

What *Katy* Didn't Do

The complex issues presented by the rewriting of 'classic' children's books

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Introduction

In *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, Harvey Darton attempts to summarise the history of children's literature as it arose in England. He describes a shift in this field occurring over the course of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of this period, there were still moral tales being written – that is to say, stories that focused exclusively on the moral education, rather than entertainment, of their readers – but there was much else too, and this phenomenon continued to develop over the course of the century.

Even though children's texts that focused solely on providing a moral framework for their audience fell out of fashion in the way Darton outlines, the idea that children's books should give their readers some manner of moral message is one that is still pervasive, even today. In *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, Peter Hunt describes children's authors as being in “a position of singular responsibility in transmitting cultural values, rather than ‘simply’ telling a story.” (Hunt, 3) As such, children's books published in earlier eras receive perhaps more scrutiny than contemporaneous works written for adults, and it might be this that has contributed to several children's books having been written more recently.

However, it seems significant to note that the cultural values which the rewriting author infers from the original may not be those the original author intended to transmit. Indeed, it can be the case that the modern author can misinterpret the statement the older author was trying to make. The authors of these re-writes sometimes fail to see the subtle ways in which the earlier authors were subverting popular tropes and conventions of their own era, some of these being the very conventions modern audiences may find objectionable. Examples of these conventions include modelling the plot on *The Pilgrim's Progress* i.e., causing the

protagonist to suffer before receiving a reward for piety and good behaviour; the view of illness as divine punishment; and rigid codes for what constitutes feminine behaviour.

A close reading of Susan Coolidge's 1872 *What Katy Did* and its 2015 rewrite, Jacqueline Wilson's *Katy*, will examine how each author chooses to portray these themes. Unlike many other modern novels that have tried to rewrite or reinterpret earlier works, in *Katy*, most of the events of the plot, and many of the characters, have a direct analogue in Coolidge's earlier work. *Katy*, Wilson's protagonist, like Coolidge's *Katy*, is the oldest of six children, her best friend Cecy is extremely similar to the Cecy Hall of *What Katy Did*, and, like the original *Katy*, she suffers a debilitating spinal injury after falling off a swing.

An analysis of *What Katy Did* will demonstrate the ways in which Coolidge is pushing back against certain conventions and tropes popular in the era in which she was writing. Then, a closer focus on the adaptations made in the twenty-first century re-write, will show how, through the changes to the plot and point of view of narration and other devices, Wilson ends up as a much stronger proponent of today's widely-accepted cultural values than the original author was of the values of her own era.

What Katy Did: A New Model for Children's Literature

Although Coolidge has clearly been influenced by and therefore is a perpetuator of contemporary social standards – and conventions of children's literature – there is also an extent to which she creates through *What Katy Did* a new model for children's literature. This model proposes a new standard for femininity and for a newer, idealised state of childhood, wherein gender roles are more blurred. Thus, for example, though *Katy* is punished by the narrative for her tomboyish behaviour and lack of obedience to adult authority figures, by the

end of the novel, she is still transgressing from some of the contemporary social standards. Instead, her conduct is more in keeping with the newer standards that Coolidge is proposing.

Throughout the novel, Katy, her sisters, and best friend Cecy are veritably bombarded by a variety of different characters presenting ideals of feminine behaviour and decorum to which they should aspire. Katy, however, does not appear to comply with these standards; although she does comport herself more according to these ideas by the end of the novel, we also see a sense of rebellion, a degree to which the presentation of the character even towards the end of the novel pushes back against the messages with which she has been inundated. Instead, she appears to find her own way of compliance in which she still preserves her essential characteristics of creativity and independence.

One way in which we see Coolidge pushing back against conventions for young girls' behaviour is in the recurring theme of outdoor play. Throughout the novel, outdoor play is valued, as is the related pastime of imaginary play: both succeed in creating a world in which Katy does not have to conform to contemporary behavioural standards. An early description of outdoor play in the novel shows that it occurs in a place set apart from everyday life.

“in summer the water dried away, and then it was all fresh and green and full of delightful things – wild roses, and sassafras, and birds' nests. Narrow, winding paths ran here and there, made by the cattle as they wandered to and fro. This place the children called 'Paradise', and to them it seemed as wide and endless and full of adventure as any forest of fairyland.” (Coolidge, 12-13)

The image of paradise is extended to portray a childhood Eden, with the ever-present risk of a 'Fall' therefrom; but this 'fall' as presented in the text appears to be one into adulthood or the adult world, rather than into sin. When the children must leave after the picnic they hold there in the second chapter,

“it was comforting to remember that Paradise was always there; and that at any moment when Fate and Aunt Izzie were willing they had only to climb a pair of bars – very easy ones, and without any fear of an angel with flaming sword to stop the way – enter it, and take possession of their Eden.” (Coolidge, 23)

This Eden the children have created for themselves also appears to be one where gender roles and boundaries are more blurred than in the adult world. We see this not only in the way Katy is accepted as the authority figure and primary creator in the children’s games, but also in other ways the characters are presented, such as can be seen in the first description of two of Katy’s younger siblings. We are told that Joanna, one of Katy’s younger sisters, is always called by her siblings “‘John’, and ‘Johnnie’” (Coolidge, 8), and that Dorry, one of Katy’s brothers, “seemed like a girl who had got into boy’s clothes by mistake and Johnnie like a boy who, in a fit of fun, had borrowed his sister’s frock.” (Coolidge, 8-9)

Outdoor play is also used as a framework to contrast Katy with her friend Imogen. When Katy and her sister Clover invite their playmate to sit in the loft above their house, Imogen’s values are presented in direct opposition to those of the two sisters through her refusal to join them. Imogen gives “a scream” (Coolidge,86) and says “‘Oh, not up there, darling, not up there![...] never, never!’” Even after Katy tries to reassure her, Imogen states that her “‘nerves would never stand such a thing! And besides – my dress!’” (Coolidge, 86)

Imogen’s actions could be seen as the type of behaviour that contemporary society would value in a young girl. Katy’s Aunt Izzie seems to embrace these conventions, wondering why her nieces and nephews are not more like “the good boys and girls in Sunday-school memoirs” (Coolidge, 4), the types of children she “liked best, and understood most about” (Coolidge, 4).

By refusing outdoor play, Imogen seems to be embracing the adult world prematurely. She asks to “sit in the drawing room” (Coolidge, 87) – a term with which the more innocent and childlike – and less traditionally ‘ladylike’ – Katy and Clover are unfamiliar. Katy tells Imogen “No, we don’t sit there except when Aunt Izzie has company to tea. It is all dark and poky, you know. Besides it’s so much pleasanter to be out-doors.” (87) In contrast, Imogen states that “it would be pleasant to go in and sit there for a while now. My head aches dreadfully, being out here in this horrid sun.”

In addition to outdoor play with other children, Coolidge presents the related theme of solitary imaginary play as another avenue through which Katy can attempt to find her own way to avoid complete compliance with society’s expectations. “She was fond of building castles in the air, and dreaming of the time when something she had done would make her famous, so that everybody would hear of her, and want to know her.” (Coolidge, 10) Katy’s use of imagination to conceptualise herself is also evident in the early chapters of the novel. In one scene, after telling a story about how a rosebush is guarded by a fairy, she tells her brother: “I am a fairy, Dorry!” to which he replies “you’re a giraffe – pa said so!” (Coolidge, 15). This exchange makes it clear that adults in Katy’s life do not necessarily think of her as presenting in a feminine way, but Katy herself seems to identify with the spiritual idea of being a fairy, rather than the corporeal reality of her physical appearance.

It could be argued that this quality of Katy’s is criticised, that it is this that gets her into what Coolidge refers to as ‘scrapes’. This can be seen, for example, when Katy gets in trouble at school for making too much noise in the school yard during the game of ‘Rivers’ she invented. We see here, then, Katy being criticised by adults for her lack of decorum and inability to conform to behaviours expected of her. With this said, the issue does not appear to be the game itself, but that it is taken too far; she is only stopped and disciplined when she

and the other children are being extremely loud and have overturned several items of furniture. Even when Katy gets into ‘scrapes’, the narrative lends her an amount of sympathy; she is being punished for her actions, but this punishment does not carry with it a note of condemnation.

Related to the imaginary world where Katy is permitted not to conform is the world of books. Katy’s love of literature is another character trait that allows her to escape her aunt’s rigid standards. When Katy spends an afternoon completely absorbed in reading Tasso’s *Jerusalem Delivered*, an epic poem that depicts women taking an active role in the Crusades, she is so engrossed in the poem that she does not hear her aunt calling her for half an hour. When Katy confesses to her aunt that she has been reading, Izzie is described as giving “a sort of sniff, but she knew Katy’s ways, and said no more.” (Coolidge, 46) In this way, Coolidge allows us to infer that Katy places a greater amount of importance in books than her aunt does, but Katy’s enjoyment of reading to the exclusion of other tasks she is expected to perform does not appear to be criticised by the text. Indeed, Izzie herself appears grudgingly to accept it. This incident indicates how how Katy’s love of reading can represent a new path to guide her actions. We can see that she is receiving a new set of influences she can follow apart from those she knows in her everyday life.

We have seen thus far that Coolidge appears to be using themes of outdoor play, and a rich inner life fuelled by imagination and reading to create new standards of acceptable behaviour for young girls. Viewed through this lens, Katy’s recovery from her accident comes across less as a reward for her personal or moral growth during her period of convalescence, as might be expected in contemporary literature influenced by the themes of *Pilgrim’s Progress* concerning suffering and reward as noted earlier, and more like an assertion of her own agency.

What Katy Did: Models and Anti-Models

Shirley Foster and Judy Simons analyse these ideas in greater depth in *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-Readings of Classic Stories for Girls*. They claim that the plot of *What Katy Did*, regarding Katy's accident and her recovery, "literally reproduces the traditional Christian patterning of fall after sin, succeeded by a gradual painful rise to a transformed selfhood." (Foster and Simons, 111) Yet, the ultimate presentation of these messages allow the novel to move beyond these conventional ideals.

One way in which Coolidge allows Katy to move beyond these ideals of feminine behaviour is through her relationship with Aunt Izzie, from whom she receives perhaps the largest number of lectures. Foster and Simons dub this character an "anti-model" (Foster and Simons, 115). They explain that she is "well-intentioned and kind at heart, but cannot understand or sympathize with nonconformity" (Foster and Simons, 115). Thus, she and Katy have a rocky relationship at the start of the novel, although this improves following Katy's injury – perhaps because Katy is now unable to do many of the things she enjoyed in the past that were aggravating to Izzie, such as constantly tearing her clothes. We see that Aunt Izzie is puzzled even by the behaviour of the more ladylike Elsie and Clover, who still "shied off like restless ponies when anyone tried to pat their heads." (Coolidge, 4) That Aunt Izzie dies of typhoid fever toward the end of the novel, too, may be notable; it is almost as if she cannot cope with her brother's philosophy of wishing his children, including his daughters, to be "hardy and bold, and encouraged [in] climbing and rough plays" (Coolidge, 5).

Another female character, Katy's friend Imogen, influences Katy to a degree, but can also be seen as another 'anti-model' in the sense that she is a victim of the social system whose values Aunt Izzie is so keen to transmit. It becomes clear through descriptions of

Imogen that she is not to be emulated. While she and Katy are both lovers of stories, the cultural influence of which we are also often reminded in *What Katy Did*, Imogen cannot always distinguish between fantasy and reality, indicating that she takes this enthusiasm too far.

When Imogen arrives at the Carrs' house for a visit with Katy, we are told that:

“She was dressed in a light-blue barége, with low neck and short sleeves, and wore coral beads in her hair, white satin slippers, and a pair of yellow gloves. The gloves and slippers were quite dirty, and the barége was old and darned: but the general effect was so very gorgeous that the children who were dressed for play, in gingham frocks and white aprons, were quite dazzled at the appearance of their guest.” (85)

The extensive description of Imogen's physical appearance mirrors the amount of importance she places in it. Through this, it becomes obvious that Imogen's behaviour is a façade; the “effect” of her appearance and manner is a “gorgeous” one, yet it is a thin veneer that masks a much more mundane reality: “She turned herself about, and tittered, and lisped, and looked at herself in the glass, and was generally grown-up and airy.” (85) This list gives us a sense of how hard Imogen is working to keep up this image, but the language used reflects the actual effect of this behaviour, presenting her as rather frivolous. Knowing that she is putting on this act in imitation of her favourite literary heroines allows us to question the content of these stories and what values they transmit.

Imogen begs Katy and Cecy to sit in the parlour with her. Once they are there, “Imogen, who for the first time seemed comfortable, began to talk. Her talk was about herself. Such stories she told about the things which happened to her!” (Coolidge, 87) Dr Carr, upon entering the house, is treated to this colourful tale from Imogen:

“Oh, it was lovely girls, perfectly delicious! I suppose I did look well, for I was all in white with my hair let down, and just one rose, you know, here on top. And he leaned over me and

said in a low, deep tone: “Lady, I am a Brigand, but I feel the enchanting power of beauty. You are free!”” (Coolidge, 89)

It is clear that Imogen is living in the land of fairy tales, surely a consequence of reading “so many novels” (Coolidge, 81), as we are told she has done earlier. While Katy, her siblings and Cecy enjoy imaginative play along similar lines, their willingness to embrace the realities of childhood, and the extent to which the girls do not appear to be as confined to more traditionally ‘feminine’ activities, means that they are able to channel this in a healthier way, and not try to pass off their stories as fact or act in such an affected way in everyday life. In this sense, it is Imogen’s commitment to nineteenth-century standards of decorum and proper behaviour, which she seems to have understood in a somewhat warped fashion, that causes this problem.

Despite their differences, and their relationship being soured by this visit, Katy has still been influenced by her friend. The following day, Dr Carr tells his daughter ““you came into the room then, exactly like your new friend Miss Clark.”” (91) When Katy questions him further, he explains ““So, ’[...] and he got up, raising his shoulders and squaring his elbows, and took a few mincing steps across the room.”” Dr Carr goes on to state that he is concerned by Katy and Imogen’s friendship. As they discuss the matter further, he tells Katy:

““Make-ups are all very well, [...] as long as people don’t try to make you believe they are true. When they do that, it seems to me it comes too near the edge of falsehood to be very safe or pleasant.”” (92)

Although the way Imogen is presented acts for the most part as a cautionary tale warning against the effects of acting in an overly affected or adult way, it could also be seen as a criticism of taking contemporary standards of behaviour for girls too seriously, or to too much of an extreme. This is reinforced by the way Imogen herself rather wants to believe in the persona she is displaying to Katy and her siblings. In a sense, she too has been a

victim of the various ideals of femininity with which Katy and her sisters have been presented. Although Katy has not internalised this message successfully by nineteenth century standards, Imogen appears to represent these ideas taken to an extreme. In some ways she is “that lady on the big posters with the wonderful hair which sweeps the ground”(Coolidge, 11), the idealised image to which Katy aspires. Yet, we can also see that, in Imogen, this affect is an act she has created. Despite this, there are points where the narrative lends her an amount of sympathy, at least insofar as it attempts to understand her way of thinking and why she is the way she is, even if she is ultimately criticised.

Katy’s invalid cousin Helen can be seen as an alternative role model to Izzie’s idea of how the children should behave. In many ways, Helen is a character whose standards of conduct seem unobtainable or even undesirable; she tells Katy to think of her injury as an opportunity to learn from “the School of Pain” (Coolidge, 133). Helen’s story of an event that occurred at the beginning of her own long illness further accentuates these unrealistic standards of conduct. She tells Katy how, when she looked at her dishevelled and wan reflection in the mirror, “I began to think how selfishly I was behaving, and to desire to do better. And after that, when the pain came on, I used to lie and keep my forehead smooth with my fingers, and try not to let my face show what I was enduring.” (Coolidge, 138) The idea that it might be the responsibility of an invalid to act ‘unselfish’ by refusing to let other people know of their pain is quite a startling one, especially to a modern reader.

Yet Helen is not necessarily presented as perfect by the standards of the nineteenth century, either. When she first comes to stay with the Carrs, prior to Katy’s injury, Katy imagines that her cousin will resemble

““Lucy” in Mrs Sherwood’s story, [...] with blue eyes, and curls, and a long, straight nose. And she’ll keep her hands clasped *so* all the time, and wear “frilled wrappers”, and lie on the sofa perfectly still and never smile, but just look patient.” (Coolidge, 94-95)

That Katy quotes “Mrs Sherwood’s story” further reinforces what would be expected of someone like Helen at the time; that Helen’s character is not presented this way could be seen as evidence of Coolidge’s intent to question these standards through her treatment of this character. Indeed, Katy feels immediately after meeting her cousin that “All [her] dreams about the ‘saintly invalid’ seemed to take wings and fly away.” (Coolidge 96-7)

Furthermore, Cecy criticises Helen’s physical appearance, asking ““Isn’t it wicked to care about clothes when you’re sick?”” (Coolidge, 99) and she tells Katy that her mother said ““she feared your cousin was a worldly person,”” (Coolidge, 99). This, then, paints Helen’s story about not attempting to outwardly show the signs of her pain in a different light. It seems that those around her expect her to dress and present herself more plainly, which makes Helen’s concern about her physical appearance seem as though she is pushing against social norms. Even if her main reason for wanting to comport herself in such a way is a desire to give others pleasure in her appearance, instead of a desire to look pleasant for her own sake, her behaviour still seems to be at odds with the conventional standards for invalids to be passive and self-effacing. Helen does mention, too, that having items she likes around her gives her joy despite her pain. As such, Helen does seem to deviate from the standards of behaviour that would be expected of her, even if she does this in a completely different way to the Katy of the first half of the novel.

After all, Helen only tells Katy about learning from the School of Pain after Katy laments not being able to attend a real school anymore. She asks Helen what she can do from her bed, and Helen responds ““A good deal.”” (Coolidge, 133). Although it can seem as though Helen

is exhorting Katy to accept and even be cheerful about her lot in life in way that can be jarring to a modern reader, she reminds Katy that she can still achieve many of her goals. She impresses to Katy the importance of continuing her studies. Even though she does stress to Katy that her younger siblings should ““feel that your room is the place of all the others to come to when they are tired, or happy, or grieved, or sorry about anything,”” (Coolidge, 141) perhaps making it seem as though she is instructing Katy to act as a mother figure to them, Helen only brings this up because Katy states that guiding and caring for her siblings is one of her life’s main aims that she now feels she cannot achieve due to her injury. In this way, Helen does create for Katy a standard of proper behaviour she should follow, but also seems concerned with inspiring her to do things in which she was already interested, and which therefore represent a continuation of her conduct ‘pre-fall’. In this sense, the advice Helen gives Katy is sound; it is more Helen’s attitude towards herself, through which she has made herself into a martyr by embracing her lessons from the ‘School of Pain’, that seems questionable to the modern reader.

Foster and Simons argue that it is important, and, to a degree, subversive, that the role models we see in the text are mostly female. They refer to Helen as “the sofa invalid who becomes an icon of gendered moral excellence” (Foster and Simons, 113), stating that “her inability to engage in the normal activities of her own sex symbolizes the suppression of desire inherent in the ‘angel’ image.” (Foster and Simons, 114) They see this character as being somewhat similar to *Little Women’s* Beth March or *Jane Eyre’s* Helen Burns, who similarly seem to show that “ideal femininity cannot combine the spiritual and the corporeal.” (114)

However, they also argue that “the text does not prioritise the kind of excellence which Cousin Helen represents.” (Foster and Simons, 115) They appear to view Helen as a role

model, but only to a limited extent, as they believe that we are meant to identify with Katy over her.

Coolidge also emphasises Katy's kind-hearted nature and desire to help the downtrodden, even though it goes against the wishes of Aunt Izzie in particular. This is especially evident through the presentation of the character of Mrs Spenser:

“a mysterious lady whom nobody ever saw. Her husband was a handsome, rather bad-looking man, who had come from parts unknown, and rented a small house in Burnet. He didn't seem to have any particular business, and he was away from home a great deal. His wife was said to be an invalid, and people, when they spoke of him, shook their heads and wondered how the poor woman got on all alone in the house while her husband was absent.” (Coolidge, 77)

Even though Katy does not understand exactly why Mrs Spenser has been ostracised by the community, she is determined to befriend her, much to the consternation of Aunt Izzie.

Although not explicitly defying orders, Katy is still going against the standards of propriety Aunt Izzie expects. Even though the narrative does not appear to wholeheartedly approve of her actions, there is still a focus on the effects Katy has had on those she has helped, while Izzie's protests are framed as having less merit.

Through one reading of the text, it could seem as though Katy, through her fall off a swing, which renders her unable to walk for years, is being 'punished' by the narrative for her inability to enact 'proper' feminine behaviour. Foster and Simons do not conceptualise it exactly this way; instead they argue that Katy is punished for her “disobedience” and “defiance against authority” (Foster and Simons, 135), rather than transgressions against the behaviour expected of her gender, per se. They claim that Coolidge does mitigate Katy's disobedience by suggesting “that it would have been more reasonable of Aunt Izzie to have explained to Katy why the swing was forbidden territory” (Foster and Simons, 117).

However, they also state that “the implication is that adult authority must be respected

unquestioningly. It is thus a moral transgression which must be atoned for. But her punishment seems disproportionately harsh in purely ethical terms.” (Foster and Simons, 117) With this said, they do argue that Katy learning to walk again is a reprieve from this, stating that “It would be wrong [...] to see this apparent crushing of female self-expression as the novel’s sole and final statement.” (Foster and Simons, 118) They also argue that “It challenges or questions some of its age’s assumptions about ethical imperatives and gender roles, disrupting in various ways the orthodoxies which it seems finally to validate” (Foster and Simons, 119). Although Katy is punished for her actions, these actions are always described with a certain amount of sympathy and it never comes across as though she is being condemned by the narrative, as we have seen above in the examples of Katy’s love of imaginary play and books, and her desire to help others such as Mrs Spenser.

Katy: Survivor as Role Model

Despite ways in which Coolidge is a product of the time and social milieu in which she is writing, Katy is very much an independent and three-dimensional character, who is given the chance to reassert her own agency through her re-learning to walk at the end of the novel. This, too, is something we can see in the novel’s sequels, *What Katy Did at School* and *What Katy Did Next*, where Katy is able to continue her education by attending a boarding school and travelling to Europe. Given the link between Katy’s learning to walk again and her ability to re-assert her own agency both at the end of *What Katy Did* and in Coolidge’s subsequent novels, it might seem surprising that it is this element of the novel that a modern audience might take issue with, yet it is just this that caused Jacqueline Wilson to feel as though she needed to rework it in her 2015 novel *Katy*, which is set in the twenty first century.

In *Katy*'s afterword, Wilson outlines some of her thought process underlying her view that this particular story needed to be rewritten. Unlike many other modern novels that have tried to rewrite or reinterpret earlier works, in *Katy*, most of the events of the plot, and many of the characters, have a direct analogue in Coolidge's earlier work. *Katy*, our protagonist, like Coolidge's *Katy*, is the oldest of six children, her best friend Cecy is extremely similar to the Cecy Hall of *What Katy Did*, and, like the original *Katy*, she suffers a debilitating spinal injury after falling off a swing. With this said, there are differences between the plots of the two novels, and Wilson addresses these in her afterword. In this section, she explains how she loved *What Katy Did* as a child, describing it as "such fun and very easy to read," (Wilson, 472) but, as an adult, reading the novel to her daughter, she "started to feel uncomfortable." (Wilson, 472) She cites the post-accident portion of the novel as the main reason for her discomfort, describing the plot of this part in some detail. Here, she characterises *Katy*'s Cousin Helen as "saintly" (Wilson, 472) claiming she tells *Katy* "that she should try to be very good and patient and tidy and act like a little mother to her brothers and sisters. *Katy* does her best – and is eventually rewarded by learning to walk again." (Wilson, 472)

It is easy to see, based on this understanding of *What Katy Did*, why Wilson felt so uncomfortable with the ending of the novel that she felt the need to rewrite it such that its central protagonist is no longer "a little saint" (Wilson, 471), but rather "a remarkable survivor" (Wilson, 472). It does seem, from one angle, as though *Katy* is constantly being harassed by the adults in her life on ways to "be very good and patient and tidy and act like a little mother to her brothers and sisters" (Wilson, 472); that she is consistently hemmed in by the nineteenth-century standards of decorum that would be expected of her, and ultimately gives in to them.

As Wilson notes, the original *What Katy Did* does seem to “reward” Katy for her positive character development by allowing Katy to learn to walk again. According to Foster and Simons, though, this event might be more subversive than the way Wilson characterises it, even if it might not be especially “fair or likely” (Wilson, 472), as Wilson puts it (although it may be significant to note that Katy is not actually paralysed in Coolidge’s novel, and that she is told following her accident that she will in all probability be able to walk again). Foster and Simons offer the alternative perspective that it is possible that the text’s “overt message conceals a more radical subtext” (Foster and Simons, 119). They claim that “Even the portrayal of Katy’s corrective invalidism contains an element of subversive questioning and suggestiveness.” (Foster and Simons, 124)

The ways in which *Katy* parallels but also deviates from the story on which it was based reinforces Wilson’s specific personal understanding of *What Katy Did*. For example, the setting of *Katy* is much more suburban than Coolidge’s, but the Carr children and Cecy are still able to enjoy their own ‘Paradise’ – for a while, anyway. The children spend their Saturday afternoons sneaking into their neighbour’s garden, where:

“there are still roses there in the summer and lots of buttercups and daisies and dandelions in the long grass. It’s so overgrown that it’s like a jungle [...]. There’s a big weeping willow too, which makes an amazing green cave where we can have important meetings and special picnics.” (Wilson, 16-17)

Although the children still have their fun creating imaginative games outdoors, we get the sense that this is a much more pared-back and pruned-down version of ‘Paradise’ than the one in which Coolidge’s characters play. This could perhaps be attributable to differences between American and English children’s books; in a discussion on how these differences affect nineteenth-century children’s literature, Gillian Avery quotes Lucy Larcom, who grew

up in Massachusetts in the 1830s, as saying after reading English children's books of the day: "It seemed to us that the little folks across the water were never allowed to romp and run wild" (Avery, 37). However, it creates an odd effect when something that was so instrumental in the original book is presented so differently here.

Indeed, it is in this garden where Katy suffers her injury, unlike in *What Katy Did* where the swing is in the Carr's own yard, not in the separate field the original Carr children call 'Paradise'. We find out that after her accident "the others shied away from [the garden] as if it were a terrible, haunted place." (Wilson, 377) Later, Katy explains that "Dad and Izzie tried harder to do things with the children rather than leave us to our own devices." (Wilson, 445). In both versions of the story, Dr Carr wants to foster a sense of independence and appreciation of outdoor games in his children, but Wilson appears to be framing him as having been in the wrong to do so. Although Coolidge's Katy is unable to visit 'Paradise' following her injury, the other children presumably still spend much time outdoors, and, as already noted, outdoor play is framed within the text as being extremely important to childhood, even within the context of Katy's accident. On the other hand, Wilson's text almost appears to be warning us off it, or at least warning us off the independence that goes alongside the children's play in the first half of the novel and in *What Katy Did*. Although Katy in Wilson's novel still enjoys sport and athletic activities following her accident, this is not linked with the idea of children having the chance to play without adult supervision in the wilderness, or imaginative games as such.

When Wilson's Imogen shows up for her visit at the Carr house, there, too, we can see Wilson's personal view on the social values the character represents in Coolidge's work. We are told that:

“Imogen’s hair was piled up elaborately on top of her head, with long tendrils hanging down in a complicated kind of way. She had make-up on too – her eyebrows looked much darker and she had a ring of black round her blue eyes that made her look incredibly knowing and sophisticated. [...] Imogen’s bright white T-shirt was tiny, so that it barely covered her weeny waist, and her shorts were even smaller, alarmingly so. She had jewelled flip-flop sandals and an elaborate bead bracelet round her ankle.” (127)

As in Coolidge’s version of the story, Imogen’s attire is contrasted to Katy’s and that of the other Carr children. However, Imogen’s taste in fashion in *Katy* appears to be based on a different impulse. In *What Katy Did*, we know that the character likes fairy tales and romantic novels, and her choice of clothes reflects this. She comes across more as wanting to look glamorous, like her favourite literary characters. Although Coolidge’s Imogen does want to present herself as older than she is, this does not play out as some warped perception of what the character believes to be necessary to resemble a teenager or adolescent, but rather as though she wants to appear like an adult woman. Wilson’s Imogen, on the other hand, does not seem to be imitating literary characters. Instead, she seems like a stereotypical pre-teen who feels extremely pressured to present herself in a certain way and ‘act older’ than her age.

Although, in a sense, this Imogen is also trying to create a romanticised or idealised image of herself, it does not seem to spring from a creative longing for better in her life in the same way, though perhaps this Imogen too has very much succumbed to the images and messages with which she has been presented. This, then, could be seen as Wilson criticising current beauty standards with which young girls are presented, yet this does not come across as subversive as the same way that Coolidge’s portrayal of the character does. After all, it seems likely that most parents or mentor figures to girls in Wilson’s target audience would probably agree that the values that Imogen represents are harmful. Conversely, this demographic in 1872 might still have been interested in propagating some of the ideas Coolidge’s Imogen

seems to have internalised, even if they would agree with Coolidge that the character has interpreted them in the wrong way.

There also is not the same sense as in *What Katy Did* that this clothing is an act or a façade. Indeed, in *Katy*, the reader gets the sense instead that it is Katy putting on an act for her new friend, rather than the other way around. In both versions of the story, Imogen is presented as an object of ridicule; that is to say, *Katy* does not ridicule her, and indeed is rather impressed by her, but we the readers are obviously not meant to fall for her charms in the same way. However, Coolidge does appear to have a certain amount of empathy for Katy's fickle friend; at least, it seems that we as readers are meant to pity her. In contrast, it rather feels as though we are meant to *scorn* Wilson's Imogen, and condemn her actions, especially as her visit to the Carr's causes Katy to hurt her best friend Cecy's feelings by having their picnic lunch without her.

Wilson's Imogen is ultimately presented as a caricature of a modern pre-teen, obsessed with makeup, beauty, and "browsing stuff on [her] iPad" (Wilson, 136). It comes across, through the way the character is framed, as though Wilson is criticising girls who do have an interest in such things, and, in this way, it could be argued that *Katy* is in this aspect more 'moralistic' than *What Katy Did*, in the sense that it is condemning an entire set of interests, while *What Katy Did* seems to criticise more specific actions only. Wilson has stated that she likes to write in the first person, because this way she is able to avoid being "didactic"; she claims her books are devoid of what she refers to as the "oh, wasn't she being a silly girl?" sort of thing" (Wilson, online). However, here we get the sense that it is not just Katy but, out of story, Wilson, who is criticising Imogen's behaviour and way of presenting herself. As Coolidge does, Wilson appears to be holding Imogen up as an 'anti-model', yet the values Wilson's Imogen espouses are not ones Katy hears from adults in her life taken to an

extreme. Quite the contrary, Imogen instead seems to represent an extreme version of values against which modern parents typically try to warn young girls.

Wilson also attempts to rework the way other role and anti-models of the story are presented. She appears, for example, to dislike how the character of Cousin Helen is portrayed in *What Katy Did*. In another of her books, *Starring Tracy Beaker*, when the protagonist Tracy is given a copy of *What Katy Did* as a Christmas present, she is told that Katy has ““a very saintly cousin who irritates a bit”” (Wilson, 164). While Wilson’s putting these words in her character’s mouth is not necessarily an indication that she agrees with the statement, the character’s words echo the language Wilson uses in *Katy*’s epilogue, where she also describes Helen as “saintly” (Wilson, 472).

Despite Wilson’s apparent dislike of how Coolidge’s Helen, the Helen that appears in Wilson’s novel – in this version of the story, a former patient of the Carr children’s father, who due to rheumatoid arthritis has been using a wheelchair since childhood – does not necessarily come across as being all that different to her original counterpart. Wilson too emphasises Helen’s striking appearance, and love of jewellery. Many of the interactions Helen has with the Carr children during her initial visit are similar, too. Wilson takes great pains to tell the reader that Helen is no saint; we are told that “Helen had the knack of paying everyone compliments, but in such a sincere merry way it didn’t sound at all smarmy.” (Wilson, 176) This character trait is similar to that of Coolidge’s Helen, who apparently has such an ingratiating manner that she “made the children at home with her at once.” (Coolidge, 96) In both these portrayals, though, we do not find out exactly what Helen said to achieve such results, and because of this, a reader may still find the behaviour of both Helens to be “smarmy” or overly ‘saintly’. For example, in *Katy*, Katy demands of Helen after her injury: “How did you get to be so brave? You never ever complain. Dad thinks

you're an absolute angel,'" (Wilson, 342) to which Helen responds "'Oh, that's hilarious! I'm anything but'" (Wilson, 343), yet we never actually see any indication that this character is anything but perfect.

While many of the surface-level details of Helen's visit to Katy after Katy's accident are different in Wilson's version of the story, it does cover a lot of the same territory. Wilson's Helen tells Katy that her "'two favourite words [are] *Can do!*'" (Wilson, 345) and that Katy might now be able to achieve "'new, fantastic things [she'd] never thought of before.'" (Wilson, 346) While at face value this might seem wildly different from the lecture *What Katy Did's* Katy receives from her cousin, in substance, there is not as much of a gulf between the two speeches as one might expect, since they both focus on re-energising Katy and reminding her that she is still capable of doing many of the things she wanted to do before her injury.

Unlike Wilson's iteration of Helen, the character of Izzie in *Katy* is more ambiguous than Coolidge's iteration of the character. Although Izzie and Katy's relationship in *Katy*, too, follows a similar trajectory to its older counterpart, Wilson's Izzie is not so clearly an 'anti-model'. Katy's animosity towards Izzie springs from her being Katy's stepmother – and Katy's resentment of her for, in her view, 'replacing' her real mother – rather than anything specific Izzie does. Although Katy does feel as though Izzie nags her incessantly, Izzie's criticisms of Katy in Wilson's novel are perhaps of a different nature to the 'nagging' of Coolidge's Izzie. Wilson's Izzie is still concerned with some of Katy's behaviour, but not about her learning standards of feminine behaviour in the same way.

Indeed, Izzie is framed by Wilson's narrative as being in the right more often than her counterpart in Coolidge's novel. This is the case even when Wilson's Katy clashes with her

stepmother when she wants to do something that would generally be seen as laudable, such as helping others. Wilson's Katy describes a time where there was:

“a huge row because I'd invited this poor homeless guy round for a cup of tea and a sandwich because he looked so cold and hungry. And it was all Izzie's fault that she'd left her purse practically sticking out of her bag.” (Wilson, 116)

Unlike the way Katy's friendship with Mrs Spenser in *What Katy Did* is presented, it seems here like Izzie's somewhat more close-minded viewpoint has been vindicated; she was right to be suspicious about that man and Katy was wrong to invite him over. Even though there are some instances where Katy's attempts to help others backfire in *What Katy Did*, her mindset is never disproven by Coolidge in quite such a drastic way. While Wilson is likely not trying to counsel her readers against carrying out acts of kindness, and is probably simply attempting to make Izzie seem more sympathetic, this does seem to carry with it a hint of caution to the reader about helping others.

Since Wilson changed the title of the book from a reference to Katy's actions to a reference to her identity, and since this book, unlike Coolidge's novel, is written in the first person, one might expect Wilson to spend a great deal of time focusing on who Katy is as a person, or exploring her interiority. Yet, as noted here, in a lot of ways this character comes across as less complex or nuanced than her nineteenth century counterpart.

Unlike Coolidge, Wilson focuses most on Katy's resilience and tenacity. We can see this especially in her rivalry with her schoolmate Eva Jenkins. In the early chapters of the novel, we see how Katy is always ready to use her sharp tongue (and sometimes other tactics, like soaking all of Eva's clothes in a swimming pool) to get back at Eva's jibes. This continues after her accident, too; Eva is assigned to show Katy around at their new school, but Katy consistently demonstrates to her that she does not need her help. When Eva warns Katy not to

tell their headmistress she has not been helpful enough, Katy replies ““Don’t worry. You can stay a little teacher’s pet, Eva Diva,’ [...] and I dodged round her in my wheelchair and bowled down the corridor.” (Wilson, 404) From this, it is apparent that even though Eva has started to see Katy as an object of pity, Katy is determined to dispel this image of herself and make sure she and Eva are on equal ground. In a sense, it could be said that Wilson’s insistence on Katy’s independence and determination not to be someone for whom others feel sorry is in itself a standard for behaviour she is trying to impart upon her readership. Wilson has stated that she feels there are values more important than “patience and goodness. You have to be cussed. You have to be determined.” (Wilson, online)

Coolidge’s Katy also demonstrates tenacity and resilience, but the author displays these qualities through Katy’s actions rather than through things she says. Coolidge’s Katy’s drive to continue to take an active role in family life, continuing to be a mentor figure to her siblings and by eventually taking over as ‘housekeeper’ after Izzie dies showcases the importance both of these traits, and of helping others. That Wilson presents her Katy as having this attribute of ‘toughness’ without her nineteenth century counterpart’s desire to use this trait to advocate for those who need it creates an odd effect, since it almost seems like this kindness is being equated to weakness.

The two novels also differ in the way in which the character of Katy is transformed by her injury. As in Coolidge’s novel, Wilson’s Katy is initially presented as an extremely imaginative character, and, as in Coolidge’s version of the story, we see that these qualities can be a virtue when not taken to an extreme. However, these qualities seem to be less prominent in the post-injury portion of the novel, since she is no longer able to lead her siblings in imaginary games outdoors. Although Katy bonds with the librarian at her school over a shared love of discussing books, and she also finds an outlet for her creativity when

she makes purses as Christmas presents for all her younger siblings, it does seem as though a large part of this aspect of her character is lost in the latter half of the novel. This is in contrast to her counterpart in Coolidge's novel; as in the Wilson version of the story, Katy, after her accident, is unable to spend time outside inventing games, but she has a great deal of fun writing Valentines poems to each of her siblings, and it is clear that she still spends a lot of time reading, for which Wilson's Katy does not seem to have as much time following her injury. As such, despite Wilson's determination to create a character who is "a remarkable survivor" (Wilson, 472), and her success at achieving this with certain aspects of the character, we also feel that this version of Katy has lost more of her pre-accident self than her older counterpart.

As noted above, one of Wilson's biggest criticisms of Coolidge's novel is Coolidge 'rewarding' Katy by allowing her to walk again at the end of *What Katy Did*. But, Wilson too presents Katy's injury as 'corrective'; Wilson seems to emphasise that the injury occurred due to Katy's impulsivity in trying to create her own rope swing, even stating in an interview that the accident is "all [Katy's] own fault." (Wilson, online) The effect, therefore, is completely different to how the book would read if Katy were, say, injured in a car accident or something similar. Additionally, Katy undergoes many changes for the positive following from this time. Most significant among these changes is Katy reaching a much better understanding in her relationship with her stepmother and stepsister. On Christmas, an event that occurs during the final chapter, Katy reflects on the changes that have occurred regarding the dynamics in her family over the past months. She states her three youngest siblings "were still a small threesome, but now Clover and Elsie came together, while I seemed to have joined up with Dad and Izzie. Or maybe I was one on my own now." (Wilson, 459) As in Coolidge's novel, Katy seems to have left her childhood behind due to her injury, and has matured rapidly in

the ensuing months, so much so that even six months later, she no longer feels as though she shares the same interests even as Clover, who is only a year younger than she is.

However, this passage does not read as a lament for the more extended period of growing up Katy seems to have lost. Instead, it seems to be tinged with gratitude that she is more able to understand and help with the needs of her younger siblings. If Wilson's Katy was punished for her rudeness and overly stubborn, hot-tempered nature, she surely has 'atoned' for it now. Yet, her character is not 'rewarded', which may add a realistic note to the end of the novel, but still makes her development feel somewhat as if it were for nothing. While it might not be reasonable as a reader to expect Katy to be 'rewarded' as such for her character development, or to assume that having her learn to walk should constitute such a reward, a reader might expect some sort of consideration for Katy's taking on so much more of an 'adult' role within her household following her accident. Since this change in her role within the family is, at least to a degree, framed as an atonement for previous sins, especially since many of these 'sins' related to family dynamics, it is hard not to feel as though the character has been short-changed. Even if she should not be 'rewarded' with the ability to walk again, it is difficult not to feel pity for a character who appears to give so much and gets so little in return.

Objective of Rewriting Children's Literature

Wilson's project in rewriting *What Katy Did* to fit in more with what she apparently sees as modern cultural values can perhaps be better understood through the lens of Jill P. May's text, *Children's Literature and Critical Theory: Reading and Writing for Understanding*. May attempts to clarify the process by which accuracy in historical novels in particular can become sacrificed to a desire to comport with the modern reader's expectations. May

examines how publishers and editors can cause historical accuracy to yield to the exigencies of the market-place, using the example of the 1972 novel *Trail Boss in Pigtails* by Marjorie Stover. This novel was based on the nineteenth-century life and experiences of Stover's ancestor, yet her editor asked her to change the ending so it "would appear to be "modern"". With these changes included, the editor intended to market it as a "women's lib book" (May, 188).

While the author agreed that the re-written ending improved the story, she regretted that she did not save the events covered in the epilogue of the novel for a sequel so that the character would have had more time to be developed. May sums up the contrasting attitudes of Stover and her editor by stating "Marjorie Stover was telling a good story about someone she admired." (May, 121) On the other hand, the editor "hoped to sell the book to an adult audience looking for stories about "liberated women" that they could give to young female readers who had already heard about girls who let down their hair and turned into young ladies." (May, 121) May claims ultimately that "While the editor hoped to make Emma Jane [the protagonist of the novel] more modern and liberated, she failed to see that young girls were being presented with a new romanticism, a romanticism of women who acted and dressed as their male equivalents did. Indirectly, by suggesting that Emma Jane's ending must comply with modern standards, the editor was implying that the clothes make the woman, and that is exactly what feminists have tried to disavow." (May, 121)

While Wilson's 'revising' in writing *What Katy Did* into *Katy* does not operate in exactly the same way as the revision Marjorie Stover was asked to carry out by her editor, there are some parallels that emerge. It could be argued that part of Wilson's motivation behind writing *Katy* was to attempt to make 'classic' novels, such as *What Katy Did*, more accessible to the modern reader, by changing and updating the story.

It may be helpful, then, to look at Wilson's and Coolidge's likely aims for their respective novels, side by side, as May does with Stover's and her editor's. In light of Foster and Simon's arguments, it seems likely that with *What Katy Did*, Coolidge was attempting to write a good story that would teach young readers the importance of obedience to authority figures but also how it is possible to balance this with independence, and a love of imaginative play and the outdoors. Coolidge presents us with several female role and anti-models, all of whom have different ideas about how young girls should behave, but also gives us a way to conceptualise these influences, taking some value from what they have to say but also advocating for a model that seems to allow girls more freedom – and particularly more time playing outdoors – than what would have been seen as the norm during the time in which she was writing. As are all authors, Coolidge was obviously influenced by cultural attitudes and standards of the times in which she was writing, but also tries to subvert these attitudes and standards up to a certain point.

Wilson, on the other hand, was trying to take a story she had enjoyed as a child but that she had found jarring as an adult, and to make it more palatable to the modern audience. She attempts to create what she refers to as “a brave new world where everyone was equal, everyone was included, everyone had a chance to star as themselves.” (Wilson, 471). She does not, however, deviate enough from the idea present in Coolidge's novel that Katy's accident is self-inflicted and therefore a punishment for her previous actions for this world to be possible. As with Marjorie Stover's editors, Wilson does not appear to realise that if a character has been ‘punished’ by the narrative for their actions, one expects this to eventually be accompanied by a reward, even if in the case of *Katy* such a reward should not necessarily mean Katy learning to walk again. Wilson removes many of the messages Katy receives from

adults regarding the proper way to conduct herself, yet she includes several of her own messages in this vein, as already noted.

Indeed, what makes *Katy* unusual even amongst ‘retellings’ of classic children’s stories is the way it directly repeats the scenarios present in the original novel. *Katy* is not, after all, Wilson’s first attempt to ‘rewrite’ an older story, but it operates in a very different way relative to the original text in comparison with *Four Children and It*, Wilson’s 2012 rewrite of E. Nesbit’s 1902 novel *Five Children and It*. In both novels, the plot centres around a family of children who find an ancient fairy that grants them one wish a day, but the effects of the wish disappear once the day is over. In *Four Children and It*, however, the characters are not direct re-treads of those featured in Nesbit’s; indeed, Rosalind, the protagonist, is reading Nesbit’s novel at the start of the book, and the titular four children actually meet the five children of Nesbit’s novel as one of their ‘wishes’.

As such, the objective of *Four Children and It* seems to be to encourage children to read *Five Children and It*, whereas the intervention of *Katy* almost seems to be to ‘replace’ *What Katy Did* in the literary canon, since all of the characters in *Katy* have their direct counterpart in Coolidge’s novel, as do most of the plot developments, and the novel *What Katy Did* does not seem to exist in the universe of *Katy*. Interestingly, Wilson also includes an afterword in *Four Children and It*; in this, she describes *Five Children and It* as a “wonderful story” (Wilson, *Four Children and It*, 314) and exhorts the reader to “try one of E. Nesbit’s other stories too” (Wilson 314). As such, her attitude toward *Five Children and It* seems very different from her thoughts on *What Katy Did*, even though Nesbit’s novel too contains scenes that might jar the modern reader.

What Wilson is trying to achieve with her changes to *What Katy Did* and the messages herein might in some ways be likened to her donning a ‘mask’, as defined by children’s

author Jill Paton Walsh in her chapter *On Wearing Masks*, from *The Voice of the Narrator in Children's Literature: Insight from Writer and Critic*. She claims that in a children's novel, the narrator is not necessarily the same as its author, even though the author's ideas often bleed through into the narrator's voice. She likens the author being obscured in this way to the writer wearing a mask, and considers how this operates in children's literature. She argues that children's authors often have a problem with:

“a lack of trust in the audience, a terrible anxiety that they won't understand art. If you show them something cruel happening, you are afraid that they will think you are in favour of cruelty. Just in case you are misunderstood, you had better get a word in here, speaking in your own voice... But the problem is that masks are magic, and if you drop them you break the spell.” (Paton Walsh, 171)

Using Walsh's theory to examine *Katy*, it seems as if Wilson does not trust her audience to understand that some plot developments in Coolidge's novel might not be realistic, or might not be entirely in line with modern standards.

However, the fact that Wilson echoes Coolidge's plot structure so closely, adding changes only in certain places she deems necessary, creates an odd almost palimpsest, in which we cannot tell which ideas are being proposed by which author or narrator. Although this is not exactly what Paton Walsh has in mind in *On Wearing Masks*, it appears as though Wilson is attempting to take off Coolidge's narratorial mask, and put it on herself, allowing it to “drop” at some pertinent moments, which gives *Katy* a confused, muddled feel at times.

After all, in *Katy*, Katy herself is the narrator, yet it is apparent at points that there is a disconnect amongst various lines of thought she has regarding her own life. The novel ends with Katy feeling some hope for her future, but even towards the end of the book, we find out that at night, “All of my courage and resolution leaked away. I just lay uncomfortably in the dark, so sad and angry and resentful, feeling like a half-person whose life had finished

already.” (Wilson, 435) While this attitude is likely realistic for someone in Katy’s position, it does not necessarily fit with the (maybe too) upbeat feel of the novel’s final pages, which do feel like an instance of Wilson ‘dropping her mask’, as it were. The idea that Katy’s life is “just beginning” (Wilson, 472) is an inspiring one, but it seems jarring when just a few pages earlier she seemed to be in such a state of despair, and we have not seen any real transition into the mindset she appears to have now. This also seems to be the case with the narrative’s treatment of Imogen, since Katy’s comments about Imogen’s appearance and behaviour seem more in line with the thoughts an adult would have, rather than a typical eleven-year-old. It seems largely as though Wilson’s Helen is being held up as an example Katy should emulate. In this sense, Wilson’s Katy too is bombarded with messages on standards of behaviour she should follow, even if these do not correlate to standards of femininity as is the case in Coolidge’s novel. Helen’s message is an inspiring one, yet it does not seem that Katy really believes it, since she still seems to have a very bleak outlook on her life and future – up until the moment where the mask is dropped in the novel’s final pages.

Many ‘rewrites’ of classic children’s novels do subvert tropes present in the original, yet since they are not directly retelling the same story, the authors have not put themselves in the same position of criticising the original. By varying the retold story in important details, these modern authors avoid the need to rework the entire narrative in order to remove any messages in the original of which they are critical to avoid their seeming hypocritical. This can be seen in Eva Ibbotson’s 2001 novel *Journey to the River Sea*. Although it is in a sense a retelling of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, it is not a ‘replacement’ of Frances Hodgson Burnett’s 1886 novel. The plot of *Journey to the River Sea* follows the orphaned Maia Fielding, who leaves her London boarding school to live with her cousins in Manaus. While on the ship bound for Brazil, she befriends a young actor named Clovis, who is part of a travelling

theatrical company planning an upcoming production of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, of which Clovis is the star.

Another of the central characters, Finn, is the son of a younger son of a British earl, as is the case for *Little Lord Fauntleroy*'s protagonist Cedric Errol. However, while Cedric's father was disinherited when he married Cedric's American mother, Finn's father, Bernard, actively chose to escape his family to become a naturalist in Brazil. During the events of the plot of *Journey to the River Sea*, lawyers are looking for Finn to persuade him to come to his family's ancestral estate, to which he would now be heir due to the deaths of his uncle and father. Like *Little Lord Fauntleroy*'s Cedric, Finn dislikes the idea of leaving his home and friends, but unlike Cedric, Finn is not resigned to the fate of inheriting his title. Therefore, Finn and Clovis plot to switch places, since Clovis longs to return to England, thus inverting the plot of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* further, since in Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel, a boy pretending to be the son of Lord Dorincourt's older son attempts to usurp Cedric's claim to the earldom. Unlike in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, Clovis and Finn fool everyone completely; Finn's grandfather often remarks on the resemblance between Clovis and several of his own ancestors. However, more similarly to Cedric in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, Clovis becomes very attached to Finn's grandfather, and agrees to continue in his role of 'Finn' because of an emotional bond to Finn's family, rather than any hope of financial gain.

As such, Ibbotson uses, as Wilson does, parallel scenarios to subvert the events of the novel she is reinterpreting, yet she appears to do this in quite a different way. Ibbotson uses scenes or archetypes that exist in *Little Lord Fauntleroy* to tell her own story. It may also be notable that when Maia watches the theatrical adaptation of the novel, she remarks mentally that it "was a good story" (Ibbotson, 84), and that the relationship between Cedric and his grandfather "was really very touching" (Ibbotson, 84) The final message of both Clovis and

Finn's character arcs seems to be attempting to impart to the readership the importance of choosing one's own destiny and path in life. This is different to, but not at odds with, the ultimate message of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, which is to treat others with kindness, and that the best way to receive kindness in return is to assume others intent to treat you kindly.

The ending of *Katy*, on the other hand, does feel as though it is at odds with the ending of *What Katy Did*. The ending of *What Katy Did* implies Katy has atoned for her sins and now can live the rest of her life freely, while the ending of *Katy* attempts to assert that even though Katy's future is different to what she thought it might be, she can still lead a fulfilling life. This notion clashes with the idea also present in the text that Katy, as in Coolidge's novel, has been and is continuing to be punished for her previous actions. As such, it still seems as though *Katy* is full of messages regarding how Katy should act, even though Wilson claims not to want to come across as moralistic. In this way, Wilson's rewrite differs from *Journey to the River Sea*, which repurposes ideas and situations found in *Little Lord Fauntleroy* to create an entirely different story. In contrast, *Katy* has the effect of attempting to 'replace' or even erase the novel on which it is based.

Conclusion

Like Foster and Simons, Wilson appears to read the novel as "a framework of a moral pilgrimage." (108) Even though this framework is very much based on nineteenth century themes originating in such works as *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Wilson seems to accept it, at least to some extent. Wilson's character Katy undergoes personal transformation as a result of her accident. In addition, Katy also learns from other characters' presentation of different ideals regarding how she should act. Additionally, Wilson continues the idea that Katy's

accident is a ‘punishment’, which makes both the lack of reward after Katy has learnt from her mistakes and the idea that Katy is still expected to live a fully and happy life somewhat jarring. Wilson has stated that, as a writer, she wishes not to be didactic, as mentioned earlier, and for that reason chose to write in the first person. Yet in a way it is more pernicious to present Katy’s story as testimony when it is clear that there are still messages Wilson wishes to impart to her readership. Wilson seems to have taken it upon herself to try to ‘fix’ certain aspects of *What Katy Did* that she disliked, but since other aspects that inform the one she removed are still present, the story feels confused at several points. In this sense, *Katy* is less successful than other rewrites or reworkings of children’s literature containing nineteenth century tropes in which authors do not bind themselves as tightly to or criticise as explicitly the original book.

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