

Pirates as Heroes: Moral Ambiguity in Teenage Fiction

I hereby certify that I have done the research for and written this work by myself, without the help of any other person except my supervisor and without plagiarising the works of others.

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to analyse and discuss a number of children's and young adult novels in the context of the topic of piracy and moral ambiguity.

Part One provides insight into the way young readers receive the literature aimed at them and it gives an overview of the history of children's and young adult literature and literary criticism. It also focuses on the theory of reader-response criticism and the notion of an implied young reader, together with the presence of didacticism in children's and young adult literature.

Part Two consists of a detailed analysis of a selection of children's and young adult novels which deal with the theme of piracy. The main topics of discussion are quest journeys, protagonists' relationships with guiding figures and rites of passage.

Part Three is about historical settings and it contains a detailed intertextual analysis of two novels. Gender issues in all the selected pirate novels are also discussed in detail here.

Literary theory shows that children's and young adult literature is often didactic and reflects the adults' concerns to instil moral values in young readers, while the novels prove that good and evil characters and deeds are integral parts of stories and of life, and that adult experience must necessarily be gained from both good and evil father-figures, situations and decisions. Teenage fiction also shows that the position of women in society and in literature has changed over time from passive, discriminated against and subordinate to active, strong and equal to men.

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Introduction

In recent years, people have regularly been confronted with the theme of piracy in different areas of their everyday lives. There have been a considerable number of terrible news reports about kidnappings of freight ships, cruise liners and private yachts along the coasts of Africa, particularly that of Somalia, and similar crimes and acts of piracy all over the seas. These pirate attacks have caused numerous human victims and great financial loss. Shipping companies now have to employ specially-trained, armed supplementary security personnel to protect their crews and their goods, and some European countries have positioned men-of-war in pirate-infested waters in order to prevent violent conflicts and kidnappings. Even the United Nations Organization has had to take measures that allow the armies of nations that trade and transport goods across pirate hotspots to arrest pirates who attack ships sailing under their nation's flag.

In spite of all this awe-inspiring news, the theme of piracy has become so fashionable in modern society that it has nearly achieved cult status, and piracy is often presented as heroic and amusing. Thus, it has become the subject of an enormous amount of merchandise such as decoration objects, souvenirs for tourists, literature, films and even children's toys and stationary. Imitations of Jolly Roger flags, t-shirts and other clothing items bearing symbols of piracy, fake treasure maps and other pirate artefacts are offered for sale in souvenir shops worldwide, and people buy these goods in large quantities. Children can now enjoy an entire range of toys related to the history of pirates on a daily basis. Stationary with pirate icons is a success among schoolchildren and teenage pupils, together with clothes and bags that have skull-and-crossed-bones imprints.

The topic is often promoted in films and literature, too, and their success shows that audiences indulge in the fictitious characters and acts of piracy described in books and shown in films. Authors of children's and young adult literature also take advantage of the situation and publish stories about piracy, and their books are widely read. It is remarkable how many children's and young adult picture stories, novels and non-fiction books that deal with the theme of piracy can be found in bookshops these days. That is not completely new, however, as authors like Robert Louis Stevenson, for example, already wrote pirate

adventure stories a long time ago, and the latter have been popular with readers since they were published. People have always felt somewhat intrigued by pirates, which is obvious in the numerous older historical reports, works of fiction and films that deal with piracy.

The following chapters provide an overview of children's literature, especially its development over the last few centuries and its didactic characteristics. The complicated relationship between adult writers and child readers is discussed, as well as the way literary critics have been dealing with children's and young adult literature. A number of typical patterns of children's and young adult stories such as quest journeys are explored in a detailed analysis of selected novels.

The main focus is on morals, and the text contains a detailed analysis of the relationships between teenage protagonists and adult characters in the stories. At the same time, the adolescents' development from childhood to adulthood is discussed in detail. The moral choices questing youths are confronted with while developing into mature adults are emphasized in order to focus on what ideologies the teenage characters are presented with, how they react to them, and what sets of moral values they finally adopt or reject. Another point of discussion is the way teenage characters react to the behaviour of adults in society, how they challenge their decisions, and how they are influenced by the surrounding adult world.

In addition, the question of how female characters are presented in children's and young adult literature is discussed with a focus on what gender roles and stereotypes young readers learn from the literature written for them. The development of female characters in literature over time is documented in combination with the comparison of two novels in the context of an intertextual analysis. At the same time, the purpose and the effects of historical settings are explored.

All the children's and young adult stories discussed in this work involve pirates, so all the main protagonists and questing adolescents are either pirates or they travel with pirates, which provides them with lots of opportunities to question moral choices and attitudes to society, life and death, as well as it forces them to make crucial choices for themselves. The kind of decisions these adolescents make, under what circumstances and with the support of what kind of role-models, constitutes the main object of research in this work.

<p style="text-align: center;">Part One: Children's and young adult literature – historical and critical aspects</p>
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This chapter provides an overview of the evolution of children's and young adult literature over time, but it is also important to consider a reader's evolution from a very young child to an adult, and to learn how readers at various different stages in their lives appreciate literature. On a developmental level and on the basis of studies, a few theorists have analysed how readers, especially young ones, respond to literature. It is relevant to study some of their findings on how young people approach and experience books at different ages.

Reading and literary appreciation from young children to adults

Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen present their readers with a clearly-structured overview of the several stages of literary appreciation a human being goes through in his life from a very young age to adulthood and to old age. In their introduction to the topic they invite their readers to note that people do not move from one of the different stages to the next in order to leave all the characteristics and skills of the previous one behind, but rather that they gain additional skills and adopt different attitudes while keeping the 'old' ones and building upon them when entering each new stage. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, p.38) A brief overview of the stages described in *Literature for Today's Young Adults* and of J. A. Appleyard's elaborate study of people's reading habits and their attitudes to literature related in *Becoming a Reader* is helpful to provide insight into readers' appreciation of literary works. Appleyard has laid out more or less the same facts as Donelson and Nilsen by defining five stages of literary appreciation:

- *The Reader as Player* (the pre-school child)
- *The Reader as Hero and Heroine* (the school-age child)
- *The Reader as Thinker* (the adolescent reader)
- *The Reader as Interpreter* (the reader who studies literature systematically)
- *The Pragmatic Reader* (the adult reader) (Appleyard, 1991, pp.14-15)

As laid out in *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, before they go to school and properly learn to read and write, children cannot, of course, read fiction by themselves. This does not mean, however, that they cannot partake in any literary experience at all. On the contrary, this is the time when children share songs and nursery rhymes with adults, who also read children's stories to them and discuss pictures and films with the young children. In addition, children start deciphering letters and signs and recognize favourite logos and stories, for example. The focus is exclusively on pleasure at this stage. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, pp.38-40)

When the child grows slightly older and goes to primary school, much of his or her time is devoted to language-learning, including reading and writing skills. This means a concentrated effort in developing literacy skills, which, however, children usually enjoy, especially if they learn to read easily. Once they are familiar with the basics of language, they can enjoy a myriad of books with stories aimed at young children, including fairy tales. Apparently, these young readers enjoy predictable stories and characters that give them a sense of comfort. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, pp.40-41)

At the next level, when the reader is in early secondary school classes, he or she develops the ability to lose oneself in a good story, provided he or she has the time and possibility to read a lot of books. The reader is then totally involved in the story, can hardly stop reading and forgets the outside world. Nevertheless, the reader is still fascinated by the events of the story itself rather than concerned to adopt a critical attitude to the work of fiction. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, p.41)

A critical attitude emerges at the next stage of literary appreciation, when the reader becomes a teenager. He or she begins to question events in a story, demands explanations and focuses on logical developments rather than stereotypes. Reading is not merely a pleasurable escape from daily life now, but an attempt to find oneself in the story. The act of reading has now gained another purpose, namely for the reader to find out about him- or herself. Not only do these teenagers read a great amount of teenage fiction, but they also show interest in biographies, personal essays and journalistic stories. The readers are curious to find out about aspects of life which are unknown to them, so they choose books which present them with lives that are completely different from their own. This is also the

stage at which readers develop a taste for the bizarre, the unbelievable, the weird or the grotesque and start reading stories of occult happenings, trivia books and horror stories. Their main focus is on finding themselves and their place in society. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, pp.41-42)

According to J. A. Appleyard, older children up to the age of twelve, who are in early secondary school classes, consider reading a way of exploring an inner world. Readers feel that the school culture rewards the activity of reading, but reading also gives them a sense of self-possession. To a large extent, children identify with the usually powerful or clever hero or heroine in the story. Reading satisfies the children's need to imagine themselves as the central figure who is the archetypal problem-solver in a disordered world because these romances are unconscious analogues of their own lives.

Most of the books children read at this age are adventure stories which include historically realistic stories as well as more complex classics like *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien or *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. The main characteristics of the stories that readers at the third stage of their evolution enjoy are that some of them are obvious adventure stories in which characters face danger and resourcefully come through it, or fantasies that involve journeys to other worlds and heroic deeds that take place there before the hero returns victoriously. Other typical features are exotic settings and crimes solved, but generally one can say that the typical theme is danger faced and overcome. Whereas all these stories are constructed around a young hero or heroine, journeys, tests of character and harm finally defeated, and while the motif of character is defined by struggle, their format, plot structure, conception of character, setting, style and the imaginable world they imply are revealing of what older primary school and younger secondary children read, as well as they are reflections of these readers' state of mind. In these stories, characters are usually ideal types of good or bad people, stereotypes that readers can easily recognize and classify at their age, without being too complex or ambiguous. (Appleyard, 1991, pp.59-62)

Alluding to Whitehead's study of the way older children up to the age of twelve read fiction, particularly adventure stories and romances, Appleyard explains that these young readers identify with the heroes and heroines in the stories they read as a way of fulfilling their

wishes. According to Whitehead, the element of wish-fulfilling is strong while the themes are emotionally immature, but, as D. W. Harding sees it, too, the reader is just as much an onlooker as he is a participant in the story. Thus on the one hand, the reader is involved in the story, and on the other hand, he is in a position to evaluate the action, which goes far beyond identifying with a central character. This study also shows that while younger readers are quite intolerant of unpleasant or disturbing elements, as they grow older they become tolerant of more realistic than wish-fulfilling outcomes. The Whitehead group concludes in its study that

any satisfactory account of the appeal of reading fiction will have to include both the imaginative sharing of a character's experience, which is generally called "identification", with its strong suggestion of wish fulfilment and the evaluative judgements made in the name of a realistic acceptance of experience by the reader in the role of spectator. (Appleyard, 1991, p.78)

J. A. Appleyard looks at the literature children read between the ages of seven and twelve as romance with a point of view of comedy. He says that it is difficult or even impossible for children to imagine wishes and dreams ending in catastrophe and death because this is mostly beyond their cognitive and affective capacities. According to the expert, these readers can understand and imagine evil people, bad actions, and temporary failure, but they cannot imagine a good person whose life ends in failure or that good and evil might be inextricably mixed. This is why adventure stories generally have a happy ending, which is typical of the comic genre, rather than a sad ending, which is typical of the genre of tragedy. Appleyard takes this as the reason for the fact that so much juvenile literature consists of adventure stories, and why children can deal with romance at this stage of their evolution as readers. It is the first literary form children can understand and relate to. "It suits the way they view the world. It is the simplest way of envisioning the relationship of good and evil: to acknowledge their conflict and assert the inevitable victory of good." (Appleyard, 1991, pp.63-64)

A few years later, readers move away from egocentrism and show interest in larger concerns and in society. They respond to books that raise questions about conformity, social pressures, justice and other aspects of human frailties and strengths. This is strongly influenced by the teenagers' intellectual, physical and emotional development. They become more and more responsible people and are faced with the necessity to assess the

world around them and decide where they fit in. Readers now tend to enjoy contemporary problem novels because they help them to focus on their own psychological needs in relation with society. The young adults also enjoy fantasy and science fiction because these types of stories provide them with new ideas about their own society. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, p.42)

J. A. Appleyard gives us more insight into this stage. As readers grow older and proceed to the next stage of literary appreciation by becoming teenagers, their view of the world changes, too, and they become more and more receptive of the point of view of tragedy in literature. Their life, behaviour and literary taste is influenced by various factors including physical growth, maturity and interest in sexuality, strong but often naive idealism, self-consciousness, ambition, rebellion and crisis. (Appleyard, 1991, p.96) Thus at this stage of their development as readers, adolescents still read romance and adventure stories, but they also show interest in historical fiction, science fiction, problem novels and adult fiction. Appleyard makes it clear that, at this point in their lives, readers also begin dividing up in two groups related to their gender. While developing a sense of identity, adolescents are strongly influenced by the physical changes they undergo, which causes the need for them to imagine acceptable versions of adult maleness and femaleness. According to J. A. Appleyard, “the distinctive modalities that psychologists summarize in terms such as “male autonomy” and “female interpersonal empathy” show up in the books of adolescents voluntarily read”. He also points out that girls generally read more than boys, and that while the latter prefer adventure, science fiction, war and sports stories, the former choose romantic stories, although both groups also share preferences for books of the genres of mystery and humour. (Appleyard, 1991, p.99)

As already alluded to, adolescents, unlike younger readers, begin to accept stories without happy endings. Whereas juvenile books deal with an innocent world in which good ultimately dominates over evil, teenage fiction deals with issues like sex, death, sin and prejudice, and good and evil are portrayed more realistically. They are “not neatly separated but mixed up in the confused and often turbulent emotions of the central characters”. (Appleyard, 1991, p.100)

In his study of what and how people of all ages read, Appleyard has found out about adolescents that they are not simply taken in by a story and do not only identify with central characters, but that they have as much taken on the role of observer. What seems to be important to these young adult readers is that stories and their protagonists are true to reality. While a few years earlier, reading a story was an unquestioned experience for them, they now feel the need to understand and judge situations and characters in the books they read, and they expect stories to help them think about values, beliefs, patterns of behaviour and emotionally painful subjects in their own lives. In conclusion, Appleyard says that “the adolescent has become what the juvenile was not, an observer and evaluator of self and others, so it is an easy step from involvement in the story to reflecting about it”. (Appleyard, 1991, pp.100-101) Thus one can say that teenagers who read novels are braced for harsh situations and they question the characters’ behaviour in the stories. These readers are able to deal with moral ambiguity in fiction and are prepared to judge what is good and what is evil. They are also able to discern characters that incorporate moral ambiguity or represent a mixture of good and evil and judge them according to their personal beliefs and values. At the same time, such figures contribute to the adolescents’ development of a set of beliefs and values. This only works, however, if, as the expert says, the characters are still stereotypes to a certain extent. Thus, as explained later, the characters are still far less complex than those in adult fiction and in ‘real’ tragedy, although unlike the characters in juvenile fiction, those in adolescent literature have inner lives and the reader has full access to their thoughts and feelings, their anxieties and self-questioning. (Appleyard, 1991, p.106) Indeed, the idea of self-questioning plays a key role in teenage fiction, for it is exactly what guides the readers into thinking about moral goodness and evil and invites them to make their own, proper judgements about characters in stories and to project those evaluations on social issues which surround them in their real lives, as well as on their own behaviour in society.

This is exactly where the notion of tragedy plays an important part. According to J. A. Appleyard, whose theory is based on the findings of Northrop Frye, teenagers are strongly influenced by their discovery that the world is not purely a good place, but that humans need to face a lot of serious problems in their life. As he terms it, adolescents realize that “not all boys and girls are good looking or popular at school, that not all encounters with the

opposite sex are romantic, that not all families are happy and not all quests end satisfactorily". They are now confronted with themes like suffering, illness and death, defeat and demoralization. Thus the kind of literature they now read and understand because they have developed enough cognitive and affective capacities is marked by the genre of tragedy. This is because "some of the characteristics of tragedy also fit the adolescent world view". (Appleyard, 1991, p.109)

In fact, while teenagers are usually at a point in their life when they develop an identity and distinguish themselves from their peers and from the adult world they are growing up in, they are also haunted by fears of isolation. Thus tragedy reflects their fears because it

tends to oppose the isolated individual to the social structure, and one of our deepest fears that tragedy plays on is the terror of being excluded from the group and therefore of being pathetic. The plight of the tragic figure is that, isolated, one may make the wrong choices and discover too late the shape of the life one has created for oneself in comparison with the potential one has forsaken. But there may be no right choice either. (Appleyard, 1991, p.109)

Indeed, considering adolescent psychology, one may claim that this is exactly what teenagers experience. They need to find their place in society and make important decisions about their values, attitudes, beliefs and belonging, but they often feel insecure when they realize they have to make such decisions alone, without the caring assistance of parents, other supportive adults or peers. Very often these decisions are crucial for their future or well-being and they give the adolescents a sense of danger and isolation. Therefore, according to Appleyard, tragedy is the literary genre that suits the adolescent psyche best. Yet teenage fiction, although it contains notions of tragedy, still represents a moderate version of the genre. "Adolescent novels seem rather to be something like primers that introduce their readers to how they should feel and think about the troubling new phenomena", and are far from satisfying a mature reader's expectations of a literary work of the genre of tragedy. Even realistic teenage novels have happy endings, although they are not as purely happy as those of juvenile adventure stories. The hero of the story usually survives, and though he or she may sometimes die there is a notion of a possibility for happiness at the end of the story. Death is not the last instance, and there is always hope left for the survivors in teenage novels. (Appleyard, 1991, p.110)

Donelson and Nilsen also allude to the idea of tragic elements in teenage fiction, making similar claims as Appleyard. According to them, “rather than writing pure tragedies, most young adult authors soften their stories with hopeful endings” because “it is understandable that teenagers want both the happy endings and the assurance that happy endings are possible”, although the outcomes of stories are sometimes “falsely hopeful”. Donelson and Nilsen even reinforce the point by quoting Virginia Hamilton, an author who a journalist interrogated about the unrealistic optimism contained in her story: “[...] this is a book for kids. They have to have hope.” (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, p.120)

Finally, according to Donelson and Nilsen, if students go to university after secondary school, they reach the stage in which they have to deal with literature on an academic level and adopt a sophisticated critical attitude to texts. Just like any other reader from that age onwards, however, they will also read a wide range of texts, from classics to rather trivial literature, and enjoy all sorts of genres like drama, poetry or novels. Aesthetic appreciation is the main goal of reading from early adulthood to old age. Nevertheless, Donelson and Nilsen also explicitly say that

people at any stage need to experience pleasure and profit from their reading [...] People who feel they are not being appropriately rewarded for their efforts may grow discouraged and join the millions of adults who no longer read for personal fulfillment and pleasure but only to get the factual information needed to manage the daily requirements of modern living. (Donelson and Nilson, 2001, p.43)

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the results of the studies carried out by Donelson and Nilsen as well as by Appleyard show facts about the various stages of literary appreciation which are based on the interests and experiences of enthusiastic readers who profit from ideal conditions that allow them to read a lot at all stages of their lives. They can develop all the necessary skills to read, understand and interpret literature to the extent that they become able to pass from one level to the next and never lose interest in reading.

Children's literature and literary criticism

The novels discussed in this work are all part of the genre of young adult literature, except for Julia Golding's *The Ship Between the Worlds*, which is rather a novel for younger readers. It must be noted, however, that Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* was published as a

book for boys and for adult readers alike long before young adult literature was considered as a genre of its own and people seriously took into account young readers' interests. In fact, the relatively new term 'young adult literature', used by various literary theorists, is quite vague because by 'young adults' some critics refer to teenagers between the ages of twelve and eighteen, while others still regard people in their early twenties as young adults. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, p.2) Nevertheless, one can generally say that young adult or teenage fiction consists of books that are largely read by adolescents, young people who cannot be regarded as children anymore but who are not yet adults, either. The protagonists and other characters in these novels are teenagers although adult characters also play important parts in the stories. Yet, many of the ideas brought forward by critics of children's literature can also be applied to young adult literature and are thus useful in this discussion of teenage fiction.

Criticism of this kind of literature, as it is usually practised by academics, did not use to be popular among literary theorists until quite recently. According to Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, who, in their book called *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, have devoted an entire chapter to the development of children's and young adult literature from before 1800 throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries up to modern popular teenage fiction, it only emerged in the 1940s. At that point, criticism merely consisted of "book lists, book reviews, and occasional references in articles on reading interests or improving young people's literary taste." However, "the comments that did appear were often more appreciative than critical", and it was only in the 1950s that the first real criticism of young adult literature emerged. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, p.73)

One of the main contributors of children's literature criticism is Peter Hunt, who has written and edited several critical works on children's literature, and who was the first person to lecture on children's literature in the United Kingdom. In his *An Introduction to Children's Literature*, Peter Hunt admits that "children's books are rarely acknowledged by the literary establishment", and that "children's books are invisible in the literary world". (Hunt, 1994, p.7) Although the 'invisibility' of children's literature which Hunt refers to has largely developed into quite a considerable importance since the 1990s, which is obvious in the numerous critical works on that genre which have been published in recent years, other theorists make it equally clear that children's literature has only very recently been regarded

and accepted as the subject of academic studies. One of the reasons for this development seems to be the fact that “we are living in a period of unprecedented production and sales of children’s books, which in turn has generated an unprecedented level of general interest in the field. There has been a steady consolidation of ‘children’s literature’ as an accepted subject in universities across the world, and it seems likely that this will continue”, according to Peter Hunt in his introduction to a series of key essays on the topic. (Hunt, 2005, pp.10-11)

Indeed, according to Charles Sarland, work started to be done by literary theorists in the field of children’s literature in Britain and in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s, when the first critics began developing criteria for judgment of children’s books. This resulted in the tradition of New Criticism in the USA and the Leavisite tradition in Britain. Northrop Frye and his theory of mythic archetypes was at the basis of American New Criticism, whereas the British Leavisites followed the English literary critic F. R. Leavis. (Sarland in Hunt, 2005, p.35) The latter strongly influenced mid-20th century British culture and advocated intense moral seriousness along with old rural values by strictly rejecting both Communist and Capitalist ideologies and values as “the hostile cultural environment of ‘mass’ society”. (Baldick, 1990, pp.102-121) Later, criticism of children’s fiction was marked by other theories such as structuralism, semiotics, Marxist criticism, intertextuality, feminist criticism, deconstructionism and Russian formalism, for example.

Another reason for the lack of interest shown in children’s literature until recently, apart from the history of children’s literature itself, which is laid down in one of the following chapters, is quite certainly the fact that it is enormously difficult to define the audience of children’s and young adult literature, not solely by its age, which many experts in the field agree upon. According to a lot of critics and theorists, it is equally as difficult to determine the act and the purpose of writing children’s or young adult literature. Therefore it makes sense to study various approaches to childhood, young adulthood and the literature written for children and teenagers or young adults.

The 'intrinsic goodness' of books

When studying literature of any kind, critics are often faced with the question of what the purposes of writing as well as of reading are, and the answer is generally that books are, among other things, at the basis of civilization. As children obviously constitute the future generations of every society, the purpose of children's literature has been an issue in literary theory and a number of critics have proved to be concerned by the question of what books have been considered 'good for' young readers by different societies over time up to the present day.

Thus in theory and criticism concerned with children's literature, the question of what books are 'good for' is just as important as that of why books are 'good'. For example, a book can be good for acquiring literacy, for expanding the imagination, for inculcating social attitudes, for dealing with issues or for coping with problems. (Hunt, 2005, p.10)

Alice Mead argues that literature encourages positive relationships between young people and society, because "to develop a broad capacity for empathy, children need stories with characters that guide them through a variety of startling, wild and joyous experiences". She goes so far as to say that "reading is [...] a crucial part of our development, timeless and necessary" for the socialization of young members of society. According to Mead, books contribute to children's moral growth and give them strength to face the harsh realities of life such as fear, death and social injustice and to act in accordance with positive moral values. The critic particularly alludes to children who grow up in a protected environment which is strongly influenced by consumerism and material sufficiency, where they are not required to deal with problems like poverty or social injustice at an early age. To Alice Mead, stories are essential guides for children on their way to adulthood, to reduce their fear and anxiety as well as to provide them with empathy and understanding of their fellows, thus basically to interact positively with other people. (Mead in Lehr, 2001, pp.152-155)

Although there have been times in history, in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when more focus was put on pleasure in reading than on teaching values via literature, it seems obvious that literature produced for a young audience has never been completely untouched by the adults' desire to transmit values and attitudes considered appropriate at the time of writing. For instance, in 1981 Fred Inglis wrote: "Only a monster

would not want to give a child books that she will delight in and which will teach her to be good. It is the ancient and proper justification of reading and teaching literature that it helps you to live well.” (Sarland in Hunt, 2005, p.32)

Societies always seem to have seen a necessity for pleasure and didacticism to go hand in hand in the eyes of literary theorists and experts in the field of children’s literature. Peter Hunt also concludes this from various sources which show that newly emergent literatures in recent postcolonial countries lend moral purpose and didacticism very much importance. John Stephens’s observation “writing for children has almost always had a purpose over and beyond that of just giving children pleasure” confirms this, too. (Sarland in Hunt, 2005, p.33) Stephens explains this in detail in his book called *Language and Ideology in Children’s Fiction*. He says that writing for children always has the purpose of encouraging the readers to accept socio-cultural values such as contemporary morality and ethics, a sense of what is valuable in the culture’s past and ambitions for the present and future, which are all supposed to be shared by the author and his or her audience.

As societies want their future generations to be ‘good’ and to meet the expectations of their elders, they try to influence them strongly, and one means of doing this is by giving them ‘adequate’ literature. This means that, on the one hand, authors endeavour to instil positive values into young readers, but on the other hand they also discourage their audience from adopting values they personally disapprove of. According to Stephens, writers who do this often agree with or respond to emerging trends that lead to social change in the areas of politics, education, ecology and feminism, for example.

Another important element of young adult literature is how relationships between an individual and society are represented. The perception that reading is to a large extent about personal development and self-understanding causes children’s fiction to focus mainly on the individual psyche. In consequence, teenagers’ growing social awareness is reflected in young adult literature, and thus moral and social values which are based on the society and/or the author’s views are taught via literature. (Stephens, 1992, pp.3-4)

In addition, critics began to show strong interest in character representation in children’s fiction in Britain and the United States around the 1970s. They found out that some groups of characters were represented at the expense of others in children’s literature, or some

groups were represented more positively than others. Thus critics claimed that children's books were promoting essentially white, male and middle-class values and they were class-biased, racist and sexist because black and working-class characters were usually subordinated to white middle-class ones or they were villains, as well as female characters normally reinforced gender stereotypes. (Sarland in Hunt, 2005, p.33)

Generally, one can say that all children's books teach their readers the values and beliefs of their authors as well as the society from which they emerge, and a writer has to be very careful what values he or she promotes in his or her work. As Peter Hunt points out: "It is arguably impossible for a children's book not to be educational or influential in some way; it cannot help but reflect an ideology and, by extension, didacticism." He goes on saying that in fact all books, whether they are written for children or for adults, manipulate their readers by presenting them with a set of values and beliefs and that only the manner in which this is done is different in the two types of literature. Because children are "less experienced and less educated into their culture than adults", their books are "more likely to be directive, to predigest experience". This means that manipulation and instruction happen more openly in children's fiction than in adult books, but the relationship between author and audience is as complex and ambivalent as that of adult readers and the authors of 'their' books. Hunt thus argues that authors of children's books are "in a position of singular responsibility in transmitting cultural values". Their job is not merely to tell stories and to entertain readers, but also to teach values and contribute to their audience's moral education. (Hunt, 1994, p.3)

It is, of course, very difficult to teach the 'right' kind of values, which leads on to the question of what is a good book for children. Due to individuals' different conceptions of moral values and the varying ideologies present in societies, 'good books' should be chosen according to specific criteria. Nevertheless, since there is no authority that could set such criteria, one might argue that children should be allowed to decide themselves what books are 'good for them'.

Daniela Caselli discusses the value of literature with relation to the (moral) education of children. She concludes from other critics' points of view that the example of the popularity of the 'Harry Potter' novels shows that if children like reading a book and children are to be

considered as intrinsically innocent and thus good, then the book is inevitably “good *for* children”. According to Caselli, many critics agree that even if a book is not of very high literary value,

the act of reading certainly remains [...] a worthy occupation, unquestioningly linked to literature’s power to improve people. If children read more thanks to Harry Potter, then the book is seen as necessarily being a moral one insofar as it helps children to become better citizens. (Caselli in Lesnik-Oberstein, 2004, pp.171-172)

Due to the extent and the aim of her article, Caselli strictly focuses on the ‘Harry Potter’ novels, but what she says also applies to other young adult literature, and it raises the question of who exactly the audience of children’s fiction is, or rather who children’s writers address in their works.

Reader-response criticism and the implied young reader

Literary theorists interested in children’s literature have pondered the concept of childhood, discussing the very nature of children and young readers. According to Peter Hunt, ‘childhood’ is impossible to define because “concepts of childhood differ not only culturally but in units as small as the family, and they differ, often inscrutably, over time”. (Hunt, 1994, p.5) Thus the idea and the perception of childhood vary in space and time, and it is extremely difficult to pin down the notion of childhood. According to Peter Hunt, ‘children’s literature’ is a contradiction in terms because its audience is often regarded as unsophisticated and marked by limited experience, knowledge and skill. (Hunt, 2001, p.2)

From a Romantic point of view, childhood is a state of innocence that adults have lost with their growing life experience and maturity, and the goodness of the child transcends social and historical boundaries. However, some critics like Jacqueline Rose and Karín Lesnik-Oberstein, for example, argue that childhood is not as innocent as one might assume because absolute innocence is impossible. They use William Blake’s ideas on innocence and experience to explain that a child cannot be innocent anymore as soon as it recognizes itself in a book, which means that it has gained experience. (Caselli in Lesnik-Oberstein, 2004, pp.171-175)

Peter Hunt offers his readers a generalization about childhood which represents the latter as “the period of life which the immediate culture thinks of as being free of responsibility and susceptible to education”. To him, children are “*developing* readers”, which means that “in terms of experience of life and books” they are not as mature as adult readers. (Hunt, 1994, p.5) Further, Peter Hunt defines childhood in terms of the absence of work in a child’s life. In fact, he says that childhood is characterised by lack of responsibility and thus is made up of ‘play’, whereas adulthood entails responsibility, which stands for ‘work’. Thus, Hunt concludes, children’s literature is about play rather than work and the latter “forms a contrastive subtext to the golden play-world of the child”. According to Peter Hunt, children’s books are meant to provide pleasure and, except for a few texts like Rudyard Kipling’s ‘Puck’ books, for example, work is marginalized in children’s fiction and only plays a minor part in stories, if it is mentioned at all. (Hunt, 1994, p.26 and pp.175-176) One can say that Peter Hunt sees childhood as a form of freedom from work and responsibility, and thus in a way also as a state of innocence, and most importantly as different from adulthood although the exact difference may be difficult to determine.

Interestingly, though, Peter Hunt also remarks in a later volume that whereas “childhood can be seen by adults as a desirable area of innocence or retreat, [...] it is constructed as a state that the child wishes to grow out of. Indeed, the very status of ‘children’s literature’ reflects a society of adults anxious to reject or forget about childhood.” (Hunt, 2001, pp.5-6) Thus on the one hand adult writers who produce books for children seem to express how they see children as eager to grow up, gain experience, find their place in society and become adults while on the other hand writers seem to make use of their stories to urge children to grow up and leave behind their state of freedom and innocence as soon as possible. This also shows how child readers are implied to be easily manipulated by the adults involved in the production and distribution of children’s literature. Peter Hunt adequately summarizes this by saying that “children’s literature is, at least in part, about control, and the primary result of that is that it reflects first of all what society wishes itself to be seen as, and secondly [...] what it is actually like. The histories we construct reflect these overriding ‘truths’.” (Hunt, 2001, p.8) In conclusion, the concept of childhood varies with different cultures, societies and time, but also with different critics’ attitudes, and

children's literature gives insight into what adults imagine children to be like as well as what they expect from children.

Reader-response criticism may lend more insight into writers' and critics' views of child readers. In fact, this approach raises the question of who is talking to whom in children's literature. Lots of critics such as Wolfgang Iser, Aiden Chambers, Jacqueline Rose and John Stephens have pondered the question of who is addressed in children's literature. Michael Benton refers to Aiden Chambers's claim that in children's books there is commonly a "sense of an intimate, yet adult-controlled, relationship between the implied author and the implied reader". Benton goes on saying that Chambers "identifies both with the figure of the 'friendly adult storyteller who knows how to entertain children while at the same time keeping them in their place'". (Benton in Hunt, 2005, p.97) This clearly shows that critics see an unequal relationship between adult writer and child reader. The adult writer conveys the impression that he or she needs to exercise power over the child reader and the desire to teach and even to discipline is obvious in this attitude. As Hunt puts it, children's books are part of a "complex power-relationship" between adults and young readers. (Hunt, 1994, p.3)

In her book called *The case of Peter Pan or the impossibility of children's fiction*, Jacqueline Rose acknowledges the presence of a didactic and repressive narrative voice in children's stories, but she also explains that there has been an "increasing 'narrativisation' of children's fiction, and a gradual dropping of the conspicuous narrating voice", which has led the events of the story to be more important than the controlling, adult narrative voice in it since the nineteenth century. Like Hunt, Rose says that the stress is increasingly laid on pleasure rather than on didacticism in children's literature, which has made the latter more 'for' children, as she terms it. (Rose, 1993, pp.59-62)

A few critics allude to the idea that authors of children's literature write for themselves as much as for children. Thus Peter Hunt quotes from a 1997 article in the annual journal *Children's Literature* which says that "a dialogic mix of older and younger voices occurs in the texts too often read as univocal. Authors who write for children inevitably create a colloquy between past and present selves." And even Robert Louis Stevenson claimed that while writing children's stories "you just indulge in the pleasure of your heart", which was

taken up later by Arthur Ransome, who continued by saying that “you write not *for* children but for yourself”. (Hunt, 2005, p.10 and p.191) Thus the implied reader may be seen as the author at a younger age, as a past but obviously well-preserved self, or based on the author’s experience of his or her own childhood or that of his or her interaction with peers.

Another theory brought forward in Reader-response criticism consists in the notion of the identification of readers with protagonists, by which the reader takes on the values of the protagonist. In this case the reader is ideologically constructed by his or her identification with a character. (Sarland in Hunt, 2005, pp.42-43) Jacqueline Rose adheres to this idea, too, as she says that the child reader is taken into the story and expected to accept its fictitious world as real without questioning its origin or its creator. In this case, the implied reader is seen as someone who can easily enter into the story and directly experience what the characters do. Rose explains, however, that despite this effort in eliminating the repressive narrative voice from children’s stories, the child’s innocent nature turns it into an object, thus making the writing didactic and controlling again. (Rose, 1993, pp.62-63)

Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco suggest that different readers interpret texts in different, individual manners and that they can either voluntarily identify with protagonists and take on their values, choose a different reading from the one initially intended by the author, or recognize the ideology that underlies the text and regard it from a critical point of view. Studies carried out in schools have shown that readers most often interpret stories according to their personal views and are thus very difficult to define as an audience. (Sarland in Hunt, 2005, pp.43-45)

Michael Benton concludes his article on Reader-response criticism with the following statement: “Reader-response criticism accommodates both the reader and the text; there is no area of literary activity where this is more necessary than in the literature that defines itself by reference to its young readership.” This means that defining the reader is equally as important as understanding the text in this kind of criticism, especially in the context of children’s literature. Nevertheless, Michael Benton confirms in his article what previously mentioned critics say about the young audience, namely that the readers’ response to literature is hard or even impossible to define and that studies do not show authentic

results, while at the same time numerous critics are interested in the topic and thus the approaches to the problem are countless, too. (Benton in Hunt, 2005, p.97)

One key idea which critics share is, however, that readers actively participate in the reading process by identifying various meanings of texts. They bring along their knowledge, life experience and personal attitudes to their reading, however limited these may be due to the readers' age. Critics also agree that historical, cultural and social backgrounds play important parts in the act of reading. (Benton in Hunt, 2005, pp.86-89)

In spite of this, Benton also claims that "the implied child reader remains a neglected figure in children's book criticism" although children's literature is strongly influenced by "the singular character of a form of literature that is designated by its intended audience". (Benton in Hunt, 2005, p.97) Benton explains that children's literature distinguishes itself from adult literature by the fact that it is written for an implied audience rather than a real one that its writers can understand because they are part of the same social, cultural and age group. This might explain why so few critics have managed to address the topic of the implied reader and to define who exactly it is and how the young readers perceive the literature aimed at them. As a result, the discussions of the implied reader constantly revolve around the element of didacticism contained in children's literature.

Didacticism in children's and young adult literature

In *Understanding Children's Literature*, Peter Hunt explains that in the beginning, children's fiction was either based on traditional materials like folk and fairy tales or overtly didactic, and children's literature in its modern form only emerged centuries later. According to Hunt, histories of children's books worldwide show that literature for children has always been influenced by educational, religious and political beliefs and intentions, and that each society's concept of childhood has influenced its literature for the young. Adults generally control the production of children's literature regardless of the young readers' tastes and desires, and censorship has always played a major part, too. Mark West, quoted by Peter Hunt, has observed in this context that

throughout the history of children's literature, the people who have tried to censor children's books, for all their ideological differences, share a rather romantic view

about the power of books. They believe, or at least profess to believe, that books are such a major influence in the formation of children's values and attitudes that adults need to monitor nearly every word that children read. (Hunt, 2005, p.5)

So one could say that adults do not only produce literature for children according to certain desires to inform, teach and even manipulate them, but they also control what literature children have access or no access to, even if the texts were written by adults for children.

In this context, Jacqueline Rose, in her detailed analysis of J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, provokingly alludes to the 'impossibility of children's literature'. Rose claims that children's literature is impossible because it is based on and clearly about the impossible relation between adult and child, although it hardly ever talks of this relation. In Rose's opinion, the adult comes first in children's literature in the form of author, maker or giver, and the child comes second in the shape of reader, product or receiver, and neither of them enters the space in between author and reader. She says that the idea that the child is in the book is wrong, for the writer only tries to get at the child by using its portrayal in the book. What she means is that writers of children's books represent children in their books in order to address real children as readers, and that the difference between writer and addressee is bigger in children's literature than in any other genre. Rose goes on saying that, because the author "sets up the child as an outsider to its own process, and then aims, unashamedly, to take the child *in*", children's literature is "quite deliberately a soliciting, a chase, or even a seduction". (Rose, 1993, pp.1-2) Thus children's literature seems to be, according to Jacqueline Rose, an open attempt to catch the child reader's attention and deliberately transmit a message to the young reader.

Peter Hunt confirms this in *Children's Literature* by saying that

there has been a long – and far from dead – tradition of didacticism, which holds that children's books must be moral and educational; this is perhaps an inevitable consequence of adult dominance, when both the child characters and the child readers are subservient to the adult voice in the book. (Hunt, 2001, p.5)

Indeed, children's literature has, to a large extent, been strongly influenced by the adult writers' desire to teach their readers through the fiction they write for them. To illustrate this attitude, an insight into the history of children's literature can be very valuable.

According to experts in the field, children's literature did not exist in a proper sense before the seventeenth century, and even then it developed very slowly. At that time, adults and

children shared the same kind of literature, and a large part of the 'texts' were oral transmissions. The reason for this lack of distinction between literature for the young and literature for adults probably lies in the fact that children were treated like adults in society before the eighteenth century, which only changed with the development of school education, medicine and economy.

Most books were produced by religious puritans and were meant to be educational in religious and moral matters. With the rise of the commercial production of books in the mid-eighteenth century, innumerable books for children were written by religious authorities, and they either had a didactic purpose, or they were based on folklore. Because they were "agents of religious propaganda", authority over the child reader and their manipulative aims were clearly expressed by the writers in these books. Simultaneously, texts which were derived from popular culture, namely the folk-tale, appeared but were regarded as trivial. They were also shared by adults and children, and they later developed into 'chapbooks', penny dreadfuls and dime novels.

Later, attitudes to childhood changed and children started to be treated with more respect in literature, which led to the emergence of 'real' children's literature in the nineteenth century and to the definite establishment of the genre in the twentieth century. Early novels which were written for children, but still largely read by adults, too, were Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, as well as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. (Hunt, 2001, pp.11-13)

The American Sunday School Union played a relevant part in the production of books for young readers in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, "most of these books were little more than sugar-coated sermons, the titles gave away the plot, and the writing was unbelievably mawkish". With time, they gave way to the popularity of dime and domestic novels, which were not of extraordinary literary value, but which helped to encourage literacy in America. Louisa May Alcott, who wrote domestic novels for and about girls in domestic settings, and Horatio Alger, who wrote dime novels, romantic fantasies for and about boys, were key figures in that era of children's literature. Domestic novels were usually written by women and read by girls and women, and they "were the products of the religious sentiment of the time, the espousal of traditional virtues, and the anxieties and

frustrations of women trying to find a role in a changing society". In contrast, dime novels were normally written by men and read by boys and men and they "developed other forms, such as mysteries and even early forms of science fiction, but none were so popular or so typical as the westerns". In the early twentieth century, series books like 'Nancy Drew' and the 'Hardy Boys' from the Stratemeyer Literary Syndicate for young adult readers became popular. The 'Nancy Drew' series were addressed to girls, whereas the 'Hardy Boys' series were meant to be read by male young readers. Although they were largely despised by English teachers and librarians for being inferior and trivial, "series books were inevitably moral". Despite being simplistic, they always advocated the good and the right over evil, and promoted values such as the ideas that school and education should be taken seriously and the importance of sports and outdoor activities for physical and mental health, for example. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, pp.48-59 and pp.64-67)

In her article on popular series books, Jennifer Armstrong confirms this by claiming that the 'Sweet Valley High' books, of which she was a ghost writer for many years, also promote good morality and work ethics. The main protagonists of this series are twins Jessica and Elizabeth Wakefield, the latter of whom is very well-behaved and virtuous while the former is naughty and bold. Armstrong admits that Jessica Wakefield is by far the more tempting figure in the series, but at the end of each book, virtue triumphs over misbehaviour and moral doubtfulness, as Elizabeth stands out as the winner each time.

Goodness and generosity are rewarded. Cruelty and selfishness are punished. [...] The characters that come out ahead in book after book are almost always the good characters, the characters who typify kindness, decency, diligence, punctuality, honesty, unselfishness and courage.

The writer goes on to say that in the case of such literature, although when interpreted wrongly, they can lead to "mindless conformity", stereotypes can be helpful to hold up for comparison. If readers view these books with a healthy portion of critical sense and if they realize that they are presented with stereotypes that mean much more than what is seen on the surface, then the books can be tools that encourage good behaviour in young readers. (Armstrong in Lehr, 2001, pp.52-55)

Looking back at the historical evolution of children's and young adult fiction documented in *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, it is notable that the difference between books written for girls and for boys respectively still remained obvious at the beginning of the twentieth

century. Thus, literature for boys was generally considered superior to literature for girls by teachers and librarians alike. The reason for this, according to critics, was that “many authors insisted on making their girls good and domestic and dull”, but “boys were allowed outside the house not only to find work and responsibilities, but also to find adventure and excitement in their books.” Concluding from this, didacticism was still very clear and dominant in literature for young readers at that time, and gender stereotypes were enforced strongly.

From that point onwards, literature still had a long way to go before children’s and especially young adult literature developed into and was considered as a genre of its own. In fact, according to critics, it was only in the early to mid-twentieth century that young adult literature became truly recognized as such. Nevertheless, the books that replaced the Stratemeyer series publications were still rather unsophisticated and “dealt almost exclusively with white, middle-class values and morality”. They all had happy endings and avoided challenging their readers’ morality. Didacticism was incorporated by the absence of taboos like sexuality, homosexuality, suicide, social or racial injustice, pregnancy, drugs, school dropouts and divorce, among others.

International politics and the two World Wars then had a strong influence on society and consequently on literature, including young adult literature, which resulted in a different kind of books being published for young readers. Thus, the *bildungsroman*, a coming-of-age novel about a young person on his or her way to adulthood, which had been read by adults for centuries already, suddenly became of interest to writers of young adult fiction and popular with young adult readers. This marked the moving away from strong didacticism and the preoccupation of writers with transmitting a sense of traditional morality in children’s and young adult fiction. (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, pp.60-73)

According to Peter Hunt, from the 1960s and 1970s onwards, writers of young adult literature started dealing with social ‘realism’. (Hunt, 2001, p.17) This led to the rise of what Donelson and Nilsen call “the modern problem novel”. After the Second World War, societal, education and business values had changed, so traditional coming-of-age stories developed from what used to be seen as *bildungsromane* into ‘new realism’ or ‘problem novels’. As opposed to previous white, middle-class protagonists, characters now came from

a variety of social and economic backgrounds, the settings became harsher, and the language used in these novels was colloquial rather than formal, as in older books for teenagers. The two experts argue: "That the general public allowed this change in language shows that people were drawing away from the idea that the main purpose of fictional books for young readers is to set an example of proper middle-class behaviour." (Donelson and Nilsen, 2001, p.117)

In conclusion, despite many changes in attitude towards childhood, child and young adult readers and consequently the literature produced for young readers over the last few centuries, children's and young adult literature has always been marked by didacticism and the desire to instil moral values in its audience, except for books written during the last few decades, when literature for young readers became less didactic. Nevertheless, innumerable works of fiction intended for children and young adults present their readers with acts of violence and flawed characters. This is certainly also true for the novels discussed in the following analysis of how exactly moral values and moral ambiguities are dealt with by various authors of teenage fiction from Robert Louis Stevenson to the present day.

Part Two: Pirate novels in focus

The history of children's and young adult literature shows that texts written for young readers have always been marked by a desire to teach values and generally to educate in a way that the society from which the work emerges considers praiseworthy. To do this, authors have used a number of techniques in their works. Certain patterns of character behaviour and storylines as well as types of character, settings and relationships are indeed identifiable in children's and young adult literature. They can be regarded as useful indicators of the ways in which authors attempt to teach their readers about life and society and to instil moral values in them. Thus in order to understand what works of fiction for children and young adults often consist of and what recurring techniques or devices are used to transmit messages, a number of novels aimed at young readers will be discussed here.

The choice of books used for this discussion is based on the topic of piracy, which they all have in common, as well as on other features such as questing adolescent protagonists and the circumstances under which these young characters leave home, travel to islands or fantasy oceans and return as mature teenagers or young adults. Gender issues and intertextual links in the stories have also contributed to this choice. The works of fiction analysed in detail are *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson and its sequel *The Curse of Treasure Island*, written over two hundred years later by Francis Bryan, *Pirates!* by Celia Rees, *The Ship Between the Worlds* by Julia Golding, and finally Justin Somper's 'Vampirates' series of novels. The latter are entitled *Demons of the Ocean*, *Tide of Terror*, *Dead Deep* and *Blood Captain*. Two additional novels recently published as part of the same series – *Black Heart* and *Empire of Night* – are deliberately ignored due to the extent and the purpose of this work. For the same reason, the analysis of the 'Vampirates' novels will be focused exclusively on the human characters in the stories, especially the pirates, whereas there will be no comments on vampire characters.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* has special status among these pirate stories because it is by far the oldest of the above-mentioned novels and was thus written in a different period of time and of the history of children's literature. In fact, it was published

during the so-called “first golden age of children’s books”. Critics consider this the time between the 1860s, during which Charles Kingsley’s *The Water Babies* and Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* were published, and the First World War. Peter Hunt writes that during this time, “in a sense, children’s literature was growing up – growing away from adults” because entertainment was becoming more important in children’s literature than didacticism and books were becoming more complex. (Hunt, 1994, p.59) This resulted in the rise of the romantic adventure story, a kind of novel written for boys but popular among adults, which was often of “the sea-going, island-visiting, empire-conquering, villainous-crews-in-Cornish-harbour-villages, buried-treasure genre”. (Hunt, 2001, p.234) Indeed, adventure stories are usually about boys who go on a journey, experience a lot of adventures and difficult situations that need to be overcome, in order to become more mature in the end. Thus adventure stories for children and young adults are often described as ‘coming-of-age stories’ which depict a young, immature protagonist in challenging situations and show how he or she gains experience and grows up during and due to the events of the story.

Coming-of-age stories and the romantic quest

According to Daniel P. Woolsey, coming-of-age stories

usually involve the assumption of new roles, rights and responsibilities. All of the protagonists in these books struggle to leave behind their childish naïveté, lack of experience, and immaturity, and move toward maturity by assuming more responsibility for themselves and for their families. Coming of age also implies a search for self-definition and an exploration of several critical questions: Who am I? Where am I going? What is my place in this world? (Woolsey in Lehr, 2001, p.113)

Growing up, with all the difficulties it entails, is thus the central theme of these novels, and it is usually represented in the form of a journey which takes the young protagonist to unknown places which in turn stand for obstacles the youth has to overcome. On his or her way, the hero or heroine meets characters that stand for real people in society who the young person needs to interact with, learn to tolerate, accept as friends or consider unworthy of friendship or trust, for example. Woolsey further refers to Joseph Campbell, according to whose analysis

the heroic journey begins at home, where the hero is unaware of his own heroic potential [...] This changes with the call to adventure, in which the hero is summoned from home to an unknown place. He sets off on a quest and proceeds despite uncertainty about whether or how he will succeed. The hero moves across a threshold into a dangerous, dreamlike landscape where he must survive a succession of trials. (Woolsey in Lehr, 2001, pp.115-116)

The critic adds that “through these experiences” the protagonist “learns valuable lessons that are necessary for full participation in the adult life of his world”. Finally, “having survived and grown through these trials, the hero returns home, bringing the knowledge gained in his adventures and generally enjoying recognition by others for his growth and development”. Woolsey bases this theory on Joseph Campbell’s analysis of the classic journey of the hero found in the mythologies of various cultures around the world, in which the latter also says that the typical pattern of the quest story is “separation – initiation – return”. According to Campbell, these mythical stories are “parables of the individual’s search for identity and the quest for self-realization”, and “the heroic quest is a metaphor for an interior journey as well as an external reality. Thus, the pattern may be applied to the development of characters in realistic fiction, whether they live and move in contemporary or in historical settings.” (Woolsey in Lehr, 2001, pp.115-116) Consequently, one can say that the device of the journey presented according to the pattern of the heroic quest is very common in literature in general, including children’s and young adult literature written at any moment in time.

Another important point that Woolsey makes is about the typical outcome of an adolescent protagonist’s quest journey. The critic explains that the questing youth is normally

separated from the safety of home and the comforting support of parents [...]. Thus, [he or she is] thrust into the demanding challenges of new roles, relationships, and responsibilities. The result of these trials and stretching experiences is sometimes painful but always results in growth. All of these protagonists do not finally achieve incorporation by the end of their initiatory experiences, but in every case it is clear that they are well on the way to manhood. (Woolsey in Lehr, p.119)

Furthermore, “in many of these stories the process of coming of age is completed with some sort of victory and a glad reunion with friends and family. With this victory comes an acknowledgement of new status and enhanced respect.” (Woolsey in Lehr, 2001, p.121) On the other hand, “in some of these stories there is not a physical return home or an actual

reunion, but there is a recognition of growth and accomplishment, and a literal movement on to the next phase of life". (Woolsey in Lehr, 2001, p.122)

There are examples of both possible outcomes of teenage protagonists' quest journeys in the novels analysed here. Indeed, Jim Hawkins travels to Treasure Island and back home in both Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Francis Bryan's *The Curse of Treasure Island* and gains insight into his own personality as well as a lot of life experience and knowledge about other people. The journey is not an easy one in either of the novels and Jim has to sacrifice a large part of his innocence in both a developmental and a legal sense. Nevertheless, Jim Hawkins returns as a financially and personally rich man.

In Julia Golding's novel, David Jones goes on a journey to a fantasy area "between the worlds" in search of his father and as a way of escaping from his problems at home and at school. He returns with the immense responsibility of holding "Earth's future in his hands". (Golding, 2007, p.233)

Celia Rees sends her female protagonist Nancy Kington from England to Jamaica, where she escapes because she refuses to be a slave-owner and to marry a villain. Then Nancy spends a long time as a pirate at sea before she returns home as an experienced woman aiming to marry the love of her life.

The theme of the journey and the romantic quest is present in the 'Vampirates' series, too, but Connor and Grace Tempest's journeys stretch over five novels and even in Justin Somper's *Empire of Night* the twins do not return home. This is quite unlikely, too, because their home now belongs to someone else and therefore it does not exist in a proper sense anymore, and they have no relatives or friends to return to, either. At the beginning of the story, the twins leave home and embark on a journey to sea to escape life in an orphanage or as the adoptive children of a greedy, childless couple they do not like, and whereas Grace spends most of her time with the Vampirates, Connor starts leading the life of a pirate and gradually loses his innocence on this journey. The 'Vampirates' novels that have been published so far, however, leave Connor in the state of growing up, searching for his identity, and the yet unwritten 'return' part of Connor's romantic quest is not included in any of the novels discussed here.

As it is a basic element of the quest story for the young protagonist to leave home and enter a different environment, most writers of adventure stories separate their young protagonists from their families and friends in order to isolate them in their new environment and force them to interact with new people and come to terms with an unknown environment. In a novel, an easy way of doing this is to make the young boy or girl an orphan, or to let at least one of his or her parents disappear temporarily or permanently.

The 'parentlessness' of young heroes and heroines

J. A. Appleyard, in his book called *Becoming a Reader*, provides an interesting explanation for the frequent use of this technique. First, he briefly goes into a few theories explaining the recurrent 'parentlessness' of fictional heroes and heroines as the "mysterious-birth-of-the-hero archetype common in mythological literature" or from a Freudian perspective, saying that the idea is a remainder of the Oedipal conflict, or even from a Marxist point of view, seeing the "fantasy of adoption as a defense against the conviction of being alienated from the kind of ideal family community that the conditions of modern life no longer allow". (J. A. Appleyard, 1991, p.76) In other words, from this Marxist perspective, the fact that heroes and heroines are displaced and removed from their homes is a statement against modern society and families, which denounces capitalist values. Then Appleyard refers to a theory that appears to be the most obvious and logic explanation for the 'parentlessness' of the heroes and heroines. In fact, he looks at the technique from a psychological perspective and makes it clear that family issues are not the main subject of coming-of-age stories which children and young adults read. According to J. A. Appleyard, "the heroes and heroines of these books have to be at least psychologically parentless if they are to be convincing models of world mastery – that is, if they are to be what the young reader wants to become and has started on the way to being, but realistically cannot yet be". (J. A. Appleyard, 1991, p.76) Indeed, the young hero or heroine in a coming-of-age story, like its reader, is about to become independent from his or her parents and to be responsible for his or her own life, so he or she needs a certain amount of freedom as well as to exist in an environment without parental authority and guidance. This is because the purpose of such a story is to let the youth struggle and overcome challenges on his or her own in order to gain the strength,

knowledge and experience that are necessary to become a successful adult. According to Woolsey, the questing adolescents in coming-of-age stories gain “independence in dealing with life’s daily challenges”, start “to address long-term personal problems” and begin “to attend to social problems in the larger world around them”. In short, they learn “to be responsible for [their] own actions and to care for others” as well as about “the importance of making right moral choices”. (Woolsey in Lehr, 2001, p.124)

J. A. Appleyard provides another, cognitive explanation of the frequency of ‘parentlessness’ in children’s literature. He says that in reality children do not have the idealized views of their parents’ authority and omniscience that they are often assumed to have, but that particularly during the time they start going to school and acquiring skills, they believe that they know a lot, even more than their parents. They do not realize that in fact their knowledge is fragmentary and that they are still rather ignorant and innocent. Thus they are convinced that they know things that their parents do not know, which Elkind calls “cognitive conceit” and which is the source of the theme of the clever child who outwits ignorant parents, a theme often present in children’s literature. (Appleyard, 1991, p.76)

In consequence, all the main protagonists of the novels which constitute the basis of this discussion are parentless in the sense that they are either real orphans, have only one parent left but are geographically separated from him or her, or temporarily lose touch with one of their parents through the latter’s mysterious disappearance. They are children or young adults from respectable social backgrounds at the beginning of the story, but soon they travel the seas together with pirates. However, at first none of them consciously chooses to join a pirate crew. They are all drawn into the world of piracy through some unfortunate circumstances. Indeed, the loss or disappearance of at least one of their parents triggers a series of events which eventually leads to the protagonists’ going on a journey together with pirates. This is the protagonists’ actual embarking on a journey away from home, from their usual environment and most importantly away from their families and friends. In these novels, human life is represented as a metaphor, and the stories are about a young person’s life journey from childhood through adolescence toward adulthood. Writing about Gary Paulsen’s *Dogsong*, John Noell Moore explains that “at the very center of the novel are issues about the conflict between the worlds in which we are born

physically and psychologically and the worlds to which we aspire”, (Moore, 1997, p.51) which can be applied to all the teenage novels analysed here.

Thus, in Justin Somper’s ‘Vampirates’ series the twins Connor and Grace Tempest, who have never known their mother because she probably died giving birth to them^{*}, also lose their father at the age of fourteen. Now they are orphans and “all alone in the world”. (Somper, 2005, p.14) They cannot even inherit their father’s fortune, as he had been broke for quite some time, and his “possessions – his boat, even the lighthouse itself – no longer belonged to them. Their father had left them nothing.” (Somper, 2005, p.15) In consequence, a rich and greedy, childless couple as well as the nasty matron of the local orphanage are suddenly interested in adopting the twins, but only for their own benefit rather than that of the children. Thus, in a desperate attempt to escape both of them, Connor and Grace decide to steal their father’s yacht back from the bank and sail out to sea. They have no plans about where to go or how to survive, and they soon get caught in a terrible storm which destroys their boat and almost kills both of them. Nevertheless, both twins are rescued by the crews of two different ships, which results in their being separated from each other. Grace lands on a ship of vampires or ‘Vampirates’ and Connor ends up on a pirate vessel. The pirates offer him a place to stay on their ship and they readily accept the boy as a new crew member, and this is how Connor’s career as a pirate begins. Later in the story, his sister Grace joins him for a brief period of time, until she voluntarily returns to the ship of Vampirates.

Nancy Kington, the narrator and main protagonist of Celia Rees’s novel *Pirates!*, suffers a similar fate at the age of fifteen. Her mother died while giving birth to her, so she grows up in a single-parent family together with her three elder brothers until her father remarries ten years later and Nancy suffers quite a lot under the pressure which her stepmother puts on her. However, as soon as Nancy’s father dies, her stepmother does not exist as a character in the story anymore, so Nancy can be considered a real orphan.

Nancy’s father, who is a sugar merchant and a slave trader, also has considerable debts, caused partly by the bad management of his finances by his elder son and partly by a

^{*} In fact, the twins’ mother was murdered after giving birth to the twins, but this is only revealed in *Vampirates: Blood Captain*, the fourth episode of the series. So until then readers are made to believe that she died in childbirth.

terrible storm that has destroyed a large part of his fleet. This story, as opposed to the 'Vampirates' series, is set in eighteenth-century England and in Jamaica, one of Great Britain's colonies. Nancy thus remains under the tutelage of her brothers, especially Joseph, who she accompanies to Jamaica. Joseph is an alcoholic, however, and not capable of managing business or looking after his sister. This comes out clearly, for example, when their father argues with him and accuses him of having ruined his business and being guilty of fraud:

'You be quiet, Sir!' My father half rose from his chair. 'If we are ruined, it is largely to your doing. What you have done is near criminal. Where are the funds I forwarded to you in order to secure the cargoes?'

My brother had no answer. He didn't even bluster, just hung his head as if he were ten again and been caught pilfering by some shopkeeper.

'You borrowed on expectation of profit, and now the whole lot is lost. All at the bottom of the sea. [...] You are guilty of fraud, Sir, or as near as dammit! [...]' (Rees, 2003, pp.66-67)

The restraint that her brother's presence means to Nancy, but also Joseph's incompetence are confirmed later in the story, when he and Nancy live in Jamaica:

'When will my brother be here? Has he sent word? Do you know?'

He would not be back for another week, Duke said. Delayed by business. I did not want Joseph to hurry back, fearing that his presence might curtail the freedom that I was just beginning to enjoy, although he might bring news from home, maybe letters.

[...]

My brother's further week extended to a fortnight. He arrived in the back of the wagonette, stinking of rum. Thomas heaved him on to his shoulder and carried him into the house like a sack of sugar. (Rees, 2003, p.117)

In fact, Joseph is usually depicted in a state of drunkenness in the novel. Thus Nancy's brother, who plays the part of a substitute parent at the beginning of the story, limits her freedom to some extent because he is her guardian, but he is obviously weak and drunk most of the time, so the young heroine gains a lot of independence from her family before she definitely breaks away from it when she escapes from the plantation.

The situation is slightly different in the case of David Jones, the protagonist of Julia Golding's novel *The Ship Between the Worlds*. He does not mourn the death of either of his parents, but he lives alone with his mother because his father mysteriously disappeared when they were on holiday together. After the following conversation with his father, David Jones is not really left an orphan, but partly parentless through his father's disappearance:

'I can't put this off any longer. I've got to go now: we're running out of time. Give these to your mom, won't you?' He dropped the car and house keys into David's open palm. 'I won't be long. I've just got to go away for a few days.' He looked guiltily over at his wife and did not quite meet David's eyes.

'Go away?' asked David, startled. 'But you can't: we've only just arrived!'

'I know. I'm sorry. But last night I found out that there was something I had to do. You understand?'

David didn't. He knew his dad could be unpredictable but this was scary.

'You'll tell your mom I'll be back. I'll contact you in a few weeks to let you know when exactly.'

'A few weeks?' The period was stretching ever longer. (Golding, 2007, p.18)

With David's mother suffering from this separation as much as her son, she does not have the strength to give David the necessary support a young boy needs in such a situation, because "she had so many problems at the moment, he didn't want to burden her" and "she used to be pretty, but since David's father had left, her face had settled into an almost permanent frown, two deep lines pinching the skin above her nose. Her black hair was beginning to grey at the temples." (Golding, 2007, pp.3 and 9-10). So with this ageing, weak from her suffering mother David Jones can be considered psychologically parentless in Golding's novel.

Jim Hawkins, who is the oldest and probably the most famous character of those described and analysed in this work, also embarks on a journey after his father dies following a long illness. Just like Connor and Grace, Jim Hawkins is fourteen years old when his father dies, and though his mother is still alive and they run an inn, their financial situation is not very good. His father has rather a weak personality, as is obvious in the way he is ordered about by Billy Bones, who is staying as a guest at his inn:

In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us, for he kept on staying week after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more. If ever he mentioned it, the captain blew through his nose so loudly that you might say he roared, and stared my poor father out of the room. I have seen him wringing his hands after such a rebuff, and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have greatly hastened his early and unhappy death. (Stevenson, 1883, p.6)

Thus Jim Hawkins's father is not the strong kind of character necessary to guide a young boy on his way to adulthood when he is still alive, and he soon dies at the beginning of *Treasure Island* and passes on his responsibility for the inn to Jim and his mother. Ironically, Jim's

father's death is mentioned only very briefly within a long and extensive account of Billy Bones's stroke, illness and death:

But as things fell out, my poor father died quite suddenly that evening, which put all other matters on the side. Our natural distress, the visits of the neighbours, the arranging of the funeral, and all the work of the inn to be carried on in the meanwhile kept me so busy that I had scarcely time to think of the captain, far less to be afraid of him. (Stevenson, 1883, p.17)

Jim's father's death is obviously connected with work, arrangements, visits and a lot of pressure, but very little sadness and mourning on the part of Jim and his mother. Jim is only "standing at the door for a moment, full of sad thoughts about [his] father" (Stevenson, 1883, p.18) the day after the funeral, but immediately afterwards he is busy with the visit of Blind Pew at the Admiral Benbow. However, when Billy Bones dies, Jim sheds tears for the first time, and he explains that

I ran to him at once, calling my mother. But haste was all in vain. The captain had been struck dead by thundering apoplexy. It is a curious thing to understand, for I had certainly never liked the man, though of late I had begun to pity him, but as soon as I saw that he was dead, I burst into a flood of tears. (Stevenson, 1883, p.20)

Billy Bones's death is related in more detail than Jim's father's death, and Jim expresses more feelings of sorrow and distress at the captain's death than at his own father's. Although Jim explains this by the fact that "it was the second death I had known, and the sorrow of the first was still fresh in my heart", (Stevenson, 1883, p.20) it is clear that his father's death did not cause him as much pain. This is because the young hero needs to break free from his home and family, and thus he cannot mourn his father's death as intensely as one might expect a son to do.

Jim's mother does not mark a strong presence in the story, either. She is "materialist rather than maternal", according to Alan Sandison. (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.212) In addition, she faints after a brief show of courage in the face of danger that is caused by the pirates who attack the inn, and Jim Hawkins has to carry her away and protect her:

"My dear," said my mother suddenly, "take the money and run on. I am going to faint."

This was certainly the end for both of us, I thought. How I cursed the cowardice of the neighbours; how I blamed my poor mother for her honesty and her greed, for her past foolhardiness and present weakness! We were just at the little bridge, by good fortune; and I helped her, tottering as she was, to the edge of the bank, where, sure enough, she gave a sigh and fell on my shoulder. I do not know how I found the

strength to do it at all, and I am afraid it was roughly done, but I managed to drag her down the bank and a little way under the arch. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.25-26)

Obviously, Jim is the stronger character in this scene, and this does not change along the course of the story. He has definitely gained independence from both his parents, his father being dead and his mother being too weak to support him, so he can be considered parentless.

In conclusion, all the protagonists of the novels in question gain independence from their parents through death, weakness or mysterious disappearance and are ready to face new challenges from this moment on. Their 'parentlessness' liberates them from authority and parental guidance and thus makes them available for adventure and rites of passage in their respective stories. This leads them to difficult challenges and the necessity to make choices concerning their future and the lifestyle they want to adopt, as well as concerning moral values and behaviour.

In spite of the fact that they are parentless when they embark on their quest journey, none of the heroes and heroines travels alone. They are all accompanied by friends, enemies, captains, fellow sailors and pirates, and many of these characters play major parts in the protagonists' development and the choices they make. An important observation made by Daniel P. Woolsey in this context is that the young hero or heroine is often guided by a mentor on his or her journey. (Woolsey in Lehr, 2001, p.116) The guiding figure who accompanies the young hero or heroine may thus be supportive of the protagonist, yet it is also possible that this guide influences or even manipulates the questing youth, which may have positive or negative effects on the psychological development of the protagonist. There may be a number of different mentors who accompany the hero or heroine simultaneously or at intervals, so the protagonist is likely to be torn between varying sets of values and attitudes. These 'mentor characters' can play the role of father-figures, particularly because the young hero or heroine is parentless and often looking for guidance from a substitute parent.

Father-figures in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*

Alan Sandison, in his essay called 'Treasure Island: *The Parrot's Tale*', provides a detailed analysis of father-figures in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. He sees Billy Bones, the pirate who stays at the Admiral Benbow for months and whose treasure map is the reason why Jim and his friends travel to Treasure Island, as the first father-substitute in the story. In contrast to Jim's father, who is weak of character and physically ill, Billy Bones is a strong character because he is physically strong and he easily gains authority over the Hawkins family as well as the other guests at the inn:

And indeed bad as his clothes were and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast, but seemed like a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike.

[...]

I was far less afraid of the captain than anybody else who knew him. There were nights when he took a deal more rum and water than his head would carry; and then he would sometimes sit and sing his wicked, old, wild sea-songs, minding nobody; but sometimes he would call for glasses round and force all the trembling company to listen to his stories or bear a chorus to his singing. Often I have heard the house shaking with "Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum," all the neighbours joining in for dear life, and with the fear of death upon them, and each singing louder than the other to avoid remark. For in these fits he was the most overriding companion ever known; he would slap his hand on the table for silence all round; he would fly up in a passion of anger at a question, or sometimes because none was put, and so he judged the company was not following his story. Nor would he allow anyone to leave the inn till he had drunk himself sleepy and reeled off to bed. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.5-6)

Billy Bones also gets Jim to 'work' for him when he asks the boy to watch out for seafarers and warn him if a one-legged sailor should appear near the inn. Jim does this job voluntarily and regularly requests his payment for it, too. This is rather significant as Jim's father's health is gradually declining, so Jim's real father, who is too frightened to claim his rightful payment, is slowly disappearing from the scene. According to Alan Sandison, "Jim's response to [Billy Bones] might be described as pleasurably fearful and a sort of intimacy is quickly established between them. [...] Jim becomes sufficiently partisan" to Billy Bones "to describe himself as 'a sharer in his alarms'". Sandison adds here that this is also significant in terms of morals, as "already, it would seem, there is a hint of fluidity in the boundaries between Jim's and the pirates' moral world". (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.215) In fact, Jim is a kind of accomplice to Billy Bones at the beginning of the story and Long John Silver's

'partner' at the end, when both have to fight for their lives together. So the boy undeniably takes part in pirates' activities and transcends moral order.

Sandison also regards the characters Black Dog and Blind Pew as father-figures for Jim (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.216), although personally I think one cannot really regard them as such. They are the triggers for Billy Bones's death and for the treasure-hunt, but Jim does not feel attached to either of them at any moment in the story, apart from being frightened of them, so they cannot really figure as substitute fathers for the boy. However, the critic also refers to Jim's "matter-of-fact description of his 'natural distress'" in the case of his father's death, to which Jim seems somewhat indifferent, and the obvious outburst of grief at Billy Bones's death, which might prove that Jim cared a little more for Billy Bones than for his father and had already accepted him as a surrogate father before his real father died. On the other hand, the critic also argues that Jim's (apparent) absence of tears at his father's death as well as the way he cries when Billy Bones dies might be a sign of his growing maturity (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.216), as he is learning about life, death and mourning, as well as about dealing with his own emotions.

In Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, the pirate Long John Silver also plays the part of a father-figure. Long John Silver already appears in Jim Hawkins's dream before he actually takes part in the events of the story, which shows that Jim is intimately connected with this character throughout the entire story. Even at the end of the novel, after Jim remarks that they have never had any news of Long John Silver, he expresses hope for the pirate and wishes he has a good life together with his wife and his parrot:

Of Silver we have heard no more. That formidable seafaring man with one leg has at last gone clean out of my life; but I dare say he met his old Negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint. It is to be hoped so, I suppose, for his chances of comfort in another world are very small. (Stevenson, 1883, p.203)

Although Jim says that Silver has "gone clean out of his life" and acknowledges the fact that Silver is an evil person by saying that he has "little chance of comfort in another world", the pirate clearly still has a place in Jim's thoughts, for Jim obviously shows admiration for the pirate by calling him a "formidable seafaring man" as well as the boy expresses concern for the pirate's well-being in this world and after death.

In 'Treasure Island: *The Parrot's Tale*', Alan Sandison classifies the father-figures in two categories: bad, threatening fathers and good, benevolent fathers. Thus Billy Bones, Black Dog, Blind Pew and Long John Silver are in the group of negative substitute fathers, while there are three men in the other group: Squire Trelawney, Dr Livesey and Captain Smollet. (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.217) Indeed, being respectively a land-owner, a medical doctor as well as a magistrate and a sea captain, these three men represent social order, good education and discipline, as opposed to the pirates and villains in the 'threatening fathers' category. In addition, Dr Livesey and Squire Trelawney travel to Treasure Island with Jim Hawkins as his friends and guardians, so they appear in the story as supportive, benevolent father-figures.

Squire Trelawney, however, soon turns out to be rather clumsy and unreliable, for it is his fault that Long John Silver and his men have learned about the treasure map and about the gentlemen's intentions to travel to the island and heave the treasure. Dr Livesey predicts this as soon as they discover the map and decide to sail to the island:

"Trelawney," said the doctor, "I'll go with you; and I'll go bail for it, so will Jim, and be a credit to the undertaking. There's only one man I'm afraid of."
"And who's that?" cried the squire. "Name the dog, sir!"
"You," replied the doctor; "for you cannot hold your tongue [...]" (Stevenson, 1883, p.36)

Later this turns out to be true when Captain Smollett accuses the squire of having given away their secret:

"I was engaged, sir, on what we call sealed orders, to sail this ship for that gentleman where he should bid me," said the captain. "So far so good. But now I find that every man before the mast knows more than I do. I don't call that fair, now, do you?"
"No," said Dr. Livesey, "I don't."
"Next," said the captain, "I learn we are going after treasure – hear it from my own hands, mind you. Now, treasure is ticklish work; I don't like treasure voyages on any account, and I don't like them, above all, when they are secret and when (begging your pardon, Mr. Trelawney) the secret has been told to the parrot."
"Silver's parrot?" asked the squire. (Stevenson, 1883, p.52)

In addition, Squire Trelawney seems to be extremely naive because he asks questions like "Silver's parrot?", above, and "Do you mean he drinks?" when Captain Smollett observes that Arrow, the first mate, is too familiar with his crew of sailors and that "A mate should keep himself to himself – shouldn't drink with the men before the mast." (Stevenson, 1883, p.52)

One can already see at this early stage of their adventure, before they have even left Bristol port, that Dr Livesey is a much stronger character than Squire Trelawney. In fact, the latter was about to dismiss Captain Smollett because he wanted to complain about the squire's mistakes concerning the recruitment of the crew, the badly planned loading of the cargo and distribution of cabins and the irresponsible treatment of the secret of the treasure map, and it is thanks to Dr Livesey only that Squire Trelawney allows the captain to appeal to him:

“Doctor, said the captain, “you are smart. When I came in here I meant to get discharged. I had no thought that Mr. Trelawney would hear a word.”

“No more I would,” cried the squire. “Had Livesey not been here I should have seen you to the deuce. As it is, I have heard you. I will do as you desire, but I think the worse of you.” (Stevenson, 1883, p.54)

Thus Dr Livesey is a figure of authority rather than Squire Trelawney, much smarter and more diplomatic, so the former has much more influence on Jim Hawkins as a mentor on his quest and concerning his choices than the latter.

Alan Sandison argues that it is no coincidence that Captain Smollett is wounded and immobilized in the middle of the adventure, because this leaves Dr Livesey as the sole ‘good’ father-figure, guardian and mentor for Jim Hawkins.

When Smollett is wounded, the man who takes over the leadership of the Squire's party is not Trelawney himself but Dr Livesey. From the start of the book whether asserting himself over Billy Bones in the ‘Admiral Benbow’ or comfortably sharing the privileged surroundings of the Squire's library, Livesey is a figure of quiet but confident authority. Drawn in sharp contrast to the unbending, unsympathetic Smollett, he exercises over Jim an influence grounded on benevolence [...]. (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.218)

As only one of the ‘bad fathers’ travels to Treasure Island with Jim Hawkins, namely Long John Silver, he and Dr Livesey can be considered as polar opposites in the story. Alan Sandison argues in this context that

in everything the doctor is Silver's polar opposite: a man of the utmost integrity, hating deception, steadfast and loyal. He makes no bones about his abhorrence of all Silver stands for and cheerfully admits to his willingness to have seen him cut down by his enraged followers at the empty treasure-site, had Jim Hawkins not been in the way. Again, the contrast between these two authority figures is brought out when Livesey's innate compassion is contrasted with Silver's inhumanity. (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.219)

Nevertheless, although Long John Silver is evil, he is too clever and interesting a character to be dismissed as completely repulsive, by either the readers of the novel or by Jim Hawkins.

Right at the beginning of the story, though for a short moment Jim is afraid Long John Silver may be the one-legged seafarer Billy Bones warned him about, and who indeed he is, the boy immediately changes his mind and takes him for an honest man:

Now, to tell you the truth, from the very first mention of Long John in Squire Trelawney's letter I had taken a fear in my mind that he might prove to be the very one-legged sailor whom I had watched for so long at the old Benbow. But one look at the man before me was enough. I had seen the captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man, Pew, and I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like – a very different creature, according to me, from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.46-47)

Jim Hawkins admits his naivety in this passage when writing about the events from the perspective of the young man who has returned from the voyage and gained a lot of experience, but it is also clear that Jim has a good opinion about Long John when he first meets him, which he keeps for a long time, too. Back at the Spy-glass tavern, Jim “would have gone bail for the innocence of Long John Silver”, (Stevenson, 1883, p.49) mainly because the latter is very talented at play-acting. In fact, Long John Silver is an extremely manipulative character who partly uses his charm as a way of exercising authority over others. Thus he treats Jim like a friend on board the *Hispaniola*, bidding him welcome in the galley and talking to him on equal terms:

All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking to each and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was unweariedly kind, and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept as clean as a new pin, the dishes hanging up burnished and his parrot in a cage in one corner.

“Come away, Hawkins,” he would say; “come and have a yarn with John. Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the news. [...]”

[...] And John would touch his forelock with a solemn way he had that made me think he was the best of men. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.58-59)

So during most of the outward voyage, Jim is on friendly terms with Long John Silver and likes being in his company. It is obvious that Silver plays the role of a father-figure, too, especially because he calls Jim “my son” and grants him privileged access to the ship's kitchen.

But this is soon to change when, in the chapter called ‘What I heard in the Apple Barrel’, Jim discovers that Long John Silver is a pirate and that he and most of the crew are planning mutiny, to betray the honest gentlemen and to steal the treasure. Jim is extremely angry, but also jealous when he realizes that he is not the only ‘friend’ of Long John Silver's, but

“heard this abominable old rogue addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used to” Jim himself. (Stevenson, 1883, p.62)

After this shock and disappointment, Jim realizes that Long John Silver is in fact a villain and the boy is immediately drawn back to the ‘good’ father-figures, so he informs them about Long John Silver and the other mutineers’ plans. Also, from this moment in the story onwards, Long John Silver is constantly portrayed as a cunning, plotting, dishonest, manipulative and most of all extremely cruel character. Clever as he is, Long John Silver makes use of his play-acting skills to win most of the sailors over to his gang of pirates and to gain their loyalty in order to carry out his plan of using the honest gentlemen to take the pirates to Treasure Island and dig up Captain Flint’s gold, to control the mutineers, and finally to save himself from being killed. Thus Jim Hawkins is “surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge of the island” (Stevenson, 1883, p.68) and Silver still treats him like a young, innocent boy, in his pretendingly friendly manner:

“Ah,” says he, “this here is a sweet spot, this island – a sweet spot for a lad to get ashore on. You’ll bathe, you’ll climb trees, and you’ll hunt goats, you will; and you’ll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself. [...] When you want to go a bit of exploring, you just ask old John, and he’ll put up a snack for you to take along.” (Stevenson, 1883, pp.68-96)

Captain Smollett also sees how good Long John Silver is at acting, so he uses Silver’s authority over the mutineers for the honest party’s benefit:

“Sir,” said the captain, “if I risk another order, the whole ship’ll come about our ears by the run. You see, sir, here it is. I get a rough answer, do I not? Well, if I speak back, pikes will be going in two shakes; if I don’t, Silver will see there’s something under that, and the game’s up. Now, we’ve only one man to rely on.”

“And who is that?” asked the squire.

“Silver, sir,” returned the captain; “he’s as anxious as you and I to smother things up. [...] If some go, you mark my words, sir, Silver’ll bring ‘em aboard again as mild as lambs.” (Stevenson, 1883, pp.77-78)

Thus Silver’s power to manipulate and control is obvious, and all the honest gentlemen on board the *Hispaniola*, including Jim Hawkins, have recognized this and try to make use of it throughout the conflicts between the pirates and the gentlemen.

Another occasion on which Long John Silver shows his manipulative traits occurs in the chapter called ‘Silver’s Embassy’, when he appears at the stockade with a flag of truce and solemnly offers the gentlemen a deal. The latter consists in blackmailing the gentlemen into

giving the pirates the treasure map and being given the choice to be taken home safely or left on the island with enough food and drink to survive and wait for a ship to rescue them.

“Now,” resumed Silver, “here it is. You give us the chart to get the treasure by, and drop shooting old seamen and stoving off their heads in while asleep. You do that, and we’ll offer you a choice. Either you come aboard along of us, once the treasure shipped, and then I’ll give you my affy-davy, upon my word of honour, to clap you somewhere safe ashore. Or if that ain’t to your fancy, some of my hands being rough and having old scores on account of hazing, then you can stay here, you can. We’ll divide stores with you, man for man; and I’ll give my affy-davy, as before, to speak the first ship I sight, and send ‘em here to pick you up. Now, you’ll own that’s talking. Handsomer you couldn’t look to get, not you. [...]” (Stevenson, 1883, p.115)

In this speech Silver lays strong emphasis on the fairness of his proposal and swears upon his honour to keep his word and share the food supplies equally between the parties, although in reality he is trying to trick the gentlemen and manipulate them into accepting a deal that will only mean betrayal and death to them. However, Captain Smollett, who really is a man of honour and absolutely loyal to his king and country, which he shows for example by flying the Union Jack above the stockade and refusing to strike the colours even in the face of danger, cannot be convinced to agree to this deal and threatens to fight the pirates without mercy. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.90, 104 and 106) Silver’s dishonesty and wickedness are obvious in his outburst of rage after Captain Smollett’s refusal and in the way he threatens to have all the gentlemen killed within an hour and those who do not die tortured. (Stevenson, 1883, p.116)

Whereas Jim Hawkins remains one of the honest men all along the story, it is obvious that at times he is torn between the father-figures Dr Livesey and Long John Silver. This causes Jim to leave the party of honest men twice in the novel, the first time to explore the island on his own, after which he is “soon warmly welcomed by the faithful party”. (Stevenson, 1883, p.108) The second time Jim leaves the party of gentlemen, however, his escape has a stronger sense of desertion, especially as he secretly slips out of the stockade and is well aware of the fact that he would never have got permission for this from Captain Smollett or any of the other men. Although Jim’s boyish desire for adventure gets the better of him, he leaves the stockade and deserts the small number of wounded men with feelings of guilt, acknowledging to himself that he is behaving like an unfaithful and cowardly person:

But as I was certain I should not be allowed to leave the enclosure, my only plan was to take French leave and slip out when nobody was watching, and that was so bad a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong. (Stevenson, 1883, p.127)

Jim even regards himself as a truant, a traitor, and explains that once he was on his way he became so obsessed with the idea of cutting the *Hispaniola* loose that nobody, not even Captain Smollett before he was injured, could have stopped him anymore:

Well, now that I had found the boat, you would have thought I had had enough of truantry for once, but in the meantime I had taken another notion and I had become so obstinately fond of it that I would have carried it out, I believe, in the teeth of Captain Smollett himself. (Stevenson, 1883, p.129)

Another display of Jim's bad conscience as well as the obvious need to justify his deed and to reassure himself of his heroism comes out clearly in his thoughts at the moment Jim is on his way back to the stockade:

Possibly I might be blamed a bit for my truantry, but the recapture of the *Hispaniola* was a clenching answer, and I hoped that even Captain Smollett would confess I had not lost my time. (Stevenson, 1883, p.155)

On the one hand, one can say that Jim respects the gentlemen and their decisions, or he would openly challenge them and try to have his own way, but on the other hand Jim waits until Dr Livesey leaves the stockade to visit Ben Gunn until he slips out himself. Thus Jim only has the courage to leave the party when the strongest authority figure is absent, and when Captain Smollett, who was their leader and the most powerful authority figure until the pirates attacked the men in the stockade, is wounded and in no position to control Jim anymore. In consequence, Jim's second escape from the group of gentlemen shows that the boy still regards Captain Smollett and Dr Livesey as his guides, but he needs to free himself from their authority in order to develop as a person. According to Alan Sandison, this "highlights the authenticity of Stevenson's portrayal of the adolescent negotiating his rite of passage. [...] His act is a necessary one if he is eventually to learn to take responsibility for his own decisions and his own life." (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.220) Jim is evidently becoming more independent from authority figures and his personality is growing stronger. For the same reason, namely the fact that Jim knows exactly that he should not have escaped and that he is in a position to understand the seriousness of the situation, the boy feels all the guiltier for it afterwards:

And the doctor it was. Although I was glad to hear the sound, yet my gladness was not without admixture. I remembered with confusion my insubordinate and stealthy

conduct, and when I saw where it had brought me – among what companions and surrounded by what dangers – I felt ashamed to look him in the face. (Stevenson, 1883, p.174)

And Dr Livesey rebukes Jim hard when he returns to the stockade after his solo adventure at sea:

“So, Jim,” said the doctor sadly, “here you are. As you have brewed, so shall you drink, my boy. Heaven knows, I cannot find it in my heart to blame you, but this much I will say, be it kind or unkind: when Captain Smollett was well, you dared not have gone off; and when he was ill and couldn’t help it, by George, it was downright cowardly!” (Stevenson, 1883, p.178)

Upon this Jim verbally expresses his feelings of guilt and even starts crying from the pain caused by Dr Livesey’s disapproval. To Sandison, “at the reproof administered here (not angrily but ‘sadly’), Jim becomes a boy again [...]”, (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.220) which shows that the authority figure keeps the boy in his place and prevents him from growing up too fast and in the wrong direction. Jim’s weeping also softens Dr Livesey’s attitude, who immediately invites Jim to jump over the fence and escape from the pirates with him. Nevertheless, Jim refuses to do this because he has given Long John Silver his word:

“[...] I’ll take it on my shoulders, holus bolus, blame and shame, my boy; but stay here, I cannot let you. Jump! One jump, and you’re out, and we’ll run for it like antelopes.”

“No,” I replied; “you know right well you wouldn’t do the thing yourself – neither you nor squire nor captain; and no more will I. Silver trusted me; I passed my word, and back I go. [...]” (Stevenson, 1883, p.179)

Thus Jim has deserted the party of honest men, but he refuses to desert Long John Silver in order to rejoin his friends. One reason for this may be that he has learned from his mistake, become a little more mature, and he will not be disloyal again, even if it means staying with the pirates. In addition, he now strictly follows Dr Livesey, Captain Smollett and Squire Trelawney’s example of loyalty. Clearly, Jim is not the same young boy who escaped from the stockade a few days earlier because during his ‘sea adventure’, a kind of ‘quest-journey-within-the-quest-journey’, Jim has gained a lot of life experience and lost a large part of his innocence. Another reason why Jim refuses to run away with Dr Livesey may be that Long John Silver is a father-figure for Jim despite his cruelty, his duplicity and the fact that he is a murderer.

Indeed, Long John Silver also plays the role of protector for Jim, although he does it in his own interest as much as in the boy's. Thus when Jim returns to the stockade after his 'sea-adventure' and finds himself in the middle of the pirates' camp, Long John Silver greets him with ironic words of welcome, pretending to assume that Jim Hawkins wants to join the pirates and help them fight the gentlemen. As usual, Silver talks politely and he is quite sure of himself. He attempts to manipulate Jim and to win him over to his side by telling him how disappointed Dr Livesey is of Jim and that the gentlemen have deserted the boy. Silver explains to Jim that he has no choice but to cooperate with the pirates:

"Now, you see, Jim, so be as you *are* here," says he, "I'll give you a piece of my mind. I've always liked you, I have, for a lad of spirit, and the picter of my own self when I was young and handsome. I always wanted you to jine and take your share, and die a gentleman, and now, my cock, you've got to. Cap'n Smollett's a fine sea man, as I'll own to any day, but stiff on discipline. 'Dooty is dooty,' says he, and right he is. Just you keep clear of the cap'n. The doctor himself is gone dead again you – 'ungrateful scamp' was what he said; and the short and the long of the whole story is about here: you can't go back to your own lot, for they won't have you; and without you start a third ship's company all by yourself, which might be lonely, you'll have to jine with Cap'n Silver." (Stevenson, 1883, p.162)

Whether Silver is saying the truth in this speech is not clear, for he may be exaggerating about Dr Livesey's reaction in order to control Jim Hawkins. Yet, while Silver seems to take it for granted that Jim will change sides and cooperate with him, he does not consider killing Jim at any moment. Cunning and plotting as Long John Silver is, he presents himself again as a fair and honourable man, offering Jim the choice to join the pirate crew or not, which, in reality, is no choice at all.

However, Jim has already learnt a lot from Long John Silver in terms of rhetoric for he speaks to the pirate using words that are similar to his own and establishes a position of power for himself in front of Long John Silver. Jim gives a long and vehement speech in which he proclaims that he was the one who overheard the pirates' talk while sitting in the apple barrel and informed against them, that he was the one who cut the ship loose and killed Israel Hands, and that he has moored the ship in a safe place, out of reach of the pirates. Finally, Jim offers the mutineers a deal, promising to prevent them from being executed for piracy if they let him live. (Stevenson, 1883, p.164) This speech reveals a lot of things about Jim Hawkins and his development. In fact, Jim proves his increased maturity in it and it shows his newly-gained strength. Moreover, one can see that Long John Silver has

had a strong influence on the boy despite the fact that Jim has spent most of his time with the doctor, the captain and the squire. Jim has obviously adopted some of Silver's self-confidence, and he addresses the pirates in the same way as Silver usually addresses other people. Thus it is clear that Long John Silver functions as a role-model for Jim Hawkins although Jim knows perfectly well that the man is a cruel villain and a murderer.

This and the desperate situation that Jim and Silver find themselves in together, as well as the admiration Jim has gained from Silver through his bold speech and his courageous deeds leads the pair to engage in a pact to save each other's lives. First, Silver stops the angry mutineers who are ready to kill Jim Hawkins on the spot:

"[...] I like that boy, now; I never seen a better boy than that. He's more a man than any pair of rats of you in this here house, and what I say is this: let me see him that'll lay a hand on him – that's what I say, and you may lay to it." (Stevenson, 1883, p.166)

After that, when Silver and Jim are alone in the blockhouse, they seal their pact:

"[...] I'll save your life – if so be as I can – from them. But, see here, Jim – tit for tat – you save Long John from swinging."

I was bewildered; it seemed a thing so hopeless he was asking – he, the old buccaneer, the ringleader throughout.

"What I can do, that I'll do," I said.

"It's a bargain!" cried Long John. "You speak up plucky, and by thunder, I've a chance!"

[...]

"Understand me, Jim," he said, returning. "I've a head on my shoulders, I have. I'm on squire's side now. [...]" (Stevenson, 1883, p.167)

One might argue that Jim and Silver only agree to this to save their own lives, but in spite of Silver's duplicity, the man seems to really like Jim. Silver admires Jim for his boldness, his courage and his strength, as well as for his intelligence, which comes out clearly when a minute after the deal is done he proclaims: "[...] Ah, you that's young – you and me might have done a power of good together!" (Stevenson, 1883, p.168)

Nevertheless, the fact that Long John Silver, who was determined to murder Squire Trelawney, Dr Livesey and Captain Smollett a few days ago, is now "on squire's side" shows his duplicity. He is the kind of person who seeks to take advantage from every situation, changing his loyalties as fits him best. This is, of course, far from honourable and a bad example for Jim Hawkins. However, when Jim has the opportunity to escape from the

pirates and rejoin the faithful party with Dr Livesey, he refuses. Jim has sworn allegiance to Long John Silver and sticks to the moral principle of loyalty. Thus it is obvious that, though this means danger for Jim and though his decision may be questionable in a moral sense, in no way has the boy adopted Long John Silver's treacherousness.

Jim is also well aware of the fact that Long John Silver may still betray him in spite of his vows because

should the scheme he had now sketched prove feasible, Silver, already doubly a traitor, would not hesitate to adopt it. He had still a foot in either camp, and there was no doubt he would prefer wealth and freedom with the pirates to a bare escape from hanging, which was the best he had to hope on our side. (Stevenson, 1883, p.182)

In that case, Jim would be separated from the gentlemen forever and be forced to travel on with the pirates, and his fate would be totally unclear. Jim is indeed afraid that this will happen when the mutineers approach the site where Flint's treasure is supposed to be buried:

Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts, and certainly I read them like print. In the immediate nearness of the gold, all else had been forgotten: his promise and the doctor's warning were both things of the past, and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the treasure, find and board the *Hispaniola* under cover of night, cut every honest throat about that island, and sail away as he had at first intended, laden with crimes and riches. (Stevenson, 1883, p.191)

Long John Silver's deceitfulness culminates at the end of the story, when the group of pirates finds an empty excavation and Captain Flint's money gone, and Silver finally decides to cooperate with Dr Livesey again. Jim doesn't like this at first: "His looks were not quite friendly, and I was so revolted at these constant changes that I could not forbear whispering, "So you've changed sides again."" (Stevenson, 1883, p.193)

In this context, Sandison draws an interesting parallel between Silver's habit of 'changing sides' and his exceptional agility in spite of his disability, his amputated leg. According to this, Silver's

freedom depends on his mobility, on his repudiation of all fixed principle, even on a fluidity of personality which amounts to a constant reconstruction of 'self'. In the tale perhaps the two most striking things about Silver are his remarkable physical agility, given his missing limb, and a parallel and equally notable mental agility which allows him to change his position in a flash, as he does when he discovers the treasure to be gone, or to exploit the unexpected to the full, as he does with Jim's

return to the stockade. Power and mobility clearly go together, a nexus which receives its most dramatic rendering in the scene where Silver kills the loyal seaman, Tom. (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.238)

In the end, and partly due to Silver's 'fluid personality', the two opposite father-figures, Dr Livesey and Long John Silver, are re-united and work together for the sake of Jim Hawkins. Dr Livesey admits that, although he was utterly disappointed by the fact that Jim Hawkins had deserted the faithful party and sworn allegiance to Long John Silver, he did everything to save Jim's life, including the fact that he spared Silver:

"As for you, Jim," he said, "it went against my heart, but I did what I thought best for those who had stood by their duty; and if you were not one of these, whose fault was it?"

That morning, finding that I was to be involved in the horrid disappointment he had prepared for the mutineers, he had run all the way to the cave, and leaving the squire to guard the captain, had taken Gray and the maroon and started, making the diagonal across the island to be at hand beside the pine. (Stevenson, 1883, p.196)

Thus both father-figures involuntarily collaborate to save Jim Hawkins's life, and in consequence Jim is intimately connected with both men. This is Long John Silver's chance to get away with murder and piracy, too, for although Dr Livesey, Squire Trelawney and Captain Smollett make it equally clear how much they despise Silver by openly accusing him of murder and deceitfulness, the latter is allowed to travel with them again and he even manages to leave the *Hispaniola* and to disappear without ever being tried or punished for his crimes. As Peter Hunt explains, Robert Louis Stevenson was well aware of the fact that Long John Silver, "despite being a vicious murderer, [...] engaged readers most strongly" while the adventure story was being published in serial form in 1881. Therefore Hunt adds that "Stevenson was on Silver's side to the extent that at the end of the book he allowed him to escape." (Hunt, 2001, p.235)

Long John Silver incorporates moral ambiguity in the sense that he is a cruel villain and a character that entirely lacks morals, and yet he is an attractive figure for Jim Hawkins as well as for most readers of Stevenson's book. Alan Sandison says that this is down to the fact that "the attractiveness of Silver's kind of power and freedom, though particularly magnetic for the late-adolescent, is universal, and were he to be extirpated the picture of the world left to us would be a false one." (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.241) Thus, although Long John Silver is a despicable character, he represents an inevitable reality of life, and therefore he owns his place as well as Jim's respect in the story.

Ironically, the events of *Treasure Island* are set against the background of a society that is based on Christian ideology as well as military values. In fact, religious piety, loyalty and obedience to the king are the major principles of the society, represented in the novel by all the honest gentlemen. Thus Ben Gunn, the maroon who is desperate to be rescued from the island, makes a point of explaining to Jim Hawkins that his mother was religious and he was raised a Christian. Moreover, he emphasises the fact that he is repentant of the crimes he has committed as a pirate, as well as that he has taken up praying again and returned to being a good Christian:

“Well, now, Jim, I’ve lived as rough as you’d be ashamed to hear of. Now, for instance, you wouldn’t think I had had a pious mother – to look at me?” he asked.

“Why, no, not in particular,” I answered.

“Ah, well,” said he, “but I had – remarkable pious. And I was a civil, pious boy, and could rattle off my catechism that fast, as you couldn’t tell one word from another. And here’s what it come to, Jim, and it begun with chuck-farthen on the blessed grave-stones! That’s what it begun with, but it went further’n that; and so my mother told me, and predicked the whole, she did, the pious woman! But it were Providence that put me here. I’ve thought it all out in this here lonely island, and I’m back on piety. You don’t catch me tasting rum so much, but just a thimbleful for luck, of course, the first chance I have. I’m bound I’ll be good, and I see the way to. [...]” (Stevenson, 1883, p.87)

It is quite obvious that Ben Gunn takes it for granted that Jim, not being a pirate, lives according to Christian principles and he uses these words to flatter the boy and assure his passage back to England by presenting himself as a pious, well-behaved person, such as the society of his time would expect him to be like. Ben Gunn also asks Jim to report to Squire Trelawney that he is a pious man again, and that he has a much better opinion of real gentlemen than of pirates. In addition, he expresses his regret that he has not been able to use a Bible or a flag, two symbols of religious and social order, when praying on Sundays. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.89-90) Desperate to be taken back home, Ben Gunn obviously tries to say what he thinks a British gentleman would like to hear in order to please Jim Hawkins and Squire Trelawney, and his speech reveals what set of values eighteenth-century British society was built on.

Likewise, Dick, one of Silver’s pirates, carries a Bible with him and begins to pray in the critical moment when they go to find the treasure with Jim Hawkins as a ‘hostage’. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.189-192) This shows that, like Ben Gunn, the pirate was raised

according to Christian principles and although he has become a pirate he has never quite given up the values of the society which he grew up in.

Squire Trelawney, Dr Livesey and Captain Smollett, the three gentlemen who represent social order, all express their desire to take the pirates to England for trial, and greatly regret that they cannot do it at the end of the story. For example, along the course of the story, Captain Smollett constantly emphasises the fact that he is a servant to his king and he will obey the king's laws by all means. This is also the case at the moment when Long John Silver requires the gentleman to give him the treasure map in the chapter called 'Silver's Embassy':

"Very good," said the captain. "Now you'll hear me. If you'll come up one by one, unarmed, I'll engage to clap you all in irons and take you home to a fair trial in England. If you won't, my name is Alexander Smollett, I've flown my sovereign's colours, and I'll see you all to Davy Jones. [...]" (Stevenson, 1883, p.116)

In this speech, the flag again symbolizes the military code of honour that underlies the captain's morality as well as that of the society which he was born and educated in.

Once the pirates, except Long John Silver, are defeated, the latter greets Squire Trelawney in a friendly manner, upon which the squire breaks out angrily:

"John Silver," he said, "you're a prodigious villain and impostor – a monstrous impostor, sir. I am told I am not to prosecute you. Well, then, I will not. But the dead men, sir, hang about your neck like mill-stones."

"Thank you kindly, sir," replied Long John, again saluting.

"I dare you to thank me!" cried the squire. "It is a gross dereliction of my duty. Stand back." (Stevenson, 1883, p.197)

Although the squire respects the promise made to Long John Silver because it is honourable to keep one's word and it is what a gentleman is supposed to do, he finds it hard not to fulfil his duty in front of the law, which is why he refuses to be thanked for this favour by Long John Silver.

Captain Smollett reveals that Dr Livesey has also served the king in military service, and therefore he expects him to show discipline. In fact, he rebukes both the squire and the doctor for not doing their duty conscientiously:

"Gray," he said, "I'll put your name in the log; you've stood by your duty like a seaman. Mr Trelawney, I'm surprised at you, sir. Doctor, I thought you had worn the king's coat! If that was how you served at Fontenoy, sir, you'd have been better in your berth." (Stevenson, 1883, p.117)

In conclusion, the society of the time expected British people to be good Christians and to live according to religious principles as well as to be obedient to the king, which means to strictly obey the law and be faithful to one's colours. The society and its government were also strictly intolerant of piracy, which is why the pirates in *Treasure Island* are afraid that they will be hanged at Execution Dock in London. Thus Long John Silver, who seems to be afraid of nothing and nobody, not even of his terribly cruel former captain, Flint, admits to Dr Livesey: "Doctor, I'm no coward; no, not I – not so much!" and he snapped his fingers. "If I was I wouldn't say it. But I'll own up fairly, I've the shakes upon me for the gallows. [...]" (Stevenson, 1883, p.178) So the three gentlemen, Captain Smollett, Dr Livesey and Squire Trelawney stand in contrast to the pirates and mutineers according to these sets of values, which emphasises the fact that they are good role-models for Jim Hawkins whereas Long John Silver, the "monstrous impostor", is a character whose morals should not be adopted.

In conclusion, Jim Hawkins finally travels back home to England with his 'good' father-figure Dr Livesey as well as with the other benevolent gentlemen, Squire Trelawney and Captain Smollett, so he is fully under the influence of good morals and humane characters. Yet, Jim also takes home the gold that cost many lives, "blood and sorrow" and "shame and lies and cruelty" (Stevenson, 1883, p.197) as well as a lot of memories of Long John Silver, and he definitely expresses his admiration for the man at the very end of the novel. Thus it is certainly no coincidence that Captain Flint, Long John Silver's parrot, has the last word in the book, possibly representing Long John Silver's presence in Jim Hawkins's memories of his journey to Treasure Island. Jim is haunted by Captain Flint in his dreams long after his return to England. The parrot's screams of "Pieces of Eight!" in Jim's nightmares represent the pirate's presence in Jim's thoughts, and the important part Silver has played in Jim's development all along. Although he is a terrible villain, Long John Silver has helped the boy to develop a set of moral values, as Alan Sandison explains:

It is a tribute to Jim's growing maturity that he recognises the ineradicability of Silver's appeal. To admit the attraction of such a figure is to recognise one's own limitations – or, rather, the limits within which one has elected to live – and at the same time to acknowledge one's secret desires. It is to admit that appearances are essentially deceptive and the drawing of moral distinctions hazardous. Jim does not seek to disown him, [...] but [he is] honest enough to allow that he has not disappeared from his dreams. (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.241)

And Captain Flint's cries in Jim's dreams at the end of *Treasure Island* also inspired Alan Sandison to analyse Jim Hawkins's relationships with different authority figures in Stevenson's novel. For example, towards the end of the article Sandison also argues that Israel Hands, who appears later in the story and who Jim Hawkins kills, is a father-figure. According to Robson, quoted by Sandison, Israel Hands is a "new and grim anti-father" (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.232) who appears as such in the middle of the adventure. Although Sandison adds Israel Hands to his list of "menacing fathers", Hands only plays this part for a very short time, and even then Jim is superior to him. However, he contributes a lot to Jim's loss of innocence, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

David Jones and father-figures

David Jones in Julia Golding's *The Ship Between the Worlds* is temporarily fatherless as his father has mysteriously disappeared during a family holiday at the beach, and at the beginning of the novel his grandfather plays the role of a substitute father for the boy. But David Jones suffers terribly from the loss of his father and he only accepts his grandfather as a substitute while admitting to himself that the absence of his real father causes him a lot of pain:

Having granddad in the house was *almost* as good as having Dad back, thought David as he mounted the stairs.

[...]

The thought of Simon Jones's absence was like a sharp knife sticking in David's ribs. He had not felt whole for many months and knew he had taken to slouching almost as if protecting the wound. Perhaps it was this vulnerability that had attracted Ricko to him like a shark scenting blood in the water. But if so, he didn't know what to do about it as the pain refused to go away. (Golding, 2007, pp.10-11)

David's loss has made him vulnerable, which has resulted in him being bullied by other boys from his class. David understands his problem very well, but he also knows that he is quite powerless and cannot defend himself at least as long as he is mourning the loss of his father. In consequence, he will go on a quest journey that will help him to deal with his loss and the problems caused by it, to grow up and to become more mature and psychologically stronger.

Similarly to all questing youths, David Jones does not go on this trip alone, but he is accompanied by various friends and enemies, some of whom constitute father-figures to him, on his voyage to the sea between the worlds. The latter is a fantasy world that contains different planets floating on an imaginary sea, with different creatures living on those floating planets as well as travelling on the sea by different kinds of ships. Some of these ships are pirate vessels that transport pirate crews while others carry benevolent creatures trying to save the worlds and to fight piracy.

Interestingly, the captain of the ship whose crew kidnaps David and forces him to travel with them to the Seas In-between recognizes David Jones as a descendant of a pirate captain who also sails the Seas In-between and whose name is Tiberius Jones. The latter, who later confirms that David is a relative of his, is a villain who destroys the work of the *Golden Needle*, whose crew toils hard to save the drifting worlds by sewing them together with gold thread. The pirate captain Tiberius Jones and his crew ruthlessly cut all the threads in order to steal the gold. After explaining to David that most people and creatures who travel on the Seas In-between do so in order to do penance for their former bad deeds and that they all need to deal with some kind of problems, Captain Fisher makes it clear to the boy that he is related to the villainous pirate captain called Tiberius Jones and that he looks similar to the latter as a young boy.

‘For most of us our reward is to be clear of our debts, to be truly free. For you? I don’t know what yours is yet. Perhaps you can find that out.’ He turned to grin at David. ‘Let me know when you’ve worked it out. But you’ll find we all have something twisted – twisted like a rope – inside us. Most of us are here to *unwind*.’ (Golding, 2007, p.36)

‘But I don’t have a relation called T-Tiberius,’ David stuttered.

‘Don’t know, maybe, but you did once. You are the exact image of him as a boy – I should know for we served together as youngsters. [...]’ (Golding, 2007, p.60)

Thus the basis for David Jones’s quest journey is laid out: he is going on this voyage to deal with his past and with his problems – the loss of his father and the difficulties to integrate positively in his school class – as well as to lose his childish innocence and gain maturity through life experience and the interaction with new acquaintances in an unknown environment. On this voyage he is accompanied by helpful friends like Shushula, Art and Halist, for example, and by malevolent creatures like Master Farthing and Bonebag, as well as two captains, one apparently good-natured and benevolent and the other apparently a

terrible villain and totally malevolent. Though in the beginning both seem rather distant, they take on the role of father-figures and influence David's decisions and choices.

Like Dr Livesey and Long John Silver in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Captain Fisher and Captain Jones are rivals. Both are intimately connected with the boy David Jones as it turns out that David is really a far descendant of Captain Jones and that Captain Fisher used to be Captain Jones's mentor. Also, it was Fisher who made a pirate of Tiberius Jones. This idea is reinforced by the fact that both captains have a pet parrot and the animals are relatives. In fact, Tiberius Jones's parrot Milli is Reuben Fisher's parrot Jemima's only chick. Thus Captain Fisher's 'parenthood' over Captain Jones, and by ancestry also over David Jones, is symbolized by the parrots' 'mother-daughter' relation.

After David saves Captain Tiberius Jones's life out of an impulse of duty as well as natural goodness during his spying mission on the *Scythe*, the captain invites him to dine with him as a way of expressing his thankfulness. During this meal, the captain behaves like Long John Silver, talking to the boy in a flattering manner and treating him like a son. Moreover, Captain Jones gives David a lot of information about Captain Fisher's life and personality, which might be interpreted as an attempt to win over the boy to his side by talking badly about his adversary:

'Why, I could tell you stories of his deeds that would turn your hair white. There's many a town in the Indies that has been reduced to a cinder thanks to him. You thought we were rough with those Carlians today? Well, that's nothing to what he would have done. If he'd been there, he would have spitted the babies on pikes and slaughtered the rest.' (Golding, 2007, pp.128-129)

David also learns from Captain Jones that it was in fact Captain Fisher who turned him into a ruthless villain, manipulated him into becoming a pirate and taught him how to commit his terrible crimes. This causes David to doubt whether he should rather be loyal to Captain Jones or return to Captain Fisher, asking himself: "Could Jones be telling the truth? Was the man for whom he had risked the perils of marooning and for whom he was now spying the same pirate who had killed so many innocent people?" (Golding, 2007, p.129)

However, David is also told that, at one point in his life, Captain Fisher suddenly changed attitude and stopped being a pirate because he had a bad conscience. He then invited Captain Jones to join him on an eternal voyage on the Seas In-between to do penance for

their crimes on Earth and make up for them by sewing the worlds together and preventing them from being destroyed and their inhabitants being killed. In consequence, Captain Jones felt betrayed by his friend and leader and decided to cut the gold threads and steal the 'wasted' booty back from Captain Fisher. (Golding, 2007, pp.129-130)

Obviously, Captain Tiberius Jones is intent on turning David into a nasty, ruthless pirate, especially as he is convinced that David possesses the same weakness of character as he did when he was David's age:

'You're brave. You're not afraid to disobey orders and take the consequences. And most importantly to an old man like me, you're loyal to your captain. All you need to do now is lose some of that innocence of yours and you'll make a fine pirate like I did. A couple of raids, a few kills, and you'll get a taste for the life, I've no doubt about that. After all, you've my blood in your veins, you tell me.'

[...]

'You see, Davy, I realized when you dragged me out of that river that you're the closest thing I've got to a son.' Jones patted his shoulder. 'I never set much store by blood, but that made me wonder. Maybe blood will out even after all these centuries? And when I finally hang up my cutlass, I'll want to know I've left the *Scythe* in good hands.' (Golding, 2007, p.132)

In this scene and from there onwards until David betrays him, the captain manipulates David by calling him his son and by treating him like his inheritor, which is of course rather seductive, especially for a boy who has just lost his father and is desperately searching for him. Captain Jones is even on the point of rejecting his protégé Master Farthing, a boy of about David's age who works for Captain Fisher and enjoys quite a number of privileges on his ship: "'Farthing doesn't have your personal reasons to hate Fisher,' continued Jones. 'He won't carry on the fight but will go off looking after his own interests. He's not fit to succeed me.'" (Golding, 2007, p.133) On the other hand, Master Farthing is well aware of this and because of his jealousy he takes advantage of every opportunity to harm David, to spy on him and to punish him cruelly, later also to reveal to Captain Jones that it was David who had sabotaged the ship's engine and rendered it immobile. (Golding, 2007, Chapters Seven, Eight, Ten and Eleven)

In consequence, David finds it very difficult to choose between two options. On the one hand, he can complete his spying mission for a former pirate who regrets his deeds and yet who used to be an evil person and a cruel murderer and who occasionally still has fits of cruelty. On the other hand, he can desert the man who recruited him to help his crew

complete their difficult job in order to join with his ancestor, a captain who was manipulated into piracy but continues to kill people and rob communities of their goods. Choosing is particularly hard for David Jones as he is a descendant of Captain Jones and thus truly his 'son', as well as because he meets his father on Carl and knows that the latter does exactly what Captain Jones does, namely cutting gold threads: "He couldn't believe what he had just seen: his father was on the same side as the pirates, destroying the threads that sewed the worlds together." (Golding, 2007, pp.122-123) As David is still very much attached to his father, it is quite tempting for the boy to do the same thing as him and join the pirates who cut the gold threads at the expense of drifting planets that will be destroyed if they are not sewn together. In addition, it is clear that being reunited with his father is David Jones's main goal and his motivation to take on the challenges posed to him on the Seas In-between. He feels responsible for bringing his own family together again. Thus while searching for his real father, he is temporarily guided by Captains Fisher and Jones, the latter being an ancestor of his and of his father's and the former being Captain Jones's ex-mentor on their past sea voyages. So the two captains constitute the links between David Jones and his father Simon Jones and they are the guides that will ultimately lead the boy back to his father.

Throughout the main part of the story, David has to understand that neither Captain Fisher nor Captain Jones are purely good or purely evil. One might say that they are opposites because Captain Fisher at first appears to be a good character and Captain Jones appears to be an evil character. Yet David learns very fast that appearances may deceive and that there is a lot more to know about the two captains and their respective motivations for being good or bad. Thus Captain Reuben Fisher, the apparently good man, used to be a pirate, as according to Shushula, his cabin girl: "Yes, one of the worst, by all accounts. Happy to maroon a man just for looking at him in a way he did not like. Careless of the lives he lost in going after gold." (Golding, 2007, p.48) Captain Jones also constantly accuses him of cruelty and piracy, and even claims that Captain Fisher only pretends to have changed but in reality is still the same villain as in the past:

'No one knows Shark like me, lad – just you remember that now. That's why I know he's still the same ruthless cut-throat as he was then.'
[...]

‘I was as green as you when I first sailed with him. He forced me to face up to the ways of the world – dog eat dog, survival of the fittest, yes, it was a hard schooling under Reuben Fisher. [...]’ (Golding, 2007, pp.128-129)

Other characters, for example Sally Ann Bowers, the cook on the *Wanderer*, and even Reuben Fisher himself, reveal similar information about Fisher’s criminal past and make it clear that, although his bad conscience has caused him to do penance, he still has a long way to go and to make up for a lot of terrible crimes before he can find peace. Concerning his rival, David finds it “easier to think of Jones as an out-and-out villain. To understand that he had shades to his character made hating him more difficult.” (Golding, 2007, p.191) So there is a moral discourse on crime and repentance, selfishness and care for others in the novel. At the centre of it David Jones is depicted as he learns a lot about appearances and how people can change along the course of their lives, as well as about the fact that most people are neither totally good nor totally evil. David also understands that people can easily be influenced by others and it is important to follow the right role-models instead of being deluded by deceitful villains.

Both Captain Fisher and Captain Jones are ready to sacrifice David, and they truly mean it, too, so with both Captain Fisher and Captain Jones, David is constantly torn between feelings of loyalty and feelings of distrust. It is only clear at the very end who the real villain is and that David is right to fight on Captain Fisher’s side, even if the latter finally admits: “See, I’m still pirate-hearted, despite everything. I’ve a long way to sail before I can finally give it all up and rest.” (Golding, 2007, p.230)

Right from the moment he engages to be a spy for Captain Shark Fisher on Captain Tiberius Jones’s ship, David is unsure whether he has made the right decision by helping Captain Fisher, and his insecurity leads him to suspect that he has become a victim of treachery. Thus he wonders about his own decision:

David chewed his bottom lip. He’d done the right thing, hadn’t he, volunteering for this mission? Fisher and the others had told him the truth about the golden threads? He wasn’t the biggest mug in the Seas In-between, was he? (Golding, 2007, p.94)

This wondering and self-questioning in combination with feeling torn between different authority figures is typical of the growing adolescent who is searching for his place in

society. It helps him to gain experience although it makes growing up and reaching adulthood as difficult as necessary for the questing youth.

When David is thrown in the brig for not doing his duties properly on the *Scythe*, he ponders his own cowardice in the face of Ricko, the boy who bullied him at home, and decides that his mission on the Seas In-between is a chance for him to show his strength, so he is determined to “help save the world from these pirates if it’s the last thing I do”. He no longer wants to be a cowardly “boy calling his mother for help, a kid who ran from playground bullies”, but rather a brave hero. (Golding, 2007, p.109) Then David thinks about his father’s disappearance and wonders if he is in a similar situation and has been faced with a similar challenge:

The notion that his father might be somewhere close by heartened David as nothing else could. He now had an added reason to keep going as there was the possibility he might find his father again. He had been given a chance to make a difference, to help save the worlds – and perhaps even his own family. (Golding, 2007, p.110)

In one particular scene, David is coming nearer his goal of finding his father, of understanding why he left his family without an explanation or any words of farewell and of being reunited with him. Yet, David still has a long way to go before he is experienced enough to really be able to deal with his father’s absence and the problems of adolescence, which is why his father simply leaves without noticing his son: “Abruptly, Simon Jones turned and disappeared into the trees.” (Golding, 2007, p.122) So David has to continue struggling with his doubts and choosing either Captain Fisher or Captain Tiberius Jones as an appropriate father-figure to follow and to pledge his loyalty to.

The captains’ duel is one of the critical moments of David’s quest journey, and the agreement they settle is an essential condition for David to be able to rejoin his family and eventually have his father back at home. It is noteworthy, too, that David Jones is the stronger character concerning the saving of the worlds from drifting apart, for his father Simon certainly has good intentions and prevents Captain Jones’s crew from getting spare parts and fuel for their ship’s engine by cutting the gold threads, but he puts Earth in danger and he is quite powerless on his own. David, on the contrary, works with the right team and finally manages to bring Captain Jones to stop stealing the gold and endangering all the floating planets. In consequence, David emerges from the story as the smarter character

who has even transcended his father's power. In conclusion, one can say that David Jones has definitely grown up during his journey on the Seas In-between and is now mature enough and ready to face further challenges such as the bully Ricko and his gang in David's life on Earth. Successful integration into a team and the realization that working alone and staying apart from others in society leads to exclusion and serious psychological issues related to loneliness have helped David to mature.

Wham! A bag slammed into David's back, knocking him to his knees.

'I've missed you, wimp,' jeered Ricko. 'So glad you decided to come back for more.'

For a fleeting moment, David experienced his old feelings of powerlessness and fear when confronted by the gang; but then he remembered the other bullies he had defeated in far worse circumstances than this.

Thwack! He threw his sports bag at Ricko's legs, felling him like a tree.

[...]

'Get him! There's only one of him, you stupid morons!' yelled Ricko as he got back on his feet.

[...]

'Oh yeah? Well, not anymore, pal,' said Mike, pushing his way through. 'You drove my friend away once. You're not going to this time.' (Golding, 2007, pp.233-234)

It is clear that, although the missing father causes a lot of problems in the beginning, his absence is necessary for the boy to gain strength and experience in order to become able to cope with difficult situations on his own. Thus after David completes his task on the Seas In-between and redeems the Jones family by helping Captain Fisher to defeat Captain Jones, his reward is the fact that his father finally returns home and they can live together like a normal family again. Moreover, David has gained enough strength to defy Ricko and his gang and even to find a true friend.

Friendship, sisterhood and guiding figures in *Pirates!*

Nancy Kington, the narrator and main protagonist of Celia Rees's *Pirates!*, is guided by two benevolent father-figures on her journey to maturity and adulthood. The situation is different from the one in previously discussed novels, as one of these father-figures is not actually an older male character in the story, but another female character of the same age as Nancy. Thus it is friendship rather than parental care that guides the questing adolescent on her way to womanhood. It has, however, a similar effect on the young girl as the influence of gentlemen and pirates on the male heroes in other novels.

There are also two malevolent father-figures in the novel, namely Duke, the overseer of Nancy's plantation, and Bartholome the Brazilian, who Nancy is supposed to marry. Although these two characters force Nancy to commit atrocious deeds, they contribute quite a lot to Nancy's loss of her childish innocence and carelessness, and they encourage her growing maturity. Both have an ugly physical appearance which reflects their evil personality, and both are cruel villains. Nevertheless, Duke and Bartholome give Nancy insight into the functioning of the imperialist and patriarchal society she has grown up in, which is why they have to be regarded as mentors on Nancy's quest journey alongside her two benevolent guiding parents. Bartholome is intent on marrying Nancy and keeping her inside his home as his prisoner and as a living object of pleasure, while Duke gradually introduces Nancy to the way slaves are kept, exploited and abused in the colony. The two malevolent father-figures also play key parts in the context of gender-roles and women's issues in the novel, so they will be analysed in more detail later in this work. This section mainly focuses on Nancy's benign guiding figures, Minerva and Surgeon Graham.

When Nancy moves from her family home in Bristol to her plantation in Jamaica, she is attended by her personal slave, a black girl of about Nancy's age. As Nancy is bored of her life at the plantation and generally opposed to slavery, she tries to make friends with the girl called Minerva. The latter, who has been a slave all her life and who therefore treats Nancy like her mistress in spite of Nancy's kindness and openness, does not appear to be willing or able to start a friendship with Nancy until the two girls experience one special event together, namely their first visit to the water spring that has given its name to Nancy's plantation: Fountainhead.

During this trip, it becomes obvious how much more skilled Minerva is in many things in comparison to Nancy. For example, Minerva can ride a horse much better than Nancy because she does not need to ride like a lady:

Minerva rode like a man, her long brown legs showing to the knees on either side of the saddle. I envied the control this gave her and determined to do the same when we were out of sight of the house. She sat a horse well, with strength, natural grace and balance. (Rees, 2003, p.111)

Likewise, Nancy has enjoyed luxury all her life because her father was a sugar merchant, but she has no idea what sugar cane actually looks like and how sugar is made. Minerva, on the other hand, knows exactly how it works and helps Nancy to some sugar cane:

Minerva dismounted, took a machete from one of the men and lopped off a growing stem. She chopped off a section and, with a few sweeps of the razor-sharp blade, she cut away the tough outer skin to expose the pithy inner core.

‘Here.’ She handed the peeled cane to me. ‘It tastes good. Refreshes the mouth after riding.’

I sucked at the oozing liquid. It was much less sweet than I had thought it might be, and did serve to quench the thirst. (Rees, 2003, p.111)

Then they arrive at the fountain, where Minerva undresses and has a swim in the cool water. When Nancy decides to do the same, first of all she is terribly shocked by the sight of Minerva’s branding, and then she almost drowns in the pool because she cannot swim. Minerva has to rescue her and is astonished at Nancy’s lack of skill:

Minerva was shocked that I could not swim.

‘Is there no sea where you live? No river?’

There was both sea and river, I explained, but no one learns to swim. Not even the sailors. (Rees, 2003, p.114)

Thus in every practical respect, Minerva is superior to Nancy. She is much more skilled in useful things that can help her to survive than the young lady from England who has only been taught ‘the female arts’. The British society, whose ideology teaches its people that blacks are inferior to them, savage beings that the whites can use as their slaves and exploit them, in fact produces women who are incapable of surviving in a difficult situation, and who are indeed inferior to the black slaves they keep.

This is one important lesson which Nancy Kington learns from Minerva Sharpe, and in this scene at the ‘magic pool’ Minerva becomes a guiding figure for Nancy, something like a mother-figure in the shape of a slave girl of the same age as her protégée. The bond that is now created between the two is described as follows:

‘We are not in the sea. I can teach you. It is easy.’

I did not find it easy, but the lesson was very pleasant. We were girls together and of an age, and that is how we behaved, laughing and playing in the water. As we lay on the smooth rocks, letting the sun dry our skin, she asked me about the ring that I wore on the gold chain about my neck. I found myself telling her all about William, things that I have never told anyone, not even Susan. We were not mistress and slave from that day on. We were more like friends. Like sisters. (Rees, 2003, pp.114-115)

The lesson that Nancy has learned at the ‘magic pool’ is far more than how to swim in water, and she has gained a true friend and guide. Minerva even becomes Nancy’s confidante, the only person whom she tells *all* the details about her love relationship with

William, and she receives valuable advice and information from Minerva about love, life and slavery. In addition, the fact that Nancy and Minerva are indeed sisters because they have the same father reinforces the idea of Minerva being a parental guide for Nancy:

‘There is something you must know.’ [...]

‘What is it?’

‘You are my sister. Your father, was my father, too.’

[...]

Things were becoming clear to me and, in that moment, much of my fear left me. I had found one safe haven in a seething sea of threat and uncertainty. Men’s love might change, prove fickle, but Minerva was my blood sister. I would always love her, and she would always love me. (Rees, 2003, pp.280-281)

Sisterhood is the bond that strengthens the two girls’ friendship and that helps them to care for one another, although Minerva’s superiority is alluded to all throughout the story and she assumes her role as a guiding figure for Nancy all the time, in various situations. Thus after Nancy kills Duke, it is the slave girl who needs to comfort her mistress although she has just suffered sexual violence. Nancy admits: “Of the two of us, her ordeal had been the greater, but she seemed to recover more quickly. In some ways, she is the stronger. I took my lead from her.” (Rees, 2003, p.149) Similarly, on the pirate ship Minerva is the braver of the two, as this one example among many shows: “Minerva swarmed up the rigging as though born to it and her agility and balance made her as sure-footed aloft as she was on deck. Her fearlessness in attack and her marksmanship singled her out from the ordinary.” (Rees, 2003, p.200) Concluding from this, Minerva is generally the stronger of the two, and she can adapt to new situations more easily than Nancy. That is also why Minerva “was much more accepted, treated as an equal and made welcome” (Rees, 2003, p.204) by their pirate crewmates.

Finally, it is Minerva who usually solves Nancy’s problems when she is in danger. Thus Minerva fights and defeats Limster, who tried to rape Nancy, and Minerva kills Bartholome the Brazilian, who has pursued Nancy all the time in order to punish her for rejecting him. Minerva also plays the role of a substitute mother for Nancy, who has never known her female parent, and who has suffered from this lack of a mother:

She lay down in the cot beside me and comforted me, stroking my hair as she held me in the hollow of her shoulder. I soaked her shirt with my tears. Lacking a mother, I had never been held by a woman like that before. [...] Minerva rocked me, hushing me as if I were a baby, and eventually I quietened. (Rees, 2003, p.279)

This scene shows that the absence of a mother in Nancy's life has been a serious problem for her, and she needs to experience something like maternal care in order to be able to develop and reach womanhood. So being her sister and her friend at the same time, Minerva plays a critical part in Nancy's life. One can also say that with Minerva's help, it is possible for Nancy to break away from the oppressing principles that are part of the ideology of her society and to gain the necessary strength as well as life experience to become a mature adult.

Although Minerva is an absolutely valuable guide in Nancy Kington's growth process, there is another character in the novel who plays the part of a father-figure for Nancy. As opposed to Minerva, this one is male and older than her, so he is a more traditional father-figure. It is Niall Graham, the doctor on the ship that takes Nancy from Bristol to Jamaica. Nancy is in a terrible state of mind during this journey because she is still mourning her father's death and she deeply regrets the fact that she has probably lost William forever, as her stepmother has hidden his letter from her. The ship's doctor comes to look after her and acts like a psychologist:

I had closed myself off for too long, beset by melancholy, as Graham had rightly judged. From that moment on, I began to feel better. [...] I felt the urge to confide although I did not know this man. [...] Graham listened with great seriousness, and did not offer false cheerfulness. (Rees, 2003, p.82)

Graham allows Nancy to relieve herself of her worries about William by listening to her and by promising to transmit a message from Nancy to William on his return voyage to England. His honesty and the fatherly support he offers Nancy help to build up a friendship relationship between the two characters, in which Graham plays the part of a confidant for Nancy. Later in the story, Nancy and Graham are reunited on Captain Broom's pirate ship, where they can truly live out their friendship. Even there, Graham still plays the part of a father-figure for Nancy, especially as he urges her to give up her life as a pirate and become respectable again on various occasions. Graham is also Nancy's only remaining link to William, as he constantly encourages her not to give up her hopes to meet her childhood sweetheart again and be married to him one day:

'I'm thinking of leaving the account,' he went on. '[...] It is only loyalty to Broom that keeps me here. And you.' He turned to me. 'Come back with me, Nancy. You can pass as my daughter.'
[...]

'[...] What of your young man, William?'

'...'

'He might be dead for all I know.'

'And he might not. Never give up hope, my dear.' Graham leaned forward and put his hand on mine as if he really were my father. 'Never give up hope. I told you that before.'

'When will you leave?' [...]

'As soon as I can.'

I could see Graham's mind was made up, so it would be no good pleading, but I had grown very fond of him and I would sorely miss his company. (Rees, 2003, pp.292-293)

Nancy chooses Minerva over Graham as there is a stronger attachment between the two women than between Nancy and the doctor. Nancy has understood that she owes Minerva a lot because Minerva has been her confidante, her substitute mother and her life saver, so she cannot desert her friend and sister and leave the ship together with Graham.

When Graham urges Nancy to settle down in England with him for the second time, she refuses again for the same reasons, and she has difficulties making him understand why it is impossible for Minerva to simply accompany him and Nancy to England:

I could not leave Minerva, I told him, and she would not come with me.

'Why not?' Graham asked. 'She would be free, after all. She would come not as a slave, or servant, but as your companion.'

'She might be free in law, but ... ' I tried to explain to him how Minerva felt. 'She says that she does not want to live in a place where she would always have to endure the stares of the curious, the comments of the idle-tongued and vicious.'

'But she would have money. Status.'

I nearly laughed. As if that would make any difference? People would see her as being above her station, and that might even make it worse. Graham was a man of sensitivity and intelligence; why would he not see that? (Rees, 2003, p.326)

Graham cannot understand it because he represents a different world from the one Minerva stands for. Graham comes from the same imperial and patriarchal society which Nancy grew up in, so despite his liberal attitude and his experience as a pirate, money and status matter quite a lot to him, whereas freedom and independence are the values that Minerva strongly defends. Thus Nancy rejects Graham's offer for two reasons. On the one hand, she cannot break her sisterly bond with Minerva, her most powerful guide on her quest journey, and on the other hand she does not want to go back to the life of a wealthy lady in England that she despises so much.

'Do you regret not going with him?' Minerva asked as his ship left the harbour.

'No,' I said, and meant it.

‘You do not stay just because of me?’ she asked, worried ‘I would not want that.’
‘That is part of it.’ I had to be honest with her. There is little hidden between us. ‘You are my sister. The only family I have, or want. But it is not entirely because of you.’
I told her of my other reasons for rejecting Graham’s offer. If I put on the bonnet and cloak of a doctor’s daughter, life would lose its savour, like meat without salt. Life would become insipid, like some floury English pudding, not sweet and sharp to the mouth like the fruits of the south. Graham would have his work, his patients; my prospects would lie in making some kind of marriage. (Rees, 2003, pp.327-328)

Nancy Kington has understood that if she goes back to England with Graham, she will be forced into the old gender stereotype prevalent in British society. Thus she makes this conscious choice between two guiding figures for the sake of freedom, which links her more closely to Minerva than to Graham. It is only when Minerva becomes pregnant, marries Vincent and settles with him in Madagascar that Nancy is no longer tied to the piratical way of life and finally returns to England in order to wait for William and to marry him if possible. Nancy has to leave Minerva in Madagascar, but it is her sister who releases Nancy from their bond and finally motivates her to go back to the place where she belongs and to find her promised husband. Minerva has helped Nancy to become a strong woman and to take her own life under control:

‘Do not grieve and do not sorrow. We have seen enough of both and we don’t have time for all that now. You must go back. I agree with Broom and Surgeon Graham. I know your reasons for staying, but I hate to see you sad and you cannot be happy with your heart divided so. You still love William, don’t you? [...] You must stop being afraid, Nancy. That is the trouble, isn’t it? You are afraid of leaving me. You are afraid of what will happen if you go back.’

I nodded [...] She knew me better than I knew myself.

‘When we first went on the account, you were afraid then.’

I laughed at the memory of it. ‘All the time.’

‘But you overcame it. You can do the same now.’

[...]

As we stood at the rail, laughing together, I truly believed that there was nothing I could not do. (Rees, 2003, pp.374-376)

In that sense, Minerva still acts as a parental guide in this final conversation between Minerva Sharpe and Nancy Kington, but she releases Nancy from her care and sends her off to find her own love and happiness as a mature, grown-up woman.

Mentor figures in 'Vampirates': the Pirate Federation and the 'real' world of piracy

In Justin Somper's 'Vampirates' series, "the oceans have risen" (Somper, 2005, p.6) and there is hardly any land left. So the story takes place almost exclusively on the ocean and most of the characters are pirates or Vampirates. As the story is set in the year 2512, it is a fantasy view of the future, and it depicts a world in which piracy is extremely widespread and has almost become the norm.

The author has chosen to present the world of piracy on two different levels. Thus he draws a clear line between traditional, 'old-school' piracy and a kind of modern, institutionalized piracy represented by the 'Pirate Federation'. The latter is, according to Cheng Li, who is a member of the Federation, meant "to further the cause of piracy throughout the world – to consolidate the power we have on the oceans and to develop a global network of pirate fleets, working in peaceful cooperation". (Somper, 2006, pp.116-117) This definition shows that the Pirate Federation is an institution that aims to establish rules in the world of piracy and to create an orderly, disciplined militia of pirate fleets all over the world. Lots of pirate captains and their crews have already become members of the Pirate Federation and operate under its authority. Others, like Captain Molucco Wrathe for example, refuse to obey the Federation's rules and operate as independent pirates.

In fact, Captain Molucco Wrathe, whose articles Connor has signed for life, refuses to become a member of the Pirate Federation, and especially to obey its rules. It is obvious in the story that he is opposed to the Federation, because he and his Deputy Captain Cheng Li constantly disagree on Federation issues as well on the way a pirate ship should be run. Connor's fellow pirate and friend Bart explains to him that Cheng Li is "a bit of a thorn in his side and he's ... well he's like a bloody great dagger in hers". (Somper, 2005, p.74) This is because, as according to Bart, "Molucco Wrathe is something of a legend. The Wrathe family are pirate royalty. Molucco is one of three brothers and they're all pirate captains", but

"Mistress Li is utterly new school. She's fresh out of Pirate Academy. [...] She graduated top of her class – with honours. Which makes her just about the most qualified pirate to ever sail the seas. [...] Mistress Li is here as an apprentice. It's the final part of her training". (Somper, 2005, pp.74-77)

The author of 'Vampirates' thus presents Connor Tempest, one of the two main protagonists, with two different attitudes to piracy. Both ideologies offer Connor a leading figure, a guide who incorporates its values. These two figures play the parts of mentors on Connor's quest journey, but they are incompatible with one another.

Captain Wrathe seems to communicate natural authority over others, and on his first meeting with the captain Connor "could see that this man was loved and respected by his crew". In addition, the narrator remarks that "you could tell that the captain had physical strength, not to mention the charisma of a natural leader". (Somper, 2005, p.56) So right from the beginning Connor is positively impressed by Captain Wrathe and he respects him as a guide in his new life at sea. Captain Wrathe cries when Connor relates to him how his father died, how he lost his sister and how he almost drowned in the storm: "Molucco Wrathe's eyes were wet with tears." (Somper, 2005, p.59) This display of humanity in the pirate captain evokes trust in the boy and lays the ground for a positive relationship between the captain and Connor Tempest, which allows the boy to accept Captain Wrathe as a substitute father. Their 'substitute father-son' relationship is sealed very soon afterwards, when "Captain Wrathe reached out his arm to Connor's shoulder, gripping it in a way that made Connor think of his own dad". (Somper, 2005, p.63) This physical, fatherly embrace, the direct allusion to Connor's real father as well as the captain's promise that "you've come to us on the darkest of your days, Connor Tempest, but we'll steer you back into the sunshine" (Somper, 2005, p.63) draw Connor close to Captain Molucco Wrathe on a psychological level and make him feel at home on board *The Diablo*. Indeed, Captain Wrathe addresses Connor with the words "dear boy" a number of times and explains to him that in the world of piracy, people are "all brothers" and "all family". (Somper, 2005, pp.120-123) Connor Tempest is accepted as one of the family, and soon he even secures his place as captain's favourite when he saves Molucco Wrathe's life. Significantly, the captain announces to Cheng Li, his deputy: "It is down to this boy," he said, throwing his arm about Connor, "and this boy *alone* that I am alive and standing before you. [...]" (Somper, 2005, p.144) Thus Connor has achieved the status of a hero and from now on he enjoys the captain's favours, all the time being treated like his son.

This is true all throughout the first novel of the 'Vampirates' series, but Connor's attitude begins to be a more questioning one during a significant scene at the beginning of the

second novel. Captain Molucco Wrathe is tricked by an old adversary who seeks to punish him for deliberately transgressing the rules of the Pirate Federation and who, significantly, accuses Captain Wrathe of only being interested in material goods. (Somper, 2006, pp.33-34) The harshness and cruelty with which Captain Narcisos Drakoulis goes about punishing Captain Wrathe for his transgressions makes Connor doubt Molucco Wrathe's integrity: "Connor sensed that Drakoulis was seeking revenge for some ancient hurt. What had Molucco done to him? Connor looked with new eyes at the captain to whom he had pledged his allegiance." (Somper, 2006, p.33) The boy now starts seeing Captain Wrathe as someone with serious flaws and as quite a selfish person who is only interested in his own pleasure and freedom rather than a captain who feels responsible for his crew and who acts according to his responsibility. In addition, as the meeting with Narcisos Drakoulis results in the death of Jez Stukeley, one of Connor's best friends, he begins to blame Captain Wrathe for his selfishness and his obsession with his freedom as a pirate:

He'd have to smarten up and stop daydreaming. And he'd have to watch Captain Wrathe a little more carefully, too. He couldn't shake the feeling that, in spite of the captain's fine eulogy, Jez Stukeley had died a needless death. (Somper, 2006, p.79)

Connor Tempest now realizes that Captain Wrathe enjoys this freedom at the cost of others and that he is ready to sacrifice young crew members in order to continue and enjoy his "merry life". The boy is thus becoming more experienced and starts to understand that he should not trust appearances but watch for other character traits in seemingly benevolent people. Although Connor still has a lot to learn and face a number of trials on his quest journey, he is being confronted with the realities of adult life and acquiring valuable knowledge about them.

After Jez Stukeley's death at the hands of a cruel punisher, but also because of Captain Wrathe's selfishness and carelessness, Connor is still strongly attached to the man who "had welcomed him aboard his ship like a father", (Somper, 2006, p.34) and "he would not betray Captain Wrathe to [the teachers at Pirate Academy], not after everything Molucco had done for him". (Somper, 2006, p.186) Nevertheless, Connor's attachment is now less unconditional than in the past, as he also wonders about his allegiance to his captain: "But he had signed up to the articles of *The Diablo*. There was no escape from that. He had pledged his duty, his very life, to Molucco. A decision, which – as Grace had told him – was now beginning, perhaps, to look a bit hasty." (Somper, 2006, p.187) These doubts continue

until, after Connor's duel with Jacoby Blunt at Pirate Academy, he regards Cheng Li as a traitor and is glad to join Captain Wrathe on *The Diablo* again.

In fact, the two characters who play the roles of mentors for Connor on *The Diablo* and at Pirate Academy, Captain Wrathe, whose only goal is to enjoy life and rob other people of their goods for his own benefit, and Cheng Li, who is much more interested in military strategy and gaining power over others together with the Pirate Federation, are rivals. Both characters have a strong influence on the boy, because Cheng Li actually rescues Connor from drowning and Captain Wrathe offers him a new home on his ship. In consequence, Connor feels attached to both characters and feels he owes both of them respect and thankfulness, which he puts into practice through loyalty and obedience.

It is difficult, however, to be loyal to both Captain Wrathe and his deputy Cheng Li, for they are polar opposites and they constantly disagree on the purpose of piracy and attacks on ships as well as raids on land. So they make Connor feel torn between them, not least because Cheng Li and Captain Molucco Wrathe try to convince Connor of their personal views of piracy and to draw him on their respective sides. For Captain Molucco Wrathe, piracy is a fun way of life, and he lives according to the motto of one of his predecessors: "A famous pirate captain of the olden days once said that a pirate's life was a short but merry one." (Somper, 2005, p.121) For him, piracy is about pleasure and freedom, and Captain Wrathe clearly refuses to respect the rule about sea lanes set up by the Federation, upon which Cheng Li explains that "there are regulations laid down by the Pirate Federation". She continues: "If we enter another ship's sea lane then we not only flout the rules of the sea, we invite attack from the pirates who we insult by trespassing into their waters." (Somper, 2005, pp.182-185) This clearly implies that the Pirate Federation invites pirate crews to attack each other in case they do not respect the Federation's rules and regulations. One can also see that the Pirate Federation indoctrinates its members and representatives with its ideology by the way Cheng Li talks to Connor about the future of piracy:

"The world of piracy is changing, boy, and men like Molucco Wrathe are going to be left behind. Being a pirate is a *jolly romp* for them. People like me – people who get things done, people with connections – we're the future. There's a much bigger world of piracy than what you see on this ship, boy. *The Diablo* is – forgive the expression – merely a drop in the ocean. There will come a time, and it is not so very far away, when the Molucco Wrathe of this world will be sidelined. *Then* you'll see some excitement: a brave new dawn of piracy." (Somper, 2005, pp.189-190)

Thus Connor Tempest is presented with two role-models on *The Diablo*. On the one hand, there is the perspective of freedom and pleasure if he chooses to adopt Captain Wrathe's lifestyle and on the other hand there is a possibility for the boy to achieve a position of power in the future if he commits himself to Cheng Li's principles. As a questing youth who is seeking his identity and his place in society, it is certainly tempting for the boy to choose freedom and the absence of boundaries coupled with pleasure and riches. However, rules, boundaries and an acceptable set of values are exactly what the adolescent needs and what he is in fact searching for on his quest journey. In consequence, the Pirate Federation, represented by the character Cheng Li, offers an equally acceptable possibility for the boy to find his ideal self in. One can say that Captain Wrathe offers Connor the fatherly care and understanding that he misses because his real father has died, and that Cheng Li offers Connor the missing parental guidelines, discipline and boundaries that an adolescent needs to find his way to maturity. This causes Connor to be torn between the two role-models and to show as much interest in the Pirate Federation as in traditional piracy. It is also the reason why Connor feels betrayed by both Cheng Li and Captain Wrathe at different moments in the story and why he changes allegiance in various critical situations.

While the Pirate Federation itself is mentioned at several points in the *Vampirates* novels, none of its key members except Cheng Li, Commodore Kuo and a few other Academy teachers and students ever appear as characters in the story. This gives the Federation an aspect of mystery and makes it appear rather powerful though immaterial. It is, however, represented in the story by the institution called 'Pirate Academy', a school for pirates which plays a key part in Connor's growth process.

Pirate Academy is a boarding school for children and teenagers between the ages of seven and seventeen. Ideally, these students spend ten years of their lives at the Academy in order to get an education in piracy with the aim to become captains when they leave school. (Somper, 2006, p.146) It is an elite school that offers places only to the best potential pirates and pirate captains and it is quite interesting to focus on what children and teenagers actually learn at this unique kind of school.

Upon Cheng Li's invitation and with the permission of their captain, Molucco Wrathe, twins Connor and Grace spend a week at Pirate Academy. When they arrive at the harbour of the

school, the first thing they learn is the Academy's maxim: "Plenty and Satiety, Pleasure and Ease, Liberty and Power." Ironically, according to Mistress Li, "the words come from a famed captain of the old times". So the Academy's leading motto is actually taken from the world that it seeks to leave behind, dominate and improve, which gives the reader a hint at the duplicity of Pirate Academy.

What the twins are initially presented with is an amazing image of the school: "Grace and Connor gasped at the first sight of their surroundings. The Academy was a colourful oasis – a sprawling mass of old buildings, painted in bright yellows, pinks and oranges and set amongst lush gardens, leading down towards the dockside." (Somper, 2006, p.132) This impression is followed later, during a tour of the Academy grounds, by more, similarly beautiful views of abundant trees and elaborate works of art. "The gardens smelled wonderful" and "the scent of the tall jacaranda tree near the dock was heady enough to knock you out. Its branches hung low, under the weight of its bundles of blue flowers." (Somper, 2006, p.134) A few moments later they see "a dazzling fountain made of coloured glass and seashells", when Grace suddenly says that "it's all so beautiful". While the group continues their tour past the fountain, there are "splashes of cool water bouncing up and onto Grace's face". (Somper, 2006, pp.135-136) Just a little later, Cheng Li pauses "by the thick foliage of a pomegranate tree" and picks fruit for the twins and for herself. "The exposed seeds twinkled in the sunlight like jewels. [...] Grace felt the fruit burst on her tongue, surprisingly cool and thirst-quenching in the heat." (Somper, 2006, p.151) Thus, from the outside, Pirate Academy presents itself almost like a fairy-tale castle with amazingly beautiful gardens full of delicious smells and savoury fruit among other impressive items like the beautifully carved entrance doors to the main building as well as the exuberant meal that is served on their first night, at the captains' dinner.

Concluding from this, Pirate Academy seems like a kind of paradise for young children and teenagers. Indeed it seems to be a place of perfection where you would not expect students to be educated in anything as base as the crime of piracy. However, the Tempest twins will soon experience how the Academy students are manipulated into becoming ruthless sea robbers and murderers. This is done by about a dozen former pirate captains who are now teachers at the Academy. They all come from different countries, which makes the Academy truly international. They also have varying attitudes to Connor's captain, Molucco Wrathe,

which they freely express during the Captain's Dinner on the twins' first evening at the Academy. Commodore Kuo summarizes the Academy captains' attitude to Molucco Wrathe like this: "Captain Wrathe has always divided opinion. As any character that large might." (Somper, 2006, p.185) And by calling Molucco Wrathe a 'large character', the headmaster clearly acknowledges a certain respect for the rogue captain in spite of the fact that Commodore Kuo, too, seems to be convinced that Wrathe's glory will soon come to an end.

Despite Connor's overall negative attitude to school, when he sees the timetable given to him by Cheng Li he realizes that "there were no boring subjects here" and "each day seemed to be jam-packed with interesting stuff". (Somper, 2006, p.147) In fact, Connor becomes gradually more impressed and fascinated with what students learn at Pirate Academy, while his sister, Grace, is viewing the classes more and more critically.

Indeed, along with sailing classes, marine biology lessons, navigational skills workshops and similar useful training, students are clearly indoctrinated with the values of warfare while they are familiarized with and taught the use of weapons, especially swords. Like little soldiers, they are trained to regard the bearing of a weapon, in their case a sword, as a great honour. In fact, the teaching methods used at Pirate Academy are very similar to those of the military, and just as effective. The students wear uniforms – black and gold Academy track suits which bear the Academy insignia, for example – they march and chant during early-morning sports lessons entitled "Strength, Stamina and Motivation" and are taught how to fight in battles at sea. Thus, on his second day at Pirate Academy, Connor takes part in a military-style morning run that involves marching and chanting, and

at that moment, Connor felt powerful, unstoppable. They *were* the future of piracy. In years to come, if all went to plan, they'd each have a fleet of ships and thousands of pirates at their command. The ocean *would* be theirs – and much of the land too. It was a heady thought. (Somper, 2006, p.200)

This reaction shows how fast Connor as well as the other children and teenagers can be convinced to become ambitious pirates and warriors. Ideas of power and control are instilled in their young minds, which allows the Academy to manipulate them very easily.

It is important to note that barely two hours earlier, Connor still doubted whether he had made the right decision by attending Pirate Academy for a week and felt disloyal for leaving *The Diablo*. (Somper, 2006, p.196) During his stay at the Academy, however, Connor is more

and more elated by what he learns and gets fully taken up by the drilling teaching methods. While Grace has started to understand how the teachers at Pirate Academy manipulate the young students into enjoying fighting and believing that they are doing this for a noble cause, Connor is still blinded by his own prospect of becoming a successful pirate and unable to regard these teaching methods from a critical point of view.

Justin Somper, however, shows his readers another example of manipulation practised at Pirate Academy when the youngest students at the Academy are offered their first swords during a lesson called Combat Workshop. In an elaborate ritual in which the children's eyes are blindfolded, senior students – Connor alongside them – ceremonially hand out the new swords, called daisho, to the seven-year-old children. It is obvious that the children are extremely excited by this gift, and they can barely hide their happiness. As soon as they are allowed to remove their blindfolds and look at their weapons, "the children's eyes shone like jewels as they had their first sight of the daisho in their hands". (Somper, 2006, pp.230-232) The speech that Commodore Kuo gives at this moment illustrates the strategies used to indoctrinate the children:

"Let these blades be your most treasured possessions. These swords represent our trust in you and our belief that you are the future of piracy. Use these weapons not in sudden anger nor for quick gain but with precision and with honour in the way that your teachers show you. These blades in your hands now connect each of you back through time to the noble line of pirates who came before you. They connect you forward into the future to the line of pirates to come. But, most importantly, your daisho connects each of you to one another – to your comrades at the Academy and in the Pirate Federation." (Somper, 2006, p.232)

The headmaster clearly uses military vocabulary when he talks about 'precision', 'honour' and a 'noble line of pirates', as well as he emphasizes the sense of belonging together and being responsible for one another that an army needs in order to function as a group and to be strong rather than to be weak, individual fighters on their own. Thus he calls them 'comrades' and reminds them of their future positions as powerful pirates in a world dominated by the likes of them. The children should regard their weapons as their 'most treasured possessions' and be proud to bear these deadly items.

Commodore Kuo himself behaves like a dictator. This becomes clear in his speeches as well as during a conversation he has with Connor in his office. In fact, Connor is impressed by what the Academy students learn and he would like to do the same. It is the first time in his

life that he finds school attractive because it is his first experience of being a successful student, and he hungers to know more about piracy and to acquire new skills. (Somper, 2006, p.284) Therefore, Connor plans to ask Commodore Kuo to be allowed to stay at Pirate Academy for another week. During the interview he has with the Commodore, however, Connor learns a few rather more disagreeable things about the Pirate Federation. Commodore Kuo points out to Connor, for example, that all members of the Federation are sworn to secrecy, and that they would even go as far as taking the life of someone who gives away information, especially to a person who is not a member. Kuo also emphasizes the “great and growing gulf between those pirates who operate within the Federation and those – like Molucco Wrathe – on the outside” (Somper, 2006, p.293) as well as the fact that the Federation seeks to assume a powerful position all over the world. He partly admits to the fact that the Federation uses spies and agents to dominate the world of pirates worldwide, and makes it clear to Connor that *The Diablo* and the boy himself have been the objects of the Federation’s observation for some time. (Somper, 2006, Chapter Twenty-Nine) Concluding from what Kuo tells Connor, the Pirate Federation does not refrain from radical methods in order to gain the position of power that they strive for. The Commodore deliberately speaks in riddles while he is trying to convince Connor to attend Pirate Academy as a full-time student as well as to join the Pirate Federation. This behaviour is typical of a radical leader, somebody who is seeking to become a superpower and control entire societies. Thus it is logic that Connor Tempest, the questing youth, looks up to Commodore Kuo with respect and admiration.

Finally, Connor is made to take part in an exhibition fight with Jacoby Blunt, one of the Academy’s senior students and clearly a favourite with Cheng Li and Commodore Kuo, in front of the entire Academy, as a way of celebrating Connor’s Federation membership. During twenty-four hours, the two boys receive special training from Cheng Li in order to set up an elaborate choreography of swordplay. They are even allowed to use two extremely precious swords, namely the ones that used to belong to Commodore Kuo himself and Captain Molucco Wrathe respectively, and which are usually only used once a year, on Swords Day. This also has symbolic value, as Connor’s opponent is going to fight him with his own captain’s sword. In fact, one can consider the exhibition fight as a fight between Captain Molucco Wrathe, represented by his sapphire sword, and Commodore Kuo, whose

old broadsword Connor uses. So the two worlds that Connor has been confronted with in his new life at sea are represented in this duel, and their two completely different sets of values are fighting each other, with Connor in the middle of this battle as one of the major actors. The Pirate Federation is thus aiming to make Connor defeat his other father-figure and role-model, Captain Molucco Wrathe, and his principles of traditional piracy. This fight is also a metaphor for the adolescent's inner torment, his inability to choose between the freedom of regular piracy and the power and discipline of the new kind of piracy advocated by the Pirate Federation.

Connor considers this duel as a great honour, and tries to do his best. However, during the exhibition fight, he soon realizes that Jacoby is trying to truly hurt him, although the latter expressed concerns about hurting his friend during their training. (Somper, 2006, p.356-357) The exhibition fight culminates in Jacoby injuring Connor, but at the same time refusing to continue to hurt his opponent, so that Connor realizes that he has been betrayed:

Connor looked into Jacoby's eyes. And he saw something wrong there – a lie, behind the familiar eyes of his new friend. [...] There was no time to be shocked by the betrayal or to think through the layers of those who must have betrayed him. [...] It happened in the middle of the sequence. Connor kept to his marks perfectly but as Jacoby launched the next attack, the blade of his rapier came much closer than they had rehearsed. (Somper, 2006, pp.366-367)

Being more experienced in real fighting than Jacoby, and having understood that he is in danger, Connor professionally defends himself and wins the fight. Connor also gets Jacoby to admit that he did not want to do it, that in fact Commodore Kuo and Cheng Li had forced him to hurt Connor, apparently in order to test his fighting skills. (Somper, 2006, p.369) Nevertheless, Connor has now understood the treacherousness and the cruelty that lie within the Pirate Federation and that are incorporated by the Pirate Academy. In consequence, Connor decides not to become a member after all, and he rejects Cheng Li and the Pirate Federation as appropriate role-models. Connor is utterly disappointed, but the betrayal has opened his eyes to the manipulation practised at Pirate Academy.

Concluding from all this, Justin Somper portrays Pirate Academy – and with it the entire Pirate Federation – as an association of villains who educate and drill innocent young children into brainwashed, violent killing machines with the aim of setting up an army that conquers and controls the seas as well as the land worldwide. Due to the horrible

discoveries that Connor and Grace have gradually made at Pirate Academy in combination with Molucco Wrathe's disdain for the Pirate Federation, the reader is formally invited to regard the Pirate Federation along with its educational wing, Pirate Academy, as wholly reprehensible. It is presented as a form of totally unacceptable, institutionalized piracy that incorporates duplicity, betrayal and abuse, even readiness to kill for their own purposes. This idea is reinforced by the fact that Captain Molucco Wrathe displays humanity once again by shedding tears at the death of his brother Porfirio Wrathe: "He broke off as a large diamond of a tear rolled down his cheek." (Somper, 2006, p.372)

Nevertheless, in the third novel of the 'Vampirates' series, Connor is made to question Captain Wrathe and traditional piracy once again. After rejecting the Pirate Federation for betraying Connor and trying to kill him and his twin sister Grace, Connor wholly engages in serving Captain Molucco Wrathe again, and the latter still regards Connor as the son he never had, that way featuring as a benevolent father-figure for the young protagonist. So he explains to his brother Barbarro Wrathe and his wife Trofie: "Connor's the newest member of my crew. He's only been with us these past three months but it's hard to imagine a time without him. Why, he's become like a son to me." (Somper, 2007, p.28)

Although Captain Molucco Wrathe really seems to consider Connor as his son for a while, there is a new element in *Vampirates: Blood Captain* that makes Connor start doubting the truthfulness of Captain Molucco Wrathe's words and behaviour towards him. Moonshine Wrathe, Barbarro Wrathe's son and Molucco Wrathe's nephew, who appears in the story as an antagonist to Connor's development as a pirate and a favourite with his captain, reveals important information about the Wrathe family that has significant influence on Connor's attitude to his captain. Moonshine directly addresses the topic of Connor's place in Captain Molucco Wrathe's crew:

"You'd better understand something. Molucco Wrathe isn't the doddery old seadog he'd have you believe. [...] He uses people. He makes them think they're part of the family and then he sends them into the line of fire. [...] Molucco Wrathe pretended that Jez Stukeley was a prized member of his crew. But he still sent him into that duel with Captain Drakoulis' prize fighter – [...] Molucco sent Jezzy boy to his death. And one day, for all his talk of you being the prodigal son, he'll do the same to you. [...] Because that's what we Wrathe's do. We're users. [...] We'll tell you anything we feel like to get what we want. But when push comes to shove, we're only out for what we can get for ourselves. [...] If Uncle Luck's being good to you right now, it's

only because he hasn't worked out how to use you yet. [...]" (Somper, 2007, pp.155-156)

Upon this, Connor is sick and runs away because he is disgusted by the other boy's nasty words. This strong physical reaction proves how much Connor is affected by the possibility that his only remaining father substitute may betray him in a similar way as Cheng Li and the Pirate Federation. Indeed, Connor is unable to dismiss Moonshine's words for meaningless nonsense from a spoilt child, because "some of what he said had hit home. The seeds of doubt had been sown." (Somper, 2007, p.157) Moonshine's speech also confirms Captain Narcisos Drakoulis's accusations in the previous novel as well as does Connor's crewmate and friend's recently changed attitude towards Captain Wrathe:

"Only Captain Wrathe isn't known for doing his own dirty work, is he? [...] I'm not going to beat about the bush anymore. There's only one person on this ship who's responsible for my buddy Jez's death. [...] It's Molucco Wrathe!" (Somper, 2007, p.274)

So from now on, Captain Wrathe is only portrayed as selfish and as a person who is only interested in his own welfare as well as in material goods rather than as a caring Captain and father-figure for his crew, including Connor Tempest. This is also obvious when Connor and Bart secretly leave *The Diablo* to take their friend Jez Stukeley, who is now a vampire, to the ship of Vampirates. After Captain Wrathe finds out about this he is furious and makes it clear that being on good terms with his brother and carrying out their planned raid on a fort is more important than a service done out of friendship:

"[...] We lost Jez in that duel on Drakoulis' ship." He paused. "It was terrible sad, but these things happen."

Connor and Bart both winced at this casual summation of their friend's death.

[...]

He turned back to Connor and Bart. "You've disappointed me greatly, both of you," he said. Connor could barely look at the captain as he continued. "You were like sons to me. But now, I don't know. I just don't know. I trust in future you'll remember where your loyalties lie." (Somper, 2007, pp.269-270)

Clearly, friendship is a value that is unfamiliar to Captain Wrathe. He is too selfish to truly care for others and to understand that his young crewmembers acted out of friendship and care when they escorted Jez to the *Nocturne*. So in some way Captain Wrathe has already rejected his protégé, Connor, and their relationship is beginning to disintegrate.

Betrayal or rejection by Captain Wrathe does not only mean possible death for Connor, but certainly a new state of solitude. So the questing adolescent, who has already moved a step away from his father substitute, is now faced with an uncertain future. He might be alone again very soon, and that is what he dreads the most after his father's death and the disappointment he has experienced at Pirate Academy. Ironically, it is Moonshine Wrathe, a completely spoilt young boy who is purely evil, cunning and treacherous, who has opened Connor's eyes and made him realize that Captain Wrathe is not an ideal mentor for him. In fact, though Moonshine is a member of the Wrathe family and has certainly inherited their selfishness and their ruthlessness, he is the only one who is honest in the sense that he openly admits his negative personality traits. Thus he explains: "If you really want to know what the Wrathe's are, look at me. You might not like what you see, but I'm the only one of this whole crazed dynasty who tells it like it is." (Somper, 2007, p.156) He does not pretend to be helpful when in reality he is Connor's enemy, and he is one key agent who causes Connor Tempest to move on on his journey to adulthood. Thus it is Moonshine Wrathe who creates a situation in which it becomes impossible for Connor Tempest to remain a pirate in the service of Captain Molucco Wrathe.

In fact, during a raid on a fort in which the crews of both Molucco and Barbarro's ships appear as a removal company, Connor is made responsible for Moonshine's personal safety. It is his job to "bring Moonshine Wrathe back to his ship alive and in one piece". (Somper, 2007, pp.293-294) Moonshine, however, is the only pirate who does not conform to Cutlass Cate's orders and who brings the entire crews in danger, not least by viciously attacking two innocent men, the Emperor's security aides. This behaviour ultimately forces Connor to kill a man for the first time in his life:

Meanwhile, Connor watched as Alessandro caught up with Moonshine and tackled him to the ground. Like his fallen colleague, he was carrying a small, jewelled dagger. This he positioned across Moonshine's neck. "I'm going to enjoy this," he said. "No!" Connor leaped forward as Alessandro lowered the dagger. He threw himself upon Alessandro, driving the blade of his rapier in between the guard's shoulder blades. [...]
Connor realized that he had killed Alessandro and saved Moonshine. (Somper, 2007, p.334)

For Connor, this murder is a key event in his growing process. He suffers terribly from having killed an innocent man, and what he now needs is a caring parent to help him deal with his

pain and his bad conscience. On Molucco Wrathe's ship, however, Connor does not get the necessary support. The entire crews of *The Diablo* and *The Typhon*, including Connor's best friends Bart and Cate, refuse to truly acknowledge Connor's difficulties to deal with the new situation, but celebrate him as a hero and thank him for his deed. They play down his emotions as something they have all experienced before and that can be overcome fairly easily:

"I know what you're thinking," Cate said. "I can see it in your eyes. We've all been there. It's going to take time for you to deal with this. But you will, Connor, you will." She hugged him again.

More members of the attack squad came up to offer their thanks and congratulations. (Somper, 2007, p.350)

"Connor," [Bart] said. "What you're going through. It's the hardest thing you'll ever have to deal with. But we've all been there. We can help."

His words were clear. He might just as well have said, "You're a killer now. We're all killers on this ship. But now you've killed once, it will be easier next time. And the time after that. Soon you'll be dispatching death without so much as blinking your eye." (Somper, 2007, p.358)

This culminates in Captain Barbarro Wrathe and his wife offering Connor a Blood Captain, a special gift to thank him for saving their son's life. Molucco Wrathe explains to Connor what a Blood Captain is and tells him to be proud of himself for having earned this gift, and to regard it as a kind of trophy:

"He held the figure out to Connor. "Take it," he said. "Take it, boy, and keep it with you. It will remind you of the day you became a true pirate."

[...]

He had no desire for such a gift. The evil figurine would only be a daily reminder of the single most terrible deed of his young life. (Somper, 2007, p.362)

Concluding from this, Captain Molucco Wrathe also celebrates Connor for his heroic deed, together with his family and their crews, whereas Connor feels that he has been turned into a murderer by the people who have been his substitute family since his father's death. Therefore Connor now rejects Captain Molucco Wrathe as a father-figure and leaves *The Diablo*. In fact, he decides to go back to Pirate Academy, partly for want of any other place to go and partly because he is still attached to Cheng Li, whom he owes his life and who he admires for being a great fighter and a clever strategist in spite of her betrayal during his last visit at the Academy. Connor's emotional attachment to Cheng Li is comparable to Jim Hawkins's intimate connection with Long John Silver in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure*

Island. Although Captain Molucco Wrathe has always been kind to Connor and indeed been like a father to him, this intimacy is missing in Connors' relationship with him, and it is exactly that which draws him away from Captain Wrathe and back to Cheng Li. She is a ruthless pirate and as manipulative and volatile as Long John Silver, as comes out clearly in Connor's reaction to her when they meet again for the first time after his escape from Pirate Academy:

Connor was a little taken aback, both by Cheng Li's words and her smile. She was so changeable. Every time he met her again after a separation, she seemed to have shed one skin and evolved into something just a little different. It was impossible to predict quite what she'd be, where she'd go, next. It made her fascinating and not a little dangerous. (Somper, 2007, p.418)

Yet after killing a man Connor feels safer and more understood in her presence than in Captain Molucco Wrathe's. Therefore Connor finds it rather easy to make his peace with Cheng Li. In addition, she acts as a confidante to the boy who has just killed a man and suffers terribly from his bad conscience because of it, as is obvious in the nightmares he has had ever since the murder. Cheng Li plays a part that is vital to help Connor but impossible to play for Captain Molucco Wrathe, who is too superficial, selfish and interested in material gain:

She was a good listener. He could tell she was taking in every word, every emotion that the words gave rise to. And she didn't interrupt. She was patient, even when he had to break off to think of the right way to express his feelings clearly to her. It was important to tell her exactly what he felt. She sat and waited for him to get there in his own time. (Somper, 2007, p.438)

In this way, the Academy's manipulative power, executed by Cheng Li during their journey to Lantao Island, manages to regain Connor as a follower of its ideology. Nevertheless, it is not only the fact that Cheng Li manipulates Connor with her skills in rhetoric that motivates Connor to definitely leave Captain Molucco Wrathe and remain with Cheng Li. It is rather the way in which Cheng Li, although she cannot take away Connor's feelings of guilt about the murder he has committed, offers Connor an ideological framework in which to organize his life as a pirate and avoid becoming an arbitrary killer:

"When I kill, I feel exactly as you do now. They say that the first time is worst, that you become numb to it after that. But I reject that philosophy. I don't want to feel numb. Why should I? There's no strength in denying the feelings that are racing through you, the feelings that make you human. We feel guilt for a reason. Just as we feel fear or joy or fatigue. They are signs. We are not *supposed* to kill each other. But, in the world we live in – like it or not – it happens. [...] The way that I move

forward is by not killing unnecessarily. You've seen me in battle, Connor. I believe in precision. I'm not into wanton violence; I'm into results. [...]" (Somper, 2007, p.439)

As already mentioned, the characters in all the 'Vampirates' novels have no choice but to be either 'old-school' pirates or members of the Pirate Federation in this fantasy setting, so readers have to accept the fact that characters are pirates and murderers, whatever their allegiances. Thus the analysis of the questing youth who has to choose his ideal role-model and guide on his way to maturity has to be made in this context, and his killing a man needs to be regarded from a more technical point of view, namely as a rite of passage. In that sense, Cheng Li's words about coming to terms with one's feelings make sense as a framework that guides the questing adolescent and helps him to make the right choices in his life:

"[...] The more alert you are as a pirate, the fewer life and death situations you will find yourself in. Being a pirate captain is not about being a killer. Sometimes you are forced into a situation in which you have no other choice. It's you or them. Or it's them or your comrade. [...] You will never find that killing becomes any easier. There's not a thing you can – or should – do about that. But what you *can* do is make sure that you reduce being in situations where you need to kill. You just need to think more about the kind of pirate you want to be. And the kind of pirates you want to be with." (Somper, 2007, pp.440-441)

This is a lesson about moral choices that really teaches the adolescent to avoid creating or getting into situations that might force him to commit a crime or do something terrible and regrettable. It is Cheng Li's ability to teach her protégé such lessons that leads Connor to choose her over his captain. As a result, Connor's return to Pirate Academy and his desire to join Cheng Li's pirate crew finally separate him from Captain Wrathe and end their substitute father-son relationship for good:

"You gave me a home," Connor said simply, "when I had none. And I can never fully repay you for that." He sighed. "But *The Diablo* no longer feels like my home. I just don't feel I can be the pirate you want me to be."

Molucco shook his head sadly. "A pretty pass this is, Mister Tempest. A pretty pass. You were like a son to me."

Connor had expected him to trot out this well-worn phrase. "But I'm *not* your son," he said.

[...]

Then he spoke, without turning around. "Don't thank me, boy. Don't talk to me. You're nothing to me now. (Somper, 2007, pp.503-507)

In conclusion, living together with Captain Molucco Wrathe on *The Diablo* and having him as a father-figure is an important episode in Connor's life and on his journey to adulthood, but

it cannot last for a long time because Captain Wrathe is too selfish to be an ideal role-model and father substitute for Connor. In Captain Wrathe's world, murder is a casual act and a matter of honour and courage, but it is not associated with the worst deed a human being can commit. This is, however, an attitude that is unacceptable for Connor, so it is necessary for him to move on and find a new guide on his quest journey. Connor remains faithful to Cheng Li in the parts of the story that have been published so far, but as the adventure has not reached its conclusion yet, it is impossible to analyse Connor's relationship with her and other father-figures further, or even to interpret Connor's final liberation from all those guiding figures at the end of his quest journey.

Murder as a rite of passage

All the pirate novels discussed above are coming-of-age stories in which the main protagonists go through a series of key experiences known as rites of passage. They are usually shocking events that force the questing youths to recognize important aspects of their own personalities, their position in society and the people who surround them. At the same time, the adolescents need to make crucial choices in these key moments, which often involves sacrifice. In the novels, these rites of passage symbolize the stages an adolescent goes through and the obstacles he or she has to overcome in order to gain maturity and to reach adulthood. Alan Sandison's definition of the *Bildungsroman* describes the purpose and the essence of such a series of rites of passage presented in a coming-of-age story:

[...] a youth is subjected to a variety of experiences which will test his capacity and readiness for the sort of responsibilities that go with adulthood. It is in the hazard of this enterprise that the more substantial drama is played out and it involves the painful rupturing of relationships, the confrontation with unsuspected moral ambiguities which make choosing exceptionally difficult yet crucial to the growth-process, and the recognition that independence, though a prime objective, will bring with it loneliness and isolation. (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.223)

In that sense, the questing youth is sometimes on his or her own in decisive situations and forced to make an important decision alone. That is because, as Alan Sandison explains in his detailed analysis of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, "acting responsibly means, in these circumstances, acting alone, as though he is aware that the challenge confronting him is a deeply personal trial". (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.232) Sandison says this about

Jim Hawkins in Stevenson's novel, but the comment can be applied generally to questing teenage protagonists in young adult literature, as the following examples of major rites of passage will show.

In two key scenes in *Treasure Island* Jim Hawkins goes on a solo adventure and grows much more experienced because of what he sees and the choices he is confronted with. In both of these moments, Jim escapes from his gentleman father-figures Dr Livesey, Squire Trelawney and Captain Smollett. Ironically, he is then faced with the evil figure of Long John Silver. Thus when Jim secretly goes ashore with the pirates and then hides from them in the woods, he experiences how Long John Silver kills another man, a faithful sailor called Tom, in cold blood, and the adolescent realizes quite a lot about the mutineer. Jim faints after witnessing the brutal murder, and this physical reaction symbolizes the fact that Jim has grown more mature because of what he has seen.

I do not know what it rightly is to faint, but I do know that for the next little while the whole world swam away from before me in a whirling mist; Silver and the birds, and the tall Spy-glass hilltop, going round and round and topsy-turvy before my eyes, and all manner of bells ringing and distant voices shouting in my ear.

[...] I could scarce persuade myself that murder had been actually done and a human life cruelly cut short a moment since before my eyes. (Stevenson, 1883, p.83)

The vision that Jim has of a world that spins around, turning upside down, and of violent, loud noises is symbolic of what has happened to him and his view of the world and the people around him. His concept of life has been shaken and redefined, and witnessing that cruel murder has given him life experience and brought him one step closer to manhood. Jim does not need to make an important decision in this moment, except to run away into the safety of the woods, but he has learnt an important lesson about people and appearances, and about the potential brutality inherent in a number of human beings.

On the second occasion Jim Hawkins leaves the shelter of his benevolent father-figures, he stealthily runs away from the stockade, first intending to find Ben Gunn's coracle, then deciding to use the coracle to get near the *Hispaniola* in the darkness of the night and to cut her loose, thus preventing the mutineers from leaving Treasure Island. As Jim's next idea, namely to sail the ship into North Inlet on the other side of the island, results in a fight with the watchmen on board her, Jim finds himself confronted with his other threatening father-

figure, Israel Hands. As the latter throws a knife at Jim in an attempt to murder the boy, Jim shoots his attacker:

Something sang like an arrow through the air; I felt a blow and then a sharp pang, and there I was pinned by the shoulder to the mast. In the horrid pain and surprise of the moment – I scarce can say it was by my own volition, and I am sure it was without a conscious aim – both my pistols went off, and both escaped out of my hands. They did not fall alone; with a choked cry, the coxswain loosed his grasp upon the shrouds and plunged head first into the water. [...]

But he was dead enough, for all that, being both shot and drowned, and was food for fish in the very place where he had designed my slaughter. (Stevenson, 1883, pp.152-153)

Although Jim kills the man in self-defence, without previously having intended to do so or consciously aiming at his opponent, according to himself, he commits murder in this scene, and he has to struggle with his bad conscience afterwards. Therefore, the next night Jim is tormented by his deed: “It was long ere I could close an eye, and heaven knows I had matter enough for thought in the man whom I had slain that afternoon [...]” (Stevenson, 1883, p.174) Nevertheless, the murder has empowered Jim enormously, for afterwards he is able to stand up to Long John Silver in a way that would have been impossible earlier in the story. Jim is still afraid of Silver, but he has grown up and become able to control his fear to the extent that he can now give a heroic speech and impress the pirates, thus saving his own life:

“Well,” said I, “I am not such a fool but I know pretty well what I have to look for. Let the worst come to the worst, it’s little I care. I’ve seen too many die since I fell in with you. But there’s a thing or two I have to tell you,” I said, and by this time I was quite excited; “and the first is this: here you are, in a bad way – ship lost, treasure lost, men lost, your whole business gone to wreck; and if you want to know who did it – it was I! I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land, and I heard you, John, and you, Dick Johnson, and Hands, who is now at the bottom of the sea, and told every word you said before the hour was out. And as for the schooner, it was I who cut her cable, and it was I that killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her where you’ll never see her more, not one of you. [...]” (Stevenson, 1883, p.164)

It is clear that Jim has grown much stronger since the beginning of the story, especially since he has witnessed Long John Silver killing one of the honest hands and since he has shot Israel Hands. He even claims to have killed both O’Brien and Hands, which is a straightforward lie, and he grows excited while defeating the mutineers with his bold speech. Jim’s murder of Israel Hands, though an immoral act, has helped him to gain

strength and to develop into an independent adult. In addition, as a rite of passage is typically characterized by the reward a questing youth earns by successfully mastering the situation and making the right choice, it is no coincidence that Jim Hawkins meets Ben Gunn after the scene in which Silver kills Tom, and that he is able to harbour the *Hispaniola* safely in North Inlet of Treasure Island, and then also to control the pirates in the stockade to some extent.

In consequence, both Jim's benevolent and his malevolent father-figures acknowledge that Jim has gained control over all the events in the novel. Therefore, Long John Silver exclaims: "First and last, we've split upon Jim Hawkins!" (Stevenson, 1883, p.165) and Dr Livesey echoes his words: "Every step it's you that saves our lives" (Stevenson, 1883, p.179) after Jim has moved the *Hispaniola* and drawn Long John Silver "on squire's side". Alan Sandison argues that by these words Jim's benevolent father substitute acknowledges "the effect of [Jim's] initiatives and so of his progress towards equality of participation in the responsibilities of adulthood". (Sandison in Bloom, 2005, p.222)

Connor Tempest is also placed in a situation in which he is compelled to kill a man, not in self-defence but to save his fellow pirate and crewmate's life. He finds it much more difficult to deal with his emotions and his guilt than Jim Hawkins, however, and because of that the rite of passage is even more strongly associated with loneliness and isolation in *Vampirates: Blood Captain*. Connor Tempest is also rewarded for his achievement when Captain Barbarro Wrathe and his wife Trofie offer him a Blood Captain: "[...] This figure, my lad, is called a Blood Captain. [...] It's a gift, an ancient pirate tradition which some ships still maintain. When a young pirate makes his first kill, he or she is given a Blood Captain. [...]" (Somper, 2007, p.361)

This decisive incident of killing a man in Connor's life causes him to suffer from a bad conscience and makes him think about his choices in life. The murder of Alessandro encourages Connor to reflect upon the principles of piracy and the life he has chosen for himself after leaving home. For the first time, Connor raises questions of identity and wonders about his personal morals. He also realizes that he has trusted appearances and put his faith in romantic visions and dreams about piracy so far, and now he understands that being a pirate involves murder, the most terrible crime a man can commit.

Connor's head was spinning. He had had such romantic ideas about piracy. He had dreamed of captaining his own ship. And, in those dreams, there had been plenty of fighting, the bravura display of athleticism and swordsmanship. But not once, not once in those dreams had he stolen another man's life. (Somper, 2007, p.362)

The romantic concept of piracy as a mere adventure with a touch of heroism Connor has until the moment he kills a man is rather innocent and naive, and typical of a young, immature boy. In the act of killing, however, the boy loses a large part of his innocence. Now he understands better what it means to be a responsible member of a community, so he has grown more mature by murdering a man. Therefore, in a letter to his twin sister Grace, Connor openly addresses the issue of an adolescent's finding his identity on his way to manhood and the struggles it involves:

What am I? Right now, I only have one answer to that question and it's not an answer I can face, certainly not one I dare share with you.

I'm going away – I don't know where or for how long. There's a lot of ocean out there and I'm sure it's easy to find a patch of it in which to hide.

[...]

Then, he slipped out of the harbour and began his getaway.

Tears were streaming down his eyes as he turned back and saw the twin hulks of the pirate ships. One of them had felt like his home. But that had been a delusion. It had all been one giant delusion. (Somper, 2007, pp.365-366)

The rite of passage, killing Alessandro, has brought Connor one step further on his quest journey, his search for an identity and a place in society. Nevertheless, it has shaken him to such an extent that right now he does not know who he is or where he belongs, which is an essential element of the adolescent psyche. The deed also leads to a painful rupture of Connor's substitute father-son relationship with Captain Molucco Wrathe, which is another typical element of a rite of passage:

[Captain Molucco Wrathe] looked up at Connor coldly.

"There are no longer articles binding you to this ship. Which begs the question, why are you still sitting here in my cabin?" (Somper, 2007, p.507)

The search for an identity is complicated and it involves loneliness and isolation, symbolized here in Connor's aimless journey across the ocean alone before he faces Captain Wrathe in order to be released from his articles and from the captain's fatherly care. It is precisely this journey which leads him away from a delusive environment and on to the next stage in his growing-process, namely his separation from Captain Molucco Wrathe and his reunion with Cheng Li, which is followed by their extensive talk about different kinds of piracy, which really stand for different ideologies and attitudes to life and death.

In Julia Golding's *The Ship Between the Worlds* David Jones is also left alone and suffering from isolation on various occasions. These are key moments in which he ponders his allegiances to Captain Fisher and to Captain Jones. Because this is a children's novel rather than a young adult one, David does not need to pass the ultimate test of killing a person on his quest journey. In fact, *The Ship Between the Worlds* is the only novel discussed here in which no one dies. Nevertheless, David is confronted with questions of identity and made to choose the ideal mentor figure for himself on his journey, and that happens when he is alone. Thus after Captain Fisher 'maroons' David and Captain Jones's crew 'rescues' him, only to punish him a short while later by whipping his back and then locking him up in the brig, he starts questioning his own decisions and being frightened of his unsafe future: "Alone in the dark, a succession of fierce emotions swept through him, one moment rage at Farthing, next fear for his own life, then despair that he would ever achieve what he had set out to do." (Golding, 2007, p.108) Only a little later, David makes another, crucial choice by sabotaging the engine of Captain Jones's ship, and is punished again. This time, he should be killed by having to walk the plank. Thus all David's important choices are associated with a period of time in which he is alone, exactly like in the cases of Jim Hawkins and Connor Tempest. During these periods, loneliness and fear are the protagonists' predominant feelings, often represented by fear of death, as with David Jones in this scene:

David trod water for a moment, listening to the sounds of the ship preparing to depart. Then, thinking of the sharks that could be nosing about beneath him even now, he struck out for the starlight, a lone figure in an endless sea as the *Scythe* set sail for the sun.

He swam as far as he could before exhaustion overcame him.

This is it, he thought, feeling strangely detached and calm as the sea rocked him. I'll float here as long as I can and then ... and then nothing. (Golding, 2007, p.166)

David's reward for having made the right choices by accepting Captain Fisher's mission and by sabotaging the evil Captain Jones's ship comes in the shape of Milli, the parrot who saves his life, and in that of Captain Stella Tor, who finally contributes to the resolution of the conflict between the two enemy captains Fisher and Jones. The rite of passage also results in David rejecting his villainous ancestor as a father-figure and in him finally gaining adult independence in the form of enough courage to defeat Ricko, his bully in the real world.

The growing process that David Jones goes through is clearly documented in the story. David embarks on his journey to the Seas In-between as a sad and fearful young boy who is

weakened by the absence of his father and the treatment he gets from the bullies at his new school. In the beginning, he is still weak and frightened and he obeys all orders given to him on Captain Fisher's ship, the *Golden Needle*, thinking that he has no other choice. As soon as he boards Captain Jones's ship, the *Scythe*, however, he begins to gain strength of character. The first sign of this is the way David talks back to Master Farthing, who makes fun of him mainly because he is jealous and afraid he might soon no longer be his captain's favourite:

'What about this?' he said nastily, holding up a girl's frilly dress. 'No? I thought it'd suit you.'

'No,' said David, unable to resist the taunt, 'you're the one with the looks for that.' [...] But Farthing laughed, appreciating a show of spirit from the new boy. He only respected those who could stand up for themselves. David appeared to have passed some kind of test for Farthing next pulled out a linen shirt, blue breeches, and blue silk waistcoat. (Golding, 2007, p.89)

This is actually the first time that David successfully stands up to a bully, although still rather tentatively, for he would never have earned respect from Ricko in this way before, being too frightened and weak to treat Ricko in this manner prior to his quest journey. The fact that David now dons seaman's clothes is another symbolic act on his way to strength and maturity.

Faced with capital punishment for betraying Captain Jones and sabotaging the engine of his ship, David is of course terribly frightened and weeps like a young child, but he also has a feeling of pride and self-certainty for having at least done something heroic before his failure and condemnation to death: "David walked out, trying to keep his back straight and his chin up. He had nothing to be ashamed of: he'd taken a gamble and failed, but at least he had stopped the *Golden Needle* being sent to the bottom of the sea." He is "determined to die bravely if nothing else", which shows that he has already developed far from the boy who used to be scared away by Ricko and the other bullies. (Golding, 2007, pp.160-162) Significantly, when David is made to walk the plank, he refuses to be humiliated by Farthing and sprints along the plank, "taking a dive off the end. He plunged head-first into the cold water – his first ever high dive – and began to swim away from the ship." (Golding, 2007, p.165) The fact that this is "his first ever high dive" shows how much he has grown up and turned from a weak, cowardly boy into a mentally and physically much stronger adolescent.

These important but smaller bouts of growing and maturing in David Jones culminate in the way he stands up to Captain Stella Tor shortly before the final battle between Captains Fisher and Jones takes place. Captain Tor, who generally refuses to tolerate men on her ship, decides to throw David overboard again after one of her crewwomen has rescued him from drowning. Sally, the crewmember who carefully looks after the boy and pleads for him to the captain, assures Stella Tor that David is “not a man yet. He still thinks of others first.” And Captain Stella Tor then agrees to spare David: “Selfless – how rare it is to find this quality in a creature. You’re right, Sally, this boy is no man or he would not think like this. Men are weak; men are greedy”. (Golding, 2007, p.184)

Although this is in fact a compliment, for it confirms David’s inherent goodness, it also shows that he still possesses a large amount of his childish innocence. Despite the fact that this could save his life, David cannot stand being treated like a little boy anymore, so he prefers pain, torture and even death to being regarded as a boy rather than a man. Thus David Jones, quite similarly to Jim Hawkins when the latter stands up to Long John Silver in the stockade, bursts out in anger and accuses Captain Stella Tor of selfishness, saying that she is responsible for the destruction of the floating worlds, too, simply because she refuses to cooperate with Captain Fisher and sometimes cuts threads in order to regain her lost gold.

Anger flared up inside him. He was sick of being pushed around!

[...]

‘Don’t you understand that there are some things worth more than gold or treasure?’ he cried out desperately. ‘Worth more than even your own life? I’ve risked my life to help Captain Fisher, but what have you risked? Nothing: you’re still sulking over a bit of gold he took from you. But maybe, just maybe, that’s the gold that has stopped Tarnis from disappearing off into the Inferno Rim, have you ever thought of that?’

[...]

‘You, you dare to preach to me, little boy!’ she said bearing down on David like a lioness coming in for the kill. I could have you thrown overboard with a click of my fingers! I could hand you back to Jones and watch him lash you to death!’

‘You could and I wouldn’t care,’ David said recklessly. Words tumbled out of him – words he didn’t know till then were waiting to escape. He’d had enough of bullies, enough of people who didn’t stop to help when someone was so plainly in trouble. ‘At least I know that I’m doing the right thing. Do *you* know that? [...]’ (Golding, 2007, pp.185-186)

In this moment David Jones proves that he is no longer an insecure boy who runs away from bullies, but has grown up considerably and reached a state of significant maturity. In spite of this, the boy has lost none of his goodness and he remains faithful to the moral principle of altruism and is even willing to sacrifice his own life for the sake of others. Through this growth process, he has also transcended his father, because Captain Stella Tor then informs David:

‘I met a man like you not long ago,’ she said, a bitter smile on her red lips, ‘all washed up on Carl. He tried to convince us to cut the threads so that Carl and Earth would drift into the Inferno Rim. He told us it was the only way to save the other worlds from the pirates.’

‘Who was he? Where was he?’ asked David.

‘We left him on Carl. I refused him passage out. I expect he’s still there, snipping away on his mad quest, haunting the Carlans like a ghost.’ (Golding, 2007, p.187)

Unlike his father, David is not refused passage at the end of this discussion, which shows that he is the stronger of the two and now definitely in charge of his own life and even of his family, as well as responsible for saving the worlds by defeating Captain Tiberius Jones. David also causes Captain Stella Tor to change and no longer to be selfish, for after the captains’ duel she remarks that “as someone once told me [...] some things are worth more than gold – my honour as a referee and that girl’s life being just two of them”. (Golding, 2007, p.223) Thus at the end of the story Captain Reuben Fisher hands over to David Jones the only gold thread that prevents Earth from drifting into the Inferno Rim and being destroyed, as well as a pair of diamond-edged scissors, the tool he has to use to cut the thread in case Captain Tiberius Jones breaks their agreement. In consequence, David Jones can now be considered mature, strong and responsible enough to guard the thread that determines the fate of Earth and all its inhabitants. He has completed his mission, which consisted in making up for his ancestor’s bad deeds. Therefore, Captain Fisher, his mentor on this journey, congratulates David: “‘I’m proud of you, Davy, proud you redeemed the name of Jones on the Seas In-between. [...]’” (Golding, 2007, p.229)

Another sign of David Jones’s maturity is the fact that he puts the pair of scissors, together with Shushula’s lock of hair, into “his old Lego box”. (Golding, 2007, p.232) This gesture symbolizes that David now no longer needs children’s toys because he has grown up, and he can use the box for the tools that he needs in his new life as a young man. The child’s toys have been replaced by the adult’s responsibilities. Later on, David adds the emerald dagger,

a present from Stella Tor and another reward for his achievements, to the scissors and the lock of hair in the box. (Golding, 2007, p.238)

Significantly, David is now able to defend himself against Ricko, the bully, and he has even made a true friend at his new school. In consequence, David receives his ultimate reward for his efforts with the return of his father a few weeks after his own. Ironically, it is Captain Stella Tor who makes this possible by finally breaking her principles:

‘What, Stella Tor gave you a lift?’ marvelled David.

‘For you, if you believe it, Davy. “Just this once, for the child’s sake,” she said [...].’ (Golding, 2007, p.237)

So David has definitely been able to make a change in the fantasy world between the floating planets, but this change really stands for the one that has occurred in himself, namely the fact that he has been able to deal with and solve a number of the problems on his way to adulthood.

Nancy Kington’s growth process involves murder, as opposed to David Jones’s, but she loses her childish innocence by gradually understanding the workings of slavery and those of the society she comes from. Celia Rees’s novel *Pirates!* is another coming-of-age story in which the protagonist develops from childish innocence to adult maturity and experience in a complex growth process. Thus throughout the story, Nancy Kington evolves from a spoilt, carefree child to a mature and responsible young woman who cares about other people and their problems. In fact, at the beginning of the story, when Nancy lives as a young girl in her family’s home, she is neglected and, although she would certainly prefer to receive more attention from her father, she enjoys a lot of freedom: “He was an indulgent parent, some might say too indulgent, for he left me to do as I liked.” (Rees, 2003, p.26)

Because of her father’s trade Nancy is rather rich, so she “did not want for playmates. [...] I led them on with my pockets full of glistening chunks of white sugar and dark, crumbling muscovado done up in twisted paper.” (Rees, 2003, p.26) One can say that Nancy uses the sugar to control others in a similar way as sugar merchants and plantation owners like her father control their slaves as well as their customers. However, at this young age Nancy does not realize that she lives a life of luxury at the expense of her father’s slaves in Jamaica. She feels sorry for herself because she suddenly has to behave like a lady, learn ‘the female arts’ and marry a gentleman. These are serious issues in the wealthy young girl’s life, as will

be discussed in detail in the next part of this work, but they blind her to the much worse problems of other people. Her lack of life experience and the protected environment she grows up in make it impossible for Nancy to empathize with others or to look at her situation from a different point of view.

This changes soon, however, when she is confronted with a sailor who has suffered terribly while working on one of her father's ships, and who is deprived of his well-earned salary, in the person of her best friend William:

'Were you not paid?'

He shook his head. 'And I need my money. I intend to join the Navy.'

'Join the *Navy*?' I could hardly believe it.

[...]

'I know what they say, but it can't be worse than under Captain Thomas. No matter how little they pay, or how hard the conditions. It's a cleaner trade.'

He looked from me to the glossy horses, the gleaming carriage, and through the wide archway to the golden stone of the house. I followed his eyes, and with them his thought. My silks and satins, my brother's Arab stallion, each honey-coloured stone of our fine new house, all of our wealth depended on this trade that he had been describing. [...] Trade goods balanced against men, women, boys, girls. [...] We were traders of human flesh. I knew none of the sailors liked to work a slaver. I had not thought why. Until now. I looked away from him, shocked by my own blind complacency, and flooded with shame. (Rees, 2003, pp.41-42)

According to this, Nancy, in her preoccupation with herself and her serious yet negligible personal problems concerning the position of girls and women in her society, has never realized that her family's wealth depends on the harsh conditions in which her father's slaves as well as the sailors on his ships have to work. In this scene, Nancy feels guilty about her father's business for the first time in her life, and only then does she realize that she lives a life of luxury at the expense of other people and their freedom.

As she grows up she learns more and more about other people's lives from her further experiences with Minerva, Duke and Bartholomew, among others. Thus, when she is taken to Fountainhead, she is utterly shocked and disgusted by the way slaves are left to die in terrible pain along the road near the sea, and by what hard and dangerous work they are forced to do day and night:

It was back-breaking work, carried on at a cruel pace set by the slave boss and the prowling Duke.

[...]

He stood back, looking at me, as if expecting my admiration, or my approval. I stared at him, shaken to the very seat of my being by what I had seen. All this was here because of us. The Kington family. It shamed me deeply that I'd never before really thought about where the sugar came from. I'd really had no idea how hard the work was, how relentless, or how dangerous. (Rees, 2003, pp.103-104)

Nancy is utterly shocked by what Duke shows her, especially when he explains how the slaves are brutally beaten against a tree in the marketplace of her plantation and how they are branded with her initials.

'God ordained blacks to be for our use and benefit, or else why make 'em in the first place? [...] All they respect is this,' the whip reared and cracked in the air. [...] 'Get 'em used to the work. Used to the discipline. First of all we brand 'em with this' [...] My attention was fixed by the object he held between his fingers. I found it most shocking and hideous in the way it combined prettiness with an utter vileness of purpose. [...]

The sudden realisation made me light-headed. I felt as though I might faint. (Rees, 2003, pp.105-106)

After seeing all that, Nancy begins to understand what kind of ordeal the slaves suffer, and she begins to feel responsible for these mistreated human beings, a feeling that causes her to lose part of her childish innocence and gain some adult maturity. It is reinforced when she actually sees her initials branded on Minerva's skin. In this moment she truly faints, like Jim Hawkins when he sees Long John Silver murder the faithful sailor called Tom on Treasure Island, and her physical reaction is symbolic of the progress she has just made towards adulthood.

Suddenly I could not look at her. [...] There was a mark on her shoulder, about the size of a shilling piece. The Fontainhead sign. I had seen it stencilled on the sacks of sugar coming into the warehouse in Bristol, burnt into barrels and packing cases, printed on documents, stamped onto leather-bound ledgers, carved above our door, but to see it branded on to the skin of another human being? [...]

I shook my head, unable to explain what I was thinking, took a step back and faltered, taken by sudden dizziness and dazzled by the light shining off the water. A sharp stone cut into my instep and I slipped, missing my footing altogether, plunging headlong. I must have stumbled into a place where the water was deeper, for I went down. [...]

Nancy is so shocked by what she has just seen and understood for the first time that she literally drowns in the water. Drowning is a metaphor which shows that Nancy is completely overwhelmed by what her people have been doing to their black slaves. She sees herself and her luxurious life in contrast with her slaves' ordeal and rejects all the principles her life has been built upon so far. Seeing Minerva's branding and suddenly understanding all about

slavery and about the British colonial power turns Nancy into a much more responsible adolescent. Thus Nancy Kingston's growth process consists in realization and understanding of the things she sees. In consequence, she refuses to accept any longer the things she used to take for granted due to her lack of knowledge and insight into what slavery is really about. That is also why she decides to shoot Bartholome's gibbeted slave to relieve him of his pain, to punish the plantation overseer for beating Phillis and to protect Minerva, her personal slave and newly gained friend, from sexual violation at the hands of this evil torturer:

I had seen gibbeted men before. [...] This was different. The man inside the cage was still alive. [...] I can never cleanse my mind of it. If I close my eyes, I can see him still. [...] When I took out my pistol, I thought just to fire into the air, to scare these scavengers away from the living carrion upon which they were feasting. Then I changed my target. [...] All I could do was pray that [...] I had put an end to that poor soul's torment. (Rees, 2003, pp.130-331 and 142)

I grabbed [Duke] by the greasy tail of hair that trailed on to his thick white shoulders, yanking his head back as I jammed the barrel of the pistol into the base of his skull. 'Get off her.'

[...]

His arm shot out, reaching for that murderous whip that hung in loose coils from the head of the bed. In a second it would be in his hand. I did it without even thinking. I pulled the trigger. (Rees, 2003, pp.145-146)

Nancy has now killed a man, although in defence of her best friend and sister, and she is no longer innocent and naive, but experienced and determined not to ignore problems, but to help as much as she can. This rite of passage has turned her into a much more mature and responsible young woman, as Surgeon Graham later confirms on the pirate ship:

'[...] When I look at you, I still see the girl that I met on the *Sally-Anne* – not much different.' He smiled. 'Her eyes still brighten when she talks about her sailor lad, like sun striking on water. She is still a little given to melancholy, and somewhat given to worry, but she has a heart that is kind and true, and a brave and generous spirit, all the better for having been tested. I also find her a little more knowledgeable about how other people live in the world, rather less given to self pity, and a great deal less selfish. [...]' (Rees, 2003, p.206)

According to this, after all the trials Nancy has gone through up to that point in the story and due to the insight she has gained into human relationships, the selfishness that is characteristic of the wealthy English child from colonial Britain has vanished from the growing adolescent on her journey to adulthood.

In the end, Nancy and the other teenage protagonists return home safely from their quest journey and most of them are happily reunited with their friends and family, as it is usually the case in this kind of stories. Connor Tempest and Nancy Kington are two exceptions, however. Whereas Nancy's growth process is completed in *Pirates!* and she goes back to her home country to wait for her promised husband, Connor Tempest continues his travels with pirates and still searches for his identity and a suitable place for himself in society. Neither *Pirates!* nor *Vampirates: Blood Captain* has a truly happy end, as it is not clear whether Nancy Kington will ever be able to marry William, and Connor Tempest is left in the middle of the turmoil of rites of passage and crucial choices to be made. Although he has already made significant progress towards manhood, his story ends with the protagonist still in the role of the questing adolescent who needs to break free from all his parental guides. Jim Hawkins and David Jones, on the other hand, return home victorious in order to be successful young adults.

Part Three: Historical settings, intertextuality and gender issues

The significance of historical settings

Settings, especially non-contemporary ones, are chosen deliberately by authors and they play key roles in the interpretation of stories. Among the novels which are studied and discussed here, only one is set in the same historical period as it was published in. Most of them have historical settings, which means that their stories take place in the past, a long time before the publishing of the novel. Julia Golding's *The Ship Between the Worlds* has a contemporary setting, whereas Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Celia Rees's *Pirates!* and Francis Bryan's *The Curse of Treasure Island* have historical settings. Justin Somper's 'Vampirates' series, on the other hand, presents visions of the future, so these stories take place in an imaginary future setting. They are what John Stephens calls "futuristic fantasies concerned with 'post-technological' societies rather than with the 'pre-technological'". (Stephens, 1992, p.204) Indeed, the 'Vampirates' novels are set in the year 2512, but the ships' crews described in them use sails rather than engines and the pirates are armed with swords and daggers rather than guns. In spite of a few contemporary elements such as neon lights and modern school equipment, for example, the settings seem to be the past rather than the future. The reason for this may be that such narratives "tend to be formed under the influence of a later twentieth-century awareness of a global crisis" (Stephens, 1992, p.204), by which Stephens means that contemporary children's authors show that they know about problems of modern society caused by the use and the progress of modern technology, and in consequence tend to reject the presence of such technology in their fantasy stories.

The fact that authors choose to set their stories in the past has similar reasons, and several literary theorists have provided detailed analyses of this practice. John Stephens, for example, has described the purpose of historical settings as follows:

The historical novel in children's literature is not a genre which, in some abstracting preoccupation with the past, constitutes a closed system of signification, representing a pre-existing and essential reality, but rather is the discursal product of firm ideological intentions, written and read in a specific, complex cultural situation. It has always performed a moral, and even didactic, function, especially through its

capacity to transform events which appear to be historical particularities into universals of human experience. (Stephens, 1992, p.205)

The theorist makes it clear that children's authors who use historical settings for their stories intend to represent a historical period together with its society, and to discuss the ideology prevalent in that particular time and society. The author may question the values of a particular society in the past or criticize contemporary society by emphasizing the contrast between the past and the present. The purpose of such writing is often to inform readers of past attitudes as well as to teach moral values by challenging the readers with the representation of ideologies usually associated with remote, past societies.

In the essay 'Space, history and culture: the setting of children's literature' Tony Watkins argues that "if history could be regarded as forms of 'fiction' about the past, historical fiction could be regarded as proposals for understanding the present" before he illustrates this point with Evans's argument that

several works of fiction are not historical novels in the sense that their main purpose is to re-create a past world through the exercise of the fictional imagination; rather, they are novels which find it easiest to address present-day concerns by putting them in a past context. (Watkins in Hunt, 2005, p.52)

Concluding from this, historical settings are often used to address present social issues and to educate readers.

John Stephens also explains that historical fiction, while having an accurate historical setting, allows for stories of personal relationships that are very similar to contemporary ones. In this way, readers can empathize with characters and appreciate the purpose of the historical setting because they experience the story as real rather than remote, and they feel personally concerned by it. According to Stephens,

such displacements suggest that human experiences of the past are of the same kind and order as those of the present and, despite strangeness of setting, can be interpreted in the same way as readers might interpret contemporary experience. [...] In children's literature this usually means that invented characters are placed within settings which are historically 'accurate' in terms of time and space.

Furthermore, according to the theorist, a historical setting causes the reader to associate the real with the serious and to regard the novel as one that deals with large human issues and to "make sense in a thematic or symbolic way". (Stephens, 1992, pp.206-207) This will ultimately lead to readers' reflection on social and ideological issues, and it may help young

readers to develop a set of personal moral values and principles. John Stephens explains this as follows:

Actual settings implicate attitude and ideology, because writers of fiction are rarely content to use the spatio-temporal dimension of setting merely as an authenticating element of narrative. Since practically and traditionally the function of setting in fiction is to convey atmosphere, attitudes and values, it is inevitable that writers of historical fiction, obliged as they are to pay careful attention to setting, would also use it as part of the process of signification. [...] Setting is thus more than mere background, but an element that contributes to making a character act in a particular way. (Stephens, 1992, p.209)

A historical setting is an instrument that an author can make use of to transmit a certain set of values to his or her readers by contrasting past and present attitudes and generalizing particular issues in order to render readers aware of them. This is true for adult and child readers alike, but John Stephens emphasizes the idea that it has a particular effect on young readers, especially if the story is about a developing young character:

Contemporary historical fiction for young readers tends to focus on an individual's personality development and passage towards adulthood, but this thematic complex nevertheless still usually both coincides with the narrative structure of the fiction and functions as metaphor for (or carrier of) an ideological position. This position frequently includes a desire to promote social change in the modern world. (Stephens, 1992, pp.238-239)

One example of a coming-of-age story which is set against a historical background is Celia Rees's novel *Pirates!*. It takes place at the beginning of the eighteenth century, partly in England and partly in Jamaica as well as at sea and in other places where the pirates go ashore for a while. The author uses this setting to familiarize her readers with the values of eighteenth-century Britain, which was a colonial power at that time. The society which is presented in the novel is patriarchal and imperialist because women are considered inferior to men and whites are considered superior to blacks. The British society of that time exploits black people as slaves and controls women by refusing to educate them in the same way as men and by forcing them into arranged marriages. The historical setting is used to expose the attitude of white males as well as to portray the difficult situation of females and blacks. It teaches young readers about the history of Britain and its colonies and makes a statement about racial conflicts as well as about gender issues. At the same time, piracy is an issue in the novel, especially the reasons why people turn to piracy.

Francis Bryan also uses a historical setting for his novel, but he takes it both from real history and from fiction. Indeed, the historical setting of *The Curse of Treasure Island* is strongly influenced by the one that Robert Louis Stevenson used for his novel *Treasure Island*. This is because *The Curse of Treasure Island* is in fact a 'writing back' to Stevenson's original novel, so the historical setting, together with a number of characters and events, constitutes an intertext. Thus Francis Bryan presents his readers with a combination of historical fiction and intertextuality in which he shows the values of eighteenth-century Britain in a similar way to Robert Louis Stevenson while addressing certain topics from a different point of view and by including other issues.

Intertextuality and the roles of author and reader

Before discussing the use of intertextuality in Francis Bryan's novel, it makes sense to study the concept of intertextuality as it is presented in the works of different literary theorists. On a basic level, the term intertextuality stands for direct literary allusions and quotations from previously published texts, and an intertextual analysis focuses on links between texts. It also studies the ways in which other texts influence the conditionings of production and reception of a particular text. (Calvo and Weber, 1998, p.140)

Christine Wilkie-Stibbs provides a detailed account of the notion of intertextuality in Peter Hunt's *Understanding Children's Literature*. She explains that the theory was developed by Julia Kristeva and Mikhail Bakhtin during the second part of the twentieth century, and that it is a reader-response theory based on poststructuralist thinking. The underlying idea is that a text extends the limits of the words on the page and is thus a discourse between previously published literary and non-literary texts, ideologies of the past and present and of different societies, as well as social and cultural contexts. The reader's part in constructing a text is as important as that of the author, for the reader receives a text in the context of his or her previously acquired knowledge as well as his or her values and ideology, and in a cultural context. Language itself is an essential element of intertextuality, because it also works on the level of linguistic, cultural and literary codes and practices, similarly to the work of writers, illustrators and readers. (Wilkie-Stibbs in Hunt, 2005, pp.168 and 170)

According to Christine Wilke-Stibbs, there are three main categories of intertextuality. First, there are “texts of quotation” which directly allude to previously published works and quote from them. Then there are “texts of imitation” whose aim it is to parody, paraphrase or relocate the original text and often to figure as a critique of the latter. Finally, there are “genre texts” which are characterised by identifiable codes, literary conventions and recognizable patterns. (Wilkie-Stibbs in Hunt, 2005, p.170)

Roland Barthes, in ‘The Death of the Author’, takes the idea even further by saying that the author of a text is merely a scriptor who writes a text down, but he is not the one who truly ‘authors’ the text. According to Barthes, the author’s hand, whose only origin is language, not content, is separated from his voice.

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. ... the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to *express himself*, he ought at least to know that the inner ‘thing’ he thinks to ‘translate’ is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely ... Succeeding the Author, the scriptor no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt: life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred. (Barthes in Walder, 1990, pp.230-231)

Thus, according to poststructuralist literary theorists, all texts exist within an unlimited number of previously written or spoken texts, and they are products of the writer’s knowledge, culture and values. Thus a book, similarly to all other literary and non-literary text production, is drawn from a pool of existing texts of various types and forms. A written text is not original, but merely a reformulation of a mixture of antecedent texts. Roland Barthes also claims that the reader’s role in literature and other writing is essential:

Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. (Barthes in Walder, 1990, pp.231-232)

Thus it is the reader's knowledge and understanding of existing sets of values, ideologies, cultural contexts and texts that contributes to the production of meaning in a written or spoken text and in a sense to the production of the text itself. Likewise, a text only makes sense within a cultural and historical context, while the written words do not convey meaning on their own. At the same time, a text can have a multitude of meanings as each reader has a different cultural and social background as well as different values, knowledge and life experience.

Julia Kristeva mentions the "interdependence" of texts, which only make sense in the context of those previously written ones that have influenced them:

The literary text, then, is just one of the many sites where several different discourses converge, are absorbed, are transformed and assume a meaning because they are situated in this circular network of interdependence which is called the intertextual space. (Wilkie-Stibbs in Hunt, 2005, p.168)

This statement also implies the notion that intertextuality does not merely consist of literary allusion and quotation, but it is also a discussion of older texts and the ideas presented as well as the ideologies and values promoted in them. For instance, intertextuality provides a possibility to change the dominant point of view in a written work and to expose issues such as racial prejudice or women's oppression, for example. Thus intertextuality can also be criticism and a questioning of claims made in certain texts, and practising intertextuality a writer can present ideas, characters or events from a different point of view and address topics in a different manner so as to question the underlying values of the older text. That is why intertextuality is as much about transformation as it is about allusion and quotation.

Christine Wilke-Stibbs links the idea of intertextuality to children's literature in an interesting manner by saying that there is an imbalanced power relationship between the writer and the reader, because children do not usually write for each other, as opposed to adults:

Adults write for each other, but it is not usual for children to write literature for each other. This phenomenon would effectively make children the powerless recipients of what adults choose to write for them and children's literature an intertextual sub-genre of adult literature. But we now know through the empirical studies involving young children in the 'game of intertextuality' that the intertextual processes through which children take ownership of a particular text preclude the imperialism of the text and the author. Inevitably, the phenomenon of intertextuality sets up a curious kind of hegemony in children's books, in which adults who write for children

(who by definition are no longer themselves children) consciously or unconsciously operate in and are influenced by the intertextual space which is the literature they read as children. (Wilkie-Stibbs in Hunt, 2005, p.169)

According to this, children are theoretically incapable of receiving and intertextually interpreting the books that are written for them by adults, on the one hand because of the discrepancy that exists between an adult writer and a child reader, and on the other hand because the texts are intertextually linked to adult literature rather than to children's literature. Nevertheless, the adults who write for children are also conditioned by the children's stories they read during their own childhood, so the texts they produce as adults are intertextually linked to children's literature by way of their authors' personal childhood experience. This fact re-establishes the power balance between adult and children's literature in the context of intertextuality.

Another interesting characteristic of intertextuality is that it can question the reader's previously acquired knowledge of a text and undermine ideas that used to be accepted as true. The relationship between the original text and the writing back destabilizes the reader's convictions of what is true or real by putting into question the statements of the focus text. (Wilkie-Stibbs in Hunt, 2005, p.171) Yet, generally one can say that the more knowledge a reader has of various intertexts, the more richly he or she is able to interpret any new literary or non-literary text.

Piracy itself is an intertext in all the young adult novels in question here, as all the stories are influenced by real pirates and their history, as well as by formerly written texts about piracy. The pirates' actions are based on historical facts, and life on board pirate ships as well as the way pirates attack other people, share treasure and live in a rather democratic society, among many other things, are described in a manner that is very true to historical information, as a large amount of literature on the history of piracy proves.

Therefore, Robert Louis Stevenson has been accused of plagiarism, and he once admitted that he took a lot of ideas from other writers' stories:

No doubt the parrot once belonged to Robinson Crusoe. No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe. [...] The stockade, I am told, is from *Masterman Ready*. [...] It is my debt to Washington Irving that exercises my conscience, and justly so, for I believe that plagiarism was rarely carried farther. [...] Billy Bones, his chest, the company in the parlour, the whole inner spirit, and a good deal of the material detail

of my first chapters – all were there, all were the property of Washington Irving. (Stevenson quoted in Hunt, 1994, p.83)

Thus the rough seaman's language the pirates speak in stories, the descriptions of the use of weapons, the roles of captains and other key members of ships' crews, the signing of articles, physical disabilities caused in fights, during storms and by diseases, clothes, flags, pets such as parrots, types of ships and similar elements are authentic and true to historical facts. Certain characters are also inspired by former real-life pirates, such as Cheng Li in Justin Somper's 'Vampirates' series. This fierce female pirate of Asian descent is modelled on the Chinese pirate

Mrs. Cheng, whose fleets of junks ruled the South China Sea in the early years of the nineteenth century. Her full name was Cheng I Sao, which means "wife of Cheng I," but she is often referred to as Ching Yih Saou, or Ching Shih. [...] Mrs. Cheng was a former prostitute from Canton who married the pirate leader Cheng I in 1801. Between them they created a confederation which at its height included some fifty thousand pirates. [...] When Cheng I died in 1807, his wife moved adroitly to take over command. She secured the support of the most influential of her husband's relatives, and she appointed Chang Pao as commander of the Red Flag Fleet, which was the most powerful of the various fleets in the confederation. [...] Henceforth Mrs. Cheng acted as commander in chief of the pirate confederation, with Chang Pao in charge of day-to-day operations. (Cordingly, 1996, pp.75-76)

Somper's Cheng Li is almost as powerful as Cheng I Sao, being a member of the Pirate Federation and having graduated from Pirate Academy with top grades. Moreover, she is the daughter of a very prominent Chinese pirate called Chang Ko Li, who "was one of the most bloodthirsty pirates who ever hoist the skull and bones", according to Connor Tempest's friend Bart. Indeed, Cheng Li's biography is different from Mrs Cheng's, yet a certain similarity between the historical pirate and the fictitious character cannot be denied.

There are a lot more direct references to formerly existing pirates in literature. For example, Long John Silver boasts that he has sailed with Captain Edward England to the other mutineers on board the *Hispaniola* in *Treasure Island*, and there are references to gibbets and to Execution Dock in London, where a lot of real pirates were hanged in the past, in *Treasure Island*, *The Curse of Treasure Island*, and *Pirates!*. In the 'Preface' and in the 'Afterword' of Celia Rees's *Pirates!* Nancy Kington even explains that she intends to transmit her written account of her pirating voyages and the events amounting up to them to Daniel Defoe, the writer of *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates*, which is a volume that recounts the lives, piratical deeds and executions of known

pirates of the 'golden age of piracy'. Among experts in the field, it is regarded as a key reference work for research on pirate history, and writers have often quoted from it. Such intertextual links of varying directness and distinctness and elaborate to different degrees can be found throughout all pirate novels, but they are particularly important and obvious in Francis Bryan's sequel to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

Intertextuality in *The Curse of Treasure Island*

Francis Bryan uses Robert Louis Stevenson's novel as an intertext for his own novel called *The Curse of Treasure Island*. Although published in 2001, the latter is set in the same place and almost at the same time as the original novel, and Bryan includes a number of Stevenson's characters as well as elements like the *Hispaniola* and the bar silver that was left on the island during the first voyage, for example, in his sequel. Even the structure of the story is similar to that of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. The form of intertextuality in question here is mainly that of quotation although it also includes transformation and a slight change of point of view in the new text.

All key figures of Stevenson's *Treasure Island* are already mentioned in the 'Prologue' to the new story: first of all, Jim Hawkins, who is the narrator of this novel, too, remembers Billy Bones, Blind Pew and how he was on the look-out for Long John Silver on behalf of Billy Bones. Then Israel Hands and the murder Jim committed comes back to his mind, and finally Jim also remembers his gentlemen friends, Dr Livesey, Squire Trelawney and Captain Smollett. Even Silver's parrot Captain Flint has its place in the 'Prologue'.

Interestingly, as the narrator and 'writer' of the account, Jim dedicates the first lines of the 'Prologue' to both his parents, who play rather insignificant, minor roles in Stevenson's novel, as already discussed in Part Two above. Jim Hawkins's gentlemen friends and father-figures from *Treasure Island* are only mentioned after the pirates, which shows that they are backgrounded in the writing back to Stevenson's novel. While Dr Livesey and Squire Trelawney participate in a few of the events, none of them travels to Treasure Island with Jim Hawkins again.

Two characters from Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, namely Long John Silver and Ben Gunn, however, accompany Jim Hawkins back to the island, although under different circumstances. In fact, Long John Silver has often been the object of intertextuality since the publication and success of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, and innumerable novels, films, children's books and comic strips among other publications have been written and produced with Long John Silver as a key figure and an intertextual link. David Cordingly, an expert on pirates, their history and their position in literature and entertainment, has accurately summarized Long John Silver's prominent role in literature and popular culture:

The dominating personality in *Treasure Island* is, of course, Long John Silver. He is better known than any of the real pirates of history and, together with Captain Hook, has come to represent many people's image of a pirate. He is tall and powerful and has a wily character which alternates between jovial good humour and utter ruthlessness in the pursuit of gold. (Cordingly, 1996, p.5)

This is exactly how Francis Bryan also portrays Long John Silver in *The Curse of Treasure Island*. His presence in the sequel is marked from the beginning, not solely by the mention of his name in the 'Prologue', but also by the fact that Jim uses Silver's guns to defend himself against Sir Thomas Maltby and his men: "I still retained the double-barrelled pistols Long John Silver gave me the day the pirates turned upon each other." (Bryan, 2001, p.25) During the outward voyage to Treasure Island, Jim reflects on Long John Silver, his personality and his behaviour during the initial voyage quite a lot. Jim also confirms his attitude to the pirate expressed at the very end of *Treasure Island*, namely that Silver has always played a key role in his life since that moment, that Jim has hoped the best for Silver and most of all that he has missed him despite his awareness of his murders and other crimes.

John Silver! He had a way of making you feel a rare importance in yourself. Long John! I saw him murder a man. I heard him plot foul crimes. I knew he lied on both sides of his face. Yet I missed him when he went, vanished one hot night in that gleaming, landlocked gulf where we put in for supplies. (Bryan, 2001, p.85)

A good deal later, Long John Silver actually appears in the story in exactly this landlocked gulf: "We reached our port – and I recognized the place." (Bryan, 2001, p.175) He looks exactly the same as in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, only a little older with a touch of grey in his hair, and it is obvious that he has prospered economically. His wooden crutch has been replaced by a silver one – which contains a hidden blade he later uses in a fight. When he comes down the stairs of his house, Jim can see that Long John Silver is still as agile as he

used to be, so on a physical level the pirate has not changed at all. The same is true for his ability to flatter other people and to appear to be honest while in truth he is deceiving others: "It was always part of Silver's gift to get himself believed, no matter how preposterous his claims." (Bryan, 2001, p.185) Thus Long John Silver is still as talented at play-acting as he is in Stevenson's novel, which is one of the reasons why Jim Hawkins decides to hire him as a 'negotiator' in order to deal with Joseph Tait and Sir Thomas Maltby. Nevertheless, there is a much deeper reason for Jim Hawkins to be reunited with Long John Silver. It is the fact that Long John Silver has never "gone clean out of Jim Hawkins's life", which is hinted at by the parrot's screams in Jim's dreams long after his first voyage to Treasure Island: "[...] and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I [...] start upright in bed with that sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!" (Stevenson, 1883, p.203)

Francis Bryan, like many literary critics, has interpreted this as a lasting connection between the narrator and the pirate, for although Long John Silver is not an appropriate role-model for Jim in *Treasure Island*, the young boy learns a lot about people, appearances and relationships from him, and this valuable life experience links Jim Hawkins to Long John Silver on an emotional level. Jim is well aware of the fact that Long John Silver is a villain, but he has not taken on Silver's evil traits, or he would be able to deal with Joseph Tait, Thomas Maltby and Abel Raspen without the help of the old pirate. However, Jim respects Long John Silver as one person who has taught him valuable lessons about life, and guided him on his way to manhood. This is what the narrator of *The Curse of Treasure Island* means by:

His spirits were excellent and his general demeanour so affable and welcoming that it remained difficult for me to remember him as one of the most treacherous villains in the world.

That arrangement in him, of treacherousness and villainy, was indeed the very reason I had come to see him again. (Bryan, 2001, p.186)

On a moral level, Jim has remained the same good-natured person as in *Treasure Island*, and Long John Silver has remained the same deceitful scoundrel whose only motivation to commit his crimes is gaining material riches as well as saving his own life at the expense of everyone and everything else. Thus Long John Silver is the character Jim needs at his side to compensate for his lack of murderous ruthlessness, and Jim can easily recruit the pirate by promising material gain in compensation for his efforts:

To put it simply, I meant to fight fire with fire – set a villain to trump a villain. Silver, who now sat before me in his brocade cloth with his glittering eye and his cheerful smile, was as evil as I took Maltby to be, and unafraid to kill. Therefore I believed him capable of overcoming both Maltby and the hunchback, Abel Raspen.

[...] It was my intention to offer Silver a huge reward should he come and recover the awful situation I had already escaped.

I hoped he would take the bait. [...] In addition, however villainous he knew himself to be, he might dearly love an opportunity to cancel the death sentence that faced him should he ever reach England again. (Bryan, 2001, pp.186-187)

Jim Hawkins, the narrator of both novels, describes Long John Silver with the same fascination, respect and fear in *The Curse of Treasure Island* as he does in *Treasure Island*, always acknowledging the fact that Silver is a criminal, a murderer and generally an evil man, and yet crediting him for his cleverness, his strength and his power to manipulate. Thus all throughout Francis Bryan's novel there are hints at Silver's duplicity, his violent nature, his refusal to accept any authority, his self-certainty as well as his greedy interest in treasure. A few examples of such descriptions go as follows:

As I looked at him I understood something about him for the first time. He had by repute a youth spent in good schooling and had once been of better character. Although he had regrettably chosen to use it for evil, this was a man possessed of extraordinary natural powers, who could have been or done anything he chose. (Bryan, 2001, p.188)

The man was a pirate, a mutineer, a murderer, capable of savage violence without a tremor of conscience.

[...]

It was also in the "giant's spirit" to need paying more than any other man would think decent. That was bad enough – but if Silver thought he might not get as much of the haul as he asked for, his great force would as easily turn against those who thought him on their side. (Bryan, 2001, pp.198-199)

It didn't matter that Long John Silver would gyp his own children if he had any: the size of his spirit guaranteed his place in the world. (Bryan, 2001, p.237)

Silver also appreciates how Jim Hawkins kills Thomas Maltby and he openly praises him for defeating the aggressive pursuer:

Silver strolled to my side with his lopsided smile.

"Jim, lad. You downfaced that swab!"

His manner contained a congratulation I was embarrassed to enjoy – his old charming warmth was working its spell again. (Bryan, 2001, p.278)

Long John Silver appears to be proud of Jim for killing a man and to be expressing his respect for him for being a brave fighter and someone who is similar to himself in terms of strength and determination.

Moreover, at the end of the story Long John Silver gets away with all his murders and crimes of piracy unpunished once again when, like Captain Smollett before him in Stevenson's novel, Captain Reid agrees not to make any report of him and his recent deeds to the authorities in England after the voyage:

Silver came to me. "I won't forget what you said, Jim."

"What's that, John?"

"About putting in a good word for me in England."

"And now, of course," I replied, "you will have the good word of Captain Reid too. He isn't making any report of all this." (Bryan, 2001, p.287)

"All this" being in accordance with Robert Louis Stevenson's portrayal of Long John Silver, Francis Bryan also introduces a new dimension to the character that invites the readers to regard him from a different point of view. In fact, Long John Silver, the ruthless killer from *Treasure Island*, is suddenly worried about the bereaved family of a dead sailor: "He were a youngish lad. Had a pretty wife and a baby and what am I to tell her? That's what I wants to know." (Bryan, 2001, p.214) There seems to be a feeling of responsibility in Long John Silver that never occurs in Stevenson's portrayal of the character, and the pirate appears to despise and regret arbitrary murder. This also comes out clearly when Tait's accomplice, the red-haired giant, beheads Manolo, one of Silver's men, for no reason at all but sheer arbitrary violence, and Long John Silver kills the murderer in return. After this deed, Silver does not behave as indifferently as he would probably have done in Stevenson's account, but he seems to be deeply touched by the brutal manner in which the giant has committed this unnecessary murder:

I heard him swear, then swear again. He turned, righted himself and went to the giant's body. Bending low he picked up the fatal stone and hurled it down on the giant's head again.

"Vile swab!" he shouted and swore again; I cannot think that I ever saw him so out of himself. He came lurching back to me and stood, shaking his head from side to side; he swore softly all the time and then gasped, "Jim, I'm getting old and I likes it not." (Bryan, 2001, p.241)

Silver is clearly shocked by the brutality with which the giant has killed Manolo, but he is also truly sorry for this waste of an innocent life. His last remark shows that he is disturbed

by his own feelings, as they seem to be new to him, too, but that underlines the realness of the emotion. Only a little later, Long John Silver confesses to Jim that in spite of his own evil, he has humane feelings and suffers from sleeplessness due to a bad conscience caused by the murders he has committed: "There be them as has called me evil. But I niver killed a man and liked doing it. I'm a man has to try and get his sleep many a night. And doesn't." (Bryan, 2001, p.244) With this shift in perspective, Francis Bryan puts his character in contrast with the cold, ruthless Long John Silver from Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, providing him with a touch of personal morality that he lacks in the original text.

In addition, there is a tenderness about Long John Silver that is unimaginable in the context of Stevenson's story when he meets Ben Gunn again on Treasure Island after Joseph Tait has been defeated:

Silver, when we reached him, was composed again and he showed a great tenderness for the men we carried. I watched, anxious to see and remember forever, his reunion with Ben Gunn, who sometimes became conscious and then fell away again. [...]

"Ben, 'tis John. John Silver."

Ben's scrawny hand fumbled a little and Silver took it like a baby's. (Bryan, 2001, p.249)

Finally, when Long John Silver leaves the *Hispaniola* in order to go home again and says farewell to his companion, Jim realizes that the old pirate is actually a lonely person: "'If a man's right company be men, then, Jim, you be company I shall think about day by day' – and for the first time I saw his loneliness." (Bryan, 2001, p.288) This is also an altogether new dimension to a character who has always only been interested in his own welfare and indifferent to others, and it makes him appear a little less guilty and more humane in *The Curse of Treasure Island* than he is in *Treasure Island*. And this reduction of his guilt, or rather the idea that because of his ingenuity combined with his powerful demeanour and the notions of humanity still present in him, his crimes can be pardoned, is echoed in Jim Hawkins's final comment on Long John Silver: "I looked after him – and I missed him there and then, as I do now, villain though he may always be." (Bryan, 2001, p.288)

In conclusion, Long John Silver is portrayed as the same treacherous character with a similar power to manipulate others as in *Treasure Island*, but the author of *The Curse of Treasure Island* has added a few new, more positive character traits to him which show a notion of humanity in the pirate that is not present in the character of the original story. Thus through

this intertextual relocation of the character from one novel to another, the basic ideas that make up Long John Silver have been echoed and built upon, but a certain transformation into a slightly different character has occurred, too.

It is also important to note that Squire Trelawney is portrayed differently by Francis Bryan from what he is like in Stevenson's novel. In the latter, the squire appears as a clumsy person who cannot keep a secret, and apart from the fact that he finances the voyage to Treasure Island, he does not contribute many valuable acts or pieces of advice to the original trip. He is even ridiculed by Stevenson when described as "all dressed out like a sea officer, in stout blue cloth, coming out of the door with a smile on his face and a capital imitation of a sailor's walk". (Stevenson, 1883, p.45) Nevertheless, in *The Curse of Treasure Island* Jim Hawkins asks Squire Trelawney for his advice on how to deal with Grace Richardson's plea.

Although some of the squire's clumsiness is repeated in the sequel, generally Squire Trelawney is portrayed as a much wiser person in Bryan's novel than in Stevenson's, and it is he who manages to delay Jim's pursuers and to help prevent him from being arrested for murder at his home, the Admiral Benbow inn. Unlike in the context of Long John Silver and the mutineers in *Treasure Island*, where Squire Trelawney seems rather incapable of dealing with the danger of the attacks, he appears at the Admiral Benbow as a powerful authority figure who manages to make the right decisions and to control Jim's aggressors until the arrival of the local magistrate, Dr Livesey. He also suggests to Jim that he take Ben Gunn to Treasure Island because he "knows the island better than anyone", which Jim does and which constitutes another intertextual link between the two novels in question. (Bryan, 2001, pp.31-35 and 68)

Dr Livesey is characterised by exactly the same calm, compassion and competence as in Stevenson's novel, and it is he who finally saves Jim Hawkins from being arrested by Sir Thomas Maltby, one of the king's court counsellors. The scene in which he silences Maltby may be regarded as a parallel to the one in which Dr Livesey triumphs over Billy Bones at the beginning of *Treasure Island* and later on over Long John Silver on the island. Here, he uses his title and his professional as well as personal competence to help Jim Hawkins out of a dangerous situation:

"I am Sir Thomas Maltby. Cousin to the murdered Duke of Berwick. I am a court counsellor."

Dr. Livesey raised an eyebrow. "Then, sir, you'd better learn the running of the King's law. And as it seems you don't know it, I'll cite it to you." He intoned, "'Where a magistrate sits or is available to sit, the court counsellor shall declare himself unnecessary to the occasion, *unless called upon* by such magistrate, as the magistrate is one of the four corners of English law.' And, sir, I *don't* call upon you."

Dr. Livesey clapped his hands vigorously, once, twice. "In other words, sir, as this is a local matter, it'll be judged locally and I'm the local judge. If you'll understand me, sir."

The sarcasm had changed hands; I recognized Dr. Livesey's wit, his playing with the word "sir". (Bryan, 2001, p.36)

The doctor's moral goodness as well as his kindness towards Jim, combined with his sense of justice, are echoed from Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. This character has thus not been altered in Francis Bryan's work. At the same time, the events of the scene referred to above are intimately linked to the focus text. Thus it is no coincidence that the narrator points out how "Dr. Livesey sat at one of our tables, ironically the same one where Captain Billy Bones habitually drank", and that Dr Livesey mentions Jim's murder of Israel Hands: "They'll enquire about you. They'll hear of your tales. Of Israel Hands." (Bryan, 2001, pp.38-39)

Dr Livesey's appearance in a later chapter also emphasises his caring sympathy for Jim Hawkins and presents him in exactly the same light as he is presented in *Treasure Island*, always fighting for the good cause and supportive of his protégé:

"Jim, who knows what wind of your trip might have become known in Bristol or elsewhere along this tattletale coast. So – I set myself to stand guard."

[...]

"Sir, I'm greatly moved," I said.

Dr. Livesey coughed, but said nothing. I wished to stay and be with him, whatever the law said, and I attempted to make some conversation.

[...]

I said to him, "Sir, I shall tell nobody I've seen you – but however this voyage turns out, I'll think constantly of this kind deed." (Bryan, 2001, pp.74-75)

Jim's thankfulness and respect for Dr Livesey has in no way diminished in the translocation from one novel to the other, and Livesey still seems to be Jim's ultimate guardian and role-model. At least, Jim still feels strongly attached to Dr Livesey. Nevertheless, this time Jim travels to *Treasure Island* without his former father-figures Squire Trelawney, Dr Livesey and Captain Smollett. Francis Bryan seems to have acknowledged that Jim has grown up and

freed himself from the necessity of father-figures along the course of Stevenson's novel, so he lets Jim travel without the guiding help of Dr Livesey in particular.

Therefore Dr Livesey is bound not to see or talk to Jim for reasons of legal matters, as Squire Trelawney explains: "Look here. Ship's doctor. You'll need one. Livesey can't go. You know that. Can't even see you, mustn't know you're here, otherwise he'll have to arrest you. [...]" (Bryan, 2001, pp.67-68) At the same time, Squire Trelawney makes up an excuse for not travelling with Jim himself:

"Will you be persuaded to join us, sir?"

He took so long to answer me that I began to ask again, thinking he had not heard me. Gazing towards the sea, a view I knew him to enjoy, he said, "No, Jim. I'll not be joining you."

As I made to press him he spoke again "It'd be unwise, I'm told, to undertake anything so strenuous." (Bryan, 2001, p.67)

Captain Smollett has already declared in Stevenson's text that he and Jim are not going to travel together in the future: "You're a good boy in your line, Jim, but I don't think you and me'll go to sea again." (Stevenson, 1883, pp.197-198) So it is clear that Captain Smollett cannot take part in the new journey to Treasure Island, either, but although he does not appear as a character in the story, he is mentioned respectfully in it:

"Mr. Hawkins, do you read a compass?"

"Captain Smollett taught me," I said.

Mr. Coll smiled at the reminder of a famous seafarer. (Bryan, 2001, p.103)

Thus Captain Smollett does not travel to Treasure Island in Bryan's novel, but his firm principles are echoed in Captain Reid, who leads the expedition in the new story. The latter is utterly opposed to piracy and refuses to become an accomplice to any kind of criminals on his ship, even unconsciously:

"If this pirate comes aboard he comes back to England in irons. Be clear in that."

"Is there no other? –" my uncle began.

"If you ask me to take him on board and then, out of charity or pity or any such motive, leave them all three in some hospitable port, you're asking me, sir, to commit a crime. Assisting a criminal to escape justice. And I will not do that – and I will treat any who ask me as an accessory." (Bryan, 2001, p.127)

Long John Silver confirms this strict principle when he describes how Captain Reid has already delivered a number of pirates to the law in England and personally made sure that their executions were carried out properly:

I said, "Yes. Do you know him?"

“Not personally. But him it was hung Blue Jackson. Hung Pete Ackham. Near to pulled the rope hisself, he did. Strutted up and down Execution Dock like a turkey. Hung Ned Haley and he only a lad of seventeen, and no mutineer was he, you can’t have a mutineer and he only seventeen.” (Bryan, 2001, pp.191-192)

So Captain Reid is as stern as Captain Smollett and he adheres to the same principles of loyalty and justice as the latter. Francis Bryan could not have used Captain Smollett as a character in his novel because of his formal refusal to sail with Jim Hawkins again in Stevenson’s novel and because “Captain Smollett is now retired from the sea”, (Stevenson, 1883, p.202) but he has introduced a new sea captain in *The Curse of Treasure Island* who behaves in a similar way as Captain Smollett does in *Treasure Island*, and who captains the crew of the *Hispaniola* with the same strictness and effectiveness.

However, when Jim is in utter distress after having been attacked by Joseph Tait and fled from him on a raft, he seeks help from a doctor again. It is certainly no coincidence that the one person who Jim trusts when he is in danger is a medical doctor. Francis Bryan has quite certainly wanted to draw a link between Dr Livesey, Jim’s parental guide and protector in *Treasure Island*, and Dr Ballantyne, who cares for Jim in a way that makes him appear very similar to Dr Livesey. There is a parallel between both doctors’ goodness, kindness and intelligence in matters of deceiving and defeating threatening characters such as pirates or Sir Thomas Maltby and his men.

In spite of this, Jim Hawkins does not travel to Treasure Island as a young boy under the guidance and protection of his gentlemen friends this time, but as a grown-up man who needs to take his own responsibilities. In that sense, Francis Bryan has taken over from Stevenson’s coming-of-age story about a fourteen-year-old moving from boyhood to manhood and placed Jim Hawkins in the situation of an independent adult. In consequence, the theme of the growing young boy has been replaced by the theme of falling in love and a young adult’s first experience with these feelings. Jim’s infatuation with Grace Richardson is related in detail as a *Leitmotiv* all throughout *The Curse of Treasure Island*, him being fascinated by her attractive physical appearance and her strength of character, but also intrigued by her secret. In fact, apart from his necessity to escape the law and from the bar silver that is left on the island, Jim Hawkins decides to travel to Treasure Island again to help Grace Richardson because he has fallen in love with her and he is ready to risk his life for the sake of this lady who enchants him so much.

It would be far beyond the scope of this work to refer to all the passages that describe Jim's feelings for Grace and his thoughts about her, because they are innumerable, so here are only two examples to show how strongly Jim's actions are influenced by his emotions, and how deeply infatuated he is with Grace Richardson:

My reflections ran like this: I am twenty-five years old and not without some experience of life – but I feel more baffled by this woman now than when I first met her. And more deeply in thrall to her: I watched her when she walked, when she sat at table, when she talked. I imagined constantly of giving her a wondrous, trouble-free life, where she would be my companion and I would dedicate to her everything I did.

This was all so new and disturbing to me that were I a man of prayer, I think I should have asked the Almighty to unchain me from this wild man who had come to dwell in my heart. (Bryan, 2001, p.87)

She held my gaze and her eyes enchanted me and I knew that I would have gone through ten thousand more such travails, had my face reamed raw ten times more, for the value of that look. (Bryan, 2001, p.218)

One may argue that the journey to Treasure Island is also an allegory of Jim Hawkins's coming to terms with these new emotions, the feelings of being in love for the first time. So Francis Bryan has given a meaning to the symbol of the voyage that Robert Louis Stevenson did not include in his text. However, at the end it seems that Jim is not ready for a love relationship yet, for his love remains unrequited. Possibly, that is also a moral statement, a symbolic punishment for Jim's emotional attachment to a ruthless pirate and his using Long John Silver to defeat the other villains in the story.

As *The Curse of Treasure Island* is grounded on the original *Bildungsroman*, however, a number of key scenes from Stevenson's novel, especially those that contain events which function as rites of passage for the growing adolescent protagonist, are alluded to in detail in Francis Bryan's *The Curse of Treasure Island*. Jim Hawkins's murder of Israel Hands in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is one of the most important events that are echoed from the focus text. It is mentioned no less than four times in the novel, and twice it is referred to in detail, as for example when Jim boards the *Hispaniola* again for the first time in *The Curse of Treasure Island*:

If ever there were a moment of turbulent feelings! I looked down to where Israel Hands killed the deckhand O'Brien in a long-drawn-out drunken fracas. My eye went straightaway to the mast where Hands then sought to kill me. The mast was unchanged. I believed I could still see the mark and I fancied I felt again the nip on

my shoulder where Hands's knife had pinned me by my skin to the wood. And I shuddered again, the same kind of shudder that had released me from the blade. (Bryan, 2001, p.76)

Because Jim knows very well from this experience how difficult it is to deal with having murdered a man, even in self-defence, he takes upon himself the responsibility for the death of Sir Thomas Maltby, although in truth it is the young boy Louis who kills him by throwing a cannonball onto his head at the end of the story. This scene, in which Jim Hawkins stabs the already dead Sir Thomas Maltby in order to make all the people present believe he has killed him, is closely linked to the one in which Jim kills Israel Hands in *Treasure Island*. Thus it is no coincidence that "Louis had been watching everything from the rigging; indeed he squatted not far from where I had fled to escape Israel Hands." (Bryan, 2001, pp.273-274) It makes the scene more dramatic and it enables the narrator to comment on the experience which this scene is intertextually linked to:

I myself had taken a man's life – on this very ship, that of Israel Hands; he fell here, on this same spot where Maltby now swayed. And even though I was defending my own life, I had been haunted by that act and that is why I know that the taking of another's life is the most grave event on earth, something from which, no matter how a man speaks to himself in the deepest folds of the darkest night, he can never get ease. (Bryan, 2001, p. 276)

Francis Bryan uses the intertextual link here to emphasize the seriousness of murder and to make a point about the feelings of a person who is compelled to kill in self-defence. At the same time, this description points out that the murder of Israel Hands has strongly influenced Jim's development as an adolescent and helped him to understand a lot about moral choices and their consequences, and that it is one of the key scenes of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

Likewise, the scene in which Jim Hawkins sits in the apple barrel on the *Hispaniola* and discovers Long John Silver's plans of mutiny, the one in which Jim meets Ben Gunn for the first time on the island, as well as the moment when Silver's men hand him the Black Spot in the stockade shortly before he and Jim seal their pact, are directly alluded to in *The Curse of Treasure Island* and show the new story's strong connection with the original adventure.

Here, trembling from excitement and fear, I had told Captain Smollett, Squire Trelawney and Dr. Livesey about the mutinous incitements of Silver, upon which I had eavesdropped from my hiding place within the apple barrel. (Bryan, 2001, p.82)

The canoe pulled away from us and there we were – the former cabin boy, Jim Hawkins himself, who, near here, ten years ago had met the old maroon, Ben Gunn, with his voice like a rusty lock and his passion for toasted cheese but who had lived solitarily here for three years on goats and berries and oysters. (Bryan, 2001, p.133)

“If you want, Joe Tait – this here’s my hand to shake. ‘Tis a hand as held the Black Spot – as you well know. But them days is over long ago. [...]” (Bryan, 2001, p.231)

It is also interesting to discuss the role of female characters in Francis Bryan’s novel in the context of this intertextual analysis. As already mentioned above, love plays a considerable part in *The Curse of Treasure Island*, but the role and situation of women in the story are also important in other contexts.

Gender issues in pirate novels

A few literary critics interested in the depiction of women in children’s and young adult literature provide useful insight into the topic. In the ‘Introduction’ to *Beauty, Brains and Brawn, The Construction of Gender in Children’s Literature*, edited by Susan Lehr, Charlotte Huck explains that up to the middle of the twentieth century, heroines were rare and girls were usually portrayed as weak in children’s literature. However, the books published after the mid-twentieth century increasingly transmit a positive image of girls and women. The considerably larger number of strong heroines is due to the “raised consciousness level of the children’s book world”, according to Huck, which has as a result that female characters now exhibit more resourcefulness and self-esteem.

Charlotte Huck also argues, however, that male characters are still as strongly influenced by gender stereotypes as they used to be, because they do not assume activities that are usually associated with girls or women, such as household chores, for example. The critic argues that this runs contrary to modern society, for there is an increasing number of men who are single parents or stay at home to raise their children while their wife goes out to work and provides for the family. In addition, Huck bemoans the fact that male characters are usually denied feelings:

Seldom do we have a story in which a male character exhibits tenderness or compassion. Or if they do, they must do it in secret [...]

Boys may show fear if they overcome it with bravery, but they seldom are allowed to cry or to show love. Frequently, destroying that which a boy loves has been portrayed as a rite of passage to manhood. (Huck in Lehr, 2001, pp.vii-viii)

This is quite true for all the pirate novels focused on here, in which men and boys alike are presented as physically strong, fighting heroes who cannot show any emotional weakness or they will die in a fight or a storm at sea. If such weakness overcomes them, which happens occasionally, it must happen in private and outside of the dangers of piratical acts.

T. A. Barron explains that modern female heroes are not necessarily imitations of male heroes. They may have similar characteristics, such as being questing figures in the process of developing from adolescence to adulthood, but they are also marked by different features. Often, they reject and transgress traditional patterns and exist independently from male heroes. This means that heroines sometimes distinguish themselves by physical strength and their power to assume the same roles as their male counterparts, but that they often have other powers such as love, wisdom or care, for example. According to T. A. Barron, some “female heroes reveal their greatness through their actions, their direct impact on the world around them”, while others’ “greatness shines through their wisdom, their observations and teachings”. (Barron in Lehr, 2001, p.31) Barron goes on arguing that this development in the portrayal of heroes is significant in the sense that it helps readers to deal with the development of gender roles in modern western society:

These new heroes are very important, not just for literature but for life. All of us need heroes. And all of us, regardless of gender, age, or background, can benefit from such thoughtful portrayals of girls and women who break through the barriers that hold them back – whether those barriers exist primarily within themselves or without. (Barron in Lehr, 2001, p.31)

Barron finds it important that social conventions and restrictions which limit women’s status and access to knowledge be transgressed by female characters in order to help readers to deal with the values of the society they live in. Indeed, the critic believes in the power of literature to influence people’s values and concepts of gender roles among others, because it reflects a kind of truth subordinated by cultural values and ideologies. The argument is that if readers are confronted with strong, influential female characters, the imagining of changed gender roles will lead to the creation of such changes and ultimately encourage a balance between men and women in society. (Barron in Lehr, 2001, pp.31-32)

In the same volume, Belinda Y. Louie makes a similar point by saying that it is extremely important to present children with balanced gender roles in stories from a very early age onwards, because that is the time and the way they learn gender norms. To make the reading experience pleasant for both boys and girls, male and female characters should be at an equal level of power and influence. "In order to empower female readers and to motivate male readers, the key is to look for stories with dynamic female characters and action-packed plots." Neither male nor female characters should be portrayed negatively in children's books if young readers are to learn to respect people of the opposite sex and regard men and women as equals. (Louie in Lehr, 2001, p.144)

The change in the presentation of female characters in children's and young adult literature which these critics describe, and which has occurred in recently published books, can be observed in the selected pirate novels discussed here.

There are only three female characters in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*: Jim Hawkins's mother, the pirate Long John Silver's wife and his parrot Captain Flint. Ironically, only two of them are human characters, and two of them 'belong to' Long John Silver. As already mentioned in Part Two, Jim's mother is rather a weak character, and she is more materialist than maternal because she is intent on getting her fair share out of Billy Bones's money while she leaves her son in charge of planning their defence against the pirates. Although she appears to be quite courageous, she faints during the attack on the Admiral Benbow inn and Jim, who is only fourteen years old, has to carry her to a safe place under a bridge. Generally, Jim Hawkins's mother does not make any important or useful decisions in the story, and she does not mark a strong presence in it, either.

Long John Silver's wife, who is an accomplice of the pirate because she moves his money from his bank account to a safe and secret place in order to meet him after the voyage to Treasure Island, is only mentioned about three times in the entire novel, and she never appears as a character of her own. She is also dependent on her husband, for Silver seems to control her, which is obvious in what he says to the other mutineers on the *Hispaniola*:

"And can you trust your missis?" asked the other.

"Gentlemen of fortune," returned the cook, "usually trusts little among themselves, and right they are, you may lay to it. But I have a way with me, I have. [...]" (Stevenson, 1883, p.63)

It is obvious that Silver uses the same manipulative power to control his wife as he uses to exert pressure on his fellow pirates, which makes her rather powerless and obedient to him and his orders. Moreover, Silver's wife is a black woman and the story takes place in a time when British society was a colonial power and therefore strongly influenced by racial prejudice. That is why a comment like "He leaves his wife to manage the inn; and as she is a woman of colour, a pair of old bachelors like you and I may be excused for guessing that it is the wife, quite as much as the health, that sends him back roving." (Stevenson, 1883, p.43) from Squire Trelawney is considered socially acceptable by the characters of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. This female character is thus not only voiceless and backgrounded behind a dominant husband, but also the object of racial prejudice and openly racist comments.

That Silver's parrot is female can only be recognized by the fact that the animal is referred to as "she" although it is named after a male pirate, Captain Flint, who Silver formerly sailed with. As opposed to the human female characters in the story, the parrot plays an active part, at least in one decisive moment, when Jim Hawkins joins the pirates in the stockade on the island by mistake. It is Captain Flint who betrays Jim's presence to the pirates and who reveals to Jim where he has arrived:

And then, all of a sudden, a shrill voice broke forth out of the darkness:
"Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"
and so forth, without pause or change, like the clacking of a tiny mill.
Silver's green parrot, Captain Flint! It was she whom I had heard pecking at a piece of bark; it was she, keeping better watch than any human being, who thus announced my arrival with her wearisome refrain. (Stevenson, 1883, p.158)

Thus the one female character that plays a key role in the novel has a man's name – that of a ruthless pirate – and is an animal. In addition, Jim Hawkins despises the parrot to the end of the novel, and its screams haunt his dreams for years after the adventure. All this, together with Jim's mother's weakness and the fact that Silver's wife is a criminal's accomplice and prejudiced against her skin colour, displays a misogynist attitude in *Treasure Island*.

This attitude is also reflected in a few scenes in Francis Bryan's novel *The Curse of Treasure Island*, for instance when Captain Reid bursts out: "I take it that you gentlemen understand by now what an ill-starred venture may come from a woman." (Bryan, 2001, p.127) This comment is clearly discriminating of women and probably summarizes the attitude of the

society of the time in which the novel is set. In addition, by way of a derogatory remark, women are accused of preferring ugly, rough men to decent, respectable ones in the novel. Thus when Jim Hawkins observes Joseph Tait and wonders about his connection to Grace Richardson, he thinks:

There is a man in our parish whose company is much relished by the womenfolk. They hail him, they spoil him with beverages and cakes – women of all ages. I have never liked him, in part because he has a face of roughness and cunning. He came to my mind that morning, as being in that category of men whom women like inexplicably. (Bryan, 2001, pp.228-229)

By writing back to Robert Louis Stevenson's novel over two hundred years later, however, Francis Bryan also shows that the concept of woman has changed in western society. Therefore, a number of female characters in *The Curse of Treasure Island* play different, more significant parts. Jim's mother, for example, is portrayed differently from the way she is presented in Stevenson's novel. First of all, she interferes with Jim's love life, as she is intent on finding a wife for him, and she decides who is suitable for Jim and who is not:

Ordinarily I met few women – farmers' daughters or other parish girls. They had little to offer outside of giggles or unseemly boldness. None of them met my mother's aspirations and therefore I had not yet thought seriously of marriage. Once or twice, a girl from one of the inland parishes, or from as far away as Bristol or Exeter, was brought to the inn by a female relative seeking to fasten the girl's future. But my mother believed we might now, with our new wealth and success, move in different circles and she conveyed discouragement to such callers. She would, I expected, my heart leaping at the thought, take a different view of the woman in the green cloak. (Bryan, 2001, p.15)

Jim seems to be willing to leave the decision with his mother, too, as he does not complain about this behaviour, thus empowering his mother with making the choice for him.

When Grace Richardson arrives and refuses to share her secret with Jim although she asks him to help her, Jim hopes that his mother can discover the necessary information, being herself a woman and therefore perhaps more influential with another of her gender. She manages indeed to find out about Grace's reasons for seeking out Joseph Tait, but refuses to tell Jim about them. This is another example of women's strength and their ability to be superior to men, especially when women work together.

In general, Jim's mother is much different from the character presented in *Treasure Island*, and this is made explicit by an intertextual link to Stevenson's novel:

Once I thought my mother a frail creature. On the night of the buccaneers' destruction of the inn she had seemed about to faint. Since my return from Treasure Island, though, I felt she had taken a new lease on life. Others saw it too.

Dr. Livesey said to me, "Many women flourish in widowhood, Jim. She'd too much respect for her husband to permit herself to be seen as stronger than him. I often observe that quality. Always indicates an excellent woman." (Bryan, 2001, pp.25-26)

Thus the change that has occurred in Jim's mother in Bryan's novel is pointed out by the narrator, while Dr Livesey's speech indicates that women are regarded as and expected to be inferior to their husbands by the society of the time. There is clearly a clash between the egalitarian attitude to women in western society nowadays, in the time of the publication of the novel, and the oppressive attitude to women that was dominant in the eighteenth century, the time in which the novel is set.

In *The Curse of Treasure Island* Jim's mother takes action all the time until the crew embarks for Treasure Island. It is she who decides that Jim should take Grace and Louis to his uncle to Bristol, and it is she who urges her son to travel back to Treasure Island, both to help Grace Richardson and to bring back the remaining treasure. Again, it is obvious how much Francis Bryan has changed Stevenson's character, Jim's mother:

Again that day, my mother astonished me. Our destination was her suggestion. "Make for Bristol," she said. "Many people stay there as birds of passage."

[...]

– but at that moment my mother more or less took over all our matters.

She kept her voice low. "I understand that you've decided to sail. Then we must make our plans." I began to resist, to explain that nobody had told me outright this would happen – but she talked on. [...]

"Shhh. You must remember too, Jim, that a trove of bar silver lies there. [...]"

[...]

I knew my mother when she was in this mood – there was no point pressing her. In something of a bate I left the room, reflecting that this did not represent the mother who had so wept in grief when first I set sail all those years ago. (Bryan, 2001, pp.41 and 66-67)

Jim's mother's strength is also obvious in the way she uses guns during the attack on the Admiral Benbow inn and becomes so angry when the attackers insult her family that she can hardly control herself and threatens to start physically participating in the fight. In addition, Uncle Ambrose, her brother, explains to Jim that he does not need to worry about her because "your mother's shrewder than any of us." (Bryan, 2001, pp.25, 32-33 and 60) Finally, Jim also needs his mother to motivate him to use the treasure he has brought from the island in order to improve their financial situation once more:

It was altogether a fabulous hoard – or so I was told; I could not bring myself to look at it and my share sat here in the inn stables a full nine months before my mother prevailed upon me to take advantage of it and collect its value. (Bryan, 2001, p.286)

This places his mother's materialism as well as her active role at the beginning and at the end of the adventure, so she is now in an equally important position as those of Long John Silver, Dr Livesey and Squire Trelawney, whose names are also mentioned again at the very end of the novel.

The theme of motherhood is addressed in a different manner in the novel, too, and this way it reveals eighteenth-century British society's attitude to single mothers and their children. In this context, a rather subtle statement is made by the fact that at the beginning of the story, Louis behaves badly and his unruliness is obviously due to his mother's failure to discipline him:

He turned his back on me and leaned his elbows backwards on the table at which I sat. His gesture lacked respect, yet his mother did not correct him – but pressed on. [...]

In general his mother showed, to my mind, insufficient desire to restrain him. (Bryan, 2001, pp.8-9)

This is paralleled in Ben Gunn's account of how he became a pirate:

"Who was your father, Ben?"

"Doan't know, Jim. Ben niver knowed. My mother, she were nice to Ben."

"How did you get to sea?" [...]

"Rum, Jim, when I were too young. A press gang took me. [...]" (Bryan, 2001, p.135)

One may interpret these examples as a way of showing that children who have been raised by single mothers behave badly or end up being drug addicts and criminals. The underlying message, or critique, may be that in the time in which this story is set single mothers were considered incapable of raising their children to become respectable adults without the help of a husband and father, not least because it was considered immoral for women to bear illegitimate children.

Nevertheless, Grace Richardson, who Jim Hawkins falls in love with and whose presence is the trigger for the journey to Treasure Island, is the most important of all the women in this novel. This female character is at the centre of the story, and she controls the events to a large extent. She even causes Jim Hawkins to become a murderer for her and her son's sake. She brings trouble with her and she puts other people in danger, but with her attractive

looks and her femininity she manages to get most of the other characters, men and women alike, to oblige her. Grace Richardson uses her secret to exert control over others, especially over Jim Hawkins, who feels that he has a right to know it but is excluded from it. Apart from the fact that she drives Jim crazy because he is in love with her, she is also able to manipulate other characters in the novel with her beauty, her female charm and her secret about Joseph Tait. This lady is mysterious and dangerous at the same time, as comes out clearly in the following conversation between her and Jim Hawkins:

“Fortune may be on our side,” I murmured. “That is why I so much need ... I need to know about Tait and – ”

“No. I cannot speak today.” For a moment she stopped in front of me and commanded me powerfully with her eyes. “I need to bring all this under some control and I shall do so better if I don’t speak of it for some time.” And then she walked away.

“Madam,” I begged. “You must tell me something. This death, the Berwick gentleman, Sir Thomas Maltby – I am desperate to know. Mysteries are dangerous.”

“No,” she said. “Please don’t press me.”

I could not resist her request. (Bryan, 2001, p.52)

Keeping her secret gives the lady power to subordinate and manipulate Jim, who cannot but treat her respectfully and grant her wish. Thus one may say that Grace Richardson incorporates the concept of a strong, modern, liberated woman who uses all her power to secure her place in society and refuses to be subordinated to a man. Jim has to struggle hard with this situation, for he does not like to be controlled in such a way:

Common sense declared that I, of all people, needed to have the fullest information, yet although she had confided in my mother, she was not prepared to tell her story to me. (Bryan, 2001, p.55)

Nevertheless, the lady has taken on the role of a leading figure in the novel, not only controlling other characters, but also the events of the story. That is why, in a conversation with his uncle, Jim explains that

“I believe she is forcing me, by her silence, to accept what she wants to do.” [...] “But perhaps not forcing me? No, I think not,” I said. “More likely leading me.” [...] “She wants me to go back there. To the island. I know that, I know it from the way my stomach sinks.” I shivered. (Bryan, 2001, pp.58-59)

Like the novel itself, which was written and published in the twenty-first century but is set in the eighteenth century, the female character Grace Richardson is a blend of twenty-first-century and eighteenth-century attitudes to womanhood. Thus her secret, which is revealed at the end of the narrative, consists in the fact that at the age of sixteen she had a secret

love relationship with Louis's father, who married her secretly before their son was born, but who was killed by his own younger brother, who wanted to inherit their parents' fortune. Thus Louis is Grace's legitimate son, but not officially so, Joseph Tait being the only witness to the wedding and her parents-in-law never having been informed about it.

The main issue here, however, is that Grace Richardson gave birth to a boy, who automatically became the next heir to the fortune because he was the legitimate son of the older of the two brothers. If Grace had given birth to a girl, her child could never have inherited from her grandparents, because, as Uncle Ambrose explains: "The law of entail again, Jim. A woman may not inherit." (Bryan, 2001, p.282) This reveals what the status of women was under British law in the eighteenth century: they were considered inferior to men and they could not legally inherit their ancestors' fortune.

On the other hand, Grace has kept her secret for so long because she is ashamed of the circumstances in which her son Louis was born, as the result of a secret love affair only made legitimate after she had become pregnant.

"Uncle, why did she not tell all this to me?"

"She feels shame, Jim. I have told her she must not feel any such – "

"Shame? What is there to be ashamed of?" (Bryan, 2001, p.283)

This conversation between Jim and his uncle reveals the attitude of both eighteenth-century and twenty-first-century societies to mothers who bear illegitimate children. In the period in time in which this novel is set, it was unacceptable for women to have love affairs and become pregnant if they were not married, or they would be regarded as prostitutes and rejected by society. Jim, in the role of the narrator of a novel published in 2001, cannot understand that Grace is ashamed, because it has nowadays become acceptable for mothers to be unmarried and single parents. The character Grace Richardson thus incorporates a discourse between the attitude to women in British society in the eighteenth and in the twenty-first centuries, revealing the difference from a critical point of view and emphasizing the fact that women have finally gained more rights and a better standing.

Another novel that contains such a critical discourse about the position of women in eighteenth-century British society is Celia Rees's *Pirates!*. In this work the writer has combined gender issues with the theme of slavery, thereby introducing a rich, white, British woman and a black slave woman as protagonists. Celia Rees portrays and criticises "a world

where women did nothing for themselves, were helpless without their slaves to attend them". (Rees, 2003, p.356) The author of *Pirates!* is a woman and the narrator of the story is a female character, so the entire adventure is related from a woman's point of view.

To begin with, Nancy Kington, the narrator and main protagonist, describes how she grew up in a household of men after her mother had died giving birth to her, and how she was neglected precisely because she was female. The only person who truly looked after her was the family's domestic servant, a black man called Robert.

He was a gentle man, and a wise one. Since no one else seemed interested, he taught me to read at the kitchen table, where he had taught himself.

[...]

By the time I was seven or eight years old, I had the run of the house. My brothers were away at school. Each one had his course in life planned from the cradle. [...] There were no plans for me, because, as Robert had pointed out, I was a girl. I seemed to be there as an afterthought, an addition, sometimes petted, more often bullied. Frequently ignored.

[...]

My father had no plans for me, other than that I would be married. (Rees, 2003, pp.21-22 and 26)

This basically summarizes the role and position of girls in wealthy British families in the eighteenth century. They were not supposed to receive an education in any academic subjects with the objective of finding employment later on in their lives. As young girls they were considered inferior to their brothers and as uninteresting family members whose only purpose was to be married later to a suitable husband and to become mothers.

Nancy Kington's stepmother, who her father marries when Nancy is ten years old, perfectly illustrates the society's attitude to girls and women, especially in rich families like Nancy's. Mrs Wilkes, the stepmother, is an influential female character who manages to completely change the way the Kington household is run. Nevertheless, although she is very powerful, this character works according to the principles of the society, never questioning the role and position of women in it. Thus she adheres to the dominant ideas that women are supposed to look perfectly pretty and be dressed in elegant clothes. Moreover, according to her, a lady has to be educated in the 'female arts', which means that she has to learn to sing, to dance, to play a musical instrument, to draw and to do needlework. Thus as a result of her stepmother's decisions, Nancy is no longer neglected in the family, but therefore she is forced to change her habits of wandering around the harbour and playing games together

with other children, mainly boys, in order to become a 'real' lady who is ready to find a gentleman husband. (Rees, 2003, pp.34-37) Concluding from the tone in which the story is narrated, Nancy does not like the way in which girls and women are treated in her society, which is also why she compares what happens to her with the treatment normally given to horses:

Such acts of rebellion declined as Mrs Wilkes wore me down, breaking me like a horse to bridle and saddle. By the time I was fourteen, I could draw passably well, hold a tune, embroider a cushion cover, and dance a minuet. I was now allowed to wait on her visitors, handing round dainties as they sipped their glasses of Bristol Milk. I was even invited to stay and join in their conversation, discoursing on the weather, fashion, and what ribbons were best to trim bonnets. (Rees, 2003, p.37)

In her sarcastic tone, Nancy Kington also refers to the superficiality of the ladies' conversations. Indeed, without a proper school education or any opportunity to do something valuable or influential in their lives, they are bound to remain superficial and oppressed members of a patriarchal society that deliberately refuses to include women in business and politics.

The depiction of Mrs Wilkes in *Pirates!* also shows that even the women of that patriarchal society did not question the way they were treated by men, but even encouraged the practice to be continued. Nancy's new female companions accept this way of life, too, so "the girls' giggling, twittering conversation revolved constantly around beaux and admirers". (Rees, 2003, p.51) This is to a large part due to the fact that they have been indoctrinated with the patriarchal values of their society. Women like Mrs Wilkes were appalled by exceptions like Nancy Kington, who rebelled against the way they were treated by their fathers, brothers and husbands.

Another important aspect of the treatment of women in terms of marriage among upper-class people comes out clearly when Mrs Wilkes decides to take Nancy to Bath to find a husband for her. Susan, Nancy's maid and confidante, refers to the true purpose of marriage among rich people in this way:

'Love? Who marries for love?'
'Plenty, I'm sure.'
'Not in your class, they don't.'
I knew she was right. (Rees, 2003, p.52)

The story is set in a time when it was common practice for fathers to pay dowries to the men who married their daughters. The richer the family was, the higher the dowry was, so it was interesting for gentlemen to marry women from wealthy families. Therefore, Nancy being the daughter of a rich sugar merchant and plantation owner, a lot of men are interested in marrying her, as Susan explains:

“T’aint just the beauty,” Susan went on, as if such a consideration was irrelevant. ‘You’ll bring a pretty penny when you marry. Someone’ll get a rare prize in you, Miss Nancy, and that’s a fact.’

[...]

Susan was right. Young men did not go to Bath for the cure, that was for sure. They went there to hunt fortunes. My father was rich. That made me a fair prospect. (Rees, 2003, pp.54-55)

The practice of paying dowries entitled fathers to choose who would be granted their money, and consequently it gave them the right to decide who their daughters could marry or not. In this context and despite the fact that Nancy is in love with her childhood sweetheart William, who has promised to marry her one day because he loves her, too, Nancy has to obey her father and her brothers’ orders and marry the man who has been chosen by her family to be her husband. Indeed, to save their sugar business and prevent the family from going bankrupt after a terrible storm in which Nancy’s father loses most of his ships, their crews and their cargo, he and his sons literally sell Nancy to a wealthy Brazilian, actually a former pirate:

‘I have spoken to your brothers about this matter so close to my heart, and indeed to your father just before his sad and untimely death. He assured me it was his dearest wish, and that I had his blessing, although he desired me to wait until the occasion of your sixteenth birthday. I, of course, have respected his request of me, but now that day has come.’ He paused to clear his throat and his voice rose, becoming more sonorous and formal. ‘Miss Nancy, I have every hope that you will make me the happiest of men ...’

He was proposing to me. [...]

I opened my mouth, but no words came out. I heard my father’s voice again, as if he were there in the room with me: *You would do your part, wouldn’t you? For me? For the family?* And my answer. *Of course, Papa.*

[...]

I was caught in a trap laid by pitiless men: my brothers, my father, this Brazilian. (Rees, 2003, pp.135-136)

Nancy’s father and brothers sealed this agreement secretly, without informing her about it, which increases her shock. And as if that was not enough, she is presented with an example of the kind of woman she is destined to become and the kind of life she is expected to lead

in the future, in the person of Bartholome's sister Isabella. When Nancy politely expresses her shock about this news and the fact that she has never been informed about the decision, begging for some time to think about it, Isabella comments: "What is there to know? Men decide. Women obey." (Rees, 2003, p.137) This brief but direct statement summarizes the fact that women have no rights at all in this society, especially not in the choosing of their husbands. It is followed by the revelation that the Brazilian is planning to keep Nancy locked in at his home, like an object of pleasure meant to be beautiful and constantly at the service of her husband's desires:

'You have a beautiful neck and shoulders.' [...] 'But rubies look best against milk-white skin, as though they rest on white satin. I fear our island sun is too strong for you, my dear.' [...] 'My sister never goes out in the day, unless heavily veiled. If you are to regain your complexion, I suggest that you follow her example.'
[...] If I were to marry him, I would be a prisoner in his house, never allowed out, with only his sister for company. (Rees, 2003, pp.139-140)

The theme of the woman who is regarded as a mere sexual object by men is taken up again in the following chapter of *Pirates!*, when Nancy Kington discovers that Duke has badly beaten up Phillis and taken Minerva home with him in order to rape her: "He was toying with her, enjoying the power he had over her, allowing her fear to feed his lust." (Rees, 2003, p.145) It is this scene, combined with the treatment Nancy has got at home all her life as well as the marriage that has secretly been arranged for her, that leads Nancy to definitely break away from the oppressing rules of the society she has grown up in: "I'd be the one to decide what was, and what was not, to do with me. [...] Nothing I could do. How many people had told me that? Well, now we would see ... " (Rees, 2003, p.144) Finally, Nancy Kington shoots Duke in an act of rebellion against male dominance as well as to protect her friend from being sexually violated, which turns her into a murderer, but a free woman at the same time. Now she is forced to escape and start a new life as a fugitive. Yet, being a criminal on the run is less constraining to Nancy Kington than living as a respectable woman in that patriarchal society.

Soon after these events in the story, Nancy and Minerva join a crew of pirates and start travelling the seas and committing acts of piracy as a way of surviving and escaping from slavery and female oppression. As pirates they are free and treated as their male crewmates' equals and given the same duties and responsibilities, yet their gender still

subordinates them to men because here they are considered as sexual objects, too, as Broom explains to Nancy:

‘We’re not on one of your father’s ships now,’ Broom grinned. ‘Everything’s decided in common. We have all sorts on board. All colours and nations. But as yet –’

‘As yet no women.’

‘No.’ He rubbed his newly-grown beard. ‘Not as such. No women at all. There’s some think women unlucky. That aside, they can cause trouble for reasons that are obvious, pirates not exactly being gentlemen.’ (Rees, 2003, p.176)

When the Articles are read out to Nancy and Minerva, the pirates confirm that, although women are protected from violation by the captain’s rules, men do not show much respect for them. In fact, they regard women as prostitutes on board the ship:

11. Any man offering to meddle with a prudent woman without her consent shall suffer present death.

‘And how likely be they to go a meddlin’?’ a voice from the back jeered. ‘What’s the point of makin’ ’em swear to that, Broom? Where’s yer sense?’

‘They might go a meddlin’ wi’ you!’ someone remarked, to much ribald laughter.

‘They can meddle wi’ me any day!’ (Rees, 2003, p.192)

Celia Rees’s novel is filled with enough realism that it includes more scenes in which attempted rape on board the pirate ship is depicted, and both Nancy and Minerva become the objects of men’s cruelty towards women. Thus when Captain Low and his crew attack Captain Broom’s ship and Low discovers by accident that Nancy is female, he immediately considers violating her, even offering her to his crew for mass rape:

‘My, my! What have we here?’ He came towards me. His blade whispered past my cheek and he plucked a lock of hair from my shoulder. ‘You *are* a pretty one, and no mistake.’ He rubbed the hair between his fingers. ‘As golden as guineas. Who would have thought that Broom would have such a prize on board that tub of his?’ He parted my shirt with his sword and stared. ‘No need to rush things. A dish to be consumed at leisure.’ I spat at him and swore. His sword was at my throat again. ‘You will learn some manners, Madam, or I’ll share you with my crew and then feed you to the fish.’ (Rees, 2001, pp.274-275)

Interestingly, the women manage to protect each other from being sexually violated and to preserve their innocence without exception. This might not be very realistic, but it presents the female characters as very strong against male offenders in the novel. One example of such a victory over a man who considers women as mere sexual objects to be used at leisure is when Minerva stops Limster, one of Low’s crew who similarly discovers Nancy’s gender and decides to rape her:

That I was a woman wearing man's clothes was generally known. Up until now, my sex had provoked little comment, but Limster changed all that.

[...]

'Duck in drake's clothing,' he sneered as I passed by him. 'A whore's a whore, whatever she's wearing.'

[...]

He was forcing my coat apart, ripping off the buttons. It made me furious to be manhandled in this way; to stand in nakedness in front of my shipmates would be more than I could stand. [...]

Limster released me when he felt the cutlass across his throat. Minerva smiled as she sheathed her weapon and took my arm.

[...]

Although he recognised me as a woman, he only knew Minerva as Jupiter and thought that she was a man. [...] Now a word in his ear disabused him. [...] He let off a volley of the vilest curses that could be aimed at womankind. (Rees, 2003, pp.283-284)

Obviously, Limster cannot stand being defeated by a woman, which rouses his anger even more when it is revealed to him that Minerva is female, too. Their fight results in a duel which Minerva wins with the help of Nancy and Graham because Limster does not keep to the rules, (Rees, 2003, Chapter 33) so the oppressing figure is vanquished once more by female characters.

Another aspect of the way women are treated in the world of piracy is emphasized in one derogatory but important remark concerning women on board pirate ships. It shows that even here, where women are free from arranged marriages and the restrictions imposed on them by patriarchal society, they are considered inferior to men and often regarded as the cause of trouble:

'There's been female pirates afore,' Pelling spoke up in support, just in case Broom needed it. 'Mary Read and Anne Bonny. Bold pirates both. As bold a pair as ever went on the account. Served with Calico Jack.'

'Aye, and look what happened to him,' a voice joined in. 'Hung at Gallows Point, along with the rest of his crew. Excepting those two. Pled their bellies while Rackham swung. That's women for you.' (Rees, 2003, p.192)

With this reference to the real female pirates Mary Read and Anne Bonny, who were exempt from the death sentence because they were pregnant, women are portrayed as prostitutes who later use their female condition in order to manipulate judges into lessening their punishment because they are pregnant, whereas men do not have such an excuse and suffer full punishment. In consequence, men who sexually abuse women or enjoy sexual

relationships with them regard themselves as victims of the female condition if women become pregnant and men have to assume the consequences of their acts.

Therefore, apart from the practical reasons for female sailors not wearing dresses on board ships, women can only exist among a crew of sailors if they wear men's clothes and give up or hide their femininity as much as possible. For their own security as well as for the sake of being respected among the male crew members, they have to adapt and disguise as men.

‘Calico Jack had women on board,’ his quartermaster spoke up. ‘Dressed as tars, served their watch and carried out their duties, same as the men.’ (Rees, 2003, p.176)

Thus when Nancy and Minerva decide to join a crew of pirates, they hide the fact that they are women by wearing men's clothes: “In the morning we would tie back our hair and bind our breasts. We would pull on our shirts and button up our trousers.” (Rees, 2003, p.178)

Women in disguise, or playing with their femininity, however, can also be very powerful and manipulative, as is alluded to by the fact that Captain Broom also makes Nancy and Minerva wear dresses and behave like ladies in order to hide that they are pirates and to seem respectable. Broom argues that Nancy and Minerva can help the pirate crew to keep under cover from the Navy and the law by wearing dresses and acting like ladies:

Thirdly, women on board could be useful, he added for good measure, and better than any set of false colours. For if we were up on deck in our feminine attire, who would take the ship for a pirate? (Rees, 2003, p.191)

Indeed, Captain Broom often makes use of this possibility, thereby turning the women into a useful addition to the crew and using the female gender as a way of manipulating business partners and pursuers. This puts the women in quite a powerful position, as the crew's safety finally depends on their gender and their disguise: “Minerva and I had a vital part to play. We would revert to women's clothes and take up our roles. I would be Broom's niece, Minerva my companion.” (Rees, 2003, p.213)

In conclusion, the importance and the strength of the female characters in the story come out clearly in the descriptions of the tasks the women fulfil on board the pirate ship, and not least in the way they finally triumph over their worst opponents, particularly Bartholome the Brazilian, who pursues Nancy because she has refused to be married to him:

My rejection and flight had slighted him. I had run away with slaves rather than marry him, lived with pirates, given his gifts to whores. I had insulted him and his

family beyond any reason and he had no intention of taking me anywhere. He had been merely toying with me. He meant to kill me then and there. (Rees, 2003, p.362)

It is clear from Nancy's realization that rejecting the husband who has been chosen for a lady deserves capital punishment in the eyes of the patriarchal Bartholome. It is an insult to the man that cannot be pardoned and turns the woman into a criminal who must be punished hard. Disobeying the man who planned to marry her and showing no respect for him is the worst thing she could ever have done in this patriarchal environment. Nevertheless, the idea of an arranged marriage is destroyed, or overthrown, symbolically in the scene in which Minerva beheads Bartholome:

Minerva had come into the room behind him, gliding on silent feet from my room to his. [...] She pulled the sword back past her left shoulder, then brought it forward in a scything motion, a wide blurring arc of grey metal, taking his head off at the neck.

[...]

'He is dead.' Minerva's voice rang out over the hushed deck. 'I killed him. Now you will be commanded by me.'

They offered no resistance. They knelt before her, as if to some pirate queen. (Rees, 2003, pp.362-363)

Immediately afterwards in the novel, Nancy's arranged marriage is contrasted with Minerva and Vincent's marriage for love at the end of the novel. On the one hand, Nancy is freed from the arranged marriage that the patriarchal British society she grew up in imposed on her, and on the other hand Minerva's love relationship with Vincent, which is based on equality, love and respect for each other, stands out as the ideal situation suggested by the novel. Therefore, Nancy never gives up hope to be re-united with William, her childhood sweetheart, in a marriage with whom both would be on equal terms. Minerva being pregnant before her wedding and yet not stigmatised or regarded as a prostitute by her fellow sailors is another statement in favour of women and their emancipation.

In the most recently published novels analysed here, namely Justin Somper's 'Vampirates' series and Julia Golding's *The Ship Between the Worlds*, female characters are not very much different from their male counterparts. They take part in the same actions, make as many important decisions as men and are generally treated as men's equals in strength, initiative and intelligence.

The most important female characters in 'Vampirates' are Grace Tempest, one of the main protagonists, and the pirates Cheng Li and Cutlass Cate. All three of them play key roles in

the stories. Grace Tempest is at the centre of all the events which are connected to the vampires and she is the protagonist of that part of the stories. Connor and Grace being a pair of twins, their positions in the novels are of similar importance, and although they have different personalities, qualities and skills, neither of them is presented as inferior to the other. While Connor is more talented and stronger in physical activities such as sports and later on fighting together with the pirates, Grace is the more intelligent of the two and better at figuring out problems in a more theoretical way. Their skills at school show this:

People found it hard to figure out why the lighthouse keeper's son was so much better at sports than the rest [of the schoolchildren in Crescent Moon Bay]. Whether it was soccer, basketball or cricket, he seemed to run faster and strike harder, even when he neglected to show at team practice for weeks at a time. And the girl provoked equal suspicion – amongst her teachers as well as her classmates – with her unusually wide-ranging knowledge and strange notions about things far beyond her age and station in life. (Somper, 2005, p.16)

It is clear that although the twins have different skills and interests, they are on equal terms and they complement one another. Now one might say that this represents the age-old stereotype of the woman who is a thinker and a domestic caretaker rather than physically active in sports, crafts and fights, which are domains reserved for men, but this idea is overthrown by the presence of Cheng Li and Cutlass Cate in the stories. Both women are pirates who actively take part in physical fights, and both are experts in the use of weapons, especially swords. They are in leading positions on their pirate ships, both being deputy captains to Molucco Wrathe and Cheng Li later on a pirate captain herself.

“Is it because she's a woman?” Connor asked. “How do the pirates feel about that?”
“Oh no, that's not it – we're not a sexist bunch. Take Cate – Cutlass Cate. She's one of the best, one of the most popular on this ship. In a fight, she's the one you want at your side. What she doesn't know about swords ain't worth knowing.” (Somper, 2005, p.77)

When Connor's friend Bart summarizes the general attitude to women predominant in 'Vampirates' like this, it is clear that no gender stereotypes are brought forward in these novels, and women are regarded as and respected for being men's equals.

The same is true for Julia Golding's *The Ship Between the Worlds*. This novel is about a young male hero who gets caught in the feud between two male captains who have been fighting each other for ages on account of their personal morals, as already discussed in Part Two of this work. In addition to Captains Fisher and Jones, there are a number of female

characters in the story who have important ranks on their respective ships. Thus there is Shushula, the cabin girl of the *Golden Needle*, who becomes David Jones's best friend on the Seas In-between and whose glowing lock of hair helps Milli the parrot to save David's life. Another example is Ruramina, who is second mate on captain Fisher's ship.

Most importantly, however, there are Captain Stella Tor and her cook, Sally. Stella Tor runs a ship with an exclusively female crew. No men are tolerated on her ship because she has had a hatred of them since she was fooled and robbed of her gold by Captain Fisher. She and her crew manage to run their ship without the help of any men or boys, which proves that women are perfectly capable of doing men's jobs, although there is also a touch of irony here because the mere thought of a man on board her ship makes Captain Stella Tor aggressive and wanting to kill the person:

'I should've guessed,' smiled Stella Tor sourly, 'that you'd have a man clinging to your skirts. You always liked them too much, Sally: that was your downfall.'

'Don't I know it, ma'am, but this one's just a boy.'

'But in case you haven't noticed, boys like him grow up into men like Captain Fisher.'

'Not on the Seas In-between, they don't,' replied Sally smartly. 'He'll stay a boy for ever if he remains here.'

Tor smiled, amused by her crewman's answer. 'You almost make me forgive you, Sally. But it's no good: he'll have to go.'

[...]

'No, not a moment longer. I will not have my ship sullied by his presence!' Tor shrieked. (Golding, 2007, pp.182-183)

Unlike her cook, who is far more tolerant of men, Captain Stella Tor is a radical feminist who reverses the usual stereotype of the unskilled, weak, trouble-causing woman still present in Stevenson's work, for example:

'Come here, child,' said Captain Tor, beckoning him to her side. He barely reached her shoulder – that seemed to please her. 'You've been through a lot for one so young. Why?'

David told her the truth. 'To save my friends, to save the worlds.'

'Selfless – how rare it is to find this quality in a creature. You're right, Sally, this boy is no man or he would not think like this. Men are weak; men are greedy.' (Golding, 2007, p.184)

Men are openly accused of bad qualities such as greed and weakness here, and Captain Tor enjoys the reversal of gender roles, symbolized by the fact that she is taller and in a more powerful position than David, which constitutes a caricature of modern radical feminism,

but also a critical statement about the way women were treated for a long time until they started to become emancipated in western society.

That such radical feminism is not a useful attitude and does not contribute to the establishment of egalitarian values in a society, either, is emphasized by the way in which David Jones, the innocent young boy who has not reached manhood yet, puts Captain Tor back in her place:

‘Go on, do it! Hit me if it’ll make you feel better. But it won’t, I can tell you that now for nothing. You’re twisted, you are – you with your females-only thing – your sulking over a treasure long since gone.’ (Golding, 2007, p.187)

Nevertheless, it must be retained that it is due to female characters alone, namely Shushula, the parrot Milli, Sally the cook and Captain Stella Tor, that David Jones’s life is saved after he has been made to walk the plank by the evil Captain Jones and that the latter is finally defeated. Thus Captain Stella Tor, although motivated by David Jones’s speech, changes attitude and makes up for the negative effects of her radical feminism by being a referee in the duel between Captains Fisher and Jones. As Captain Jones’s man decides to play false, Stella Tor supports Captain Fisher and his good cause, thus not only saving the lives of both Shushula and David Jones, but also contributing to the saving of the drifting planets: ‘[...] I agreed to be here to make sure you played fair, and you, little man, are playing dirty with someone I choose to take under my protection. [...]’ (Golding, 2007, p.223) In the end, male and female characters are put on an equal level of power and influence, and concerning gender issues, the underlying message of the novel is that women should be neither considered as inferior to men nor be guided by radical feminism, but the right attitude to gender issues is egalitarianism.

Concluding from all the novels analysed here, women are clearly discriminated against in the literature of the nineteenth century, while they are the object of a critical discourse present in literature published in the twenty-first century but set in eighteenth-century Britain and its colonies. The social changes concerning the station of women that have occurred over time are reflected in the recently published literature with a historical setting. The attitude to women presented in modern literature with a contemporary setting is feminist, but egalitarian, which means that male and female characters are portrayed as equals, performing the same tasks and having the same rights as well as positions in society.

This explains why in older literature female characters are weak, passive and voiceless if they are present at all, whereas in modern literature they are much more influential and they transgress the stereotypes established by former western societies.

In addition, female authors like Celia Rees and Julia Golding seem to defend women's issues more vigorously than male authors. However, the examples of Justin Somper's and particularly Francis Bryan's novels show that male authors also reflect on the position and status of women in society, and introduce gender issues as the subject of discussion and critique in their literary works.

Conclusion

Children's and young adult literature is rather a new genre in comparison with adult literature, and it was marginalized in literature studies until quite recently. This is a result of the different ways in which children have been perceived in society over centuries, as well as of the discrepancy between the adults who write books and the young readers who are addressed in them. Writers and critics have often pondered the question of who the implied reader of children's and young adult literature is, and how books are received by their young audience. The history of children's literature shows that adult writers have always attempted to educate children and adolescents via literature, so pleasure usually goes hand in hand with didacticism. This has resulted in recurring patterns of character behaviour and relationships in which a questing child or adolescent is presented with opposite sets of values in books. The adolescent protagonist is torn between good and bad role-models and struggles hard to find his or her place in society. In addition, the questing youth goes through a learning process which reflects the teenage reader's necessity to define his or her identity and place in society. Quest journeys are allegories of life which reveal both good and evil characters and situations. The subject of such a journey is a teenage protagonist who is torn between various ideologies. Characteristically, the adolescent protagonist is the image of a teenage rebel who seeks to break away from moral and social order to test various attitudes to life and society, but who finally returns to the respectable environment of his or her home and family.

Studies of reading interests in people of various age groups show that young readers evolve through different stages of literary appreciation with different aims. Children like predictable stories that contain stereotypes, and the literature aimed at child readers is characterised by happy ends. The younger the readers are, the likelier they are to appreciate literature that features elements of the genre of comedy, such as happy ends, and they usually refrain from depictions of serious danger, illness, loss and violence. Literature aimed at children is also characterised by the absence of sexuality and death, as adult writers and publishers tend to consider these topics inappropriate for children's books.

Adolescent readers, on the other hand, expect stories to be true to reality, and they gradually learn to deal with issues like violence, sexuality and death. Reading helps teenagers to deal with the realities of their every-day lives and the issues that concern them. Therefore, young adult literature is marked by tragic elements in the sense that books do not end as happily as those written for children. Although these stories have outcomes that are positive to a large extent, they also allow for characters to die and to suffer loss, or to experience some kind of insecurity or limitation.

A certain moral ambiguity is inherent in the presentation of father-figures and other guiding characters in coming-of-age stories. It shows how important and inevitable it is for a child to lose its innocence in order to develop into a mature adult during adolescence. Being faced with moral choices leads the child to recognize and accept the harsh realities and the responsibilities of adult life. Painful and disillusioning experiences encourage the teenager to move on towards adulthood by gaining necessary life experience. The ambiguity lies in the fact that good and evil cannot always be separated from each other, which is why teenage characters go through a lot of terrifying experiences including situations that involve murder and betrayal. Although protagonists return home from their quest journey as mature young adults, most of them have suffered loss on their way and have learnt essential truths about individuals and society, good and evil, life and death. All questing adolescent protagonists are torn between benevolent and malevolent father-figures, and generally they finally adopt the morals of their good role-models. Nevertheless, adolescent characters commit immoral and even criminal deeds on their quest journeys. The evil characters in the stories also play crucial parts in the development of the growing adolescents, which is why they are usually not completely defeated, forgotten, or excluded from the story and the protagonist's life. In pirate novels there is always a notion of critique of the establishment and the prevalent social and moral order of the time, which explains the evil figures' attraction. Being mature means having a notion of both good and evil, as well as being ready to make the right moral choice while accepting that evil forces also contribute to positive developments. Questing youths escape from established, respectable social and moral order together with pirates and live with them as outcasts of society for some time. In the end, however, all teenage protagonists reject the attractive but contradictory notion of freedom that piracy stands for, in contrast to respectable society,

and adopt an attitude of obedience and conformity again. This proves that authors of children's and young adult literature always engage in an effort to instil good moral behaviour in their readers and that didacticism is inseparable from this literary genre.

The presentation of female characters in children's and young adult literature has evolved with the concept of womanhood in society over time. Older works of fiction feature passive, marginalized, discriminated female characters, while the latter are presented on an equal level with their male counterparts in recently published books. Female morals are often discussed in the context of female characters' sexuality and in that of parenthood. Writers with a more feminist attitude openly discuss the position of women in society and in literature by presenting a discourse on female characters and women in history and society that is clearly critical of female subordination and discrimination, as well as of the reduction of women to sexual objects.

Whereas all works of fiction are intertextual in the sense that they are influenced by the prevalent ideologies of the time and place in which they are published and read, as well as by their authors' and their readers' knowledge and attitudes, some writers choose to focus their work on one particular target text. This allows writers to engage in a critical discourse of moral ambiguities, gender issues, societal concerns and historical aspects of life by transposing characters and scenes into a different context. Settings are often used to express ideas and attitudes to cultural, social, moral or historical issues.

Finally, pirate novels address most young people's deepest concerns about growing up in a clearly defined framework of social and moral order, of sexuality and gender roles, and of freedom, which explains the attraction of the topic and the popularity of past and present literature on piracy.

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