

*Alice Munro's*  
"Day of the Butterfly":  
*An American Source*

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I N HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *A Sort of Life* (1971), Graham Greene gives an amusing account of how, years after it was written, he was startled to find in his short story "Under the Garden" an unlikely source: Beatrix Potter's *Squirrel Nutkin*. Quite unconsciously, as he explains, he had reworked into his own murder story that terrifying moment in Potter's miniature thriller when the hapless Tom Kitten is being "trounced up by the rats behind the skirting board and the sinister Anna Maria covering him with dough" (52). Clearly there is no way of predicting how and when in an author's mature writings material from the slagheap of childhood reading may assert itself.

Certainly in the case of Alice Munro, works she read as a child would seem to have infiltrated her stories. As her family and friends have noted, reading was an "addiction" to her (Ross 15). And she read widely and eclectically. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Tennyson's poetry, Dickens's *Child's History of England*, and L. M. Montgomery's novels, especially *Emily of New Moon*, captured her youthful imagination (Ross 14-16). Just as influential, however, were writers of a kind that clever people rarely mention when furbishing the child-prodigy part of their critical reputations:

. . . behind all those childhood books I've mentioned, I was just reading anything and everything. When people talk about their reading, they tend to mention [only] the respectable books. I mentioned Tennyson, for instance, but at the same time I was reading *Gone with the Wind* compulsively. . . . I read everything we happened to have in the house, and the books that came into our house all came in by accident. So my reading was just here and there, and all over. I [also] read what was in the Sunday school library. (Ross 19)

Elsewhere she points out that authors “who have never become very well known” because they wrote only “a few marvellous stories” are unfortunately excluded from a writer’s list of literary mentors. “One tends not to think of them,” Munro told one interviewer, “when you’re on the spot with a question like this” (Struthers 11). The reason, then, for omitting such writers is not their unimportance, but memory’s inevitable gaps.

Difficult as it can be to remember what we read as adults, it is harder yet to retrieve the name of every book familiar to us in childhood. Yet these stories, though immature, cannot be denied; they too leave their mark. The persistent impression made by books read in youth may account for the striking similarity between Alice Munro’s “Day of the Butterfly,” written in 1953, and *The Hundred Dresses* (1944) by American juvenile writer Eleanor Estes, best known for her award-winning books about the Moffat family. Munro may have deliberately emulated Estes, a good possibility given her habit of staging “imitations” of successful narratives in her head, sometimes committing these works of dual authorship to paper (Ross 20, 22). She defends this early activity as a kind of apprenticeship: “There’s nothing wrong with writing imitations. It’s the only way, I think, to learn” (Ross 22). Whether a writer is or is not aware of copying others, Munro considers the practice to be greatly beneficial:

I’m not very often aware of influences, but I’m sure they’re happening all the time. . . . I’m probably using things that other people have used first without even realizing I’m doing it. I think many of us do that. Or we pick up a tone that seems appropriate to a certain kind of material, and we try out that tone. Or perhaps we’re given courage to go on using a kind of approach or material when otherwise we might worry that too much had been done of this. (Struthers 17)

Munro’s admission that in the early stages of her career she modelled her work on that of others makes her use of *The Hundred Dresses* entirely plausible. Or perhaps she wove strands from Estes’s compelling tale into her story all unconsciously, much as Graham Greene without realizing transposed elements of Beatrix Potter’s *Squirrel Nutkin* into his short story. In any case, if Munro had not read Estes’s minor classic before writing “Day of the Butterfly,” then it is by an extraordinary coincidence that two

stories written less than a decade apart should be almost mirror images of each other.

During the early 1940s, when the young Alice Munro was reading all manner of books, Estes's novels were a staple in North American libraries. Because Estes is not a writer of the same rank, say as C. S. Lewis or Frances Hodgson Burnett, a few words should be said about her place in children's literature. In 1943, she won the Newbery Honor label for *Rufus M* and, in 1952, the Newbery Medal for *Ginger Pye*, two awards which established her reputation as one of America's finest children's writers. Her books about the fatherless Moffat children were a perennial favourite with young readers, but adults were quick to see the greater sophistication of *The Hundred Dresses*, a sombre account of how children of mainly Anglo-Saxon descent so persecute a Polish classmate that her family has to move away.<sup>1</sup> In a survey of children's books written between 1920 and 1950, Ruth Hill Viguers notes that "Among the few fine stories of a child who is 'different,' one stands out for its subtlety, its good writing and its perfect understanding of childhood. Eleanor Estes, in her *The Hundred Dresses* (1944), has accomplished what only an artist in the portrayal of children can do" (551). Critics writing in another survey of children's literature make a case for the book's uniqueness, saying that "Eleanor Estes's *The Hundred Dresses* (1944) has some claim to be the first story to deal with prejudice, [one which] is all the more distinguished by its downbeat ending" (*Children's Literature* 250). Estes can hardly be credited with having written the first story to deal with prejudice among children—Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and Katherine Mansfield's story "The Doll House" (1922), for example, both preceded *The Hundred Dresses*—but her sombre theme was indeed uncommon in literature written expressly for children at that time.

Estes's controversial subject no doubt piqued the interest of Munro, whose stories often explore the dark side of human motivation. She might also have been inclined to expose the evil of racism by her own dislike of it, a dislike made clear by her remarks on the bias of a juvenile encyclopedia called *The Book of Knowledge*, which she had read uncritically as a child: "These

books have glaring faults—they're quite racist—and I would never give them to children to read" (Ross 14). But Estes's skilful treatment of her subject in *The Hundred Dresses* could alone have inspired Munro's respectful imitation of it in "Day of the Butterfly." Mastering fictional techniques which had worked well for others was very important to Munro in her days as a fledgling writer. Her first stories, "Day of the Butterfly" among them,<sup>2</sup> she herself compared to "paintings that are said to be 'in the school of,' [or] 'after the manner'" of another artist (Struthers 23). Just how closely Munro emulated the "manner" or art of Estes in "Day of the Butterfly" can be inferred from its compelling resemblance to *The Hundred Dresses*.

This paper documents the main parallels between the two works. Both Munro and Estes convey the foreign girl's suffering from a classmate's perspective. The two stories begin the same way: the girl through whose eyes we see events (a central consciousness in Estes, a first-person narrator in Munro) first describes the victim as a person who, before being harassed, was thought beneath everyone's notice, a subtle form of discrimination; then, noting those details which set the unfortunate child apart, this same observer makes clear to us, if not to herself, just why it was a young foreigner who was treated so cruelly. Estes's memorable character types will be shown to inhabit Munro's story as well, notably the immigrant friends and relations of the tiny pariah who worsen her social status, and also the young bullies who like a pendulum swing from abusing their strange classmate to doting on her. In Munro as in Estes, teachers accidentally initiate the youngster's misery and later preside over the group's act of collective restitution. The most remarkable similarity, however, is the shocking recognition by both Munro's narrator and Estes's observer that they are the victim's alter ego.

*The Hundred Dresses* opens with deceptive simplicity: "Today, Monday, Wanda Petronski was not in her seat. But nobody, not even Peggy and Madeline, the girls who started all the fun, noticed her absence" (1). The "fun" turns out to be the ritual mockery of Wanda for having once claimed to have one hundred dresses in a closet at home, despite her obvious poverty. This taunting is called the "hundred dresses game" and also "having

fun with Wanda" by Madeline, or Maddie,<sup>3</sup> the girl who witnesses the events. Before the game ever started, no one had even noticed Wanda; outside of those moments when she is being persecuted, the children continue to ignore her; and when she stops coming to school altogether, no one remarks upon her absence for several days. In her understated way, Estes has captured society's attitude to the people it marginalizes. Neglect eventually gives way to persecution when Maddie's friend Peggy sets out to expose Wanda as a liar. Peggy daily cross-examines her in a "mock polite" voice (17), ostensibly to establish the truth of the matter: "Why did [Wanda] want to lie? And she wasn't just an ordinary person, else why would she have a name like that?" (16-17). The last line points to Wanda's ethnicity as the real irritant. Most of the children in the class do not have an unusual name like "Petronski," but rather "names [that were] easy to say, like Thomas, Smith, or Allen" (10). It comes as no surprise later that in a letter to the teacher Wanda's father should cite discrimination as the reason that he and his family are moving away: "Dear teacher: My Wanda will not come to your school any more. Jake also. Now we move away to big city. No more holler Polack. No more ask why funny name. Plenty of funny names in the big city" (47).

Mr. Petronski's broken English recalls details given earlier in the story that set Wanda herself apart. She too has trouble with English, as is shown by her painful failure to read aloud when called upon to do so and by her classmates' impatience with her on these occasions (36). She makes herself noticeable by wearing the same worn, if clean, blue dress every day. Then there is the greasy sheen of her forehead. Maddie, herself a poor girl who wears other people's cast-off clothing, is very thankful that at least her own "forehead didn't shine the way Wanda's round one did. What did she use on it? Sapolio? That's what all the girls wanted to know" (17). In part, Wanda is reviled by others simply because of her greasy look, a stigma that Alice Munro's child-victim in "Day of the Butterfly" bears as well.

Wanda is also derided for living in a strange, run-down neighbourhood, a place made worse by its nearness to the house of another immigrant, an unemployed Swede who is known as "old

man Svenson." Svenson's dilapidated house and property show the effects of his being out of a job. Maddie has heard people speak of him at best as an "old good-for-nothing," at worst as someone who once shot a man (54). Yet these harsh judgements are based on nothing more substantial than poor Mr. Svenson's foreignness—he mumbles unintelligibly when addressed—and his offputting appearance, with his "drooping mustache and tangled hair, his hound loping behind him, and the long streams of tobacco juice [which] he expertly shot from between his scattered yellow teeth" (59). The book's illustrations reinforce this benign reading of Mr. Svenson's character.<sup>4</sup> The soft outlines of Louis Slobodkin's two sketches of him—seated innocuously on his porch in one and looking startled at the questions put to him by Peggy and Maddie in another—predispose us to see Mr. Svenson as a harmless man who has been badly treated by his American neighbours, and to regard Wanda the same way.

Like the young Polish victim in *The Hundred Dresses*, the foreign child in Munro's "Day of the Butterfly" at the outset is entirely ignored, confirming her status as a non-entity. The narrator Helen recalls barely noticing the girl whom she would later torment: "I do not remember when Myra Sayla came to town, though she must have been in our class at school for two or three years" (100). Prior to harassing her, the schoolchildren "had not paid much attention to Myra" (102); and when Myra stops coming to school, Helen cannot even say whether it was "the day . . . or the week after" another incident that Myra vanished, inconsequential as she was (106).

At first glance, the group's cruelty to Myra seems arbitrary, but Helen's careful noting of all the things that set Myra apart makes its own statement about why she is hounded, the same technique found in *The Hundred Dresses*. Even the minor details used to establish Myra's strangeness mimic those of Estes. Like Wanda, for example, Myra has trouble with English, being unable to spell and, when she speaks, sounding as if she were "wetting her lips with her tongue" (104-05). Her clothes are also as ill-fitting as those of her counterpart in *The Hundred Dresses*. Wanda always wore the same blue dress "that looked like a piece of the sky in summer" (24) but that "didn't hang right" (12), two de-

tails which are fused together in the reference to Myra's "glimmer[ing] sadly in sky-blue taffeta, in dusty turquoise crepe, a grown woman's dress made over, weighted by a big bow at the V of the neck and folding empty over [her] narrow chest" (106). In short, she looks ridiculous.

Just as Wanda's social status suffers because of her proximity to the suspect Mr. Svenson, so too Myra's unfortunate connections make her lose caste in the eyes of her ruthless young critics. Deliberate mention is made of the fact that her aunt is a nun, for example, a reference that might seem innocent except that, in Munro's world, people's religious affiliation is so often a lightning rod, making them the object of discrimination.<sup>5</sup> Also, the unappetizing sight of Myra's father, a Svenson-like character who sits idly in his store all day chewing garlic, "with his shirt open over his swelling stomach and tufts of black hair showing around his belly button" (103), hardly enhances her social position. Significantly, the children find the daughter's own appearance as repellent as the father's. One compelling detail in Estes's work which becomes even more arresting when duplicated by Munro is the greasy look which stigmatizes both foreign girls. Myra's turban of "oily" hair recalls Wanda's forehead which looks as if she had rubbed Sapolio on it, in each case perhaps an oblique reference to their nationality, since many ethnic groups use creams and pomades to make skin supple and hair lustrous. This sign of obvious difference inspires Helen and her classmates to devise a "game," as they call it (103), a euphemism that also appears in *The Hundred Dresses*:

. . . now a game developed; it started with saying, "Let's be nice to Myra!" Then we would walk up to her in formal groups of three or four and at a signal, say together, "Hel-lo Myra. Hello My-ra!" and follow up with something like, "What do you wash your hair in, Myra, it's so nice and shiny, Myra." "Oh she washes it in cod-liver oil, don't you Myra, she washes it in cod-liver oil, can't you smell it?" (103)

The songs and chants of childhood, as Iona and Peter Opie famously demonstrated in such books as *The Singing Game* (1985), *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (1959), and *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (1969) are a universal part of growing up. As both Estes and Munro show, so is taunting.

What gives special interest to each author's depiction of schoolyard bullying is her emphasis on ritual. The teacher in both works, for example, like a shaman leads the group from guilt to atonement. In *The Hundred Dresses*, Miss Mason, in other respects a decent person, is the first to discriminate against Wanda by relegating her to a corner of the room "where rough boys who did not make good marks on their report cards sat" (3), presumably because Wanda like the boys had mud on her shoes—in her case picked up from a long trek to school along country roads. The teacher no doubt simply wanted to keep the floor clean, but her segregation of Wanda still sets an unfortunate precedent. Similarly, in "Day of the Butterfly," Myra's trials are also begun by her teacher. When Myra asks permission to take her little brother home because he has "wet himself" (100), Miss Darling forces her to put her request more euphemistically, making her ridiculous before the class. From that moment on Myra and her brother stand alone at recess on the school's back porch. In their isolation, they are strikingly like Wanda, who, while other children congregate in the playground, remains in her solitary place "by the ivy-covered brick wall of the school building" (14). Perceiving the misery of Myra and her brother, Miss Darling tries to scold the children into treating them better, a ploy that backfires with the invention of the taunting game. In the end, each girl finds asylum from the torture of school, Wanda in a larger city and Myra in a cancer ward.

The process of atonement in *The Hundred Dresses* begins when the teacher announces that Wanda has won an art contest with one hundred sketches of beautiful dresses, drawings which substantiate her once preposterous claim. This proclamation is followed by the news contained in Mr. Petronski's letter. Upon reading this document Miss Mason first adjusts her glasses, then removes and wipes them, a sign of clearer moral vision and perhaps even of regret for her part in Wanda's suffering. She is now fitted for the task of inspiring a similar change of heart in her students. Gently she tells them that their hurtful comments were probably made "in thoughtlessness" (48), but that they must examine their conscience all the same. Maddie and Peggy visit Wanda's house, hoping that she might still be there and that



they might congratulate her; on finding it vacant, they send her a friendly letter praising her drawings (65). Wanda sends them a gracious (if unidiomatic) reply which the teacher reads aloud to the whole class. The children are now delighted to hear from the celebrated artist whom before they had mistreated. At the time of the class Christmas party, the ballet student Cecile, whose lovely red dress months earlier had provoked Wanda's boast, performs the "Passing of Autumn" for her classmates, a dance which becomes their favourite. This detail makes its point unobtrusively: the vile behaviour of the previous autumn is now a thing of the past for the children, who here undergo a ritual purification.

In "Day of the Butterfly," Munro enlarges upon Estes's idea of the teacher-guided ritual, giving it several complex twists. Miss Darling's attempted defence of Myra and her brother makes them into living fetishes, or "small figures carved of wood, for worship or magic with faces smooth and aged" (101). Myra is later said to be "set apart for legendary uses" (103), but Miss Darling is incapable of understanding the scapegoating and victim worship that this term implies, far less her own role in expediting them. Like Miss Mason in *The Hundred Dresses*, she too is bespectacled, although her glasses are "fragile" and their rims "thin" (100, 101), two epithets which also describe her vision. Without realizing it she provokes the children into taunting Myra; with like incomprehension she inspires their collective atonement by organizing a fake birthday party for Myra in March in case she dies before her actual birthday in July. The idea of the party greatly appeals to the young bullies for whom Myra now becomes oddly enviable. Although she does not dazzle her classmates with a hundred beautiful drawings, Myra exudes all the same "the excitement of sickness and hospitals," within which context she is "impressively set free of all the rules and conditions of [her classmates'] lives" (107). The girls plan the party as if it were a "cause" (108) and decide that their gifts should exceed the twenty-five cent limit imposed by Miss Darling. In a striking phrase, they are said to discuss Myra "as if she were something [they] owned" (108). The earlier comparison of Myra to a small figure carved of wood now acquires a new, chilling significance: a human being must become an object, this time of worship, before the group can absolve itself.

The real awakening in each story, however, is not experienced by the group at all; rather, this improved moral vision is attributed solely to the girl from whose perspective the story is told, and then only when she comes to see herself as the victim's alter ego. Maddie's recognition of her kinship to Wanda begins on a bright October day when everyone seems more brightly arrayed than usual and even "Wanda looked pretty" (106). She sees that Wanda's claim on this occasion to have a hundred dresses is based on a simple desire to be like all the other girls who at that moment are admiring Cecile's red dress. With a piece of broken glass Maddie flashes a rainbow of the October colours onto nearby houses, trees, and telephone poles (23), a perfect symbol for herself as a reflector or mirror image of the bullied girl. Maddie always feels ill at ease when others harass Wanda, but her one attempt to stop Peggy from doing so ends abruptly when she perceives how much a target like Wanda she herself is:

Suddenly she paused and shuddered. She pictured herself in the school yard, a new target for Peggy and the girls. Peggy might ask her where she got the dress she had on, and Maddie would have to say that it was one of Peggy's old ones that Maddie's mother had tried to disguise with new trimmings so that no one in Room 13 would recognize it. (35)

In Wanda's predicament, Maddie sees an image of her own. The very names "Wanda" and "Maddie"—their capital letters an inversion of each other, and the rest a trochaic assembly of like-sounding vowels and consonants—underline this identity. In the final analysis, Maddie's sense of kinship with Wanda impels her to make amends. Restitution takes the form of fantasies in which Maddie rescues her other self from various perils and, more concretely, of the friendly letter that she and Peggy write. Yet as the last paragraph of the novel makes clear, Maddie remains troubled by the memory of the persecuted girl:

. . . she blinked away the tears that came every time she thought of Wanda standing alone in that sunny spot in the school yard close to the wall, looking stolidly over at the group of laughing girls after she had walked off, after she had said, "Sure, a hundred of them—all lined up. . . ." (80)

In "Day of the Butterfly," the narrator retraces the journey to self-awareness made by Estes's Maddie. With adult hindsight,

Helen presents at the story's end all the clues of her kinship with Myra, recalling uneasily, just as Maddie had done with Wanda, how her ostracized double used to stand alone against the school. Although not foreign like Myra, Helen has other liabilities. She lives outside the city limits, for example, which is presumably why her boots are encrusted with mud, a stigma in Estes's fictional world as well. Just as Maddie fears becoming the next Wanda, so too does Helen sense that her poverty will make her as inviting a target for bullying as Myra:

I was the only one in the class who carried a lunch pail and ate peanut-butter sandwiches in the high, bare, mustard-coloured cloak-room, the only one who had to wear rubber boots in the spring, when the roads were heavy with mud. I felt a little danger, on account of this; but I could not tell exactly what it was. (103)

As a child Helen cannot entirely decipher her kinship with Myra, but she clearly senses it, as we see in the passage just quoted. This awareness of a common bond is reinforced by Helen's learning that Myra reads the same comics and popular fiction that she herself does (105). That Helen finally grasps what Maddie had plainly stated in *The Hundred Dresses*—that in her resemblance to the victim she herself might become the object of the next schoolyard game—is evident from her reaction when, in giving Myra the tin butterfly from her cracker jack box, she grazes Myra's hand: "I flushed but Myra did not. I realized the pledge as our fingers touched; I was panicky, but *all right*. I thought, I can come early and walk with her other mornings. I can go and talk to her at recess. Why not? *Why not?*" (106). She is relieved that Myra does not wear the butterfly and that she vanishes shortly afterwards into the hospital. Helen and her classmates write Myra a letter (just as Peggy and Maddie write to Wanda) and give her lavish presents. Helen refers to these gifts as "guilt-tinged offerings" (110), and she resolves to get rid of the one that Myra gives her. Like Maddie, Helen cannot escape the "treachery of [her] own heart" (110). The story ends exactly like *The Hundred Dresses*, with the sometime persecutor haunted by the image of the victim standing solitarily against the school:

Did Myra ever say goodbye? Not likely. She sat in her high bed, her delicate brown neck, rising out of a hospital gown too big for her,

her brown carved face immune to treachery, her offering perhaps already forgotten, prepared to be set apart for legendary uses, as she was even in the back porch at school. (110)

In the first published version of "Day of the Butterfly," which appeared in *Chatelaine* (July 1965) under the title "Good-by Myra," the story had ended far more lamely: "At the door I had to pause once more and look back at her sitting in the high hospital bed. I thought that soon I would be outside. So I called back quickly, treacherously, almost gaily, 'Good-by!'" (58). In keeping with her early practice of imitating works she admired, Munro improved this conclusion by emulating Eleanor Estes's dramatic return to the time of past injury, an effective reminder in both works that the memory of cruel acts is not easily annulled.

To see *The Hundred Dresses* as the source of Munro's "Day of the Butterfly" heightens our appreciation of both texts, since each one casts a helpful light on the other. Such a study also illuminates the process by which texts are made of other texts. Finally, a comparison of the two works proves John Rowe Townsend's point that the boundaries between children's literature and adult fiction are shifting and elusive. Many books written for a mature audience—such as *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*—are often appropriated by youngsters, whereas children's works such as the Alice books and Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* can be popular with adults. No writer in any genre has a monopoly on the truth; and the truth buried deep in a child's heart, as Eleanor Estes and Alice Munro so movingly show, only the skill of a genuine storyteller is needed to reveal.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In "Eleanor Estes: A Study in Versatility," Mabel F. Rice tells of how a group of teachers taking summer school were held spellbound by their professor's reading of *The Hundred Dresses*:

Toward the end of the morning session of a huge summer school course for teachers at Whittier College the visiting lecturer, Dr. Paul Witty, put down his papers and picked up a thick colorful book. Sometimes he ended the period with a poem or a book review and the class looked forward to them. He stood silent for a moment, looking at the book before he announced the title. *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes. Without preface or comment, he began to read. The large group sat silent, all eyes fixed intently on the reader. No proverbial pin dropped. People scarcely seemed to breathe. When he finished, he closed the book softly. . . . The class filed out silently, almost reverently. They

must have scattered to libraries and book stores in their home towns across Southern California. The next morning one saw at the top of many a pile of notebooks and papers *The Hundred Dresses*. (555-56)

In "Therapeutic Reading," Matilda Bailey recounts how a teacher of a racially mixed group of children saw in *The Hundred Dresses* a means of preventing discrimination:

In an Anglo-Saxon community, the influx of "foreigners" often presents a problem in the school. One teacher wisely anticipated difficulty by reading aloud to her class Eleanor Estes's *The Hundred Dresses*. The pupils quickly recognized that the little girl in the story with her strange and almost unpronounceable name, was a very nice little girl made extremely unhappy by the Browns and Smiths and Joneses in her class.

One girl said after the reading of the story, "I wish she were in our class. We'd be nice to her." (32)

- 2 Munro admits that certain early stories, including "The Day of the Butterfly," were imitations of other works. At the time of her interview by Tim Struthers, she said that she couldn't recall just whom she was imitating in "Day of the Butterfly" because it was "such an early story" (Struthers 23). As she also said in the same interview, writers who have never become famous but who wrote one or two splendid stories are often forgotten when a writer is "put on the spot" with questions about influences (11).
- 3 This unusual nickname also appears in "The Peace of Utrecht" in *Dance of the Happy Shades*, a minor detail but one that nonetheless strengthens the case for Estes's influence on Munro.
- 4 Estes's book is made greatly appealing by Louis Slobodkin's whimsical sketches and watercolours. The smudged impression of his characters' faces, for example, is a perfect screen onto which young readers can project themselves; and his avoidance of period detail gives the story a timeless quality.
- 5 In "Friend of My Youth," the mother of the narrator dismisses the Cameronian sect as a "freak religion from Scotland" (*Friend of My Youth* 5), a lofty judgment delivered from the "perch of her obedient and lighthearted Anglicanism" (5). One woman in "Accident" tells another of how a priest gave the last rites to, or "did the business" on, a Catholic boy after he died, a comment that elicits a censorious cluck from her listener: "There was not much hostility to Catholics in this disapproval, really; it was a courtesy Protestants were bound to pay to each other" (*The Moons of Jupiter* 93). The narrator of "Privilege" echoes this idea in observing that people of the town were "Catholics or fundamentalist Protestants, honour-bound to molest each other" (*Who Do You Think You Are?* 24). Such molestation sometimes took the form of preventing religious intermarriage. In "Walker Brothers Cowboy," a man's family rejects his sweetheart because she is a Catholic, or a person who "digs with the wrong foot" (*Dance of the Happy Shades* 14, 17). Similarly, in "Jesse and Meribeth," Floris had been courted by the local druggist, "but Aunt Ena objected to him: he drank (that is, he drank a little), and was a Catholic" (*The Progress of Love* 186). Clearly, to Aunt Ena, the druggist's being a Catholic was as bad as his being a drunkard.

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