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The Selectively Permeable Home in Charlotte Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe*

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<1>In Charlotte Yonge's novel, *The Heir of Redclyffe*, the home is an important space for the self-actualization of the protagonist, Amy Edmonstone. Amy is in many ways the epitome of Victorian womanhood—quiet, demure, and adept at making a comfortable home for her family. Her journey to self-actualization is also subversive, however, in that it centers a non-normative kind of home—the intimate interpersonal space that Amy and her baby share after the death of her husband, Guy. While of course, Amy has a duty to her baby, Amy's attention to her baby goes beyond duty; rather, Amy withdraws into her room with her child and rarely comes out, cementing an intense intimacy between herself and her baby, while neglecting her duty to provide affection to other members of her family. While the newly-widowed Amy's primary function within the family is to be an affectionate daughter, the interior space of her room that Amy frequents is her true home, in which she is able to exercise what I call "selective permeability." While Amy's status as a new widow and mother holds her family—particularly her mother and father—at a distance and makes them feel that they can follow her into this intimate space, Amy is free to invite whomever she will into her room, and thus, into her life. The control Amy has over who ventures into this intimate space allows her to feel safe within it, and to focus on herself—to recuperate from her trauma and bond with her child.

<2>Amy is unique in Yonge's oeuvre not only for her unique brand of homemaking, but in the way her initially timid, dependent personality is developed through her widowhood, putting her in a position that is different from the spirited female protagonists Yonge scholars have often found interesting. These characters are heroines such as *The Daisy Chain's* Ethel, who struggles to discipline her intellectual desires and involvement with a school in the local town of Cocks Moor in favor of domestic employments, and *The Clever Woman of the Family's* Rachel whose desire to form a school for local children has disastrous results. Scholars have been drawn to these characters not merely for their high spirits and intellectual desires, however, but because, as Tamara Wagner put it the "self-policing of Yonge's liveliest heroines" has presented scholars with "an inviting contradiction" by which her desire to render psychologically complex female characters seemed to contradict her religious commitments to self-sacrifice and duty to family ("Depressed Spirits" 280).

<3>Recently, however, scholars of Yonge have attempted to resolve the seeming contradictions of Yonge's harsh disciplining of female characters by arguing that Yonge uses elements of realism (including psychologically complex characters) in a more symbolic manner than what modern readers might expect. Gavin Budge, for instance, argues compellingly that "Yonge's religious position as a Tractarian is not in conflict with the artistic seriousness and self-awareness of her writing" because she draws on a Tractarian version of Romantic poetics that...that allows

her to combine domestic realism with a transcendent dimension of religious typology” (201).ⁱ Perhaps the most innovative readings of Yonge’s novels recognize the ways in which Yonge is particularly attuned to form. After all, Yonge does not use narrative form merely as a tool in her larger purpose. Rather, her religious commitment is constituted by her belief in the goodness of conforming to God’s pattern. Therefore, she in turn forces characters to submit to a larger pattern that is not only effective in its ability to advocate religion, but in the way its beauty glorifies the work of the master pattern and plot-maker. In a reading of Yonge’s *Heartsease*, for example, Talia Schaffer uses an analogy with craft to illustrate the formal constraints of Yonge’s style literally. Schaffer argues that “A craftswoman would view the frostbitten currants [in *Heartsease*] in terms of their abstract qualities (shape, color, size), that may or may not be suitable for gluing into a pattern. In neither case does the observer care to view the berry as in itself it really is” (95). All of these readings honor Yonge’s status as much more than a purely didactic writer, attempting to reconcile the psychological complexity of her characters with the apparent contradiction of her didactic message, and showing the rigorous beauty and internal consistency of the divine forms she sets up and sets in motion. However, all of these scholars’ interpretations of Yonge form their conclusions about her style from focusing mostly on the characters who *need* discipline by Victorian standards—young women with unruly desires. In my reading of *Amy*, I aim to demonstrate the way in which some characters in Yonge’s master patterns have been neglected, giving us a skewed view of the whole.

<4>As demonstrated in the prevalence of scholarship on Yonge’s attention to form, this oversight is one to be remedied. As *Amy*’s unruly emotions are more related to circumstances (her widowhood) than to what Tractarians would have seen as an inherent personality flaw, she provides an example of a different kind of Yonge character with the potential to enrich our view of the workings of Yonge’s novels. Yonge’s novels do serve as machines for the furtherance of divine plots; however, characters like *Amy* show that there is a much larger place for female development in those plots than her more unruly heroines might suggest. In examining a female character who does not require discipline, we are able to examine the degree to which Yonge was capable of and interested in imagining the workings of women’s minds outside of a disciplinary context.

<5>Unlike the majority of Yonge’s heroines—both unruly heroines like *Ethel*, and intellectual female invalids such as *The Clever Woman of the Family*’s *Ermine*, and *The Pillars of the House*’s *Geraldine*—*Amy*’s struggle is not against her intellectual desires or the limits placed on her disabled body. Rather, she struggles against the emotional management her family subjects her to after her husband’s death, and the necessity of negotiating the demands upon her time and affection as she returns to being a “home daughter” after once being a wife. While *Amy* does struggle, like many Yonge heroines, to carve out a space for herself against her family’s preconceptions and needs, her situation is different in that her search for this space isn’t disciplined, but rather, supported by the narrative. Lest this situation seem specific to the point of idiosyncrasy, however, Tamara Wagner’s work on the role of affliction in Yonge’s novel and Yonge’s alternative treatment of “depressed spirits,” show that *Amy* is far from an outlier in Yonge’s fiction. In contrast to scholars’ frequent explorations of the way Yonge’s plots serve to discipline her characters, Wagner’s work shows that Yonge was also centrally concerned with the interpersonal dynamics of emotional management in the home. While *Amy* is not an exact analogue for either one of the character types Wagner delineates—the invalid and the depressed

person—Amy combines elements of these two character types in such a way as to defy the dictates placed on either. While Wagner argues that many of Yonge’s invalids, “in turning their sofas into the center of the household, form part of productive communities, even as they embody ideals of mutual dependence,” Amy refuses to embody the model of the productive invalid in her almost complete withdrawal from her family into her room after the death of her husband (“Home Work” 105). Wagner also provides a partial analogue to Amy in the depressed person. Just as in Yonge’s exploration of depressed spirits in the characters of Norman and Leonard, in *The Daisy Chain* and *The Trial*, respectively, the problems that can ensue when families try to manage each other’s emotions are central to Yonge’s treatment of Amy. A crucial difference for Yonge’s treatment of Amy is of course, gender. Amy’s gender adds an interesting layer to her family’s attempts to manage her emotions, however, as their expectations that she be present at household events constitutes the emotional labor of the “home daughter” as well as the burden of the “productive invalid” whose pain management is expected to constitute a form of productive labor for the other members of the household. While Amy’s family may believe they are helping her deal with her difficult emotions, her family actually smothers her.

<6>In my reading, I will follow Wagner’s lead in showing how Yonge’s form serves to illuminate women’s emotional labor. In particular, I will argue that Yonge problematizes any easy revelation of emotion by obscuring and then slowly revealing Amy’s emotions within the narrative. By revealing Amy’s emotions to readers only when they become clear to Amy herself, Yonge replicates the process of emotional management at the narrative level. While providing discipline to her characters (and a model for readers) was undoubtedly a large part of Yonge’s purpose in writing, I submit that the critical impulse to focus on discipline and to make sense of it through typology, also skews other facets of Yonge’s writing. In Amy’s growing awareness of her own emotional state and personal boundaries, we can see Yonge’s impulse toward depicting self-care, rather than self-discipline. Importantly, Yonge permits Amy’s storyline to unfold deliberately and slowly as Amy negotiates her position within her family on her own terms—in spite of her family’s repeated attempts to control this process for her. Moreover, this reintegration is as necessary to Amy as it is to her family. I will argue that in her representation of these complex states, Yonge prefigures Arlie Russell Hochschild’s concept of emotional labor, which is defined as the “pinch between a real but disapproved feeling on the one hand and an idealized one, on the other” (*Managed Heart* x-xi). Rather than simply illustrating the ways in which a woman in such a circumstance might hide her feelings, Yonge’s novel mirrors Hochschild’s more nuanced exploration of emotional management, in which a person might not know what they feel at all (or be able to communicate those feelings to readers).

<7>In addition to enriching Yonge scholars’ concept of Yonge’s use of form and her depictions of female characters, however, Amy’s inability to articulate her emotions enriches our understanding of the connection between women’s interiority and the interior spaces of the home that has been seen as an inherent part of domestic realism. In keeping readers from accessing Amy’s interiority, Yonge problematizes the popular idea that the home should be, in the words of Nancy Armstrong, the “perfect realization of the domestic woman’s character” (16). While the home was thought to be a transparent, outwardly legible representation of the woman’s interiority, in which one could read her virtue and love for her family, Yonge’s convoluted narration of Amy’s thoughts serves to make Amy into an uncanny blank that is not at all legible—even to herself—as she is not allowed to fully feel her feelings. Because of this

suppression, her family's home and the family circle of affection it represents are decidedly not natural spaces for Amy. Rather than Amy being an easy signifier for the concept of home, and its joys, then, she must painstakingly reconstruct a sense of home for both herself and her broken family—not to mention the physical and psychic homelessness that her husband's death confers on her. Her belated centrality to the plot and narration, which comes with her husband's death, allows Yonge to carve out a symbolic space for female growth within ideologies about female domesticity. By illustrating the potential difference between domesticity as duty to others and domesticity as a practice of meaning-making for oneself, Yonge shows that domesticity could potentially be an important practice for women, if it was divorced from feelings of necessity and pressure. Moreover, Yonge shows that women must play an active role in negotiating boundaries with their families, conceiving of themselves as giving voluntarily from the resources of affection and attention they possessed, rather than as boundaryless entities whose sole purpose is to be a public resource. Thus, Yonge expresses a different definition of homemaking that bears witness to and protests against women's continual emotional labor and shows that women must create home spaces for themselves before they can make them for others.

<8>In the beginning of the novel, Yonge makes Amy's affinity with the home seem natural, revealing Amy's interiority through homes spaces and relationships with others. This setup for Yonge's readers makes the shock of Amy's husband's death and Amy's subsequent unnatural relationship to home even more powerful. In her parents' home, Amy spends most of her time entertaining her brother Charles, who is an invalid, in the drawing room where he typically sits for many hours a day, or his mother's dressing room, when he is feeling indisposed. It is notably these rooms that form the center of both Amy's duties and pleasures, making the interiors of homes seem at first, relatively unproblematic and natural as the source and end of self-actualized female subjectivity. Her mother's dressing room is also the place in which she feels most free to express the opinions and emotions that make her an individual, as when she expresses her positive opinion of her cousin Guy, openly contradicting Charles's bad opinion of him (21).

<9>Amy's identity as traditional homemaker is further consolidated when she nurses both her cousin Philip and her husband, Guy, during their illness on Amy and Guy's honeymoon in Recoara, Italy. Yonge's narrator speaks of Amy's talent for nursing as an extension of her talent for homemaking. As Miriam Bailin points out, the sickroom belonged to the home both literally and ideologically, meaning that "it is thus intimately related to the social processes and expectations from which its own customs and rules of association and conduct deviate"—in this case, the logic of separate spheres, which identifies the home as expression and realization of the female character (19). When Amy successfully makes broth for Philip (a task she also frequently performed for Charles in her parents' home), Guy writes an account of her feat in a letter, saying that it "deserve[s] to be published in a book of good advice to young ladies, to show what they might come to if they behaved well" (430). Amy is lauded for creating for Philip "a peaceful place where one is sure to find comfort" (544), an ability that also seems even more exceptional because the three are removed from their literal home. Embodying the ideal later formulated by Ruskin, she is depicted as capable of taking her home anywhere—even to a sickroom in Recoara, Italy.

<10>Amy's identification with the home space becomes a problem however, when she must undergo the emotional labor of concealing her anxiety for her husband during his and their

cousin Philip's illness. Hochschild's definition of emotional labor as the "pinch between a real but disapproved feeling on the one hand and an idealized one, on the other" (*Managed Heart* x-xi) presumes a "sentient self," which, "is capable of feelings, and aware of being so. More than a bloodless calculator or blind expresser of emotions, the sentient self is aware of feeling as well as the many cultural guideposts that shape it" (*Commercialization of Intimate Life* 77). Unlike Freud, Hochschild conceives of emotions as things that one can have a vexed and only partially conscious relationship to. Hochschild's model matches Yonge's in that her novel attends to Amy's semi-conscious feelings that she attempts to hide because she thinks they are unacceptable. Though she uses free indirect discourse to give readers a greater degree of access to Amy's thoughts, these thoughts are ironically, strangely limited and contorted due to her emotional labor, thereby drawing attention to the difficulties of representing women's experiences that defy gendered narratives. Yonge inflects Amy's experience of emotional labor into the narrative by showing how Amy is mentally uncomfortable in the "space" of her own mind. The interiority we see is characterized by the negative feelings of dread and desperation that Amy cannot fully allow herself to feel surrounding her husband's death, and moreover, by an ambiguity in narration that makes it clear that Amy is stopping herself from feeling. These feelings thus suggest that the home does function as a surface of the feminine mind—but not an unproblematically legible one. It is only through Yonge's intentionally tortured free indirect discourse that we can read the meaning of these difficult homemaking acts for Amy.

<11>Yonge inflects emotional labor into the text via narrative in the way that she psychologizes Amy negatively, even as she puts her forward as the novel's primary focalizer—by describing the feelings she cannot allow herself to feel via vague hypotheticals, objections from other characters to her subdued state, and convoluted free indirect discourse. When Guy laments his steward, Markham's ignorance of the dire nature of his illness, the narrator relates that

She understood; but these things did not come on her like a shock now, for he had been saying them more or less ever since the beginning of his illness; and fully occupied as she was, she never opened her mind to the future. (*Heir* 458)

The narrator here implies a contrast between what Amy "understood" and the future she does not open her mind to—implying that at some level, she dreads her husband's impending death, but that this level of emotion can only be recognized in negation because she does not wish to upset him. Amy recognizes that Guy's implication about his death should shock her, but it doesn't because she makes a semi-conscious decision not to consider what is disturbing, refusing to "open her mind to the future" (458). In the same scene, Guy enjoins Amy to look through his desk after he dies. The narrator relates that "she gazed at him without answering. If there had been any struggle to retain him, it would have been repressed by his calmness" (458). Amy's thoughts come into the narrative here as a response to Guy's injunction that she is not able to acknowledge. She is not sure what she feels about her husband's impending death, because she does not allow herself to consider this possibility.

<12>It is not merely her desire not to face her husband's death, however, but her desire to make home for others, that keeps Amy from acknowledging her feelings. At this time, Amy's interiority becomes one with the space of her care; her emotions are only related to readers as they relate to the duties she must accomplish, and are filtered through her idea of what is appropriate in her caring role. Amy frequently indulges in a brief look into the room where Guy's body lies—"the room where all her cares and duties had lately centered" (472). She also

glories in transferring her care for Guy to Philip after Guy's death, taking "thought for him as if he was the chief sufferer, as if it was the natural thing for her to do, working in the strength her husband had left her, and for him who had been his chief object of care" (472).

<13>However, Yonge makes clear that these duties are detrimental when they result in Amy holding off her own interiority, thereby figuring knowledge of and comfort with oneself as an important prerequisite for making the home. While Philip and Guy are comforted by the home she makes for them through her care, this space is not home for Amy herself. Rather, she is made emphatically uncomfortable in the space of her own head. Amy dreads the time in the evening when "she sat in the dim candle-light, with everything in silence, a sense of desolation came upon her, and she knew that she was alone" (473). Though during Guy's illness she had been "supported by the forgetfulness of self which gave her no time to realize her feelings" (458), she now dreads the onslaught of aloneness. She cannot yet make a true home because she is incapable of being at home within herself—a fact that is mirrored by the limitation of her point of view to the rooms in which her duties center.

<14>During this time, Amy's centrality in the novel comes along with a peculiar absence of psychological content that bespeaks Amy's desire to efface her material body and point of view following her husband's death. Her new centrality to the plot ironizes her own lack of desire to experience her subjectivity—much less to give anyone else access to it. Fittingly, readers no longer receive extensive access to her thoughts through free indirect discourse at this time, but are instead reminded that we are immersed in Amy's interiority by the contrast between the intensity of characters' fear for her with the flatness of her own affect. In narrating this contrast, Yonge essentially narrates Amy's interiority through emotional labor. When Philip later asks her how she bears her husband's impending death, Amy answers "I don't know—I can't vex him" (461). Mrs. Edmonstone also reminds Amy that "surely, my poor dear child, you have reason for not risking yourself!" reminding Amy of the unborn child she carries (474), and repeatedly enjoining her to eat and drink. Amy later tells the clergyman's daughter, Mary Ross, that she had been hoping to die after giving birth to her baby—the logical extreme of her lack of attention to her material body (552). When others attempt to call Amy back to herself, readers become aware of the gap between the feelings that are expected of Amy and the feelings she actually feels. This places readers in the experience of emotional labor by letting us feel a sense of aimlessness caused by Amy's lack of affect—as though the narrative's new and unwilling captain were no longer in control of the ship.

<15>On moving back to her parents' home, Amy's family's solicitousness for her health and desire that she rejoin them in regular family activities combine to create a condition in which Amy feels guilty for not filling her proper role of pleasing them. This guilt and her desire to renegotiate the boundaries of her new relationship to her parents (she is now first and foremost a daughter again, as opposed to a wife) causes her to withdraw from society into the delimited space of her room. Amy reproaches herself for her feelings, saying,

It is so stupid of me to be always poorly and making Mamma worry about me when there's nothing the matter with me...it is a naughty feeling; but when I feel all those dear, kind eyes watching me always and wanting me to be happy, it is rather oppressive, especially when I can't; but when I try not to disappoint them, I

always make such a bad hand of it, and am sure to break down afterwards, and that grieves Mamma all the more. (552)

Amy's recognition of the workings of emotional labor becomes more acute and complex here, causing her to be more distressed not only by the "pinch" between the ideal feelings her family looks for and her real feelings, but also by the idea that her family might discover that her emotions cause her labor. As Hochschild writes, in her case study of flight attendants at Delta Airlines, "part of the job is to disguise fatigue and irritation, for otherwise, the labor would show in an unseemly way, and the product—passenger contentment—would be damaged" (*Managed Heart* 8). This language of disguise and transparency is telling, because it reveals both the stakes and the costs of emotional labor for Amy. Amy now feels as though her emotional struggle were accessible to everyone—as though her family can tell by her expressions or actions when her struggle for happiness proves unsuccessful. This knowledge of her lack of success results in extreme self-reproach and self-alienation. Because Amy feels transparent, she must cloister herself away from her family, creating stronger boundaries in order to fend off the sense that she is losing her private self. She must also continue to attempt to give her family what they want, however, hiding her negative feelings so that her family does not perceive the emotional labor she expends in keeping them happy and appearing happy herself. The stakes of happiness and the degree to which Yonge wishes to lay bare the logic that underlies emotional labor are illustrated even more clearly in this next passage. The narrator reports of Amy that

though she was willing to do all that was asked of her, it was in a weary, melancholy manner, as if she had no peace but in being allowed to sit alone, drooping over her child. From society, she especially shrunk, avoiding every chance of meeting visitors, and distressed and harassed when her father brought home some of his casual dinner guests, and was vexed not to see her come into the drawing-room in the evening. If she did make the effort of coming, to please him, she was so sure to be the worse for it, that her mother would keep her upstairs the next time, and try to prevent her from knowing that her father was put out, and declared it was nonsense to expect poor Amy to get up her spirits, while she never saw a living soul, and only sat moping in the dressing-room. A large dinner-party did not interfere with her, for even he could not expect her to appear at it. (*Heir* 552)

Again, Amy fears disappointing her family whom she believes will perceive the effort it takes her to appear happy. This passage also illustrates that the consequences of emotional labor for Victorian women stemmed from the fact that, even more than the flight attendants and other service workers Hochschild discusses, "the emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself" (*Managed Heart* 5). That fact that Amy's father is "put out" that she does not join the family shows that attending parties is considered one of the duties she performs in her vocation as a daughter, which she has now resumed due to the death of her husband. Moreover, though her father initially becomes upset because she does not perform this service of joining him at dinner, the family becomes increasingly upset in both cases because "her spirits are not up"—not merely because she does not *go* to dinner, but because she does not want to go to dinner. Yonge points out that, for Amy's family, the fact that she considers going to dinner to be labor is the problem, because it suggests she does not perform her domestic duties in the light of a vocation stemming naturally from inner qualities, but as something unrelated to, and indeed, detrimental to, her self-expression.

<16>Amy is finally able to create a selectively permeable space of her own through her baby, with whom she spends a good deal of time alone in her room. Selective permeability is my name for a kind of exclusivity without isolation that Yonge posits as a solution to the problem of emotional labor. She articulates the idea of selective permeability overtly in a conduct book she later writes entitled *Womankind*. “Even the solitary woman,” she writes,

will make her sitting-room homelike and enjoyable; alone, she will people it with shadows like those in Longfellow’s poem, and she will be ever ready to welcome those who come to refresh themselves in the calm her quiet dwelling makes, when their own are full of the cares and joys of life; or the lonely will seek to her for relief. And she will listen to each in turn, and open her stores of sympathy for those who rejoice and those who weep, and yet it is not change or variety she seeks or needs, for she is never happier than when alone. (272)

Yonge’s speaker here maintains a selective permeability; though she embodies hospitality and openness at all times, she is able to open and shut the doors of her storeroom, protecting herself from becoming too involved with these people who need her care and sympathy. The space Amy creates works well for her in her new role as mother and daughter because it is selectively permeable—because it serves the functions of shutting out the prying eyes of her family and contains Amy and her baby, while allowing her to invite in whomever she pleases and to thereby avoid complete isolation from a larger community. The baby does not serve merely an excuse for Amy, however—a device she uses to get her way; rather, the baby is positioned as part of Amy’s desire to create a home for herself—a private but not isolated physical and narrative space. The narrator relates that

Amabel had always liked to be shut in by herself, dearly as she loved them all...there was always something pleasant in being able to return to her own world, to rest in the thoughts of her husband, and in the possession of the little unconscious creature that had had come to inhabit that inner world of hers, the creature that was only his and hers. (*Heir* 538)

The baby helps Amy to delineate a “space of comfort” around herself like the one that it is considered her vocation to create for others. The dressing room importantly has the ability to seclude Amy from the rest of the household and its duties and care—to “shut [her] in.” When Mrs. Edmonstone closes the door on her daughter, she can no longer oppressively monitor her emotions.

<17>The combination of the baby’s materiality and its unconsciousness enable Amy to create an intimate relationship with it that is not oppressive to her. The narrator relates that “She had from the first always felt herself less lonely when quite alone, before with his papers, and now with his child” (538). If we take this passage as free indirect discourse, then she directly compares her baby to an object—Guy’s papers—here. Both are possessions with marked materiality that soothe her loneliness by evoking Guy’s material and spiritual presence, and, paradoxically, by allowing her to truly be alone. Amy therefore considers her baby to be in some sense, an object; the little as yet unnamed child does not yet count as a person to her, because unlike her family, even her cries have no power to disturb her peace. The narrator relates that Amy spends a good deal of time that night “whispering to it fond words which she could never have uttered in the presence of any one who could understand them” (538). Amy’s baby is the perfect interlocutor for her precisely because she does not understand. She cannot protest, be alarmed or tear up at her mother’s sentimentality (like Mrs. Edmonstone); she cannot even really be said to listen, as

the words' tone and their speaker are far more important than their meaning to a newborn baby. This allows Amy to use her baby as one might a diary—an object that allows one to talk to oneself, to check in with oneself and process one's feelings without the pressure of other human interlocutors. The idea that Amy's words of comfort are more for herself than for her child is supported by the fact that many are words of comfort said to one who is surely not hurting yet. She speaks to her baby of how “the poor little fatherless one would be embraced in the arms of His mercy, and received by her great Father in heaven,” ending her speech with the exclamation “Oh baby, if we can but both endure to the end!” (539). Safe from the observation of her family, Amy thinks forward to her child's future, an act that allows her to conceive of a love they both share that is transcendent but expressed physically. Through her baby, Amy effectively imagines God as Guy—a fantasy that helps her relate to her changed world, but that feels too intimate to be shared with anyone who could speak back.

<18>Paradoxically, however, Yonge gives readers more direct access to Amy's thoughts via free indirect discourse in this scene. When compared to the tortured free indirect discourse that Yonge used to relate Amy's emotional labor in her husband's sickroom, Amy's feelings of longing for her baby's heavenly future can be expressed more clearly here because there is an established language for her thoughts to be expressed in—that of intimacy with her child and late husband. The tableau depicting Amy and her baby on the night before the baby's christening lasts for a page and a half, and uses free indirect discourse to convey the murmuring tone in which Amy speaks to her baby. To quote a little bit of this scene,

She had from the first always felt herself less lonely when quite alone, before with his papers, and now with his child; and could Mrs. Edmonstone have seen her face, she would have wept and wondered more, as Amy fondled and hushed her babe, whispering to it fond words which she could never have uttered in the presence of any one who could understand them... 'Guy's baby! Guy's own dear little girl!' It did not mean half so much when she called it her baby; and she loved to tell the little one that her father had been the best and the dearest, but he was gone away, and would she be contented to be loving and good with only her mother to take care of her, and tell her, as well as she could, what a father hers was, when she was old enough to know about him? Tonight, Amy told her much in that soft, solemn, murmuring tone, about what was to befall her tomorrow, and the great blessings to be given to her, and how the poor little fatherless one would be embraced in the arms of His mercy, and received by her great Father in heaven:—'Ay, and brought nearer to your own papa, and know him in some inner way, and he will know his little child then, for you will be as good and pure and bright as he, and you will belong to the great communion of saints tomorrow, you precious little one, and be so much nearer to him as you will be so much better than I. Oh! Baby, if we can but both endure to the end!' With such half-uttered words, Amabel Morville slept the night before her babe's christening. (538-9)

When Amy tells her baby what will happen at her christening, this constitutes the most direct access we have had to her thoughts. Phrases like “And would she be contented to be loving and good?” are some of the only times when the narrator's free indirect discourse extends to relating Amy's thoughts in her own syntax and diction. These passages of free indirect discourse also reproduce the “soft, solemn murmuring tone” of Amy's directly narrated words. There is both a sense of ongoingness about the free indirect discourse in this passage and a sense of repeated

stops and starts, which nevertheless conveys something very different from the convoluted diction used during the narration of Amy's emotional labor. Amy's sentences are long and distended, and her syntax (both as narrated directly and in free indirect discourse) is tripping over itself, intimating her eagerness in trying to communicate many thoughts at once about her baby's father, and about the experience the baby is about to have. The grammar of Amy's sentences also partakes of this eagerness. Phrases like "you will be so much nearer to him as you will be so much better than I" are confusing in their density of meaning, but this confusion stems not from a lack of knowledge of or ability to recognize her own feelings, but from a difficulty in expressing the nature of so many relationships at once. Amy's final exclamation, "Oh Baby, if we can but both endure to the end!" links her own fate to her baby's, and to readers' experience of her speech. Amy's care for her baby's salvation acts as a means of acknowledging her own fears for the future, and jars readers abruptly out of the space we had inhabited for a page and a half. Amy's free indirect discourse in the scene of her baby's christening immerses readers in a space of powerful meaning that gives us a sense of comfort, making Amy the ideological home of Yonge's narrative. In addition to sharing the space of the dressing room with Amy, Amy's baby thus also becomes a kind of co-focalizer with her—the means through which her interiority can be instantiated in the second half of the novel. Amy's interiority is unnarratable within the context of emotional labor, because revealing the existence of this labor would be a violation of the gendered logic by which the home must be represented as every woman's natural vocation. As she awaits her child's christening, however, her interiority bursts out of the grammatical and narratological seams of the novel. Amy is associated once again with the inner spaces of home that now self-actualize rather than alienating her. The powerful, good feelings that this passage evokes makes it clear that Amy's experience of intimacy with her baby fits better with what society expected a woman's life to be than her experience of emotional labor. However, this experience is still difficult to speak about clearly precisely because of its density of meaning. In narrating the intimacy with her baby, Yonge shows her interest in narrating women's interior, subjective experiences at a very deep level, when feelings are difficult to articulate either because they are socially unacceptable (as in emotional labor), or because they are just too meaningful (as in her intimacy with her child).

<19>However, this scene also deliberately keeps a portion of Amy's interiority veiled, suggesting that, in the vein of Armstrong's argument, what makes a woman valuable cannot be narrated. In this case, however, this unnarratability is not a sign of Amy's discomfort; rather, the sense of an outside to Amy's consciousness is what gives the unnarrated inside its value. This passage gains its pathos from the fact that we as readers are "shut in" with Amy, while Mrs. Edmonstone is shut out. The narrator posits that "could Mrs. Edmonstone have seen her face, she would have wept and wondered more, as Amy fondled and hushed her babe" (538). Indeed, though it seems as though we have full access to Amy's thoughts in this passage, the narrator's description of Amy's words as "half-uttered" suggests we are not receiving the entire transcript, and that, perhaps we and the narrator share Mrs. Edmonstone's speculative view of Amy's thoughts, rather than the omniscient elaboration of them we perhaps thought we were receiving. Amy's interiority is ultimately only selectively permeable to readers—a strategy that crucially allows Yonge to give Amy both value and agency within the narrative.

<20>Though there are moments in which the narrator shows us what Amy's family is not allowed to see, it is crucial for Yonge to also include moments where Amy's feelings are hidden

from readers as well. This tactic ensures that we as readers continue to appreciate the sacredness of Amy's interiority and her right as a mother and a widow to experience emotions that are not relayed to the rest of the family. Many of these moments occur, not surprisingly, via the description of Amy's properly-veiled face after her husband's death, behind which we and the other characters can only speculate what goes on. At her baby's christening, a time of particularly charged emotions, the narrator does not exert omniscience, but instead speculates about Amy's thoughts via the onlooking crowd, who cannot see her face behind her crape (541). As they hurtle toward Redclyffe to aid Philip's recovery near the end of the novel, Charles also speculates on Amy's feelings, while noting that "there was too much crape in the way to see her face" (562). In a characteristic move, the narrator veils Amy's interiority in the scene before her baby's christening by reminding us that "except for Guy, there was no one so difficult to know as Amy" (570). In this moment, Yonge ensures that we see continuity with the Amy we knew from the novel's beginning, whose feelings and thoughts were rarely narrated at all, but who we understood as an almost completely relational being. Whereas in the beginning, Amy's interiority was not narrated because her self was so entwined with the family unit, now her interiority is not narrated because she is irrevocably separate.

<21>Amy finally aids the Edmonstone family in re-cohering, however, by gradually increasing the permeability of the physical space she inhabits, and by allowing them to share the private meanings she creates around her baby, exercising the kind of influence that had come to be seen as a specifically feminine kind of power. The kind of influence Yonge makes Amy exert is again similar to Ruskin's idea of influence, in which women's creation of home is depicted as "shedding its quiet light afar, for those who else were homeless" (78). However, Yonge is more interested in depicting Amy's subjectivity as she creates this home, showing how it requires her to cultivate an egoless self, which because it erodes the boundaries between itself and others cannot be penetrated. The cultivation of this kind of self is something Amy does for others and for herself, as it allows her to be more a part of her community as well.

<22>Soon after she lets her friend Mary Ross into her dressing room, she begins to let other members of the family in, creating a home space that they will all share. This reintegration is characterized by Amy's active immersion in the world around her. Because she has created her own home within, she is now able to take a more active role in her community, sharing her resources with others and receiving more emotional investment in return, rather than having to seclude herself defensively from her family's demands. This reintegration can only occur, however, following Mrs. Edmonstone, Charlotte, and Bustle's departure for Ireland, which leaves Amy with the whole house to herself, allowing her to gradually feel at home again outside her dressing room. During this time, Amy and Charles again begin to bond through evening talks in the living room and drives with Amy's baby, gradually moving into the spaces of the outside world, and reintegrating those spaces into their conception of home. Though Amy initially fears she will give Charles "too much of the little lady's society," she continues to allow him access to her (*Heir* 557). Importantly, he treasures the child by making the same web of private associations around her that Amy makes, loving her for the way she evokes "the face which had always shone on him like a sunbeam," and because "it was worth anything to see the looks she awoke in her mother" (557). By sharing the happiness of the home she has created with her baby, Amy sheds her influence around her and makes Charles happy. She creates home for her family

by allowing them to share in her happiness, but she first had to cultivate this genuine happiness through a selectively permeable environment in order to share it.

<23>At Redclyffe, Amy's homemaking is put to the test as she and Charles go to Redclyffe to cheer their depressed and unwell cousin Philip, who has inherited the home that would have been Guy's. This part of the novel is an opportunity for the family to re-cohere in Guy's absence and to create in Redclyffe a space that can have some communal meaning for them—a home. But more importantly, it is an opportunity for Yonge to lay out strategies for overcoming the challenges to intimacy that face a family after such trauma as the death of an important member. At this point, the family has to learn how to balance Amy's need to feel like a member of a private family that includes her child and late husband with their own need for her society. Philip's main need after the death of Guy is to mitigate his guilt—of which he is daily reminded by the objects at Redclyffe. Originally furnished for Amy, the great manor possesses “piano, books, prints, similarities to Hollywell” that are said to have a “fresh new bridal look, inexpressibly melancholy” (567). After Amy's arrival, however, she gives the Redclyffe piano meaning by playing it again for her daughter, now named Mary Verena. The first time she plays it, the sound evokes “one of the peculiarly sweet and deep tones of Guy's voice. It was like awaking its echo again” (572-3). Tellingly, Amy plays the piano for her daughter only when the rest of the family goes out, however, and she takes it with her when she leaves. This suggests that there is still a profound disjuncture within the family that cannot be bridged. The others cannot hear Amy's music because, as its association with Guy's voice indicates, it is too intimate a sound for them to be privy to. The other members of Amy's family must still respect her need for private moments shared with her daughter.

<24>Similarly, Amy must also learn to compromise, sometimes engaging in the activities of the larger family. After arriving at Redclyffe, Amy wishes to stay alone in her room looking at the engraving Guy had placed there for her before his death. Instead, however, she resigns herself, thinking "Down she must go, and put off 'thinking herself into happiness,' till the peaceful time of rest" (567). The narrator then relates that "she softly re-entered the sitting room, bringing to both its inmates in her very presence such solace as she little guessed, in her straightforward desire to nurse Philip, and take care Charles was not made uncomfortable" (567). Tellingly, it is the performance of these everyday, simple actions that occasions Yonge's slip from relating Amy's experience of emotional labor in free indirect discourse to relating the men's appreciation of her from their point of view. It is these outward, physical actions that provide Yonge a way of alternating between the two viewpoints. Yonge seems to be suggesting here that such actions create home by providing a meeting place for people who may not be able to or wish to communicate the emotions they are experiencing. Home is not when families want the same things at the same time, Yonge suggests; it is when they continue to share actions and experiences even though their emotions are different. It is also telling that in this passage, Amy delays, but does not put off indefinitely her own desires, for after tea, they all immediately retire. She no longer hides her emotions indefinitely through emotional labor or withdraws indefinitely from family because she cannot see the end of such emotions, but merely delays the gratification of her own emotional release for a short time.

<25>Another way that emotional labor is overcome at Redclyffe is through immersion, rather than selective permeability. Amy's excursions while at Redclyffe take on an increasingly

immersive quality that signifies that her own needs now more closely coincide with those of the rest of her family. They need her to help them re-cohere as a community in the wake of her husband's loss and to help them make the now emotionally impoverished house of Redclyffe a home. And for Amy, making a home once again requires emotional connection with others besides just her baby—it also requires making connections with the places and people whom Guy had loved. The narrator reports that “every day she stood on the cliff and looked at ‘Guy’s sea,’ before setting out to visit the cottages, and hear the fond rough recollections of Sir Guy, or to wander away into the woods or on the moor, and find the way to the places he had loved” (573). By the time Amy leaves Redclyffe, she has even immersed herself within the sea Guy loved. Returning to the house after visiting the “Shag” with James and Ben Robinson, two local villagers, Charles and Philip overtake Amy, “her cloak over her arm, her crape limp with spray, her cheeks brightened to a rosy glow by the wind, and a real smile as she looked up to them” (573). Rather than finding in it a protective shield from the intrusive glances of her family, Amy now finds her crape to be a hindrance, throwing her veil over her shoulder so that it no longer impedes her free movement. Amy here enacts home by an act of interpenetration, allowing her protective shield to be covered in the sea spray as she rides out into it, enacting a symbolic union with Guy through Redclyffe, and transforming both herself and Redclyffe in the act.

<26>Ultimately, this shift is for Amy, a shift toward the unnarratable. During Amy's time at Redclyffe, readers begin to have the pleasant sense that habitual action is becoming the norm for Amy's life, rather than an excess of disturbing thought or emotion. This trend continues as Amy returns to her birth family, resolving to live a quiet life with them—to “go on my way, attend to baby, and take Laura's business about the school, and keep out of the way of company, so that it is very nice and comfortable” (594). Tidily declaring this statement to be sufficient, the narrator says “Amabel's life is pretty well shown here” (594). Yonge's desire to narrate the parts of women's lives that resist narration—emotional labor and extreme intimacy—here collapse, as Amy's life becomes not worth narrating. This moment is crucially different from other moments like it in Victorian literature, however. Unlike Dorothea Brooke's spending “her full nature...in channels which had no great name on the earth,” for instance, Amy is immersed in her life—not spent by its cares. Domestic life is not a disappointment for Amy, but an achievement. For readers, this immersion in the mundane relies on a deflation of our expectations. This anticlimax leaves Amy her identity as a common, private individual, rather than asserting that her identity constitutes some sacred, unnarratable core. The central difference between immersion and being spent, then, is pleasure. Appropriately, Yonge's focus is continually on Amy's trajectory in achieving happiness. In the end, however, this obscurity is what she wants. Rather than gratifying her father's desire that she “turn into a young lady again” or perhaps readers' desire to hear more about her, Amy retreats into the activities and connections which constitute pleasure—and home—for her.

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ⁱ Other scholars have taken up form as a way of explaining Yonge's seemingly contradictory content include Susan E. Colón, who argues that Yonge's use of "dramatic reversals" as a means of "challenging the reader's own moral state" serve to classify *The Heir of Redclyffe* as parable (32).