can be viewed as a symbolic point of convergence and coordination of different political parties and social classes. From an overall panoramic point of view, all these varied groups aim at factory reform and use the symbol of white slavery in their propaganda. They are all involved in activism of various types, using approaches ranging from conservative amelioration to radical militancy. Altogether they constitute a rather metaphysical form of a cooperative social body, achieved through this figure of the white infant slave. In its ability to encompass such varied elements of varied groups, we further witness the malleability of the child figure, which connects, contains and transcends social contradictions.

Discussing the appropriation of anti-slavery rhetoric to factory reform during the 1830s and 40s, Gray observes,

> References to slavery quickly became established in the language and iconography of ten-hours agitation. Banners displayed the overlooker's strap, or the billy roller (a device used in slubbing, sometimes adopted to beat child workers), with slogans about 'white slavery', and 'the representation of a

deformed man, inscribed – "Am I not a man and a brother?"'[166]

With a shift in focus from plantation slavery to factory child labour, Gray notes that there are 'significant transformations involved in the reworking of these slogans and symbols'.[167] As he points out,

> The figure of the 'white slave' was ambiguously positioned: it implied the sharing of an oppressed condition, but it also marked difference, between black plantation slaves and white factory slaves, and between children and adult workers. (p. 39)

As Sanders states, there is a noticeable change 'from the muscular, strong, adult black slave to the deformed, enfeebled, white factory-child'.[168] The sharp contrast makes the factory child a more pitiable object and a more pressing issue than the Negro slave, since the child is younger and feebler, and lives in the native land of England. Thus abolitionist attention to the colonies is turned back onto the miseries at home. As the nation is already determined that slaves shall be free, now it is time for factory children to be emancipated. It is a strategic move used by factory reformers, radical or conservative, middle-class or working-class. Through the imagery of 'white slaves', the originally specific attack upon the physical sufferings of factory children, allegedly caused by their work alongside machinery, now becomes a more general moral appeal and a vociferous strain of social critique.

Indeed, wide circulation and even abuse of the white-slave icon becomes so prevalent in the 1830s that it eventually seems like empty terminology, or even a cliché, rousing the antipathy of liberal critics. For example, Robert Hyde Greg, active within the Liberal Party and an opponent of factory reform, wrote a book attacking the Article on the 'Factory System' (which, again, contrasts the fate of the factory child with that of the Negro adult) in the *Quarterly Review* in December 1836.[169] Reviewing all the

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[166] Gray, p. 39.

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] Sanders, p. 316.

[169] Robert Hyde Greg, *The Factory Question, Considered in Relation to Its Effects on the Health and Morals of Those Employed in Factories and the 'Ten Hours Bill,' in Relation to its Effects upon the Manufactures of England and Those of Foreign Countries* (London, 1837), Part I. History of Legislative Interference with the Labour of Children Employed in Factories, p. 14. In this work Greg reviewed

negative terms applied to the factory children, with 'slavery' surpassing them all in frequency, Greg perceives 'the general *unfairness of the phraseology and assumptions'* from the social reformers.[170] He considers these expressions all 'exaggerations', a word also quoted by Trollope as an example of the hostile reception her novel met with.[171] Yet Greg acknowledges their power to 'leave a painful impression on the public mind, and a feeling that, if only half true, the factories ought to be suppressed as nuisances'.[172] While earlier liberal social commentators like Harriet Martineau expressed sympathy with child labourers, in the course of the divisive debates of the 1830s, liberal hostility led to overt criticism of the slavery analogy as well as of other hackneyed and stereotyped expressions. In the evolving social climate of the factory debate, this change also signals the strong social effects of the transformation of the factory child into the white-slave icon.

The white-slave image synthesizes different social parties into a cooperative social body promoting factory reform, yet at the same time it incurs the detestation of liberal critics. As regards textual examination, we have already noted the unequal power of factory children and machinery in their cooperation. The 'slavery' analogy further reinforces the inequality between the two parts of the factory system and points to the class struggle symbolized by the human-machine interaction. The 'slavery' metaphor presents two unequal and opposing groups – the oppressor and the oppressed. Yet, if the factory child is the slave, who is the slave driver? With reference to our previous discussion, the most evident, concrete and immediate threat is the monster machine, which can stand for the joint tyranny of machinery, the factory system, and associated people at the middle and managerial levels. To illustrate, in John C. Cobden's *The White*

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various social discourses concerning the factory system from about 1833 to 1836, including Parliamentary Papers, such as the *First Report … as to the Employment of Children in Factories* (1833), its *Supplementary Reports* (1834), and *Reports of Inspectors of Factories* (1834), as well as articles from *Quarterly Review, Journal of American Institute* and *London and Westminster Review* and so on.

[170] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[171] *Ibid*.

[172] *Ibid*.

Slaves of England, Compiled from Official Documents with Twelve Spirited Illustrations (1853), he describes an interlocked 'system of overbearing tyranny' 'toward everybody under them' (p. 148). Among the 'two classes of superintendents', the 'managers' are 'the first class' with 'great power and authority' from the masters or mill owners to 'watch over the whole concern' (p. 147). The 'overlookers' are 'the second class', 'immediately responsible for whatever is amiss'; they are also responsible for the 'quantity of work' (p. 148). But, as the speed of each machine is fixed, more production can only come from longer hours of work. Thus 'the manager drives the overlookers', and then the overlookers drive 'spinners'; 'consequently, the piecers and scavengers are drilled, in their turns, to the severest attention', which result in factory children's physical and mental torture (p. 148). Accordingly, all the people, along with the machinery, in the factory system act as slave drivers, forming a complex, unitary machine.

People and machinery working together to inflict tyranny or slavery constitute not only a symbol but an actuality. The symbol is embodied in the slave-drivers' frequent use of the 'billy-roller', a part detached from machinery, to beat factory children. Cobden provides a concrete example from examination of a clothier by a Parliamentary Committee. In the clothier's observation, severe violence takes place when people urge factory children to attend to their work, or punish them when they make mistakes, even if out of fatigue. While shouting at the piecener, 'Damn thee, close it; little devil, close it', the 'slubber or billy-spinner' would strike the child with 'the strap, or the billy-roller' (pp. 149-50). The clothier describes the billy-roller as 'a heavy rod of from two to three yards long, and of two inches in diameter, and with an iron pivot at each end. It runs on the top of the cording, over the feeding-cloth' (p. 150). The billy-spinner often detaches the billy-roller from the billy-frame and uses it as an instrument to knock the little pieceners on the elbow or even rap them on the head, 'making their heads crack so that you might have heard the blow at a distance of six or eight yards, in spite of the din and

rolling of the machinery' (p. 150). The clothier further confirms that the billy-roller is 'the most common instrument with which these poor little pieceners are beaten, more commonly than with either stick or strap', and that there are cases of death caused by it (p. 150). In the novel *Michael Armstrong*, there are also girls 'beaten and bruised with the strap and the billy-roller' (Vol. 2, p. 79). In a factory girl's reply to Miss Brotherton during her factory visit, Trollope describes the billy-roller and its abuse: 'It is a long stout stick, ma'am, that's used often and often to beat the little ones employed in the mills when their strength fails – when they fall asleep, or stand still for a minute' (Vol. 2, p. 79). Such are the realistic examples, in parliamentary and novelistic representations, of the combination of people and machinery exerting tyrannical power. The shared discourse between Trollope and Parliamentary Reports again demonstrates Trollope's usage of social evidence in her novel and a coherent social imagery achieved by fiction and non-fiction. In Cobden's words, the factory system is 'a slavery which destroys human beings, body and soul' (p. 161).

Therefore, in both the fictional and non-fictional depictions that we have seen, there are realistic examples of machinery and seemingly all the other personnel of the factory working together, like a single machine or a cooperative body, to oppress the factory children. The fact that it is the 'slubber', an adult workman, who directly hits the factory children with the billy-roller, also indicates that it is now a more complicated joint act of violence by capital and labour, though there are various comments that accuse the managerial and mill-owning classes, or the overlookers and the masters, of being child abusers as well.[173] The children become the only group who are solely victims of abuse and cooperate with all the other parts of the factory in a manner painful to themselves. Factory children become parts of the huge machinery as a whole, yet

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[173] As for literary representations, in Douglas Jerrold's melodrama *The Factory Girl* (1832), the master is a good man, and the villain is his foreman; in John Thomas Haines' factory play *The Factory Boy* (1840), the villains are the rich mill-owner and his foreman; in Frances Trollope's industrial novel *Michael Armstrong* (1840), the mill-owner and his associates (other employers, managers, overlookers, professional men, and so on) are the villains. See Booth, *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century, I. Dramas 1800-1850,* pp. 204-05, and Gray, p. 145.

they are violently abused. In Section I we see adult workmen smashing machines; in Section II and III we see machines smashing or injuring children; here we see adult workmen using parts of machines (or becoming part of the mechanism) to beat children – a different and complicated form of human-machine cooperation.

While Greg provides an example of a social discourse which incorporates and discusses other social discourses, all belonging to the same generic category, John C. Cobden's *The White Slaves of England, Compiled from Official Documents with Twelve Spirited Illustrations* (1853) intriguingly weaves diverse materials, using as his evidence large amounts of text quoted from fiction and non-fiction, ranging from the early to the mid nineteenth century. In this book Cobden respectively discusses different kinds of 'slavery' existing in England, including slavery in the British mines, workshops, workhouses, and factories. The white-slave icon persists for decades, and its usage is extended to other social injustices. Furthermore, it is used to transcend generic boundaries and coordinate literary and non-literary works into a united argument. Comparable to James Montgomery's 1824 anthology, *The Chimney-Sweeper's Friend, and Climbing-Boy's Album'*, which includes both tracts and literary works focussing on the child chimney sweep, now, with the white-slave icon, a new hybrid discourse is achieved.

In his Chapter III, 'Slavery in the British Factories', Cobden quotes from Edward Baines's *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain* (1835) as well as Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), writing that Gaskell, 'in her thrilling novel, "Mary Barton, a Tale of Manchester Life," depicts without exaggeration the sufferings of the operatives' (p. 106). The writer uses the novel as evidence and spends pages replicating passages abstracted from the novel. He emphasizes its truthfulness by commenting that, although it is fiction, 'it must not be forgotten that it is the work of an English writer, and that its scenes are professedly drawn from the existing realities of life in Manchester, where the author resided' (p. 114). Thus, lengthy reproductions of extracts from fictional works,

Parliamentary Reports, examinations of *Robert Blincoe*, speeches by a Manchester spinner and by Richard Oastler and so on, are mixed together in this representation of white slavery in England. It forms a composition in which varied writings from different times are juxtaposed in parallel with little distinction between them. The writing itself can be deemed a machine, in which different parts are assembled to function as a whole. Here these different parts are easily separable as well, being different blocks of original texts linked together. Yet, joined with each other by Cobden, this unique interwoven piece embodies the writer's understanding of factory slavery and presents an enriched image in which fictional and factual elements are pieced together regardless of differences in genre or period.

Aside from the diverse writings it incorporates, *The White Slaves of England* uses as its own frontispiece a modification of an illustration from Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*.[174] Echoing the front page, its Factory Slavery chapter also closes with a passage from *Michael Armstrong*. The frontispiece of *The White Slaves of England* (Figure 2.1) evidently reproduces the illustration of the factory interior scene in *Michael Armstrong* (Figure 2.2), the only major change being in the central characters, which rewrites the whole story. In *Michael Armstrong*'s illustration, captioned 'Love conquers Fear', we see the sentimental and melodramatic reunion of the factory brothers, Michael and Edward, in a factory room. While Michael wears decent clothes because he has been 'adopted' by Sir Matthew, his brother appears skinny, barefoot and wretched in dirty rags, and there is another poor factory boy crawling on the floor underneath the machine. We can see that the emphasis here is on the suffering factory children, who are surrounded by four adult factory workers, alongside the big machine (which occupies the left half of the picture), with three more gentlemanly-looking people (Sir Matthew Dowling the master, Dr Crockley, and Mr Parsons) in the background (yet at the top of

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[174] At the end of his essay, Chaloner also mentions the appropriation of the illustration from *Michael Armstrong* as the frontispiece of *The White Slaves of England*, but he does not provide any pictorial analysis of or comparison between them. See Chaloner, 'Mrs. Trollope and the Early Factory System', p. 166.

the pyramid structure). But, in the frontispiece of *The White Slaves of England,* while the central scene is expanded, with the edges cropped out, the three factory children in the middle are replaced by a factory boy (facing the reader with a helpless expression, his hands waving or hanging in mid-air) confronting a man (facing the boy with his back towards the reader) holding a strap over his head. Although all the other characters, the machine and the setting remain the same, the drama is completely different. With the book's title printed upon the picture, we witness a violent scene of infant slavery in factories. It is a visualization of the white slavery theme, incorporating the suffering factory child, the slave driver, the machinery, and the class hierarchy. It also visually manifests how Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy, is turned into a White Slave in British Factories.

If we relate the picture to the texts, it is interesting to see how the Factory Slavery chapter closes with a lengthy extract from the novel *Michael Armstrong*. To introduce the novel, the writer pays it high compliments and declares that it should be much more widely read:

> We cannot close this chapter upon the British factories without making a quotation from a work which, we fear, has been too little read in the United Kingdom – a fiction merely in construction, a truthful narrative in fact. We allude to 'The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy,' by Frances Trollope. Copious editions of this heart-rending story should be immediately issued by the British publishers. (p. 162)

Following this statement, many of the passages I quote from *Michael Armstrong* in previous discussions are also cited here, including the descriptions of tortured children looking like ghastly goblins in 'the horrid earthly hell' (p. 162) and of the acrobatic scavenger girl (p. 163). Yet Cobden also quotes one particular passage that especially refers to slavery and portrays the overlooker with his 'strap in hand', which echoes the imagery of the frontispiece: (p. 163)

> [I]n the room they entered, the dirty, ragged, miserable crew, were all in active performance of their various tasks; the *overlookers, strap in hand*, on the alert; the *whirling spindles* urging the *little slaves* who waited on them, to movements

as unceasing as their own; and *the whole monstrous chamber*, redolent of all the various impurities that 'by the perfection of *our manufacturing system*' are converted into 'gales of Araby' for the rich, after passing in the shape of certain poison, through the lungs of the poor. (*Michael Armstrong*, Vol. 1, p. 200; *White Slaves*, p. 163; my own emphasis)

This passage figuratively presents a sketch of the manufacturing mechanism: the infant slaves, working at the machine, supervised by the overlookers, inside the hideous room, within the factory system. Thus the integration of the text and adaptation of the image from *Michael Armstrong* make *The White Slaves* a new creation and a new example of cross-genre cooperation.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen the metamorphosis of the human-machine integration, in the course of a journey drawing on a variety of sources from different genres – stage melodrama, memoirs, industrial novels, medical treatises, and other social writings. It is an uneven process of producing a cooperative body from different (injured) parts, in terms of interaction between human beings and machinery, confrontation between social classes, and integration of varied literary modes and social discourses.

In the compounded social unrests accompanying industrial advancement, class conflicts and political revolts, the human-machine collision represents multiple anxieties of mechanical dehumanization and capitalist oppression, as we have examined them. The shift of representational focus from the violent and dangerous workingmen to the endangered and harmless children implies a middle-class imaginary solution with which to transform the threatening mob into manageable infants. Yet, through the implicit link between factory children and adult workers in their shared lack of free agency under capitalism, or through the innate contradiction of Tory-Radical alliance in the Ten Hours Movement, an inherent class dissonance is still contained in the child figure.

Factory children not only represent the working class in a more sympathetic form,

they are also malleable and changeable beings; thus they occupy an irreplaceable position in reformist writings. As the radical factory lads are changed into the suffering factory children, the human-machine relationship is also transformed from drastic machine breaking or human smashing to a more durable yet still unequal relationship. In their long-term interaction with machinery, the factory children not only undergo physical deformation and behavioural adjustment, but are figuratively turned into animals, machines, or little old men. Each human transformation signifies contemporary anxieties about dehumanization.

Combined with abolitionist discourses, the exploited factory child eventually becomes a lasting icon of white slavery. The unequal power struggle among the working, managerial and capitalist classes is also embodied in the symbolic scene of factory children's enslavement to machinery. Using the theme of white slavery in their propaganda, factory reformists (ranging from working-class radicals to middle-class conservatives) coordinate their efforts to promote the regulation of child labour in their own nation. The factory child figure thus assumes and changes shape in the discursive journey, in the struggle between competing forces and different emblems.

With the factory child figure, and later with the white slave icon, class boundaries are crossed and different social groups are connected. In the representation of human-machine cooperation, which symbolizes inter-class collaboration, we see human beings gradually becoming part of the machine. Following Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40), in Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41)*,* the operative is called 'a human piece of mechanism' (p. 616).[175] Yet it is not only the factory workers who are parts of the machine; the mill-owning class are also involved in this mechanism. In Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley* (1849), 'the industrialist Moore, without any irony, refers to himself as a human mill whose boiler (heart) is about to burst': 'The machinery of all

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[175] Joseph Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 62.

my nature; the whole enginery of this human mill: the boiler, which I take to be the heart, is fit to burst.'[176] Thus there is a vision of society as a machine composed of different classes. As Patricia Ingham suggests, by the 1830s 'for many the picture of society as a machine and human beings as its parts was no longer a metaphor'.[177] To some extent the terminology, or the concept of the social body as a vast machine, became 'inescapable, as what had at first been taken metaphorically came to be regarded as literal'.[178] Thus we see the evolution from class antagonism to reconciliation, from relentless violence to the more functional relationship of a cooperative social body within one machine – yet ensuing problems still need to be solved and inequality needs to be reduced.

As for the composition of written discourse, this also resembles an experimental machine formed of various parts. The novel *Michael Armstrong* serves as an example, incorporating both literary and non-literary elements, ranging from melodrama, memoirs, illustrations, documentary notes, and social evidence, to anti-slavery propaganda and so on. In this incorporation and subsequent ones, like Cobden's *The White Slaves of England*, the representation of factory children and machinery is re-coloured and rewritten time and again. Different genres influence and interact with each other to achieve functional cooperation across generic borders, thereby becoming a unified cooperative body. As Mary Poovey remarks, such representation is always 'contested' and 'under construction', 'because it was always in the making, it was always open to revision, dispute and the emergence of oppositional formulations'.[179] Thus a variety of literary and social discourses, historical events and circumstances continue to be recycled, reproduced, and represented in a recursive process.

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[176] Patricia Ingham, *The Language of Gender and Class Transformation in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 12, 33.
[177] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[178] *Ibid.*
[179] Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989), p. 3.

Figure 2.1
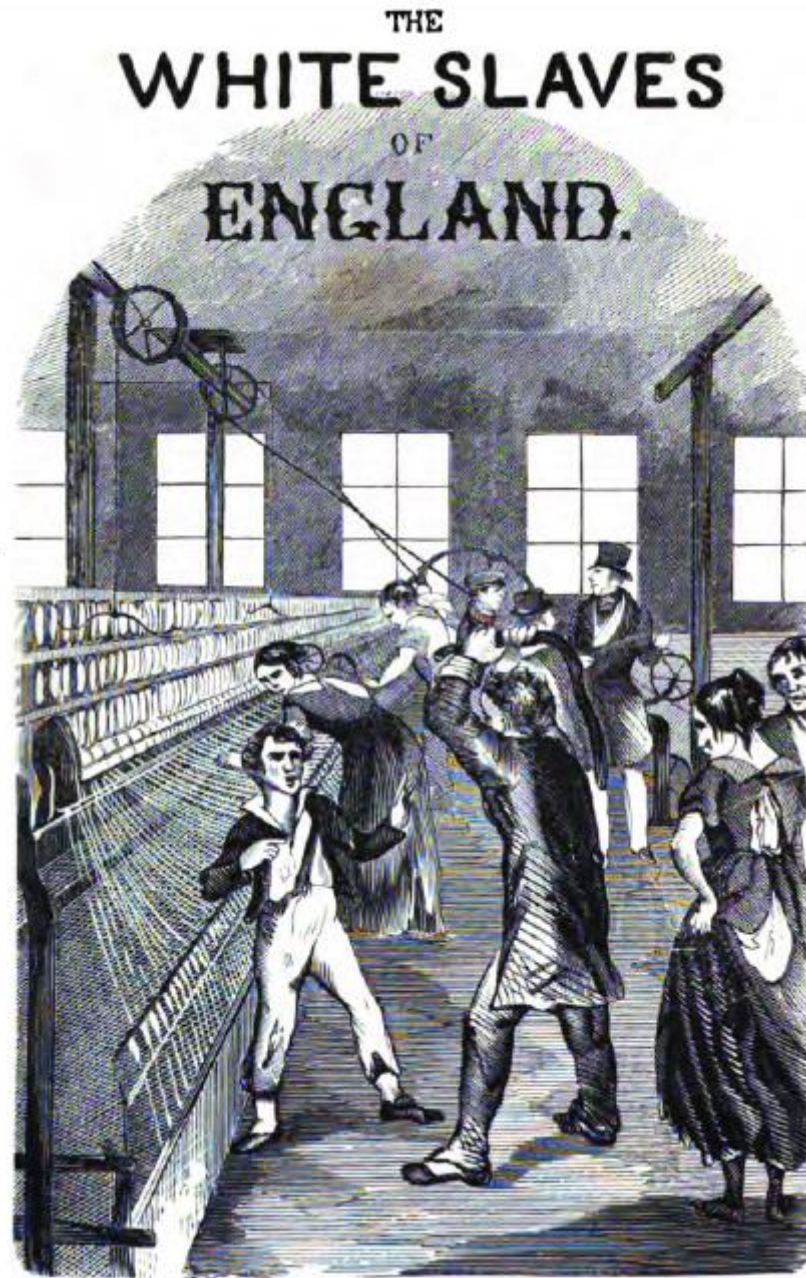
John C. Cobden, *The White Slaves of England, Compiled from Official Documents with Twelve Spirited Illustrations* (1853)

Figure 2.2
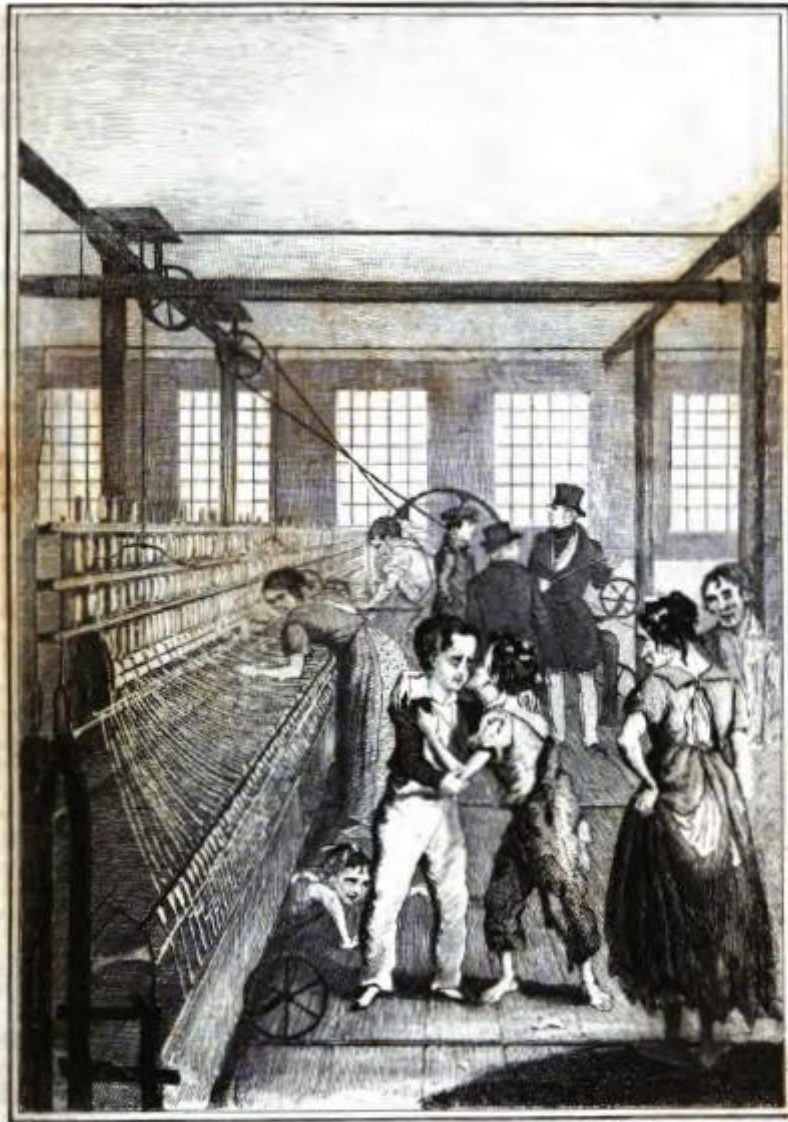
"Love conquered Fear."

Frances Trollope, *Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (1840)

Chapter Three

Apologists for the Factory System and the 'Blessed' Factory Child

Introduction

In his preface to the novel *Mary Ashley, The Factory Girl, or Facts Upon the Factory* (1839), Frederic Montagu openly attacks Frances Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, Factory Boy* (1839-40) with a blunt letter to 'the cotton manufacturers of Great Britain':

> Gentlemen,
>
> A work entirely of fiction, which has but lately issued from the press, entitled 'Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy,' and having for its object, as far as it has yet proceeded, the universal condemnation of manufacturers and manufactories, and placing the employers and employed in the lowest scale of human degradation – has caused me to undertake the really simple task of placing fairly before the reflecting portion of society the true bearing of the case.[1]

At that time the contemporary Victorian general public had been greatly agitated by horrifying accounts of how children employed in factories were abused, the disclosures being widely circulated in serialized fiction, such as *Michael Armstrong*, with its sensational descriptions and shocking illustrations. Now, those who allied themselves with the mill owners needed to fight back. Here Montagu announced his intention to do so, making it clear whose side he was on. As Helen Heineman has observed, with *Michael Armstrong*, Trollope 'boldly led the way in making fiction "the medium of

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[1] Frederic Montagu, *Mary Ashley, The Factory Girl, or Facts upon Factories* (London: [s.n.], 1839). Subsequent references are to this edition. *Mary Ashley* is generally noted by scholars as a counterblast to *Michael Armstrong*. Michael Sadleir specifies that 'in August 1839 (about five months after *Michael Armstrong* had begun to appear) there was published the first of ten monthly numbers of *Mary Ashley*', and suggests that the surname of the titular heroine obviously mocks Lord Ashley, who proposed the Ten Hours Bill in 1833. See Michael Sadleir, *Anthony Trollope, A Commentary* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1927), p. 94. Yet Joanne Shattock and Philip Arthur William Collins further state that the novel 'was planned in ten monthly parts from August 1839, but collapsed after its second installment', in *Dickens and Other Victorians: Essays in Honour of Philip Collins* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 102. See also W. H. Chaloner, 'Mrs. Trollope and the Early Factory System', *Victorian Studies*, 4, no. 2 (1960), 159-166 (p. 165); Monica Correa Fryckstedt, *The Early Industrial Novel: Mary Barton and Its Predecessors* (Manchester: John Rylands University of Manchester, 1980), pp. 15-16; Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 148. However, deeper and wider contextual analysis of *Mary Ashley* is missed in all the previous researches. This is what the present chapter sets out to provide.

interpretation" for a new age, and the novel with a purpose rapidly became a common and then a dominant type as the 1840s progressed'.[2] Here I further demonstrate that the novel is not only 'the medium of interpretation' but also the tool for debate. As if fictional works were weapons on the battlefield, the defensive narrative was thus indignantly launched.

In the 1830s and 40s, in light of the factory problem and the question of children's employment associated with the Ten Hours Movement, factory children had become a controversial issue. Competing contemporary views on factory children can be illustrated by the two examples below. Supporters of factory reform saw devastating conditions of employment for factory children, the focus, as we have seen, being on the physical damage caused by machinery, recounted in the reformist writings analyzed in Chapter Two. Besides fiction writers like Trollope, nonfiction writers such as Samuel Kydd in his historical monologue also commented upon the cruelty of factory employment for children and the greed of manufacturers:

> Tens of thousands of 'the little children' in those mills have been destroyed because of their owner's lust of gold. The necessaries and decencies of life were but little cared for in some cases; in many, fatally neglected. Education was, as a rule, entirely unprovided for. Children have dropped down at their frames exhausted, the fingers of little ones have been snapped off instantly, their limbs have suffered in like manner; there have been living bodies caught in the iron grip of machinery in rapid motion, and whirled in the air, bones crushed, and blood cast copiously on the floor, because of physical exhaustion.[3]

Kydd presents a picture contrary to what we shall see in the apologist writings. Composed as a deliberate riposte to the Sadler Report, *The First Report of the Factories Inquiry Commission* (1833) states,

> It appears in evidence, that of all employments to which children are subjected, those carried in factories are amongst the least laborious, and of all departments of in-door labour, amongst the least unwholesome. It is in evidence, that boys

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[2] Helen Heineman, *Mrs. Trollope: The Triumphant Feminine in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979), p. 171.
[3] Samuel H. G. Kydd ('Alfred'), *The History of the Factory Movement: From the Year 1802, to the Enactment of the Ten Hours' Bill in 1847, in Two Volumes* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1857), Vol. I, p. 22.

employed in collieries are subjected at a very early age to very severe labour, that cases of deformity are more common and accidents more frequent amongst them than amongst children employed in factories. Hand-loom weavers, frame-work knitters, lace-runners, and workpeople engaged in other lines of domestic manufacture, are in most cases worked at earlier ages, for longer hours and for less wages, than the body of children employed in factories.[4]

Here we see a common technique used by the Whig party or other apologists for the factory system: comparing factory children with those of other trades so as to highlight the relative good fortune of factory children. Other defensive viewpoints will be further examined in the literary and non-literary apologist writings this chapter deals with.

As rival views created controversy in the press, the two industrial novels, *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong*, polarized the debate in the literary arena. How those who supported the cause of factory children, like Frances Trollope, advanced their case is examined in Chapter Two and in the next chapters; in this one I focus on the opposite case, the representation of factory children provided by Montagu, Harriet Martineau, and other defenders of manufacturers or of the factory system. They suggest that child labour is not a necessary evil, but a blessing; that is, that the child is fortunate to have beneficial employment on the one hand, and to act as a 'national blessing' for Christian England on the other hand.[5] To put it concretely, far from the exploited slave of narratives critical of the factory system, apologists represented the child in a well-regulated factory as a favourite of fortune – a blessed, rather than cursed, child.[6] As Montagu claims in his opening letter preceding the novel,

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[4] Factories Inquiry Commission, *First report of the Central Board of His Majesty's commissioners appointed to collect information in the manufacturing districts, as to the employment of children in factories, and as to the propriety and means of curtailing the hours of their labour: with minutes of evidence, and reports by the district commissioners* (London, 1833), p. 51. Pinchbeck and Hewitt quote part of this from Ronald Fletcher, *The Family and Marriage in Britain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966) p. 86, in *Children in English Society. Vol.2, From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act, 1948* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 403.

[5] William Cooke Taylor, *Factories and the factory system; from parliamentary documents and personal examination* (1844), 'Ch IV. Infant Labour', repr. in *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings About Work,* ed. by David J. Bradshaw and Suzanne Ozment (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), pp. 236-52 (p. 236). Subsequent references are to this edition. The idea will be further discussed later in this chapter.

[6] How child labour is associated with slavery in reformist rhetoric is examined in Chapter Two. See also Robert Gray, '1. Factory slavery', in 'Part 1. Voices in a debate, c.1830-1850', *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 21-47.

> the Factory Children are … comparatively better taken care of − better educated − in better health − live better − are better clothed − and much better paid − than any trade individually, or the whole of the working classes collectively, throughout her Majesty's British dominions.

Behind this representation or rationalization is a middle-class male concept or idealization of the employment of factory children as promoting national prosperity and benefitting the children themselves as well.

Here the interpretation is especially gendered because, for one thing, the male writer Montagu directly criticizes the female in the final note of his novel:

> If the system is bad, it will not be improved by any Female (sorry are we to write this latter word) continually calling upon the name of the Deity, or making use of profane swearing, (as the case may suit her purpose,) whilst she sets before the public a work having for its crest the appropriate drawing of 'The Father of Lies.' (p. 104)

To be sure, there were also present in the debate the female writer Harriet Martineau, adherent of *laissez-faire* economics, and the male Charles Dickens, with his sympathy for lower-class people. Discussion of Martineau will be provided in this chapter, and of Dickens in the next. Yet the apologists for the factory system who will be examined in this chapter are mostly male, while many women writers (like Frances Trollope, Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Caroline Norton, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning) construct narrative empathy with factory children in their poetry or fiction. This thesis will discuss how gender difference (along with the gendered connotations of related ideologies such as patriarchal hierarchy, social paternalism, separate spheres, domestic ideology, Luddism, and sentimentalism) is reflected in representations of the factory child. In addition to Montagu's fiction, this chapter will analyze how Martineau, as a female apologist, uses her 'feminine' powers of illustration and 'masculine' knowledge of political economy. Their representations crystallize middle-class apologists' perceptions of factory children's role in the factory system − an inevitable, indispensable, yet subordinate one in the patriarchal or paternalist class structure.

In this chapter, I shall use Montagu's novel as an extended example to demonstrate

the various facets of the representation of factory children, supplemented by other literary and socio-historical materials. Along with the construction of the factory child, I shall also analyze the nature of these discourses and the underlying ideologies which affect that construction. One perspective this chapter will examine is that of the Victorian male persona with his middle-class values, who sees factory children through the preferred lens of solid 'facts' (or what he regards as great truths), concrete evidence, logical rationales, and even superior ideals, rather than the 'vulgar sympathy' or 'gross exaggeration', that he dismisses as feminine traits (p. 104). Montagu's novel, immature though it is in terms of literary quality, establishes an early model of the industrial novel which tries to mingle facts with opinions in fiction. Yet, favouring fact over fiction – as suggested by the title of his novel and by his condemnation of Frances Trollope's work as 'entirely of fiction' – Montagu, as a barrister himself, employs a rather didactic and explanatory style, as opposed to Trollope's sensational, adventurous story.[7]

To sum up, the purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to examine the construction of the image of the 'fortunate' factory child; second, to analyze the discursive experiments present in this phenomenon. I would argue, as hinted at by the title of the novel, that Montagu presents a seemingly blessed factory girl, using a blend of factual description mixed with opinions in a fictional narration, to justify the mighty factory system which devours the girl's voice.

I. Harriet Martineau, Political Economy, and the Factory Movement

Before looking into Montagu's factory fiction, it will be useful to analyze Harriet Martineau's representations of factory children, combined with the principles of political economy that she emphasizes, in the tales contained in *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1832-34). As another predecessor of the writers of industrial fiction,

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[7] Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 148.

Martineau provides in these tales a link and a transition between earlier factory fiction and narratives, as discussed in Chapter Two, and later industrial novels, to be further discussed in this and subsequent chapters, both in their content and in their genre formation.

The series was published between 1832 and 1834, when the Ten Hours Movement was getting underway. To fully understand Martineau's representations, we need to view her tales and her Malthusian arguments in the *Illustrations* as a whole within this social context. The belief in political economy or the *laissez-faire* doctrine, rather than in protectionist or paternalist intervention, is the fundamental ideology of the apologists opposing the Ten Hours Movement.[8] In the first half of the 1830s, the Royal Commission, appointed by the Whig party in Parliament with its belief in utility and political economy, refused to reduce the working hours of adults along with those of children. The dismissal of the Ten Hours Movement in 1833, as well as the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834, marked two prominent examples of the political controversies of the time. On one side, there were the newly-ascendant manufacturers and political economists, coldly and rationally holding to the doctrines of free enterprise and *laissez-faire*; on the other side, there were old-fashioned Tory paternalists and working men looking for governmental interference and protection against the cruel 'free' market.[9] Thus, while Tory reformist writers, like Trollope, sentimentally publicize the suffering of working-class children for propaganda purposes, liberal-minded writers, like Martineau and Montagu, who support political economy, look more coldly at the laws and reasons underlying the social facts. Upholding the famous doctrine of Malthusian checks on the increase of the labouring poor – namely, that with gradual abolition of the Poor Laws, the number of the labouring poor would naturally decrease,

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[8] For the philosophies underlying much of the social and political debate of this period, see Kim Lawes, *Paternalism and Politics: The Revival of Paternalism in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 65.

[9] For a quick overview of the social conflicts of this period, see Edward Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History, 1750-2010* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), p. 147.

thus preventing the nation from squandering its wealth on financial assistance for them – Martineau does not represent factory children as objects of sympathy.[10] The characters in Martineau's tales to some extent serve as puppets dominated by the laws of political economy.

Thus, as predecessors of industrial fiction, Martineau's tales also provide an early interdisciplinary example of the fusion of fictional and non-fictional exposition of the rules of political economy. Besides crossing the boundary between genres, Martineau crosses the gender boundary between male and female discourses. Scholars have discussed Martineau's fusion of feminine traits and masculine discourse. Linda Peterson noted that Martineau's early *Illustrations of Political Economy* 'accepts the subordination of (female) narrative work to (male) theory and theorists: Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, Thomas Malthus, James Mill'.[11] Her tales are also prefaced or followed by a 'summary of principles' from their theories, which 'control and master Martineau's imaginative work'.[12] Lana L. Dalley points out that Martineau's unique project not only made (feminine) fictional and (masculine) economic discourses compatible, but also, through the popularity of the *Illustrations*, made her a household name and helped to popularize the doctrines.[13] At the time of the series' publication, most readers assumed that fiction and economics were two separate and distinct entities, connoting the separate gendered spheres and hierarchical gender roles: fiction (considered feminine and usually inferior with its appreciation of 'concrete particulars and imaginative excursions') claimed authority over emotional knowledge, while

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[10] For Malthus's *Essay on Population*, see, for example, Lawes, p. 67.

[11] Linda H. Peterson, 'Harriet Martineau: Masculine Discourse, Female Sage', in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse: Renegotiating Gender and Power,* ed. by Morgan, Thaïs E. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 171-86, p. 181.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Lana L. Dalley, 'On Martineau's *Illustrations of Political Economy*, 1832-34', in *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. by Dino Franco Felluga, <http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=lana-l-dalley-on-martineaus-illustrations-of-political-economy-1832-34>, pp. 1-2. For the popularity of the *Illustrations*, see also Elaine Freedgood, 'Banishing Panic: Harriet Martineau and the Popularization of Political Economy', in *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics*, ed. by Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 210-28.

political economy (considered masculine and usually superior with its abstract reasoning) claimed authority over empirical knowledge.[14] This stereotyped view of gender and genre, also noticeable in reviews of Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* as discussed in Chapter Two and in Montagu's *Mary Ashley* as a riposte, was subjected to reconsideration through Martineau's experimental work. However, though fusing the two traditionally gendered spheres, to some extent Martineau still preserves the superiority of masculine theory in her early tales. In the preface to the *Illustrations*, Martineau promises to present the philosophy of political economy in a 'picture' and in 'a familiar, practical form'.[15] She sets out to 'embody each leading principle in a character: and the mutual operation of these embodied principles supplied the action of the story'.[16] Therefore, all the plots and characters in her tales seem secondary to the dominating rules, which imply the gendered hierarchy. Gendered assumptions also permeate the contemporary reviews of Martineau's literary economic project. For example, Edward Bulwer Lytton states in his review that he considers Martineau 'a writer of fiction' rather than 'a political economist'; in other words, he does not believe that a female fiction writer can possess the scientific mind of a male political economist.[17] Here we see also that, in the cultural climate of the first half of the nineteenth century, the gendering of discourses made female discursive activities more closely scrutinized and even disparaged, whereas men could move between discourses with greater freedom.[18] As Dalley comments, Martineau, while admitting the occasional necessity of adding fictional 'accessories' to her tales, maintained that such accessories were 'rendered subordinate' to the economic principles.[19] Yet, as Peterson argues, Martineau's work shows how the reasonable truth or masculine ideology

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[14] Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 133.
[15] Martineau, *Illustrations of Political Economy* (London: C. Fox, 1834), p. xi.
[16] Martineau, *Autobiography* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Company, 1877), p. 147.
[17] Dalley, p. 4.
[18] Dalley, p. 4.
[19] Dalley, p. 2.

emerges from the feminine narratives.[20] How Martineau uses her rather 'feminine' portrayals to achieve the 'masculine' purpose of political economy in her representations of industrial themes will be further analyzed in the tales from her *Illustrations* which will follow.

As a female apologist for the factory system, Martineau provides a link and transition between the feminine sentimental representations of victimized factory children and the masculine Malthusian expectation that factory children should die out.[21] In the sentimental atmosphere of the 1830s and 40s, political economists and their supporters mistrusted sympathy and asked people to 'harden themselves against the influence of kindly feelings', so as not to lose their sanity and misunderstand the facts.[22] The sentiments prevailing in Trollope's and other reformist writings and the rationality permeating Martineau's and other apologetic discourses are thus placed in sharp contrast. Martineau's portrayal of factory children in 'A Manchester Strike' (1832) turns out to be a meeting point between reformist and apologetic representations of factory children, and a turning point in the discourse. Despite a moving account of a poor factory girl, Martha, being effectively presented in the tale, Martineau's goal was to illustrate and popularize the principles of *laissez-faire* capitalism, which ran counter to the anti-utilitarian humanitarian narratives of Frances Trollope, John Walker, and others.

As a possible influence on *The Factory Lad*, Harriet Martineau's pioneering factory tale 'A Manchester Strike' connects early melodramas and later industrial novels.[23] Published in the same year as *The Factory Lad* and the *Blincoe Memoir*, 'A Manchester Strike' is, as Catherine Gallagher suggests, 'primarily a story about male

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[20] Peterson, 'Harriet Martineau: Masculine Discourse, Female Sage', p. 186.

[21] For the influence of Malthus on Martineau, see, for example, James P. Huzel, *The Popularization of Malthus in Early Nineteenth-century England: Martineau, Cobbett, and the Pauper Press,* 'Chapter Two: Harriet Martineau: A Female Malthusian?' (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 55-105.

[22] G. R. Searle, *Morality and the Market in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 174.

[23] For the relation between *The Factory Lad* (October 1832), industrial novels like *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40), and especially Martineau's 'The Manchester Strike' (August 1832), see Vernon, 'Trouble up at t'Mill: the Rise and Decline of the Factory Play in the 1830s and 1840s', pp. 124-25.

workers', yet it also includes 'a poignant account of a factory girl'.[24] It can be viewed as one of her fullest treatments of industrial themes, and one which, as Deborah Anna Logan states, 'provides a compelling depiction of suffering among the industrial working poor'.[25] In this tale, there is a long-suffering working-class hero, William Allen, whose daughter Martha, a factory girl, is pathetically feeble and lame. There is a scene at the cotton factory on the banks of the River Medlock in which Martha, 'a lame child of eight, is subjected to the dust, smells, heat and "incessant whizzing and whirling of the wheels" of the machinery which makes the pale children's heads ache'.[26]

Comparing 'The Manchester Strike' (published in August 1832) and Walker's play *The Factory Lad* (produced in October of that year), Vernon points out that Walker's play and Martineau's story are similar in theme but different in 'sentiments'.[27] Although Martineau shows the pathos of her working-class characters' situation and even places emphasis on the factory children's suffering, in an extremely affecting description such as Walker does not attempt, her objective is to demonstrate theories of political economy to employers and workers in order to convince them to accept the 'universal and inescapable' laws of the market as 'the best way to accommodate themselves'.[28] However moving Martha's suffering is, it is still partly the result of the uncontrolled reproduction of the working class. In contrast, presenting a bitter class conflict through the medium of melodrama, Walker 'leaves an impression of an essentially unjust and unjustifiable relationship between master and man'.[29]

In terms of its influence on novels, Martineau's tale is considered to anticipate subsequent industrial novels in its 'sympathetic portrayal of workers blinded, maimed,

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[24] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, c1985), p. 128.
[25] Harriet Martineau, and Deborah Anna Logan (ed.), *Illustrations of Political Economy: Selected Tales* (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2004), p. 137.
[26] Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 68.
[27] Vernon, 'Trouble up at t'Mill: the Rise and Decline of the Factory Play in the 1830s and 1840s', p. 125.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*

and crippled by industrial exploitation, spiritually broken by unremitting hopelessness, and driven to alcoholism through desperate poverty'.[30] Although Martineau's goal was to illustrate and popularize the principles of *laissez-faire* capitalism, which conflicted with the goals promoted by the anti-utilitarian humanitarian narratives of Frances Trollope, John Walker, and John Brown, nevertheless, a moving account of a poor factory child was effectively presented. As Monica Correa Fryckstedt further confirms, 'A Manchester Strike' introduces 'the plight of child workers', thus anticipating novels like Frances Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40) and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41), with its 'sympathy for human suffering'.[31] In addition, the 'relations between masters and men' illustrated here cohere with the theme of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848).[32] As Penny Brown comments on Martineau's approach, she is 'not unaware of or unconcerned about the soul-destroying implications' of factory work, but she prefers 'a rational stance', generally avoids 'the temptation of sentimentality', and has 'a clear allegiance to the capitalist class'.[33] Although the reformist and apologetic writers headed in different directions, here Martineau's portrayal of factory children becomes a meeting and turning point. Her factory tale serves as a transitional site where varied portrayals and different emphases meet; where issues of class conflict and child labour exist side by side.

As another instance of Martineau's portrayal of children, in 'The Hill and the Valley' (1832), published in the same year as 'A Manchester Strike', a child dies as a result of putting his head in the way of machinery, interpreted as the outcome of disobeying orders rather than as an occasion for sympathy. As the story is told, a boy in charge of some component of new machinery 'was careless, and put himself in the way

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[30] Deborah Anna Logan, ed., *Illustration of Political Economy,* p. 138.
[31] Monica Correa Fryckstedt, *The Early Industrial Novel: Mary Barton and Its Predecessors* (Manchester: John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1980), pp. 12-13.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 68.

of receiving a blow on the head, which killed him on the spot'.[34] Listing other common workplace incidents, the narrator comments, 'no one would have blamed anything but their own carelessness; and so it ought to have been in the present case' (p. 92). Thus the accident is blamed on the child's own inattentiveness, rather than on the new machinery. Nevertheless, machinery is seen as a threat and even as a target of revenge by workers in the tale, as in the *Blincoe Memoir* and *The Factory Lad*, discussed in Chapter Two. While the factory accident scene in 'The Hill and the Valley' strongly echoes that in the *Blincoe Memoir*, here the scene is reframed and given a different moral. While the *Blincoe* scene uses sensational and bloody descriptions to highlight the terrors in the factory boy witness's mind and to cast factory children as helpless victims, the incident in Martineau's tale further triggers workmen's discontent and intention to demolish the machinery – the latter action, despite echoing the factory destruction scene in *The Factory Lad*, being used to point out the folly of the workmen who actually bring ruin on themselves.

Thus the Luddite theme of *The Factory Lad* also appears in Martineau's 'The Hill and the Valley', yet with an opposed lesson. While the workers in Martineau's tale and in Walker's melodrama both view machinery as the cause of their unemployment and the target of their revenge, and use violence to smash the machinery to pieces, here in 'The Hill and the Valley' the narrator points out that it is a 'delusion' to see machinery as the 'cause'. On the contrary, Martineau intends to correct this public perception and emphasize the unity of labourers and capitalists, rather than their division. As Martineau's 'Summary of Principles illustrated in this Volume' shows, 'Machinery' actually helps increase 'the demand for Labour' by 'assisting the growth of Capital'; thus, the interests of 'Labourers and Capitalists' are the same (p. 140). As a result, she demonstrates how the workers' revengeful actions against machinery result in their own

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[34] Martineau, *Illustrations of Political Economy,* Vol. 1, 'The Hill and the Valley' (London: Charles Fox, 1834), p. 92. Subsequent references are to this edition.

loss. Instead of inflaming workers' irrational vengeance, Martineau uses her tale to instil the principles of political economy into the public mind and to calm their violent sentiments. To some extent, Martineau's representations support Peterson's argument that the masculine, rational truth emerges from the feminine fictional description.[35]

Therefore, Martineau redefines factory accidents and factory destruction, as presented sensationally in contemporary works like the *Blincoe Memoir* and *The Factory Lad*, in a cooler manner and with an explicitly more rational stance. Compared with Martineau's tales, Trollope's novel *Michael Armstrong* to some extent also tames the radical violence and emphasizes cooperation between classes, as discussed in the previous chapter; however, as discord is still found in the interaction she depicts between factory children and machinery, Trollope appeals for legislation to improve factory conditions. In contrast, Montagu's fiction, an apologist work to be further discussed later on, presents a harmonious working scene and a cordial relationship between factory owners and workers. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, whose representations of factory females will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five, produced her fiction as a deliberate response to Martineau's Radical-Liberal ideas.[36] Martineau, a proponent of political economy as well as a Victorian feminist, supports the expansion of work opportunities for women in industry.[37] Her intention to revise women's sphere is revealed in her early tales like 'The Hill and the Valley', in which a character says, 'Women are not often so cowardly as they are said to be, if they are but treated fairly, and given to understand what they are to expect' (p. 104). For Tonna, however, it is women's role within the family rather than as industrial workers that should be protected; Tonna's Evangelical viewpoints will be analyzed in the following chapters.

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[35] Peterson, p. 186.

[36] See Ella Dzelzainis, 'Reason vs Revelation: Feminism, Malthus, and the New Poor Law in Narratives by Harriet Martineau and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 2 (2006), <www.19.bbk.ac.uk>, p. 2.

[37] See, for example, Kathleen Blake, *The Pleasures of Benthamism: Victorian Literature, Utility, Political Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

II. Narrative Elements and the Blessed Factory Girl in *Mary Ashley* (1839)

In *Mary Ashley*, to introduce the lives of factory children to his middle-class readers, Montagu first orients the latter in middle-class family surroundings featuring an heiress, Amina Myddleton, who serves as mediator in the virtual tour of the factory. The writer uses her as a proxy to ask questions he would like the readers to ask, following which members of the mill-owning class, or of the upper working class who act and speak on the mill owners' behalf – masters, employers, overlookers, foremen, or other fatherly figures – serve as spokesmen for the writer's ideology and interpretation of the factory system and factory children's lives. A sense of patriarchal didacticism underlies this novel. Montagu seems to assume that readers can easily identify themselves with the middle-class personae, thus placing themselves in the position of bourgeoisie, and can gradually receive instruction based on middle-class male-centred opinions as to how to approach and understand working-class families and children. While middle-class female writers like Trollope and middle-class female characters like Amina in *Mary Ashley* are concerned for working-class children, the middle-class male characters in *Mary Ashley*, representing the writer's view, preach the 'correct' attitude towards the working class. Thus Montagu assumes the superiority of the male view over the female one. Issues of gender (male domination and female inferiority as well as feminization of the factory workers) and class (the confrontation between the middle and the working class) complicate the subject matter.

In defending the factory system, apart from fiction, there were other contemporary discourses in the form of journalistic or socio-historical writings, which I shall consider in relation to Montagu's novel. They usually view the factory system as a promise, rather than a threat, to the nation; and they would regard 'problems' arising from the operation of factories as individual cases in unregulated factories. A similar idea is conveyed in the novel, and a sense of paternalism underlies all these works, which will be further discussed later. However, this is not to say that all these discourses are the

same. Despite being apologists for the system, the writers' diverse backgrounds, motivations, and perspectives create variations among them. The apologists are not a homogeneous group but are loosely linked together, just as the novel itself is a miscellaneous space accommodating different forms of writing. Although the socio-historical texts share some common ground in justifying the employment of factory children, still they may vary in style, approach, standpoint, material, focus and scope.

For justification, the socio-historical discourses usually draw on 'leading employers and commissioners' and inspectors' reports'.[38] Much-cited sources of this optimistic view include Andrew Ure's *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835), Edward Baines's *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain* (1835), William Cooke Taylor's *Factories and the Factory System; from Parliamentary Documents and Personal Examination* (1844) and *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire* (2nd edn, 1842). Ure's approach, as suggested by Gray, 'is that of a scientific taxonomy, with grandiloquent claims for the authority of natural philosophy in support of what is in many respects a technicist utopia'.[39] Baines accused those who campaigned against child labour of providing a false picture of what it was like to work in a mill; he claimed that 'factory labour is far less injurious than many of the most common and necessary employments of civilized life'.[40] In his chapter on 'Infant Labour' in *Factories and the Factory System,* Taylor presents some arguments identical to those advanced by politicians. Taylor insists, like Baines and Ure, that exploitation of labouring children has been greatly exaggerated: 'their labour is not demanding; their

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[38] Gray, p. 133.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] Edward Baines, *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain: With a Notice of Its Early History in the East, and in All the Quarters of the Globe; a Description of the Great Mechanical Inventions, Which Have Caused Its Unexampled Extension in Britain; and a View of the Present State of the Manufacture, and the Condition of the Classes Engaged in Its Several Departments* (London: H. Fisher, R. Fisher, and P. Jackson, 1835); repr.: *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain: With a Bibliographical Introduction by W. H. Chaloner* (Augustus M. Kellery; Cass, 1966), p. 454. Subsequent references are to this edition.

hours are not excessively long; they are protected from dangerous machinery'.[41] All point out that factory work is much less oppressive than employment in other trades such as mining or cottage industries, a claim corroborated by twentieth-century social historians.[42] In what follows I shall develop my discussion of Montagu's novel and supplement it with the non-fictional discourses, so as to enhance the analysis with a more panoramic view.

I shall scrutinize the representations offered by apologists for the factory system and further analyze their supporting strategies. To begin with, a quick overview of these strategies for constructing positive perceptions of factory child labour can be sketched here: To 'correct' the gloomy impression of factory children created by their opponents, the apologists try to replace the representation of cruelty with a positive portrayal. To ensure factory owners' profit while upholding their integrity, they assert the need to employ children in factories as essential to the prosperity of the manufacturing sector; hence the manufacturers are not to blame. To refute the accusation of cruelty, they tone down the harsh nature of factory work by emphasizing its lightness. Furthermore, they even declare it a blessing, using a blend of supporting concepts (scientific and economic, religious and utilitarian) and examples. Medical evidence is cited; the enlightenment brought by mechanization and the affluence of the new industrial centres are acclaimed. The possible benefits for factory children are also listed: religious education, moral cultivation, their support for the family economy, their assistance in national industrial development, the doctrine of work upheld by the middle class, and even fun for the children. These claims are used to establish the image of a happy factory child growing up in an auspicious factory environment.

What most of the writers and social commentators try to do is, first of all, to eradicate the imagery or the general 'misconception' of miserable factory children and

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[41] Bradshaw, *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings About Work*, p. 400, note 12.
[42] *Ibid.*

replace it with proof that factory work is actually undemanding. The light nature of factory work is asserted on the grounds that the machinery does all the important and heavy work, leaving the children idle. In order to convince their readers, such writers often provide a factory scene which allows readers to 'witness' this spectacle through descriptions or pictures of machinery attended to by factory workers in an effortless manner. Examples can be found in both the fictional and non-fictional discourses that we are going to see.

In the novel *Mary Ashley*, it is in the last chapter that the middle-class heiress Amina eventually enters the factory for the first time and the 'cruelty' of factory work is refuted in the dialogue between her and the foreman. The heiress, intrigued by a recent novel (*Michael Armstrong* being hinted at), asks, 'do you find the work cruelly laborious?' (p.100) The foreman reassuringly replies that 'all the hard work is performed by the steam-engine, which leaves NO manual labour at all, and very little to do' (p. 100). Then the heiress points at a little factory girl, whose work, as the foreman explains, does not even require *attention*, and 'she will stand idle for a time – in general three-fourths of a minute, or more' (p. 100). This statement suddenly 'illuminates' the heiress, who quickly abandons her original 'misconception' or 'ignorance', concluding that '*if a girl remains twelve hours a day, for nine hours she will perform no work at all*' (p. 100). A paradoxical perfect idleness is emphasized here.

Let us look at the approach of the narrator in Montagu's *Mary Ashley*. To defend the factory system, from the middle-class male point of view, it is pointed out that the factory work is centred upon machinery, so that the children need only passively supplement it with trivial, easy chores. From his perspective on the factory system, the writer, in emphasizing the significance of machinery, trivializes factory work and marginalizes factory children: these are only subordinate elements, not objects of concern. Indeed, here the representation of factory children echoes the interpretation adhered to by the manufacturing class and provides a justification for the factory system.

The child is muted. We cannot hear her voice or understand how she really feels. But for the middle-class males as dominators this does not matter. It is the foreman, speaking from the middle-class male viewpoint, who imposes that ideology upon the naïve woman; she, in turn, stands in for the general reader to whom the writer imparts the 'truth'.

Here I argue that Montagu uses the female character, the heiress Amina, as the surrogate reader, for his intention is to refute Frances Trollope's view and to expose the ignorance of the general female public. Thus Amina appears to know nothing about the factory until the male characters in the novel enlighten her, and Montagu hopes his readers can accept the 'truth' about factories as Amina does. In addition, by bringing Amina and other middle-class matrons into his story, Montagu indicates the 'proper' female roles he expects middle-class women to take: as domestic and philanthropic angels quite unlike Trollope, a female writer participating in social debate and promoting factory reform. Montagu's representation is consistent with the 'separate spheres' ideology, since in his novel middle-class men conduct business while middle-class women take care of both middle-class homes and working-class families.

In order to induce his readers to empathize with the manufacturing class and with the ideal image depicted by the narrator, Amina, as the surrogate reader, is taken on a tour of different middle-class families before she eventually enters the factory in the final chapter of the novel. Montagu's didactic purpose is made explicit in the implied author's opening remarks at the beginning of the last chapter, Chapter XI:

> We now arrive at that part of our narrative which is more intimately connected with our original intention than the matter which has necessarily preceded this chapter. In order to create an interest to the general reader, resource has been had to fiction, to enable the facts which will develop themselves to appear in the most pleasing light, which, had they been given in dry detail, would not have been the case. (p. 93)

Here Montagu admits that, although it is the last one, actually it is only in this chapter that the main subject matter is finally dealt with. Yet he does not deny the need for the

previous ten chapters, in which he guides the readers, along with Amina, in visits to several middle-class families, mainly those of the three Mr Percevals (Robert Perceval, a country banker, Henry Perceval, a bleacher, and William Perceval, a cotton spinner) who are joint guardians of the heiress Amina, the late cotton spinner's daughter, following her father's decease (which takes place in the first chapter).[43] In addition, in Chapter VIII there appears a Mr Constantine Mandeville, a distant relative, who serves as a good example of a mill owner who 'employs about twelve hundred persons in his mill, and they one and all look upon him as a Father' (p. 62). Paternalist management of the factory is thus idealized here. The previous chapters also take the occasion to enable readers to understand bourgeois family life, especially the wives' role in it, middle-class attitudes toward the working class, and the interaction among them.

Therefore, throughout the novel, Amina, rather than the factory girl Mary as proclaimed in the novel's title, seems to be the central character, despite being a two-dimensional one – a seventeen-year-old 'well-grown graceful looking girl' (p. 1). *Mary Ashley* is thus a story of how the late manufacturer's daughter, Amina Myddleton, finds the poor girl Mary Ashley and introduces her to work in her late father's mill. Then, accompanying this philanthropic heiress and Mrs William Perceval the cotton-spinner's wife – another example of a domestic and philanthropic woman – and seeing the helping hands they lend to poor working-class families, readers are shown how the miserable cases encountered arise from individual faults rather than from the factory system, and are resolved or corrected by middle-class charity, benevolence, and sound religious faith. Accordingly, the arrangement of the 'indispensable' first ten chapters (regarded as necessary preparation by the writer) and the final chapter 'Introductory observations – Mary Ashley and her father's admission into Myddleton Mills – the visit

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[43] Although the novel calls Amina's father Mr Myddleton the cotton spinner, he is actually the person in charge of the Myddleton Mill, a manufacturer and employer in his own right. Many late eighteenth-century or early nineteenth-century textile industrialists were cotton-spinners, manufacturers, and factory owners. See, for example, François Crouzet, 'The Middle Class in Industry', in *The First Industrialists: The Problem of Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 107-08.

of the heiress and Mrs William Perceval' shows the writer's intention of fortifying a male-centred middle-class viewpoint: that is, a patriarchal and paternalist one.

The opening remarks of the last chapter also reveal Montagu's attitude to fiction. He adopts it as an expedient genre in order to help present 'facts' in the most pleasant and appealing way to the public, thus demonstrating the writer's belief in the strength of fiction as a more effective tool than non-fiction for reaching a wider – and perhaps particularly feminine – audience. In other words, to some extent Montagu wishes to endow fiction with documentary qualities, or to vivify tedious evidence with fiction's imaginative power. On the other hand, the passage itself shows how the writer interrupts the narrator's voice, intruding on his fictional narrative with a direct statement of purpose. Still, the writer is self-conscious about violating the genre of fiction. Before returning to his narration, he confesses:

> These remarks (intruding somewhat into the page of fiction) bring us into direct contact with our great opposite – in thought, feeling, and sex – and whose pen is now in the full exercise of its great power, in the alleged delineation of the present state of fact. (p. 94)

Again Montagu clearly and directly specifies his objective and points an accusing finger at his opponent Frances Trollope and the female sex. Issues of gender discrimination and female inferiority underlie the statement. If we reflect again on the sex of the characters in and outside the novel, we can easily discern that Montagu assigns all the innocent or ignorant roles to the female: the heiress, middle-class ladies, working-class girls, and the novelist Trollope, while all the ruling or leading voices belong to the male: the manufacturers, employers, factory managers, and Montagu himself. For Montagu, it is important to express his opinions to the readers in an exercise of narrative control, even at the expense of interrupting the flow of fiction.

In parallel with the novel, some contemporary social discourses also present factory scenes centring on the machinery and presenting factory children as idle because of their light work. Ure and Baines share the opinion that mechanization allows children

to be frequently idle at work; in addition, they tend to use materials from parliamentary reports to cite favourable evidence or to attack the unfavourable kind. Reworked parliamentary reports also appear in the novel. Here we can compare the different modes of apologetic writings, which may shed light upon the features of the novel.

Ure quotes from a Factory Commissioner Mr Tufnell in a Supplementary Report of Factory Commissioners to support the claim of the lightness of the chores of the child labourer: 'nothing is to be done, not even attention is required from either spinner or piecer'.[44] He further claims that 'in fine spinning particularly', children could idle 'for three-quarters of a minute, or more' (p. 310). Therefore, 'if a child remains at the business twelve hours daily, he has nine hours of inaction. And though he attends two mules, he has still six hours of non-exertion' (p. 310). Ure uses this as a means to attack the accounts contained in the Report of Sadler's Factory Committee, concluding that the misery documented in that Report only exists in people's melodramatic imagination and that the children are in effect quite happy:

> The scavengers, who in Mr. Sadler's report have been described as being 'constantly in a state of grief, always in terror, and every moment they have to spare stretched all their length upon the floor in a state of perspiration,'[45] may be observed in cotton-factories idle for *four* minutes at a time, or moving about in a sportive mood, utterly unconscious of the tragical scenes in which they were dramatized. (p. 311)

Baines also cites from Mr Tuffnell, whom he regards as 'a close observer of factory labour', passages overlapping with Ure's (p. 458):

> *all the hard work is performed by the steam-engine*, which leaves for the attendant no manual labour at all, … the fact is, that *the labour is not incessant on that very account*, because it is performed in conjunction with the steam-engine.… Three-fourths of the children so employed are engaged in piecing at the mules, which, when they have receded a foot and a half or two feet from the frame, leave nothing to be done; not even attention is required from spinner or piecer, but both stand idle for a time, which, if the spinning is

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[44] Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures: Or, an Exposition of the Scientific, Moral, and Commercial Economy of the Factory System of Great Britain*, Cass Library of Industrial Classics, 3 (London: Cass, 1967; [1st edition 1835]), p. 309. Subsequent references are to this edition.
[45] Ure's note: Report of Mr. Sadler's Factory Committee, p. 325.

fine, lasts in general three-fourths of a minute, or more. Consequently, in these establishments, if a child remains during twelve hours a day, *for nine hours he performs no actual labour*. (p. 459)

Following this passage, Baines adds his note: 'A piecer, however, generally attends two mules, whose motion is alternate, and then his leisure is six hours instead of nine' (p. 459). This calculation of factory children's idle hours in consideration of their attending two mules at a time is very similar to that in Ure's account. What more, Baines cites from the parliamentary report the same paragraph describing scavengers as 'constantly in a state of grief', in order to refute it (p. 459). Here is an example of intertextuality among socio-historical discourses.

Moreover, some of the factory commissioner's words as cited by Ure and Baines, as we have seen, appear in the dialogue in *Mary Ashley* between the foreman and the heiress concerning a factory girl's work: thus demonstrating intertextuality between fictional and non-fictional writings. Yet while the socio-historical writers more openly and clearly quote from parliamentary sources, the novelist secretly appropriates them into his fiction. The documentary feature of socio-historical discourse finds its way into fiction in a different form. Hence these parliamentary reports are repeatedly reproduced in various texts in diverse ways.

Such a middle-class male vision of centralized machinery and marginalized factory labour is reinforced by illustrations. Social commentators and novelists thus use illustrations as concrete realizations of their imagery. A common feature of the images is a clean, ordered and spacious room with large machines attended by a few seemingly quiet and absorbed workers. Most of the pictures display a structure radiating from the centre, as we can see from the illustrations in Ure's and Taylor's books (Figures 1.1-1.3), so that the room seems wide and deep, and the machinery on both sides majestically impressive and solidly positioned. Facing the machines on the left or right, the workers' countenances are neglected. Curiously, in Ure's illustrations, a gentleman-like figure strolls in the aisle, his face turned more towards the front so that it is easier for the

viewer to see. As Gray also points out, 'We should note the presence in Ure of authority figures … with diligent operatives in the background.' [46] Here a middle-class perspective is displayed, revealing the hierarchy of classes. In the *Illustrated London News* in 1851, there is a picture of workers at Dean Mills near Manchester (Figure 3.4), showing a room in which workers are doubling the thread to produce fine threads for the manufacture of lace. In this picture, though in a different structure, the grandeur of the room can be observed, and the facial expressions of the workers, with their heads bent over their work or their backs to the viewer, are similarly almost obscured.

Interestingly, although Ure and Baines use the same parliamentary reports and share some opinions, Ure criticizes the view of mule-spinning presented in Baines's text (Figure 3.5), which 'shows how incompetent a general artist is to delineate a system of machinery. He has given pictorial effect, regardless of truth and propriety.… [T]he piecers are there figured joining the broken threads, when they are five feet distant from the roving ends, and would therefore need to have arms at least six feet long for the purpose' (pp. 309-10). Here we see how illustrations attract contemporary notice and create their own dialogue, which may also parallel the way contemporary novelists, like Montagu and Trollope, also generate debate and respond to one another in the novel – all in a flagrant rather than veiled manner. Besides, Ure with his scientific viewpoint scorns Baines's more artistic approach, which somewhat mirrors Montagu's use of an 'evidential' approach to criticize Trollope's more flamboyant one. These instances in both fictional and nonfictional writings reveal a common feature of the contemporary discursive climate: the discourses are not just soliloquies but contain debating space within themselves; the writers not only present their own statements but also cite those they agree with and rebut those they disagree with, even attacking fellow writers in order to present their own picture as the 'truthful' one. This kind of discursive interaction, or even documentary combat and written polemic, prevails over a variety of

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[46] Gray, p. 134.

genres practised at that time. The boundaries between modes of writing, or even between different pieces of writing, are blurred and broken. The writers are reaching out.

The image of grand machinery attended by insignificant manual workers is also offered in detail in many discourses. In *Chambers Journal*, for example, the account of the perfunctory technical processes of the self-acting mule is presented wonderingly: 'and all this, thanks to the extraordinary skill of Mr Roberts of Manchester, without human intervention, excepting where here and there a little boy is seen crawling under them sweeping up the dust, or a girl is attending to a broken thread'.[47] Visits to the interior of the workplace, as Gray further explains, are generally to 'the large, modern mill under "enlightened" management', with 'a shift in focus from the workers to the machines and the progression of cotton "from the pod to the piece"'.[48] These portrayals and descriptions reoccur in both social discourses and literary narration, and the pictures and words mutually reinforce each other to consolidate the representation. Similarly, in the last chapter of *Mary Ashley,* we are shown how Mary works by an illustration portraying a neat and orderly factory scene. In it the two middle-class ladies are visiting the workplace, standing at the front (Mrs William Perceval faces the front, and Amina, face hidden by the hat, seems to listen to her); all the workers appear to be female and face either to the left or to the right. Among them Mary the factory girl is the only clear figure – yet she is obviously smaller than the two middle-class ladies; the other workers are very small and shadowed in the background. The picture displays a hierarchy of class and the feminization of factory workers, as well as naïve factory visitors. Yet the countenances of the figures, the space of the room, and the triangular structure of the picture give a sense of quietude and placid steadiness (Figure 3.6). Mirroring Montagu's picture, Baines's personal factory visit and observation of factory workers seem to tally

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[47] *Chambers Jour.*, new ser. No. 258, 9 (Dec. 1848), 372-76, in Gray, p. 136.
[48] *Chambers Jour.*, new ser. No. 258, 9 (Dec. 1848), 372-76.

with Montagu's representation, conveying the 'coolness and equanimity' of factory children, whose manner seldom 'indicates anxious care' (pp. 456-57).

To better understand the social meanings of these widespread textual and visual representations of factory scenes, and especially the justification of the factory system that they imply, we could compare them with the broader Victorian social context. Contemporary curiosity about the new industrial sites, and the impulse to explore their interiors, actually make factory scenes a key subject of Victorian illustrations, which were instantly appealing and could be widely reproduced. In addition, 'industrial sight-seeing', as noted by Gray, seems to have become fashionable among 'concerned philanthropists, journalists or any tourist with appropriately respectable credentials'.[49] Many of the writers of and even characters in the novels are factory visitors, with the readers who cannot visit in person following them on a virtual tour. Mechanization being one of the embodiments of technological improvement in factories, the spectacle of the machinery inside a factory room connotes modernization and industrialization, and the symbolism can be extended to the whole factory building and even to a factory town. In this respect, factories under favourable conditions become a symbolic site of 'potential improvement'.[50] When describing Stockport, for instance, the writer in *Chambers' Journal* says in a 'whimsically apologetic tone': 'Behold us, then, note-book in hand, and with every faculty on the alert, set down in the steaming, smoking, buzzing town of Stockport'.[51] Such description can well match another illustration in Ure (Figure 3.7), which shows the magnificent structure of Orwell's cotton factory in Stockport in the centre of the picture, its towering chimney spouting smoke to the sky. Thus these industrial centres are seen as tokens of bright hope for a new era. This kind of symbolic image is repetitively celebrated in many journalistic treatments of the manufacturing districts, among which Manchester attracts particular attention, with the

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[49] Gray, p. 136.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid. Chambers Jour.*, new ser. No. 258, 9 (Dec. 1848), 372-76.

largest number of entries in *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature*. As the most significant site of factory industry, Manchester also turns out to be 'the symbol of a new age'.[52] Many factory novels and tales are thus set in this city. This positive association also becomes central to the discourses of justification. Such is the rosy vision of the factory site offered by the apologists, with its modern machinery and silent workers inside.

Hence, for the apologists for the factory system, the spotlight is on the magnificent factory site, presented as a harmonious industrial scene with workers inserted alongside the machinery; however, for the reformists, the focus is on the workers, especially the factory children as a group of specially vulnerable beings, and the effect of the working conditions that surround them. Thus there emerge two different ways of viewing the same factory scene. When the focus is on the children, there arise concern and contention in which the factory system is a threat, the factory site a dangerous workplace, and machinery a source of potential injury. This viewpoint has been analyzed in the second chapter of the thesis, in the discussion of Trollope's *Michael Armstrong*, which places children in the foreground as horrifying examples of physical disability, or of the mechanization of human beings, as well as of other mental impairments and moral turpitude. Yet here we can see how the apologists react to these accusations: although they may wish to shift the focus to the promising factory site, they still need to deal with issues centred on factory children raised by their opponents. So we can ask, how do the apologists justify their assertion that children can work with machinery in a factory safely and free from harm?

In *Mary Ashley*, after emphasizing the self-acting steam-engine and describing the 'perfect idleness' of factory children, the writer comes to deal with the general concern about factory children's health, as related to the nature of their work and the factory

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[52] *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature* (1891), vols. I, II, entries for Manchester, cf. Birmingham, Liverpool, etc.; A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), in Gray, p. 135.

environment. Amina asks why a factory girl looks so pale, and the foreman answers:

> 'Why, Madam, they prefer being lightly clad; and they will keep the windows closed; and though it may reduce their vigour, it seldom produces disease. They are not crowded together, nor can they be, from the space occupied by the machinery; the air, therefore, is not vitiated from being frequently breathed.' (pp. 100-01)

The heiress continues to question him about the low-spirited expressions of the workers:

> 'I find the youngest child and the oldest woman alike in the rigidity of their faces.'
>
> 'O, Miss Myddleton!' replied honest John Holt, 'that is very easily accounted for – the work, whilst it lasts, requires great attention of eye; as the threads break they must be joined together again… habitual seriousness soon, very soon, moulds the countenance into a serious cast.' (pp. 100-01)

The foreman thus explains that, despite lack of fresh air in the factory and the serious demeanour of the workers, they are not ill. It is a rather feeble defence – admitting the reduction of vigour and the moulding of faces into rigidity, the defender cannot really maintain that the workers are very healthy, but can only negate the impression of their unhealthiness by claiming that they seldom become ill. This kind of defensive explanation seems rather passive and ineffective.

In other journalistic or socio-historical writings dealing with accusations of factory children's ill-health, similar opinions prevail, and more support is sought from medical evidence or other discourses. Baines, for example, contends that, as illness occurs naturally, it should not be a reason for limiting or prohibiting employment of children: 'the human frame is liable to an endless variety of diseases. Many ... children … are so weakly, that under any circumstances they would sink under factory labour, as they would under any other kind of labour, or even without labour' (p. 454). Like Montagu, Baines maintains that, despite confinement for long hours and deprivation of fresh air, which makes factory children 'pale and reduces their vigour', 'it rarely brings on disease' (p. 457). Then he brings in an inaccurate piece of medical evidence that the minute fibres of cotton floating in the air 'are admitted, even by medical men, not to be

injurious to young persons' (p. 457).

Paradoxical as all these rationales may seem to modern readers, medical evidence as well as statements from other authorities are often used by writers to strengthen their claims of factory children's good health. Just as doctors are introduced as characters in the early industrial novels, social discourses also frequently quote physicians' comments or provide statistics. For instance, Baines cites a medical report by a Dr Bissett Hawkins, one of the medical men on the Factory Commission, who circulates questions among people in Manchester, Preston, Derby, and Knutsford:

> *'Is the mortality among factory children greater than in other classes?'* To this question, nineteen of the medical witnesses reply in the negative, … one only answers distinctly in the affirmative.... Several of the witnesses consider the mortality among the factory to be less than among other children. Dr. Shaw says – 'I think I might go further, and say that the mortality amongst factory children is less than amongst other working classes. Factory labour is better remunerated than any other kind of labour, consequently the children generally are better fed and lodged; they are less exposed to the vicissitudes of climate; greater attention is paid to their comfort, at least in the silk and cotton factories of Manchester, many of which I have frequently inspected.' (p. 469)

Other issues addressed by the doctor include: 'disease or accidents to which factory children are particularly subject', 'the children of factory operatives inferiour in stature to those of your other classes', 'Has the factory life any tendency to check the complete growth in those of either sex who have reached the age of puberty?', 'Are the factory operatives more or less attentive to cleanliness and ventilation in their dwellings than other persons of similar means?' and so on (pp. 470-71). Baines concludes that the 'sum of all this medical evidence is decidedly favourable' (p. 472). Then he gives the testimony of the operatives themselves in regard to their health, along with tables 'containing the results of an inquiry made by a committee of the master spinners, into the state of the work-people in the principal mills in Manchester where fine yarn is spun' (pp. 472-74).[53] Furthermore, Baines cites Factory Inspectors' strong testimony as to the

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[53] Information on the tables were collected from 19 fine mills in Manchester, working sixty-nine Hours

healthfulness of factory labour:

> Mr. Leonard Horner, the Inspector of Scotland, the four northern counties of England, and the north of Ireland, says,
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> 'It is gratifying to be able to state, that I have not had a single complaint laid before me; either on the part of the masters against their servants, or on the part of the servants against their masters; *nor have I seen or heard of any instance of ill-treatment of children or of injury to their health by their employment.*'[54] (p. 475)

With these various parties' accounts, Baines offers his substantial proof of the health of factory labourers.

What Baines is doing when trying to establish factory children's good health is worth further contemplation. We can compare Baines's socio-historical writing with Montagu's novel, as both seem to seek 'evidence' to put into their works. While Montagu can hardly make direct use of all the tables, statistics, questionnaires, medical reports, and testimonies of operatives and factory inspectors, Baines enjoys assembling all these materials – another miscellaneous mode of writing in its own right – accompanied by direct quotations and his own summary and conclusion, in a more logical, scientific and objective style. This may be one feature of socio-historical discourses that Montagu wished he could employ in his own fiction. Thus, by the end of the novel, Montagu proclaims in a note his wish to include an appendix performing the documentary function: 'our appendix, in the last number of our work, will verify all the facts we have made use of by documentary and irreproachable evidence' (p. 104). Yet the appendix does not materialize. Altogether, the factory, as an embodiment of lofty ideals for the apologists, is condemned as an unhealthy workplace by the reformists. In response, the apologists cite a variety of medical, scientific and parliamentary evidence and sustain a paradoxical rationale to assure the public of factory children's good health.

Furthermore, the machinery claimed by the apologists to leave children idle, is

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per week. Headings of the table include: General Statement of the Age, Time of Employment, Health of Spinners, and their Opinions respecting the Effect of Factory Labour on Health, with Averages and Proportions deduced therefrom.

[54] Cited by Baines, from Reports of Inspectors of Factories, Parl. Papers, No. 596; sess. 1834, p.10.

accused by the reformists of presenting physical danger. But the apologists fight back by referring to safety fencing or blaming accidents on individual ill usage. Once again, refutations or relevant evidence readily appear in socio-historical discourses, yet similar ideology is found in both fictional and nonfictional writing. For instance, Baines imputes the 'deformity' of factory children to their ill usage of the machinery 'in stopping the throstle with their knee, instead of stopping it with their hands' (p. 472). Ure also states that the safety fencing makes it 'almost impossible for an accident to occur', yet should it happen, 'which is very rarely, it is generally through some gross negligence or misconduct in the person injured' (pp. 402-03). Therefore, the system or the machinery is not to blame, but rather individual misconduct; this point also arises in Martineau's 'The Hill and the Valley', as previously discussed. Furthermore, Ure does not omit to draw a comparison with coal mines in order to emphasize the safety of the factory environment: 'Fatal accidents are not one-twentieth part so common in cotton factories as in coal mines' (pp. 402-03). It seems that a convenient avoidance mechanism with which apologists refute accusations consists of blaming any problems on individual faults, or comparing the factories with other industrial sectors to encourage readers to find fault with the latter.

Up to now we have seen examples of a to-and-fro debate, especially centred on the interrelationship of the factory, children, and machinery, with the focus shifting from one to another to fulfil writers' differing agendas. At the end of the novel *Mary Ashley*, the writer finally issues a broad retort defending the righteousness of factory masters and dismissing as the result of individual problems all the negative associations surrounding factory children. When Mrs William Perceval inquires about the 'squalid' and 'wretched' looking children that she sees emerging from the mills in Manchester, the foreman replies,

> 'Why, Madam, the reason is very obvious – either the owner of the mill cares for nothing but his own interest, (and there will be such in all trades,) or he has no control over his people, because they live in the town – can get work wherever

> they choose to go, and by the wages they receive are perfectly independent of their masters.' (p. 102)

By comparing the cotton mill with other trades and blaming its drawbacks on individual faults, Montagu frees the manufacturing class from the need to take any responsibility for factory children. Such is his ultimate defence of the factory system.

Montagu presents a crude image of a well-off factory girl as a final means of attributing natural irresponsibility to the working classes, best amended by the discipline of factory life. As Amina observes them, the factory girls appear to be mostly 'stout' and 'fond of show' (p. 103). Then she points out a girl with earrings, who, as explained by the foreman,

> 'receives thirteen and sixpence weekly, and is better fed and lodged than many agricultural labourers, who have to support themselves and family upon a far less sum – there are no persons who dress more showily on a Sunday than girls employed in the mills; though in this mill the Sunday school has done much towards making the dress more neat than showy.' (p. 103)

Once again, through comparison with labourers in other trades, the well-being of factory children is emphasized. Here, with this sketchy image, the novel closes, yet many issues related to factory children linger unsolved, such as the relation between the children and their families, and the moral, educational, or even religious cultivation of factory children. As these issues are of greater concern to social reformers than to apologists for the factory system, Montagu does not touch much upon them, and they will be treated more thoroughly in my fourth and fifth chapters, with additional examples from the Evangelical writer Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41).

After acquainting ourselves with the last chapter of *Mary Ashley*, we can revert to its beginning, to discover, in tandem with the novel, related opinions, connotations and representations linked to issues of factory children, religion, education, sexual morality, and the working-class family. Meanwhile, further positive meanings of the employment of children in factories, as found by apologists of factory work and attestors to the well-being of factory children, will continue to be investigated and clarified – such as

conceptions arising from the religious viewpoint and from the Victorian gospel of work, regarding the education, religious cultivation and moral guidance that a factory environment could provide, and the economic assistance to their families and even the prosperity of the whole nation that factory children could bring about.

Mary Ashley and her family first appear in the second chapter of the novel, when the heiress Amina is thinking about her late father's 'goodness to his factory children', thus signalling the paternalism that permeates the novel (p. 17). Through the window Amina sees a dreary scene consisting of a husband, recently put out of work, his wife, and two shoeless little girls walking in the snow to Manchester; although their lot seems miserable, they are cheerful (p. 17). Here Mary (who is going to become the factory girl of the final chapter) and her working-class family are brought into the story, though the readers do not yet know their identity. Anticipating the final chapter with its strategy of drawing comparisons with other trades to stress the well-being of factory children, here the situations of chimney sweeps and shoemaking apprentices are introduced. On their way to Manchester the family come across two sweeps, aged ten and twelve, whose 'sooty feet' 'had now assumed a dark purple', and 'thin bowed legs … told very plainly that nature was yielding to the oppressive work of the boy's calling' (p. 19). The writer emphasizes the cruelty of this kind of work and makes the two boys a perfect picture of 'living wretchedness' (p. 19). Later on, when the family arrives in Manchester, they see a sickly-looking apprentice at a shoemaker's shop, who 'after a slight fit of coughing resumed his occupation very diligently', and another little African boy 'with only one leg and one arm', who originally was a beggar but was unfortunately robbed by a gypsy and kindly taken in by the shoemaker (pp. 19-20). By contrasting the case of factory children with that of other children, the writer seems to show that factory children are blessed in that, first, they are employed, rather than sunk in the family adversity of unemployment, and moreover are employed in factories, which is better than working in other trades.

In comparison with other working children, the apologists hope to show that factory children are relatively healthy and thus more blessed than others, although they may not appear very well at first glance. Such contrasts between different working children's situations often appear in parliamentary debate, where there is favourable comparison between factory work and other employments for children, such as 'mining, domestic weaving, framework knitting and lace-running', reaching the conclusion that factory work is 'amongst the least laborious' and 'the least unwholesome'.[55] Other socio-historical discourses feature similar statements. Ure, for instance, avers that 'there are no trades in which young persons are engaged in numbers, such as sewing, pin-making, or coal-mining, nearly so salubrious, or so comfortable as a cotton-mill' (p. 288). Through such comparisons these writers wish to tone down the association of factory children with suffering. Some may go even further and create a scene of merry-making among factory workers. Holland Hoole, for example, in a pamphlet 'which attracted the formidable polemical powers of Oastler', describes Whit processions of factory children 'well clad and often even elegantly dressed, in full health and beauty, a sight to gladden a monarch – not to be paralleled perhaps in the whole of the civilized world'.[56] Here we see the 'benign' conditions 'enjoyed' by factory children.[57] In his *A Home Tour through the Manufacturing Districts of England, in the Summer of 1835, 1836*, Sir George Head, among many tourists who published descriptions of their travels through the industrial areas, also recorded his favourable impressions of the Yorkshire woollen towns in 1835. Here he overturns the 'portraits of misery and overfatigue' and claims that he witnessed 'a crowd of apparently happy beings, working in lofty well-ventilated buildings'.[58] Therefore, what the apologists try to establish may be expressed as, first, employment is itself a blessing, and second,

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[55] Factory Comm., First Report, p. 51.

[56] Gray, p. 99. H. Hoole, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Althorp ... in Defence of the Cotton Factories of Lancashire* (1832), p. 10.

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] Sir George Head, *A Home Tour through the Manufacturing Districts of England, in the Summer of 1835, 1836*, pp. 123-4, 144, 146, 169, 186-7, in Ward, *The Factory System*, pp. 159-160.

factory work is enjoyable.

Here we arrive at a closer examination of the meaning of work, and factory work in particular. In the novel the shoemaker says 'work and pay are both useful to man' (p. 20), which hints at both the more uplifting spiritual meaning of work and the more realistic material meaning of pay resulting from work and supporting the household. Through the image of the diligent working apprentice shoemaker, we see the Victorian gospel of work. Meanwhile, Mary's family is at that time jobless, so readers can imagine what a relief it would be to the family economy if they can get the factory work they hope to find in Manchester. Thus, both the spiritual and material aspects of work are touched upon here. Throughout the novel, it is Amina who makes an effort with charitable deeds and establishes contact with the factory managing class to try to place such poor working-class families in factory employment.

The Victorian gospel of work is a middle-class value linked to religious piety and faith in work. Such an ideology encourages people, especially working-class people, to persist in their work, however difficult it might be, since all work is considered a blessing and a form of redemption. Such ideas can often be found in poems with religious overtones. Eliza Cook is an example of a poet who consistently endorses middle-class virtues and values of this kind in her works. In her poem 'The Poor Man to His Son', although we sense the sufferings of working children, the writer demands, not alleviation of their work, but rather the young labourers' piety.[59] Here a working-class father insists that 'all work is honourable and urges his boy to strive diligently and accept his place in life. Echoing Carlylean principles, the father tells his son to be satisfied if he can but earn remuneration sufficient to keep on working'.[60]

> Work, work, my boy, and murmur not,
> The fustian garb betrays no shame;
> The grime of forge-soot leaves no blot;
> And labour gilds the meanest name.

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[59] *Cambridge Chronicle*, Volume VI, Number 27, 5 July 1851.
[60] Bradshaw, *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings About Work*, p. 551.

> There's duty for all those, my son,
>
> Who act their earthly part aright;
>
> …
>
> God grant thee but a due reward,
>
> A guerdon portion fair and just;
>
> And then ne'er think thy station hard,
>
> But work, my boy, work, hope, and trust![61]

We can also find this spirit applied to contemporary social situations. For example, as an anonymous worsted master put it in his pamphlet, 'man' had to labour 'wherever Providence has cast his lot'; moreover '"PROVIDENCE" required children to earn their keep'.[62] Here we see that the doctrine of work is used by the manufacturer to defend the employment of factory children. Therefore, the spiritual meaning of work is compounded with its material meaning. Through work, children would earn redemption for their souls and provide financial support for their families.

Understanding the basic Victorian premise of the value of work, we come to analyze the special significance of factory work for children, for working-class families, and eventually for the whole nation. It is worth noting that, with the improvement of machinery (as proof of 'enlightenment'), the kind of labour factories required shifted from men (with their skill and strength) to children (with their sharp eyesight and dextrous fingers), with a consequent impact upon the economic structure of working-class families. Ure and Friedrich Engels both point out that, with the improvement of machinery, children's manual dexterity makes them better fit for mechanized factory work than men.[63] Engels perceives that the work 'requires no muscular strength, but only flexibility of finger'; therefore, men are 'not only not

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[61] Repr. in *The Voice of Toil,* pp. 553-55. Published also in *Cambridge Chronicle*, Volume VI, Number 27, 5 July 1851.

[62] *Manufacturer, A Letter to Sir John Cam Hobhouse Bart. MP on 'The Factories Bill' (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1832)*, pp. 12, 16. Gray, p. 104.

[63] Unlike Ure, who is an apologist for the factory system, Marxist political theorist and author Friedrich Engels collected material during his two-year visit in Manchester (1842–44) for his book on *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845 in German), which was a condemnation of the poverty generated by the Industrial Revolution.

needed for it, but actually, by reason of the greater muscular development of the hand, less fit for it than women and children.'[64] Ure also believes that, with mechanization, there is a natural tendency towards superseding human labour altogether, evidenced at present 'by substituting the industry of women and children for that of men'.[65] Employing 'merely children with watchful eyes and nimble fingers, instead of journeymen of long experience', Ure continues, is a proof of enlightenment.[66] Thus, apologists insist upon the irreplaceable requisite of factory children's employment in such 'play'. They argue that children suit factory work perfectly and that factory work entertains children.

The replacement of men with children in factory work had a great impact upon working-class family life and domestic economy. Within the new economic structure of the working-class family, factory children's work was gradually seen as necessary to the household income; similarly, setting orphans onto factory work was deemed a means of relieving the parish. In a Parliamentary interrogation of a manufacturer, for instance, we see a list of reasons for employing children in the factory: besides the nimbleness of children's fingers, their responsibility for their parents, and relief from the burden on the township further contribute to the argument:

> Why do you take the children so young? – The motive of taking the children so young is partly to oblige their parents; in a great degree to relieve the township; and also, because at that early age their fingers are more supple, and they are more easily led into the habit of performing the duties of their situation.[68]

These points also remind readers of stories of parents sending children to factories, or workhouse orphans being beguiled into work at factories so as to pursue a better life, as factories become a symbolic site of promise. Such plots appear in novels like Trollope's

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[64] Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. and ed. by W. O. Henderson & W. H. Chaloner (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), in *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings About Work*, ed. by Bradshaw, p. 453.

[65] Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures; Or, An Exposition of the Scientific, Moral, and Commercial Economy of the Factory System of Great Britain* (London: C. Knight, 1835), p. 27.

[66] *Ibid.*

[68] Report of Minutes of Evidence respecting the state of health and morals of children employed in Manufactories; chiefly as to cotton factories, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1816, III, 76-9, in Ward, *The Factory System,* Vol. 2, p. 69.

Michael Armstrong and Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*, as well as in *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe*, but are featured negatively in these cases, serving to foreshadow disillusionment. There is also a hint of the persistent custom of early apprenticeship, with small children being taken to work. Such issues surrounding factory children and the working-class family will be examined in detail in my fourth chapter.

From the family to the parish, eventually the scale of economic influence of factory children's employment is expanded in apologist accounts to encompass national prosperity; factory children's work is gradually seen as necessary for industrial development, and even as a blessing for the whole nation. In his chapter on infant labour, Taylor declares that 'the juvenile labour … in factories … is in fact a national blessing, and absolutely necessary for the support of the manifold fiscal burthens which have been placed upon the industry of this country.'[69] He continues by saying that, since working-class men are now unable to financially support their families, children of the operatives should earn their own living. He further uses parliamentary papers regarding the relevant clause of the Factory Act of 1833 to indicate that restriction on juvenile labour would bring more harm to the children:

> in cases where working by relays have been resorted to from necessity, great numbers of children, under eleven years of age, have been discharged in various parts of the country, and great distress has in many instances been the unavoidable result. The children thus discharged, if unable to find other employment, are left to wander about the streets in idleness.[70]

In addition, the burden on the nation would thus be increased, as 'parish relief must necessarily, in this case, be sought as their only alternative'.[71] Then he extracts another paragraph from the same parliamentary report to warn that the limitation of children's working hours has 'occasioned a revolution in the trade by the discharge of vast numbers under 11', and if the age limitation is extended to children under twelve or

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[69] Taylor, *Factories and the factory system; from parliamentary documents and personal examination,* in *The Voice of Toil*, ed. by Bradshaw, p. 236.

[70] *Report of R. Rickards, Esq., 15th April, 1834 – Reports of Inspectors of Factories,* p. 36, cited by Taylor, pp. 237-38.

[71] Taylor, pp. 237-38.

even thirteen, then it is 'likely to prove fatal to manufacturing prosperity'.[72] In face of such a menace Taylor concludes that, as it is necessary for parents to send children to work, rather than expelling children from factories and making them enter more injurious or ruinous workplaces like coal mines, giving them easy factory work is actually a better choice. Therefore, factory work is a blessing for children, and factory children become a blessing for the family, the township, and the whole nation. This model is reinforced in Montagu's novel, where Amina, after witnessing the distressing scene, strives hard to help such jobless working-class families back into factory work. Through her charitable acts of assistance to poor working-class families, readers confront several cases of misery and come to understand the economy of working-class households and the waged labour of children within them.

We have examined factory children's working environment and the nature of their work – all of which are interpreted by the apologists as symbols of hope, bringing both spiritual and material improvement to factory children, the working-class family, and thus to the whole nation. Moreover, through cross-class interaction, middle-class people bring 'civilized cultivation' to factory children. In *Mary Ashley*, Amina contacts the factory-managing class in order to put unemployed workers back into factory work; here the writer diverts readers' attention away from the poor working-class beings to the middle-class people and their 'positive' treatment of the workers. Montagu creates an opportunity to justify the factory administrators' manner of regulating workers' behaviour. John Bowman, the overlooker of Myddleton Mills, for instance, defends such firm supervision by saying,

> 'I have twelve hundred persons of all ages and both sexes under my charge, and one person is quite sufficient to ruin them all.'
> 'It is very easy for one person to do much evil – it was only last week I detected a stranger, whom I had taken into the mill from charity, reading a bad paper, which was written by bad men, to inflame the weak minds of the poor ignorant

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[72] *Report of R. Rickards, Esp., 15th April, 1834 – —Report of Inspectors of Factories,* p. 38, cited by Taylor, pp. 237-38.

wretches into whose hands it might unhappily fall.' (p. 65)

Then John suspends him from work for a week to reflect (as he was hot-headed). He comes to John a few days later to admit his fault and heartily appreciates John's action. Consequently, he is allowed to work again, and things go well in the factory. Here Montagu presents to us an image of decent and well-meant paternalist regulation, in the person of a kind and sensible overlooker, rather than of the typically violent, ruthless character more commonly portrayed by reformers.

As ill-treatment or child abuse by the supervising personnel in factories comes under public scrutiny, defenders often respond by characterizing them as individual cases and ascribing the responsibility to spinners or other operatives instead of to the manufacturers, or by justifying the need for some discipline. In other socio-historical discourses, Baines, for example, states, 'abuse is the exception, not the rule' (p. 454). As noted by Gray, problems associated with unregulated child labour are also ascribed to smaller factories, whereas larger ones with 'the benefits of a well-regulated factory system are illustrated in lengthy quotations from the reports of the district commissioners'.[73] Thus, as proclaimed by James Stuart, a Scottish factory inspector, in the first report of a factory committee, 'where the harshest treatment of children has taken place, the greatest number of bad cases occur in the small obscure mills belonging to the smallest proprietors', and might well be the fault of 'violent and dissipated workmen'.[74] Ure, too, is ready to attack belief in accusations of manufacturers' cruelty towards children, and to tilt at working-class agitation:

> The sentimental fever thus excited by the craft of the Operatives' Union was inflamed into a delirious paroxysm by the partial, distorted, and fictitious evidence conjured up before the Committee of the House of Commons on factory employment, of which Mr. Sadler was the mover and chairman. (pp. 290-91)

By using an account from a factory commission report, Ure further transfers

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[73] Gray, p. 72.
[74] Factory Comm., First Report, p. 20; and cf. pp. 16-18. For Stuart, see U.R.Q. Henriques, 'An early factory inspector: James Stuart of Dunearn', *Scottish Historical Review,* 50, no. 1 (1971).

responsibility for factory child abuse from the master to the spinner:

> 'Who is it that beats the children? – The spinner.' 'Not the master? – No; the masters have nothing to do with the children – they don't employ them.' 'Do you (a spinner) pay and employ your own piecers? – Yes; it is the general rule in Manchester; but our master is very strict over us, that we don't employ them under age.' 'Are the children ever beaten? – Sometimes they get beat, but not severely; for sometimes they make the stuff to waste, and then correction is needful; but that is unknown to the master – he does not allow beating at all.'[75] (p. 300)

As social discourses feature logical reasoning, scientific analysis, and word-by-word records of interrogation, novels feature vivid presentation of characters. In *Mary Ashley*, besides the good overlooker and other supervising staff, we also see examples of benevolent employers. In addition to the cotton spinners (Amina's late father and Mr William Perceval), Mr Mandeville is a good example of a mill owner, who 'employs about twelve hundred persons in his mill, and they one and all look upon him as a Father' (p. 62). He constantly visits his mills, and he knows all the workers – including men, women, and children. Most of the boys there 'were out of respect for him christened Constantine, and the girls Constantina' out of 'their real desire to evince gratitude' (pp. 87-88). Also, Amina herself is very kind to working-class people. She frequently pays charitable visits to sick workers, and provides poor children and families with work and residences. Similarly, Mrs William, a cotton spinner's wife, is a benevolent woman who visits poor, sickly and dying people at public houses. She brings jelly herself to an ill young woman, visits her every day during her long illness, and prays for her by her bedside. As the dying woman attests, 'her [Mrs William's] prayers, I'm sure, have done me a great deal of good, and her manner of explaining the Bible, was to me – a poor creature like me – very, very comforting' (p. 45). Here Montagu constructs a series of images of philanthropic and paternal manufacturers, along with religious, charitable, and affectionate female figures. By this means, the writer reassures

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[75] Ure's note: Supplementary Factory Commission Report, p. 193.

readers that factory children can live in a humane environment under well-meant regulation from loving adults. Just as possible abuses are dismissed by apologists as individual cases, so too possible problems arising from the factory system are softened or solved by individual benevolent behaviour in these writings designed to defend the manufacturing class.

The middle-class cultivation of factory children emerges in terms of religion and education. As for religious cultivation, in *Mary Ashley*, the little factory girl Mary and her sister appear to be very religious. When the two girls are about to part from each other, as one is going to work in the factory and the other to work as a maid in another family, the sentimental parting scene offers a moving dialogue between the two loving sisters (these are also, notably, the only words we hear spoken by the factory girl):

> 'Mary, will you always love me?' said the youngest of the two.
> 'Always, dearest Emma, and don't forget me.'…
> 'My father will come over and see me sometimes?'
> 'He will, Emma, and will bring me with him; and night-time, Emma, never forget that prayer our poor mother taught us, when little Willie died.'
> 'No, I never will,' 'and I will pray for you, Mary, and my father – but our mother is in heaven.' (p. 68)

As Montagu frames it, the religious faith these working-class girls embody actually comes from middle-class teaching. The girls' late mother, 'who had once been a servant-maid to a lady (and had been brought up and educated by her from infancy)', 'taught her children to read, and instilled into their young minds those right principles of excellence which involved a strict duty towards their God and their neighbour' (p. 68). Thus we are given an example of the middle class serving as religious role model for the working class. In addition, it is noteworthy that this kind of stereotype of religious factory girls appears in many other factory tales, including Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* and Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*, though the latter revises the stereotype, as will be discussed in Chapter Four, where factory children and religious education are examined in further detail.

In *Mary Ashley*, we see a good example of the education that factories could provide, in the form of a weekly class held at Mrs William Perceval's house. All the girls employed in Perceval's factory who enjoy music are 'instructed in the psalmody of the Church of England; and the perfection to which they arrived was of such a character, that the church they invariably attended was crowded to an excess' (p. 84). Here we see also that education and religion are often combined in a form of religious instruction.

Factory inspectors' reports usually identify well-managed mills as the site of educational and other types of improvement. Educational facilities, like Sunday schools, are also described in journal articles and other narrative writings. In a letter to the *Morning Chronicle*, a writer describes his visits to and observations on factory schools in comparison with other children's schools in Manchester, remarking that the most impressive thing for him is that 'factory children were decidedly more intelligent than the non-labouring juveniles'.[76] He narrates in great detail a lively scene in an afternoon class, where factory children are studying:

> A set of more animated dirty faces, and brighter twinkling eyes, you would see nowhere. ... One class were copying upon their frameless slates, the word 'Britannia' chalked upon a large blackboard. I asked them what was the meaning of Britannia. They looked at each other, shuffled their feet − half a dozen were about to speak, when one urchin roared out: 'Britannia? Why, to be sure, Britannia rules the waves.' And there was a great laugh at the appositeness of the quotation. Another class were spelling, under the care of an 'apprentice teacher', a singularly fine looking and intelligent boy. The pupils spelt very fairly a variety of disyllabic and trisyllabic words.[77]

The system of Sunday schools in Manchester is also described in another letter to the *Morning Chronicle,* the writer boasting that 'The Sunday Schools of the industrial north form not only a vast moral and educational engine but a curious and characteristic social fact'.[78] As the correspondent states, 'the order and discipline which it is the very nature

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[76] Ginswick, *Labour and the Poor in England and Wales, 1849-1851: The Letters to the Morning Chronicle from the Correspondents in the Manufacturing and Mining Districts, the Towns of Liverpool and Birmingham, and the Rural Districts*, Vol. 1, p. 59.
[77] *Ibid.,* p. 60.
[78] *Ibid.,* p. 67.

of the factory system to instil, formed a soil in which the Sunday School System took very deep root, and bore very rich harvests'.[79] Here the promising symbol of the factory as engine of national prosperity is reinforced by its educational function. Beyond educational benefits, the schools even 'tend to bind different classes of society together', as 'men in the middle ranks of life very commonly act as teachers'.[80] As for the kind of education provided there, it is 'elementary and religious', as characterized by the writer.[81] He gives the concrete example of the Bennet-street Sunday school, describing the vast building of four stories and its arrangement of classes according to sex and age. As for the pupils, girls are 'decently attired' and many 'neatly and tastefully dressed'; they 'sat in classes, engaged, according to their progress, in reading Scripture or Scriptural extracts'.[82] The boys, for their part, answer the teacher's questions 'intelligently and readily', and 'read, without exception, fluently and correctly'.[83] So from these accounts we see the good educational performance of factory children, as well as the beneficial effects of the educational facilities. In Ure's account from John Redman, a visiting overseer of Manchester, he also puts emphasis on the education offered at Bennet-street Sunday-school, where habits 'of decency, of order, of respect for religious observances' are naturally communicated to the classes 'by precept and example'. Concrete instances are given of the teachers' great effort in teaching students manners and regulating their conduct both inside and outside school (pp. 421-22).

Thus, the factory is not only representative of scientific, industrial or economic development by virtue of its technical advancement, but through its program of civilized cultivation it also stands for more humanistic values of morality, religion and education. The symbolic representation of the factory system seems comprehensive and complete. The factory, encompassing both machinery and middle-class people, becomes a

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[79] *Ibid.,* p. 68.
[80] *Ibid.*
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.,* p. 70.
[83] *Ibid.*

wholesome environment for the work as well as the cultivation of factory children –
making them a group of blessed ones. Nevertheless, the apologists never really dwell on
the children themselves, but are rather engrossed with the prosperity accompanying
industrial change. They pay attention to factory children only to reply to their opponents,
to amplify their own values, or to use some pleasant aspects of the children's situation
to uphold their rosy view. In the novel, the factory girl Mary seems to exist solely as an
embellishment. She is voiceless and submissive. The fictional representation reveals the
apologists' real conception of the workforce structure within the mechanized factory
system, and the class relations in the newly industrialized society.

On the other hand, if we consider textuality, or the media through which writers
present imagery and communicate ideology, we see that in dealing with the new social
situation they produce a new form of writing by combining different discourses. In this
'period of some cultural uncertainty', as Robert Gray points out, 'discursive hierarchies
were unsettled'.[84] These discourses, whether literary or non-literary, as Steven Marcus
suggests, actually all belong to the 'cognitive disciplines', which means they are all part
of the formation of human cognition of new phenomena.[85] Yet 'what is in this context
singular and distinctive about literature', as Marcus further indicates, 'is its
all-inclusiveness'.[86] It is in fiction that writers are offered a space for merging different
discourses and for crossing and blurring the borders of genre, as we have seen in the
case of *Mary Ashley*. The fusion is analogous to the confusion present in the society of
the time. With vivid and imaginative narrations, the writer hopes to help readers
approach and understand the unfamiliar category of factory children. Fiction, which
allows greater room for subjectivity and flexibility, thus becomes a perfect vehicle for
the writer wishing to convey his ideology and present his vision. Here readers are led by
the narrator (or the guiding characters in the novel) on a virtual journey into the fictional

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[84] Gray, p. 11.
[85] Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. ix.
[86] *Ibid.,* p. x.

world, which reflects and is reflected upon by the real world. A panoramic view of the complex social issues surrounding factory children is thus offered by the novelist, from his own standpoint and imbued with his interpretation.

Figure 3.1
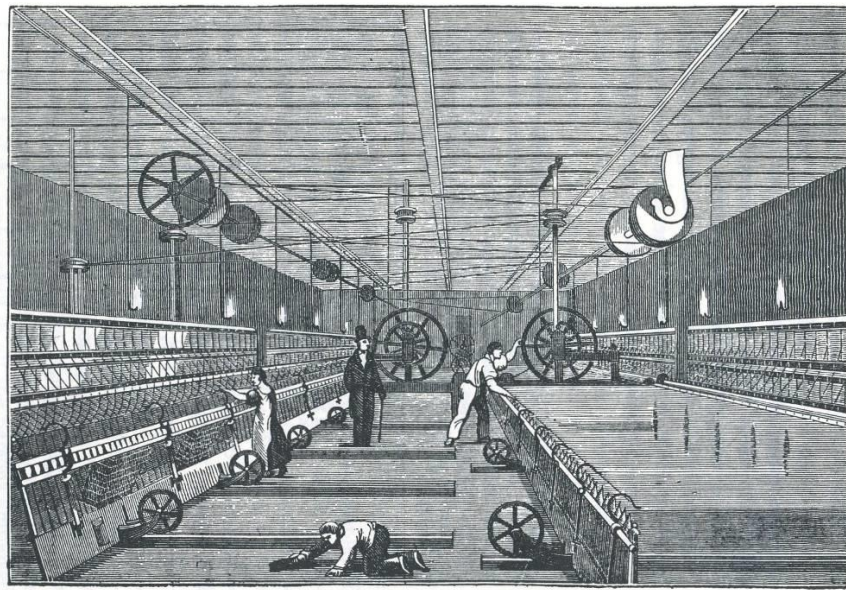
Fig. 55.— Cotton Mule-Spinning.

Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures,* p. 308

Figure 3.2

POWER LOOM FACTORY OF THOMAS ROBINSON ESQ?
STOCKPORT.
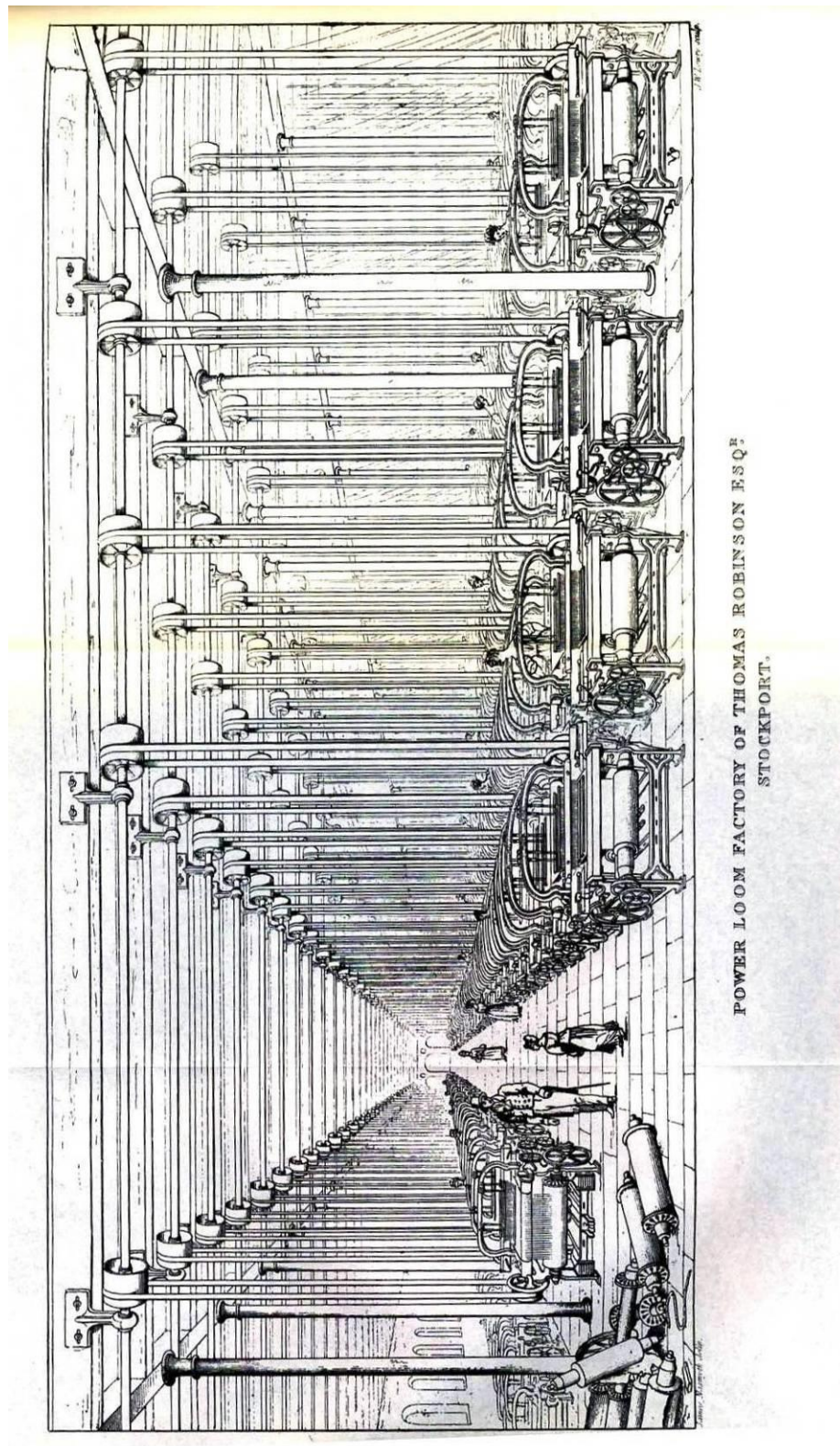
Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures,* p. xii

Figure 3.3
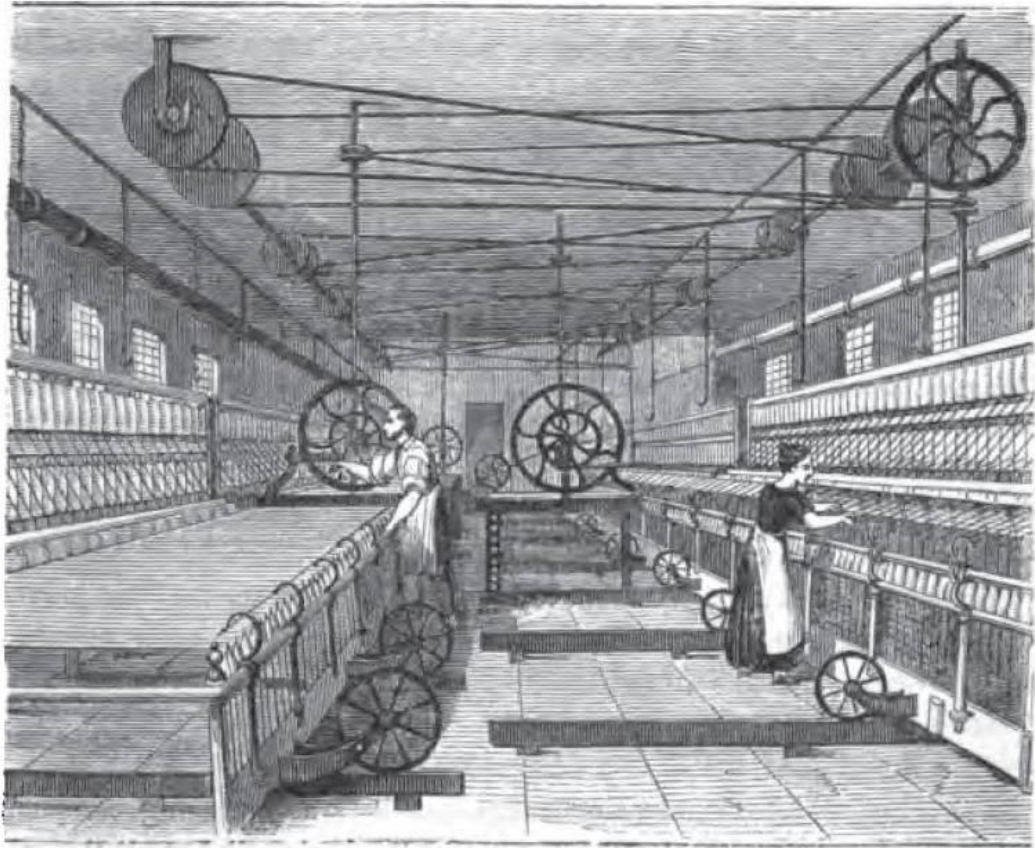
Taylor, *Factories and the Factory System,* p. 252

Figure 3.4
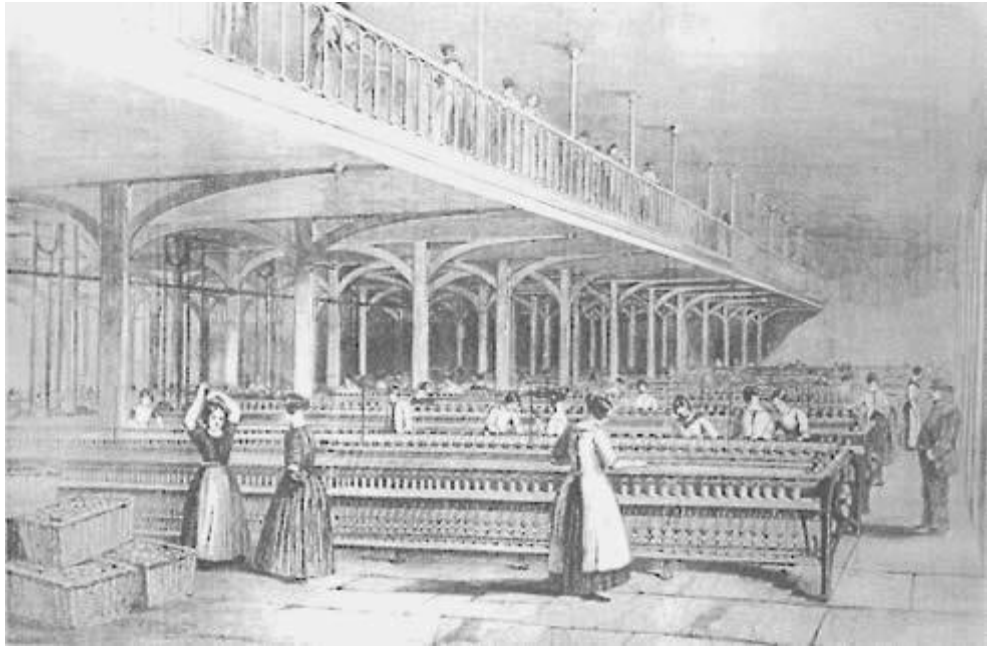
Cotton workers at Dean Mills near Manchester in 1851. This scene shows the doubling room where the thread is doubled to produce fine thread for the manufacture of lace. From *The Illustrated London News*

<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_1/illustrations/imcrewe.htm>

Figure 3.5

MULE SPINNING.
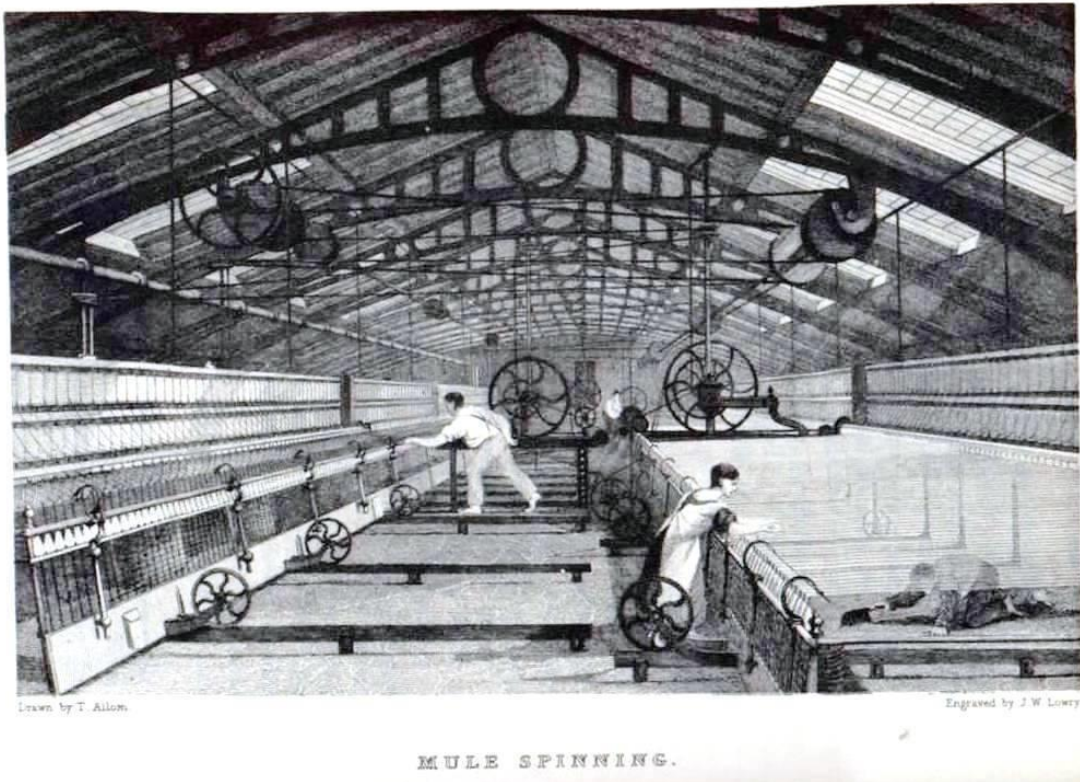
Baines, *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain,* p. 211

Figure 3.6
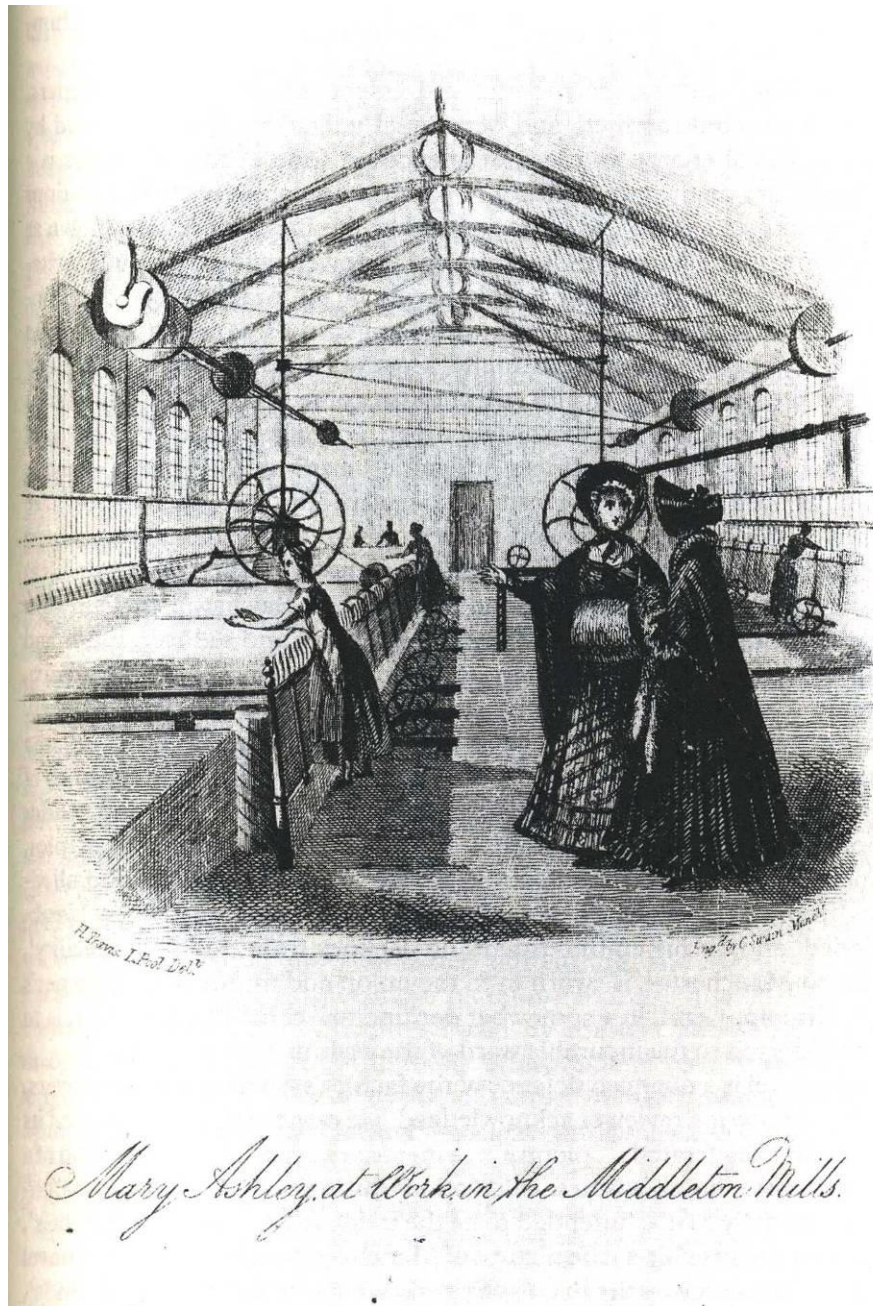
Mary Ashley, at Work in the Middleton Mills.

Montagu, *Mary Ashley*, p. 73

Figure 3.7
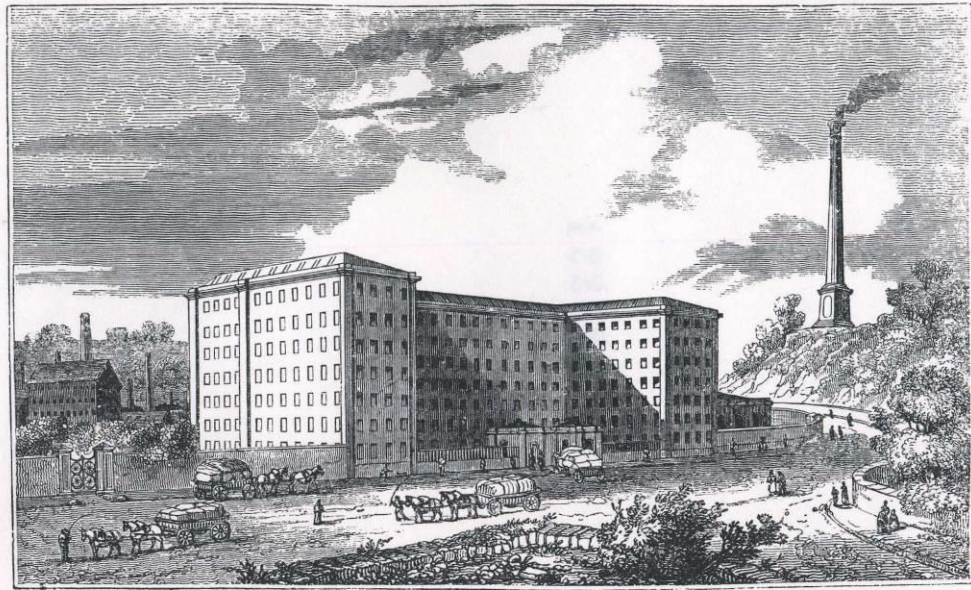
ORRELL's *Cotton Factory, Stockport.*

Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures,* frontispiece

Chapter Four
Evangelicalism and the Factory Girl

Introduction

This chapter, focussing on the representation of factory girls, centres on the eponymous heroine of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's Evangelical novel *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41).[1] Of the three industrial novels on factory children which this thesis examines, *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40), discussed in our second chapter, features within a network of propaganda for factory reform through its presentation of a factory boy venturing in and out of factories and struggling with class conflicts and human-machine collisions. In the third chapter, we examined *Mary Ashley* (1839), a defence of the factory system, which marginalizes and feminizes the working class by its projection of a prosperous industrialized nation and a hierarchical social order, despite taking for its title the name of a factory girl. It is worth noting that, while the boy protagonist seems more like a melodramatic hero than a real-life factory worker, here a major working scene (as examined in our second chapter), consisting of a girl painstakingly working alongside machinery, is presented. *Helen Fleetwood* is another topical novel promoting the welfare of factory children in support of the Ten Hours Movement. Moreover, as Patricia E. Johnson also notes, it is a novel that contains 'detailed descriptions of the lives of factory girls' and has 'a heroine directly involved in industrial labor'.[2]

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[1] *Helen Fleetwood* was first serialized between September 1839 and March 1841 in the *Christian Lady's Magazine,* when Tonna was the editor, and then published in a one-volume edition priced at seven shillings by R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside in London in 1841. See Ivanka Kovačević, *Fact into Fiction: English Literature and the Industrial Scene, 1750-1850* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), p. 305, and note 3 in p. 311; Ella Dzelzainis, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Pre-Millenarianism, and the Formation of Gender Ideology in the Ten Hours Campaign', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 31, no. 1 (2003), 181-91 (p. 181); Andrzej Diniejko, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's Domestic Feminism as a Response to Child and Female Employment in Early Victorian England', in *The Victorian Web* <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/tonna/diniejko.html> [last modified 26 August 2010].

[2] Patricia E. Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social-Problem Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), pp. 12, 153.

The comparatively greater novelistic attention paid to factory girls than to boys, as seen in *Helen Fleetwood* and the other two earliest industrial novels, may be partly related to the social facts that girls did constitute a greater proportion of workers than boys in textile factories by 1841 ('for every boy there were three girls'), and that Richard Oastler, the alleged 'founder of the Factory Movement', also

Previous scholars generally acknowledge the contribution of both *Michael Armstrong* and *Helen Fleetwood* to the enactment of the Ten Hours Act; as Samuel Kydd commented in 1857, 'Mrs Trollope's novel, *Michael Armstrong*, has been much abused; it has, however, been useful, and so, also, has been *Helen Fleetwood*, by Charlotte Elizabeth'. [3] Yet, comparing Tonna's and Trollope's novels, previous scholarship usually credits Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* with more realistic depictions based on socio-historical documents and Parliamentary Reports, and draws attention to Tonna's Evangelical faith in this context.[4] Humphry House comments, for example, 'Mrs Trollope, who had to write for money and had made her name with social criticism,

emphasized this in his famous 'letter of protest to the *Leeds Mercury* on "Yorkshire Slavery"' in 1830: 'Thousands of little children, both male and female, *but principally female*, from seven to 14 years of age, are daily *compelled to labour* from six o'clock in the morning to seven in the evening, with only – Britons, blush while you read it! – with only *30 minutes allowed for eating and recreation*. Poor infants!' See Thomas Edward Jordan, *Victorian Childhood: Themes and Variations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 126; Eric Hopkins, *Childhood Transformed: Working-class Children in Nineteenth Century England* (Manchester [u.a.]: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 75-76.

[3] Samuel H. G. Kydd ('Alfred'), *The History of the Factory Movement: From the Year 1802, to the Enactment of the Ten Hours' Bill in 1847,* in Two Volumes (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1857), vol. 2, p. 295. See also Louis F. Cazamian, *The Social Novel in England, 1830-1850: Dickens, Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 235; Mary Lenard, 'Deathbeds and Didacticism: Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna and Victorian Social Reform Literature', *Contributions in Women's Studies,* 200 (2003), 67-90 (p. 73). Both of them refer to Kydd's remark. For discussion of Tonna's contribution to the Ten Hours Campaign, see Ella Dzelzainis, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Pre-Millenarianism, and the Formation of Gender Ideology in the Ten Hours Campaign', *Victorian Literature and Culture,* 31 (2003), 181-89, in which Dzelzainis argues that Tonna played a more important role in the campaign than Kydd has acknowledged. Wanda F. Neff also credits *Helen Fleetwood* with preparing the way for the Factory Bill of 1844, which 'limited the working day of factory women to twelve hours', in *Victorian Working Women: An Historical and Literary Study of Women in British Industries and Professions, 1832-1850* (London: Cass, 1966), p. 86. Vineta Colby claims that *Helen Fleetwood*, which came out of Tonna's battles while 'crusading in the interests of exploited factory workers', was 'more influential in its day' than Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*. See Vineta Colby, *Yesterday's Woman: Domestic Realism in the English Novel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 175. Boyd Hilton also states that Tonna's 'stories of urban despair and degradation in the 1830s and 1840s were, as she intended, powerful propaganda for the Ten Hours Movement'. See Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford [England]: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 97.

[4] See, for example, Cazamian, *The Social Novel in England, 1830-1850*, pp. 236-40. *Michael Armstrong* is judged by Cazamian as 'one of the worst' social novels, because of its 'unconvincing' 'exaggeration' which 'disgust[s] the reader instead of evoking his pity' (pp. 236-37). *Helen Fleetwood*, though approved of by Cazamian as 'genuine' and 'moving', is still criticized for its 'lack of artistic talent' and 'mediocre literary quality' (pp. 239-40). As my Introduction indicates, earlier scholars tend to criticize the industrial novels prior to Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) on grounds of their failure to achieve high levels of artistry or to offer realistic portrayals (especially documentary criticisms like Sheila Smith's *The Other Nation* [1980]). Tracing the influence of Tonna on Gaskell, Monica Correa Fryckstedt regards *Helen Fleetwood* as 'the only true forerunner of *Mary Barton*' because, as she further explains, it is 'the only industrial novel to develop the religious ideas which I take to be the core of *Mary Barton*'. Yet Fryckstedt also criticizes *Helen Fleetwood* as using a language 'more appropriate to religious pamphlets' and lacking the 'authenticity' of Elizabeth Gaskell's novel. See Monica Correa Fryckstedt, *The Early Industrial Novel: Mary Barton and Its Predecessors* (Manchester: John Rylands University of Manchester, 1980), pp. 12, 27-28.

found a topical subject and approached it with an average sense of decency and justice;

Mrs Tonna was inspired by her evangelical faith to a hatred of the factory system and its

child employment even more passionate than Ashley's'.[5] As Ivanka Kovačević indicates,

Tonna, with her commitment to Evangelicalism, primarily wanted to present industrial

facts drawn from data found in Parliamentary Papers, but she realized that turning the

materials into fiction could better 'move the hearts and stir the conscience of

middle-class readers'.[6] In the novel, the narrator proclaims: 'let no one suppose we are

going to write fiction, or to conjure up phantoms of a heated imagination, to aid the

cause which we avowedly embrace.'[7] The narrator insists that all the incidents

described in the novel are 'every-day reality', in relation to 'the main subject – that is, to

the factories of this, our free and happy England' (p. 45). Regarding readership, while

Michael Armstrong accidentally attracted Chartist supporters, *Helen Fleetwood* was

targeted at middle-class Christian ladies when it was first serialized in the *Christian*

Lady's Magazine, though its later one-volume edition also went on to appeal to the

wider public. Through examining her hybrid representation of the working-class girl

possessing some middle-class traits, we can further analyze how Tonna instils sympathy,

and even empathy and identification with their 'working-class sisters' in her

middle-class female readers.

There is a good degree of scholarly consensus that Evangelicalism fuels Tonna's

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[5] Humphry House, *The Dickens World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 204.

[6] Kovačević, *Fact into Fiction*, p. 301. See also Ivanka Kovačević and S. Barbara Kanner, 'Blue Book Into Novel: The Forgotten Industrial Fiction of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction,* 25 (1970), no. 2, 152-73.

For a basic understanding of Evangelicalism, See David Cody, 'Evangelicalism', in *The Victorian Web* <http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/evangel1.html>: 'Evangelical, a term literally meaning "of or pertaining to the Gospel," was employed from the eighteenth century on to designate the school of theology adhered to by those Protestants who believed that the essence of the Gospel lay in the doctrine of salvation by faith in the death of Christ, which atoned for man's sins. Evangelicalism stressed the reality of the "inner life," insisted on the total depravity of humanity (a consequence of the Fall) and on the importance of the individual's personal relationship with God and Savior. They put particular emphasis on faith, denying that either good works or the sacraments (which they perceived as being merely symbolic) possessed any salvational efficacy.' For further reference, see Elizabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford [England]: Clarendon Press, 1988).

[7] [Tonna], Charlotte Elizabeth, *Helen Fleetwood* (New York: John S. Taylor and Co., 1841), p. 45. Subsequent references are to this edition.

novel: Catherine Gallagher, for example, suggests that *Helen Fleetwood* is 'the most important work of industrial fiction to emerge from this reforming Evangelicalism'.[8] Nevertheless, Tonna's characterization of factory girls, including the eponymous heroine, remains a fragmented and underexplored area. Stressing Helen's 'passivity' and 'feminine duty' of 'meekly and silently enduring both debilitating work and persecution', Gallagher claims that Helen 'acts like a character in a Hannah More tract: she submits to the system that martyrs her'.[9] However, it is the differences between Tonna's Helen and More's collier girl that I am going to point out in this chapter. More recent scholarship has noted the unconventional aspects of this working-class heroine. Constance D. Harsh states that Helen 'begins to assert her power in the mill town' and commends her as 'the great active and positive force in the novel'.[10] Nevertheless, Harsh neglects the former pastoral childhood of Helen, which I argue is vital in Tonna's formation of Helen's unbending spirit, a spirit that persists and even wields influence in the factory town. Noticing more 'individuality' and 'complexity' in Tonna's characters than in Trollope's, Penny Brown contends parenthetically that 'Helen could be deemed to anticipate Mary Barton as the first working-class heroine in a full-length social-problem novel'.[11] Yet, further analysis is needed. This chapter will thus probe into the characterization of Tonna's factory girl, as a significant combination and adaptation of elements from Evangelicalism, the Romantic inheritance, and Victorian social discourses, as well as from sentimental rhetoric. Unlike the stereotypical puppet factory girl deployed in *Mary Ashley* or the flat supporting characters in *Michael Armstrong* (to be further discussed in the next chapter), *Helen Fleetwood* offers, in the representation of the titular factory girl, a figure full of will and Evangelical faith which endows her with the ability to sustain

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[8] Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 41.

[9] Gallagher, pp. 46-47.

[10] Constance D. Harsh, *Subversive Heroines: Feminist Resolutions of Social Crisis in the Condition-of-England Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 88, p. 91.

[11] Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 74.

working conditions that are not only physically consuming but also spiritually devastating. As Harsh elucidates, working-class heroines have 'doubly transgressive' potential 'by virtue of their class and gender'.[12] I argue that Helen Fleetwood represents a hybrid of the traditional Angel in the House, a victimized factory girl, a female preacher, and a new working-class heroine.

Exposing the working and living conditions of factory children and migrant working-class families, *Helen Fleetwood* depicts an orphan girl moving with her adoptive family from the idyllic countryside to an unexpectedly demonic (morally polluting and corrupting from an Evangelical viewpoint) factory town, where they are swiftly disillusioned in their hope of earning a better living.[13] Through the geographical movement, Tonna's narration presents the disparity between rural and urban environments. Implicitly, as I argue in the first section, the contrast between Helen's idyllic girlhood and her life in the factory also reflects Victorian nostalgia for the Romantic pastoral ideal and childhood innocence.[14]

In contrast to *Michael Armstrong,* which highlights corporeal clashes between human beings and machinery and materializes class conflict, the emphasis of *Helen Fleetwood* is on spiritual endangerment, in such forms as verbal violence and sexual immorality among factory workers. Throughout the novel, Helen, the factory girl, perseveres in her Evangelical faith and influences her family members and fellow workers in their religious and moral outlooks, yet her eventual early death from consumption embodies the writer's attack on social cruelty. As Tonna declares, she only desires 'to show the withered remains of [the nation's] poor blighted victims' (p. 43).

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[12] Harsh, p. 87.

[13] See Gallagher, p. 28. Gallagher points out that in *Helen Fleetwood*, 'the factory town of M. is described both as an economically necessitated "system" and as a part of the world that the devil somehow controls'.

[14] For girlhood, femininity, and innocence, see Jackie C. Horne, *History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children's Literature* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011); Catherine Robson, *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Lynne Vallone, *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

Tonna's unique portrayal of the factory girl – combining submissive femininity with firm Evangelical faith in the face of industrial severity – provides a new approach to social problems. In addition, Tonna's appropriation of the familiar Victorian deathbed scene of a young angelic girl adds new vitality to such sentimental conventions by poignantly and realistically bearing witness to social brutality.

This chapter is divided into three sections, following the story line of *Helen Fleetwood* and incorporating supplementary literary and socio-historical materials. With reference to Helen's early rural childhood, the first section discusses the Victorian inheritance and transformation of the Romantic ideal of pastoral life and childhood innocence. The second section focuses on Tonna's Evangelical vision of industrial reality and her portrayal of the softly feminine yet stoutly spiritual factory girl, who submits to providential circumstances but steers her way through industrial evils.[15] The third section looks at Tonna's version of the sentimental death of the factory girl, which uses a conventional literary trope yet adds richness and social relevance. I hope to present analysis of and insight into the representation of the working-class heroine through the three stages of this discussion: the country girl and the Romantic influence, then the factory girl and the Victorian industrial experience, and finally her sentimental yet realistic death. I argue that Tonna's overall representation of Helen Fleetwood through this process of gradual change is an effective means of linking the Romantic past to the Victorian present, arousing contemporary public concerns, and appealing to reformist sentiments. As the factory worker Mr South explains to Richard Green in the novel, 'It is no party matter at all; whig or tory, conservative or radical, any man may assist our noble champion Lord Ashley, without interfering with his general politics, or

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[15] In her discussion of 'Free Will versus Determination', Gallagher uses *Helen Fleetwood* but focuses on the male character Richard Green as the one who 'represents the free will actively combating evil in the world'. See *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction,* p. 47. In her note, Johnson argues against Gallagher and states that 'Helen's experience is, indeed, central, while Richard is a bystander, who represents the remnant of an honest but ineffectual paternalism'. See *Hidden Hands*, p. 196, no. 18. Agreeing with Johnson upon this point, I further explore Helen's action and religious conviction in combating the evil in the factory system.

offending the party he belongs to' (p. 299).

I. Retrieving the Romantic Rural Childhood of the Victorian Factory Girl

Helen loses her father at four years old, then is adopted by the Widow Green into her family (pp. 6-7). In her opening chapter, Tonna portrays Helen as 'a simple country girl' enjoying nature and tending cows with her adoptive younger sister Mary Green (p. 2). Conceptions of the pastoral life and childhood innocence, as revealed in the opening of the novel, have their roots in Romantic ideas.[16] Tonna depicts a picturesque setting on 'a clear autumnal morning', 'when the breeze was strong, the billows tumultuous, and the sun resplendent in a clear blue sky' (p. 2). While Helen and Mary are enjoying the pretty sunrise, the 'distant lowing' of their two cows are 'occasionally audible during the short pauses of the ocean's measured roar' (p. 2). The tranquil scenes of nature at the beginning of a bright day are analogous to the state of purity that human beings, like Helen and Mary here, seem to initially inhabit – which recalls the Romantic idea of childhood innocence.

The narrator's emphasis on the 'clear' status of the morning as an elemental quality of nature suggests an initially pure and lucid human nature before it is clouded over by industrial problems. In regard to the overtones of nostalgia for Romantic childhood, Linda Austin points to the nineteenth-century taste for and dependence on the iconic images of 'an essentialized child', a figure materialized in Rousseau's writing on the continent and Wordsworth's early poetry in England, 'especially the *Lyrical Ballads* and the "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" (1807)'.[17]

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[16] In Chapter Two I also mention childhood innocence in relation to the factory child in *Michael Armstrong* (by contrast with *The Factory Lad)*, yet what is distinctive in *Helen Fleetwood* is that it clearly depicts a rural childhood prior to the industrial one. Thus in this novel childhood innocence is further compounded with nostalgia for the pastoral past and contrasted with the later, more current, industrial living conditions. As we shall see in the second section, the narrator's depiction of rural childhood innocence forms a sharp contrast to the industrial childhood of pollution and suffering once these girls enter factories.

[17] Linda Marilyn Austin, *Nostalgia in Transition, 1780-1917* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), p. 94.

The 'elemental child of nature' is thus established in the public memory of childhood in nineteenth-century England.[18]

This peaceful prelude thus hints at Victorian nostalgia for the Romantic rural past and childhood innocence. If we use Nicholas Dame's definition of Victorian nostalgia to examine Tonna's presentation of rural childhood reminiscences, we can better understand how such nostalgia functions in the Victorian context. Dames contends that 'transforming memories into useful acts … is pre-eminently the work of the Victorian novel'.[19] In a larger sense, the novel can be regarded as 'a form with intimate ties to various lived pasts', and it engages readers in 'acts of thematic and structural remembering'.[20] Yet Dames specifically points out that 'nostalgia', as 'a form of retrospect' delineated by Victorian narrative and eventually acquiring its name in the nineteenth century, is a kind of selective remembrance that 'remembers only what is pleasant, and only what the self can employ in the present'.[21] In other words, Victorian nostalgic narrative tries to 'transform the chaos of personal recollection into what is useful, meaningful, able to be applied to the future – into what works'.[22] This is 'a memory that is always only the necessary prehistory of the present'.[23] Dames suggests that 'from the point of view of Victorian fictional values', nostalgia 'promotes a certain kind of life – a life no longer burdened by the past, a life lived as a coherent tale, summarizable, pointed, and finally moralizable'.[24] Thus, Tonna idealizes a beautiful rural past, brief and impressionistic in its novelistic depictions, as a desirable and meaningful prehistory of the industrial present. Unlike the later more detailed, concrete, and realistic descriptions of industrial life, the depiction of Helen's rural childhood is rendered in a comparatively dreamlike and picturesque manner. Increasing

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[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Nicholas Dames, *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 3
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

industrialization comes at the expense of rural living. Dames further explains that, in the nineteenth century, as social change increases rapidly and the 'past in its particularity gradually vanishes', 'the pleasure of recollecting that vague, disconnected past becomes more keen, and more a part of the texture of fiction'.[25] Therefore, there is a strong emotional need for Victorian readers to retrieve an idealized and stabilized past. As Dames concludes, 'the consequentiality of the past dwindles into its capacity to provide pleasure, security, self-definition – above all, utility'.[26] Consequently, Tonna in her novel provides a pleasant and secure rural childhood, as a shared fundamental past which her readers may reminisce about.

In the novel, the pastoral and industrial styles of living appear as the earlier and later stages of the protagonist's childhood, along with regional and temporal differences. Yet, in the minds of some older characters or in Victorian public memory, the change from rural to urban life may represent a more extended generational change and a more distant longing. Comparisons between country and town life come constantly into view in the course of *Helen Fleetwood*. For example, in Chapter XIV, a townsman's lament – 'these villagers retain much of what may be called the virtue and simplicity of their forefathers' (p. 209) – expresses a remembrance of and yearning for a bygone agricultural society that also conveys concern for spiritual purity. Here nostalgia for pre-industrial idyllic living upholding traditional values harmonizes with the idea of and reminiscence about the emblematic and simplistic Romantic childhood.

In a sense, Tonna makes use of Victorian nostalgia for the Romantic to unite her readers, to restore and return them to a common foundation of childhood innocence and pastoral harmony. The writer utilizes the idealized tranquil past as a solid and stable base on which to locate and unify her readers. With current dissension among people disregarded, they can embrace a mutual cause and work together in a single direction to

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[26] *Ibid.*

condemn and fight against the evils of the factory system. The readers are thus brought together to relive an old experience or revive an old dream, which is to some extent illusory. Collectively, they may think of the nation's stable agricultural past. Individually, an opportunity is opened up for readers who have had a rural childhood to engage in retrospection. Regarding nineteenth-century nostalgia in transition, Linda Austin also remarks that remembering is 'optical': 'to remember, the subject becomes part of the scene'.[27] Then, in 'nostalgic remembering', people can be transported into the recalled place, which is a 're-implacing' to the 'embodied space'.[28] Thus the novel can effectively create an envisioned space with a vividly depicted scene, offering the readers 'a single shared space' in which they can be placed and even joined together.[29] Moreover, as we have observed, 'personal' (or 'individual') remembering is 'mediated by cultural tradition' or compounded with 'communal remembering'.[30] By 'tapping a collective sense of loss attached to memory' and creating a 'binding power', the novelistic setting generates a mutual understanding among the readers.[31] In this way, the opening chapter of *Helen Fleetwood* establishes a personal and communal identification of its readers with the protagonist's early childhood and the society's rural past.

From another perspective, to retain the metaphorically primal, bright and simple (or simplified) nature may also help to shed light on and provide insight into the current complicated social conditions or polluted human minds of Victorian England. As the novel's opening sentence declares:

> Who that has seen the sun's uprising, when his first bright gleam comes sparkling over the billows on a clear autumnal morning, but has felt a thrill of gladness at his heart – an involuntary, perhaps an unconscious ascription of praise to the Creator, who has so framed him that all his innate perverseness cannot bar the entrance of that thrill? (p. 1)

In a religious sense, the sunrise evokes the essence of the Creation. Basking in the sun,

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[27] Austin, p. 15.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.,* p. 23.
[31] *Ibid.,* p. 95.

Helen feels 'its joyous influence through every fibre of her frame' (p. 2). The sun is also personified as 'the Sun of Righteousness', who 'rises with healing in his wings upon a benighted world of tumult and strife' (p. 2). The 'benighted world' signals the industrial town which Helen is going to enter. Nevertheless, 'within her bosom' Helen has already 'owned his power, and rejoiced in his light' (p. 2). In this way Helen seems to carry the light of the sun within herself, like a messenger of God, to bring its righteous and healing power into the world of industrial evil. Thus this childhood experience of nature becomes a significant cultivation of the essence of being. In a further image, the narrator affirms that 'the brisk wind that curls the wave, and flings its light spray abroad, does but multiply mirrors for the imaged ray to flash from' (p. 1). It is implied that every creation in the world is originally and naturally like a mirror which multiplies and reflects the image of God. Thus, before presenting the industrially polluted environment and its corrupted human minds, Tonna returns her readers to pre-industrial outer and inner conditions so as to re-acknowledge the possibility of a clear and bright state of mind.

The 'healing' power of the sun as described in the novel may also be attributed to Wordsworthian influence. Donald D. Stone, in discussing the Romantic impulse in Victorian fiction, indicates that Wordsworth's 'healing power', or his 'prescribing of the therapeutic charms of Nature', was particularly influential for Victorians and provided writers with 'a source of calm and renewed inspiration'.[32] He further observes that Wordsworth, as 'the one major Romantic poet', is 'congenial to the tastes even of Evangelically minded Victorians, brought up to a life of duty and self-denial and suspicious of imaginative literature'.[33] This analysis explains how Tonna, as a fervent Evangelical writer who, after conversion, detests her childhood enjoyment of

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[32] Donald D. Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 134.
[33] *Ibid.*

imaginative literature, can also advert to a Romantic concept of nature.[34] Stone also

finds that 'a mood of reverence for and acquiescence to the eternal forms and powers, be

they natural or religious or national', along with a common 'humanitarian strain', flows

from the Romantic poet and appears to be 'safe enough' for the Victorians.[35] Thus we

can see this shared sympathy with a kind of natural eternal power as a Victorian linkage

with and inheritance from Romanticism. To show Wordsworth's more direct influence

on Tonna and subsequent Victorian writers, Stone notes:

> *Lyrical Ballads* as well as *The Excursion*, in showing the potential for nobility
> and tragedy in the lives of the poor and in celebrating their fortitude under the
> pressure of intense grief was elaborated in Charlotte Tonna's influential *Helen
> Fleetwood* (1841), which directed the attention of the Evangelicals who had
> suppressed the slave trade abroad to the plight of England's internal slave market
> in children as factory workers. It is within this tradition that Gaskell's *Mary
> Barton* (1848) belongs.[36]

Simply put, in this Romantic-Victorian lineage, there is a sympathy stemming from

Nature's rejuvenating power that is homogenous with Christian spirit and brotherly love.

For another examination of the Romantic influence, Penny Brown explores the

concept of the innocent child in Rousseau's view and in the Romantic poets' creations;

her analysis further clarifies how Christian ideas of the child blend with those found in

society from the Romantic era to Victorian times. Brown points out that Romantic

writers install the child as 'the symbol of primal innocence in danger of corruption by

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[34] For a basic biographical understanding of Tonna, see 'Tonna, Charlotte Elizabeth – Introduction', in
Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 135, ed. by Russel Whitaker (Gale Cengage, 2004)
 <http://www.enotes.com/nineteenth-century-criticism/tonna-charlotte-elizabeth>.
It describes Tonna's early immersion in literature and later condemnation of it: 'Tonna suffered total
blindness early in her life, a condition that proved temporary; however, the treatment used to restore her
sight resulted in complete and permanent loss of hearing, depriving her of the music she loved. She turned
to books for comfort, reading not only the Bible and the works of Shakespeare, but fairy tales and
romantic novels as well. Later in life, after her conversion to Evangelicalism, she would denounce her
total immersion in the imaginative world of literature as a foolish waste of time.' For further reference,
see Charlotte Elizabeth [Tonna], *Personal Recollections* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1848), p. 17 (where
Tonna describes her 'unutterable delight' in reading fairy tales at bedtimes as a child and then states, 'I
have no doubt the enemy was secretly constructing within me, to mislead, by wild unholy fiction'.); p. 31
(where Tonna describes her childhood enjoyment of carrying into her retreat 'a volume of Shakespeare'
and laments 'Oh, how many wasted hours … what robbery of God, must I refer to this ensnaring book!').
[35] Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction*, p. 134.
[36] *Ibid.,* p. 143.

the world', under the influence of 'Rousseau's view of the innocent child'.[37] Such symbolic imagery is present in the opening scene of Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*, in which an idyllic start to childhood is followed by disastrous incidents in the factory town. Yet besides the idea of childhood as 'Original Innocence', the other principal way of thinking about children in England in the nineteenth century, as Brown indicates, is as the child of 'Original Sin'.[38] While the former derives from 'the writings of Rousseau and the Romantic poets', the latter comes from 'the influence of the religious revival launched by John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, which also affected the Church of England and became known as the Evangelical revival'.[39] As an Evangelical writer, Tonna, whose writing has Romantic overtones as we have seen, indeed also embraces the seemingly conflicting idea of the child of sin. How, then, do these two perceptions of childhood work together?

In fact, although 'Original Innocence' and 'Original Sin' appear contradictory, they do coexist in Christianity. We can first look at how the idea of 'Original Innocence' works in *Helen Fleetwood*. As Brown suggests, the idea of childhood innocence also in effect has 'its roots in Christian beliefs, notably Christ's reverence for the inspired innocence of little children'.[40] This religious overtone was 'given impetus by Wordsworth's depiction of childhood as the "seed-time of the soul", a time of superior integrity, spontaneity, and sensitivity'.[41] Such a perspective further explains why Tonna chooses to represent pre-industrial childhood as a time when undefiled human nature is nurtured in physical nature. The simplicity of childhood innocence is revered and considered more powerful 'than all the elements', as described in Wordsworth's *Prelude*.[42] With his 'attempt to establish universal truths about childhood and the nature

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[37] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 5.
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[41] *Ibid.*
[42] *Ibid.*; William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book 5, lines 531-33. See William Wordsworth, Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Charles Gill, *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850: Authoritative Texts, Context and Reception, Recent Critical Essays* (New York: Norton, 1979).

of human life', Wordsworth shares 'Rousseau's insistence on the significance for the adult of childhood experience' and 'emphasis on the relationship between the child and nature as a fundamental prerequisite for moral growth'.[43] As adulthood and industrial society are often associated with moral degradation, we can see why it is indispensable for Tonna to present a childhood in natural surroundings as a significant moulder of character. The Victorian adult writer and readers regret their own 'loss of the child's spontaneous joy in nature' and also lament the deprivation of a free and happy rural childhood for the factory children.[44]

In terms of the idea of 'Original Sin' in the novel, Jacqueline P. Banerjee addresses the issue that 'the pretty reservoir of idealizing sentiment about children in the Christian tradition, as well as Rousseau's secular conviction of man's innocence in his natural state' was swamped by 'the great tide of Victorian Evangelicalism'.[45] During 'the new wave of reform in the Protestant church', Evangelicalism 'brought back with a vengeance the Puritans' belief that "[o]ur souls are sin-laden from before conception in our mothers' wombs, … guilty because we were one in and with Adam, were Adam in his primal act of sinning" (O'Connell 335)', which recalls the poignant idea of the inescapable Original Sin.[46] With the concept of Original Sin, there comes the sense of 'personal contamination' and the need for vigilance against 'inherent wickedness'.[47] These ideas are manifest in the later chapters of *Helen Fleetwood* in the account of factory children's immoral inclinations, when Helen uses her religious faith as a spiritual guide and interacts with morally tarnished factory children. This aspect will enter into the discussion in the second section of this chapter.

There thus appears a creative conflict between notions of Wordsworthian innocence and Evangelical notions of Original Sin in the way childhood (and its

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[43] Brown, p. 6.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] Jacqueline P. Banerjee, *Through the Northern Gate: Childhood and Growing Up in British Fiction, 1719-1901* (New York: P. Lang, 1996), p. 50.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

pastoral associations) are handled in nineteenth-century fiction. To include in the novel the concepts both of pure childhood innocence and of the Original Sin of human beings, Tonna highlights them in the two stages of rural and industrial life respectively. As Helen enters the factory, the focus is shifted from Original Innocence onto Original Sin. However, Helen's character embodies the everlasting and healing power nurtured in Nature and transports it into the contaminating factory environment. In this way childhood innocence performs a function in opposition to Original Sin. These two perceptions of childhood thus work together. From another perspective, the Romantic spiritual purity becomes a guiding light in the industrial chaos, a theme we shall examine in the second section.

The transition from the pastoral to the industrial also indicates the incongruity between Romantic imagery and Victorian reality. In this context, Victorian reformist writers like Tonna could easily turn the idealized image of child into social propaganda. As Brown contends, the representation of 'the child's immortal nature' in Wordsworthian 'evocation of the Platonic myth' faces a challenge when the 'shades of the prison-house' of reality become central in the Victorian time.[48] This is illustrated by the moment in *Helen Fleetwood* when the nourishing rural life is suddenly replaced by the threatening industrial life, representing the heavy main theme following the light prelude. Tonna tries to sustain the pure power of natural childhood innocence at the beginning of the novel, but she cannot stay in the Romantic past. Given both an increasingly 'harsh, materialistic society and a cold, dehumanised Christianity', the disparity between the Romantic ideal and the Victorian social truth inevitably widens.[49] In the nation there develops an atmosphere of religious doubt, social unrest, and an attempt to set out on 'subjective exploration of the self'.[50] Still influenced by 'the social and political ferment of the end of the eighteenth century', as Brown notes, in their quest writers used 'the

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[48] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 6.
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] *Ibid.*

child' as 'a potent literary symbol' for their 'sense of uncertainty and vulnerability, and of simplicity, innocence and feeling in the face of the increasingly dehumanising industrial age'.[51] Therefore, 'the Romantic concept of the child was to be increasingly pressed into service as a vehicle for social protest'.[52] As we see in the novel, the ideal image of the happy rural child, in opposition to the later victimized factory one, makes a powerful appeal to the reader.

In *Helen Fleetwood*, we shall see that early childhood innocence, embodying the Romantic idealization of the angelic child, is contrasted and shifted to the Victorian concern with and realistic depiction of victimized childhood. The Romantic pastoral ideal can hardly be a reality in a Victorian industrial town, however much it remains a cherished emblem in the minds of the migrated family. While inheriting the Romantic attachment to Nature's sacred power, now the Victorians need to deal with adverse industrial realities. The change in Tonna's portrayals of Helen from 'a simple country girl' (p. 2) pursuing a life of rural contentment to a hard-working factory girl in an industrial town thus provides a reflection on and transition from the Romantic idea of pastoral and innocent childhood to Victorian nostalgia for the past and confrontation with industrial reality and its child victims.

In terms of the transformation from Romantic to Victorian representations of children and childhood, Banerjee explores how Victorian novelists 'built on the eighteenth century in the ways they did'.[53] This may provide us with a further understanding of the context in which Tonna makes use of the Romantic heritage. With the novelists initially 'looking at the society to which children had to adapt in the nineteenth century', Banerjee points out the significant social encroachment upon children themselves, 'particularly in the earlier half of the century', which not only impinges on the imagery of Victorian childhood but also affected the novelists when

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[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] Jacqueline, *Through the Northern Gate*, p. 45.

they 'were growing up and beginning their writing careers'.[54] In other words, the novelists not only make use of cultural nostalgia to appeal to the readers, but also by this means deal with their own sense of loss and remembrance, since they themselves are involved in the early Victorian transitional period. Yet, while Banerjee contends that the novelists 'use the child character to try to confront their own pasts', I would suggest that to confront the past is the first step in dealing with the present.[55] In the novel, the narrator retrieves a time before pain arises, following which she can examine the causes of the current social traumas and seek solutions.

While the opening is largely derived from the writer's personal recollection or imagination, the principal body of this industrial fiction takes in details from Parliamentary Reports.[56] Correspondingly, representation of the child is transformed from a romantic ideal into a realistic portrayal. In Laura C. Berry's analysis, although the 'figuration of childhood has roots in Romantic culture', there is a distinction between the more symbolic representation and ideal projection of children in Romantic poetry and the realistic portrayal of and concern for Victorian children, especially child victims.[57] Berry further explains the difference: 'Victorian writing tends to consider the child not merely as a symbol but as a subject, focusing in greater detail and at length on his or her interior state and physical well-being'; 'Victorians tend to cast the child as victim rather than as a triumphant representation of the transcendent self.'[58] Thus Berry argues that 'Victorian representations of childhood', in comparison to Romantic ones, 'are more likely to focus on childhood distress rather than transcendence, and to position their discourse in relation to social reform projects and debates'.[59] To show how

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[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] See Ivanka Kovačević and Barbara Kammer, 'Blue Book into Novel: The Forgotten Industrial Fiction of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction,* 25 (Sept. 1970), 152-73.

[57] Laura C. Berry, *The Child, the State, and the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville; London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 16. More discussion of Victorian representation of the victimized child is provided in the second chapter. Here I only wish to present the link and the difference between Romantic and Victorian conceptions of childhood.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Victorian literature presents the hardships of childhood, Berry provides the example of Dickens's Little Nell, which can be counted as 'an object of nostalgic reflection' yet without idealization of her lived circumstances.[60] Berry does not mention factory novels in her study, but nonetheless offers a fertile approach to *Helen Fleetwood.* Furthermore, in *Helen Fleetwood* we see a different example of the trend, demonstrating how a religious writer can turn social discourse into fictional presentation with the purpose of provoking social reform. Never considering herself a novelist, Tonna aims not at writing fiction but at presenting facts to raise awareness and promote legislation.[61] Her novel thus exemplifies another kind of Victorian creative force; in effect propaganda, it also reinforces cultural constructions and acts as a further literary representation of child victims.

In addition to the difference between Romantic and Victorian ways of characterizing childhood, the ways they describe physical manifestations of industrialization – most prominently factories – also reveal the shift from Romanticism to Victorian realism. In Romantic literature, the allegedly idyllic pastoral conditions are already contrasted with the dark Satanic mills. As Kirkpatrick Sale remarks, the Romantic poets, beginning with Blake, Wordsworth, and Byron particularly, were 'repulsed by the Satanic mills' and 'mindful of the ruined paradise of the past'.[62] Romanticism often invokes horrifying images of the mill, as a symbolic embodiment of mechanization and the veiled threat posed by machinery, corresponding to some extent with the themes of *The Factory Lad*, as discussed in my second chapter.[63] It also

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[60] *Ibid.*, p. 16. There will be more discussion of and comparison between representations of Little Nell and Helen in the third section of this chapter.

[61] See also Linda H. Peterson, *Traditions of Victorian Women's Autobiography: The Poetics and Politics of Life Writing* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), p. 50. Analyzing Tonna's *Personal Recollections*, Peterson observes: '[W]hen Tonna speaks of writing, it is as a "literary avocation" (221) or, in biblical terms, as a "free-will offering" (136). The amateurism implied by "avocation" is deliberate, a refusal of professional status consonant with her belief that her writing should be of a "homely simplicity" (179)…. The use of "free-will offering" reinforces Tonna's conception of women's writing … as one of many possible forms of Christian service'.

[62] Steven E Jones, *Against Technology: From Luddites to Neo-Luddism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 77.

[63] For more discussion of the correlation between Romanticism and Luddism, see Jones, p. 77.

reveals nostalgia for the rural past and laments the devastation of the natural environment after industrialization. Parallel to the Romantic idealization of childhood, we can also discern the Romantic idealization of nature, with the mill acting as a threatening symbol. The difference is that Victorian representation of the factory, as illustrated by *Helen Fleetwood*, is not a vague nightmare but a real construction, laid bare with the wretched workers inside. William Safire notices that, in 'dark Satanic mills', intellectuals and Romantic poets saw 'the human spirit being stifled'.[64] Thus, worries about the spiritual harm (the dehumanizing or mechanizing effect) are deeply ingrained in Romantic reflections on industrialization, while more realistic and detailed depictions are presented by the Victorians. The relatively vague, nightmarish and phantom-like presentation of a Romantic Satanic mill now appears as a real and concrete Victorian establishment, even thrown open to enable people to examine all the evils inside.

Therefore, the retrieval of the early rural childhood innocence of the subsequently victimized factory girl, as a preliminary setting for the Victorian writer and reader, functions indispensably to return them to a cultural root of mutual reminiscence before the impact of industrialization and to recover a pure and simple spiritual nature. This incorporates both a Romantic ideal and Christian belief. Inevitably the novel connects with readers' personal memories of childhood. For the readers collectively, the pastoral settings evoke impressions of a peaceful agricultural past, in sharp contrast to the turbulent industrial society. Therefore, all these sudden changes for the worse – from an innocent childhood to a victimized one, and from an idyllic rural life to an endangered urban one – articulate the 'evils' of the factory towns. The narrator plants the readers firmly in a shared cultural origin; the rural childhood becomes a concrete mental image that they can all identify with. Then they are prepared to confront contemporary industrial injustices. Why must the girl perish in the factory? Where does society go

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[64] *Ibid.*

wrong? In a calm and collected frame of mind, they embark on a quest for answers as the novel unfolds and seek remedies for society.

II. Realistic Representations of the Evangelical Factory Girl

i. Original Sin in Association with Natural Innocence

Helen Fleetwood is sixteen when working in the factory (p. 18). After entering it, she is no longer able to bask in the 'Sun of Righteousness', yet she still owns 'his power' 'within her bosom' (p. 2). Now she uses this power to confront the factory's evils. Turning from the romantic rural life to realistic urban existence, Tonna brings Nature's positive influence into the characterization of the factory girl. Helen's childhood innocence, her bright and untainted nature, forms an important spiritual power retained within the factory girl. Thus she is likened to the righteous sun, seeing rights and wrongs clearly, acting in a just way, and healing mental injuries to herself and others. Furthermore, the sun is directly compared to and connected with God when Helen says to her eleven-year-old sister Mary, remembering their 'pleasant' former days when they herded cows together, that 'the Lord shines upon' their 'own sea-shore' (p. 86). In this way, Nature and Christianity are combined into one.[65] Hearing this remark Mary says to herself, 'I think Helen has turned preacher'; 'I never heard her talk in this way before' (p. 86).[66] It is thus the factory experience that makes Helen recognize and integrate natural and Christian ideals.[67] In the contaminating factory environment, she strives to

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[65] The background of this idea may also reflect the influence of Wordsworthian Nature-worship and pantheism. See Robert M. Ryan, 'Ch. Three: Nature's Priest', in *The Romantic Reformation: Religious Politics in English Literature, 1789-1824* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 80-118.

[66] For further discussion of Helen as a female preacher, see Christine L. Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 143. Discussing Helen's later testimony in court, Krueger notes that 'thanks to her reliance on God, Helen enjoys a radical independence'. Krueger comments: 'In order for social discourse to represent the gender- and class-based causes of such injustice, Tonna implies, the woman preacher's voice must play a role. … Helen's demeanor, language, and rhetorical strategy unambiguously identify her with the tradition of the woman preacher, and her witness is genuinely heard.'

[67] Refer also to Boyd Hilton's discussion of Evangelicalism and 'natural religion' in *The Age of Atonement*, p. 19. Here Hilton indicates that 'during the first half of the nineteenth century', 'religion was assumed to be natural or inductive' and thus '"feeling" was felt to be important'. Hilton quotes from Tomas Bernard's *Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor* (1802) that 'Natural religion is … written in the feelings of the human heart'. Hilton also notes the early nineteenth-century religious ideas of 'the

keep her character as clean and clear as she once did on that 'clear autumnal morning' with 'sunrise at sea' (p. 1) and to further exert her influence.

The initial impression and portrayal of Helen living in the countryside echoes the installation of 'the child as the symbol of primal innocence in danger of corruption by the world', as developed by 'the cult of Romantic sensibility'.[68] Later the concept of Original Sin is emphasized when Helen is working in the factory. In the novelistic narration, the natural rejuvenating power and the debilitating original evil work as two competing forces within a human being, influenced and induced by external environments. When innate purity corresponds to and rejoices at Nature's purity and brightness, innate sin is subdued, as shown in the opening of the novel. But when innate sin is encouraged by social corruption, Helen provides an example of one who struggles to maintain innate purity and to wield its purifying power.

Yet the novel contains no denial of the seed of evil in the original being of the child. The narrator signals it when she says in the novel's opening sentence that the 'sun's first bright gleam' makes 'a thrill of gladness at [the beholder's] heart – an involuntary … ascription of praise to the Creator, who has so framed him that all his innate perverseness cannot bar the entrance of that thrill' (p. 1). The description shows human beings' natural affection for the sun, which, in words having religious overtones, penetrates the 'innate perverseness' – signalling the original evil – of human beings. Notions of Original Sin and industrial evil then converge in the novel.

The concept of Original Sin is certainly important for Tonna as an Evangelical writer. As the Bible declares, 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned'.[69] Moreover, in her *Personal Recollections* Tonna reviews the various types of Christianity practised in her own spiritual education – 'Socinianism, Popery, Antinomianism and Irvingism' –

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indispensable importance of a child-like spirit' and 'child-like simplicity of mind'.

[68] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 5.

[69] Romans 5:12-21, King James Version.

and has 'found them all wanting'.[70] She then lists three reasons why these versions of Christianity are 'at once opposed to Scripture, and tainted with papal leaven', and why Evangelical Anglicanism is the only true Christianity.[71] The first and foremost of these three reasons is that Anglicanism alone understands not only that people are born into original sin, but also that original sin is not washed away by baptism.[72]

Bearing the Original Sin, children are inclined to misbehaviour; keeping themselves morally upright in contaminating environments thus becomes difficult. As Article IX 'Of Original or Birth Sin' in *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England* expounds the doctrine:[73]

> Original Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam*; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil…. (p. 26)

In the novel, upon taking factory work, Mary says 'stoutly': 'as for sin, I won't go into any sinful company' (p. 78). Then Mr South retorts, 'You can't keep out of it, my poor child' (p. 78). Thereupon Helen firmly and 'modestly' replies, 'If it is in the way of duty, sir', 'and we pray to the Lord to watch over us, and enable us to watch also, we shall be kept from evil ways, though we may be forced to have evil companions' (p. 78). With this statement Helen expresses a kind of will power, a sense of 'self-discipline' and 'self-improvement' (as encouraged by fervent Evangelical believers) with which to connect oneself to God, so as to remain prudent and untainted.[74] Helen's proclamation also reflects Evangelical views on work and poverty. Helen values the importance of fulfilling her duty, whether doing rural work or factory work. Elisabeth Jay in her study of Evangelicalism points out that 'poverty' is never elevated as a 'virtue' by Evangelicals;

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[70] Charlotte Elizabeth [Tonna], *Personal Recollections* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1848), p. 305.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] Church of England, Edward Welchman, Formerly Archdeacon of Cardigan, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of The Church of England, Confirmed by Texts of Holy Scripture, and Testimonies of the Primitive Fathers: To Which Are Added, Short Notes, in Illustration of the Articles,* new edn. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1842). Subsequent references are to this edition.
[74] Brown, *The Captured World,* p. 41.

rather they 'held in curious tension the ideas of a station in life appointed by God and the Puritan work ethic'.[75] Therefore Evangelicals are encouraged to accept their secular posts and fulfil their duties – 'to see in secular success, a sign of God's favour, and, in misery or squalor, a sign of punishment for superstition or irreligion'.[76] This explains why Helen performs her work, whatever it is. In addition, Helen states her belief in a 'modest' way, which conforms to traditions of feminine virtue; this aspect will enter into further discussion in the fourth chapter.

In *Helen Fleetwood*, to some extent, the two seemingly contradictory features of innate childhood innocence and innate evil exist side by side, though maybe not always in a consistent and harmonious way. The child contains a naturally pure state and simultaneously a seed of evil, which may be prevented from coming to vicious fruition if checked by constant vigilance. This echoes a contemporary Christian emphasis on 'the importance of obedience and of moral indoctrination from an early age'.[77] The original innocence and the innate evil act like bright and dark forces which may contend with each other within oneself. In effect, the tension between and the vicissitudes of the two aspects of human nature impact on the changing personalities of the factory children in the novel. In Romantic conceptualizations of childhood innocence, the child's 'natural purity and sensibility and innate tendencies to virtue' may be stained with later social pollution, which causes 'deviation from virtue'.[78] In Tonna's novel we see Helen's younger sister, Mary, gradually going astray, acquiring a bad temper and engaging in vicious behaviour after her entry into the factory. But if the child fortifies his or her own innocent nature, as Helen does in the face of the corruption in factories, he or she can wield good moral influence and offer spiritual guidance to others, children and adults alike. Thus, the conflict between Christian moral instruction (as an important part of

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[75] Elisabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 179.
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] Brown, p. 5.
[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

nineteenth-century childhood education) and the Romantic idea of natural childhood innocence, as Brown notes, may not be necessary.[79] Instead, Christian doctrine may aid in keeping the child's purity intact, protecting childhood innocence from external evil contamination or inner degeneration. In this way, there may be reconciliation between original innocence and original sin.

There is a further significant factor in Tonna's representation of the coexistence of childhood innocence and original sin. While the Christian idea affirms innate evil and thus asks for inner submission and cultivation, as seen in earlier religious tracts like those of Hannah More, written for lower-class people, the Romantic cult points to external social evils as the source of corruption. This tendency helps to justify Tonna's efforts as she lashes out at the factory system and supports legislation and other social remedies. Yet one thing worth noticing is that, although the Romantic ideal presents the innocent child as akin to Nature and in danger of social pollution, in the Romantic era the focus is on the idealization of children as ethereal emblems of natural innocence; it is in the Victorian period that people confront and deal with the other side of the Romantic dream – the cruel social reality. The shift of focus to the dark side also reflects the rise and development of Victorian social realism. Realistic depictions of the conditions of factory children thus occupy a great deal of the novel. Therefore, Tonna not only pays strong attention to the inner spiritual states of factory children, but also makes a great effort to expose realistic social problems, so as to find remedies for both. In other words, 'obedience, fortitude, patience and acceptance of the "rightness" of a lowly position in society' is still important in a conservative Evangelical sense.[80] But for Tonna, it is also important for middle- and upper-class Christians to shoulder their social responsibilities and actively improve social conditions.[81] In the conclusion to the novel Helen's adoptive brother Willy, once a factory boy, says:

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 41
[81] For discussion of Victorian Evangelicals who 'advocated material and not just moral support for the poor', see also Hilton, pp. 91-98. Here Hilton includes Richard Oastler and Tonna in his discussion.

'[W]e should pray for those men who are trying to make the factory children less miserable; … for I can't help thinking God must be angry with them while they take so much care about their own little ones, and have no thought, no feeling for the perishing children of the poor!' (p. 390)

This remark, although made within a religious discourse, clearly asks the general reader to add to the collective social effort to improve the lot of working-class children. It thus marks a crucial difference between Tonna's novel and the religious tract 'The Lancashire Collier Girl' (1795) by her predecessor and fellow Evangelical writer Hannah More. Further discussion of More's and Tonna's fiction is offered in the third part of this section.

ii. The Factory Girl as the Embodiment of Practical Evangelicalism

This is an appropriate point at which to examine more closely Evangelical attitudes towards social realities, as presented in Victorian novels. Elisabeth Jay, in discussing the relation between Evangelicalism and the nineteenth-century novel, contrasts the English Victorian novel with Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, suggesting that 'Tolstoy mistrusted any religion that taught men to look to the Redemption, to salvation by faith rather than by the fruit of human works'.[82] By contrast, Jay notes that traditional Evangelical belief relies on faith rather than works, religious redemption and salvation after death rather than realistic efforts at social improvement in the secular world.[83] Jay continues by commenting on the Evangelical influences on Victorian novelists, who 'apparently accepted uncritically the Evangelical tendency to portray its faith as resulting in temporal as well as spiritual salvation'.[84] In her perspective, Elizabeth Gaskell or George Eliot both 'looked to individual conversion rather than to legal reform to realize their humanitarian dreams'.[85] Thus, Jay contends, through considerable absorption of 'the Evangelical ethic' there exists in the Victorian novels 'an ultimately irreconcilable

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[82] Jay, *The Religion of the Heart*, p. 178.
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] *Ibid.*
[85] *Ibid.*

humanitarian ethic'.[86] However, this viewpoint contradicts Tonna's Evangelical activism in promoting both spiritual redemption and legislative reform. Nevertheless, Jay suggests a different possibility, namely that, with 'practical Evangelical piety', the 'Evangelical must live in the world, where Providence had placed him, but must not be of the world. It required a mature and sensitive intelligence to keep these ideas in permanent synthesis'.[87] If we situate this concept in the context of *Helen Fleetwood*, we can view Helen as the embodiment of practical Evangelical piety, who practises transcendental Evangelical faith in her daily life of factory work. In representing the Evangelical factory girl and presenting the evils of the factory system, Tonna manages to place in parallel and even to coordinate individual spiritual salvation with practical social reform.

When working in the factory, Helen comes to realize that '[t]here are corruptions in every human heart, hidden even from the knowledge of its possessor, until particular circumstances are so ordered as to bring them forth to his view' (p. 46). Factory life thus brings forth an occasion for Helen to see and deal with inner evil. With her Evangelical faith, she considers the factory post to be God's arrangement to provide her with a lesson. She is going to 'learn the value of an humbling dispensation' and to understand its necessity (p. 40). It is in the 'startling process' of enduring suffering that she prays 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults' and learns to humble herself as a Christian (p. 41). Through incidents of factory life, Helen brings the Evangelical spirit into full swing within realistic practice. Thus in this way, not only is the Evangelical spirit embodied in the factory girl, but the factory conditions are also detailed in the author's realistic descriptions.

Helen, as a factory girl now, is depicted as 'a girl of delicate mind', which is often found, as the narrator states, 'in our sequestered villages' (p. 41). This endows Helen

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[86] *Ibid.*
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

with a conventional female characteristic – delicacy – which is linked to rural life, reminiscent of Romantic nostalgia, as previously discussed. The narrator emphasizes her religious cultivation, writing that she has been reared 'under the guardianship of watchful prudence, more especially when influenced by early, simple piety' (p. 41). In addition, the narrator makes a curious remark about 'class': 'There was nothing in her character unusually elevated above the class to which she belonged' (p. 41). This seems to reveal the writer's Evangelical belief that a religious spirit will transcend class boundaries. However, in probing into the formation of Helen's character and personality, the narrator suggests that it is owed to 'the scenery of her native place' – once again a reminder of her rural childhood (p. 41). In a sentimental touch, it is further associated with 'infant bereavement, of parental sorrow' and thus connects Helen with 'pathos' and the value of family (p. 41). This passage ascribes conventional feminine domestic and religious virtues, in association with cultural tradition, to the factory girl in the contemporary industrial society.

Yet back in her everyday reality of factory life, when feeling 'helpless' and 'with poignancy the rudeness of various kinds to which she was, for the first time in her life, subjected', such as 'the coarse language uttered in her hearing', she strives 'by talking in a louder and more cheerful tone than usual to withdraw the attention of her little party from many things unfit to hear' (p. 42). Witnessing her indefatigable insistence upon keeping herself unpolluted by outer circumstances, a working man is struck by her conduct, swears she is 'an honest, good girl' (p. 42) and is inspired and motivated to restrain 'his comrades from further profanity and rude jesting' (p. 42). This incident demonstrates that Helen not only protects her own virtue but further reclaims her fellow workers from immorality. Helen proves to have more power within herself to fight against immorality than More's protagonist of 'The Lancashire Collier Girl', who is protected by the abundant kindness of workers around her – this earlier tale to be further

analyzed below.[88] But Helen is equally submissive and grateful in a religious sense. Besieged with evils, she 'secretly thanked the Giver of all wisdom for guiding her to such a course' (p. 42).

iii. From Hannah More's Conservative Evangelicalism to Tonna's Evangelical Activism: The Collier Girl Mary versus the Factory Girl Helen

To better understand Tonna's advancement and innovation as an Evangelical fiction writer portraying working-class children, we can compare Tonna to her predecessor Hannah More. Hannah More is an Evangelical moralist writer of 'fiction for propagandist purposes'.[89] Her tale 'The Lancashire Collier Girl: A True Story' (1795), published as a *Cheap Repository Tract*, is 'one of the few tracts to include descriptions of an industrial environment'.[90] It was, as Kovačević states, 'an effective piece of fictionalized propaganda', adapted from 'an anonymous contribution to *The Gentleman's Magazine*' of the same title.[91]

Though both More and Tonna are Evangelical, one major difference between them is that Tonna is pre-Millenarian, while More is post-Millenarian. This distinction results in their different attitudes towards industrialization; More is relatively optimistic, whereas Tonna holds an apocalyptic view. According to Boyd Hilton, More supported the view that 'poverty was "ordained" by providence and that the poor were especially favoured in God's sight'.[92] Moderate Evangelicals of her type were comparatively 'anxious to be privately charitable but uninterested in fundamental social and economic reforms'.[93] This is evident from the plot of More's tale, in which the working-class girl

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[88] 'The Lancashire Collier Girl' is reprinted in Kovačević, *Fact into Fiction*, pp. 169-75. Subsequent references are to this edition. Further evidence will be provided.

[89] Kovačević, p. 147. The writer states that Hannah More initiated the 'important literary trend' of 'fiction for propagandist purposes', 'and such was her grasp on the psychology of her reading public that she could provide fiction as exactly suited to their tastes as to their pockets. She was a past master of the art of holding their attention while unobtrusively conveying her message.'

[90] Kovačević, p. 151, p. 155.

[91] Kovačević, pp.151- 53.

[92] Hilton, p. 207.

[93] Hilton, p. 208.

protagonist is saved by an individual charitable deed. By contrast, Tonna's stories of 'urban despair and degradation' were intended to act as 'powerful propaganda for the Ten Hours Movement'.[94] Her pre-millenarian views also make the imaginary factory town 'M' in her novel a stronghold of Satan. In discussing *Helen Fleetwood*, Gallagher indicates that the male character Richard 'must be defeated by the antiprovidential determinism of M'.[95] This signals the fundamental distinction between the evil town in Tonna's novel and the blessed habitat depicted by More, which is intended to bring God's 'grace and redemption'.[96] This point thus testifies to the decisive difference between Tonna's pre- and More's post-millenarian visions. Moreover, in the 1830s and 1840s when Tonna published her industrial fiction, the factory system and the Ten Hours Movement were powerfully progressing, which was not the case when More wrote her tract in the late eighteenth century. The varied religious beliefs and socio-political situations thus give rise to the differences between More's and Tonna's representations of working-class girls and between the implied messages of their stories.

More's story to some extent 'shows the social changes caused by the process of industrialisation' and 'is one of the first fictionalized accounts to record this change'.[97] Nevertheless, it does not intend to promote social reform as Tonna's novel does. More's fiction was created at a time when general attitudes towards 'the problems of the poor' were changing, and a 'new interest in the improvement of the position of common labourers' developed.[98] As Kovačević points out, after one particular 'simple and pathetic' story portraying the life of a collier girl, Betty, was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1795, a reader in his response to it 'reveals a strong concern for the condition of the girl, and a desire that she should improve her lot in life'.[99] This shows the 'growth of a new sensibility', or an increase in 'sentiment', which 'came to

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[94] Hilton, p. 97.
[95] Gallagher, p. 48.
[96] Hilton, p. 381.
[97] Kovačević, p. 154.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 152.
[99] *Ibid.*

inspire the reformist movement of the next generation'.[100] Thus, Tonna's fiction moves forward from earlier portrayals of working-class children that aimed to encourage working-class piety and contentment with life, and undertakes the further exposure and deeper investigation of working-class children's conditions, the aim now being legislative reform. Indeed, 'The Lancashire Collier Girl' is 'characteristic in its insistence on the "contentment" of the poor'.[101] It was considered, from a conservative perspective, that the poor 'had to be *satisfied'*, rather than 'merely *reconciled* to their condition', so that society would be 'safe enough'.[102] Hence More would 'have it that the families of the colliers lead "cheerful" and "contented" lives'.[103] However, in Tonna's story, whilst the titular girl Helen still submits to her secular position, the sufferings of the children and the distress of the working-class families are no longer concealed or neglected but depicted and discussed in great detail. The writer now appeals to middle-class awareness and urges collective reform. From More to Tonna, the religious spirit still persists in the representation of the eponymous heroine, but in Tonna's narration there is a direct confrontation with industrial problems and a new call for social remedies.

The different fictional-didactic goals of Tonna and More result in differences of focus in their representations of working-class girls. Unlike the happy and contented working-class family presented in More's tale, that working-class people 'led miserable lives was obvious' to Tonna and is also evident in her novel.[104] From another perspective, going beyond religious didacticism, 'to present the public with the facts of the situation' and to move middle-class readers through the novel are among Tonna's primary goals.[105] However, More's aim, as proclaimed in the conclusion of her tale, is firstly to ask working-class people to be 'self-reliant' (which is also a frequent

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[100] *Ibid.*
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[102] *Ibid.*
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] Kovačević, p. 303.
[105] *Ibid.*

underlying point in the *Cheap Repository Tracts*). [106] More also asks the middle and upper classes to 'find peculiar modesty and merit, even in the most exposed situations', of some poor people (p. 174). In other words, Tonna urges a collective cross-class rescue through legislative reform, but More only asks for conservative fulfilment of individual duty. While More insists strongly on 'the spirit of self-help',[107] Tonna further appeals to national reformation of the system. More's demand for simple working-class contentment is reflected in her flat and stereotypical characters.[108] However, Tonna's investigation into the complicated social problem leads to more careful depictions of character development in relation to working conditions.

Via a comparison and analysis of Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* and More's 'The Lancashire Collier Girl', I hope to show how the representation of the factory girl Helen constitutes a more realistic portrayal of unfaltering Evangelical faith in detrimental situations. Tonna proclaims that 'not an incident shall be coined' to 'aid the cause which we avowedly embrace' – that is, factory reform (p. 45). She draws on the 'horror' aroused by 'the bare, every-day reality' of factories, which clashes with the idea of 'our free and happy England' (p. 45). Tonna states that 'she will set forth nothing but what has been stated on oath' to confirm the validity of her descriptions; yet to keep her Evangelical writing sacred and untainted, she also insists that she will not 'lift the veil that piety and modesty would draw over the hidden atrocities of this diabolical child-market' (p. 45). Tonna strives to present the facts of the mill-turned-into 'pandemonium' without 'sully[ing]' the pages (p. 45). She proposes to 'exhibit the tree', and

> analyze the soil where it grows, the elements that nourish, the hands that culture it, and the fruit which it ultimately produces; but the secret circulation of its poisonous sap [she] will not so bare as to contaminate the mind of a youthful reader, or to harrow up the soul of any one. (p. 46)

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[106] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[107] *Ibid.*, p. 154.
[108] Patricia Demers, *The World of Hannah More* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), p. 110.

With this metaphor Tonna shows her attitude and approach towards representing the 'tree', which alludes to the natural status of human life and reminds readers of the last name of the working-class family of Mrs Green, Helen's adoptive grandmother. In this way, Tonna preserves spiritual purity, as incarnated in the factory girl Helen, in the contagious working environment.

More's tale depicts a secure and congenial working environment where, in an apparently idealized image, upright miners respect the collier girl Mary. The male workers help her with physical labour and even protect her purity, which contradicts the contemporary view of working-class people. In More's depiction, the miners with whom Mary works are:

> a race of men rough indeed, but highly *useful to the community*, of whom I am also happy to say that they have the character of being *honest* and *faithful*, as well as remarkably *courageous*, and that they have given moreover some striking instances of their *readiness to receive religious instruction*, when offered to them. (p. 172, my own emphasis)

Thus More presents a very positive image of the working class. She raises their profile, highlights important virtues from an Evangelical viewpoint, and establishes role models for working-class people to follow. With these people, 'Mary's virtue was safe' (p. 172). What is more, Mary even receives 'protection as well as assistance' from the miners – 'her fatigue having been sometimes lessened, through their lending her a helping hand, with great feeling and kindness' (p.172). The exclusion of danger and even the addition of kindness to her working conditions mark a distinct difference from Helen's predicament.

Helen, in contrast, faces constant endangerment from the speech and behaviour of other workers. Her virtue is definitely not safe in the factory, unless she succeeds in guarding it with firm Evangelical faith. In this way Tonna compounds a female ideal with an actual social victim. Helen is both a virtuous religious girl and a suffering girl in need of public rescue. To protect her life from threats, the narrator appeals for

amelioration of hazardous working conditions. While still presenting a factory girl of good virtue, Tonna thus puts Helen in a dangerous, polluting, yet more realistic working environment. In this way, Tonna further demonstrates the strength of the Evangelical spirit in the age of industrial turmoil and simultaneously places emphasis on the need for material improvement of the factory system.

What More shrinks from, but Tonna deals with, is actually the concern over sensual desire in the mixed sex working environment. Evangelical protestant believers especially identify original sin with concupiscence. Article IX 'Of Original or Birth Sin' of *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England* points to lust in its explanation of the Original Sin:

> … the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, Φρονεμα σαρκος, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin. (p. 26)

As Kovačević indicates, 'sexual promiscuity' was common, according to Parliamentary reports, but 'as a pious Evangelical Hannah More could not even hint at such depravity'.[109] However, among other immoralities 'concupiscence and lust' are the dangers that particularly threaten Helen.

Helen acts as a guiding character amidst the wrongdoings of the adult world. Rather than being protected, in the challenging conditions she is exposed to Helen strives not only to keep her purity but also to lead her family and friends. She exhibits a religious spirit and rational action. For instance, Helen finds in the factory numerous cases of the 'wicked deceit' of falsifying children's ages to gain them eligibility for factory work, which causes early childhood deaths from consumption (p. 51);

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[109] Kovačević, p. 153.

astonished by the facts, she soon regains calmness and decides to inform Mrs Green in a mature manner:

> 'I thought so, Granny: or I would never have been a tell-tale, to grieve you, and to expose these poor young people. They informed me that their sister Sarah, whom you were asking for, was made as they said, too good a bargain of; and that from early over-work in the mill, bad treatment, and other injuries – they did not say what – she is such an object that her mother kept her out of our sight. She is up stairs in a little loft, not likely to live long. All the others died of early consumption.' (p. 51)

Upon hearing it, Mrs Green is 'petrified', and, among 'other horrors', terrified that her daughter (Sarah's mother) has been 'guilty of the most systematic falsehood' (p. 52). Helen resumes:

> 'From all they said, I feared it was likely you might be deceived into making some agreement that you would afterwards be sorry for: therefore I tell you now. I think, Granny, you had better take us to the gentleman you have the letter to, rather than a stranger.' Then, seeing the deep grief and alarm depicted on *her friend'*s countenance, she added, 'You know, all Christ's people must bear a cross; and really we have had none to bear, we have been so happy and prosperous. So it is reasonable to expect it now. Besides, is it not a mercy to be forewarned?' (p. 52, my emphasis)

Helen shows a righteous attitude in her reaction to the deceitful conduct of factory workers. Then, she offers her guardian Mrs Green reasonable analysis, sensible advice, affectionate consolation, and religious counselling. When Helen's guardian is addressed as 'her friend', the passage also suggests that Helen is the equal, if not the superior, of the adults in spiritual and practical terms.

Yet after offering these remarks and receiving thanks from Mrs Green, Helen, 'smiling through tears' upon remembering herself once as 'a friendless child', expresses her happiness in repaying the kindness of her 'own dear Granny'. Here is revealed a conventional and sentimental girl's bond with her family.[110] Thus the girl is fluently represented in her multiple facets. The meticulous treatment of Helen – which fuses elements of social reality, religious piety, and culturally endorsed affection –

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[110] Discussion focused on femininity and domesticity will take place in the next chapter.

demonstrates Tonna's advancement in characterization.

In contrast to Tonna's detailed representation of the factory girl confronting injustices, More gives dull and monotonous religious instruction when describing Mary in 'trying circumstances' (p. 172), which merely indicate physical exhaustion. In a didactic manner More solemnly states:

> I trust … that when sincere Christians come, as Mary now did, into very trying circumstances, they may hope … to experience still … the peculiar blessing of Heaven; I do not expect that such persons will be free from pain, poverty, or sickness, or other worldly evils, … but then I believe that these very afflictions will be made the means of increasing their trust in God, and prove in the end (I mean either here or hereafter) to have been entirely designed for their good. (pp. 172-73)

Thus More asks her readers to 'view things in this religious and most comforting light' (p. 173), out of a wish to 'relieve the pain of [her] reader' (p. 170). This seems an indifferent religious lesson, and even a severe lecture on unfailing faith in God, devoid of any lively or affectionate illustration. In this way, Mary remains a flat character.

Calling Helen 'the poor harassed girl' in the novel (p. 349) is the narrator's way of hinting at sexual immorality in the factories. Helen 'admitted that she was unceasingly harassed' (p. 143). Her adoptive sister Mary 'betrayed the fact of having, in spite of all admonitory cautions, embroiled herself to a great extent' in bribery among the gang of factory girls (p. 143). There is always a concern for propriety, and about moral or spiritual degradation related to the female sex. Wanda F. Neff, in her historical and literary study of Victorian working women, states that 'the popular opinion of the factory girl was that her morals were very bad'.[111] 'Employment outside the home' was considered to lead to her 'degradation'.[112] The social investigation providing 'the basis for this literary gloom about factory girls' is 'to be found in the report of Sadler's committee and other parliamentary papers' and contemporary industrial publications

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[111] Wanda F. Neff, *Victorian Working Women: An Historical and Literary Study of Women in British Industries and Professions 1832-1850* (1929), repr. with a new bibliographical note (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1966), p. 53.
[112] *Ibid.*

such as Peter Gaskell's *The Manufacturing Population of England* (1833).[113] A solid proof of factory workers' 'general looseness in morals' is 'the number of illegitimate children born to girls in certain mills' (P.P., 1831-32, Vol. XV, pp. 99-100).[114] Similar attitudes are described by Patricia E. Johnson, who indicates that, in the Victorian era, 'any woman working outside the home, especially in a mixed-sex work-place, was in danger of being classified as a prostitute'.[115] Thus female miners and factory workers, like the fictional Mary and Helen, fall into this category. However, in an effort to break the stereotype and preserve working-class female purity, Tonna as well as More present as their heroines feminine working-class girls of sound virtue. Working-class femininity and domesticity, as well as the representations of and cultural associations with undomestic working women, will be further investigated and discussed in the next chapter.

In *Helen Fleetwood*, Mrs Johnson, a working-class neighbour of the Green family, says, 'To be sure, not one girl in fifty keeps her character clean' (p. 78). This remark reflects the common opinion and status of a factory girl as morally tainted and fallen. Mrs Johnson continues, 'to be sure there isn't a small tradesman's wife would not think herself disgraced to take a factory girl for a servant' (p. 78). This point reflects the difficult situation in which Mary finds herself in More's tale. Nevertheless, after confirming popular images of factory girls, Mrs Johnson presents different viewpoints and exceptional examples. She remarks, 'What so many do doesn't look as bad as if only a few did it. I have seen some that turned out decently after all. My nephew married one [factory girl], and she did very well' (p. 78).

Tonna, like More to some extent, wants to preserve a morally intact and virtuous working-class heroine.[116] Thus, contrary to public ideas about fallen factory girls, and

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[113] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[114] *Ibid*.
[115] Patricia E. Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social-Problem Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, *2001),* p. 5.
[116] Kovačević describes Tonna as 'a worthy disciple of Hannah More'. Tonna wrote about More in the

distinct from the 'blaspheming profligates' in the factory (p. 349), Helen is established as a holy, saint-like feminine figure possessing noble virtues. She is the cross-class embodiment of a middle-class projection of an ideal female character, despite her work in the contaminating lower-class environment. There is an uneasy combination of bright and dim aspects in the girl. On the one hand, she is constructed as pure and superior, guiding people of all ranks and classes on a spiritual path; on the other hand, she is presented as a suffering social victim, a threatened factory girl in need of public attention and systemic reform. The working-class girl struggles in her everyday life to guard her spiritual purity. Upon this figure, 'imperatives of right feminine conduct and class conduct converge'.[117] Tonna is striving to sculpt a heroine who transcends class boundaries. In this way, she also provides a link between working-class and middle-class sisterhood. Making the lower-class girl a hybrid of social victimization and religious saintliness, she appeals to her middle- and upper-class readers (who are 'simple home-keeping Englishwomen ignorant of the changes the Industrial Revolution had brought', in Neff's description).[118] This different kind of cross-class female relationship envisaged by Tonna will be examined on a larger scale in the next chapter.

The two fictional working-class girl heroines, Mary in More's tale and Helen in Tonna's novel, come to very different ends, which hint at the two Evangelical writers' different intended readerships and social purposes. Despite More's positive description of working in the mine, Mary still needs 'rescuing' from this situation and placement in domestic service instead. By the end of More's tale, the collier girl Mary is accepted by a gentleman to work as a servant to his family. Mary can be accepted into an upper-class

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1840s, 'reminding the public of Miss More's great merit in creating a new method of approach to the uneducated'. See Kovačević, *Fact into Fiction*, p. 155, note 1; Tonna, *Recollections* (1849), p. 210.

[117] For Hannah More's scrutiny of the conduct of the lower-class girl, see Lynne Vallone, *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 74. Refer to the same book for further discussion and analysis of traditional English feminine conduct and feminine values – 'for example, charity, physical decorum, silence, Christian meekness, domesticity, and chastity' – along with explorations of 'complex cultural and textual ideologies manifest in the literature, institutions and figures of girlhood' (p. 5).

[118] Neff, p. 25.

family because of her good character – her 'decency', 'propriety', 'diligence', and 'a very remarkable modest, humble and contented spirit' – despite her previous work in the seemingly polluting environment of the mine (p. 174). More's conclusion once again accentuates her emphasis on self-help, asking her working-class readers to model themselves upon Mary, 'to learn and labour truly to get their own living, and to do their duty in that state of life, into which it hath pleased God to call them' (p. 175). In contrast, Helen dies by the end of Tonna's novel, though retaining her good character and fulfilling her duty. Helen's death will be further examined in the next section. Although she was as virtuous as Mary, in this later text Helen cannot be rescued by an individual benign act; rather, the writer hopes for the overall reform of the factory system.

III. Death of the Factory Girl and Female Sentimentalist Reform Narrative

'There are not many in this room who will live to be twenty!'
– *Helen Fleetwood*, p. 326

Poignant and truthful, emotive and realistic, the sentence above shows a discursive trait of the industrial novel, evoking sentiment by social facts. There are several pathetic deaths of factory children in the novel *Helen Fleetwood*. In this section I would like to include textual analysis of the death of the factory girl Helen, in comparison with the famously (or notoriously) sentimental death of Little Nell in Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41), as well as with the deaths of working-class children in women writers' sentimental poetry, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'The Cry of the Children' (1843). In this context I shall discuss Tonna's appropriation of sentimental morality and the girl child's deathbed scene, with its literary and social significance.

Depictions of child deaths in *Helen Fleetwood* are, first of all, religious. They are rendered according to an Evangelical logic of life, death, or after-life. For example, on her deathbed surrounded by family, poor Sarah mentions the religious benefit she

experiences and makes her brother Charles repent his previous misbehaviour (pp. 376-78). There is also an appropriation of the sentimental deathbed scene, popular in contemporary Victorian literature, of which Dickens's Little Nell is the most prominent example. However, the difference between Dickens's and Tonna's sentimental girl deaths lies in that the former, by softening the reality, seeks to induce personal calmness while the latter, by projecting poignancy, aims at promoting social reform. Tonna's version does not romanticize the death or embellish it with a rosy aura; instead, it is usually realistic and even blunt, so as to present the 'fact' of the cruel social reality to its readers for reformist purposes.

To further analyze Tonna's representation of the death of the factory girl, we can juxtapose passages on Helen's death from *Helen Fleetwood* with those on Little Nell's death from Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*. As *The Old Curiosity Shop* was serialized in *Master Humphrey's Clock* from April 1840 to November 1841, overlapping with the serialization of *Helen Fleetwood* in *The Christian Lady's Magazine* between September 1839 and March 1841, the comparison offers a good reference point for understanding the contemporary literary style and taste. Depictions of and reactions to the life and death of Little Nell, which was popular and influential at that time, may reflect and reveal the general social and cultural atmosphere, an atmosphere inhabited also by *Helen Fleetwood*, published in book form in 1841. Additionally, both the novels' main characters, Helen Fleetwood and Nell Trent, are lower-class orphan girls who are infallibly virtuous. This apparent similarity of the two heroines in social status and prominent feminine virtue further accentuates the importance of inquiring into the different presentations and effects of their deaths. Both Nell and Helen appear to be incarnations of ideal girls thrust into an industrial world. The different representations of their deaths signify the different effects and purposes they achieve: the angelic death of Little Nell offers a personal escape, or comfort over losing a child, while the realistic presentation of Helen's death has a reformist role within the Ten Hours Campaign.

To take Helen's death first, when talking about Helen perishing in the mill, her adoptive brother Richard, older by one year, exclaims, 'Helen must be an angel to stand it all, and to get better and better, while the rest go to ruin' (p. 331). But the younger brother James responds, 'She is no angel, … but a poor sinful mortal; yet a dear child of God, living by faith, and ripening for glory' (p. 331). Helen admits and accepts in a composed manner, 'Death is at work in me' (p. 339). Even when asked by the doctor, 'Would you like to die in the factory, Helen, surrounded by the profane who mock your hope?' Helen contentedly replies, 'Indeed, sir, if such were God's will I should like it exceedingly' (p. 371). In preparation for and progression towards Helen's death, the common consolatory practice of likening the dying child to an angel, associated with the image of heaven above, is denied here. It is cruel to force the reader to face the fact that she is only a brutalized human being. The significance of Christian belief is emphasized, not in wishing for a carefree afterlife, but in undergoing trials with a firm will and faith while alive.

Both secular and sacred aspects of child mortality in factories are included here in the novel. In discussing the distressing lot of the factory children both as God's providence and as the fault of the factory system, James says to his brother,

> 'I cannot deny that the factory system is one of the worst and cruellest things ever invented to pamper the rich at the expense of the poor. …; but even in the factory, Richard, God's own people are yet his care: he makes all things still work together for good to them. I say, and I don't say it in anger, but in grief, that the mill-work has shortened Helen's life – it has murdered her,' he added, crimsoning with emotion: 'and that will be declared at the judgment-seat, before all the angels of God, not only as to our Helen, but thousands and thousands more….' (p. 343)

Here Tonna exemplifies a kind of social Evangelicalism. James does point out the injustice of the factory system, and emotions certainly work here in his rather rational discussion. He does not display excessive social or political anger, but in comparatively moderate grief accepts the currently unjust social situation. However, he looks forward to the final judgement in heaven before God, whom he trusts to punish those unjustly

enriched by infringement on others' living rights and interests. Apparently it is not important here to distinguish social from sacred law, as long as justice is ultimately served. The doctor further points out that promoting legislative reform is a social duty for 'every Christian', as they should all shoulder and share the responsibility of lessening the pain of their fellow countrymen: including society's thousands of factory children in similarly jeopardized situations.

> 'We must take the laws as we find them, our duty is to submit, for the Lord's sake, to every ordinance of man; but when we see a legal enactment stretched to the extend of oppressing the poor, it becomes the duty of every Christian to assist his afflicted fellow-subjects in bearing a burden that we cannot remove from their shoulders.' (p. 359)

This provides an explicit rationale for an Evangelical activism, which fuels social correction with Christian faith.

The eventual description of Helen's death appears simple, realistic, unexaggerated and unromantic.

> Helen did not die in the mill: but her last seizure took place there, and so alarmed her companions as to give a great effect to the few words she was enabled to speak to them before being carried home. Short, but severe, were her sufferings; and in a few days a rough shell enclosed her wasted remains, which were laid beside those of Sarah Wright. (p. 387)

Although emotionally affecting and poignant, the narration makes Helen's death seem as common as any real death taking place from time to time in an English mill.

Now if we turn to Dickens's depiction of the death of Little Nell, we can see the different effects produced by these two representations of the deaths of working-class girls. The death of Little Nell, unlike that of Helen, is romanticized with pervasive sentimentality. Nell's death is portrayed as beautiful and serene, still and quiet, removed from suffering as if in painless sleep. She is compared to an angel who does not belong to the earth but to heaven.

> She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature free from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death.

Her couch was dressed with here and there some winter berries and green leaves, gathered in a spot she had been used to favour. 'When I die, put near me something that has loved the light, and had the sky above it always.' Those were her words.

She was dead. Dear, gentle, patient, noble Nell was dead. Her little bird – a poor slight thing the pressure of a finger would have crushed – was stirring nimbly in its cage; and the strong heart of its child mistress was mute and motionless for ever.

Where were the traces of her early cares, her sufferings, and fatigues? All gone. Sorrow was dead indeed in her, but peace and perfect happiness were born; imaged in her tranquil beauty and profound repose.

And still her former self lay there, unaltered, in this change. Yes. The old fireside had smiled upon that same sweet face; it had passed, like a dream, through haunts of misery and care; at the door of the poor schoolmaster on the summer evening, before the furnace fire upon the cold wet night at the still bedside of the dying boy, there had been the same mild lovely look. So shall we know the angels in their majesty, after death.[119]

On the death of Little Nell a blissful and everlasting repose is born, but after the death of the factory girl Helen a turbulent aspiration to give factory children justice and better their lives by earthly means is sustained and strengthened.

The passages concerning Helen's death mix religious and social discourses, with realistic descriptions and a restrained use of sentimental elements. The focus is shifted between the individual factory girl, Helen, and the huge group of suffering and dying factory children of which she is a representative. The tone is subtly adjusted between the rational and the emotional, at the same time interweaving secular and sacred themes. Yet the emphasis is definitely upon the earthly issues – the abuse of the factory children. Even after their death, what is desired is not that their pain will be erased but that the injustice they suffer will be proclaimed before the angels. They are not expected to turn into angels as is Little Nell, since in that case the deceased children would seem to be completely detached from earthly tortures and to enter a blessed world. Little Nell's suffering is described as ending with her death and disappearing altogether; the

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[119] Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (London: Chapman and Hall, Strand, 1841), pp. 209-10.

exploited factory children, however, retain their earthly status and await final justice after death.

The different relation between the angels and the dying girls is significant here. Laurence Lerner, in discussing the Dickensian child, points out that '[w]hen the child dies … it is represented above all as an angel'.[120] Nell is compared to an angel, whereas in *Helen Fleetwood* the comparison of Helen to an angel is denied by James, who says, 'She is no angel, … but a poor sinful mortal; yet a dear child of God, living by faith, and ripening for glory ' (p. 331). In Dickens's exquisite and refined imagery, the aim of the death scene is primarily to achieve pathos, to lead to calmness, to alleviate the pain of people who may suffer from the loss of their own loved children. But in *Helen Fleetwood*, the description of Helen's death exemplifies a Christian acceptance of the real death without embellishment or avoidance of its cruelty, leading rather towards social reform that can introduce practical measures to enhance working-class children's lives.

In a soothing manner, readers of *The Old Curiosity Shop* are carried away from the painful reality of Little Nell's death and come to forgive and forget the distress that has occurred in her life. The atmosphere of her deathbed scene is presented as 'tranquil', 'calm'; a site of lasting peace. The narrator dwells on beautiful images of heavenly happiness rather than on the stark reality of earthly suffering, eliding actual loss and pain. Not only does the narrator of *Helen Fleetwood* refrain from describing a picturesque death; she even makes readers face the unadorned fact that the wasted remains of the dead factory girl will be wrapped in a 'rough shell' and then laid beside those of another dead girl. Tonna's novel returns her readers' attention to the everyday reality of the society they live in.

Furthermore, Nell's wish to have her remains laid under the 'light' below the 'sky'

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[120] Laurence Lerner, *Angels and Absences: Child Deaths in the Nineteenth Century* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1997), p. 82.

reminds us of Helen's endearments to the sun in the countryside (as stated in the opening of the novel and discussed at the beginning of the chapter), with an allusion to a Romantic innocent childhood in nature and an idyllic pre-industrial rural past. It suggests a combined nostalgia for one's happy childhood and the nation's joyful past, encompassing both personal and collective levels. As Catherine Robson observes, Nell bears a 'symbolic relationship with both the historic past and the childhoods of old men'.[121] I argue that Helen bears a similar symbolic relationship to the nation's rural past and nostalgically recalled childhood innocence, both of which the industrial reality jeopardizes. Robson contends that this relational burden denies Nell 'any kind of autonomous existence', and that her 'ultimate death simply makes literal what has been metaphorically true' throughout the novel – the heroine is continually associated with 'stasis' by the novelist.[122] However, in *Helen Fleetwood*, the heroine keeps moving forward in her life's journey with vigour and unyielding perseverance (literally from the carefree rural livelihood to oppressive factory labour and finally to death) and makes an impact with her death by driving the readers on to promote social reform in their own journeys through life. If Nell represents a static quality in her inner characteristics and outer movement, Helen, I would argue, secures an inner stability in her firm faith but shows an outer adaptability that enables her to deal with changing circumstances.

To gain a more comprehensive insight into Nell's stillness and Helen's progression, it is worth examining the difference between the way Nell and Helen lead their respective virtuous lives towards the end. Nell's purity is considered 'frail',[123] but Helen's purity proves sturdy as she endures and confronts industrial evils. While Nell, at death, is restored to an 'idyllic village setting',[124] Helen's death occurs right after she undergoes her last seizure in the factory. It is almost as if Nell's purity needs to be

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[121] Catherine Robson, *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentlemen* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 88.

[122] *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

[123] Lerner, *Angels and Absences,* p. 95.

[124] *Ibid.*

protected and preserved in natural and rural conditions; Helen, in contrast, never returns to the countryside once she has set off on her irreversible journey. As Lerner comments, *The Old Curiosity Shop* is a rather 'static' novel, and its 'emotional effect derives from iconographic, pictorial elements and from the accumulating, pervasive atmosphere that lead us to think about death almost all through the book'.[125] Thus in a sense Nell never really moves on from her starting point in the novel; but *Helen Fleetwood* displays a dynamic, changing process. At both personal and collective levels, Helen leads the reader on a journey from the idyllic rural past of England to the industrial present, from the Romantic ideal of innocent natural childhood to the Victorian reality of suffering factory children, and to an eventual death representing undisguised social cruelty. Her progression in life is fuelled with will and vitality, and her death puts a sharp and distinct end to mortal life.

Contrastingly, as Lerner notes, in *The Old Curiosity Shop* Nell's life is 'suffused with the idea of death', and her death 'is perceived as not very different from life' in the sense that death is compared to sleep.[126] Lerner explains that the 'long-standing Christian assertion (not dead but sleeping)' is 'used to soften and sentimentalize the harshness'.[127] To some extent the confusion between the angel-like living girl and the sleeping-like dead girl shrouds the girl's life and death in dreamy cloudiness, and the blurring effect blunts the feelings of loss and pain; this tendency is avoided in *Helen Fleetwood*. Tonna, despite her novel's immersion in Christianity, specifically distinguishes the factory girl from an angel and shows her dead body to be located in a grave rather than in a bed associated with sleeping, so that readers are given a clear and distinct perception of the life and death of the mortal girl. This imagery of Little Nell's peaceful death-like slumber and sleep-like death is delineated in the illustrations by Samuel Williams in the first chapter and by George Cattermole in chapter 71 as a

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[125] *Ibid.*
[126] *Ibid.*
[127] *Ibid.*

closing tableau (Figures 4.1, 4.2). The scenes show 'the child in her gentle slumber' and 'at rest', as indicated in the captions. As Robson comments, 'there are no significant variations' in the renditions of these two artists 'because Dickens's descriptions are practically identical'.[128] Robson suggests that Dickens narrates the journey of Nell 'toward the bed of death from the equally still bed of sleep' by employing 'numerous strategies to convince us that Nell's apparent movement is an illusion'.[129] Lerner also comments on the first and then the final illustrations:

> Nell herself looks angelic enough to be thought dead rather than asleep, unless we say that her arms lying on top of her body is a sign of life – in contrast with her arms at her side, clutching a book (presumably a Bible) when she is finally dead, in Cattermole's picture for the conclusion of the story – this time surrounded only by uplifting, not at all by grotesque, images. 'No sleep so beautiful and calm,' says the text, 'so free from traces of pain, so fair to look upon.'[130]

There is an idealization of the cruel reality of death and possibly also an attempt to mitigate the pain of participation in life, which creates a reluctance and ultimate refusal to provide a realistic description of death. But Tonna does not share either this intention or this manner of representation. The description of Helen's death is succinct and direct, while her journey through life is kept moving from one stage to another, marked by a continuous active engagement with life and work, as well as by the tangible influence she exerts upon her family and friends (as discussed in sections I and II).

I would argue that Dickens's flat characterization of Little Nell as well as the static narration of her life, in contrast to the dynamics embodied in Tonna's descriptions of Helen, reveals a kind of middle-class male writer's difficulty with the direct handling and realistic description of a working-class girl. Despite Nell's being working-class, the disconnection and separation between the ideal of femininity and her real working conditions causes Dickens to divide these two aspects so that her development stagnates.

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[128] Robson, p. 88.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] Lerner, after p. 113.

In comparison, what Tonna achieves in her dynamic characterization and evolution of the factory girl is not only that she merges Romantic idealization with Victorian realism but also that the curiously hybrid girl exemplifies middle-class feminine virtue while performing working-class labour, in a complete cross-class integration of cultural ideal and factual existence. To elucidate Dickens's difficulty in closely connecting these two aspects, Robson examines the pair of girl characters in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Nell and the Marchioness. She points out that 'in this novel death comes to the ideal girl, not to the chronically malnourished, repeatedly abused, persistently deprived child of the working class'.[131] The division into the ideal girl and the suffering working-class girl, or the construction of Nell and the Marchioness as 'mutually complementary characters', shows a writer unable to combine 'class-specific traits' in one embodiment.[132] As Dickens's readership is middle-class, poor Nell is also portrayed as culturally belonging to the middle class.[133] Although, as Robson suggests, Nell's working-class social status, or the 'working-class mobility' transferred to Nell by Dickens, lays the heroine open to threats, still Dickens keeps this paradoxical figuration as a symbolic representative of ideal and static girlhood, in order to guarantee middle-class readers' 'sense of security'.[134] Although Dickens constructs Nell's ideality as seemingly 'independent of class constraints', he still evades more sensitive issues by detaching the working-class body (considered erotic) from association with middle-class spirituality.[135] However, as we have discussed in section II, Tonna manages to join the two and does not shun issues of sexual morality within her social Evangelicalism.

In *Helen Fleetwood,* what Dickens presents through doubled characters – Nell and the Marchioness – is merged into one: the main character Helen. Her superior spirituality and suffering labouring physicality are combined in one presence, both

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[131] Robson, p. 85.
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] Lerner, p. 121.
[134] Robson, p. 91.
[135] *Ibid.*

secular and holy. It is an undaunted integration of a middle-class ideal girl with working-class reality, and finally with a socially cruel death. The figure of Helen Fleetwood thus leads the way, bearing the burden of the historical past, meeting the cultural expectations of girlhood, being confronted with Victorian industrial conditions, and finally arriving at a new position – a further reinforcement of cross-class identification, which propels middle-class efforts towards legislative reform to improve working-class conditions. It has a symbolic social meaning, while constituting a particular literary representation. As Robson also notes, Dickens shrouds 'the working-class girl's body' from the reader's view, while 'the physicality of the ideal girl is the object of intense narrative interest'.[136] It seems 'dangerous' and 'problematic' to bring 'the ideal into conjunction with the abused'.[137] But Tonna makes the middle-class ideal and the working-class reality of the girl collaborate and cohere. Therefore, Dickens's presentation, though showing sympathy for the working-class girls, sticks more within the implicit and insurmountable class borders, so as to maintain an ideal and clearly defined social order. Contrastingly, Tonna blurs the line between the proper feminine and the abused kind, in an attempt to seek a new resolution that directly reconciles the two and reaches a new balance for the purpose of mutual understanding and cooperation. Helen is thus a venturesome dual embodiment of the conjointly ideal and abused girl. She encompasses both traditions and moves ahead into new territory. Her death thus goes beyond the quiet and static sentiments of personal consolation to welcome deeper and more fluid cross-class interaction for the sake of a mobile and collaborative social endeavour. While the working-class characters (such as Mrs Green and Richard Green) in the novel exert themselves to understand the factory system and to improve the lot of their fellows, within the dialogues between the working-class brothers Richard and Willy after Helen's death (as already discussed) the narrator also

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[136] Robson, p. 85.
[137] Robson, p. 75.

upholds the efforts of middle-class social reformers and invites contributions from the readers. With this new vision, the text brings a fresh kinetic energy, a revolutionary power, to gender and class roles.

The death of Little Nell is widely acknowledged as a classic example of Victorian sentimentality. [138] We might then ask: is Tonna's presentation of Helen's death sentimental or not? Or, what is Tonna's strategy in appropriating the sentimental child death? To answer these questions, we can begin with a glimpse at the changing reception of Victorian sentimentality and its gradual ascription to femininity. In Lerner's interpretation of Victorian literary sentimentality and pathos, the sentimentalized depictions of child deaths offer significant consolation for the writer and readers as parents, in relation to the deaths of their own children. However, as the cultural climate gradually shifts, excessively sentimental elements in literature gradually become condemned as vulgar expression of emotion, or despised as feminine traits in later Victorian times. Oscar Wilde's famous remark on *The Old Curiosity Shop,* 'one must have a heart of stone to read the death of little Nell without laughing', marks the increasing trend in literary criticism towards negative assessment of sentimentality.[139] Yet, the link between sentimentality and women to some extent encourages and degrades both. Lerner points out the 'woman power' in 'rehabilitating sentimentality'.[140] Sentimentality and women writers in this way come to license and empower each other; women may thus justify and liberate themselves by writing sentimental texts. However, in so doing, women writers may also need to work through certain limitations and fight against the negative associations of so-called feminine sentiments.

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[138] See Nicola Bown, 'Introduction: Crying Over Little Nell', *Rethinking Victorian Sentimentality*, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century,* 4 (2007) <www.19.bbk.ac.uk>. On child death and sentimentality, see Lerner, p. 183.

[139] Emma Mason, 'Feeling Dickensian Feeling', *Rethinking Victorian Sentimentality*, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007) <www.19.bbk.ac.uk>. Lerner, p. 180.

[140] Lerner, p. 189. Lerner uses the American novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as his example. Although Lerner does not talk about Tonna, what can be offered here as a supplementary reference is the fact that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*'s author Harriet Beecher Stowe was also an admirer of Tonna. As Penny Brown observes, 'Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote an enthusiastic introduction to the American three-volume edition of [Tonna's] works published in 1844-45'. See *The Captured World*, p. 75.

To better understand Tonna's appropriation of sentimental elements in literature, we can take a look at an extract from the sentimental poem 'The Little English Factory Girl' which concludes the novel *Helen Fleetwood*.[141] Echoing the novel's plot, here the girl protagonist of the poem expects to 'work and die' in the factory like her brother (p. 331). Then she is described as taking 'her last hour's labor' and weakly lying by the frame (p. 332). When the engine finally ceases,

> She fell, and rose no more,
> Till by her comrades carried,
> She reached her father's door.
>
> At night, with tortured feeling,
> He watched his speechless child,
> While, close beside her kneeling,
> She knew him not, nor smiled!
> Again the factory's ringing,
> Her last perception tried;
> When from her straw-bed springing,
> 'T'is time!' she said – and died. (p. 332)

The factory girl in the poem, like Helen in the novel, does not die in the dreamy atmosphere of the idyllic countryside as Little Nell does. Instead, their final seizure takes place during their factory work. The girl in this sentimental poem dies after uttering a panic-stricken cry upon hearing the factory bell's morning summons. As numerous Victorian sentimental child death descriptions dwell on affections deriving from the parent-child bond, here also the poem conveys parental emotional poignancy as the father faces the death of his own child. The unsmiling factory girl's death differs significantly from the serene sleep-like death of little Nell; what is more heart-rending, the girl seems to die of a nightmare phantasm of factory labour, her last gesture at the threshold between life and death being an attempt to rise for work.

There are similar sentimental or emotional elements surrounding Helen's death. For

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[141] This poem is not included in the 1841 edition but in a later edition (New York: Charles Scribner, 1852). References for this poem are exclusively to this edition.

example, when Helen reveals her determination to work in the factory, even being willing to die in the factory if it is God's providence, the widow Mrs Green cries 'anxiously', 'Don't say so, my child!' (p. 371). As Little Nell's grandfather can hardly accept the death of his granddaughter, here the bonds between family members are also strong and cause emotional struggle when others face the loss of the beloved little one. However, in *Helen Fleetwood* the narration moves on to a new emphasis. After Helen's death, her eight-year-old brother Willy, originally working in the factory, follows the eldest seventeen-year-old brother Richard to go back to the country and again enjoy the natural sunshine and rural work. They reflect upon Helen's death, upon their good luck in returning to field work, and upon those children who are still suffering from factory work:

> [Willy,] ' … I am sure it was the wickedness of the place, more than the work, that killed Helen.'
> [Richard,] 'But the work was enough to do it.'
> 'Yes, … I don't know if a grown person can stand it better, indeed…. I can't bear to think,' added [Willy] the boy, while *tears* stole down his cheeks, 'I can't bear to think that now, when I am basking in the beautiful sunshine, leaning on your kind knee, and having you watch that I don't even overtire myself at any pleasant work, my poor little companions are going on, on, on, in their weary slavery, the whirligig wheels always whirring, and not a pleasant sight nor a cheerful sound to make a variety....'
> [Richard,] 'It does cheer me, Willy, to think you are out of it all.'
>
> (pp. 389-90, my emphasis)

Obviously there are sentimental elements present when we see tears trickling down Willy's cheek. Yet here the sentimentality is less about affections within the family and more to do with sympathy for other living beings in society; it extends and directs personal sentiments to a social purpose. The sentimental power here will move readers to deliver those real-life suffering factory children from their plight.

Nicola Bown argues that it is because of 'its sentimentality' that Nell's death makes readers 'feel properly not only in relation to fictitious objects but also towards real

ones'.[142] Following this idea, the function of the 'tears of sentimentality' is to enable readers to 'feel more powerfully and more appropriately the emotions which we should feel in response to terrible events such as the death of a child'.[143] Therefore, while weeping over the fictional deaths of children, the readers may be better able to release their feelings over the deaths of real children. Yet what I would like to argue here is that, with her depictions of the deaths of factory children, Tonna wants to make her readers feel sorrow not just about child deaths, but specifically about children who die of and suffer from factory labour. For her social purpose, Tonna's sentimentality aims at encouraging cross-class affections to facilitate legislative factory reform. When Dickens idealizes Little Nell by erasing her working-class features and highlighting her angelic middle-class virtues at her death, the sentiments of middle-class readers are more easily linked with their own personal loss of children. However, when the working-class situation is realistically identified in the factory girls' deaths, Tonna sets out to make her middle-class readers shed sentimental tears for the sufferings of factory children in particular.

In contrast with Dickens's death of Little Nell, we have confirmed the keen social purpose revealed in Tonna's appropriation of sentimentality, which is epitomized in her strongly social-status-specific descriptions of the deaths of factory children. A useful comparison can be made with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'The Cry of the Children' (1843), which may have been inspired by Tonna. [144] Besides discussing its sentimentality, I would also like to offer this poem as an epitome of the three facets of childhood – rural life, factory labour, early death – as presented in the novel *Helen Fleetwood* and discussed in the three sections of this chapter.

Apparently overflowing with sentimental elements, this poem is literally full of

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[142] Bown, 'Introduction: Crying Over Little Nell'*,* p. 6.
[143] *Ibid.,* p. 7.
[144] Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 75. This poem is included in *Romantic Women Poets 1788-1848, Volume II*, ed. by Andrew Ashfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 248-51. Subsequent references are to this edition.

working children's tears from beginning to end. It opens with the narrator's call for the readers to listen to the working children's ceaseless weeping. It ends with the accusation that the country is making industrial progress by trampling upon children's bleeding hearts, and a warning that 'the child's sob in the silence curses deeper/ Than the strong man in his wrath!' (p. 251, ll. 23-24). The central image of the children is as a group of bitterly tearful child victims in need of help. As to contemporary reception of the poem, Robson confirms that '"The Cry of the Children" created a popular sensation and was held to be instrumental in preparing the climate of opinion for the passage of the Factory Act of 1844'.[145]

The first stanza, in which the poet mentions the 'young lambs' 'bleating in the meadows' as well as other natural scenes of 'young birds' 'chirping' and 'flowers' 'blowing' in 'the country of the free', deploys Christian and Romantic notions of childhood innocence (p. 248, ll. 5-8, 12). Beginning with the springtime when 'all young creation celebrates its existence', Barrett Browning's poem shares the assumption that 'the working girl has been unnaturally severed from the pleasures of childhood and countryside that should be her due'.[146] It reminds us of the pastoral life Helen leads at the beginning of the novel before entering the factory. As Robson points out, the poem alludes to a Wordsworthian Romantic ideal of childhood. 'Working within a literary form, Barrett makes creative use of opportunities' and draws 'on the reader's knowledge of her poem's literary heritage'.[147] Robson indicates Barrett's deliberate link between her factory children poem and Wordsworth's poem on childhood, *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*:

> To a Victorian audience, the poem that, above all others, told the 'truth' about the state of childhood was Wordsworth's *Ode.* By presenting her poem as the modern-day version of the beloved *Ode*, Barrett insists that contemporary industrial life's exploitation of children is a perversion of the natural and sacred

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[145] Robson, p. 66.
[146] Robson, p. 65.
[147] Robson, p. 66.

order, and that it is her class's responsibility to restore that lost relationship between the child, God, and Nature.[148]

Thus, this poem situates its exposure of the cruelty of child labour against a Christian Romantic backdrop of ideal natural childhood innocence.

With close textual analysis, Robson demonstrates Barrett's 'deliberate allusions to the *Ode*'; Barrett contrasts the young suffering children of industrial England with 'Wordsworth's concept of our gradual movement from childhood's joy to the suffering of adulthood'.[149] The children are suddenly 'benighted' in their early years, deprived of early happiness.[150] The contrasting imagery of light and darkness, nature and factory, God's glory and human evil, coheres with the shift from rural to industrial life in *Helen Fleetwood*. The 'perversion of the Wordsworthian order', or the damaged bond between childhood and nature, as Robson further explains, causes misery not only to children, but also to adults and the nation alike.[151] As Robson indicates, 'England's ability to conceptualize its rural heritage through the innocence of its children is imperiled'.[152] The sufferings of the children, who are offspring of the nation, thus 'not only indicts the country's present and threaten its future, but cuts off all access to the richness of the past'.[153] The grief and loss is not only on a personal level but also on a collective or national level, both for the jeopardized childhood and the endangered rural life. The same effect is achieved by *Helen Fleetwood*.

Such carefree rural childhood is unattainable for the working children, whose life in the factory removes them from nature; but even more than this the noisy machinery seems also to disconnect them from God. The factory children 'have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory/ Which is brighter than the sun' (p. 251, ll. 3-4). The comparison of glorious God to the bright sun, and the factory to darkness, also echoes

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[148] *Ibid.*
[149] *Ibid.*
[150] Robson, p. 67.
[151] *Ibid.*
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] Robson, p. 68.

the imagery in *Helen Fleetwood*. The noise in the factory here appears so unnatural and unbearable that it seems to obstruct communication between God and the children. The factory children cry,

> 'Who is God that He should hear us,
> While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
> When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
> Pass unhearing – at least, answer not a word;
> And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
>   Strangers speaking at the door:
> Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
>   Hears our weeping any more? (p. 250, ll. 17-24)

The cry of children seems ignored by God and people, so the narrator demands her readers' attention. When these working children are called 'orphans of the earthly love and heavenly', the poet appeals to her readers to take on their earthly duty of caring for the exploited children (p. 251, l. 11). The passage parallels Tonna's depictions of Helen working in the factory alongside children who are ignorant of religion.

The children here are described as accepting early death as a common and even a good thing, for it happens frequently and takes children away from earthly pain.

> 'True,' say the young children, 'it may happen
>   That we die before our time:
> Little Alice died last year – the grave is shapen
>   Like a snowball, in the rime. (p. 248, ll. 37-40)

Here the death of the factory girl Alice is depicted as being as sweet as 'sleep', which cannot be broken (p. 248, l. 43). In the children's imagination, the dead girl is going to enjoy 'merry' moments with a growing 'smile' (p. 249, ll. 4-5). She can finally rest in stillness, without work and without tears. The factory children thus conclude, 'It is good when it happens… [t]hat we die before our time!' (p. 249, ll. 7-8). This shares with the representation of the girl's death in Dickens's Little Nell a Christian romanticization of child death, which is described as painless sleep. Here it is a situation envied by other working children, expressed in their unrealistically genteel middle-class diction.

Robson glosses Barrett's creation as presenting 'curiously hybrid' working-class

children.[154] Because the poet intends to arouse sympathy in her middle-class readers rather than alienate it, she 'must tread a fine line' in her 'constrained' depiction.[155] Thus factory children are portrayed as using middle-class diction, instead of regional working-class expressions, to avoid realistic depiction of some unacceptable traits of the suffering children. In their representation and idealization of working-class children, to some extent Barrett and Dickens meet a similar difficulty and use a similar solution. However, in Tonna's novel we see more variously and realistically depicted degraded factory children. Tonna presents the terrifyingly immoral and irreligious factory children as a threatening social problem, like the 'wicked' factory girl Phoebe Wright (to be further discussed in the next chapter), but she also offers a possibility of redemption and correction. For example, by her deathbed, the factory girl Sarah makes her brother Charles apologize for his previous wrong-doings before Helen (pp. 376-78). Although both Barrett and Tonna present factory children as social victims, Tonna includes the more thorny representation of detested working-class children, something evaded by Barrett.

We have already touched upon the issue of sentimentality; then is there any difference between the sentimentality of Dickens's Little Nell, Barrett's 'The Cry of the Children', and Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*? Many critics have argued that sentimentality is a crucial factor in Dickens.[156] As for female writers of social reform narratives, such as Tonna and Barrett, it is also acknowledged that sentimental literature becomes their tool because of its connection with femininity. Drawing on Jane Tompkins's argument that 'the sentimental social reform novel was one genre in which a woman could speak with a voice of power and authority', Mary Lenard further confirms that Tonna 'exemplifies this insight'.[157] As already mentioned, by the mid-nineteenth century sentimentality was

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[154] Robson, p. 68.

[155] *Ibid.*

[156] See Sally Ledger, '"Don't be so melodramatic!" Dickens and the Affective Mode', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 4 (2007) <www.19.bbk.ac.uk>.

[157] Mary Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell, and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (New York:

increasingly feminized and belittled. Sentimentality increasingly became more distinctively regarded as a female quality. To some extent, it was 'a good and positive thing, encouraged by the culture' to associate women with 'sentimental religious values, with sympathy, and with tender, compassionate feelings'.[158] This association, as Lenard comments, 'opened the doors for women to become involved in political and social issues, since women's greater access to these affective qualities made them ideal social reform writers'.[159] As Lenard notes, the development of female reform writing also responded to 'the growing physical separations between social classes', which 'made sentimentalist social values even more desirable'.[160] However, in 'literary culture', feminized sentimental qualities were increasingly disparaged.[161] Thus sentimental literature on the one hand justifies or empowers women writers, while at the same time lowering their status. Female sentimental social reform discourse was sometimes criticized as vulgar emotionalism. To differentiate between the sentimentality exemplified in Dickens's and the other two female writers' narratives, as least within the three texts examined above, is to argue that Dickens's Little Nell is realized with greater emotional reserve in order to offer consolation for personal bereavement, while the others serve the more highly political intention of spurring collective social reform. In the three cases, to arouse readers' 'feelings' is crucial to all.

Lenard argues that 'sentimentalist novels tried to effect change by influencing the hearts and the feelings of their readers, exploiting the "feminine" cultural value of feeling for political purposes'.[162] The 'political purpose' for Barrett and Tonna here is evident – the legislative factory reform promoted by the Ten Hours Movement. But for Dickens, such a purpose seems less apparent. Lenard does use *Helen Fleetwood* to support her argument, quoting the narrator's statement, 'I hope it may please God, before

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Peter Lang, 1999), p. 3.

[158] Lenard, *Preaching Pity*, p. 23.

[159] *Ibid.*

[160] *Ibid.*

[161] *Ibid.*

[162] Lenard, p. 46.

long, to rouse the feelings of our fellow countrymen on behalf of the poor children in these mills. If that was done, we should soon see a change for the better' (p. 298).[163] As Lenard further illustrates, 'the frequent deathbed scenes and portrayals of physical and emotional distress' in *Helen Fleetwood* were 'an integral part of [the Victorian] cultural work', which 'made emotion and feeling politically meaningful'.[164] Yet this argument is especially valid for the female sentimentalist social reform writers. It is probably also because, as Chapter Two has already indicated, writing (especially about children) is a vital channel or even a powerful tool enabling women to get involved and have an influence on society, that women writers seem especially eager to effect social or political reform through their discourses. Thus these women writers in particular use 'their culturally assigned religions and emotional "powers" to enact social change through their writing'.[165]

Furthermore, female sentimentalist writers manifest special concern for female-related issues and appeal to female readers. As Lenard notes, Tonna provides an example of 'female influence in *Helen Fleetwood* in a particularly political form, as an impetus towards legislative factory reform':[166]

> Now suppose a lady … looking upon her own children and thinking what she would feel if they were situated like the wretched little ones in the factories … don't you think these ladies would use their influence over their own husbands, fathers, brothers and friends, to make it a point with the candidate they vote for, that he should support our cause in Parliament? (pp. 298-99)

This significant passage not only calls upon female personal and maternal feelings for their own children and then extends these feelings to working-class children; it also asks them to wield influence over their male family members and friends to promote legislative change. In this way Tonna channels feminine sympathy into social action. This further step is absent in Dickensian mourning and crying over the death of Little

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[163] *Ibid.*
[164] *Ibid.*
[165] Lenard, p. 4.
[166] Lenard, p. 65.

Nell.

It is time to look again at the child deaths in *Helen Fleetwood*, in comparison to the deaths of factory children in sentimental poetry and the death of Little Nell in Dickens's novel. In the sentimental reform poem, death is the only and ultimate rest available to factory children, who suffer from physical and mental torture in the factory and long for the final comfort. The aim of sentimentality here is to inspire readers' sympathy for the abused working-class children. Not only does Nell's death offer her a lasting sleep, it is also set in a domestic environment in the idyllic countryside. The working-class associations of the girl are completely obliterated in the final tableau. Dickens offers a serene and static, dreamy and picturesque tableau of a girl's death, which conforms to the ideal of middle-class girlhood and accords with a steady and ordered middle-class social outlook. To produce a soothing and calming effect, it invites readers' personal tears over the loss of such an angelic girl. It does not encourage possibly disturbing collective social movement. Contrastingly, the deaths of factory children in female sentimental poetry still bear a strong connection with working conditions, and the children are depicted as weak and helpless in order to elicit middle-class aid. Although Barrett embellishes her presentation of factory children by endowing them with elegant rather than vulgar speech, the aim is to soften the unbearably ugly situations of working children, so as to invite middle-class readers' affection in place of disgust. Yet both Dickens and Barrett represent children as passive; both return to a 'norm' of class division and ensure that their readers retain a sense of middle-class superiority and control. In Barrett's weakening portrayal, and in Dickens' emblematic idealization, there emerges a final confirmation of inviolate and stabilized social classes and gender roles.

However, Tonna's representations vary and mobilize conventional class portrayals and gender ideals. Throughout Tonna's novel, the factory girl Helen, although submissive, is presented as full of willpower even up to her death. In a sense her death from factory labour is not just a preordained doom, but a matter of her willing

acceptance and choice exercised with firm resolution. She suffers, but she actively responds with unwavering faith and stout will. She lives and dies as a combination of working-class social victim martyred by the factory system, and an alternative female icon – retaining the traditional feminine quality of religious virtue and turning it into active power; an ideal 'woman preacher' as Christine Krueger and Mary Lenard frame it.[167] Thus Tonna's representation transcends the boundaries of class and gender roles. The active female power derived from Tonna's comparatively radical Evangelical social activism is materialized in the representation of her working-class heroine, and eventually is passed on to her middle-class readers. It is a journey in which Helen shuttles between different conceptions of childhood, class, and gender – which are bound together by the sense of a transcendent Evangelical ideal. In an attempt to subvert class stereotypes and gender ideals, it achieves further interlocking intimacy and identification between females of different classes. It is also a continuing journey by the middle-class Evangelical woman writer, entering her literary world in which she moulds the working-class heroine with middle-class femininity, and finally motivates her middle-class female readers to actively influence men in the Ten Hours Movement. There is a chain reaction from the woman writer to the factory girl heroine, and then from the death of the girl to other Victorian women readers, with their subsequent efforts to better the lot of real-life working girls, regardless of differences in social status. While Dickens's Nell exhibits a soothing stability, or a static quality, throughout his novel, Tonna sues for change, for a transforming power, throughout the novel and beyond its pages. The reading of the factory girl's literary death gives rise to the influential power of middle-class women in urging the male towards social reform.

Barrett's poem invites social efforts to rescue the pitiable children, within safe class boundaries and a social order that evades working-class autonomy. Tonna ventures to

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[167] Christine Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Mary Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell, and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

empower her factory heroine with an ideal spiritual influence over the evils in the factory and then empowers her middle-class female readers with influence on men whom they urge to enact factory legislation. Tonna makes her factory heroine bridge the two nations, and her female readers connect the separate spheres. With Helen Fleetwood, we see the originally separated worlds meet and merge. It is not by masculine means in the concrete form of physical violence, like the factory lads' protest and attacks on the factory structure, as discussed in the second chapter; it is an intangible but all-pervasive female influence. Although Tonna still insists on 'the proper female sphere', in that domain women 'must act on one another's behalf'.[168] Her influence is based on characteristics culturally ascribed to women and steps forward to advance fresh conceptions and constructions of gender roles and class relationships. The factory girl Helen Fleetwood represents a hybrid of the virtuous feminine ideal, the working girl, and the social victim, providing inspiration for innovative heroines in the transitional Victorian period. Tonna here contrives a risky balancing and connecting point. It encourages cross-boundary mutual understanding, interaction, collaboration and integration for the benefit of the whole nation. It is an ongoing dynamic process of continual literary and social progress.

Conclusion

In terms of propaganda promoting factory reform, it is plausible to read Helen as a social victim who dies from an abominable working environment that can easily be improved by legislation. Yet, in terms of the gender and class status of the factory girl as a fictional character, Helen's death not only signals social injustice but also hints at the possible un-narratability of an adult working-class woman as a novelistic heroine in the early 1840s. In contrast, in the late eighteenth century, the fictional device for enabling the working-class girl to live on, as seen in More's tale, consists of taking her into a

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[168] Krueger, p. 145.

family and making her submit to the upper class. The hierarchical class relationship and the gendered spheres of home and work are eventually adhered to in More's fictional ending. Nevertheless, in Tonna's narrative, while Helen is denied the possibility of becoming a servant in a lady's house, it is unconceivable, un-narratable, that Helen might grow up and live on as a capable and independent factory woman – an outcome which could be seen, from a middle-class standpoint, as a threatened subversion of the social order. This chapter has thus examined how the angelic feminine ideal, the female preacher, and the abused social victim are combined in the eponymous heroine of *Helen Fleetwood*. How Tonna deals with the problematic nature and immoral aspects of working-class girls and women in *Helen Fleetwood* and in her next novel, *The Wrongs of Woman* (1843-44), is thus what the next chapter sets out to explore.

In terms of the mixed genres and experiments found in the industrial novel, in this chapter we have seen how Tonna appropriates Evangelical religious tract stories and female sentimental narratives in her industrial novel to appeal for legislative reform. The figure of the factory girl Helen Fleetwood also incorporates various elements ranging from Romantic childhood innocence, to the Evangelical idea of Original Sin, to the Victorian trope of the girl's death. Yet, with keen reformist purpose, Tonna further revises these cultural elements with poignant social awareness that not only highlights the issue of working-class morality in factories but also points at the cruel social fact of factory children perishing in large numbers.

Johnson, in her study of Victorian working-class women and social-problem fiction, analyzes the 'particularly incoherent and contradictory' imagery of the factory girl and the factory woman.[169] She defines the factory girl as 'a merely sentimental, pathetic victim, who becomes politically significant only if she inspires male action', and describes the image of 'degraded' working-class women as 'monstrous' and 'sexualized',

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[169] Johnson, *Hidden Hands*, p. 3.

serving as 'emblems of ultimate social chaos'.[170] Johnson also names 'three extreme images of the factory girl/woman': namely, 'victim', 'saint', and 'whore'.[171] These conflicting cultural iconographies of factory girls and women can supplement other difficulties in portraying a factory girl emerging into womanhood. We can see in Tonna's representation that Helen, as a factory girl, encompasses the roles of social victim and religious saint, but she avoids association with 'whore', an image more strongly connected with the stereotypical factory woman. Susan Zlotnick in her feminist reading of the novel also notes that Helen 'embodies middle-class femininity despite her humble origins', and that she is pictured as 'the very beau ideal of an English village maiden' (p. 367) and a 'modest, right-minded female' (p. 346), who is 'mortally wounded by the immorality of the mill'.[172] To keep her positive feminine traits, in the novel Helen can only remain a victimized yet virtuous factory girl in need of social help. However, focusing on the 'sexual harassment' that Helen 'articulate[s] and resist[s]' in the factory, Johnson indicates that Tonna thus 'defines this as a women's issue, rather than simply a class issue'. [173] Therefore, 'Tonna stresses a cross-class identification of women with women' that is 'rooted in the working-class woman's experience, not one that requires her to masquerade as middle-class woman'.[174] While Zlotnick stresses the middle-class female trait and Johnson stresses the working-class female experience, I would say that Helen indeed displays both. Both the working-class-specific factory experience that Tonna depicts and the cross-class feminine nature and religious power that Tonna believes in exist in the representation.

Helen thus dies on the threshold between girlhood and womanhood. Her death, which may bear the traditional religious meaning of expecting a better afterlife in heaven, a nostalgia for childhood innocence that entails the death of a symbolic child

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[170] *Ibid.*

[171] *Ibid.,* p. 41.

[172] Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution, Baltimore* (Md. and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 142.

[173] Johnson, *Hidden Hands,* pp. 56-57.

[174] *Ibid.*

too good for this world, and a literary and cultural allusion to sentimental child deathbed scenes, has a significant social meaning.[175] Tonna eventually connects the multi-faceted representation of the factory girl with her practical Evangelicalism; at the same time she turns people's gaze towards the cruel social reality – many factory children did indeed die in similar circumstances to Helen's, and the earthly lives of those remaining can actually be saved by the public. It takes collective social effort for the factory girl to live on safe and sound, and then enter womanhood.

Whether in industrial literature or in Victorian society, issues of female domesticity, and questions of working-class women's independence and middle-class women's social engagement, became more critical as the nineteenth century went on. As Neff comments, around 1850, 'a new sense of sex solidarity' developed 'with the growing consciousness of individuality which resulted from women's participation in the Industrial Revolution'.[176] Compounded with a new awareness of female gender roles, 'a social sympathy' also grew, possessing enough strength to engage in 'breaking down class barriers'.[177] As Neff further suggests, after the 1850s, a 'significant social phenomenon' is 'the emergence of middle-class women as workers'.[178] Distinct class borders are thus blurred. This social progression and literary transformation will be further looked into in the final chapter.

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[175] See Banerjee, *Through the Northern Gate*, Ch. Four: Child Death and the Novelist's Purpose. In discussing Victorian child deaths and novelists' purposes, Banerjee says that the fictional death of the child offers a 'point at which the Romantic ideal of the innocent child, and the Evangelical ideal of the saved child as a spiritual guide, reinforce each other' (p. 83). This point can also be witnessed in the scene of Helen's death.

[176] Neff, p. 250.
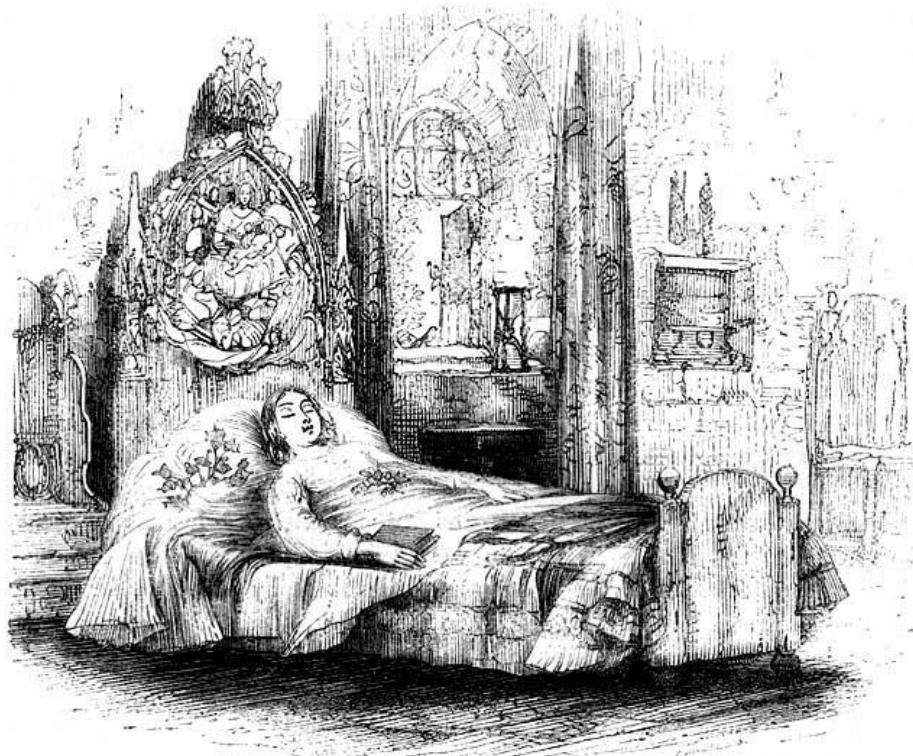
[177] *Ibid.*

[178] Neff, p. 253.

Figure 4.1

'The Child in Her Gentle Slumber', Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chapter 1.

Figure 4.2

'At Rest', Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, chapter 71.

Chapter Five
From Factory Girls to Working-Class Women:
Domesticity and Cross-Class Female Relationships

Introduction: the Shifting Focus from Factory Children to Working-Class Women

It has been widely noted that, in the 1830s and 1840s, there was a shift from a focus on factory children to a focus on working-class females as a cultural and socio-historical phenomenon. As illustrated by the regulatory amendments, the Factory Act of 1833 limited the working hours of children and adolescents under eighteen, following which that of 1844 further included women of all ages under the same rules.[1] Robert Gray, in his historic study of the factory question, also notes that the regulatory concern about child labour became more closely linked with the case of adult women by the early 1840s.[2] With a shift in the focus of the legislative process from factory children to women, there appears a corresponding change in literary focus away from the child protagonists of the 1830s and early 1840s to the working-class women in industrial fiction of the 1840s and 1850s.[3]

Viewing the correspondence between the changing literary emphasis and the social or legislative one, James Richard Simmons claims that it was because 'the ill-used factory child' became 'essentially a figure of the past' during the 1840s and 1850s that 'sympathetic writers turned to adults as the focus of their industrial novels'.[4] However,

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[1] For a summary of the factory acts and their beneficiaries in the 1830s and 1840s, see James Richard Simmons, 'Industrial and "Condition of England" Novels', in *A Companion to The Victorian Novel,* ed. by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 343-44. For further information on the factory legislation, see Samuel H. G. Kydd ('Alfred'), *The History of the Factory Movement* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1857). The Ten Hours Act, which Frances Trollope and Elizabeth Tonna wrote novels to support, passed in 1847 and benefitted not only children and women but also adult males (Simons, 'Industrial and "Condition of England" Novels', p. 344). For Tonna's contribution to the Ten Hours Campaign, see Ella Dzelzainis, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Pre-Millenarianism, and the Formation of Gender Ideology in the Ten Hours Campaign', *Victorian Literature and Culture,* 31 (2003), 181-89, in which Dzelzainis argues that Tonna played a more important role in the campaign than Kydd has acknowledged.
[2] Robert Q. Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 35.
[3] Scholars generally agree on this. See, for example, Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction: Social Discourse and Narrative Form, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 128-29. This will be further discussed later on.
[4] James Richard Simmons, 'Industrial and "Condition of England" Novels', in *A Companion to The*

Simmons's statement seems to reflect an oversimplified assumption that literature merely reflects social tendencies, and at the same time that the factory acts, once passed, were satisfactorily implemented and thereupon eliminated child labour problems in society. While the socio-historical research on the implementation of factory laws and eradication of labour problems is beyond the scope of this thesis, the significance of this underexplored literary transition is what this chapter sets out to probe.

In her influential study of industrial fiction, Catherine Gallagher confirms a growing concern about working females in literary representations of the 1840s.[5] Yet her description seems to suggest that the novelists merely copied the symbols of the suffering class constructed by the factory reformers, namely the helpless girl in the 1830s and then the helpless woman in the 1840s.[6] Gallagher also notes that these changing symbols, presented for reform purposes, from a weak girl to a weak woman, are illustrated in the difference between Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's two industrial novels: *Helen Fleetwood* (1839-41) and *The Wrongs of Woman* (1843-44), with the latter clearly delivering a message that 'like children, women must be protected from the long hours of labor demanded by unregulated factory production'.[7] However, what I want to point out is that Tonna does not passively receive and reproduce the social reformist rhetoric in her novels, but rather actively revises the representations of working-class females and even daringly introduces threatening and sexually immoral female figures (aggressive factory girls, fallen young women, and monstrous mothers) in her novels. This departure paves the way for more vigorous and subversive working-class heroines, or heroines of fluid sexuality and flexible class status, in later novels by women writers, such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Elizabeth

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Victorian Novel, ed. by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 344.

[5] Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, pp. 128-29.

[6] *Ibid.* This concept of Gallagher's seems to have been adopted by later literary scholars, such as Susan Zlotnick, whose study will be discussed later on. See Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 147-51.

[7] Gallagher, p. 129.

Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853).[8] That the heroines in these two novels are subversive in terms of

their gender roles is recognized by previous scholarship, as is Brontë's and Gaskell's

familiarity with Tonna's works.[9] Yet the subversive seeds dwelling in Tonna's

characterization are yet to be further explored.[10] This chapter will illuminate how the

interaction and fusion of the virtuous factory girl Helen with immoral Phoebe in Tonna's

Helen Fleetwood, along with the controversial working-class women in *The Wrongs of*

Women, anticipate later lower-class heroines that may integrate all.

Therefore, it is the continuity and change between the representations of factory

girls and those of working-class women from the 1830s into the 1840s, as well as the

conceptions underlying them and the significant contribution Tonna makes through

them, that I want to scrutinize in this chapter. Touching upon the changing emphasis

from children to women in the factory reform discourses, previous scholarship has

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[8] For Jane Eyre's ambiguous sexuality and class status, see Mary Poovey, 'The Anathematized Race: The Governess and *Jane Eyre*', in *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Stephen Regan (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 194-211.

[9] See Esther Godfrey, '*Jane Eyre*, from Governess to Girl Bride', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 45, no. 4 (2005), 853-71, in which Godfrey suggests that *Jane Eyre* proves 'unsettling in its use of gender identities and its associations of gender with class and age' (p. 853). She also confirms Brontë's familiarity with Tonna's works. What is at issue with *Jane Eyre* is actually also significant in regard to Tonna's novels.
For a reading of the subversive implications in *Ruth*, see Siv Jansson, '*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*: Rejecting the Angel's Influence', in *Women of Faith in Victorian Culture: Reassessing the Angel in the House*, ed. by Anne Hogan and Andrew Bradstock (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 31-47. In this chapter Jansson insightfully points out: 'Gaskell's radicalism lies, first, in her assertion of the right of "fallen women" to be given another chance, and second, and more significantly, in presenting a woman who is both angelic and sinful, who is the embodiment of the perfection of influence while lacking the sexual purity that the image demands' (p. 45); in other words, Gaskell confronts her readers 'with such subversive images of women who abandon their angelic place yet retain their angelic role' (pp. 45-46). The literary genealogy between Tonna and Gaskell has been acknowledged by many scholars of the industrial fiction, or of the nineteenth-century literature and culture, that this thesis engages with. See, for example, Monica Correa Fryckstedt, *The Early Industrial Novel: Mary Barton and Its Predecessors* (Manchester: University Library, 1980); Mary Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell, and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

[10] For further studies related to Victorian women writers, subversive heroines, rewriting of the gender signs, and the woman question, see Judith Lowder Newton, *Women, Power, and Subversion: Social Strategies in British Fiction, 1778-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981); Constance D. Harsh, *Subversive Heroines: Feminist Resolutions of Social Crisis in the Condition-of-England Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Patricia Ingham, *The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1996); Nicola Diane Thompson, *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also Martha Vicinus ed., *Suffer and Be Still; Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); Martha Vicinus ed., *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977); Julia Swindells, *Victorian Writing and Working Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

noticed a Victorian tendency to link children with women, as well as the problem of making the working-class female the representative of the abused class. Behind this tendency stand the complicated and contradictory intricacies of the Victorian ideas of gender, class, and childhood: childhood innocence, patriarchal protection, social paternalism, the feminine ideal, domestic ideology, separate spheres, and so on.[11] Simply put, while social paternalist propaganda of the 1830s puts forward the harmless and helpless factory children as sympathetic representatives of the suffering class, it simultaneously infantilizes the image of the working class to forestall the potential threat of working-class riots associated with adult working-class men, as discussed in Chapter Two.[12] Choosing the factory girls – who appear even 'weaker' than the boys and 'unable to grow up and challenge the father's authority' – as representative workers, the paternalist social reformers in the 1830s further feminize the working class to preserve class hierarchy and patriarchal order.[13] In this way, not only are the children

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[11] For Victorian middle-class ideas of domestic ideology, separate spheres, doctrines on femininity, and the Evangelical influence, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850, revised edition* (London: Routledge, 2002; [first edn: London [u.a.]: Hutchinson, 1987]). Amanda Vickery challenges the application of the idea of separate spheres in interpreting Victorian women's 'experience, power and identity' in her 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal,* 36, no. 2 (1993), 383-414. Yet Davidoff and Hall explain: '"Separate spheres", we argued, became the common-sense of the middle class, albeit a common-sense that was always fractured. Something significant changed at the end of the eighteenth century; there was … a realigned gender order emerged … associated with the development of modern capitalism…. This is not to suggest that there were no continuities. Nor that ideas of "separate spheres" were invented in the 1780s. Rather, existing expectations about the proper roles of men and women were re-worked with a significantly different emphasis. Between 1780-1850 enterprise, family, home, masculinity and femininity were re-drawn, negotiated, reformed, and reinstalled' (p. xvi, in 'Introduction' of the 2002 edition). See also Patricia McKee, *Public and Private: Gender, Class, and the British Novel (1764-1878)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[12] Behind this are Victorian conceptions of children and the ideology of social paternalism, which uses family as a metaphor for society and hence highlights its 'harmony and hierarchical order'. See Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction*, pp. 119-20.

[13] For more detailed explication, see Gallagher, p. 128, and Gray, p. 34. Gallagher indicates that girls were considered 'weaker, more passive, and more helpless than boys' and thus 'seemed indisputably in need of legislative protection'. As she adds, with reference to the 'apprentice boys of numerous tales' since the sixteenth century, there had been established 'a long and popular tradition in which working-class boys were portrayed as relatively self-sufficient, active, and capable of getting ahead in the world'. Behind this image, as Gray suggests, are 'gender connotations' of 'patriarchal protection'. As he explains, the 'rhetorical figure of the helpless and vulnerable child was often associated with femininity'; thus 'the female child' especially represented such 'innocence' and 'dependence'. As Gallagher also suggests, the 'feminization of the factory child's image made industrial workers appear to be not only defenceless children but also permanent children'.

feminized, the women are infantilized as well.[14] The protective intentions thus include womanhood in addition to childhood. Besides the cross-age concern about female workers who need to be protected, there is an ambiguous cross-class concern for endangered femininity in the working environment. Indeed, all these qualities of the ideal woman – dependent, childlike, domestic, asexual, pure and spiritual in nature – are threatened by the very idea of the female worker.[15]

Victorian working-class femininity is in question. There is revealed the inherent paradox in the Victorian ideal of innocent girlhood and feminine purity, which is at once specific to middle-class identity and possessed of 'a universal application', as Deborah Gorham indicates.[16] Gorham's explanation of femininity helps to illuminate the pivotal ideological position occupied by the working-class girl: as a girl she excels adult women in embodying feminine purity, and being working-class she still possesses high spirituality despite social or material conditions. In Chapter Four we have seen that Helen Fleetwood actually exemplifies this kind of 'universal femininity'. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall point out: 'the crucial distinction was between spiritual equality and social subordination'.[17] We can generally infer that, in the Victorian ideology of femininity, which is especially related to Christian belief, the ideal

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[14] This further refers to the idea of the Victorian feminine ideal. See Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982). As Gorham notes, the ideal Victorian woman was 'to remain permanently childlike, childlike even in maturity' (p. 6). Thus, similar conceptions of children and women help extend the concern over child labour to that over female labour regardless of age.

[15] For the Victorian ideal feminine qualities, see Gorham, pp. 6-7.

[16] Gorham, pp. 5, 7, 37. As Gorham explains, the feminine or angelic qualities were 'defined as spiritual in nature'; thus 'they took on a universal application, transcending mere material circumstances' (p. 7). In the Victorian period, 'the idea of femininity came to full power' and was materialized in the phrase the 'Angel in the House', which stands for 'feminine dependence, childlike simplicity and sexual purity' (pp. 5, 7). Because the 'ideal of feminine purity is implicitly asexual', a girl rather than a woman can make a 'wholly unambiguous model' of 'the quintessential angel in the house' (p. 7). Thus 'the Victorians developed an image of the perfect daughter, an image of girlhood that represented the quintessence of Victorian femininity' (p. 37).

[17] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes,* p. 114. See also Vallone, pp. 70, 182, note 4 to chapter 4, which refers to Thomas Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working-Class Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). As Lynne Vallone also points out, 'based on the belief in the spiritual equality of the soul', the eighteenth and nineteenth century Evangelical educational reform expected working-class children 'to be taught to know their God and to read His book' so that they could 'embrace its tenets of humility, submissiveness, and patience, even in the face of social, economic, and political inequality'.

working-class female is spiritually feminine and equal to the middle-class one, yet socially subordinate and lower. Thus, feminization of the image of working-class females makes them acceptable, identifiable, and even respectable in the eyes of the middle-class public.[18] We shall further see how this works in novels like Frederic Montagu's *Mary Ashley* (1839) and Frances Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* (1839-40), and how Tonna in her two novels reworks this theme with her Evangelical ideas and realistic depictions.

It is the associations with sexuality, violation of feminine virtues, and transgression of the domestic sphere that make the stereotypical reformist representations of weak working-class females so problematic, for they are conceived as dangerous and infectiously immoral in the Victorian public imagination.[19] As David J. Bradshaw and Suzanne Ozment indicate, despite the social fact that women formed 'one-third' of the labour force by the middle of the nineteenth century, 'prejudice persisted against women's working outside the home'.[20] In addition, 'parliamentary investigations of factories and collieries' voiced concerns 'on the removal of women from their proper sphere' and 'over the threat posed to the social order when women of any rank detached

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[18] It can also be noted that, as Camilla Townsend observes, 'By the 1860s the "respectable" working classes, too, had supposedly seized upon ideas of … "femininity," in imitation of their betters in the middle classes'. See Camilla Townsend, '"I Am the Woman for Spirit": A Working Woman's Gender Transgression in Victorian London', in *Sexualities in Victorian Britain*, ed. by Andrew H. Miller and James Eli Adams (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 214-33 (p. 226).

[19] For studies of Victorian sexuality, gender ideologies, and the Victorian novel, see Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (New York: Pearson, 2012 [first edn: London: Longman, 1981]); Carolyn Dever, 'Everywhere and Nowhere: Sexuality in Victorian Fiction', in *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2005), pp. 156-79; Andrew H. Miller and James Eli Adams eds, *Sexualities in Victorian Britain* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

For particular reference to the fallen woman, sexuality, cultural myths, and Victorian representations, see Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982); Lynn Nead, 'The Magdalen in Modern Times: the Mythology of the Fallen Woman in Pre-Raphaelite Painting', in *Looking on: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts*, ed. by Rosemary Betterton (London: Pandora Press, 1987), pp. 73-92; Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1988); Deborah Anna Logan, *Fallenness in Victorian Women's Writing: Marry, Stitch, Die, or Do Worse* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998).

[20] David J. Bradshaw and Suzanne Ozment ed., 'Introduction' to 'Part 4 (Separate) Spheres of Work', in *The Voice of Toil: Nineteenth-Century British Writings About Work* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), pp. 629-32 (p. 629).

themselves from their homes to undertake paid work'.[21] 'Even among working-class families', as Bradshaw and Ozment point out, 'the ideal was for married women to remain at home occupied with domestic and maternal duties'.[22] Tonna indeed responds to these sexual concerns with her characterization of female workers who later fall; she further accentuates the importance of returning these poor victims back to their homes.

Previous scholarship has pointed out the contradiction and the unnarratable horror that the figure of the female worker poses in Victorian literature and culture in the 1830s and 1840s. As Susan Zlotnick mentions, the female worker, working outside the home and entering the public realm, is generally imagined to be (sexually) 'immoral and undomestic'; thus she notices the strenuous efforts made by the two female novelists Frances Trollope and Tonna to change the public conception with more sympathetic portrayals.[23] However, while Zlotnick indicates the discrepancy between literary representations and the popular imagination, she claims that both these novelists replace the stereotypical 'aggressive, independent, and fallen factory girl of the popular imagination' with another stereotype of 'the unwitting victim of a brutal industrial regime' which is 'borrowed from the factory reform discourse'.[24] Similarly to Gallagher, Zlotnick seems to suggest that both novelists simply reproduce the reformist rhetoric. What Zlotnick ignores – Tonna's far more diversified working-class female characters, including the aggressive and threatening female working-class figures that she daringly represents and innovatively introduces to industrial fiction – is what I have partly analyzed in Chapter Three and shall further demonstrate and argue for in this chapter. In

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 630-31.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 631.

[23] See Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 147-51. As Zlotnick indicates, the 'Victorian middle class' 'associated female publicity with impropriety' because 'the high visibility of factory work rendered it a morally suspect activity'; 'by labouring under the gaze of the public eye', the image of the factory woman thus blurs with that of the prostitute. She further suggests that early factory critics often connected 'the representation of the independent and prosperous factory girl' with 'that of the fallen woman', 'implying a logical progression from the power loom to prostitution'. Besides, factory women's 'love of finery' and their 'increasing purchasing power and autonomy' is interpreted as 'a sign of moral laxness'.

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 151.

her novels, Tonna confronts the public conception of the immorality of working-class females. She takes this opportunity to redraw the female image, rewrite her story, and revise gender ideologies.

Yet as Gallagher has already pointed out, domestic ideology, to which the focus on working-class women especially relates, disrupts the social paternalism employed in the debates over industrialism: 'women were thrust forward, by the rhetoric of social paternalism, as representative workers and yet were simultaneously told by domestic ideologists that the roles of worker and woman were antagonistic'.[25] Indeed, within the idea of domestic femininity, not only is the association of worker with woman problematic, but also the association with the girl is dangerous and threatening, designating her more of a fearful social problem in need of control than a sympathetic social victim in need of rescue. Considering *the First Report of Commissioners for Enquiring into the Employment and Conditions of Children in Mines and Manufactories* (1842), with the girl figure exciting public outrage and shock, Catherine Robson also points out that the 'abused working girl', with her 'active body' working in a mixed-sex environment which signals sexual immorality, alarmingly threatens the asexual feminine ideal symbolized by the girl in the Victorian cultural imagination.[26] Noticing that 'factory girls almost disappear from "the industrial novels"' after the early 1840s, Patricia E. Johnson argues that 'the public uproar over the 1842 parliamentary blue book on the mines … was the turning point in this development because it revealed the woman worker's threat to Victorian ideologies of gender and class and resulted in her repression'.[27] While Robson focuses on the girl figure and Johnson turns to the controversial images of working-class women, I contend, examining the transition from factory girls to working-class women in Tonna's two novels, that it is only when the

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[25] Gallagher, p. 129.
[26] Catherine Robson, *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 51.
[27] Patricia E. Johnson, *Hidden Hands: Working-Class Women and Victorian Social-Problem Fiction* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001), p. 12.

factory girls grow up into adult women that they can exert the privileged domestic influence of wives and mothers as envisioned by Tonna, were they given enough time at home. Tonna's novels reveal that she anticipates in the working woman the potential strength that comes from reigning over her own hearth: the domestic role thus marks the decisive difference between the function of a girl and that of a woman. For Tonna this is why the changing literary focus from the factory girl to the working-class woman matters. I therefore provide a more positive interpretation of this literary phenomenon than Johnson's.

Thus I argue that in the novels Tonna's shift in focus from factory girls to working-class women signifies her use of the Evangelical ideas of spiritual equality of the soul and of female domesticity to empower women of all ranks at the hearth.[28] She transforms the stereotypical cultural conceptions of the class-specific immorality of working-class females into the idea of wrongs inflicted by the social system which abuses women across classes. With a single move in legislation (The Ten Hours Movement) that is expected to give back women's 'rights' to preside over the hearth, Tonna further negotiates the proper female role and accentuates the 'spiritual power' that grants all women domestic authority and public influence. Indeed, in Tonna's idea of Evangelical domesticity, returning working-class women to the home does not only passively protect their vulnerability but more positively empowers them with moral influence, as Ella Dzelzainis has observed.[29] Building on Dzelzainis's work and further

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[28] For Evangelical influence upon Victorian thought and upon doctrines of femininity, see Lynne Vallone, *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, 'Part One: Religion and Ideology', in *Family Fortunes,* pp. 71-192; Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

[29] For how Tonna collaborates with the Tory M.P. Lord Ashley in forming the gender ideology in the Ten Hours campaign, see Ella Dzelzainis, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Pre-Millenarianism, and the Formation of Gender Ideology in the Ten Hours Campaign', *Victorian Literature and Culture,* 31 (2003), 181-89. Here I agree with Dzelzainis that Tonna plays a more active role in the formation of the ideas of working-class women's domesticity. As she demonstrates, Tonna does not merely 'endorse' Ashley's viewpoints (p. 182). Her essay shows 'how their religious alliance led Tonna and Ashley to a shared analysis of the evils of the factory system: one which came to predicate the security of the nation on the return of the female factory worker – particularly the mother – to her proper sphere, the home' (*ibid.*). She also argues that Tonna 'renegotiated the boundaries between the public and the private, the male and the female sphere' in her involvement in the Ten Hours Movement (*ibid.*).

stressing the ferocious and immoral working-class female characters in Tonna's fiction, I emphasize Tonna's unique literary contribution through her Evangelical ideology of domesticity.[30] I also point to a new, more equal, cross-class female relationship by contrast with the hierarchical models in previous industrial novels.

In brief, in this chapter I am going to demonstrate that, stressing the essential and equally distributed nature of the female, Tonna introduces the previously unnarratable and horrifying working-class girls and women into literature and rewrites them into sympathetic figures. Second, with her idea of domesticity, which has an all-pervasive public influence, by restoring all women to their natural right of domestic dominance (as she expects The Ten Hours Act will do once passed), Tonna envisions morally and socially influential women of both the working and middle classes.[31] Finally, by presenting the varied female workers with their domestic roles in *The Wrongs of Woman*, Tonna further encourages her middle-class female readers to develop a subversive cross-class mutual identification and a more equal and reciprocal relationship between working- and middle-class women.[32] Tonna imagines an independent yet interrelated relationship between middle-class and working women, with each of them giving full play to her far-reaching and mutually affecting domestic influence.

Tonna's representations of working-class females break boundaries of propriety

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[30] Upon the cult of domesticity and the Victorian novel, credit is due to Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[31] In her reading of Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* and Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood* and *The Wrongs of Woman*, Susan Zlotnick concentrates on the problematic ideas of domesticity, and she focuses on the redrawing of the gendered boundaries and transgression of the separate spheres dichotomy by these two female novelists. See Zlotnick, '3. Frances Trollope, Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, and the Early Industrial Discourse: Domesticating the Factory; Eroticizing the Factory; Repairing the Factory', in *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 123-67. She argues that the three novels 'not only link public and private through the mechanism of female influence (the power granted women by the domestic ideology) but also – in a more subversive move – disclose the penetration of the public sphere into the sanctum of the domestic space' (p. 127). To illustrate, with the heiress Mary Brotherton in *Michael Armstrong*, the 'middle-class daughter's luxury and the working-class child's suffering' are linked; then in *The Wrongs of Women*, Tonna makes visible 'the relationship between domesticity and commodity fetishization' (p. 133). However, while Zlotnick attends to the continuity of ideas between Trollope and Tonna, I shall identify in this chapter the significant difference between their proposed means of women's empowerment.

[32] As indicated in Chapter Three, Johnson has also noted that Tonna 'stresses a cross-class identification of women with women', which is 'rooted in the working-class woman's experience'. See *Hidden Hands*, p. 57. Yet analysis of the social relationship between working- and middle-class women is missing in her work.

and incarnate a hybrid and integrated being incorporating the virtuous angel, the immoral devil (the manly monster and the fallen whore), the saintly preacher, and the realistic social victim.[33] I give attention to how these disparate images come together in Tonna's characterization. [34] In this chapter, by comparing Tonna's diversified working-class female characters with the flat working girl characters in *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong*, and with the formidable working-class women presented in Parliamentary Reports and periodicals, we shall better understand the unique working-class characters Tonna portrays. By comparing the interaction between middle-class women and working-class girls in *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong* with the sisterhood Tonna creates between the working-class women characters and her middle-class women readers, we shall see the different model of the cross-class female relationship which she envisions.

I. Virtuous, Immoral, and Victimized Factory Girls

This section focuses on the aggressive and immoral factory girl Phoebe, in connection with virtuous Helen in Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*. I am also going to contrast these figures with other meek and religious factory girl characters in *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong*. I shall demonstrate that, with her Evangelical emphasis upon the universality of female nature (including both the positive aspects of femininity and negative sinful inclination), Tonna presents all the varied types of working-class girls –

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[33] I appropriate terms from Patricia E. Johnson and Constance D. Harsh. See Johnson, *Hidden Hands*, p. 41, and Harsh, *Subversive Heroines: Feminist Resolutions of Social Crisis in the Condition-of-England Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 66. Johnson specifies the 'three extreme images of the factory girl/woman – saint, whore, victim', while Harsh notices the pair of 'angelic and demonic victims' – Helen and Phoebe in *Helen Fleetwood*. In naming these, I consider Tonna's Evangelical belief, the cultural myths of femininity, and Victorian social reality. I define and distinguish the 'devil' in two categories: the manly monster and the fallen whore. By the former I mean the seemingly androgynous female worker, who takes jobs such as factory or mine work that public opinion conceives as being more suitable for men, and who appears manly rather than womanly; by the latter I mean the working-class females who are sexually immoral and usually fallen, and become prostitutes. A fallen seamstress, for example, belongs to the second category rather than the first. Yet, an aggressive factory girl who later becomes a prostitute may fit into both.

[34] In Chapter Three I have examined how the angelic feminine ideal, the female preacher, and the abused social victim are combined into the eponymous heroine of *Helen Fleetwood*. Thus in this chapter I am going to deal with the remaining categories.

whether virtuous, ferocious, or fallen – as sympathetic victims with transgressive potential. This idea will be further extended to the portrayals of working-class women in her subsequent novel.

With Phoebe Wright and other factory girls in *Helen Fleetwood*, Tonna innovates in industrial fiction through her representations of indecent girls, who become defiant figures rather than helpless weaklings after entering the factory. Phoebe bears strong hostility towards Helen and persecutes her, because Helen is 'so different from herself' (p. 217). Phoebe and Helen work in the same room. If Helen tries hard to remain religious and virtuous in the contaminating working environment, as we have discussed in Chapter Three, Phoebe is her exact opposite, being thoroughly polluted and embodying the wickedness of the place:

> Phoebe could not restrain for a single day her bad feelings against the girl [Helen] whom she had *scoffingly* introduced among her new companions as *a mighty great saint*; … poor Helen found herself at once marked out for the *contempt and dislike* of the people around her. She hoped it might wear off; but whatever ensued *she resolved in the strength of the Lord to submit*… (pp. 87-88, my emphasis)

From Helen's viewpoint, the narrator discusses the polluting effects upon the character of children, especially girls, of the mixed-sex factory environment:

> The majority of [Helen's] immediate companions were of her own and Phoebe's age, and seemingly *hardened* past all fear or shame; but some interesting and *modest*-looking little *girls* were mingled among them. Her greatest annoyance however by far, was from the *boys*, who were often set on to *insult her* in ways more trying than the rest. Still she endured, as seeing Him who is invisible… (pp. 114-15, my emphasis)

In Tonna's description, girls are 'hardened' by factory work, which is exactly the devastating consequence of exposing girls to the public realm feared by middle-class Victorians, as noted in Gorham's analysis of femininity.[35] Besides, Helen discerns in

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[35] Gorham, pp. 6, 37. As Gorham notices, the Victorians 'frequently spoke of the way in which males were "hardened" by their exposure to the rough and tumble of the outside world', and they also feared that 'should a woman be so exposed, she too would be hardened' (p. 6). Thus Victorian 'women were told that they must remain within the domestic sphere both because their duties were to be performed there, and because contact with the wider world would damage their ability to perform those duties' (p. 6). A

her sister Mary 'a growing spirit of discontent and disobedience' after entering the factory (p. 113).

In contrast, when touching upon issues of (sexual) immorality in factories, Trollope presents a seven-year-old girl persecuted by the oppressing class. In *Michael Armstrong*, the issue of immorality in the mixed-sex working environment is dramatically transformed into unbearable middle-class oppression of working-class children. When Dr Crockley and Sir Matthew are visiting the factory, 'the facetious doctor' suggests that the mill owner make Michael 'take that bare-legged scavenger wench round the neck, and give her a kiss while she is next lying down, and let us see them sprawling together' (vol. I, p. 201). Sir Matthew does so. '"I say, Master Michael!" he demands, "Take scavenger, No. 3, there, round the neck; now-now-now, as she lies sprawling, and let us see you give her a hearty kiss"' (vol. I, p. 202). Hearing the command the boy does not move, and the helpless little girl, 'who owed her safety to the miserable leanness of her shrunken frame', could only let the machinery move onward over her body (vol. I, p. 202). Thus in Trollope's presentation, sexual immorality in factories is displaced by middle-class adult oppression of innocent factory children.

But Tonna directly deals with the dispositions of workers themselves, as well as the collisions between the females and between the two sexes. In her descriptions, the contaminating factory environment or the inhumane social system breeds rebellious streaks in human beings. Talking about the unnatural condition of overwork in factories, the narrator of *Helen Fleetwood* remarks, 'under such a *system*, the robust *adult* speedily acquires a sickly habit of body, and a morbid state of feeling, leading at once to most awful perversion of mind and *corruption of morals*', not to mention the 'young, tender, growing *children*' (p. 126, my emphasis). By stressing that even strong adults are

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Victorian female outside the home is easily associated with negative images: a 'vulgar, self-seeking, lazy and sexually impure' daughter, a 'self-seeking, selfish, neglectful wife', and 'the cold, neglected, loveless household' (p. 37). A Victorian female outside the home, like a working-class one, thus represents the exact opposite of the feminine and domestic ideal.

corrupted in this situation, Tonna further reasons that these delicate children become immoral as a result of suffering under it. Thus the aggressive or dangerous female workers, though threatening, are still victims wronged by the system.

Besides the rationale concerning the factory system, Tonna links her representation of the depraved factory girl to a biblical reference. When Mary asks, 'What can possibly makes Phoebe so spiteful against us?' her grandmother Mrs Green replies, 'It must be the same feeling that made Cain slay Abel, "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous"' (p. 125). The narrator continues to explain:

> He that is born after the *flesh* is ever disposed to persecute him that is born after the *Spirit*; and where the *restraints of education and refinement are wanting*, this inclination will show itself, particularly where *godliness* with the *powerful though silent eloquence* of a holy walk rebukes *vice and profanity*. Phoebe was evidently a *depraved* character: such, alas! are to be found in every place; but Phoebe was placed in *a sphere where multitudes united to discountenance virtue….*(p. 125, my emphasis)

Thus Tonna, using religious rhetoric in a 'political sermon', explains the deleterious effects of the factory system on people by means of Christian logic.[36] In comparing the factory girl Phoebe with the biblical character Cain, she makes the realistic industrial story a modern Christian tale. Following the tradition of Christian moral stories that she appropriates to apply to working conditions in factories, she is able to present the vicious character as a victim of the wrongful system. As she specifies more clearly,

> The system, *the factory system*, under which Phoebe Wright had imbibed the peculiar *wickedness* that now pervaded her character, also fed the *evil*, guarded it, and armed it with *power* to wound whatever excited its *enmity*. The factory system surrounded her with associates, by whom she had been encouraged in the ways of daring *sin*, and who were in turn encouraged by her to unite against any one whose *uprightness* of principle should tacitly condemn them. (pp. 125-26, my emphasis)

Under this atrocious system, the ruined factory girl grows rebellious and acquires destructive power. Tonna thus daringly represents such threatening factory girls. She

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[36] Christine L. Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 139.

argues that, although these girls seem wrong, they are actually wronged by society. In contrast, Helen is compared to Abel. She represents one who is 'born after the Spirit', rather than the sinful flesh, with her 'godliness', 'uprightness of principle', and 'powerful though silent eloquence' in condemning the evil.

However, by encountering Phoebe, even Helen almost turns into a defiant being. The narrator describes an 'extraordinary change in Helen's aspect' with 'an encounter of glances between her and Phoebe' (p. 121). While Phoebe's expression is 'marked … by a degree of scornful, malicious derision that could not escape the notice of the most heedless looker-on', 'Helen's usual expression of retiring modesty gave place to one strangely foreign from her natural aspect' (p. 121). The narrator closely depicts Helen's sneering demeanour, and her hostile glare that threatens Phoebe, in contrast to her previous feminine and saintly behaviour:

> On meeting Phoebe's half-opened eyes, her own expanded, and fixed in a gaze, almost a stare of *proud and high defiance*, under which the other presently quailed, though the contemptuous curl of her lip, as she dropped the long lashes, gave her the aspect of disgust, rather than of conscious guilt. Still *Helen* flinched not: her eyes were riveted on the downcast face, and she stood erect, *the very personification of indignant, haughty disdain*. Could it be Helen Fleetwood, – *the gentle, retiring maiden, the subdued young Christian*, to whom even the aged *pilgrim* secretly looked up as a pattern of that '*meekness of wisdom*' which she had prayerfully inculcated, and praisefully marvelled at, as its growth exceeded her most sanguine hopes? (pp. 121-22, my emphasis)

With such an encounter, Tonna unites the doubled characters, Helen and Phoebe, into one, showing that even the virtuous Helen has sinful aspects. Helen might become another Phoebe; thus the transgressive seed of an even more unconventional working-class heroine underlies this portrayal.

Moreover, while Helen retains 'the same air of conscious superiority, fixing, from time to time, the same full undaunted gaze upon Phoebe', meanwhile she is 'frequently addressing Sarah', 'the poor sick girl', 'in terms of fondness' (p. 125). As she says 'in a full, firm voice', 'My dearest Sarah, has the Lord given you better health since I saw you

last?' (p.125). Therefore, while Helen exemplifies pride, which makes her lose hold of the image of moral propriety, at the same time she reveals a religious spirit. It seems that the dichotomy between virtuous and immoral is broken, and the integration of righteousness and sinfulness is now achieved within the single character of Helen. Recalling the Original Innocence and Original Sin both of which exist in children, as discussed in Chapter Three, here we see a further step taken by Tonna in bestowing on the virtuous heroine an evidently sinful aspect.[37] Thus, not only Phoebe but also Helen are morally wronged in the factory, which does not provide adequate religious 'education and refinement' but overflows with evil associations (p. 125). The connection between Helen and Phoebe thus also helps to make both of them sympathetic victims.

We can further understand how Tonna's Evangelical ideology informs her representation of sinful factory girls if we examine her introductory remarks in *The Wrongs of Woman*, as she continues her reformist efforts but here focuses even more on the female sex. Tonna emphasizes 'an equal share of inbred corruption' between man and woman and the importance of the 'spiritual existence', 'the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, to show us the right way'.[38] By alluding to biblical Eve who 'shamefully dishonoured the Most High, by her act of disobedience', Tonna further states, 'The *pride* of carnal reason too often conquers *faith*' (*WW*, part I, p. 7, my emphasis). This sense of 'pride' (connected with the flesh and the Original Sin) is exactly what makes Helen Fleetwood deviate from her faith (connected with the spirit). As Helen later admits to her adoptive grandmother Mrs Green, when relating her encounter with Phoebe, 'I felt something come over me that I am afraid was *pride*' (*HF*, p. 130, my emphasis). Thus, besides the Satanic factory system, the original sinful nature of all human beings that obstructs their path to spiritual existence further justifies Tonna in her

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[37] The narrator later also alludes to the biblical 'tree of forbidden knowledge' as 'a tree of spiritual darkness', which closes man's eyes 'against the peaceable fruits of righteousness that spring therefrom, when once he has been made a partaker in the faith and hope of the gospel' (p. 126). Thus the narrator accentuates the dark side in all human beings and the importance of religious faith.
[38] [Tonna], Charlotte Elizabeth, *The Wrongs of Woman: Part I. Milliners and Dress-Makers* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1843), p. 3. Subsequent references are to this edition.

depiction of immoral girls.

Furthermore, noting that 'the woman [Eve] was first in the transgression' in the biblical 'fall', Tonna signifies the biblical designation of the female as 'the weaker vessel' and points to the 'doom' pronounced upon her that 'is found in operation all over the world' (*WW,* Part I, pp. 4, 8). This biblical fall is also linked to the realistic fall of factory girls and young seamstresses in *Helen Fleetwood* and *The Wrongs of Woman.* Phoebe becomes a prostitute and has 'gone off with a regiment of soldiers' (p. 217) by the end of *Helen Fleetwood*. As a threatening representation of degraded working-class females, she then exemplifies sexual violation of the traditional feminine ideal. The fallen young women in *The Wrongs of Woman* will be examined in the next section.

To check the growth in Helen of malicious power like that of Phoebe, domestic protection, along with the cultivation of faith, is vital. As Tonna later signifies, the fallen Eve was supposed to be a wife, 'a *help* meet for Adam' (*WW*, part I, p. 7). She further proclaims that the female sex 'who were lost by giving heed to the deceivableness of Satan, are "saved in child-bearing"', for 'it was "the seed of the woman" who bruised the serpent's head, and He who had no earthly father was in his human nature the son of a *mother*' (*WW*, part I, pp. 4-5, my emphasis). Thus, the redemption of females lies in their domestic role – especially that of a mother. The universal female maternal nature, as Tonna states, is also a 'high and happy pre-eminence in privilege' that women may 'humbly rejoice in' (*WW*, part I, p. 4). Meanwhile Tonna stresses that women shall 'exercise faith, individually, in the Saviour, who by a woman was born into the world' (*WW*, part I, p. 4). It is thus as a mother of faith that Tonna envisions a working-class woman. Accordingly, Tonna describes herself as 'a woman pleading for her sex … – a christian woman for those who have had the like precious price paid for their redemption', who wishes to 'win a *sympathizing* response to the appeal that she ventures to make' (*WW*, part I, p. 14, my emphasis). Thus cross-class female identification in domesticity becomes a main theme in Tonna's

representation and re-examination of working-class females, which will be examined in the following sections.

As the factory girls are victimized in *Helen Fleetwood*, Tonna makes a broader claim in *The Wrongs of Woman*, which declares that not only working-class females but females of all classes are wronged by the system: 'the wrong against woman, against woman in every rank and every class, perpetrated by the means which have been very briefly sketched in these pages, is alike fearful and universal' (part IV, p. 110).[39] Even the 'Queen of England' is wronged when 'rebellion is cradled' in her country (part IV, p. 110). The way to correct these wrongs, as Tonna warningly urges, is to give back women their 'natural rights' of presiding over the hearth:

> [W]hile God's laws were not outraged, nor His Poor ground down by oppression that actually forbids the woman of a Christian land to be "a keeper at home," to "rule the house," to adorn herself with "shamefacedness and sobriety," or to fulfil even the most sacred duties of a mother to her own baby offspring, yea, compels her to become an infanticide, – so long the blessing was not withdrawn – the curse was not poured out upon the land. (part IV, pp. 111-12)

Tonna warns that there is a danger of widespread revolutions if proper measures are not taken in time.

Nevertheless, with her more diversified factory girls, Tonna is able to subtly change the construction of female nature, negotiating a model of female working-class influence which develops new parameters of female subjectivity and marks out new territory for the heroine in social fiction. With the connection between Helen and Phoebe, a later instance of the fallen yet virtuous heroine, the eponymous character of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*, is strongly anticipated. As Siv Jansson notes, Ruth Hilton is 'both angelic and sinful'; she is 'the embodiment of the perfection of influence while lacking the sexual purity that image demands'.[40] Ruth is thus identified with 'spirituality

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[39] Charlotte Elizabeth [Tonna], *The Wrongs of Woman: Part IV. The Lace-Runners* (New York: John S. Taylor & Co., 1844)

[40] Siv Jansson, '*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*: Rejecting the Angel's Influence', in *Women of Faith in Victorian Culture: Reassessing the Angel in the House*, ed. by Anne Hogan and Andrew Bradstock (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1998), p. 45.

and purity' and 'can redeem herself for her sexual sin'.[41] Yet the contradictory and paradoxical elements are already there in Helen's confrontation with Phoebe in *Helen Fleetwood*. Helen's taint of contemptuous pride, which is originally embodied by Phoebe, inevitably connects her with Eve's as well as with Phoebe's later fallen status. With Gaskell's Ruth, the sexual Phoebe and the mostly virtuous Helen are completely integrated and have fully grown into womanhood and even motherhood. In a more daring manner than Helen, Ruth leaves her 'angelic place' but preserves her 'angelic role'; thus *Ruth* provides 'radical and subversive re-readings of Victorian womanhood in nineteenth-century fiction'.[42] This literary evolution can be further linked to the breakdown of the 'Angel/House trope' (or the sign for 'middle-class femininity/domesticity') and the 'fallen woman' symbol (or the 'Whore/Disorder sign') in the interlocked coding of 'class and gender' from the 1830s to the 1850s, as Patricia Ingham specifies.[43] While Ingham looks to a number of industrial novels for examples of novelistic intervention that changes gender and domestic ideologies, she ignores Tonna's contribution to the re-conception of domestic femininity as universal female nature rather than as a middle-class-specific trait.[44] In the next two sections, we shall further examine Tonna's idea of female domestic nature as presented in *The Wrongs of Woman*.

With factory girls like Phoebe and even Helen, who are associated with sinful or immoral nature, Tonna thus changes the innocent factory girl as a reformist stereotype of the 1830s into an individual with subversive potential. In contrast, the factory girls in Montagu's *Mary Ashley* and Trollope's *Michael Armstrong* remain permanently angelic and childlike. Indeed, to retain the domesticity of a working girl while justifying a girl's work outside the home poses a significant issue for the Victorian industrial novelists. To

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[41] Jansson, p. 45.
[42] For discussion of Ruth, see Jansson, p. 46
[43] Jansson, pp. 25-26.
[44] See Jansson, pp. 27-30.

fulfil this aim, fictional representations of working-class girls often fall into the stereotype of the submissive and virtuous ideal female.

Earlier portrayals of the lower-class girl in, for instance, Hannah More's *Repository*, achieve a balance between the girl's work of material production and her female task of spirituality. As Vallone explains, More's 'tract heroines need to behave properly in order to produce adequately'; 'through the Evangelical ontology of separate on earth but one in the eyes of God', the working girl could keep 'effectively in her place' and 'within the sphere of (working-class) contentment'.[45] Thus the 'dual concerns of sexuality and production do not clash'.[46] However, in the Victorian era, the balance between material production and the spirituality of the working-class female is endangered.

While Tonna tackles the threat to working-class femininity and spirituality with her fictional factory girls, Montagu's Mary Ashley and Trollope's Fanny Fletcher still conform to the ideal imagery of the girl, embodying domestic femininity, spiritual purity or religious piety. Both Montagu and Trollope, while pursuing contrary aims, choose to exhibit the domestic qualities of the factory girls, thus signifying the prevalence of the ideology of inviolable female domesticity. They avoid presenting or dealing with problematic undomestic and unfeminine factory girls. Hence, notwithstanding Montagu's and Trollope's contradictory purposes, there emerges a rather consistent and stereotypical image of the factory girl – as a harmless victim or a powerless dependant in need of help. The difference between the two lies only in the degree of suffering, if any – the sound and pleasant conditions found in the apologist literature and the physical and psychological suffering of the girl in the propagandist literature.

In *Mary Ashley,* an apologia for the factory system, the two working-class sisters, 'the contour of each singularly beautiful and innocent', display religious piety (p. 66). They are educated by their late mother in a respectable Christianity (p. 66). Their

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[45] Vallone, p. 75.
[46] *Ibid.*

mother, once 'a servant-maid to a lady (and had been brought up and educated by her from infancy)':

> had taught her children to read, and instilled into their young minds those right principles of excellence which involved a strict duty towards their God and their neighbour – very, very different to the principles of action, and shallow sense of religion, so boastfully performed by many of their worldly superiors. (p. 68)

One thing worth noticing about their religious faith is that the narrator specifically describes the religious instruction of the working-class girls as derived from a higher-class 'lady', who educated their mother when the latter was her employee. Although their mother passes away, the girls' excellent Christian quality – of being strictly dutiful to God and neighbours – remains and even excels that of their 'worldly superiors'. While this statement evidently scorns contemporary Christians' superficial religious performance, as distinct from deep faith or actual practice, it also echoes the Evangelical idea of the 'spiritual equality of the soul', which transcends social inequalities. Although the lower-class females seem to receive moral education from their higher-class female superintendents, eventually the working-class females are able to carry on, handing down their morality and excelling, on their own.

The two sisters also exhibit strong affection for and bonds with their family. When the two sisters, Mary and Emma, are going to be separated because of obtaining different posts – the former as a factory girl and the latter as a maid – they exhort each other to pray as their mother once taught them.

> 'Mary, will you always love me?' said the youngest of the two children, as she threw her arms around the neck of her sister.
> 'Always, dearest Emma, and don't forget me,' she replied, meeting her embrace with the tenderest affection.
> 'My father will come over and see me sometimes?'
> 'He *will*, Emma, and will bring me with him; and night-time, Emma, never forget that prayer our poor mother taught us, when little Willie died.'
> 'No, I never will,' sobbed the child addressed, 'and I will pray for you, Mary, and my father – but our mother is in heaven.' (p. 68)

This sentimental parting scene takes place at the house of Miss Amina Myddleton,

heiress of a late factory owner, through whose charitable acts the two girls obtain their jobs. The older sister, Mary, also takes on their late mother's role of giving religious guidance to the little one, reminding her that 'Heaven is God's home, and if we are good He will think of us – you know our mother told us so' (p. 68). The domestic quality of the factory girl is strongly emphasized. As Gorham observes, the 'image of the perfect daughter' was ideally designed 'to reconcile the conflict between the morality of Christianity and the values of capitalism'.[47] Here we can see elements of domestic femininity easing the tensions in narrating the industrial world and harmonizing possible antagonism between classes. Thus it serves the purpose of this novelist, as an apologist of the factory system.

Trollope also depicts the domestic qualities of the factory girl Fanny Fletcher in *Michael Armstrong*, even in a factory setting. In *Michael Armstrong,* when Michael first enters the horrific Deep Valley Mill and is frightened by his treatment there, the 11-year-old factory girl Fanny gently guides and soothes him. When Michael says something rude and is admonished by the little girl, he asks 'How can I be good?' (vol. II, p.161). Bursting into tears he continues, ''Twas mother that made me good before, and I don't think I shall ever see her any more' (vol. II, p. 162).

> 'I never can see my mother any more, till I go to Heaven,' replied the little girl – 'but I always think every day, that she told me before she died, about God's making every thing come right in the end, if we bear all things patiently for love of him' (vol. II, p. 162).

Fanny, one year older, acts like an elder sister to Michael, who misses motherly care and guidance at home. He thus says to Fanny, 'I'll try to be good too, if you'll love me, and be kind to me always' (vol. II, p. 162). The girl replies, 'I will love you, and be kind to you, if you'll be a good boy and bear it all patiently' (p. 162). Then she comforts Michael, who is saddened when thinking of his miserable life here and the family from whom he is parted:

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47 Gorham, p. 37.

'Don't cry, Michael!' said the little girl, taking his hand – 'We shall be sure to get out if God thinks it right. Don't cry so!'

'I wish I was as old as you,' said Michael, with an accent expressive of great respect. 'I should bear it better then.' (vol. II, p. 163)

The factory girl here exhibits femininity and takes on the domestic role of an elder sister or mother. With abundant affection, she cares for the little boy – though only one year younger than herself. She gives him religious and moral instruction and is respected by the boy for her spiritual authority. This unwavering and influential faith of the factory girl is further strengthened in the eponymous heroine Helen Fleetwood and her resemblance to a female preacher, as Chapter Three indicates.

Fanny exemplifies the Victorian domestic role of the older sister, who was supposed to act as her brother's moral guide: 'A sister ... is that sort of second conscience, which like the fairy ring in an old story, pinched the wearer whenever he was doing anything amiss'.[48] Yet one thing worth contemplating is that the capacity of a Victorian sister to act as a 'moral guide derived from the purity she retained by being cloistered within the private sphere'.[49] It reminds us of the cultivation of the working girl's religious character by home education – both Fanny Fletcher and Mary Ashley received instruction from their late mothers at home, and Mary's mother had been taught by her mistress in a middle-class family.[50] Within the traditional concept, 'to retain her moral authority', 'a sister had to retain her sheltered purity'.[51] While a Victorian 'brother's task was to go out into the world and shape a public destiny for himself', which meant that 'often he must be wounded, or subdued, often misled, and *always* hardened', a sister was to be 'sheltered from the world' so that 'she could be morally uplifting' and take on her responsibilities of guiding and healing.[52] The interaction between Michael and Fanny, though not brother and sister by blood, reflects the

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[48] Gorham, p. 45, quoting Isaac Taylor, *Advice to the Teens: or Practical Helps towards the Formation of One's Own Character* (second edn; London, 1818), pp. 126-27.

[49] Gorham, p. 45.

[50] Similarly, Michael Armstrong's mother, who teaches her children well, was once a servant at a middle-class lady's home.

[51] Gorham, p. 45.

[52] Gorham, p. 45, quoting John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (1865).

gendered division of tasks between brothers and sisters. Yet one contradictory feature is that the factory girl is actually taken out of the private home and put into the factory to work along with her brothers in the public industrial sphere.[53] While Trollope omits the immoral and polluting nature of the factory environment, Tonna directly deals with this fault in the system and demonstrates its ill effects on factory children's spirituality, leading to the importance of the domestic sphere as the proper female realm, as stressed in *The Wrongs of Woman*.

What, then, are the possible factors that contribute to the emergence of immoral girls like Pheobe in industrial fiction? Besides Tonna's Evangelical ideology, which emphasizes the evil factory system and sinful human nature, as previously discussed, Gorham indicates a possible source of the 'negative images of girlhood' in 'the conventions of didactic literature'.[54] As a stereotypical bad girl, she simply provides the negative counterpart to the ideal girl, so that 'readers could be admonished about attitudes and behaviour that they should avoid'.[55] Gorham's analysis suggests a possible religious influence on the representation of the unfeminine girl, which echoes the biblical reference applied by Tonna to Phoebe in *Helen Fleetwood*.

However, Phoebe is a realistic portrayal of an unfeminine working-class girl rather than merely a negative stereotype. We shall further refer to the social context existing by the end of the 1830s and into the 1840s, when additional representations of unacceptable or unfeminine working girls or women appeared. Regarding the reasons for this cultural phenomenon, Jacqueline P. Banerjee in her study of childhood in British fiction indicates that:

> the Victorians' awareness of the dangers to society of child abuse, and their growing interest in heredity, among other factors, encouraged them to branch out from some of the traditional configurations to create threatening as well as admirable youngsters – child villains as well as heroes – and a whole range of

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[53] Some scholars, like Zlotnick, have suggested that some female factory novelists tried to domesticate the factory. See Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution*, p. 128 onwards.
[54] Gorham, p. 49.
[55] *Ibid.*

personalities in the supporting cast.[56]

Thus, children gradually became presented as lively individuals with varied and changeable personalities, good or bad, rather than 'static "emblems" or "images"' as shown in earlier literature.[57] The 'frequent appearances' of children in '*Punch* cartoons' also confirms this Victorian tendency.[58] Banerjee's observation may offer a general context for the emerging diversified representations of Victorian children, as well as a reference point from which to view the violent factory girls in *Helen Fleetwood*.

In addition, since, as Zlotnick indicates, the factory girls are conceived as 'the domestic women's Other', there may be further reasons for middle-class women writers to probe the opposite world.[59] Penny Brown, in her study of nineteenth-century women's writing on children, states that, for women particularly, 'literature became a valuable means of openly exploring their responses to the gendered identity and roles imposed on young females by society from a very early age'.[60] Indeed, especially through the representation of working-class females, it offers middle-class women an opportunity to reflect upon the similarities, differences, contradictions or connections between females of different classes, as well as the cultural or social ideologies imposed on them. Furthermore, in writing about females, they obtain an opportunity to fortify, adjust, or rewrite the female roles.

Tonna thus continued her reformist efforts and ideological work on gender in her next industrial novel, *The Wrongs of Woman*, and nonfictional essay, *The Perils of the Nation* (1843), which further explore the already widely extended women's issues and expound her domestic ideology. *The Perils of the Nation: An Appeal to the Legislature, the Clergy, and the Higher and Middle Classes* (1843) was a well-documented and influential polemic commissioned by the Christian Influence Society in an effort to

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[56] Jacqueline P. Banerjee, *Through the Northern Gate: Childhood and Growing Up in British Fiction, 1719-1901* (New York: P. Lang, 1996), p. xxiii.

[57] Banerjee, p. xxiii.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Zlotnick, p. 147.

[60] Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), p. 6.

promote corrective legislation. *The Wrongs of Woman*, as Andrzej Diniejko comments, caused 'the ladies of England' to better empathize with 'their working-class sisters', 'had impact on public opinion', and 'contributed to the passage of the Factory Acts of 1844, 1847 and 1848'.[61] As Joseph A. Kestner notes, 'an identification of women with workers' resulted in 'concern with women's issues'; representation of injustice through 'class struggle' in factory novels by female novelists actually led to new gender consciousness in feminist novels in the late nineteenth century.[62] I argue that Tonna's novelistic representation of working-class females in the 1840s points to a new female self-awareness and a new cross-class female identification with domesticity and social influence. Tonna thus transforms the class issues into women's issues, as she proclaims: 'The cruelties now heaped upon the poorest of our sex are, in the broadest, most inclusive sense, THE WRONGS OF WOMAN' (*WW*, Part IV., p. 112).

II. The Milliner and the Incapable Wife

Tonna presents young fallen seamstresses in 'Milliners and Dressmakers' (1843, 1st part of *The Wrongs of Woman*) to bridge the shifting focus from the debauched girl loitering outside, like Phoebe Wright in *Helen Fleetwood*, to the depraved women botching up their domestic duties, like the working-class mothers in 'The Forsaken Home' (1843, 2nd part of *The Wrongs of Woman*). In other words, Tonna's representation of young fallen seamstresses creates an important link between the ferocious and fallen factory girl and neglectful working-class wives and mothers. While the young seamstress makes the transition from girlhood to womanhood with her sewing work – a seemingly domestic task – she also makes a symbolic connection between the public

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[61] Andrzej Diniejko, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's Domestic Feminism as a Response to Child and Female Employment in Early Victorian England', *The Victorian Web*
<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/tonna/diniejko.html> [last modified 26 August 2010]
[62] Joseph A. Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 11.

and domestic spheres, and between lower and higher classes.[63] Thus, the representation of a seamstress links together employment and home, working females and domestic roles, and women across the classes. As Gallagher notes, 'seamstresses were even more appealing sufferers than other working women because their trade was unmistakably feminine'; in contrast, 'women who worked in mines or factories … were often imagined to be mannish or even brutish'.[64] However, I argue that Tonna subverts this popular conception by categorizing the seemingly feminine seamstresses together with the culturally imagined mannish woman miners and factory workers (whom she introduces as abused mothers in 'The Forsaken Home') as similarly victimized women in *The Wrongs of Woman*.[65] Tonna also challenges the idea that seamstresses are feminine by linking them with fallen women. In so doing, Tonna transforms the image of the seamstress into that of a victim deprived of her natural right to be a 'help meet' to her husband. Because of their fallen status, these women cannot make good wives. Thus, Tonna's representation of fallen seamstresses further reinforces the importance of restoring these young women to the home and their proper domestic sphere.

Looking into the plot of 'Milliners and Dressmakers', we can further understand how the young apprentice girls, despite performing a seemingly feminine task, also suffer from moral pollution, like the factory girls in *Helen Fleetwood*. Similarly to Helen Fleetwood and her adoptive siblings, the young King sisters, Ann and Frances,

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[63] See Lynn Mae Alexander, 'Creating a Symbol: the Seamstress in Victorian Literature', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 18, no. 1 (1999), 29-38 (p. 30). As Lynn Alexander notes, 'the seamstress as a figure allowed social critics to portray workers in ways less offensive to middle-class readers', because 'sewing was allied with images of domestic economy, with traditional female roles of wife and mother, with the home rather than the factory'. See also Lynn M. Alexander, *Women, Work, and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian Art and Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), p. 1. Here Alexander notes similar viewpoints in Elizabeth Stone's remark in *Art of Needlework* (1841) that 'virtually all women, regardless of class, sewed'.

[64] Gallagher, p. 130.

[65] Lynn Alexander points out the impact of Tonna's nonfictional tract *The Perils of the Nation* 'on later fictional representations of the seamstress'. The significant innovation in Tonna's treatise, as Alexander observes, is that, 'in this study, for the first time, the feminine employments of dressmaking and millinery were yoked to mining and factory employment, a device frequently employed by fiction writers who followed during the 1840s and 1850s'. See Alexander, *Women, Work, and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian Art and Literature*, p. 7. In this chapter I look into Tonna's fictional portrayals of female sewers, miners, and factory workers to demonstrate her novelistic innovation.

live in a farmhouse before moving to the industrial city to serve in the dressmaking trade. As a young milliner, the innocent girl Ann is negatively affected by the indecent conversation of fellow workers at her workplace. She gradually discovers the polluting nature of 'the topic on which her more immediate neighbours are engaged', which she does not like to hear about (*WW,* Part I, p. 32). As described by the narrator, she especially remembers the image of her passed mother's watchful look when checking such discourse (p. 32) – indicating the important role of the mother in exercising authority for moral cultivation at home. In addition to mental detriment, the girl is physically deteriorating under her heavy workload. She declares that she used to go to church on Sundays, which did her good in 'body and mind', but now is 'forced to lie in bed all the Sunday morning' (p. 49) – thus, engagement in regular religious practice is also emphasized here. However, dressmaking work prevents the girl from staying at home or going to church. The girl regrets that she has been degraded during her fourteen months of work here (p. 48). She says that none of her companions would go to church with her, and that she is persuaded by them to pursue 'merriment and amusement' on weekends rather than go to church. She cries, 'I regret it now, bitterly: I was better taught at home; but … the power of example is very great over the young, especially when nobody that they can look up to cares for them except as working-machines' (pp. 49-50). Thus, Tonna points out the morally polluting effect on young women of working in the dressmaking trade. In describing Ann's gradual degradation, Tonna further emphasizes the importance of restoring these working girls   to their families to receive maternal guidance and religious instruction.

While Ann as a milliner later dies of consumption, her sister Frances, as a dressmaker, eventually falls into prostitution. The fates of the sisters working as needlewomen exactly mirror those of the paired factory girls, Helen who dies early and Phoebe who falls, in *Helen Fleetwood*. Tonna then appeals to bourgeois ladies to restore these working-class women to their proper sphere, to make each of them a true

'help-meet for man', rather than 'a beast of burthen … to her own sex' (p. 97). In Tonna's animalization of the working-class female, again, the ill effect of the 'unnatural exactions of pride' is emphasized (p. 97). Here, Tonna emphatically links the fallen young dressmaker with the image of an inadequate wife, a linkage absent from the representation of the fallen factory girl in *Helen Fleetwood*. The link effectively connects the fallen young female with her supposed domestic role, leading to Tonna's subsequent representation of the depraved working woman and the destitute working-class family. Furthermore, Tonna makes her female readers consider the issue not as a problem of the working class but as a curse on their own sex, thus shifting the perspective from the different classes to the common sex; she expresses collective concern for all females and blurs the class distinctions among them. Additionally, Tonna applies the analogy of factory children as infant slaves, as discussed in Chapter Two, to the employment of needlewomen and females in other trades, referred to as female 'slavery' (p. 97). Here Tonna provides another link and shifts the focus from labouring children in her previous novel to working females in the new one.

Tonna contributes to the promotion of sympathy among higher-class females for these sexually immoral lower-class female figures, suggesting that they are all supposed to be help-meets to their husbands, but the fallen seamstresses are deprived of this 'natural right'. As for the sympathetic portrayal of fallen women, Tonna in 'The Lace-Runners' (Part IV of *The Wrongs of Woman*) further concludes by offering factual evidence of 'unfair pricing and the inevitable prostitution'.[66] Since lack of wages eventually leads these working women – despite being skilful and hard-working – to fall into prostitution, they are wronged by the social system.[67] Furthermore, as Deborah Kaplan has also argued, Tonna's fiction demonstrates that the middle-class lady, 'as a

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[66] Joseph A. Kestner, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *The Wrongs of Woman*: Female Industrial Protest', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 2, no. 2 (1983), 193-214 (p. 210).

[67] See also Kestner, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's *The Wrongs of Woman*: Female Industrial Protest', p. 209: 'Ivy Pinchbeck notes that "the lace-runner, although the most skilful, was the hardest worked and the worst paid of all the operatives connected with the lace trade"; as a result, "almost all became prostitutes"'.

consumer of tainted goods', 'participates in the working-class woman's fall from domesticity', which threatens 'bourgeois femininity' in turn.[68] Thus, Tonna helps to establish middle-class female identification with working-class and even fallen sisters. Her representations influence later literary portrayals of working-class women, especially needlewomen, or fallen women, in novels by women writers, such as Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and *Ruth* (1853).[69] Mary Barton is the daughter of factory workers and a milliner, which seemingly connects earlier factory novels with later fiction about working women;[70] Ruth, too, is an apprentice milliner who becomes a fallen woman. As Christine L. Krueger finds, in *Ruth*, Gaskell further establishes cross-class female identification with the fallen woman, arousing some contemporary controversy.[71] Therefore, Tonna extends her readers' sympathy to previously unacceptable working-class and fallen women, with whom Gaskell elicits additional cross-class identification.

Under Tonna's influence, Gaskell draws her readers into identification with a seamstress, the eponymous working-class heroine of *Mary Barton*.[72] While Lynn M.

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[68] Zlotnick, p. 187, note 6. Deborah Kaplan, 'The Woman Worker in Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's Fiction', *Mosaic* 18 (1985), 51-63.

[69] For Tonna's contribution to establishing the seamstress as a symbol of working-class women, see Lynn M. Alexander, 'Creating a Symbol: the Seamstress in Victorian Literature', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 18 (1999), no. 1, 29-38. As Alexander remarks, 'By 1844, government reports and the publication of the novels of Stone and Tonna had established the seamstress as a figure of hardship and suffering. It was at this point that women writers overtly adopted the seamstress as a symbol for the working classes, especially working-class women' (p. 32).

[70] Lynn M. Alexander makes a few comments on the milliner characters in *Mary Barton*. See Lynn Mae Alexander, *Women, Work, and Representation: Needlewomen in Victorian Art and Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), p.19: 'While Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* has the daughter of factory workers obtaining a job in a millinery shop, the emphasis remains on the working-class community in which she lives – and the only time we see her working is when she is assisting a friend [Margaret] who is a slopworker', and Lynn M. Alexander, 'Creating a Symbol: the Seamstress in Victorian Literature', p. 34: 'Gaskell balances Mary's character with that of Margaret, also a working-class seamstress, but one who is a slopworker. Gaskell usually shows Margaret, not Mary, at her needle; and the scenes involving needlework mostly show Mary helping Margaret in the evenings, with any discussion of working or health conditions, including the inevitable blindness resulting form long hours and poor lighting, centering around the experiences of Margaret, the working-class slopworker'. In addition, blindness among dressmakers, as exemplified by Margaret in *Mary Barton*, is recorded as fact in the *Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission* and quoted by Tonna. See Christine L. Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 150.

[71] Tonna's influence on Gaskell's Ruth as a subversive heroine has been partly discussed in the previous section. For more discussion, see Krueger, pp. 159, 164, 205.

[72] As Lynn Alexander analyzes it, 'Gaskell immerses a seamstress among the working classes and has her

Alexander notes that Mary Barton acts as an 'observer' through whom the reader can understand working-class conditions, we can further contrast this working-class heroine with the middle-class lady characters who assume similar roles in *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong*. As discussed in Chapter One, in *Mary Ashley* a middle-class lady, Miss Myddleton, serves as a guiding character or a surrogate reader in leading readers to understand the factory system from a middle-class perspective. Similarly, in *Michael Armstrong*, Miss Brotherton inquires into conditions at the factory. Thus, in each of the two earlier factory novels, readers could identify themselves with a middle-class intermediary character in order to learn about factory workers, but in this later development identification with the working-class heroine becomes a possible source of information about the working class. The change testifies to the cross-class female identification with the seamstress, an identification to which Tonna and Gaskell contribute. Furthermore, following Tonna's use of the image of the seamstress 'to encourage women to actions that would improve conditions for seamstresses' or for working-class females, here Gaskell seeks to 'inspire action in their readers' to better the lot of the working class in general.[73] Thus *Mary Barton* inherits themes from earlier industrial fiction yet adapts to a new form these earlier elements and the devices of the surrogate reader and the symbolic seamstress.

III. Tonna's Monstrous Working-Class Mothers in Factories and the Unwomanly Female Miners in Parliamentary Reports

As *Helen Fleetwood* deals with fallen factory girls, and 'The Young Milliner and

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function as an observer rather than a participant; Mary Barton is a product of the working classes (both her parents were factory workers), but her position as an apprentice in a millinery house has set her apart from other members of her class. When the mill lays off workers, she observes their hardships, but does not experience the same degree of suffering herself.' 'By creating a protagonist who observes the sufferings of labouring classes rather than experiencing them herself, Gaskell distances her protagonist from the issues, yet allows her to be sympathetic to them. This objectivity creates a feeling of empathy within Gaskell's readers; they see the suffering along with Mary Barton and respond with equal sympathy'. See Alexander, 'Creating a Symbol: the Seamstress in Victorian Literature', pp. 35-36.

[73] Alexander, 'Creating a Symbol: the Seamstress in Victorian Literature', p. 36.

Dressmaker' deals with fallen seamstresses in connection with incapable wives, Tonna's 'The Forsaken Home' further deals with the destroyed working-class mothers in factories or in mines. While the *First Report of Commissioners for Enquiring into the Employment and Conditions of Children in Mines and Manufactories* (1842) caused social outrage with the images of indecent female miners which it exposed, Tonna's novel turns the monstrous female miners into sympathetic mothers. Tonna describes the process through which these women become degraded by their employment. Again, she uses her Evangelical idea of universal female domesticity to appeal to her middle-class women readers.

Before looking into Tonna's portrayals of these victimized working mothers in her 1843 fiction, we can first look at the graphic representations of indecent female mine workers – ranging from teenage girls of 'about 15 years of age' to adult women – in the parliamentary reports of the Children's Employment Commission of 1842, which present horrifying deviations from the Victorian feminine ideal and are widely reproduced in the press (Figures 5.1-5.5).[74] Among these popular images, there is a picture from Scriven's report to the Commission that shows a female coal miner with short hair, standing with legs a bit crossed, her hands in her trouser pockets, and her face and clothes covered with coal-dust (Figure 5.5, on the left). The woman looks manly in gesture and appearance. Catherine Robson remarks that this figure 'appears to be a solid and self-reliant lass, sufficiently proud of herself to be wearing a necklace with her grimy work clothes'.[75] She actually resembles a female cross-dresser, not much

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[74] The illustrations were reproduced in Peter Kirby, 'Child Labour, Public Decency and the Iconography of the Children's Employment Commission of 1842', *Manchester Papers in Economic and Social History*, 62 (Oct. 2007). Peter Kirby reviewed the 'innovative use of drawings' to depict the working conditions of miners by the Commission of 1842 (p. 9). Among the Commission's illustrations, as Kirby observes, 'the most widely-publicised' one was from sub-commissioner Scriven's report on west Yorkshire, which 'depicts a 14 year-old boy and a girl of "about 15 years of age" being wound up a mine shaft in a "cross-lapped" position' (p. 11) (Figure 5.2). The girl as well as the boy in the image is 'clearly naked from the waist up', with her legs around his body (p. 12). The image, with its female nudity and the physical contact between a teenage boy and girl, was shocking and widely reported and reproduced in early Victorian society (p. 12). The drawing was also modified by the *Westminster Review* and presented in a refined version in July 1842 (p. 14) (Figure 5.3).

[75] Robson, p. 71.

different from a working-class man. Yet her shirt is ragged, so that her breasts are partially exposed, though covered with and obscured by dirt. Then, as Peter Kirby notes, the *Westminster Review* further eroticized the picture, showing the woman 'clean of coal-dust' and 'holding her exposed breasts in a provocative manner' (Figure 5.5, on the right).[76] As Robson also comments, 'the girl has been transformed into a smirking houri, attracting attention to her semiexposed snowy white breast by cupping it with her hand, and directly soliciting the reader with come-hither eyes'.[77] In this revised version, the woman's hair is longer and curly and she wears a provocative facial expression, with her white face, neck, and chest clearly shown. Compared with the original version, in which her face and body are darkened by dirt, the woman in the modified version has a more sexually suggestive or disturbing appearance and gesture. It is indeed, as Robson comments, 'repulsion' rather than 'compassion' that these images may provoke; they also indicate that the commission team, 'truly appalled' by such 'human misery', ignited 'a genuine desire to hasten reform'.[78] This widely circulated social imagery echoes Tonna's warning in the finale of *The Wrongs of Woman*: 'our women are changed into men, and our men into devils'.[79] However, by transforming these representations of manly or sexualized female miners into victimized mothers, Tonna changes her readers' reaction to the female miners from one of repulsion into one of sympathy. As Mary Lenard also suggests, the 'cultural prominence of Tonna's fiction signals … important shifts in social attitudes and literary conventions – shifts that resulted in a new structure of feeling, a new cultural discourse'.[80]

Through cross-class female identification with domesticity as her critical means, Tonna calls for the re-examination of females employed in mines. In her fiction, by

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[76] Kirby, p. 16.
[77] Robson, p. 71.
[78] Robson, p. 72.
[79] Charlotte Elizabeth [Tonna], *The Wrongs of Woman: Part IV. The Lace-Runners* (New York: John S. Taylor & Co., 1844), p. 112. Subsequent references are to this edition.
[80] Mary Lenard, 'Deathbeds and Didacticism: Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna and Victorian Social Reform Literature' in *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers,* ed. by Brenda Ayres (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp. 67-90 (p. 69).

linking the female miner with her domestic roles of wife and mother, as well as with her original 'tidy' status, Tonna further stresses the inhuman working conditions that victimize the woman. Redrawing the image of female miners in 'The Forsaken Home', the factory woman heroine Alice Smith is told by a fellow female worker Mrs Carter about the working conditions of female miners. In a sympathetic and regretful tone, Mrs Carter points at a factory girl and says that her mother, once 'a tidy girl', is 'married very young to a miner', and that 'he took her down to the coal-pits to hurry for him' (p. 68).[81] Mrs Carter adds an explanation of 'hurrying', which reflects the female miner's working conditions: ''Tis the drawing of a wooden carriage, heavy-loaded with coals, along the seams of a mine, where a body couldn't stand half upright, where all is as dark as midnight except the candle stuck in the miner's cap' (p. 68). Then she describes the clothing and physical position of the female miner, associating the images with slavery and the animalization of human beings: 'she had to slave like a brute beast, in nothing but her body-linen, with a coarse pair of trousers, a thick leather belt round her waist, a heavy iron chain fastened to it, passing between her legs, and hooked on to the carriage' (p. 68). The ragged wear and the indecent position of open legs crossed with an iron chain convey a hint of sexual vulgarity. This concept of industrial work making women unwomanly, slave-like and beast-like, is repeated in representation of working women in different trades in The *Wrongs of Woman*, as we have seen in the previous section in regard to seamstresses. The narrator continues to talk about the long hours of female labour, spent crawling on four limbs in the dark mine, which makes readers sympathize with the brutalized and exhausted female worker: 'she dragging it, almost on all-fours, through these passages, ten, twelve, fourteen, or sixteen hours – I was going to say, every day – but there was no day for her. It was dark night always in that frightful mine; and dark night above-ground before she could leave it' (pp. 68-69). Thus, in Tonna's

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[81] Charlotte Elizabeth [Tonna], *The Wrongs of Woman: Part II. The Forsaken Home* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1843). Subsequent references are to this edition.

presentation of these unfeminine working females, she not only alarms her readers, but also evokes their sympathy for these figures who, in the popular imagination, are considered repulsive.

The sexual immorality and androgyny of female miners is more strenuously and explicitly discussed in Tonna's non-fictional treatise. In her chapter on the mining poor in *The Perils of the Nation,* as Esther Godfrey notices, the 'unsteadiness of class-based gender identities becomes central to Tonna's study':[82]

> She laments at length the sinful licentiousness that pervades the mine, this 'scene of deepened gloom.' Men, women, and children worked in mixed company in the mines, wearing little clothing because of the heat, and created an androgynous workplace where the notion of separate spheres and often gender differences themselves did not exist. As she describes, 'The dress of these young labourers of both sexes is the same: from seven or eight years of age to twenty and upwards they may be seen, naked to the waist, and having a loose pair of ragged trousers, frequently worn to tatters by the constant friction of the chain.'[83]

In Tonna's account, as Godfrey observes, these ambiguously androgynous and sexually immoral figures carry infection from the mines into society. As Tonna proclaims, 'Indeed, the transfer to the surface, of a body of females so utterly hardened in the gross depravities of the mines, must, for a time, spread contamination on all sides'.[84] The fact that Tonna points out the problem of unfeminine female miners more directly in her anonymous treatise, including them in her novel only as subjects of indirect description rather than as lively characters, suggests the difficulty or impossibility of representing such figures in fiction.

The root of all the causes of female suffering and consequent social unrest, in Tonna's interpretation, is the deprivation of working-class women's natural right to

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[82] Esther Godfrey, '*Jane Eyre*, from Governess to Girl Bride', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 45, no. 4 (2005), 853-71 (p. 854). In this essay, Godfrey suggests the influence of Tonna upon Charlotte Brontë.

[83] Godfrey, pp. 854-55. [Tonna], *The Perils of the Nation: An Appeal to the Legislature, the Clergy, and the Higher and Middle Classes* (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, 1843), pp. 54, 47. Subsequent references are to this edition.

[84] [Tonna], *The Perils of the Nation*, p. 54.

preside over their hearths. In 'The Forsaken Home', the female protagonist Alice Smith, who is forced into the factory by poverty, is demoralized by long hours of work and exhaustion, and thus unable to 'exert moral influence over her family', as Dzelzainis indicates.[85] Indeed, as already proclaimed in her opening remarks in *The Wrongs of Woman*, Tonna stresses the privileged female domestic role of a mother, to which she assigns religious importance. As Mary Lenard also observes, Tonna represents 'a domestic ideology that gave women "natural" dominance over both morality and affect'.[86] Tonna herself is one of those 'women authors, who, because of their culturally sanctioned roles as guardians of "sympathy" and "mutual understanding" ("Lady Novelists" 24)', constructed 'affective bonds' between 'the rich and the poor' (perceived as 'two opposing camps' in 'dominated cultural discourse' by the 1840s) and 'figured prominently in the arena of social reform literature'.[87] How Tonna empowers women of all classes with her innovative cult of domesticity will be further expounded later.

In 'The Forsaken Home', to turn the monstrous factory women into sympathetic females, Tonna narrates the process in which the factory worker Alice becomes an enfeebled and demoralized mother through exhausting work in polluting factory environments. Like the eponymous factory girl of *Helen Fleetwood*, whose morals eventually become tainted through her association with immoral fellow workers in the factory, after entering it Alice 'feels her sex cruelly wronged by being placed in a situation so fraught with evils' (p. 42). Tonna delineates Alice's evil associates as working women who viciously debase their maternal duties of child care. Alice observes that it is a 'universal practice' among her fellow female labourers 'to quiet these poor neglected babes during the long hours, or rather days, of their mothers' absence, by dosing them with a mixture, of the nature of which she is ignorant, but its effects she

[85] Dzelzainis, 'Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Pre-Millenarianism, and the Formation of Gender Ideology in the Ten Hours Campaign', p. 185.
[86] Lenard, 'Deathbeds and Didacticism', p. 72.
[87] *Ibid.*

clearly comprehends to be very deadly' (p. 43).[88] Yet later on, Alice herself cannot not remain immune to the immorality among factory workers. She becomes a neglectful wife and mother as well. To her 'dread and dismay', her family is thus demoralized and destroyed, as her household becomes 'disordered' and 'disunited' (p. 63). The narrator reviews Alice's degradation:

> There was a time when Alice Smith would have laughed at the idea of calling in additional influence to guide her honest partner into any course that she deemed best for his family; but that was a time *when she filled her proper sphere*, *as the manager of his household affairs, the watchful nurse of his children, the presiding genius of his poor but peaceful home*. She is now exhausting her little remaining strength in a daily routine of toil, alike disgusting and degrading in her sight, among companions whose very talk is *contamination*. (pp. 62-63, my emphasis)

Alice can no longer serve as a moral guide for her husband, a tender mother to her children, a 'manager' of the household, or 'the presiding genius' of home – due to exhausting labour and a contaminating working environment. As Dzelzainis also notices, with female domestic duties neglected, Alice's husband John gradually indulges in drink and begins beating his wife (p. 110); 'the children become "filthy", as well as "wayward and unruly"; the new-born baby dies of maternal deprivation; the family no longer attends church; and their home is "the very picture of hopeless neglect"' (pp. 110-12).[89] The 'domestic order' breaks down from 'the long absences of Alice'.[90] Thus Tonna in her representation of factory women focuses on the clash between their domestic responsibilities and their employment. With the same domestic concerns affecting all women, Tonna further encourages her middle-class female readers to empathize with

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[88] The narrator then describes a factory scene when 'one wild-looking female labourer holds up a shrivelled, long-limbed little creature, the broad, fixed, unmeaning stare of whose eyes is like that of a corpse, and says, "See, here's the blessing of Godfrey…" and she began roughly to dance it. The poor babe uttered a faint cry of pain and distress….' (pp. 43-44). The narrator later supplies some factual information: 'Godfrey's Cordial is a mixture of boiled treacle and water, with the addition of a certain portion of opium. Mothers purchase it for the purpose of keeping their children quiet, or of 'sleeping them,' during the time the mother goes out to work. Many children are killed by it; some waste away to skeletons, and their sufferings are prolonged; others die more easily' (p. 44). Thus Tonna presents these working women as vicious mothers by means of fictional representation followed by factual knowledge, which makes her readers further relate to real-life woman workers.

[89] Dzelzainis, pp. 184-85.

[90] Dzelzainis, p. 185.

their working sisters.

Moreover, in Tonna's interpretation, it is not just these female workers who are victimized: females of all classes are endangered by the unchristian system. As Tonna declares in 'The Forsaken Home', women of England were hardened, brutalized, and turned into devils under the industrial system, a dangerous state of affairs which her female readers cannot escape and should take on the responsibility of ameliorating:

> Why, *we* are organizing *an army of ferocious, fearless women, inured to hardship, exercised in masculine labours – drinking, swearing, smoking Amazons*, to make an onset for which we are ill-prepared, seeing that God cannot be for us if *we* be even silent abettors of the system that thus *brutalizes*, thus *devilizes the wives and daughters of England*. (p. 141, my emphasis)

In Tonna's description, even the most aggressive working females who create social chaos are not persecutors by nature, but have been 'devilized' by the unchristian system. Tonna makes her middle-class readers reflect on the collective oppression imposed by their own class, and on the similarly jeopardized situations of those same middle-class women. Indeed, in 'Milliners and Dressmakers' Tonna directly links the doomed destiny of the fallen seamstresses with the greedy higher-class female employer, who sacrifices the welfare of her employees in her pursuit of profit.[91] Thus Tonna establishes the fateful connection between middle- and working-class females. To rescue their working sisters from falling, Tonna encourages her readers to boycott these inhumane employers through their purchases. Moreover, as Zlotnick observes, in the story 'The Little Pin Headers' (part III of *The Wrongs of Woman*), with its symbolic pin that pins the two worlds of the working and bourgeois sisters together, Tonna collapses the border between classes and their conventionally separate spheres, to connect women of all classes.[92] As Zlotnick states, 'Tonna breaches the protective walls of domesticity and

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[91] After talking about the fallen dressmaker Frances, the narrator comments, 'The snares laid for young girls are as numerous as are the intended victims; and the wrongs inflicted by a heartless woman, in her pursuit of gain, exposed the unhappy Frances to the yet greater, more enduring wrong, than heartless man inflicts, in the pursuit of unlawful gratification. To trace her course into the abyss of wretchedness and guilt would answer not good purpose: suffice it to say, she fell...' (p. 88).
[92] Zlotnick, p. 127.

denies the Victorian home its immunity from the competitive, exploitative world of capitalism'.[93] Addressing her female reader, who 'benefitted from the industrial order' 'as a user of pin' and other commodities, Tonna argues that 'every consumer bathes "in the guilt of innocent blood"' (p. 417), with the 'moral contagion spread by industrial capitalism' permeating her home and life.[94] Thus Tonna asks her female readers to 'promote positive social change through their concrete economic power as consumers' as well as influencing their male family members and friends towards effecting systematic social reform, which 'gives the abstract notion of female influence a concrete formulation'.[95]

Tonna thus rewrites the working-class female into a fearsome yet sympathetic figure, a realistic sufferer persecuted by social injustice. She changes public, especially female, attitudes towards undomestic females from hostility to empathy. The working-class home and family are indeed an important concern for Evangelical campaigners in the Ten Hours Movement. As Dzelzainis indicates, Tonna shares with the Tory MP Lord Ashley, the 'parliamentary champion of Ten Hours campaign', the same faith in pre-Millenarianism ('an extreme, minority strand of Evangelicalism') and an 'analysis of the evils of the factory system: one which came to predicate the security of the nation on the return of the female factory worker – particularly the mother – to her proper sphere, the home'.[96] As I demonstrate, the domestic role of women also becomes an important theme in Tonna's novelistic representations. While *Helen Fleetwood* focuses on factory girls, *The Wrongs of Woman* concentrates on portrayals of working women, especially those who occupy the position of wife and mother. The important task, in Tonna's view, is to empower all women by restoring them to domestic dominance.

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[93] Zlotnick, p. 131.
[94] Zlotnick, pp. 131-32.
[95] Zlotnick, p. 132.
[96] Dzelzainis, pp. 181-82.

Tonna brings innovation to the cult of domesticity and widens the scope of the female domestic sphere. With her industrial novels, Tonna envisions empowered roles for all women through her Evangelical cult of domesticity, which stresses female moral influence. Indeed, Lenard notes that Tonna as a female writer renders herself 'one such politically influential woman'.[97] Regarding her depictions of working-class females, as Dzelzainis comments, Tonna presents 'the role of the working-class wife and mother as pivotal to the spiritual regeneration of the industrial masses'.[98] In her novels, Tonna not only expects working-class women to be morally influential by reigning over their hearths, she also expects her middle-class women readers to be politically influential by becoming informed about social conditions and influencing the men who hold political power.

IV. Cross-Class Female Relationships: From Hierarchical Management to Reciprocal Sisterhood

As previous sections have already indicated, Tonna encourages cross-class female identification and bonds between working- and middle-class women to be established by their manufacturing and purchasing behaviour; the section further examines the new model of cross-class female relationship that Tonna develops in her novels. I argue that Tonna envisions a cross-class sisterhood with domesticity at its core, which is decisively different from Trollope's female paternalism in *Michael Armstrong* and from Montagu's patriarchal and paternal class relationship in *Mary Ashley*.[99] Only when we recognize Tonna's shift of focus from the factory girl to the working-class woman − to whom Tonna ascribes equal domestic power − can we better appreciate her idea of cross-class sisterhood, unlike the hierarchical cross-class female relationships in *Mary Ashley* and

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[97] Lenard, 'Deathbeds and Didacticism', p. 73.
[98] Dzelzainis, p. 185.
[99] For Trollope's female paternalism, see Rosemarie Bodenheimer, '1. The Romance of the Female Paternalist: Frances Trollope's Female Knights', in *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp.15-35.

Michael Armstrong. Through analyzing the pairs of factory girl and middle-class woman in *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong*, the sole factory girl heroine in *Helen Fleetwood*, and Tonna's address to her female readers in *The Wrongs of Woman*, we shall gain further insight into middle-class female social participation and the emergence of cross-class female empowerment in Tonna's novels.

To begin with, I would like to examine the relationship between the middle-class heiress Amina Myddleton and the submissive factory girl in *Mary Ashley*: a paternal and philanthropic link between the middle- and working-class females. I argue that Dorice Williams Elliot's analysis of the role of middle-class women as paternalist supervisors of the factory workers (comparable to their domestic servants) actually better explains the relationship between the mistresses and the factory girls in *Mary Ashley* than the analogous relationships in Trollope's or Tonna's novels.[100] As Elliot suggests, following the 'paternalist model' of domestic servants 'positioned as dependent children' in the middle-class home, middle-class women writers of industrial fiction project a similar viewpoint onto the relationship between factory workers and mill owners, who – parallel to the mistresses or masters at home – are seen as providing supervision, protection, and patronage to their employees.[101] Although *Mary Ashley* is written by a male novelist, the factory owner-operative relationship within the text is ideally presented as such a paternal one. For example, Amina often thinks about the 'goodness' of her late father, owner of the Myddleton Mills, towards 'his factory children' (p. 17). Thus Amina herself emulates her late father's role in taking care of the industrial poor.

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[100] Dorice Williams Elliott, 'Servants and Hands: Representing the Working Classes in Victorian Factory Novels', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 28, no. 2 (2000), 377-90. Elliot contends that industrial novelists like Trollope and Tonna compare factory workers with domestic servants, who are employed and managed by the middle-class mistresses, so that the middle-class women writers claim 'authority for middle-class women even in the supposedly more public world of the factory, by virtue of their experience as domestic managers of servants' (p. 385) However, I argue that, while Trollope presents Miss Brotherton as a 'female paternalist' in *Michael Armstrong*, this middle-class female character actually challenges the patriarchal and paternalist model, and that Tonna aims at developing mutual dependence and respect between women of different classes rather than promoting hierarchical class management.
[101] Elliott, pp. 380-381.

Besides this, *Mary Ashley* presents another way in which middle-class women help to manage the working class – through extending middle-class feminine domesticity to the practice of individual philanthropic care. In the novel, Amina follows the example of her aunt Mrs William Perceval, a mill-owner's wife, in offering charitable aid to lower-class people. Mary Ashley is thus a poor girl whom Amina helps to introduce into her late father's factory to do the 'beneficial' work of supporting her impoverished family.[102] Aside from Mary Ashley, Amina helps by offering work to other unemployed people, together with residence at her late father's cotton mill (pp. 49-50). The narrator directly encourages middle-class women to perform sincere acts of charity, remarking that 'when a woman is anxious to perform a kind act, the inventive faculty is never long dormant, or the ways and means far distant' (p. 22). The way Amina bids her servant Larry to aid these poor people and bids the factory overlooker John Bowman to organize their work further illustrates the authority and role of the middle-class woman in managing and mediating class relationships (pp. 46, 50).

In *Mary Ashley*, the middle-class women's philanthropic acts are intertwined with their domestic roles. In the case of Mrs William Perceval, the novel emphasizes the domestic roles of a middle-class woman as a good mother and wife. Furthermore, the narrator shows how, through her charitable deeds, such as visiting poor sick women and educating factory girls who work at her husband's mill, the mill owner's wife can use feminine affection to support her husband in managing their employees. As the narrator says, being a good wife, she 'sought the good will of Mr William Perceval's family because she loved him, and knew it to be the duty of a good wife to conciliate those standing in connexion with her husband' (p. 34). Also, as a good mother, she instructs her children, cultivates 'the affection of their father', and is 'hourly grateful to heaven for

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[102] When Amina first sees the miserable scene of Mary Ashley's family passing outside her window on a dreary snowy night, her eyes are obscured by tears and she kneels and prays fervently for 'all who were in anywise afflicted or distressed' (p.18). As she is 'very anxious to render the poor persons assistance', she asks her servant Larry to seek out Mary Ashley's family, and eventually helps provide working opportunities for them with the help of the factory overlooker John Bowman – 'principal overlooker of the Myddleton mills, who had faithfully served his kind master for five and thirty years' (pp. 22, 24, 67, 2).

so many mercies' (p. 34). In the interest of practising charity and comforting the poor, Mrs William Perceval goes to see a dying woman every day during the latter's long illness, bringing jelly to the sick one; 'her prayers', as the dying woman says, 'have done me a great deal of good, and her manner of explaining the Bible, was to me – a poor creature like me – very, very comforting' (pp. 44-45). Following Mrs William Perceval's example, Amina thus pays regular charitable visits each morning and every weekend (p. 59). Moreover, to educate the factory girls, Mrs William Perceval holds a weekly class meeting at her house, for:

> all the girls employed in her husband's factory, who had any ear for music, and evinced any power of voice, when, under the superintendence of a master, they were instructed in the psalmody of the Church of England; and the perfection to which they arrived was of such a character, that the church they invariably attended was crowded to an excess. (p. 84)

Thus this middle-class mistress extends the paternal treatment of the factory operatives, especially the female ones. The middle- and working-class female relationship presented in the novel is a hierarchical class relationship, featuring the mistress's benevolence and tender provision of care and education. The novel, as an apologia for the factory system, adheres to the conventional hierarchical order and the conservative class and gender relationship.

Mary Ashley reveals a means to female social participation and class management through extension of their domestic roles to philanthropic concerns. We shall further examine the domestic roles and philanthropic acts of middle-class women, in relation to the male-dominated factory enterprises, as promoted in *Mary Ashley*. Elizabeth Langland, in her study of domestic ideology and middle-class women in the Victorian novel, has noted the significance of the mistress as an 'adjunct to man's business endeavours' despite the opposition of the private domestic sphere to 'the public sphere of commerce'.[103] As Langland points out, there emerged two strategies enabling

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[103] Elizabeth Langland, 'Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 107, no. 2 (1992), 290-304, (pp.

middle-class women to 'mediate class differences' and 'to manage lower-class dissent': one was 'the regulation of the classes in the middle-class home', as shown in the mistress-servant relationship; the second was 'a logical extension of their "angelic" mission – philanthropy, particularly in the form of house-to-house visiting'.[104] We can apply Langland's analysis to our reading of *Mary Ashley*. In the instance of the mill owner's wife, Mrs Perceval replicates the mistress-servant relationship in the mistress-worker one and brings the factory girls into her home for such 'domestic' management, while also paying regular house-to-house visits to other feeble working women. As Langland contends, 'middle-class women approached the poor "not merely as spiritual missionaries … but as managers and employers of labour in their own right'. [105] Therefore, 'in the interest of maintaining middle-class control', the middle-class Victorian women interact with the lower-class employees and regulate their behaviour.[106] Ironically though, as Langland has noted,

> In a gendered politics of power, middle-class Victorian women were subservient to men; but in a class politics of power, they cooperated and participated with men in achieving middle-class control through the management of the lower classes.[107]

As we contemplate the gender and class relationships in *Mary Ashley*, we see that the hierarchical order, in which middle-class men are higher than women, and middle-class women higher than working-class ones, are strictly adhered to. The working-class females remain powerless and passive throughout, waiting to receive kind help from their upper-class superintendents. In this paternalist and patriarchal model, as the

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290-95). As Langland observes, the 'Angel in the House', as 'the intersection of class and gender ideologies in a Victorian icon', 'actually performed a more significant and extensive economic and political function than is usually perceived' (pp. 290-91). Langland indicates that 'running the middle-class household', including supervising servants, was actually 'an exercise in class management, a process both inscribed and revealed in the Victorian novel' (p. 291). Simply put, the 'central task of the Victorian angel was management of her servant(s)' (p. 295). Thus, the 'Novel, in sum, stages the ideological conflict between the domestic angel in the house and her other (the worker or servant), exposing through the female characters the mechanism of middle-class control' (p. 291).

[104] Langland, p. 296. As Langland also indicates, it seems natural that 'the model women developed to govern relations between masters and servants was applied outside the home to rich and poor' (p. 296).

[105] *Ibid.*

[106] Langland, p. 295.

[107] Langland, p. 294.

working class are dependent on the middle class, the middle-class females are dependent on the (middle-class) male. Yet the practice of house-to-house visiting can be deemed a significant step through which women can start crossing the borders between separate spheres and between different classes, reconciling class relations and remedying social ills. The contradictions between the powerless and powerful roles of middle-class women in different gender and class relationship contexts are somewhat challenged by the rather subversive female paternalist Mary Brotherton in *Michael Armstrong*.

Mary Brotherton, like Amina Myddleton in *Mary Ashley*, is an heiress of a mill owner and tries to help the working-class poor. However, while *Mary Ashley* presents harmonious – though hierarchical – cooperation between people of different genders and classes, the representation of tyrannical and exploitative treatment of the lower class in *Michael Armstrong* indicates a crisis in class as well as gender relationships. On her way to rescue the victimized factory children, Mary Brotherton, by contrast with Amina Myddleton, is independent and hostile to the factory system, which signifies the evil of male-dominated capitalism. She fights to expose the social evil and to remedy industrial cruelty, which appears to be caused by self-interested male manufacturers. Through her visit to the factory boy Michael Armstrong's home, and her long journey to the horrifying Deep Valley Mill, as well as other investigations, she becomes acquainted with factory conditions (previously concealed from middle-class females like her) and rescues the helpless factory girl Fanny Fletcher from the industrial hell.

Trollope uses Mary Brotherton as, in Rosemarie Bodenheimer's words, a 'female knight' and 'female paternalist' fighting against the evil factory system constructed by male capitalists.[108] Yet giving middle-class females this kind of masculine power proves to be unworkable, as the novel eventually ends with her emigration, along with

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[108] Rosemarie Bodenheimer, 'Frances Trollope's Female Knights', in '1. The Romance of the Female Paternalist', *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 25-35.

her protégés, out of English society. Mary Brotherton is subversive in terms of her gender; rather than practising feminine submissiveness, she opposes the evil factory system erected by the middle-class male. Talking about Mary Brotherton in *Michael Armstrong*, Joseph Kestner comments that 'for the first time in this literature, a female becomes the repository of the social conscience, not a male as in *The System* or *The Rioters*'.[109] In contrast to Martha, the meek and ignorant daughter of the greedy and arrogant factory owner Sir Matthew Dowling, Miss Brotherton, like a crusader, confronts the injustice committed by middle-class men. Bodenheimer points out that Trollope reveals in her novel 'a social sensibility that is simultaneously paternalist and antipatriarchal'.[110] Distinguished from capitalist male oppressors in the patriarchal system, Mary Brotherton endeavours to implement paternalistic protection for the working class by herself. Bodenheimer calls Mary Brotherton a female knight, who unmasks 'the guilty secrets of the patriarchs' and sets out to 'rescue the victimized poor'.[111] Turning into a 'female knight', Mary Brotherton becomes socially active in the public arena; she fights against the male capitalist and by herself rescues the oppressed victim, the working-class girl Fanny, from the factory. Such manly empowerment of the middle-class female contradicts the ideology of separate spheres. The novelist tries to endow the middle-class woman with socially influential power through female awakening, which spurs her on to individual heroic rescues conducted in a rather impetuous manner and without public support. Yet, although Mary Brotherton violates 'the domestic ideal of womanhood' in 'her earlier adventures', in the end this headlong female social participation culminates in the middle-class woman, yoked together with her family of rescued factory children, emigrating to Germany; thus her chivalric act proves to be unsustainable even in fictional English society.[112] In addition, while the

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[109] Joseph A. Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 57.
[110] Bodenheimer, p. 25.
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] See Bodenheimer, pp. 30-31.

middle-class heroine enjoys autonomy and achieves some masculine power as a female knight, the working-class girl, Fanny, remains powerless and dependent throughout.

Yet, the issues that remain unresolved in *Michal Armstrong*, namely the futility of individual rescues in face of the system and the power struggle of the middle-class woman, are managed differently by Tonna. Tonna's ideal middle-class women effectively utilize their female power either by boycotting unethical manufactures in their domestic purchases or by influencing the men in their domestic realm towards social reform. Thus, from Trollope to Tonna, we see the development of a different way to empower middle-class women. In Tonna's model, middle-class women can simultaneously achieve social participation and fulfil the domestic ideal of womanhood. The radical and dramatic individual act of Mary Brotherton, playing an unlikely female role in Victorian society, is replaced by the more modest and feasible collective action advocated in the appeal to female readers of *The Wrongs of Woman*. Tonna helps her readers envision more expansive and profound functions within the domestic role; with effective domestic action and its all-pervasive influence from the home onto society, women can enjoy a new form of social participation and a new cross-class female relationship.

The cross-class female relationship Tonna envisions is a new kind of cooperative connection between middle- and working-class women, less hierarchical or paternal and more equal and reciprocal. Not only is middle-class women's domestic power emphasized, but the restoration of working-class women to their homes is urged, through the Ten Hours Movement campaign to shorten their working hours. Thereupon, these working women can likewise exert their moral power to safeguard their families, influence their husbands, and nurture their children in a positive way. As all women, regardless of class, take good care of their households, collectively the social ills will be relieved, and society will become more wholesome. In a revised feminine manner, Tonna highlights female domestic action as vital for national renewal. Thus Tonna

illustrates a kind of respectable female social participation and moral influence over men, which is sustained by domestic ideology.

Moreover, the powerless position of the factory girls in both *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong* becomes one of power in *Helen Fleetwood*. Then, shifting her focus from girls to working-class women in *The Wrongs of Woman*, Tonna further endows these adult women with domestic authority. In *Helen Fleetwood,* as discussed in Chapter Three, we see a self-sufficient and morally influential factory girl. For the first time, a factory girl constitutes the real and sole heroine of an industrial novel, unlike the helpless factory girls, dependents of middle-class mistresses, in *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong*. In addition, there are factory girls of morally destructive power, like Phoebe, in *Helen Fleetwood*, as discussed earlier in this chapter. There are no major middle-class female characters in Tonna's industrial novels, but the narrator addresses her middle-class female readers constantly. In *The Wrongs of Woman*, as already discussed in this chapter, readers witness the indispensability of working-class women as wives and mothers at home, and they see the hidden bonds between the fates of working-class and middle-class women. In this interwoven web of connections, women of different classes can (indirectly) help each other, but only if they all bring their domestic roles into full play. In Tonna's conceptualization, women's power lies in their influence over men. As Krueger notices in *Helen Fleetwood*, when the widow Mrs Green tells the mill owner's daughter Amelia, 'it is not money that I want: but if you could win your father's protection for my poor girls, how thankful I should be' (p. 560), the narrator advises her readers to influence their male associates.[113] Then, in *The Wrongs of Woman*, the readers are informed: if working-class women are granted enough time at the hearth to guard working-class morality, they can curb social infection from spreading into middle-class households; meanwhile if middle-class women wield moral influence over their consumer behaviour and advise their male relatives

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[113] Krueger, p. 141.

accordingly, they can help facilitate better working and living conditions for working women. In other words, they can mutually consolidate the female spiritual power at the hearth. Thus, each female of every class is given authority to govern her own household in an independent yet interrelated way.

In *The Wrongs of Woman*, Tonna thus envisions a new way for middle-class women to extend their domesticity into society. In contrast to the conventional form of direct, private, house-to-house, philanthropic actions as seen in *Mary Ashley*, Tonna suggests an all-inclusive and transcendental female power of influence. Unlike the anti-patriarchal yet paternal power assumed by the middle-class woman in *Michael Armstrong*, Tonna's conception of cross-class sisterhood strikes a new balance in harmonious class and gender relationships, which grant women of all classes their own female power without threatening that of the male. Moreover, though still helping to mediate class relations, the middle-class females turn from paternalist mistresses or managers of their dependent working-class children into sensible and affectionate sisters of their working-class counterparts, who hold equal female rights. The cross-class female relationship and interaction depart from hierarchy to become more reciprocal. The partial, contradictory or unstable empowerment of the middle-class women in *Mary Ashley* and *Michael Armstrong* also changes into the overall enhancement of female domestic roles and widening of women's domestic sphere.

Tonna makes clear to her female readers the jeopardized situations of working-class women, with whom they are in the same boat, and argues that they should not continue to 'suffer and be still' but must exert their female influence to bring about change.[114] Therefore Tonna concludes in *The Wrongs of Woman,* 'it is the peculiar work of Christianity, wherever it is established, to elevate woman from the debased position in which she is elsewhere placed' (p. 417). As Krueger comments, 'this could

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[114] A woman's 'highest duty is so often to suffer, and be still,' by Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Daughters of England, Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities,* (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1842), p. 133.

also be said of the legacy of evangelical fiction she left to Elizabeth Gaskell'.[115]
Alexander notes that, in *Mary Barton*, Gaskell's premise is that:

> there must be reciprocation; labourers and owners must work together. Without reciprocation neither worker nor mill owner will survive, as John Barton comes to realize on his deathbed and Mr Carson through the death of his son.[116]

With the eponymous working-class heroine, the novel thus guides readers to envision a new gender role and class relationship, leading towards mutual understanding and equality.

Conclusion

To some extent, the end of the Ten Hours Movement and the inclusion of women in the Ten Hours Act of 1847 naturally lead to the factory children leaving the central stage of industrial fiction. As the main social issues of concern also shift to Chartist violence, the relation between masters and men, and others, the industrial or social novel also enters a new stage with the more mature works that people are comparatively familiar with today. These early industrial novels, as examined in this thesis, are thus configured as an experimental field in which literary and non-literary discourses intersect with visual representations. It is a site where fresh textual integration and construction of new textual relationships take place, constituting an important process in the formation of the genre. While the representation of the factory child negotiates contradictory ideologies of industrial labour, class, gender, and childhood, the text itself also mediates the conflicts between different forms of writing. Moving towards cooperation, the new genre emerges and new social relationships are conceived. The novel's conjunction of these textual and social integrations, or the creation of the hybrid literary mode at these novel intersections, is thus significant in Victorian literary, cultural, and social history.

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[115] Krueger, p. 155.
[116] Alexander, 'Creating a Symbol: the Seamstress in Victorian Literature', p. 36.

The representation of factory children, which these novels centre upon, correspondingly becomes a point where various conceptions of industrial labour, childhood, class and gender converge. The diverse images of factory children thus symbolically embody unstable combinations of contradictory ideas and discursive elements. This hybrid representation is remarkably versatile in crossing the line, bridging the gap, reconciling oppositions, and establishing collaboration between people of different social positions and texts of different types. Therefore, at the novel intersections of early industrial fiction, the novelistic representation of factory children plays a dynamic and complex role that manifests and mediates social and textual conflicts, connections, and confluence. In other words, the hybrid representation of a mixed literary mode offers a new opportunity to reflect and reconcile social and textual relationships. The wide variety of elements encompassed by this earliest group of industrial novels not only leads us to trace various genealogies of industrial fiction, but also forecasts their potential futures. The investigation into the varied positions of factory children in early industrial fiction thus helps us to envisage further literary developments and social evolutions.

As a whole, the chapters in this thesis attest to the changing construction of new social relationships of class and gender, as incarnated in the industrial novels of factory children. Despite narrative intricacies and ideological conflicts, what gradually comes to light is the common goal of achieving more harmonious, cooperative and reciprocal relationships among all human beings, regardless of social position, class and gender conventions. Eventually in Tonna's *The Wrongs of Woman* we see a pioneering yet practical solution to industrial social problems. Ranging from the group of factory children trapped in the factory system to the overall social structure of class and gender, Tonna advises her female middle-class readers to wield their far-reaching female influence from within a revised domestic sphere. It is emphasized that women can boycott immoral manufactures through their daily purchases and can encourage men in

the area of legislation and social reform. This approach empowers women yet, unlike Trollope's female knight, does not violate current cultural and social expectations about gender. It is an argument that strikes a balance between idealism and reality in a more sustainable way. At this moment, the factory children, forming a symbolic icon of social victimhood, also gradually withdraw behind the scenes. A new integration of people of different classes and genders thus emerges.

Regarding the representations of factory 'children' (in a flexible or fluid sense) in the early industrial novels, we can understand how these representations connect and mediate all the gender, class, and adult-child relationships. We see Trollope's weakening of working-class men and Tonna's empowerment of working-class women in their novels. Trollope refrains from narrating her boy hero into manhood in *Michael Armstrong*, which suggests middle-class infantilization of the working class. In contrast, from *Helen Fleetwood* to *The Wrongs of Woman*, Tonna manages to conduct her problematic working-class heroines into womanhood. The distinction of age, and the implied difference in strength or capacity, is thus crucial for understanding power relationships between genders and classes. Tonna in this way leads women writers towards a new literary phase of the representation of subversive working-class heroines. The factory children characters are then released from their task of harmonizing class relationships, and the new heroines of lower or fluid class status (like those in Gaskell's and Brontë's novels) take on the fresh tasks of revising the gendered sphere.

The representations of factory children thus present varied images of boys and girls, victims and slaves, animals and angels – which additionally influence the characterization of adult figures in later novels (as evidenced by *Helen Fleetwood* and *The Wrongs of Woman*). Industrial fiction has also evolved from interaction and integration with blue books, scientific treatises, socio-historical discourses, reformist rhetoric, didactic literature, melodrama, Romantic poetry, religious tales, and sentimental narratives, as well as from angelic, victimized, or monstrous images of the

working class. Now featuring adult characters, the Victorian social novel enters a new stage in the late 1840s.

Figure 5.1. Naked Face Workers

40. I have often been shocked in contemplating the hideous, and anything but human, appearance of these men, who are generally found in a state of bestial nakedness, lying their whole length along the uneven floor, and supporting their heads upon a board or short crutch (Fig. 4); or sitting upon one heel balanc-

ing their persons by extending the other. Black and filthy as they are in their low, dark, heated, and dismal chambers, they look like a race fallen from the common stock. It did not much surprise me to be told that old age came prematurely upon them, and that they were "mashed up" at 40 or 45; indeed the care-

Source: P.P. 1842, XVII, p. 63.

Figure 5.2. Sketch of Ann Ambler and William Dyson
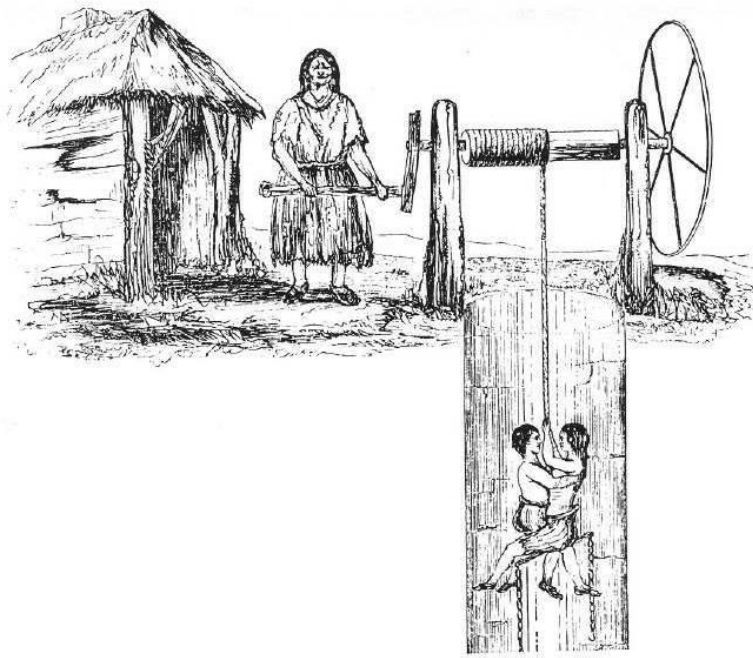
Source: P.P. 1842, XVII, p. 61.

Figure 5.3. Ann Ambler and William Dyson
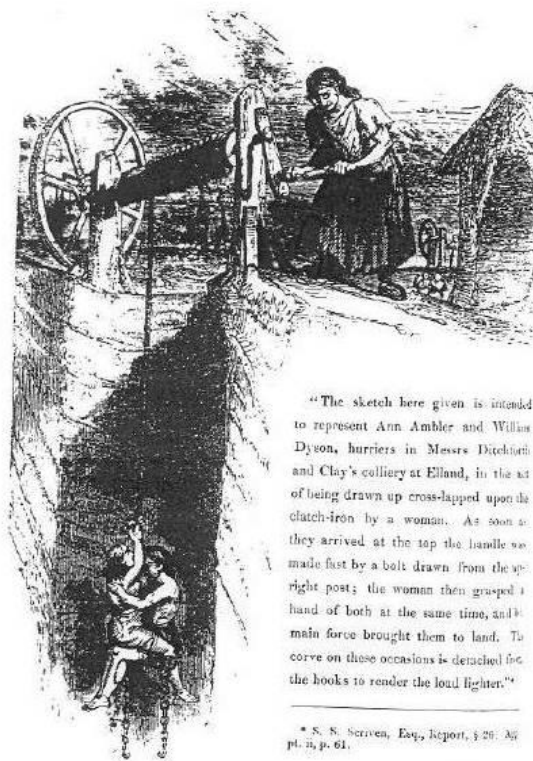
Source: Greg, W. R., 'Protection of children in mines and collieries', *Westminster Review*, 38 (July 1842), p. 104.

Figure 5.4. Ann Ambler and William Dyson

William Bowden, under ground steward to Messrs. Hounsfield, Dunn, and Co., at the Soaphouse colliery, Sheffield: In Silkstone pits believes women and girls work dressed as men, and often naked down to the waist, just the same as men and boys. Decency is disregarded." Wm. Pickard, general steward to Sir J. L. L. Kaye's collieries: "I have known a married woman hurrying for a man who worked stark naked, and not any kin to her." William Dyson, aged 14, Messrs. Abraham and Charles Pitchforth and Clay: "We

Source: *Halifax Guardian*, 21st May, 1842, p. 5.

Figure 5.5. Female Miners
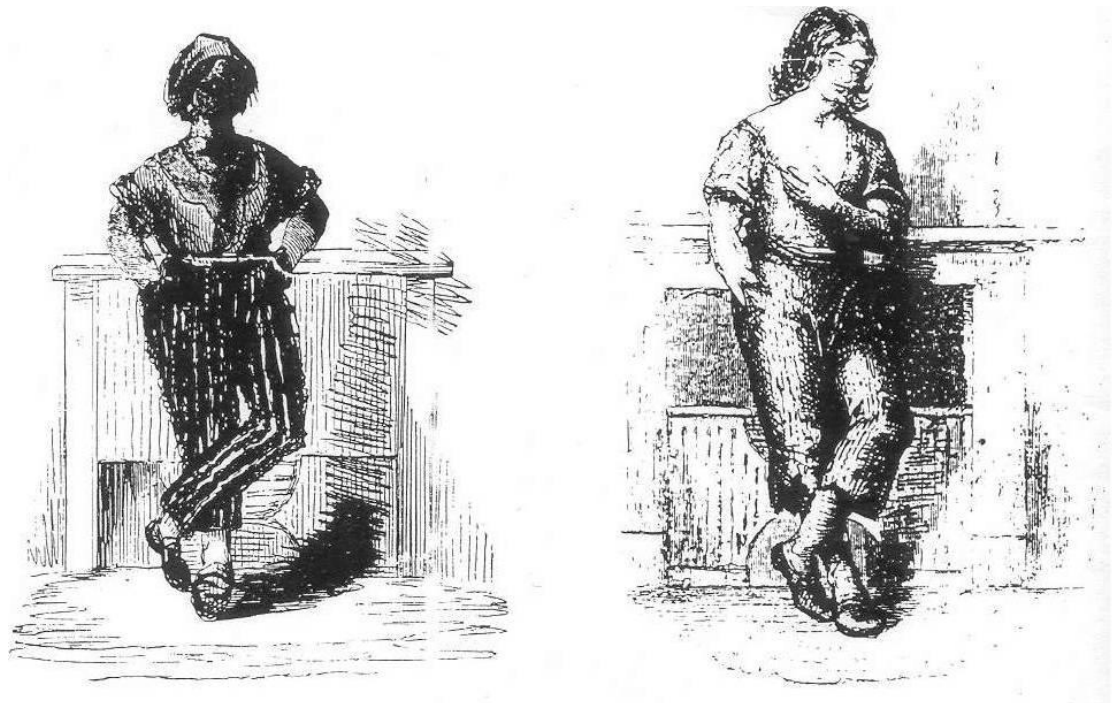
Sources: (left) P.P. 1842, XVII, p. 74; (right) Greg, 'Protection of children in mines and collieries', p. 123.

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