Guardian Hosts and Custodial Witnesses: *In loco parentis* in Women's Ghost Stories.

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Abstract

As Carpenter and Kolmar's annotated bibliography on women's ghost stories demonstrates, children are essential literary figures in this genre. In the later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, a subgenre emerged that had roots in a hybrid tradition of institutional religious doctrine and oral folkloric expressions of anxiety over the fate of the child's soul in the afterlife. Given the persistently high infant mortality rates and increased public awareness of child abuse across the classes, the growing presence of stranded child ghosts in literary fictions of the period represents, I suggest, doubts or fears over the newly dominant liberal insistence that all children would attain peace in heaven and would be reunited and cared for by their family, as well as looked after by God. The child in this period represents the completion of the domestic and gendered ideal and various non-fiction and fiction literatures urged a sense of community care and guardianship over the living child that was, I demonstrate, extended to its dead spirit. In a great number of ghost stories by well-known and obscure Anglophone women writers like Elizabeth Gaskell, Anna Hoyt, Annie Trumbull Slosson, Charlotte Riddell, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Amelia B. Edwards, Margaret Oliphant, Ellen Glasgow, Josephine Bacon, H.D. Everett, and Bessie Kyffin-Taylor – of which I examine a selection – childless female and male protagonists and narrators act as witnesses for, or saviours of, the orphaned ghost child in ways that reframe or interrogate prescribed ideals regarding motherhood, fatherhood, the spinster, and the bachelor, but which simultaneously project concerns over childlessness and childhood more widely.

Keywords: ghost-child; guardianship; motherhood; fatherhood, child death;

Introduction

As a great wealth of scholarship on the history of childhood has shown, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was a surge in campaigns by parents and guardians against "systematic child injury, torture, and murder", and calls for a wider sense of social guardianship to care for and protect the living child.[1] Claudia Nelson has argued, that the mid-century shift from traditional hierarchies and authoritarianism to sentimental domesticity had brought "the child into sudden prominence as an object of major concern both in the home and in society as a whole", and this is reflected in the number of institutions and legal processes established to regulate care.[2] This article investigates a related concern, however: who is responsible for caring for the child *after it is dead*? Such a question was not merely academic for contemporaries. The fate of the child's soul in general, had been the subject of prolonged and intense dogmatic debate, as well as of social and individual anxiety, for centuries. This was accompanied by particular apprehension about the fate of the soul of the abused child who was

not ‘saved’ (in theological as well as physical terms). Long-standing Christian traditions consigned the souls of unbaptised or sinful children to purgatory or denied them the glories of heaven in some other form. These views and practices intersected with centuries of European oral folkloric tales and traditions (many collected and circulated in the long nineteenth century) which featured a range of unbaptised and/or murdered child spirits unable to pass over to heaven and whose purgatorial realm was earth. In many regions of Europe, dark and sometimes vengeful incarnations of child spirits haunted and punished the perceived perpetrator, while in other, especially Anglophone traditions, the spirit was more passive and required assistance from a living person to escape their liminal exile and receive God’s grace.[3]

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the idea of duty toward the child after death changed significantly as the old theological traditions were openly challenged and refuted by mainstream liberal Christians. Their cultural narrative, reflected in religious doctrine and practice and which filtered into general parlance, was that all children, of all classes and religions, would go to Heaven. In many renditions, the topography of the afterlife was increasingly aligned with the terrestrial domestic space; offering communities of guardianship which included not only God and Celestial Beings but loved ones. Michael Wheeler writes that “Victorian preachers and poets” were afforded “considerable latitude of interpretation” by new biblical criticism on the afterlife, “and the idea of heaven as blessed home or country in which friends and loved ones meet is the most characteristic of the age”.[4] In her work on the New England regions, Ann Douglas explains further that middle-class women turned to writing consolation literatures which “poetically stressed the continuing presence of the deceased” and “depicted and emphasized heaven as a continuation and a glorification of the domestic sphere”.[5] This is echoed in a number of contemporaneous transatlantic supernatural writings predominantly produced by women writers, in which the child visits earth from heaven simply to reassure parents of their happiness, or as an angelic presence who guides a dying relative to heaven.[6]

Yet, as my wider research suggests, anxieties persisted over the validity of this insistence, or over the effect horrific deaths might have on the soul, and of the consequences for not saving the child. Of the many British, Irish, and North American authors who professed elsewhere in other writings that the innate purity of the child was carried over in death, a number nevertheless used the ghost story as the medium through which to consider the child who remained behind: without glory, perhaps miserable and angry, but sometimes also violent. While there are a couple of similar stories written by men that used this theme, the subgenre was dominated by women writers.[7] As Lynette Carpenter and Wendy Kolmar write, in the domestic lives documented in women's supernatural fiction, "Far from being woman's domain, the house is a place where patriarchal oppression finds its cruellest expression in the physical and legal power vested in the head of the household" and is "a place where privacy ensures not protection but the invisibility of domestic crime."[8] The fusion of genre and form therefore allowed these writers to perform acts of cultural reclamation by revealing secrets of the sanctum and social inequities: for where centuries of oral folklores damned the infanticidal mother as the cause of the child's death (reflecting the social attitude in many real instances), in these literary tales, any wicked perpetrators of unnatural child deaths are predominantly identified as men. These were not only, as social reformers such as Benjamin Waugh (founder of the NSPCC) identified, "low wretches who have taken upon them fatherhood […] to inflict tortures on babes", but grandfathers, uncles, male cousins, and stepfathers too.[9]

Therefore, as Eve Lynch suggests, the appeal of the supernatural short form, was that it "offered evidence that the home was no haven from powerful and exacting pressures" and, aside from the pecuniary appeal, was attractive because these moralistic stories could potentially be circulated quickly and cheaply to a wide readership.[10] I add further that, given the stunted mortal narrative of the ghost child – a figure that, even in life, was predominantly compartmentalised within Victorian fictions – the short form offered a structural reflection of their compact and marginal existence within a contained space that is both the text itself and,

as discussed below, the home. Despite the wealth of critical approaches to the ghost-story genre, very few works have offered sustained analysis of the frequent figure of the ghost child. This article, then, is part of my wider attempt to redress that dearth by examining a few paradigmatic works published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Anglophone women writers that, for the most part, demonstrate a shared set of assumptions and ideas about children, childlessness, and guardianship.

The stories discussed in detail – Charlotte Riddell's "Walnut-Tree House" (1878), Margaret Oliphant's "The Open Door" (1882), Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman's "The Lost Ghost" (1903), Ellen Glasgow's "The Shadowy Third" (1916), and Bessie Kyffin-Taylor's "Two Little Red Shoes" (1920) – feature female and male protagonists and narrators (often childless) as witnesses for the story of, or saviours of, a child ghost who has remained on earth and is orphaned in the afterlife – that is, not immediately reunited with family as contemporary liberal Christian discourse suggested. In some ghost-child tales of the wider corpus, the spirit appears because it requires assistance (for instance, in Annie Trumbull Slosson's 1890 tale "A Speakin' Ghost" in which a "heathen" boy awaits the tuition and care of a bereaved young woman to prepare his soul for heaven) or provides comfort and guidance to the living (for example in Hildegarde Hawthorne's short 1897 piece "Perdita", in which the child spirit simply arrives to accompany her mother on her destined trip to heaven). Many others, however, depict children who suffered in the private domain of the home at the hands of those who were legally required to care for them; the child's stories buried – often better than their bodies were.[11] In realist prose and poetry, such depictions tended to focus on the abused working-class child; however, most of these ghost stories take place within middle and upper-class households. This corroborated and heightened the claims made by social reformers like Waugh about the insidious all-pervasive reaches of such horrors. In an 1888 article, he argued that it was a mistake to think that the worst examples of cruelty were a result of "poverty, or large families, or ignorance" for in fact, the proportion of "well-to-do and well-informed" with "fiendish

dispositions towards children is found to be greater than those who are very poor".[12] What is demonstrated in many key examples from the ghost-child sub-genre, I argue, is a borrowing from and merging of the darker conceptions of child death and the afterlife from theology, folklore, and literary Gothic, to emphasise that across the classes, the home is not necessarily the safe haven of Victorian ideology and that neither biology nor legally prescribed guardianships are irrefutable necessities for care amongst the living and the dead.

Each ghost story in this article demonstrates variant forms and intensities of such informal guardianship to, and salvation of, the dead child, as well as considering those who distance themselves from such responsibilities, in ways that questioned assumptions of innate gendered attitudes toward domesticity and of the afterlife. Social categories of spinster, mother, bachelor, father, of parent, of what it means to be "childless", are shown to be fluid and open to context; *feeling* and *action* have more meaning and value than prescribed familial taxonomies or gendered roles. Indeed, many of the stories depict women who are inexperienced or reluctant assistants, defying expectations of innate maternal instinct, and show men to be equally tender and significant carers for the ghosts. The domestic Christianity that fuelled many of these works suggested that in the worst scenario, all is not lost for the child, as through decent and loving guardianship – from anywhere – light may be found. Yet in others, the child assumes an agency in death it did not have in life, and the divine punishment in which they take part is posited as a component of care. I begin by assessing the literary stories in relation to ideologies and practicalities of motherhood and female guardianship and the role of the witness; both of the figure of the martyred mother; and finally, the paternal helper.

Reluctant Witnesses and Maternal Guardians

There are two often overlapping statuses that unite the greatest portion of otherwise disparate female protagonists of child-ghost stories: childlessness or child absence (discussed in more detail further on) and acting as witness and/or guardian. In literary works, the woman as

witness and narrator of a ghost's existence is a role that was traditionally and frequently assigned to rural peasantry ("old wives" or "old nurses") and a lower-class of domestic servants owing to their perceived "proximity […] to supernatural phenomena, arcane folk beliefs, intuitive and irrational knowledge and the uncanny", and the confidence entrusted in them by the household.[13] The figure is used in a germinal literary ghost-child tale of the period – Elizabeth Gaskell's well-known "The Old Nurse's Tale", which was first published in the Christmas number for *Household Words* in January 1852. However, while, as Lynch shows, the domestic servant remained a key demographic in the Victorian ghost story, the catchment broadened to represent the changing landscape of women's domestic work and class status, and included witnesses who were, for instance, shopworkers (see Anna Hoyt's 1863 "The Ghost of Little Jacques"), caretakers (see H.D. Everett's 1920 tale "Nevill Nugent's Legacy"), and teachers (see Trumbull Slosson's "A Speakin' Ghost). So too, the woman-as-witness figure reflected the increased number of untrained, generally female, Spiritualists who acted as conduits between "deceased loved ones and family members" – particularly for those who had lost children. The role as "witness" is therefore framed as an essential component of what Dara Downey identifies in domestic objects as "an extensive array of mourning practices that sought both to bear witness to loss and to make possible a continued communication between the living and the dead."[14] Furthermore, it provides a sense of agency and feeling of expediency that, owing to their familial and/or working status, is otherwise seemingly denied them, as will be shown in Kyffin-Taylor's story below.[15]

Yet not all the women fit neatly into the category of willing guardian or witness. In Ellen Glasgow's tale of revenge, "The Shadowy Third", first published in the 1916 Christmas number of *Scribner's* magazine, the unmarried narrator Margaret Randolph is a hospital (and thus "professional") nurse but acts as neither guardian nor medium to the child. The tale recounted concerns the silent spirit of a ten-year-old girl named Dorothea (meaning 'God's gift') suggested to have been discreetly murdered by her stepfather (a medical doctor) for her

inheritance. The child remained in the vicinity of her living mother, the wealthy Mrs Maradick, who, since her daughter's death, was depicted by her husband as mentally unsound. Dorothea could only be seen by those attuned to the supernatural, or, as her mother said, only by those who are "good".[16] Appointed to care for Mrs Maradick at the family home, Margaret is identified as one such 'good' person. She recounts a scene in which her patient was told by the "famous alienist" (665) Doctor Brandon of her impending incarceration. The woman had cried, "'I cannot go away from my child!'" and Margaret declares, as if in the testimony for a criminal case, that she saw:

> the door slowly open and the little girl run across the room to her mother. I saw her lift her little arms, and I saw the mother stoop and gather her to her bosom. So closely locked were they in that passionate embrace that their forms seemed to mingle in the gloom that enveloped them. (669)

Clouded by empiricist values, however, Brandon was unable to see the devotion and continued guardianship and saw only "the vacant arms of the mother and the swift, erratic gesture with which she stooped to embrace some phantasmal presence" (669). As she was being led away to the asylum, Mrs Maradick had turned to Margaret and pleaded, "'Stay with her […] as long as you can. I shall never come back'" (669). Yet Margaret, who had remained dubious about Maradick's supposed role in the girl's death, cannot fulfil any supposed duties of guardianship as "the child had not been seen in the house" since her mother died (669). A year later, when the news broke of Doctor Maradick's plans to marry his first love and to tear down his dead-wife's beloved ancestral home, the child returned. Margaret, who had continued in his employment as an office nurse, saw the ghostly girl playing with a skipping rope; a toy that she later spied "lying loosely coiled […] at the bend of the staircase" (671) in the moments before Maradick fell down the stairs and broke his neck. Dorothea did not, it seems, need looking after, she only required, and her presence was motivated by, revenge for herself and her mother.

As with many of the male and female narrators/protagonists of these stories, there is another dimension to the "witness" which fuses with that of pseudo-detective as they uncover a crime done against the child in life and allow the case to be 'heard'.[17] "The Shadowy Third" does not fit neatly into this category either, but Margaret's description of her own role – "I am ready to bear witness" to this "phantasmal judgement" (671) – does emulate that of the witness at a court trial. So too, while not a form of guardianship, given the high number of unrecorded lives and deaths of infants and children in the period, bearing testimony in these stories is also framed as an important act of memorialisation. Margaret's narrative, though reluctant, honours and remembers the dead as well as the injustices they suffered and gives Margaret a sense of higher purpose that the subsequent years of "hard nursing" which "had taken so much out of" her, did not (663). Rather, through her tale, Margaret navigates her own role in the wider familial scene and what she communicates, in many ways, is not the narrative of the child (although that does play a part), but the *consequences* for those who neglect or abuse their guardian role.

When they encounter the child ghost, many female characters are, like Margaret, childless – either in terms of having no living children, not having had them yet, or (as it is often told retrospectively) having never had them. Owing to a variety of endogenous biological and social "exogenous factors", across the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a considerable decline in fertility rates and family size in both Britain and America was recorded, particularly among the upper classes, with growing rates of childlessness increasingly, but not always, voluntary.[18] In Dorothy Scarborough's *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (1917), she identifies this as a feature, but also a concern, of the wider genre, cataloguing various texts from over the last century or so, in which "spirits of the unborn […] haunt childless women" or rooms are encountered which "seem sacred with the potentialities of motherhood" and "the ghosts of little children that never were and never may be", but suggests that in "these stories associating children with the ghostly there is always a tender pathos, a sad beauty that is appealing."[19] As well as sometimes providing a social commentary on child abuse, the sub-

genre's wider interest in childlessness, and its offer of alternative forms of guardianship for the adult to undertake, may therefore be considered a form of condolence for a more common horror of losing a child, which many biographical readings by scholars have suggested.[20] However, given the increasing *choice* of many women to be childless, there may also be instances in which the subgenre conservatively pushes ideologies of maternity and censures those perceived as attempting to shirk collective maternal responsibility in the wider community.

This is certainly one of the subtexts in "Two Little Red Shoes" by relatively unknown British author Lady Bessie Kyffin-Taylor, and which appears in her only supernatural collection *Out of the Silence* (1920).[21] In a slight departure from the demographics of the previous stories, the unnamed narrator is also a childless woman with a strong maternal identity, but of the middle-upper classes. Set vaguely in the early twentieth century, the narrator regularly explores (effectively breaks in to) abandoned houses and envisages dwelling in them "always with a tender lover by my side", furnishing the interior with her imagination, choosing "my nurseries, and peopl[ing] them with little people".[22] It seems she has a husband but not children. Yet, although she expresses a longing to have her own, and censures women who do not seem to make time for their children, she also cherishes the financial and travelling freedom that is afforded to her by not having children and suggests constraints placed on women according to biology, class, and social situation. She talks of one particularly hot and dry summer when she was "doomed to stay in town until the end of August, after which I was free– Free! with a little sum of money at my disposal to squander as and where I pleased" (61). Travelling one day to an uninhabited house, she broke in and came across lovely rooms which indicated children had once lived there. Further into the labyrinth of the house, however, she found a dull, dark, and cold room:

> pushed against the wall were two little high wooden stools, and to each stool was attached a long, thin steel chain. I didn't like it. The stools looked as if two small dogs might have been fastened there, and made to sit still. (65)

In a room full of old worn toys, she found “a little pair of scarlet shoes” (65-6) and had “a wild desire to put” these material emblems of ‘the child’ body in her pocket; deciding to “borrow them” and bring them back the next day (66). Whether touching or wanting the shoes, or simply because of being in the house, something prompted a connection with the supernatural and as she left the room she heard “a long-drawn whimpering cry of a little child” (66) that she could not see.

Exploring the garden, she saw a boy and a girl “so sweet and lovely” that “I wanted to run to them, catch them in my arms, and cover them with kisses” (72). A sudden change occurred however, as the child figures visibly but silently expressed terror caused by an unknown source. The narrator “could not endure it” (73), and desired to help them, but soon she realised they were “Children from another world, still visiting this one – if, indeed, they had ever really left it” (73). She recalls a power compelling her to return the next day and her feeling of ownership and responsibility is emphasised in her declarations that she “had a kind of feeling that if I saw *my* babies it would not be until four o’clock” (74) and again, “I wanted *my* babies” (78) [emphasis added]. As she wandered the house waiting for the allotted supernatural time, she was shocked to discover the hardness of the beds on which the children must have been forced to sleep in life and was horrified to hear terrible screams “of children in dire pain and terror” (79) and to see their ghostly figures come into the room covered with “weals and cuts” (80). The narrator desires physical closeness and to fulfil some sense of guardianship that was hindered by the separation of living and dead:

> Even now, as I look back after many years, I find it difficult to believe those little figures were not ‘real’ […] I wanted to go to them, to kneel beside them, soothing, comforting, but something – was it their absolute unconsciousness of my presence, I wonder – kept me still (80)

Leaving the house for a second time, she came across a living old man who threw a confessional packet of letters to her, declaring “‘God forgive me – pardon – I have atoned’” (82) before committing suicide by poison. The confession told how he was the house’s owner and that,

> he was left by his brother, then in India, as Guardian to these children of his, and how he and his son Roger made up their minds from the first to get the vast sum of money, left to the children […] they treated the children with systematic cruelty, though no one suspected it – their torturing of them always taking place during late afternoon or evening hours, but during the day, when people were about, money was lavished upon the children (84)

Detailing their torture, he confirms that "There was no one to shield them" because "his son and their nurse, as evil as himself, aided him in his cruelty, having been promised a large sum as soon as the children were safely disposed of" (84). After the children's father was killed – in "some Frontier trouble […] the shock of his death reduced their mother to a helpless invalid who seldom left her rooms, believing her little ones were in good hands" (84). One day "they were beaten so vilely, that both died from shock" (84) and he and his son threw the bodies in the disused well and told their mother they must have been kidnapped by gipsies. "This added grief killed the poor lady" (85) he explained, and not long after this his own son was killed in a car accident. The man had then travelled the world alone, forever haunted by the unformed cries of the children.

The house was not solely a place of horror, however. At one point the narrator revels in the painted cherubs around the beautiful room: "truly, this house had held one lover of children at any rate" (77). She imagines a,

> Happy mother! and happy babies […] a mother in the old real meaning of the word– someone to whom the children could go always sure of sympathy for woes and joy in their joy, Mothers like that are rare to-day, they have not time. Children weary them, pet dogs are so much less trouble. (77-8)

The narrator's philosophy of motherhood is a nostalgic ideal that is juxtaposed against these sweeping claims about the contemporary state of motherhood. Natalie McKnight delineates an ideological shift in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which it became not only fashion, but a perceived necessity that "Mothers should devote themselves to the spiritual, physical and educational welfare of the children".[23] Therefore whilst, as Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair suggest, the competing ideologies "of domesticity and the attendant image of 'angel in the house'" were ideals "to be aspired to rather than a practical reality", the Victorians were nevertheless, as Elizabeth Thiel argues, "seeking a perfect paradigm which, in time,

evolved into the myth of the domestic ideal and was ultimately transmitted to future generations".[24] Through her idealised imagery, Kyffin-Taylor's narrator therefore urges that the 'proper' benevolent maternal sentiments need to be maintained (and are not redundant) within the fast-paced modernity of the outside world, because fundamentally children – cherished objects – require love and care.

In an attempt at reparation, the Uncle left the vast fortune he inherited "'To benefit some children in whatsoever manner the finder of this confession shall decide'" (85). The narrator turned the house into a children's convalescence home in which the "'Punishment Room,' was transformed into 'Matron's Room,' where sits a sunny-faced, gentle lady, ever ready to help her little ones, and adored by her nurses" (85). In the garden, the holy maternal imagery continues as "'an exquisite white marble Angel, holding in her arms two tiny children"' (86) was erected. The matron tells the narrator that before it was put there, she had heard some strange crying, but not since, to which the narrator responds, '"If all the babies sleep in peace nurse, all is well'" (86). This suggested that the punishment of the Uncle had not sufficed, but the material memorial and a strong maternal presence fulfilled some cultural criteria for the children's eternal peace.

Motherly Martyrs

In a number of these stories, the desire for children or the child ghost's desire or requirement that a mother looks after them, can be fatal to the living. Such occurrences have disconcerted modern critics, as Catherine Lundie writes,

> Although motherhood in these stories is occasionally sentimentalized, the sentiment is undercut by the demands of the child ghosts. For these are not childish spirits waiting contentedly to greet their mothers in glory. These are the ghosts of dead children, earthbound until they can *coerce a woman to sacrifice her life* to mother them in the next world. The fact that the appearance of the dead child is received not so much with terror or surprise as with a sense of the inevitable, is chilling in itself.[25] [emphasis added]

Even stories which positively promote the ideal of reunion are therefore read by Lundie as troubling. Such narratives condone the perceived necessity of a woman's loss of agency on

behalf of her child, and that one *needs* to sacrifice that agency also places "the child" in an unsettling (but I would argue in fact illusory, given they are dependent) position of power that has fuelled the terrifying and uncanny child image in the twentieth and twenty-first century.[26]

One such story, to which Lundie directly refers, is "The Lost Ghost" by Mary E. Wilkins (later Freeman) first published in *Everybody's Magazine* in 1903 and extended and published that same year in her collection *The Wind in the Rose-Bush and Other Stories*. Narrator Rhoda Meserve details an encounter with a ghost child from when she was a young woman and lodged with two elderly sisters. She describes the spectral girl with a mixture of pity and horror: "I saw a little white face with eyes so scared and wistful that they seemed as if they might eat a hole in anybody's heart" and admits she "was a pretty harmless little sort of ghost".[27] Nevertheless, Rhoda repeats that the child is "dreadful" and even when used to its presence, always "dreaded seeing her" and hearing her repeat the same sorrowful phrase "'I want my mother'" (411). Her landladies, Mrs Dennison and Mrs Bird, tell Rhoda that they discovered the child had "lived in the house with her father and mother two years before" (410). The father "about worshipped the child", but "was away most of the time" owing to his job as "a drummer for a big leather house in the city" (410). Her mother "was as handsome as a picture" from a good family, but "bad clean through", a "real wicked woman", who would mistreat the girl – who "wasn't much over five years old, and small and babyish for her age" – while the father was away (410). She eventually locked the child in a room before running off with a married man. Neighbours who became concerned about the child eventually found her "starved to death, and frozen […] nothing but skin and bone" (410). The father returned shortly after to find his child had just been buried, "was beside himself", and "went on the track of his wife, and found her, and he shot her dead" before disappearing (411).

Here Rhoda is only witness, not guardian: Rhoda noticed that the ghost-child would come and repeat her refrain to Mrs Bird more than anyone else and says the woman "wondered if it was possible that the poor little thing couldn't really find her mother in the other world" because

"she had been such a wicked woman". Mrs Bird was almost "heart-broken because she couldn't do anything for it, as she could have done for a live child" and would ominously exclaim "'It seems to me sometimes as if I should die, if I can't" help the girl (411). Although childless, Mrs Bird "was a real motherly sort of woman" (406) who was "very much interested in mission work" (408), and when she and her sister first encountered it, "tried to catch the child" for "she had an idea of putting a shawl around it and going out […] and trying to find out to which of the neighbors she belonged" (409). While Rhoda was, by profession, a school-teacher – a formal kind of guardianship – and Mrs Dennison had born children, they could only see the girl as a ghost, where this more maternal figure concentrated on the soul in need. One morning, the women see, "as plain as we ever saw anything in our lives, Mrs. Abby Bird walking off over the white snow-path with that child holding fast to her hand, nestling close to her as if she had found her mother" (411). They go upstairs to find the woman dead "smiling as if she was dreaming and one arm and hand stretched out as if something had hold of it" (411). Despite this appearing to have been Abby Bird's wish – a fulfilment of duty – and the suggestion being her death was still natural rather than *caused* by the child, Mrs Dennison is horrified, and it apparently continues to haunt Rhoda decades later. The bright journey to Heaven through the snow seems to suggest this is a positive event, and that the latter two women are too materialistic, perhaps not "maternal enough" to appreciate its beauty. And yet, aspects such as the unseemly rigidity of Abby Bird's corpse and the suggestion that there was no alternative to achieving peace owing to the violence that caused the haunting, promotes a self-sacrifice which many of the stories endorse but seem themselves to be troubled by.

In H.D. Everett's "Anne's Little Ghost" from *The Death-Mask and Other Ghosts* (1920), there is an unexpected reunion on earth between living mother and dead daughter, but one with sinister undertones. A couple holidaying in Devon encounter a girl ghost of around six years' old that Anne is convinced is a 'grown up' version of their daughter who died in infancy from an unspecified disease. Initially, her husband Godfrey (the narrator) only hears the ghost but

does not see it or touch it as Anne does. It is not in dire need, for Anne describes the child as '"Not a poor woman's child'" but dressed in beautiful clothes with "such an appealing little face as if she was longing to be sheltered and comforted".[28] However, Godfrey soon becomes more concerned with his wife's health:

> There was a change in her I did not like to see; a feverish spot on her cheek, and slight as she was before, she had fallen away in the few weeks of our sojourn to be very thin […] Was vitality being drawn from her for the shaping of the child apparition in material form; and, if, so, what would be the effect on her health? (201)

Soon after this he sees the child, which he refers to as an "exquisite small creature" (203) that, owing to its likeness to a young Anne, is, without a doubt their child. In the end, however, Godfrey says that "a threatened crisis" to Anne's health "which demanded prompt attention– surgeon's investigation and a nursing-home" took them away (207). Although he takes care not to definitively equate the spirit's presence with this eventuality, the abrupt departure from what they know to be their daughter's spirit, with no hint of return, suggests Godfrey fears the consequences of any continued guardianship from his wife more than he feels a need to comfort the child's soul.

Benevolent Bachelors and Paternal Protectors

In the ghost-child subgenre, the domestic unit for the *living* child often involved extended family and previously unknown guardians, who assumed the role when parents had died or were absent. Male perpetrators of violence and abuse are identified and vilified in this subgenre, but there is little explicit condemnation or even explanation for the recurring absence of father-figures and the potential damage this does – although such concerns were central to Victorian cultural narratives. In Freeman's story, it is the father's work in the city that either prompts or allows his wife to sustain an affair and leave their child undiscovered for days, and he does not remain behind for his child ghost to find. And yet, it is the mother who is solely blamed by the community. Sylvia D. Hoffert writes for instance, that,

> Among the middle and upper classes in the urban environment of the early nineteenth century, the workplace was often separated from the home and fathers were likely to spend

> less time with their families. Some social critics were so concerned about this situation that they were beginning to charge that middle- class husbands were abdicating their paternal responsibilities[29]

However, John Tosh explains that as well as the "domestic tyrant" and "absent father" tropes in Victorian fiction and culture more widely, there was also a "nursing father" image from early nineteenth century in which "fathers are characterized by a loving interest in their children's lives". Although this was a reality, not just a "contemporary aspiration", as an ideal it began to fade in the public eye by the mid-century.[30] In Glasgow's story the father is dead, while in Kyffin-Taylor's story the father is absent because he undertakes masculine duties in the colonies – protecting Imperial investments rather than his children. In Everett's story, Godfrey talks frequently about the joy connected with having, and the grief of then losing, a child but in relation to his wife's feelings, and "a mother's heart", while the title also suggests that possession of the child belongs to Anne (192). Yet, at one point he breaks his detachment, and refers to Anne's worries about the ghost of "our little Clarice […] Mine as well as hers; the father's tie as valid surely as the mother's, if not so close and fond. If to one of us, why not to both?" (202). Gordon and Nair maintain that "there were many different" and "acceptable" forms of fatherhood in this period, "because Victorians had complex and ambiguous notions of what constituted a proper paternal role."[31] The stories discussed in this section transform the momentary male assistant of folklore into more active and involved carers, reflecting the fluidity of the paternal role – both in the case of actual fathers assisting child ghosts and unmarried male guardians.

The bachelor as witness is a role used in a few stories and includes the reluctant as well as the ideal figure. Amelia B. Edward's "Was it an Illusion? A Parson's Story" (1881) which is told retrospectively by the eponymous parson Mr Frazer, is an example of the undesirable and aloof witness or guardian. Frazer was responsible at the time of the haunting (nearly eighteen years previous) for the inspection of schools in a large rural parish. While visiting an unfamiliar town for work, he had seen the ghost of what turned out to be an illegitimate teen-aged boy

who had been murdered in a fit of fury by the local schoolmaster, who was in fact his father, although he had pretended to be the boy's uncle. The boy's body had been hidden in a lake and was undiscovered until a rupture in the landscape (which occurred whilst Frazer was visiting) drained the lake and revealed the body. Aside from the murderer who said he was pursued by a shadow, no one else but Frazer had seen this ghost, and what in fact, his role was, is therefore unclear. He talks of "responsibility" for relating "events as I witnessed them", and yet he plays no active part in revealing the truth and indeed leaves the town before the narrative is fully pieced together, which reflects rather negatively on this supposedly spiritual and pedagogic role.[32]

In contrast, the perfect guardian bachelor for the dead child is suggested as one who is invested in the story and with the potential to be an excellent family man. This is the situation in Charlotte Riddell's "Walnut-Tree House", first published in *Illustrated London News* in December 1878, and as a longer version collected in her *Weird Stories* (1882). The tale (in third-person limited narrative) begins with the return of protagonist Edgar Stainton to England to claim his inheritance, despite having already accrued great wealth from the colonies. He has, "led a wild sort of life" for there is "not much civilisation in the bush, or at the gold-fields", but is proved, almost immediately, to be an honourable man who treats solicitors' clerks, butchers, and former housekeepers as his equal (much to the distaste of some).[33] In response to the news that Mrs Toplis, an old housekeeper, is in the workhouse, "Edgar Stainton turned away, heart-sick. Was this all wealth had done for is people and those connected with them?" (29), for he believes it is the duty of a wealthy family to care for its loyal servants. He declares, "'Heaven helping me […] I will not so misuse the wealth which has been given me'" (30). His belief in the joy and necessity of the communal family exacerbates his sense of loneliness and he laments how although his parents "'are better off"' in heaven his acquisition of this ancestral home is one of cold solitude. The narrative therefore establishes a desire and longing for family and comfort that, when added to his inherent honour, makes him an ideal guardian.

When Edgar first encounters the child in his new home – whom he does not suspect to be the ghost child – he does not turn this stray and silent boy out or chastise him, but thinks '"What a hungry little beggar,"' (17) and kindly asks the boy what he wants. Receiving no reply, he urges:

> 'What *is* it you want, my boy' […] glancing as he spoke at the child's poor thin legs, and short, shabby frock, and shoes well nigh worn out, and arms bare and learn and unbeautiful. 'Is there anything I can get for you?' (18)

Although he still receives no answer, rather than getting angry, Edgar remains sympathetic. Realising this boy is a ghost, Edgar makes it his mission to discover why this boy haunts the house despite neighbours insisting that "'If there were a wrong done it is too late to set it right now'" (24) and that his money cannot "bring back the dead to life" (32). He learns that in recent, living memory, twins named George and Mary (relatives of his) resided in the house after their mother had run away for a loving but imprudent marriage and died along with their father. Initially, their harsh and miserly grandfather had wanted to send them to the workhouse but retracted when he was told he would have to pay for their upkeep. In his old age he repented and grew to love their pure innocence – rewriting his will to benefit them, but cutting off the heir-presumptive, Alfred Stainton. When the grandfather died, the will was never discovered, and Alfred – their new legal guardian – "half-starved and neglected them" (35). According to Mrs Toplis, although twins, George "was more like a father to the little girl than aught else" (34), doing his best to keep her safe. When Mary contracted a deadly illness and Alfred refused to get her a doctor, she was saved by her paternal Aunt who happened to be visiting and "wrapped the child up in blankets, sent for a cab, and carried her off" (35-6). The Aunt intended to come back for George, but the boy died of a "broken heart" (36) before that happened and his ghost had been wandering the house ever since.

Although the neighbourhood is aware of the child ghost, none have considered trying to assist the child in death. Nor did they help him in life, although there were rumours of mistreatment and feeling that the boy should have been heir. Even Mrs Toplis helped only in a

limited way: "'I durs'n't given them a bit of bread and butter unless it was on the sly'" (35). She waited until the boy was very ill (but too late) to write to the Aunt about the boy's condition. The reluctance is understandable, given that Mrs Toplis would have feared losing her position, and in more recent years, the neighbours, aware of the haunting, were hindered by the spectre remaining inside private property. Edgar's motivations for helping the child are not completely selfless, however, for he worries that, if he cannot "'lay that child [to rest] I shall go mad,"' like the former owner and Uncle, Alfred. Melissa Makala Edmundson writes that "For Edgar Stainton, the child's ghost represents a repressed and abusive familial past that invades his property and his mind".[34] It is a chance reunion, with the boy's sister Mary – now a young woman – that appeases Georgie's soul, but Edgar still has work to do to rebuild the idea of family. Some time passes, in which he has become a fond friend of this extended family and discovers the will, which restores Mary's portion of inheritance and helps the old servants. In case there was concern about Edgar's heteronormative masculinity owing to such care, Edgar also asks Mary to marry him. Edmundson proposes that the child-ghost makes Edgar question the nature "of single-'family' residences" in which seems to be Riddell's reaction against, what Tosh explains was, an increasing, "[r]ejection of domesticity" being written into the culture of that period, in which the wealthy bachelor had become "'the representative man"'[35]

In the final example, "The Open Door" by Scottish author Margaret Oliphant, first published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in January 1882, it is anxiety over the health of a living son which prompts narrator, Colonel Mortimer, to assist the dead-child spirit. Mortimer is the head of an upper-class English family who have recently returned from India and are renting an old Scottish estate. While away on business he felt assured that "All was perfectly well at home […] I was confident in my home – comfort and peacefulness".[36] However, he receives news that his son Roland has been taken ill and has been hearing and becomes obsessed with cries in the ruins of the former servant offices on the estate that are

causing him great distress. He repeats the sounds in a feverish somnambulist state making him seriously ill. He begs his father to assist whoever, or whatever, it is that suffers, but as Mortimer discovers, the apparition itself has no physical form and he cannot see how he can provide help. The identity of the disembodied spirit turns out to be the wayward son of a former housekeeper who returned from an unspecified form of gallivanting to find his mother dead (and there is no mention of his father), and the doorway through which he normally entered to see her was barred. It appears that, in his moment of trauma he threw himself against the door in grief, and his spirit became imprinted upon that space.

The type of man and, more particularly, the father Mortimer wants to be, is emphasised throughout. The news of his son's illness "was a thunderbolt to fall upon a man's head who had one only son, and he the light of his eyes!" (4). When Mortimer's wife expresses concern that they have pushed their son too hard with his work and exclaims to her husband, "'Even you would think little of honours or prizes if it hurt the boy's health'" (5) he inwardly begrudges the accusation: "Even I! as if I were an inhuman father sacrificing my child to ambition" (5-6). Roland is clear that it must be his father who helps, and places great weight on the paternal role. When, in response to Roland's description of the sounds, Mortimer says, "'No doubt it is some little lost child'", his son gave him "a sudden swift look, investigating my face as if to see if, after all, this was everything my eminence as 'father' came to" (7). The pressures upon Mortimer – as a man who has seen battle and is the clear Patriarch and protector at home – arise not only from the living but the dead: "I had to act the part of a father to Roland's ghost […] It was the strangest mission that ever was intrusted to mortal man" (9). Although a caring family man, Mortimer does not share Edgar Stainton's feelings towards his servants, however. He (incorrectly) blames them for warping Roland's minds with ghost stories, and subsequently for not telling him of the potential dangers from the sounds: "My heart was full of bitterness against the stolid retainers of a family who were content to risk other people's children and comfort rather than let a house lie empty." (11)

Initially, Mortimer undertakes the mission for his son's health alone, but after encountering the cries, he finds his motivation widens: "My heart was rent with pity and trouble–pity for the poor suffering human creature that moaned and pleaded so, and trouble for myself and my boy" (25). In her work on the representation of fatherhood in Victorian periodicals, Claudia Nelson explains that:

> childhood was coming to serve a new emotional purpose for adults as children came to be seen […] as icons of innocence, harbingers of a better world to which adult males could hardly hope to aspire. Evangelicalism left in its wake anxiety about selfishness, greed, and the gratification of the ego…[37]

In figures such as Stainton and Mortimer, concerns about their ability to fulfil the ideal of male guardianship, particularly when surrounded by poor role models, is evident. Yet, each man prevails under extremely difficult circumstances as anxieties caused by the growing demands on their time by a capitalist and imperialist society are put into perspective by the child ghost. Tosh writes that "for many fathers time spent with children was a vital dimension of the healing power of home in a world of harsh entrepreneurial values" as "Romantic notions of the transformative power of childhood in the lives of adults had a continuing appeal".[38] In order to fulfil his 'duties' Mortimer employs help from other men, but in the end, it is not the Imperialist masculinity of Mortimer and his man-servant soldier, nor the empirical mind of the local medical doctor, but the care and attention of a local minister – Doctor Moncrieff – that saves the spirit, and thus Roland. As the haunting sounds begin their nightly chorus, the men hear Moncrieff call out to the boy and find the minister "absorbed in anxiety and tenderness" (26). He calls to the spirit:

> "'Your mother's gone with your name on her lips. Do you think she would ever close her door on her own lad? Do ye think the Lord will close the door, ye faint-hearted creature? […] Do you hear me?–me that christened ye, that have struggled with ye, that have wrested for ye with the Lord!'" (26)

As a minister – a father of the local community – Moncrieff had a duty toward the boy in life, and continues to assume that duty in this liminal space; but he concedes ultimate guardianship to a higher power:

> "'She's no here. You'll find her with the Lord. Go there and seek her, not here. He'll let you in, though it's late […] Go home to the Father–the Father!'" (26)

With great energy and this proclamation, the spirit disappears, and the safety of the home is restored.

Poems, prose fiction and non-fiction of the period alike refer to the dead child gone to their Home above, to the care of the heavenly Father. In the stories discussed here, their spirits were initially unable to pass over to heaven because the cruelty they endured was unpunished. Yet, even after the assistance or love of a living guardian or helper the child ghosts are only *suggested* to have gone to the God, or be at peace, because the haunting has stopped. Whilst their deaths (if not their lives), has been transcribed and thus their inclusion in the community of the dead fulfilled, there is no witnessed vision of the afterlife or conformation from angelic children come back from heaven to reassure their parents of their safety and joy. For instance, while Godfrey of Everett's tale wonders whether "a longing for the earthly parents' love" has drawn the ghost "down to us, away from her safe and happy cradling in the satisfaction of Heaven" (203), his wife also described the child's facial features to be "'as if no one have ever welcomed or been kind to her before'" (197) and when she asked the child where it lived, it "'only made a sign and put a finger to her lips'" (198). The strange eeriness of contradictory messages – pervasive in the ghost story genre – unsettles any certainty of heaven.

Like child-protectionist articles of the period, these ghost-child tales urge their reader to acknowledge that it is not only countless pauper children who died miserable and brutal deaths; buried without care and attention. The employment of the "orphaned" ghost clearly works as Nelson argues it did in realist fiction, "as a rhetorical ploy designed to elicit a particular emotional response from its nineteenth-century audience" which encouraged all such children to the care of their neighbours.[39] Yet, there was a counter-narrative for the reality of atrocities children received *in* care, as "unregulated adoptions had potentially deadly consequences; some seemingly excellent adoptive parents had hidden, and serious, weaknesses."[40] Certainly, in a

great number of the ghost tales there is a recurrent question of the child as property – as *belonging* to someone or being referred to as "my" child – which demonstrates the social expectation that a child cannot be independent, but must be cared for by someone; the alternative is considered unfathomable. Despite the potential positives of many of the guardians, such spectral narratives set frequently in the past seem to propose a "cure" rather than a "prevention" – but this is resolved through the frequent use of a double living child that represents the potential for cycles of abuse. While the happy child in the long nineteenth century represented the completion of the domestic and gendered ideal, as Carpenter and Kolmar proclaim children in all strata "have even less domestic power than women".[41] And yet, while the later narratives discussed centralise compassion foremost, as many of the child ghosts require only witnesses to their stories, rather than guardians per se, for they either enabled their own ascension to heaven (or at least out of purgatory) or were actively involved in enacting the punishments of those responsible for their deaths. This potentially affords the child that agency and power denied in life. Nevertheless, as I discuss elsewhere, the spirit child is continually silenced, or its voice *mediated* or stuck, its character undeveloped, and forever constrained in a stifling version of eternal childhood.[42]

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[1] Benjamin Waugh, "Cruelty to Children," *Good Words*, no. 29 (1888): 818. See for instance, Lori Askeland, "Informal Adoption, Apprentices, and Indentured Children," in *Children and Youth in Adoption, Orphanages, and Foster Care: A Historical Handbook and Guide*, ed. Lori Askeland (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 3–16; Ginger Frost, "The Kindness of Strangers Revisited: Fostering, Adoption and Illegitimacy in England, 1860–1930," in *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600–2012*, ed. Rebecca Probert (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
[2] Claudia Nelson, *Little Strangers: Portrayals of Adoption and Foster Care in America, 1850-1929* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 14.
[3] See Jen Baker, "Imprints: Forming and Tracing the Malevolent Ghost Child," in *The Cultural Construction of Monstrous Children: Collected Essays on Anomalous Children from 1595 to the Present Day*, ed. Simon Bacon and Leo Ruickbie (London: Anthem Press, 2020), 91–108.
[4] Michael Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell, and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990 [1994]), 11–12.
[5] Ann Douglas, "Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830–1880," in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975 [2017]), 61, 54–5.
[6] This includes decidedly non-Gothic works such as elegies and poems that imagine or dream of the spirit of the child in order to provide comfort to the grieving parent or guardian.
[7] I have written in other works referenced above about the stories composed by men, which all appear in a cluster – M.R. James' "Lost Hearts" (1895), Arthur Quiller-Couch's "A Pair of Hands" (1898), and Rudyard Kipling's "They" (1904). James' tale is very different in style to all of the others (male and female authored), in that it is darkly humorous.
[8] *Ghost Stories by British and American Women: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography*, ed. Lynette Carpenter, Wendy Kolmar (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1998), xxvii.
[9] Waugh, "Cruelty to Children," 818.

[10] Eve M. Lynch, "Spectral Politics: The Victorian Ghost Story and the Domestic Servant," in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamella Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 67–86 (67).
[11] While there are some stories where the abuse and death of a child takes place elsewhere – such as aboard a trade ship in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' "Kentucky's Ghost" (1868), this article will focus on the dominant topography of the home. For analysis of the spectral child in this text, see Jen Baker, "Spectral Stowaways in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' 'Kentucky's Ghost' (1868)" in "Nautical Gothic," ed. Emily Alder, Antonio Alcalá González, special issue, *Gothic Studies* 19, no.2 (2017): 45–57.
[12] Waugh, "Cruelty to Children", 820.
[13] Eve M. Lynch, "Spectral Politics: The Victorian Ghost Story and the Domestic Servant," in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, and Pamella Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 67–86 (67). See also Paula M. Krebs, "Folklore, Fear, and the Feminine: Ghosts and Old Wives' Tales in Wuthering Heights," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 26, no. 1 (1998): 41–52.
[14] Dara Downey, *American Women's Ghost Stories in the Gilded Age* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 91–2.
[15] Ann Braude, "News from the Spirit World: A Checklist of American Spiritualist Periodicals, 1847–1900", *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 99, no. 2 (Jan 1, 1990): 399–462 (399).
[16] Ellen Glasgow, "The Shadowy Third", *Scribner's Magazine* 60, no. 6 (Christmas, 1916): 664. Subsequent quotations are from this edition and included parenthetically in the text.
[17] For more on the relationship between the ghost story and detective fiction see Michael Cook, *Detective Fiction and the Ghost Story: The Haunted Text* (Springer, 2014).
[18] Mark Rothery, "The Reproductive Behavior of the English Landed Gentry in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 3, (2009): 679; Stewart E. Tolnay and Avery M. Guest, "Childlessness in a Transitional Population: The United States at the Turn of the Century", *Journal of Family History* 7, no. 2 (June 1982): 200.
[19] Dorothy Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), 289.
[20] For instance, see Elizabeth McCarthy, "Death, Mourning, and Memory in the Ghost Stories of Margaret Oliphant," in *The Routledge Handbook to the Ghost Story*, ed. Scott Brewster and Luke Thurston (New York: Routledge, 2017), 106–115; Enid L. Duthie, *The Themes of Elizabeth Gaskell*, (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 1980).
[21] Very little is known of Lady Bessie Kyffin-Taylor [1869-1922]. Her husband was a Member of Parliament and she was active in charity work connected with his government position and aside from the collection she only published one other work, a non-supernatural play called "Rosemary".
[22] Bessie Kyffin-Taylor, "Two Little Red Shoes," in *From Out of the Silence: Seven Strange Stories* (London: Books Ltd, 1920), 39–60 (59, 60). Subsequent quotations are from this edition and included parenthetically in the text.
[23] Natalie McKnight, ed., "Introduction: Undermining the Victorian Father," in *Fathers in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 1–12 (2).
[24] Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, "Domestic Fathers and the Victorian Parental Role," *Women's History Review* 15, no. 4 (2006): 552; Elizabeth Thiel, *The Fantasy of Family: Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature and the Myth of the Domestic Ideal* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 2.
[25] Catherine Lundie, "'One Need Not be A Chamber-to be Haunted-': American Women's Supernatural Fiction", in "Reinterpreting the American Experience: Women, Gender, and American Studies", Special Issue, *Canadian Review of American Studies* 22, Part II, (1992): 239-278 (259).
[26] In Josephine Daskam Bacon's unusual tale "The Children" (1909), the young wealthy widow Mrs Childress (child-less) and her housekeeper seem to will the children Mrs Childress never had, but always wanted, into being. Upon realising her imagined children are 'real', she dies of shock, but cannot be 'reunited' with them in Heaven, because whilst she receives comfort from their presence on earth, the existence of the children defies "natural" ideals of reproduction. While the reason for her conjuring of these beings is moving, the pathos which Scarborough proposes comes from these stories is marred by Mrs Childress' troubling death and suggests that she felt their reality to be an aberration.
[27] Mary E. Wilkins, "The Lost Ghost", *Everybody's Magazine* 8, no. 6 (May 1903): 405–411 (406, 409). Subsequent quotations are from this edition and included parenthetically in the text.
[28] H.D. Everett, "Anne's Little Ghost", *The Death-Mask and Other Ghosts* (London: Philip Allan, 1920), 188–207 (197). Subsequent quotations are from this edition and included parenthetically in the text.
[29] Sylvia D. Hoffert, "'A Very Peculiar Sorrow': Attitudes Toward Infant Death in the Urban Northeast, 1800–1860", *American Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1987): 601–616 (612).
[30] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (London: Routledge, 2016), 129, 30.
[31] Gordon and Nair, "Domestic Fathers", 554.
[32] Amelia B. Edwards, "Was it an Illusion," in *Thirteen at Dinner and what came of it. Being Arrowsmith's Magazine Christmas Annua*l (London: Griffith & Farran, 1881), 9–30 (27).
[33] Mrs J.H. (Charlotte) Riddell, "Walnut-Tree House," in *Weird Stories* (London: James Hogg, 1882), 1–47 (5). Subsequent quotations are from this edition and included parenthetically in the text.
[34] Melissa Edmundson Makala, *Women's Ghost Literature in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (University of Wales Press, 2013), 112.
[35] Makala, *Women's Ghost Literature*, 112; Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 108.
[36] Margaret Oliphant, "The Open Door", *Blackwood's Magazine* 131, no. 795, (Jan 1882): 1–30 (4). Subsequent quotations are from this edition and included parenthetically in the text.
[37] Claudia Nelson, *Invisible Men: Fatherhood in Victorian Periodicals, 1850–1910* (University of Georgia Press, 2010), 3.
[38] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 139.
[39] Nelson, *Little Strangers*, 3.

[40] Ginger Frost, "The Kindness of Strangers Revisited: Fostering, Adoption and Illegitimacy in England, 1860–1930," in *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600–2012,* ed. Rebecca Probert (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 125–144 (139).
[41] Carpenter and Kolmar, *Ghost Stories by British and American Women,* xxv, xxvii.
[42] See my forthcoming chapter: Jen Baker, "Death (un)Personified: Pronouns, Patriarchy, and the Child Ghost" in *Vision, Contestation and Deception: Interrogating Gender and the Supernatural in Victorian Shorter Fiction,* ed. Oindrila Ghosh (India: Avenel Press, 2021), pp.51-80.