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# Healing in the Works of Elizabeth Goudge

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TRINITY COLLEGE

Thesis

Healing in the Works of Elizabeth Goudge

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## ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Goudge's fictional works are worthy of further academic consideration. Using the context of Goudge's persuasive endeavor to provide a framework to conceptualize the healing of the soul, this paper explores the characters who heal and the characters who experience healing, and the practices that these characters engage in, using Goudge's *The Eliots of Damrosehay Trilogy*, also published as *Bird in the Tree*, *Pilgrim's Inn* (or *Herb of Grace*) and *Heart of the Family*, and *The Rosemary Tree*. Although Goudge had no professional training in psychology, her characters engage in what today would be labeled as modern-day therapeutic techniques, from Radical Acceptance to forms of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; her deep understanding of human nature reflects her contemplative spiritual life and her novels focus on both human suffering and joys.

For my husband,  
my mother and father,  
and my sister,  
with loving thanks.

Elizabeth de Beauchamp Goudge (1900 – 1984) was a British novelist who wrote before, during and after World War I and II in Europe. Her novels feature journeys or quests that take place at home, in the confines of domesticity. Though unadventurous, in a traditional sense, the quests her characters pursue require courage and fortitude. These quiet novels brim with discussions of literature and art, but primarily it is the art of living that is focused on. Characters learn from one another's insights as well as actions. Over the course of the novels, they are given visions of better versions of themselves to aspire to, which, over time, they achieve.

*The Eliots of Damrosehay Trilogy* (1957) was first published as *The Bird in the Tree* (1940), *Pilgrim's Inn* (1948), and *The Heart of the Family* (1953). *Pilgrim's Inn* was also published in England as *The Herb of Grace*. *The Trilogy*, as well as *The Rosemary Tree* (1956), offers a surprising insight into what is now termed mindful living, against the wartime backdrop of the experience and awareness of real violence, pain and suffering.

Despite her once enormous popularity, neither Elizabeth Goudge nor her adult novels have amassed much academic discussion. Contemporary press clippings and reviews of her award-winning novels indicate that her writing was well-received and filled a specific niche after both World Wars, in her native England and beyond. While cogent critical commentary continues in the 21st century, it is found predominately on blogs, reviews and websites maintained in a scholarly fashion by ardent fans. And yet her novels maintain their relevance and immediacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Though the backdrop of the major world wars provides a time-specific occasion for the imposition of real suffering through hardships of displacement, food scarcity, physical war-injuries, and the unexpected losses of loved ones due to battle and random bombs, it could be replaced by any present-day world suffering. What distinguishes Goudge's treatment of the World War I and II

from that of the Napoleonic wars in Jane Austen's novels, is that Goudge's characters are not protected from the war, to the extent that Jane Austen's were. Goudge's characters face the wars' impositions on everyday life. This occurs both volitionally, when characters choose to listen to the radio, learning what was happening overseas, and involuntarily, in the very real ways in which the entire nation of Great Britain, civilians and soldiers alike, were affected by the war, from bombings to hosting evacuees, or being one, to rationing. While most modern nations are in a different situation than was England pre- and post-WWII, many people today do live in very real fear of violence perhaps not only from other nations dropping bombs, but through other equally random acts of violence. Violence once relegated to war is becoming ubiquitous. It is also all too easily experienced vicariously through the immediacy of television and the internet<sup>i</sup>, and the effects of this on everyone, not just trauma workers, of this vicarious traumatization<sup>ii</sup>, as it is known, have been documented by psychological studies.<sup>iii</sup> Yet despite our extraordinary technological connectedness, individuals can feel just estranged and isolated from the people around them facing these destructive and soul jarring circumstances. Even apart from the war-time realities of Goudge's time, the world of the 21st century is still racked with pain and suffering, refugee camps, and immigrants fleeing genocide. Human vulnerabilities remain constant.

It is difficult to address, directly, the realities of suffering and to speak of healing, in a way that is going to be useful to the person who is in the midst of it. In writing her novels, Elizabeth Goudge engages in a discourse with the general public that enables her to share her personally held convictions about life and the nature of healing, and how it can be brought about. She demonstrates the creation of and careful tending to, of healing places. Goudge utilizes the form of the novel to be a way of showing truth beyond the story, by means of story.

Through the medium of the novel, Goudge presents her ideas about the art of creating healing places, and the necessity for them. She does this in a way that enlightens her readers as to

ways in which to create healing places for themselves, through conversations that the characters have with one another. She also pleases readers' imaginations in her very detailed presentation of spaces of healing; not formal places, like hospitals, or hospices, or even places built for the healing of torture victims, but the transformation of ordinary homes into places of healing. Goudge gives her readers interesting and multifaceted characters, whose many small acts and conversations and thoughts add up to count for much more than any one part, each functioning as an incremental portion of her overarching theme.

Goudge defines healing, not as the complete restoration to a pre-wounded state, but rather, as people being enabled to continue on to the next stage of their lives, despite, or even because of, harrowing experiences. Merriam Webster has multiple definitions of healing, ranging from a simple sort of patching up, to a complete and total restoration, to being able to function again, to overcome. Goudge uses this latter, "to overcome." She shows that healing often occurs incrementally, as many small choices are made, eventually leading to greater healing, even when healing is not the primary objective. Indeed, healing in Goudge's novels can be so gradual that it might be better defined as not a cure, but both a respite from suffering, and a permanent, life-changing transformation.

As many authors do, Goudge writes about what she knows. She is keenly aware of her own suffering and that of the people around her. She does not shrink back from facing it in her works. She, of course, does not use the language we would use today to describe her character's responses to their situations and how these impact themselves and others, yet she describes situations to which we can apply contemporary understandings to obtain relevant contemporary meaning. She shares the paths towards and through healing that she and others have found successful. The variety of her characters' responses can be seen as sets of examples for the reader to follow and learn from. These templates include the spiritual practices of mindfulness, solitude and stillness, and service to others.

She also writes of self-enrichment, and radical acceptance, as well as a route to self-knowledge that today would be considered the employment of the techniques of cognitive behavioral therapy.

These templates are presented illustratively in the narratives, rather than directly. In *The Rosemary Tree*, and *The Eliots of Damrosehay* trilogy, Goudge illustrates several paths towards, and in one case deliberately away from, healing, using a semi-omniscient narrator, conversations between the characters, and the characters' inner reflections. Goudge's use of the semi-omniscient narrator accomplishes two distinct goals. Firstly, it allows the reader to surmise what is occurring to the characters before they themselves may have fully processed it. Secondly, it allows the reader to be plunged into a world of beauty and loveliness. Goudge's many paragraphs of scenic description may seem to be superfluous, or simply there to set the stage, but they also transport readers, and enable them to be able to see and understand for themselves, the healing places that the characters live in and have created with intention. In addition to the places of nature that her characters seek out and delight in, Goudge's characters create oases of domestic refuge and gardens. These are places of respite, comfort and solace. Characters live with extraordinary intentionality, centering their lives around small things that would seem scarcely important outside of the confines of a home, but which actually carry great significance and importance to the well-being, of both they themselves, and of their fellow-characters. In the midst of a world where safety was so questionable, and displacement was common, home takes on a much greater importance, both to preserve wholeness and to restore it. Her characters choose their settings, and their methods for creating and preserving those spaces of "refuge" and "escape" where people may enter "weary and sickened" in order to be refreshed amidst "peace" and beauty," "and go away made new" (BT 50-1). They follow in the footsteps of previous generations, and their own work, is set against a backdrop of awareness of the hard work of those who have gone before.

Goudge's conversations create a pattern for how people in everyday life might interact with one another, not on a continual basis, but in moments of intimate security. Characters discuss weighty topics, such as suffering, the wisdom that comes with aging, the care of one's spirit, and even, explicitly, healing. The characters' inner reflections, inspired by their interactions with art, natural beauty, dialogue and meta-ruminations, form a pattern for interactions with one's self. Her characters choose to allow themselves to contemplate things of beauty, to ponder dialogue, and to become aware of their own thought-processes. It is easy for people to neglect to engage with thoughts and feelings; Goudge's characters offer one another myriad opportunities to enter, or reengage, into deeper understandings.

*The Eliots of Damerosehay Trilogy* and *The Rosemary Tree* are stay-at-home adventures of the spirit. All the action takes place predominately indoors, or in gardens. The wars are mentioned explicitly only occasionally, but their ramifications are constantly felt. Goudge's references of aspects of daily living during World War I and World War II are specifically time-bound, but it is not their impact that is the central focus of the novel, nor its driving force, although the results of war are a central theme.

It is the interactions of the characters with one another, as well as their reflections and quiet contemplation that are the driving force of the narrative. Rather than centering around the intricacies of navigating social graces and complicated relationships, Goudge focuses on developing a life of the spirit, a mindful life. Rather than sending her characters out to combat the evils humans find in the world around them, she sends them deeper in, to repair and comfort. And rather than psychoanalytically focusing on the human evils within, she creates characters whose life's work is the creation of home, and a sense of place, with its subsequent healing ability. She refers in *The Heart of the Home*, to Lavender Cottage, the place where Lucilla and her elderly daughter Margaret retire to, as the place where they can "make [their] souls" (HF 30). The young mother Sally, in the

same book speaks of the four homes owned by members of the same family as “standing at the four points of the compass” (HF 40-1), representing the north, south east and west

Goudge’s treatment of the specific ailments that plagued the society she lived and wrote in applies as well to our present age. She writes with a deep conviction that all times will be plagued with the scourges of selfishness, fear, and violence. And this is true, reading her now. The focus of societal fears has changed, in that new groups are waging violence, their technological capabilities advancing beyond what existed in Goudge’s time, but the literature she wrote which so helped her readers process the horrors and cruelties of the world is even more relevant now, than to her original audience.

Others have also examined the power of Goudge’s works beyond their being merely pleasant stories. Much of the academic writing on Goudge focuses on her children’s literature and appears in journals such as *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* and *The Lion and the Unicorn*<sup>iv</sup>.

Michelle Joselin Warry in her 2004 thesis “Vision of Community: A Feminist Re-reading of Elizabeth Goudge’s Children’s Novels” suggests that Goudge has unjustly been forgotten as a feminist author, and deserves more scholarly attention, as well as a resurgence of readership. As of the writing of this thesis, nearly all of Goudge’s children’s and adult books are back in print, making at least this second hope, an easy reality. While her children’s stories are excellent in their own right, it is her adult tales, and the enduring implication they have for today’s society, that is our focus here. Retired Australian professor John Gough argues in “Reconsidering Elizabeth Goudge” published in 1996 in the journal *Bookbird* that Goudge has frequently been mislabeled as a romance author. Rather than romance attracting her readers, he contends that it is “her intense observation of landscape; the clashing contradictions that contend within each individual; and the passion with which the story unfolds to its hard-won satisfactory ending” (Gough) that draws readers to her works. While her writing “has been criticized for what might appear to be cozy over-sentimentality

and or writing about a world that is alleged to be unrealistic,” he argues that such criticism “fundamentally misunderstands her moral vision.” (Gough). Goudge’s dynamic stories contain layers beneath the surface, but his assertion that her novels, “historical or modern, are always about two worlds: our own everyday world as it once was, full of the brutal and tender facts of reality, as well as the world of beauty, poetry, faith, or a child’s vision,” misses the mark, I believe. She does, as he suggests, present “these worlds as two aspects of one larger richer world,” but not in order to “transform and transcend what we take for granted as ‘ordinary.’” Rather she does so to actively guide her readers through becoming aware of both aspects of life. Goudge’s portrayal of multiple viewpoints with which to view reality, or the world in which her readers live, simultaneously presents both the ordinary aspects of life *and* the uplifting ones. At a gathering of the Romantic Novelists Association, an organization for which she served as vice-president, Goudge is quoted as having said that “As this world becomes increasingly ugly, callous and materialistic it needs to be reminded...that the blue spring mist that makes an ugly street look beautiful is just as real a thing as the street itself.”<sup>v</sup> The novels that she wrote portray a world filled with both harsh realities and beautiful ones, too. Goudge’s draws readers, by means of her novels, into a world in which they can view those aspects of beauty, poetry and faith in the life that goes on around them daily.

Goudge’s novels may be enjoyed on multiple levels, not the least of which is for pure entertainment. Frances Diane Neal in 1997 wrote a thesis studying Goudge’s works as a kind of respite, intended to be read purely as lighthearted fairy tales, “Fairy Tales for Grown-Ups: The Love Gifts of Goudge.” Goudge’s primary motive, Neal suggests, was “to comfort, entertain and edify her readers” (Neal ii). Quoting Bettelheim, she argues that Goudge's work, like a fairy tale, “makes no demands of the listener, but ‘reassures, gives hope for the future, and holds out the promise of a happy ending’” (Neal 22). Neal points to broken characters as “representative of those who were left spiritually deprived and without hope, place, or function by World War I (Neal 23). While

Goudge's works do enrich and delight her readers, the assertion by Neal that they make "no demands" of her readers is a dismaying one. It is an easy trap, to fall into line with her contemporary critics than to seek to explore other lenses through which the novels might be viewed. However, Neal's premise does make one very important point: there was a great deal of societal interest in novels that allowed hope to prevail; but Goudge's novels have remained quietly popular long after many of those other novels have fallen largely out of favor. There must be something deeper in books to keep people coming back to them, and in Goudge's work, there certainly is. Neal's conclusion is that it was through her books that Goudge sought to alleviate the despair of the world, offering stories that allowed escape. More than that, however, they offer succor and encouragement. However, a closer reading of Goudge suggests that it is not so much escape that she offers, as a way through.

Niamh Baker, feminist scholar of post-World Wars female British novelists, posits in *Happily Ever After? Women's Fiction in Postwar Britain* that Elizabeth Goudge is one of several who "cannot be dismissed as merely writers of escapist romantic novels since they confront issues that face women" (Baker 22). Goudge, Baker suggests, is among those female popular British postwar authors who, because they were passed over by literary critics, were freer to "question contemporary beliefs" (Baker 24). This is possibly true, that Goudge's grappling with deep truths, was enabled by a sort of isolation that resulted from her being considered less seriously by critics. While Baker discusses very real issues of feminism and women grappling with a unique set of clashes between traditional roles and contemporary ones during the wars and the period following them, Goudge is an ill fit with the company of novelists Baker tries to categorize her with, such as Elizabeth Jane Howard and Barbara Comyn. Elizabeth Goudge's is not writing solely for women.

While Goudge's characters do grapple with real dilemmas unique to their time period, as traditional roles were changing as a result of the war, it is not simply women whose lives were

completely changed then. Thousands of men and women escaped small villages and narrow lives, by joining the various armed forces. Women became Land Girls. Sally, John Adair's daughter in the trilogy, went from being the daughter of a famous and wealthy man, to looking after sheep, in the Cumberland Hills. There was a complete societal turnover at this time, as more and more members of the servant class went off to war. This is reflected in the novels, with the characters discussing how difficult it is to find any servants. The men and women who grew up being served are now taking care of their older, and dying servants, alone.

Men, as well as women, both in the armed services and at home, were holding onto preserving society. The story of Saint George and the Dragon, served as a touchstone for Great Britain during this time. People referred to it, and believed they were living a form of it out, from Winston Churchill's personal aircraft being named after the patron saint's lance Ascalon, to propaganda posters featuring a knight fighting with a sword against the dragon<sup>vi</sup>. Everyone was aware that the lives and acts of ordinary people were intertwined with the country's success or failure. Goudge is neither writing solely for women, nor is she critiquing, as Baker claims, the traditional, by subverting it. Rather, she is addressing the tensions of creating good amidst recognizing and warring with evil, and she does this while simultaneously working with the tension between what is appealing and appalling about humans.

Goudge, Baker contends, intentionally sets up a paradigm wherein her good characters are revealed, by their flaws, to be not very good at all. Baker argues Goudge as an author is filled with "curious contradictions" (Baker 54), who "openly makes conventional statements about women and their roles, but at the same time subverts those same statements by making her good, conforming women not only somewhat unreal, but at times slightly repellent" (Baker 55). Using the Eliot family matriarch, Lucilla Eliot as an example, Baker argues that "even while portraying Lucilla as a good woman, Elizabeth Goudge undermines the picture over and over again" (Baker 55) by showing her

to be controlling and manipulative. Baker posits that if the thing that is ostensibly good, in this case, the more conventional characters and their actions, is shown to have a bad or less attractive side it is because Goudge is trying to show that the stated good is actually bad, *as a whole*. The assumption here, that Lucilla's manipulation of her family into their own good is a bad thing, is Baker's own.

The flaw in Baker's reasoning is that she neglects to take into account Goudge's Christianity. Baker is operating within a dichotomy that does not apply to Goudge: Goudge's entire point is to highlight the need for grace and compassion in humanity at large, and to cultivate the good that is in fellow humans. She highlighted this at a time historically when the worst of human impulses was so apparent. Goudge believed that people were fundamentally flawed, and in need of redemption, and a redemption that could not, ultimately, come from within themselves. She writes in a Christian context. The complexity of her characters is not, as Baker suggests, Goudge signaling to her readers that even seemingly positive values are somehow less than ideal, but rather that good can come from flawed people; that there is hope of change, a hope of redemption, a hope of something more. Goudge deliberately highlights the less-than-perfect nature of humanity, and the ways in which those negative aspects can be used for good. She frequently has characters wrestling with their awareness of the areas in which they fail, from a moral perspective. She also paints characters in whose lives there are circumstantial evils that ultimately bring good, like the town vicar Hilary Eliot in the Eliot family novels, one of Lucilla's sons, who is beloved by his family, loyal to all, who stands faithfully by them, in prayer. But the reader also learns he is a man racked by tortuous physical pains from being gassed in the first war, whose longing to go into a monastery, was denied, owing to his ill health. Yet he presses on, in the circumstances he finds himself in, drawn by his love of God.

Madonna Marsden puzzles in her essay "Gentle Truths for Gentle Readers: The Fiction of Elizabeth Goudge" over the fact that Goudge's narratives are governed by a "directing force" that

“allows humanity freedom of will” while also being able to “direct that freedom to meet its own ends, which always prove to be positive” (Marsden “Gentle” 70). Given Goudge’s open declaration of faith, that this occurs is not a surprise, but rather, a manifestation of her Christian faith.

She was a lifelong member of the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, an International organization of women in the Anglican church founded in 1884 and still in existence today. The society itself existed in secret until relatively recently, when in 1975 “for one year, Companions studied and prayed and evaluated the future” of their retreat center. The organization ultimately chose to and continues to welcome a wide variety of non-Companions to their retreat center, however prior to 1975, “membership in the SCHC was a private matter, many women never disclosing their association as Companions to the world at large” (17, SCHC Formation Handbook). Indeed, Companions were urged to “exercise discretion and reserve in speaking of the Society, save to Companions” (9 Manual).

This quiet secret among its members explains why none of those who have written previously about Goudge mention it. Only other Companions would have been aware that she was a member, and I am grateful to the Companion who first told me about this.

Their aims in the 1909 handbook are listed as:

1. To bind together by mutual intercession and simple rule those who desire to follow closely in the steps of our Lord's most holy life. <sup>vii</sup>
2. To encourage unceasing prayer for others; to pray especially for the reconciliation of classes<sup>viii</sup> and the reunion of Christendom<sup>ix</sup>; and to encourage the constant spirit of thankfulness and of Christian joy.
3. To inspire and maintain the earnest effort after greater simplicity of life and after the patient bearing of the Cross. <sup>x</sup>
4. To deepen spiritual motive and to strengthen definite aim in all active work,

especially in work among the unfortunate and friendless.

The Intercession they practiced was to be “systematic” and regular, with Companions vowing to “seek to serve God day by day, in the ministry of intercession, in thanksgiving, and in simplicity of life” (Manual 28). These ministries to the world at large and to one another were at core focused on “the deepening of the spiritual life” (Manual 8), and the Rule of the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross states that they are “the links which bind them in a spiritual companionship to which they shall always be lovingly loyal in thought, word, and deed.” Once you were a member, you were a member for life. What those vows described was a commitment to pray steadfastly on a daily basis, for people the members knew and for people throughout the world, pledging to:

lead a life consecrated to the service of Jesus Christ; of inner separateness from the world, in spite of outward circumstance...to have the courage of our convictions in association with the world...to do nothing, say nothing, think nothing, contrary to the spirit of that mighty love which led Jesus Christ to suffer on the Cross...to cultivate his love for souls in praying and working for others, so that his sufferings for them should not have been borne in vain; To study his Word of Life, seeking to reproduce in ourselves his absolute unselfishness and self-sacrifice.; To live and work for others for no reward save his approval; To be ready at all times to obey his voice, and unhesitatingly to say, ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word;’ To say nothing that we would not like Jesus Christ to hear; To do nothing that we would not like Jesus Christ to see; To go to no place where we would not like Jesus Christ to find us; Never to spend our time in such a way that we would not like Jesus Christ to ask, ‘What art thou doing?’; To begin to lead his life here, so that hereafter we shall see him as he is, being conformed through fellowship with his sufferings to the likeness of himself.” (Manual 10 – 11)

Companions take these very seriously, and Goudge’s disciplined spiritual life comes through in her

characters' proclivities and discoveries throughout the four novels discussed in this paper.

Her autobiography, and Christina Rawlins' recently published biography both confirm that she strove to lead a life intentionally "consecrated to the service" of God. Her autobiography considers if, and Rawlins' biography confirms that, she was also successful cultivating that "inner separateness from the world, in spite of outward circumstances" and a deep courage in her convictions shines forth in her novels. The characters she describes, the paths their lives take in responding to the wars themselves and the changes they bring to modern society, and the circumstances in which they find themselves cover a wide range of life stages, beliefs and preferences. But the instructions that characters give one another on how to live their lives and the ways in which healing occurs, reveal an exceedingly strong conviction on the part of Goudge in sharing with the world the valued beliefs by which she lives.

The importance of becoming unselfish and self-sacrificial is addressed in nearly every one of Goudge's novels from those for children to the historical romances. Additionally, cultivating a readiness to harken to the small still promptings that they receive always benefits characters, whether they do so recognizing that action to be obedience to "the voice" of God or not. And the utility of suffering in forming connections between people and with God likewise frequently reoccurs as a theme. As has been pointed out about JRR Tolkien, there is an extent to which one's personal beliefs will invariably leak out into one's writing, simply because they are an integral part to one's being.<sup>xi</sup> Her idea that good will ultimately win is an intrinsic tenet of Christianity, despite Marsden's implication that Goudge was sugar-coating real life with happy endings. However, for Goudge's characters there is not always an escape from suffering in this lifetime, and certainly there is no escape from death. There are sanctuaries of recovery and respite, but there is always danger and fear and unhappiness. Goudge's novels, and in particular these four, are stories of people's attempts to navigate through the quagmires of life, and the ways in which they show success are

directly correlated to the practices that she herself found life-giving and necessary.

Warry notes that “Marsden’s argument is severely restricted in its scope by her radicalism” (Warry 12), being very “patriarchy-focused” which leads to Marsden being “unable to address other possibilities outside the stance of her thesis” (Warry 13). Marsden suggests that “self-sacrifice and selflessness” are characteristically feminine (Marsden “Fiction”), when in fact, they are in Goudge, particularly Christian ideals, that apply to both men and women. Many of the sufferers in Goudge’s novels, have been damaged by forces beyond their control, and yet retain their ability to love and sacrifice. Sebastian, a concert pianist who has been in a German prison camp, who lost his beloved son there, and the rest of his family in the bombing of Hamburg, is particularly self-sacrificing. Despite all he has lost, he spends most of the generous salary David pays him, on charity for others.

Characters do, as Marsden suggests, find joy when connected to other people, but while some deliberately chose unwise courses, like Michael in *The Rosemary Tree* who uses his clients’ money to back his own play, and upon losing it, serves jail time, others like his jilted fiancé Daphne, have to deal with the pain inflicted upon them. When she initially chooses to respond out of her hurt pride, her actions create bitterness and cause her much harm throughout the years. Eventually, she is confronted with the truth, that her husband has been much better for her than Michael ever would have been. John has drawn her closer to God, and closer to whom she was meant to be, whereas Michael brought out in her all that was mean spirited, and unpleasant. Her ability to picture Michael as a child, to love him as an injured person not as the agent of her pain, and her confrontation of who she was at that point in her life, enable her to be, finally, released from those emotions.

Archivist Anne Salter, of Ogelthorpe University, the curator of a web database of Goudge’s life, and author of several articles on Goudge and of a forthcoming book exploring work on commentary on Goudge through 2010, argues that Goudge’s characters learn perseverance by example. In her article “Elizabeth Goudge Revisited: The Lost Art of Happily Ever After,” in the

Georgia Library Quarterly, she suggests that much of Goudge's appeal is due to the indomitable spirit her characters have, in the face of suffering and life-shattering changes, the "Victorians — the quintessential good soldiers," Salter proclaims, "— mustered on through the hard times, quietly and patiently enduring until better times came. Those better times always did arrive no matter how miniscule or unassuming." Furthermore, she argues, "optimism and imagination are often happily linked in those end-of-the-19th-century minds, and Ms. Goudge's writing style and personal history reveal nothing less than the unsinkable spirit — a product of her upbringing." Goudge absolutely does direct her readers towards fortitude and the willingness to find joy in small and "unassuming" places, as Salter suggests, and there is a real understanding throughout her narratives that people have a choice only in our response to life's difficulties, in how we handle ourselves, particularly. We will never really be at liberty to fully evade such difficulties.

However, this viewpoint is not only acquired by having been brought up a certain way. The ability to recognize one's own individual power over one's own response can be learned regardless of upbringing. This frame of reference Salter credits as a particularly Victorian sensibility, "with its optimistic joy in the small things of life and its ability to shoulder burdens until the sun shines again, " is a learned response, one which can both be acquired from an early age at home, or, as an adult, later in life. Salter suggests, I believe correctly, that this trait Goudge writes into her characters is what "makes her characters appealing, especially to readers with similar trials," and indeed, to many of the present-day bloggers and reviewers who find a point of commonality and resonance with Goudge's characters' experiences, and, frequently, in their responses. But Goudge is not merely writing for those who have found respite and comfort as do her characters, but also for those who have yet to find it, to give hope. Among the devoted fans reviewing Goudge's works are many who speak of an older relative, as Salter does, whose correspondence with Goudge began in response to their reading one or more of Goudge's books which helped them through a difficult

time in their lives. Goudge, like so many authors, requested that her papers be burned after her death and her wishes were followed, but even those letters from her that remain are as good as burned because their recipients find them too personal to share.<sup>xii</sup> Goudge met people both in her actual letters to individuals, and in her novels, in the midst of life's trials.

It is also an error to pin Goudge's work to a particular time period. In 1993, Indian author Indrani Aikath-Gyaltsen published a plagiarized novel, *Cranes' Morning*, taken word-for-word from Goudge's 1956 novel *The Rosemary Tree*. It received rave reviews in England, India, and the United States; from reviewers like Edward Hower of *The New York Times*, to authors as exemplary as Amy Tan. While the discovery of the novel's fraudulent origins soon pulled it from the shelf, the indirect praise that Goudge's work received, albeit under Aikath-Gyaltsen's name, for its insightful look at modern grief, suffering and perseverance in the midst of the realities of human life suggests, as Paul Kafka in *The Washington Post* points out, that the original author's work merits another look. That this story that so captured public appeal is so imbued with wisdom, is not unsurprising. Healing is a universal and eternal process, and Elizabeth Goudge depicted it and gave us an understanding based on her time period. Different language is used to describe what she saw, experienced and wrote about, today, than Goudge used. But the words that are used to describe the processes she described, the behavioral health terms of today will, in another sixty-five to eight-five years, also likely have changed. But her portrayal of it taps into a universal truth that is timeless.

A number of critics of her day dismissed Goudge's novels as frothy and saccharine and claimed to be bewildered by the source of her popularity. Their belittlement of Goudge, even after her award-winning *Green Dolphin Street* was made into an award-winning motion picture, reads rather appallingly, by today's standards. Fortunately not all critics found her unworthy of contemplation. Some of her more positive reviewers suggest that Goudge's novels themselves are the very respite that her characters experience in her novels, Rosemary Carr Benet in particular says

that, "Miss Goudge, who may or may not be lonely and afraid, manages through her books to speak directly to many readers who are both fearful and alone; if for only a few hours she can quiet their panic with dreams, surely she has reason to be proud" (Benet). This was made as a defense against sarcastic reviews of Goudge's novels' popularity and the making of one book into a movie.

Incredulous critics saw nothing worth admiring, and Benet's counter is, by comparison, uplifting.

Indeed, finding respite is a very real part of Goudge's project. As she herself proclaims, "I am not a serious chronicler of the very terrible contemporary scene but just a story-teller, and there is so much tragedy about us everywhere today that we surely don't want it in the story-books to which we turn when we are ill or unhappy... We must escape somewhere" (Salter). However, Goudge does not merely return the reader back to from whence she or he came, but lifts her or him up, giving hope and encouragement. Her stories incorporate characters handling very difficult life-circumstances *within* their on-going life-altering difficulties. There is no real escape, only rest and further preparation for the next thing, whether more of the same, or something new.

Salter reflects on this lack of final resolution when discussing Goudge's personal life:

Her life, as revealed in her auto-biography, *The Joy of the Snow*, reads like anything but her optimistic and happy-ending novels. Yet through it all, Goudge remains undaunted and accepting of what life measures out. Her parents were her models. Her father, a prominent clergyman of the Anglican Church, moved several times, uprooting the family on each occasion. Her mother, an invalid most of her life, suffered terribly from a back injury. [She also lived out her days among those who allowed her homeland of Jersey, one of the Channel Islands, to fall to the Nazis, and carried a real grudge against the British.] Yet Goudge's life is revealed as that surrounded by a loving family to whom hardships were part of life and the good times found in the source of a sunny day, an abundantly blooming lilac bush and a peaceful walk with the family dog.

It is no surprise that as a novelist Goudge wrote from her own life and the lives of others around her, but what is surprising, and can easily go unnoticed, is the fortitude of her characters when faced with a variety of ailments, heartbreaks, and major life decisions. Their quietude might be mistaken for a lack of turmoil, but, upon a closer reading, nearly every character within Goudge's novels, and in the three Eliot Family novels and in *The Rosemary Tree* in particular, has a deep and defining life-changing struggle that the reader is let into. There is no person in any of Goudge's novels who exists without some thing that causes them bitterness, frustration, pain, anxiety, or misery.

Goudge's exploration of the benefits of traditional ways in a modern world is less about feminism, as Baker and Marsden imagine, and more about the importance in small things in the creation of normalcy in world she sees is sorely lacking it. The ways in which people treat one another, and the ways that they treat their spaces, dramatically affects the ways that positive change can be brought about in others' lives. Throughout the four novels discussed here, Goudge presents her readers with a guide for care of self and of others who are in pain, all within the confines of the un-heroic daily-life.

Among the practices that Goudge's characters engage in that can be done alone to restore the soul is mindfulness. The characters of Goudge are able to still themselves, and allow their minds to dwell on the world around them. They center on the natural world, woods, rivers and the estuary near the Herb of Grace Inn, and Damerosehay. They also focus on objects created by human agency, like gardens, actors' performances, musicians' playing, church sculptures, poems, paintings, and buildings. Meditation can take a number of forms, but it is not refined or polished, or easily explained to others. Daphne finds this in *The Rosemary Tree*, when trying to explain hers to her husband, John, the village vicar and squire:

“... I sat in the church by myself and meditated. Don't look so astonished. I meditated. At least I think so.”

“What method did you use?” asked John with a twinkling eyes.”

“I know nothing about methods,’ said Daphne. “I’ve never listened when you’ve told me about them. I’ve always thought Belmaray church was like a rock and I merely thought suddenly that the vicarage pew was my particular hole in that rock, and then somehow or other I arrived at knowing that I’m lodged like a seed in a cranny of some much greater rock... what I’m saying has been said before of course” (RT 365-6)

Because the reader was with her in the moment she was having the visions and experiencing the revelations she continues with, they make sense, but summarized, they don’t entirely, and she says as much to John. He tells her that, “everyone’s meditations are crude. Human nature is crude and all our aspirations are as crude as our nature; but they’re the stuff of growth so what does it matter if they are?” (RT 365), and indeed, each moment of medication often means the most to the practitioner, when they try and explain the depths to which they have been affected, the moment oft evades words.

These moments come about when characters take time to slow down and delight in the world around them through nature and art, music, and reading. In those moments of contemplation, however brief they may be, characters are freed to realize there are truths beyond themselves and their own lives. Removed from the busyness of their days for a period of time, they are enabled to see things outside their moment-by-moment scope. They are able to focus on the needs of others, to consider the present things that need to be done, as well as considering their future. They are able to see the consequences of their past actions, and how those have influenced their present lives; to use a modern term, they practice mindfulness.

There are many examples of specific portions of nature inspiring mindfulness, but fewer specific pieces of art, theatre and music. Van Gogh’s painting of the Lark and the wheat sheaves in a childhood room is one, a reproduction of which hangs over David’s childhood bedroom, and

causes Sebastian to remember “the thrill of delight the picture had given him when he had first seen it” (HF 20) It provides the first opening of the, ”shutters in his mind closed against all moments of past happiness” that he himself had erected after his wife and children’s deaths, and “almost exhausted his will with the effort of holding them shut” (HF 20). But the beauty of the picture brings him joy, and “the memory of the light and of the lark” slips through “quite easily” without bringing “pain” (HF 20). Childhood visits to art museums is another remembered pastime, the pictures characters saw in their youth return them over the course of the novels, long after they have grown up.

Lucilla, the Eliot family matriarch recalls to pianist Sebastian, “you played at the Waldstein. What an evening of delight you gave us!” (HF 93). They find joy in the universe even while being also being aware of suffering and pain. For some of Goudge’s characters, it is that very awareness of suffering and pain that enables them to find restorative joy, even the ability to continue living. Actor David Eliot, a protagonist of *Heart of the Family* and the eventual employer of Sebastian, a world famous concert pianist who lost his family in the war, speaks of Sebastian’s connectedness in a conversation with David's wife:

‘But there are those who at times can reach a world-consciousness of suffering,’ David went on. ‘A man who had been in a concentration camp talked to me about it once. He said that for a moment or two there can come to you, through your own suffering, a consciousness of the suffering of the whole world.’

‘How horrible!’ said Sally.

‘On the contrary, he said it was only those moments that made it possible to go on.’

‘We can’t share our particular Things, but deep down somewhere they can link us together,’ said Sally.

‘That’s the idea.’ (HF 45)

They go on to discuss how this idea of interconnectedness is not limited to truly noteworthy suffering such as living through a concentration camp or a war, but also the “little silly things that fortunate people have,” (HF 45) too, suggesting that those, too, “could let us in... if we knew the way to let them” (HF 45). The idea that suffering can connect all of humanity runs throughout Goudge’s works and even in her own autobiography. It could be said that joyousness does, too, but one’s own joy is often easily a communal thing, whereas suffering is more often than not, private. Goudge has characters learning to connect with others via, and because of, their suffering. Harriet, an arthritic invalid in *The Rosemary Tree* whose usefulness, because of her health, is past and she struggles with feeling purposeless. She finds comfort in allowing “the trevail [sic] of her mind to bring forth one concrete fact at a time to pray about; one child in danger, some particular man in darkness, some particular prisoner facing the world again with fear and shame; God knew who they were even if she did not” (RT 14). She uses her own emotions and anguish to allow her to be connected to an imagined person for whom she can pray. And curiously, it is Harriet who gives the most wisdom to Daphne, brings healing and comfort to Michael, just out of prison, and support to John, and his ministry. As John and Daphne’s children are led out from the soul destroying darkness of Mrs. Belling’s school and into a new one, the reader is led to assume, that it is Harriet’s prayers which have paved a way for this to happen.

And there are others besides Harriet whose lives are focused on prayer. Hilary, the village vicar in the Eliot family novels, and son of Lucilla the family matriarch, uses his pain from his injuries in the first World War, not as a source of connection, per se, but as a reminder to himself, also to pray. He physically cannot sleep often, due to his pain, and, while there is little to no mention of this fact, except as an aside in which Goudge mentions that due to not being able to sleep, he remains awake and uses the time to tend spiritually to those he loves. In Goudge’s novels, meditations on others, lifting up a crises or a particular person in prayer, is an active response. This

is known as intercessory prayer. Through her books and in life, Goudge treated prayer as an interventive means of action, and it would be an incomplete analysis not to attend to this aspect. Goudge herself corresponded with a number of people for whom she prayed.

Prayer has an intriguing treatment in the novels. Goudge is not afraid to take a close look at it. Many of her clerics at times mistrust their ability to pray successfully, and even explicitly state that often it feels to them as if prayers are not answered. The Anglican vicar John in *The Rosemary Tree* even goes so far as to argue that “unless prayer was bread cast upon the waters in blind faith, without hope or desire for knowledge or reward, then it was nothing more than a selfish and dangerous indulgence of fantasy” (RT 27). The narrator also offers a window into his mind, sharing with the reader that “it was perpetually his duty as priest to do something about somebody and his prayers for guidance were seldom answered in any way that was apparent to him” (RT 38). Yet Goudge also shows that his concern shines through and his “bewilderment” (RT 38) in and of itself is a form of restoration for his parishioners. His actions, taken in prayer, seem to always connect. Not simply because he is a character in a novel, but because of his belief that someone, somehow, needs to do something. Seemingly fervent prayer is not answered directly by divine intervention, and yet, her characters at times awkwardly bumble towards helping their fellow characters, and something in what they say unlocks the healing process for others, which Goudge hints at, as being a sort of divine orchestration. How people respond in response to their faith speaks loudly. John muses on the subject of cleaning at one point, “What did a little dust more or less matter? The communing of one soul with another was really more important even if it were only on the subject of mice. He thought to himself now that it did not much matter, in itself, what one did. It was chiefly as the vehicle of love or the symbol of prayer that action was important” (RT 26). Ultimately, Goudge seems to be saying, via her priests, that the meta-analysis of prayer’s effectiveness is less important than the care for other people, and the selflessness, which inevitably

accompanies it. Through her characters' interactions, also, Goudge suggests answers do come to prayer. But they come not always in the form of cut and dried delineations. Harriet prays, in the midst of her frustration after watching John's wife doing the task that he forgets, while watching John hastily completing it, that they would be able to laugh together, asking God why the yaffingale could not teach them to laugh together (RT 44). No further dots are connected for the reader, and yet, it is in response to that same woodpecker's song that Daphne and John do laugh, a short few sections later, instead of having one of their rows. Time and time again, Goudge shows prayers being answered, but prayers that only the reader is privy to, almost exclusively by way of the narrator's relaying them. Often no precise words are spoken, and only the gist is relayed. Her doing this again and again indicates that there is meaning behind them. Beyond connecting the storylines together, Goudge is showing readers the interconnectedness of people who are willing to be used as agents in one another's lives.

While Goudge's conviction of the vital importance of prayer may not be shared by her readers, evidence of her faith does not seem to have distanced her from them, either. Bloggers and modern online reviewers alike comment on how her awareness of something beyond the day-to-day aspects of the material world, bolstered them through darker times. Some have come to share in Goudge's faith. Others dismiss it as quaint, yet Goudge's faith is one of the tools she found invaluable to her own life that she offers to her readers as life-giving.

There is a theme of community throughout Goudge that has a spiritual base. In *The Rosemary Tree* Harriet tells Michael, formerly imprisoned for embezzlement, that "'we're never alone...that's the mistake so many people make. There'd be less fear if folk know how little alone they are...You've forgotten your mother, maybe?' 'No, I never forget her.' 'Then it's an odd thing you thought yourself alone,' said Harriet" (RT 380-1). There's a sense of a thin veil throughout Goudge's four novels, and in the others, too, wherein those who are close to death realize how close

those they loved have been to them in life, even as they died. Far from words offered in solace, Goudge's elderly, who are, as the Eliot family matriarch explains, closer to death, are more aware of what else is going on around them, beyond what they might normally perceive. While Goudge does discuss ghosts in her autobiography, she does not believe that these people are stuck, this community is one that is merely the natural extension of that had on earth. In the Anglican Communion, this is known as the Communion of Saints, and indeed, in the *Companions*, there is a chapter, called *The Paradise Chapter*, into which those who have died transfer their membership. Goudge portrays her characters as sharing this viewpoint; they are conscious of their membership in this community of the spirit, and they are not alone, even when alone.

While the disciplines of meditation, stillness, and prayer can be practiced alone, perhaps they can be best cultivated amidst a juxtaposition of the two. Taking time in the midst of busy lives filled with to-dos to stop requires greater, more intentional effort, and the benefits are arguably most tested and felt. This belief in the importance of community as a venue for living out one's spirituality has its roots in pilgrims' beliefs. Goudge was deeply influenced by her study of the Cistercian Order, known for their disciplined spiritual lives, their severe simplicity, and their esteem for physical work. Traces of their philosophy are to be found throughout her novels, and a monk appears as a character, or is referenced, in nearly every novel she wrote, including her children's novels. If not a monk himself, at the very least, mention is made of the dissolution of the monasteries in England by Henry the VIII. And she made the *Herb of Grace* the original hostelry for the pilgrims of what was formerly a Cistercian Abbey.

The Cistercian Order was founded at the end of the eleventh century and readopting, "the letter and spirit of St. Benedict's rule, that is, a communal life in which by means of the liturgy, spiritual reading and manual labour, the monks sought contemplation and greater union with God" (MacLoughlin 296). The Order was founded in the year 1098, by Benedictine Robert of Molesme,

at Cîteaux Abbey, near Dijon, France (Donkin 403) and was the third in a series of reforms to occur surrounding the Rule of St. Benedict, which in its inception balanced communal and private prayer, sleep, spiritual reading, and manual labor, “that in all [things] God might be glorified“ (from Chapter 57 of The Rule of St. Benedict, *ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus*, from 1 Peter 4:11).<sup>xiii</sup>

The Cistercian theologians argued that the disciplines of the will, as St. Benedict had emphasized, over the more stringent physical disciplines, were “interior exercises of obedience, humility, and charity” that “were to be practiced in a community life” (MacLoughlin 296). Indeed, they were *best* practiced within the confines of communal life. The Cistercian writings are not alone in discussing the idea of learning from others, but they are unique in stressing relationships amongst fellow monks, equals, as “contributing to emotional change within the advancing soul” (Bynum 279). It is interesting to note, in Goudge’s novels, how frequently characters find themselves tried in ways that would have been familiar to Cistercian monks, and resisting the temptation to react negatively to others’ truly annoying behaviors. The narrator rarely takes sides, merely portraying the interactions and leaving characters to puzzle out motivations and rationales, from unmarried Margaret breaking free and purchasing a trolley for tea on her own, to Tommy borrowing the skeleton his brother Ben keeps for his art, without asking. Again and again the narrator shows how the living out of principles challenges the individuals who hold them, and requires constant vigilance. Goudge shows the importance of the solitary practices, many of which, particularly mindfulness, have reemerged today, but which are much more easily done alone than practiced around other people. This is the challenge that Goudge’s characters, and indeed, all humans, face – how to walk out the values of being kind, loving, and cherishing amidst the sincerely trying nature of fellow humans.

Another aspect of community that resurfaces again and again in these four novels is that of assuming the mantle of those who have gone before one, carrying out their work. Interestingly,

while some characters in the Eliot Trilogy actively embrace a familial legacy, others are the first in their families to embark on their quest, and their heritage is one of people unrelated by blood, but united in vision. In speaking of the land that inspired her to write the Eliot family novels, Goudge suggests that like “the natural loveliness has perpetually renewed itself in sea and woods and marshes, lanes and fields,” even as it changes season by season, there is an aspect in which the “heroism of this human life, the effort, the order and peace” also remains ready to be seen. She suggests that the women and men who made lives for themselves and their families amidst great difficulty somehow created a lasting, resounding, echo. They, like the “monks of Beaulieu who toiled and prayed in the great Abbey, tilled the ground, nursed the sick, taught the ignorant, and set the great bell of the Abbey pealing so loudly that it was heard by the sailors out at sea, [who] were not men whose influence upon the country where they lived can be rubbed out by the passing of just a few centuries” did not vanish.<sup>xiv</sup> In *Heart of the Family*, Sebastian speaks of being “very much aware of the Eliots’ fortitude” (HF 317), and David adds Sebastian to the list of the people who have lived at Damerosehay, saying “you know just what I mean. In the future the discerning will be just as aware of you as you are aware of Christopher Martin” (317 HF).

Beaulieu was the Cistercian monastery near the house that inspired Damerosehay; the mill is there still, and as is true in so many parts of the United Kingdom, pieces of the monastery are to be found scattered amidst the backdrop of everyday modern life. The monks sought to provide entirely for themselves, any hired workmen and anyone in their guest-houses within a self-sufficient system (Williams 58), a Cistercian monk “being required to provide his daily food by the labour of his hands in cultivating the land and in tending cattle” (Williams 56-7). “Manual labour” was not meant “for the purpose of making profit,” rather it was to be “limited by the needs of the monastery.”<sup>xv</sup> Laying hold of this self-sufficient hospitality, the Eliot children successfully convince their parents to reopen the Pilgrims Inn near a river. The children work very hard, sometimes more

enthusiastically than strictly usefully, but always with strong commitment. As a child, Ben Eliot takes to dedicating each task of demolition to God, shouting “For the glory of God!” (PI 108) while removing almanacs covering beautiful old wood paneling, and it becomes his cry for subsequent tasks. His father, George, “protested at this battle cry, but Ben had stuck to it. This house was a maison-dieu, and the stripping away of all that was unworthy and the building up of new beauty was in the nature of a crusade” (PI 108). There was a real sense in which the Eliots who now made their home in the inn perceived themselves as having taken on the mantle of the monks, being compelled to “give shelter and refreshment at any hour” (PI 111), and joining the “deep companionable love of those who strive together for the glory of God” (PI 107-8). That the space had been set apart did not make its refurnishing any less difficult, but Nadine, who has a “supreme gift for furnishing and decorating” finds that she “never had she so enjoyed putting her gift to use” (PI 108). The children inspire the ideal that all actions can be for the glory of God, that all aspects of people’s lives can be lived in the expectation of being used, but it is the adults who must repeatedly carry it out. Her crowning glory is the fifteenth century fresco that her children uncover in what must have been the monk’s chapel.

Even beyond a place itself being for the glory of God, and all things done for it being done to the same, Goudge goes one step further in her clergymen, who are shown relishing all things, even those quite humble, as being part of the glory of God. Despite playing a dreadful game of Bridge

“Hillary enjoyed himself, just as he had enjoyed himself drinking the port. Increasingly, as he got older, he enjoyed things. As his personal humility deepened, so did his awareness of the amazing bounty of God... So many things... The mellow warmth of the port, the pleasure of the game, the sight of Lucilla’s lovely old face in the firelight, and David’s fine hands holding the cards, his awareness of Margaret’s endearing simplicity, and the

contentment of the two old dogs dozing on the hearth... One by one the small joys fell. Only to Hilary no joy was small; each had its own mystery, aflame with the glory of God. Yet when ten o'clock struck he lumbered to his feet and wished them a good night. He lived as firmly by the clock as any monk..." (PI 173)

Each aspect of their lives, the older characters show, is imbued with the glory of God, each portion of life can contain joy.

There is an interconnectedness in the lives of her characters that is in itself healing. While many of the spiritual disciplines are meant to be practiced alone, it is only in community, that they are tested and refined. Lucilla is annoyed by her daughter's purchase of the tea trolley that makes rucks, in the rugs. Ben is irritated when Tommy takes his skeleton. Sebastian is horrified by what he perceives as Nadine's expenditures to make the house lovely. Yet relationships are not undone by these things, and people grow through them. Lucilla realizes how deeply she loves Margaret, and what it has meant to her over the years, having Margaret doing so much sacrificial work in keeping the house, and, enabling Lucilla to tend to the grandchildren's souls. By learning to stand up to Tommy, Ben begins to develop the backbone that will enable him to stand up to his parents. And Sebastian is confronted by the truth that his own expenditures, as a successful pianist, with his wife, probably caused much covetousness in the young struggling musicians they delighted to entertain.

The practice of being well-read is one that is both encouraged and rewarded in Goudge's novels, but even more so is the practice of deeply considering that which one reads. Self-enrichment in the form of reading produces emotional and spiritual growth. This is elucidated by Goudge's careful mentions of both the practice of reading and many specific works of literature. Eliot family matriarch Lucilla refers, while counseling her grandson and her daughter-in-law who have come to speak with her about their intention to marry, to a time when she had not yet "read very much" (BT

244) and as such she was “very uneducated” (BT 245), and in trying to understand truth she “had to think it out very crudely” (BT 244). Reading is not merely for the delight of the soul, although it is that. It is also a means, Goudge suggests, to deeper understanding.

Lucilla goes on to confess that she was so uneducated that she had not “even read Keats in those days” (BT 245), as if poetry were the least difficult entry point for beginning to read. Snatches of poetry abound throughout all of Goudge’s works. In the four novels, Shakespeare is the most notable. He is often connected with David, who, because he is a famous actor, has played many Shakespearean parts. Nearly every time Shakespeare is mentioned, even if the subject matter is far from David, David gets mentioned, as Lucilla does, recalling, “I think it is David’s beloved Shakespeare who says somewhere, ‘Upon such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense’” (BT 250). Often someone will remember David having given a performance and speaking lines as Romeo, or as King Lear, and references a line, or a scene, giving thought to its effect upon themselves. Sonnets of a wide variety are referenced in snippets, often with the explanation that they have been read “somewhere” as Lucilla says of the couplet from Arthur Symons’ “In the Wood of Finvara” that she quotes about the way that smoke blinds lovers (BT 197). Likewise, Michael Stone asks Mary, in *The Rosemary Tree*, if she ever reads the poems of Thomas Sturge Moore, and recommends two of them, and then quotes to himself some verses only labeled as “the words of an Irish poet” (RT 231), the lines being from John Millington Synge, some sleuthing reveals. T.S. Eliot is directly quoted, as her characters discuss their dark experiences of wars’ after-effects, and Eliot’s question of where one must go “from a world of insanity/Somewhere on the other side of despair” (RT 280) becomes very relevant. Another named snippet is that of stanza six of George Meredith’s *Lover of Life*; Goudge quotes it in its entirety, notes it as being “Meredith...I was trying to find that bit about the lover of life. That darling Sally whom you brought to tea with me – she’s a lover” (PI

173) as his grandmother Lucilla describes the woman David has come to love, and the words of a portion of the first stanza come to David's mind later that evening.

It is a pleasure for the reader to recognize the passages and to go and find the whole poem. Some are written in such a way that characters explain them to one another, but others slip by unnoticed, unless the reader happens to be familiar with a given text. Throughout *The Rosemary Tree* references to Don Quixote abound, many explained, some merely tossed in, and their addition spices the narrative. Malory is frequently referenced as well, without much explanation, as a childhood favourite. Goudge's mentioning it, however, adds a dimension of depth to Michael's musings on the passage of time. Similarly, a poem given before the title page, at the start of the novel, is referenced in bits, as characters read and interpret the excerpt quoted on the sundial at John's family home, Belmaray. It continues to show up, line by line, as first one character and then another stops to perceive and ponder, until it becomes a theme for the book.

Literature is mentioned as being a point of connection with across cultures, such as this passage from *Wind in the Willows* that is not explained, but comes up as Austrian-born pianist Sebastian finds a commonality with young British painter Benjamin, "'Just messing about in boats. he said.' Sebastian knew and finished the quotation. 'Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.' They both laugh, Ben with delighted surprise." (HF 100). Sebastian goes on to explain, "at one time I traveled a good deal, and I tried to read all the best-loved children's classics in all of the countries I visited" (HF 100). That alone serves as explanation for his being familiar with the beloved British classic; either Goudge's readers know it or they do not, but Goudge neatly encloses a text-based clue for those who might not.

She deliberately uses real references for her readers to track down, and introduces her reader to authors and pieces. While not everyone may be familiar with the authors Goudge mentions, their

merits are discussed between characters. The writings of the mystic Julian of Norwich are mentioned as a salve for blind Richard, who tells his sister of having been walled in by the loss of his physical sight during the war, as Julian had herself walled in at the Cathedral at Norwich. As Richard does in *The Rosemary Tree*, the narrator in all four novels is employed by Goudge to discuss characters' important books, how and when specific ones proved useful to them, and why. In *The Heart of the Family*, the third of the Eliot novels, the narrator portrays David happening upon the bookshelf in his childhood room while showing it to his employee Sebastian who will be staying in it, finding first Humber Wolfe's *Uncelestial City*, and remembering "lying in bed in this room and reading that on a night of storm that had been a night of crisis in his life, and it had helped to turn him in the direction that he had taken..." and then "Gerard Manley Hopkins," which he had read "after the war, during those sleepless nights when he had worked himself into such ridiculous states of fear, afraid that he would kill himself, afraid that he would go mad, afraid of this, that and the other which had never happened at all," finding the poems, "sonnets of darkness," which helped to realize "that his torments were nothing at all to the mental suffering that other men endured and had survived..." (HF 79). Within the novel through the poems, David was guided by the suffering of others and saw himself as not alone, not singled out, for especial misery.

There is a great deal of discussion of other people's wartime experiences as well, throughout the four novels in connection with books and art. Goudge suggests through the narrator that this is a method of coming to terms with and understanding that experience. Books, in libraries and on bookcases, are also often mentioned, and prized throughout the four novels discussed in this paper. Michael in *The Rosemary Tree* is enchanted by the library of the old manor house, and the sight of it so inspires him that he whimsically offer to garden for the owner, having no knowledge of plants, so that he can read them. Books, the narrator often shows, accompany their owners, and borrowers, through difficult moments, providing comfort. In *The Bird in the Tree*, the narrator specifically

points out that “in times of storm and tempest, of indecision and desolation, [when] a book already known and loved makes better reading than something new and untried” (BT 315). At such times, the narrator comments, “the meeting with remembered passages is like the continual greeting of old friends, nothing is so warming and companionable” (BT 315). It is a nice reminder for the reader, who most likely reads regularly him- or herself.

Not every character can find solace in books amidst the trials of life, and Goudge offers two beloved characters who do not find books to be a source of comfort amidst despair. Nadine at the very moment that David is finding joy in old literary friends, finds such comradeship in the form of books elusive, and goes to sleep. Similarly, the Irish school teacher, Mary, is shown simply not finding reliance on classical literature a part of her makeup; however, she does note to this be a lack: “Has Miss Giles been sitting here with you?” John asks her. “‘You’re observant,’ said Mary, laughing and removing some dun-colored knitting and Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson* from a chair. ‘I don’t fly to the classics for comfort, as Giles does. I’m too frivolous. Worthy people always read the classics when things are difficult’” (RT 320). While Mary does enjoy more modern books, she later reveals to her beloved Michael that she dislikes the plays and novels he’s written, despite their popularity.

Worthiness aside, there’s a conviviality to sharing a love of books, as John and his Aunt Maria discover while conversing with Michael, finding “the younger man easy to talk to, for he appeared to have nourished himself upon the books of their youth through the turmoils of his own, which touched them oddly, as though they had themselves ministered to his needs” (RT 137), and it is almost a meta-discourse on the healing power of story.

Religious texts, also, come readily to characters. For some, their appearance is a routine part of life, and quite comforting. For others, they come unbidden and by surprise. Hilary, the village vicar has a wealth of hymns “stored” in his brain, from teaching “his squeaking little choir boys”

(BT 204), and takes great delight in recalling them. Daphne, the wife of the village vicar in *The Rosemary Tree*, also finds herself reminded of a hymn, but rather than proving comforting, the words of “that sentimental old hymn” Rock of Ages spur her on to thinking, acting as a conduit: she thinks the verses are “doggerel” and yet recalling how she “could never sing them without hearing the roll of thunder and feeling a thrill of fear” (RT 47), she finds herself pondering the story of how they are written by a man in a storm hidden in a crag, and seeing similarities between herself and that man, and who she wants to be going forward. Passages from the Bible frequently come to characters’ minds, usually from the Old or New Testament, and especially often, from the Psalms; in *The Rosemary Tree*, Goudge cites the custom of John’s nursemaid to “read psalms to the children” (RT 21) in addition to telling of John’s favourites. While it is relevant to his character development to learn what he was like as a small child, Goudge could have achieved that end by simply mentioning that and quoting the Psalm and without bringing in the speaker of the words, or referring to the habit of regularly exposing oneself and one’s small children to them. For many of Goudge’s contemporaries, regular reading of the Psalms aloud or in private, is an example of a traditional practice whose benefits Goudge quietly extols.

Goudge’s care to include a wide range of characters in her narratives, from those who completely disagree with her beliefs and principles, to those who wholeheartedly agree with them, and also her pointing out how she has come by them, seems very directed towards the reader. She is very much like a wise grandmother that her fans came to expect, pleading to a younger generation, “your ideals and mine are so different, but please just think about mine, for they have been tested and I think experience has proved them trust-worthy” (BT 250). She speaks through each of her characters, expressing doubts and fears through conversations they have with one another. She describes quiet revelations that they have in times of peaceful respite, and each of the doubts and fears is met, often shared and another character reveals how he or she either handled that situation,

or could see him/ herself in the other character's situation. Goudge began her novel-writing career as a writer of short-stories, and the way in which each character embarks on a individual journey towards healing, throughout the storyline of the novel, or novels in the case of the trilogy, belies that deeply ingrained sensibility has his or her own journey to walk. But, at the same time, each character is integral to the plot, and to the next part of the journey for his fellow characters. Healing can be begun and practiced alone. But there are practices that require other people. Service, for example, cannot be done without someone whom to serve.

While there is discussion of passion in Goudge's novels, there is far more discussion of love, and its nature, and what it means to care more about the wellbeing of others more than about oneself. She writes of what it means to take care of others well. Prioritizing the good of the community over one's own immediate well-being can be a very private decision, and, discussing the rationale leading up to the choices made can prove to be deeply uncomfortable. While most of the individuals who choose to make others' lives better by their own service have a few pages, or even a few paragraphs devoted to their personal musings, they do not for the most part discuss them. The Eliot family matriarch, Lucilla, is encouraged in the first of the Damerosehay novels by her son Hilary to share the story of how she almost left his father with her former-daughter-in-law and to explain her decision not to do so. This chapter of her life is not one she ever shares with anyone in her life and even Hilary only pieces some of the narrative together, as a small child. Her tale shows how she ultimately chose to prioritize the good of the world she could create for others in her role as wife and mother, over the life that she could grant herself in a passionate romance with a young doctor. She strongly resists sharing what she nearly did, but at Hilary's resolute insistence of the efficacy of doing so, she does. In so sharing, Lucilla causes the grandson she loves most, David, to reconsider his modern ideal of self-authenticity as being the closest expression of the truth. There is again and again, a theme that, regardless of one's gender, faithfulness to those who are entrusted to

one's care is the ultimate duty, whether as someone with the financial means and societal place to take on the care of people less fiscally fortunate, a captain to his crew, or role of a familial caregiver. These things are to take precedence over all else, but especially the strong and very real emotions that a particular individual feels. The good of the many, outweighs the good of the one. A single decision can be the impetus for a complete life change. For example, agreeing to take care of someone in her old age, or in his time of need has long-lasting implications for the care-giver. The living out of a selfless decision requires acts of service. These acts of service can be hugely important, but they are seldom obvious, and dramatic. They can seem to be incredibly inconsequential. Mary's decision in *The Rosemary Tree* to be kind to Miss Giles while bringing her afternoon tea awakens something within Miss Giles that causes her to respond benevolently and, in turn, kindles kindness within Mary, which then has a spiraling outward effect in their becoming friends, and later, joint partners in the establishment of a new school. A single act of refused kindness can also have profound effects. Mrs. Bellings, the owner of the vile "horrid school" (RT 203), is offered a chance that seems almost minute, at redemption, in the call to take care of her abused dog who loves her. In a dream-state vision, Mrs. Bellings hears a voice compelling her to call her dog, whom she has abused both by neglect and by physical force, but who continues trying to comfort her even as she lashes out at him. Knowing he is bleeding from her rings hitting him, and has an injured paw from where she dropped him and that she has caused his medication for eczema to be burnt because her niece went behind her back to take him to the veterinarian, Mrs. Bellings pictures the dog whimpering beneath her bed. In that near-epiphany moment, unlike the other teachers in her school who have seen their cruelties and chosen to turn away from them to begin to make amends, Mrs. Bellings actively rejects the option of being kind to the dog, choosing, instead, to wallow in physical comfort and ignore the small creature she has wounded. One last time, she puts care of herself ahead of a fellow creature. The book enables this mystical experience to not

appear out of the ordinary. From Elizabeth Goudge's biographies and her other written works, we can infer that this voice is the intervention of the Spirit of God. Mrs. Bellings' refusal of this opportunity to turn away from the self oriented path she has been on her entire life, is unique in the four novels, following the same pattern as many others of Goudge's characters, but turning away at the final moment.

Single actions can have incredible importance, but so also, can repetitive ones, in the living out of a sacrificial choice. In the four novels, characters choose, or reference choices, to lay aside the lives they'd planned for, from lives of solitude, to lives of domestic bliss, from lives of domestic bliss, to solitude, or to take care of someone in need. They relinquish them. There are many sacrificial pairings throughout these four novels where men or women choose to give up their own plans and dreams to take care of someone else who has need of them. Some are somewhat romantic, such as the Anglican priest John who, prior to the start of *The Rosemary Tree*, makes the decision to abandon his dream of a monastic cell in order to marry and bring healing to his jilted cousin Daphne. Several women come to realize that the men with whom they are in love will need from them a tremendous amount of their inner strength, yet knowing this, still choose to marry them and willingly take on that role. Two particularly poignant examples that warrant more attention are both non-English women. There is the young Irish schoolteacher Mary, who in agreeing to marry an older Michael, now starting a new life after his imprisonment for using his clients' money to put on his play and the supremely cowardly act of shooting himself to escape having to continue in the war, which led to a comrade subsequently being blinded. Michael knows himself unworthy of her love due to his wartime cowardice and recent imprisonment, and Mary realizes "with a flash of vision" that it is with in "her power through the kindness of love" (RT 372) to provide him with the strength and security to make a new life. Similarly, the French governess Zelle realizes that she can encourage her beloved Ben into a new life, but unlike Mary she has seen a great deal of suffering

and misery throughout the years of France by Germany, her father having been murdered and her mother working as a secret service agent. Her choice to marry Ben, and to encourage him to pursue his artistic passion will require her helping to shore him up with her own strength, against his parents' desire that he pursue a career in the Foreign Office. These women have moments of reckoning wherein they realize the cost of following their heart, and they decide to do so, knowing that it will constitute a large portion of their life's work.

Nadine chooses to leave her decorating business in London to make life in the country work for her children's health and husband's happiness, putting her considerable decorating and hostessing skills to work to revitalize the Herb of Grace into an amazing country inn. John's aunt Maria Wentworth takes care of her brother, who has become blind during the Boer War in *The Rosemary Tree*, caring for him during his attacks of "melancholia" into his old age. By considerable financial sacrifice, she carries out his extraordinary gardening plans for improvements in the landscape that he can no longer see. Both women reflect that the individuals they become far surpass who they could have been without their sacrifices. Maria cannot see it, until the end, being "almost too weary to notice anything except Richard" (RT 151) and it is only the night before he dies that they overcome their generation's reticence for not feeling "the need of having their exact spiritual, emotional, nervous and physical state, as conceived by themselves, thoroughly understood by those around them" (RT 152) and discuss what they have lived through.

Lucilla, too, becomes fully absorbed in the task of raising the children she dedicates her life to. She has lost so many sons in the war, and she takes upon herself the raising of her grandchildren. As many who lived in the country did at that time, she takes in evacuee children during the war, while preserving the house for future generations of her own family. And the mother of the owner of the house just before the Eliots buy it, becomes something of a legend of the meaning of sacrifice to the Eliots, Amarante Emilie du Plessis-Pascau, who, realizing that Captain Marlow has lost his

mind in a concussion in the storm at sea that they barely survived, turns down opportunities to become the wife of younger men, instead dedicating herself to the care of the man who sheltered her on the voyage, and shows her overwhelming kindness when he was still sane.

The steadfast, ongoing, sacrifices of these individuals in service of something that they believe to be higher than themselves helps create places of healing. It is partially cyclical that characters' value for the work they are doing better enables them to create places imbued with that higher purpose; their service in creating spaces for others in and of itself creates a space of restoration and healing. The reminder the sacrifice that went into creating it makes the space all the more meaningful. The lives that these people build are far from perfect, but they are beautiful and handcrafted in their sense of purpose.

While many of the examples are future-oriented, the building up of something yet to come, others are more honoring a past. Harriet, the old nursemaid of John and one-time housekeeper of the rectory, who is taken care of in her old age despite her pleading that they send her "to some institution" (RT 16) because she can no longer be of physical use. John and his wife Daphne refuse to, out of both duty, and sentiment, because John's "bleak childhood had been redeemed from disaster by her love. He said he could not face life without her. They all said they could do not without her" (RT 16-7), and there is a very real drain on their finances and strain on their family dynamic because of it. Much good comes out of it, within the storyline, but that it does is irrelevant to the Wentworth family's willingness to care for her.

David sacrifices as well a future that is self-oriented, for the good of his community, in *The Bird in the Tree*. Rather than creating something new, like his grandmother and he did after the first World War, David steps into a continuation of what she begins. He realizes, that the town and specifically the house he is going to inherit have "a tradition of faithfulness" (BT 251). In being the care-taker of others, he comes to value, beyond his own experience, the stories of the house being a

refuge, specifically for the good of others. He realizes that the home that has made him feel safe, and given him a place to grow up, was only created out of Lucilla's act of self-denial. His family has been at the property for a generation, but they step into a pattern of caring for others. Obadiah, who lives in the village and who grew up working in Damerosehay as a servant, comments on how good it is to have "sensible folk" living in the house, and expresses his hope that David will continue living there, "Master David, Oi 'ope ee'll be at Dameosehay many a long year" (BT 173). On the night of a tremendous flood, when his Obadiah's son is out of town, David awakens to a sense of someone having called him, realizes that the dyke has broken and that Obadiah's life is in danger. He rows out to rescue him, to discover Obadiah "standing on a chair ankle deep in water" (BT 322) wearing his "high sea boots" (BT 322) with his treasured goods piled on the bed, certain that David would come. David realizes how easily he could have chosen to stay home and sleep, during the storm, instead of setting out in it, in a boat, but the realization that something needed to be done, and that he could, enabled David to embrace that self-sacrifice, choosing to take care of others over himself. Obadiah presents him with his treasured grandfather clock, which was originally Damerosehay's, to acknowledge the care that David provides him.

Goudge writes of many several men and many women who live out their lives in service to others because they simply feel it is the right thing, what they are supposed to do. Some are older, several are religious, and it is the younger generation of adults who learn how and why their elders make the decisions that they do. But the older generation does not lose sight of the fact that their decisions do not make them somehow more special or heroic. In *The Rosemary Tree*, the Abbot of a group of monks while discussing whether or not Michael would like to be prayed for, eloquently summarizes this belief:

"You could do no one anything but good, Sir," said Michael.

“My good man it has nothing to do with me,” ejaculated the Abbot in sudden exasperation.

“It’s not in my power to do anyone good. Prayer is the Word. He made the heavens and the earth without our aid. Spring comes again whether we live or die. Bringing men to rebirth he works differently, through the souls that are offered up to him to be the channels of His will. Goodnight” (RT 364).

There is a very real sense throughout each of the sacrificial pairings that, while they are the only ones who can do what they choose to do, they are neither doing it alone, nor are they doing it in their own strength. There are hints of a divine order, and others help, as well. Maria, in giving up Belamaray to the monks, makes the ultimate sacrifice, but Goudge makes it clear that it is the natural conclusion, of her life, well lived, and the monks will take up and continue the sacrifice for the place that she has made.

Healers in Goudge’s novels do not wave their hands and speak magic words, rather, they come alongside the person struggling. Sometimes the exact words they say, or their exact actions, touch a nerve in the person seeking healing, and cause unacknowledged pain at the root of self-loathing to come to light, and the healer’s role is to stay in the moment with the sufferer. Even if that is all that he or she can do, the healer stays and loves. Goudge shows many characters reflecting on the power of simply having someone be there. Malony, one of the musical artists in *The Heart of the Family*, notes to himself of Hilary’s desire to be there for him, that “the immense power of his good will, together with his personal humility, made a sudden unexpected appeal... he wasn’t out to do you good, this chap -- he didn’t think enough of himself for that -- he was simply out to jog along beside you for a little and pass the time of day, knowing you were down on your luck and thinking that a bit of companionship might not be amiss” (HF 255). He relishes Hilary’s honesty, and willingness not to “say what he didn’t mean” (HF 255). It is this very self-deprecating reaching out that allows Hilary to function so supremely well as a healer. The people who are healers in

Goudge's novels tend to be individuals who have suffered, and who are free from a pride in their own abilities. Sometimes they do not even really believe that they alone can fix what is wrong. It is their willingness to be used, and their wiliness to come alongside those who need help, that in fact allows them to be used, presumably by God. John notes in *The Rosemary Tree* that coming alongside someone in pain is "the difference between beasts and men [is] that the first desert each other in pain and the second go in to each other and bear each other company...with understanding" (RT 123), and he says this, all the while doubting his own effectiveness in actually bringing comfort to his parishioners. He continues to persevere however, knowing that it *might* help. Different Characters' eagerness to be used, however they can be, allows them to be much more deeply effective than they imagine. "If the willingness is there," as Second Corinthians 8:2 suggests, it is enough.

Those characteristics that they view as their worst, are in fact oftentimes the instruments of healing for those people in need of comfort and respite. Hilary barges in, in *Pilgrim's Inn*, to visit Annie Laurie, and it is his bumbling awkwardness "like an old dog" (PI 228) that breaks down her resistance to seeing him. Also in *Pilgrim's Inn*, it is Sally's "sound normality" (PI 211) that endears her to David, who loves her "healthiness, the childlikeness that had companioned him" (PI 211) through the ordeal of breaking the connection with his sister-in-law and former beloved, even as Sally bemoans her sheltered wartime experience looking after sheep. It is John's accidentally giving his pensioner a partially empty flask to drink from that brings joy and laughter to the old man's life, who recalls similar incidents of John's childhood absentmindedness, and settles him into the comfort of John's never changing.

Characters' willingness to not think too highly of themselves also enables them to be of real use to characters who think the worst of themselves, by being able to accept flawed individuals as they are, and to continue to love them. This takes two distinct forms that flow together. The first, is

that healers, and any character stepping into the role of healer, are able to accept the person's past as it was, which in turn helps that person do so, and to begin to move beyond the incident. This is termed, radical acceptance, where those who heal, help people acknowledge on a very deep level that something unwanted, even evil, has occurred, in order to be free to plan out a response. The second way in which healers can be used by their understanding and acceptance of a situation is that they then are able to disrupt and reframe the narrative the character in need of healing has created, as often, this narrative perpetuates the wound. The healer, because she or he has seen and acknowledges the true evil that occurred, is able to join with the recipients of healing and help them to see their lives differently.

We now call this Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, but Goudge understood, ahead of her time, that for healing to work the healer often has to disrupt the narrative that haunts the daily lives of recipients of healing. The narrative that a person tells himself in his thoughts, is changed, and in place of the old thought-patterns, a new set is proffered, made by someone from outside the person, seeing them in their entirety, as he or she really is. Beyond simply remaining with the psychologically wounded character and not turning away, the healer acknowledges the faults, or the wrongs, that occurred, while also speaking the truth of the wounded person's goodness into the depths of his or her self-loathing. Goudge's healers speak truth into the perception of the person being healed, enabling him or her to see the wrongs they have done, or the evils within themselves, yet to acknowledge them only as a part of who they are, rather than imagining them to be the defining aspect.

The majority of Goudge's characters' are native to England, and this is perhaps why they are not prone to displays of excessive emotion. They frequently are tortured by the effort of keeping what they see as their innermost beings, their worst and true selves, hidden from others and even from themselves. Cut off from past deeds, things they might have done differently and from

scarring experiences, they try to avoid even contemplating them. Not remembering things, may allow them to feel safe from harm, but this gives a false sense of safety, because the effort to sustain not having those unpleasant aspects of their lives drains their energies, and affects the new lives that they are trying to build. The characters are impeded from being able to fully function as their true selves, living in hiding, both dreading yet hoping that someone will find them out and reveal them for the unwholesome person that they believe themselves to be. They often will tell a portion of what happened, but Goudge understood that that is not enough for real healing to take place. It is the actions of others stepping in, and listening to all of what has happened, that enables them, finally, to begin to truly heal. The people who step into moments of unmasking are the ‘healers,’ acknowledging the monstrous deeds or sentiments, the wrong-doings that occurred because of, or to the person in need of healing.

Related to the belief that one is alone in the world, is the deception of believing that if the truth were known of one’s misdeeds, one would be unloved, even shunned. There is acknowledged truth to this: Annie-Laurie who was technically acquitted of murder feels herself guilty and shuns the judgment of others. Sebastian knows himself to be hate-filled and wishes only to end his days unknown, not having to confront his former life as a concert pianist and family man. Michael wishes to have a fresh start at life, but keeps coming back to having attempting suicide, jilting his betrothed, now John’s wife, the night before their marriage, and funding his own play with his clients’ money. He believes himself to be a “rotten chap” (RT 102). The key to the current psychological concept of radical acceptance, is for a person to acknowledge the reality of their situation, an aspect of their lives, or a situation that has occurred, some thing that they would rather were not a part of their lives. By acknowledging it as reality, they are able to deal with its ramifications, rather than simply struggling endlessly with why it should not have occurred.

Goudge has other characters come alongside them to help the person undergoing healing to walk through and understand why that thing came about, not to condone it, but to understand it, so that they can move on to the next phase. The first step of radical acceptance is to acknowledge truths that are difficult. The key to dispelling the influence that a problem has over one's life is treating it as it is, and not as one might wish it to be.

This seemingly overwhelming power that a thing may have over a person is often in the eye of the perceiver. To have someone else come alongside one and change the narrative is invaluable. This narrative change, occurs again in Goudge's books, and especially in *The Rosemary Tree* and the Eliot family trilogy. Characters in Goudge's novels give this reframing to one another.

Although these phenomena seem complicated, in reality, the interactions are simple. The first step is that the healer requests complete truth. Nadine in *Pilgrim's Inn* asks Annie-Laurie to "try to tell me everything, Annie-Laurie, as you would have told your mother. Try not to leave anything out. It is never fair to anyone to tell a half-truth. It is a form of lying and it confuses judgment" (PI 285). Likewise, John in *The Rosemary Tree* demands "Out with it. I want to know" (RT 336), when Michael hesitates to explain the entire story.

The second is complete acceptance. Michael is thankful for John's having "made no comment whatever upon his story" (RT 337), giving him more emotional space to completely bare all, "the relief of having told it was so great that he wanted no other" (RT 337). Nadine, also, does not offer comment, allowing Annie-Laurie to tell the story of her first husband who had been presumed dead, opening the window on her baby by her second husband, intentionally allowing the already sick infant to be killed, and then in turn, Annie-Laurie allowing him to take wrong medication, which accidentally leads to his death. Annie-Laurie too, finds that having "told it at last, the thing that had poisoned her life and nearly disordered her reason" is a tremendous relief, her whole physical being "seemed to shrink in upon herself" (PI 286). And afterwards, Nadine sits

“quietly beside Annie-Laurie, not touching her but willing that the warmth of her understanding might reach her” (PI 286).

The third is identification. As Michael proclaims, “whitewash brought no comfort. The real comfort was to have one’s sins and weaknesses not explained away but understood and shared” (RT 337), and he finds John’s declaration “We’re much alike. My childhood was not unlike yours, though far easier,” and his own sharing that his own wartime experience was deeply undoing for him, how “after one naval engagement, and getting torpedoed once only” (RT 335) he began “seeing mutilated bodies where there were none, and that sort of thing, and any efficiency I might have had had vanished” (RT 335), but how it was not until he “spent all night on a makeshift raft roped to two men who became corpses overnight” (RT 335) that he experienced “complete failure of nerve” and was put “in a nerve hospital” (RT 335). He tells Michael he too might have tried to end himself, as Michael attempted, “I’ve never been so ashamed in my life. Had the means of self-destruction been at hand, as it was in your case, I might have done what you did” (RT 335). Michael finds himself deeply bolstered by John’s saying he might have acted similarly, and it occurs to him “that it can be as much by our weakness as by our virtue that we can serve each other” (337 RT). Nadine, likewise leaps in with Annie-Laurie after asking if she were thinking about her daughter and sharing stories of “awfully battered” (PI 284) and beloved stuffed animals their daughters had, saying “I’ve never lost a child, but I can imagine how all the little things would stab one till the end of time” (PI 284). She also, upon learning that she had not meant to bring the wrong tablets back but, once she realized had let him take them, thinking they would merely make him unwell, Nadine aligns herself with Annie-Laurie, telling her, “I’m sure I’d have done the same...I believe any mother would” (PI 286, PI).

Goudge’s confessional healing, much like cognitive behavioral therapy, provides a series of different ways to think about things, a series of questions that enable the person being healed to

arrive at a new way of understanding his or her own experiences, while still maintaining their relationship, that is, the healer does not become a counselor, remaining a peer and friend. John tells Michael that he is glad Michael “fucked Daphne” because it meant that he “got her,” but, he continues, “I think you treated her badly. If you felt yourself too much of a worm to marry her why didn’t you tell her what you’d done and leave the decision to her?” (RT 335). This enables Michael to realize that the relationship he had had with Daphne was very immature. John further queries, “You fought well in Africa, later?” (RT 336) to which Michael acknowledges he did, and “Surely, with your reputation, there must have been those who would have advanced the money to save you from prison even if they wouldn’t advance it to back your play?” (RT 336) to which Michael is able to realize that he had not asked anyone because he “was not court-martialled for attempted suicide” and “thought it was time I paid the price.” (RT 337). John walks Michael through the process of seeing himself not just as a coward and an ex-convict, but also as someone whose fears go deeply, who gave his life savings to the family of the comrade who went blind after he left the military, and who took what he felt to be deserved punishment rather than be exonerated because he was able to be so. Nadine, likewise, lays the groundwork for a reconceptualization of Annie-Laurie’s husband’s death, asking, “Annie-Laurie, now that you’ve told me that much I think it would help you if you told me everything. Was your husband very ill? If so, perhaps he was not in a normal state of mind when he opened the window” (PI 285), which Annie-Laurie acknowledges to be the case, because it had been “an awful shock to him, after we had loved each other so much, to come back and find me married to another man” (PI 286 PI). Nadine guides Annie-Laurie through acknowledging that she ought to tell the full truth, “do you think – I ought to tell Jim?” (PI 287), Jim being Malony’s real name. Nadine guides Annie-Laurie, by asking questions about why she hadn’t told him, such as “Why did you not tell him before? Were you afraid you would lose his love?” (PI 287) to coming to realize and accept that Luke was mentally ill, and that the promise not to reunite with Malony

should Luke die was one “which Luke had no right to ask” (PI 288) and Annie-Laurie has “no right to keep” (PI 288). They begin to talk about what is meant by truth, and decide it’s “a question of charity” and of not seeking “ease of conscience at the expense of another’s happiness” (PI 288 PI). Nadine does not stop at advising; as her mother-in-law doesn’t, in the previous book, Nadine bears her truth, advising her to go forward now “with a single mind” to the man in her life, admitting, “I’ve no right to talk, Annie-Laurie. I haven’t practiced what I preach. But I’ll try – if you will” (PI 289). Nadine reframes the story of Annie-Laurie’s life, giving her a new way of understanding herself and, like John does with Michael, gives her a new path for the future.

It is fundamentally difficult to pin down who of Goudge’s characters are “healers,” and who are “the healed” because of the very nature of suffering, whether physical or emotional, enables compassion and healing. The harm and pain born by any given individual both strengthens his or her compassion and decreases his or her pride, often simultaneously. Becoming a healer is an ongoing process, marked by continual choosing to continue to move in the same direction as the character has already begun to move. What began with a simple cup of tea that Mary makes for Giles, becomes a partnership, and a new school being formed, in a new and beautiful house. The progress of becoming healed, similarly, is on-going, cyclical, not linear, and often the individual being healed cannot account for progress made except by a sudden awareness of no longer being trapped in the bitterness or pain that he or she had come to experience as his or her norm.

A sense of one’s self apart from the circumstances and busyness of everyday life develops, often while surrounded by nature, or in some way physically removed from one’s normal routine. Not unexpectedly, these moments of realization of healing tend to occur in the places where the healing has occurred, and or directly following an encounter with the person who has been the main source of healing in the individual’s life. At times, these pairs appear interchangeable, with the healing flowing from one person bringing still further comfort back to the other. One person helps

the other walk through a known area, with a comfortable familiarity and the knowledge that there is a way out. Sebastian functions in the Eliot family's lives, as a healer, because of his experiences, as Sally tells him, give them all a much deeper understanding of what it costs to completely sacrifice, to be crucified. His same experiences, and the dramatic loss of them via the bombing of his family and the death of his son in a concentration camp, have left him in turn in great need of healing.

Accepting, normalizing, and reframing a given thing does not necessarily mean justifying, although it can, but creating a space in which a false belief or fear can be stripped of its overwhelming power. Part of the problem with the issues Goudge's characters struggle with is that the issues are not the main problem in and of themselves, but rather how they control the life of the doer. True understanding is the path towards healing. John the vicar asks Michael the convict for "the reasons for the facts" (RT 333) of what Michael did, in *The Rosemary Tree*. He claims that "why you do a thing what matters" because that is where "the springs of character" (RT 333) are to be found. Michael begs off, asking if they aren't "...being a bit introspective?" (RT 333), to which John the vicar rather inelegantly asks of Michael, "rather than live with a bad smell all your life isn't it better to find the corpse" (RT 333)? To get at the heart of what happened, requires the character to re-live the experience, to tell someone else what happened, why they did what they did and how it has affected them. This act of confession in a safe space is what enables the second part of interpersonal healing in Goudge to occur.

This is the reframing of the narrative. Healers acknowledge the duality of the nature of the recipients of healing; they do not try to whisk away the qualities or deeds that have somehow made the person believe themselves to be lesser, but rather the healers acknowledge, openly and honestly, the very reality of these things. But, crucially, they also acknowledge that the scope of the evil deeds is limited- that those evil parts are real, but that they do not broadly define a person. Rather, they make up a *part* of that person's definition.

Now, more than ever, human beings can, with the click of a few keys, be vile and cruel under the guise of anonymity. Our ability to do harm, however small or seemingly insignificant, has increased vastly in the years since Goudge wrote. It is easier than ever to ignore a literal cry for help on the side of the road because we do not know the person, or to ignore warning signs because we do not know how best to help. Goudge writes characters who simply reach out to those around them, using only their own experiences, to try and help as best they can.

Owen Barfield, in his 1928 essay *Poetic Diction and Legal Fiction* suggests that a piece of literature ideally serves as more than a mere a conduit to a higher idea, and that in fact, it somehow embodies it. He suggests that the reader should “feel that B which is actually said, ought to be necessary, even inevitable in some way in the best of stories. It ought to be in some sense the best, if not the only way, of expressing A satisfactorily.” Goudge’s works excellently illustrate Barfield’s premise, not only because she writes stories of healing, also because the act of reading her books becomes for many an act of healing in and of itself. Goudge’s novels, while enjoyable on their own for their stories, carry within them deeper meta-narrative, one that speaks to the human condition. Beyond the each person’s individual struggles, there is an ever increasing reality of evil. Nadine’s character in *Bird in the Tree* reflects on that present time being “a bad moment in history, this, in which to live and love. The Rider on the Red Horse seemed advancing ever more and more quickly, his shadow creeping before him over the light of the sun” (BT 226-7). The rider in Revelations 6 referring to war, the removal of peace, more specifically. Yet every age has its absolutely peace-removing atrocities, whether conducted at home or outside one’s own nation, abroad. We are never free of the horrific havoc that humans can wreak on one another.

“The English Channel was to the south of the marshes, the estuary, leading to one of the greatest of the naval ports, bounded them upon the east. Enemy planes had passed over day and night, guns had roared out at sea, and the old house had rocked to the explosions of bombs falling in

the marshes.”

(PI” (PI 42), describes the narrator of Lucilla’s wartime experience. In a time where death, violence and fear run rampant, and peoples’ lives were rife with uncertainty, there is often no obvious sense of what to do next. A real sense of hopelessness can develop. In response to such grave, grand-scale evil, what can one person possibly do? Without being trite, Goudge answers that question in myriad ways, with her response: we can do very little, but each very little means a great deal. She shows characters benefiting from the culmination of minute details, of small thoughts and words and deeds, done repetitiously and with love. She shows how they use moments of respite to sustain themselves and others through the vicissitudes of life. She shows how sacrifice, whether small or large, lived out, can create community both in its concrete form, and in the act of others recognizing what has been done for the cause of maintaining that community. And she does all of this while connecting disparate people, via characters who reach out to those near them, their own relatives and those people who just happen into their lives, offering themselves as agents of life-changing healing, regardless of the potential outcome, or the small the number of people they affect.

Speaking of the plagiarization of *The Rosemary Tree*, and Paul Kafka explains that often when a story is set somewhere that is other than the reader’s immediate understanding, it takes on a different value (Moore). The real trouble with Goudge’s work is that the lovely rural English countryside is, rarely, part of the average person’s everyday world, even in many parts of Great Britain, and it is easy to dismiss them as lovely stories set in a land far, far away. As she was writing about it, the original inspiration for the sanctuary that is Damerosehay was being destroyed and replaced by bungalows, and she spoke of her stories as being a homage to that lovely place in which she enjoyed respite and restoration. However, the point of Goudge’s novels is not that were her readers to be transported to a world like the ones her characters inhabit, the problem of their lives would be solved. The point is that people in all times and places share fears of destruction and

have to contend with unkindnesses and even evil, and yet are capable of creating the same sort of places of respite and healing. Repeated reading reveals that characters' struggles are quite similar to those of today. Curiously, within the books, where the modern characters of the '40s and '50s walk through what they consider to be new life problems, the older characters receive them and share, openly and honestly, with them the ways that they too, had to deal with those problems in different guises. History repeats itself, with different actors.

Goudge's characters show again and again that the choice to change the world around them is an easier one, than might be expected. In order to do it, one has to find and use the support network of others' wisdom in the written word, and in spiritual communion. As her each of characters discover, it is possible for anyone to find meaning in stilling one's soul, to appreciate the beauty of nature around, and to allow those moments of appreciation to nurture their souls. Her characters show tiny actions, repeated faithfully, can become the impetus for change, for the formation of community amongst those individuals with whom one lives. Brokenness can be countered with empathy and a reliance on radical honesty and truth. And though darkness has come, they remind us that every age has had to deal with it, and will. There is hope, in the midst of it.

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<sup>i</sup> See Ruth E. Propper "Is Television Traumatic? Dreams, Stress and Media Exposure in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001."

<sup>ii</sup> See Maddy Cunningham, "Teaching Social Workers About Trauma: Reducing the Risks of Vicarious Traumatization in the Classroom;" Arin Greenwood, "Ripple Effects: Education and Self-care Can Help Lawyers Avoid Internalizing Client Trauma;" and Kathleen Hubbs. Ulman, "Helping the Helpers: Groups as an Antidote to the Isolation of Mental Health Disaster Response Workers"

<sup>iii</sup> See Sabine Sielke "Why "9/11 Is [not] Unique," Or: Troping Trauma" for a survey of trauma literature.

<sup>iv</sup> See Teya Rosenberg, "Genre and Ideology in Elizabeth Goudge's *The Little White Horse*" and Megan Lynn Isaac, "Misplaced: The Fantasies and Fortunes of Elizabeth Goudge," respectively.

<sup>v</sup> This quotation frequently appears on dust jackets and GoodReads quotes, but it appears to have its origin at the RNA, and is in fact cited in their origin story. See "Our Story." Romantic Novelists Association, n.d. Web. 5 October 2015.

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<sup>vi</sup> Britain needs you at once. London: Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, [1915] Medium: print. From the Library of Congress: Reproduction Number: LC-USZC4-11248

<sup>vii</sup> See Appendix for The Ministry of Intercession and Thanksgiving, as outlined in the 1906 Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross Manual.

<sup>viii</sup> The Companions were very socially active, particularly in Connecticut where they were focused on the working girls in the factories, but it was decided that each Companion should decide for herself how best to manifest her convictions, so as to include any who were not in agreement about the manner in which they should be seeking to help. The only stipulation for what is now called economic justice in the modern language is the injunction to pray for the reconciliation of classes, that God would “make up” those “dissensions which divide us from each other, and bring us back into an unity of love.” See Appendix for the prayer for the Reconciliation of Classes, as listed in the 1909 manual.

<sup>ix</sup> See Appendix for the prayer of the reunion of Christendom.

<sup>x</sup> See Appendix for the Ministry of Simplicity of Life.

<sup>xi</sup> Carpenter, Humphrey, *The Authorized Biography of Tolkien*. Ballantine Books: New York, 1977.

<sup>xii</sup> Rawlins does quote one such letter, however, in her biography of Goudge, in which a woman asks Goudge about whether or not she should have another baby, the writer of the letter being both Catholic, and the mother of five other children.

<sup>xiii</sup> First was the Cluniac in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, which focused “abandoned monastic labor in favour of multiplication of religious serves” (Kingston 182), but also began to depend on rent rather than self-sufficiency, and building ornate monasteries and churches. In the eleventh century, the hermitic Carthusians similarly favoured meditation and prayer over communal interactions, although to a greater extreme.

<sup>xiv</sup> ‘Of Pilgrim’s Inn’ in Wings, April 1948, as cited by Christine Rawlins in *Beyond the Snow: The Life and Faith of Elizabeth Goudge*, p. 269.

<sup>xv</sup> That from their founding they renounced “the ordinary sources of monastic income” such as churches, alters, oblations, burial-grounds, bakehouses, mills, farms or serfs, even including “the distribution of the tithes” (Cooke 628-9) leads one to wonder how these monasteries flourished. William Kingston in “Monks, Liturgy and Labour” suggests that it was largely due to very highly educated individuals performing manual labour, citing Lynn White Jr.’s *Dynamo and Virgin Reconsidered*, Cambridge MA: M.I.T. Press, 1968 he says that “the monk was the first intellectual to get dirt under his fingernails.” Calling their lives “extraordinarily active” Kingston suggests theirs was a “managerial revolution” and particularly lauds the invention of grange-farming (large-scale farming which enabled practices like crop rotation) and transhumance, moving herds of animals by the thousands from one location to another.

## APPENDIX

**The Ministry of Intercession and Thanksgiving**

1. Companions shall seek to practise and to encourage systematic intercession for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth.
2. They shall use daily the prayer of the S. C. H. C.
3. They shall observe Holy Cross Day, September 14, by receiving the Holy Communion either on that day or as near before or after as possible, with the special intention of interceding for all Companions of the Holy Cross, and of returning thanks for all blessings vouchsafed the Society.
4. The especial objects of prayer of the Society, apart from individual needs, shall be the Reconciliation of Classes and the Reunion of Christendom. In prayer for individual needs, especial emphasis shall be placed on the deepening of the spiritual life.
5. Companions shall use, according to their discretion, the monthly Intercession Paper, to which each Companion and Probationer shall have the privilege of sending in petitions and thanksgivings each month.
6. In the month of May the paper shall be a thanksgiving paper, and the spiritual life of the Society shall be centered in the giving of thanks.

**For the Reconciliation of Classes**

GOD the Father, Fount of Godhead, good beyond all that is good, fair beyond all that is fair, in whom is calmness, peace, and concord; do thou make up the dissensions which divide us from each other, and bring us back into an unity of love, which may bear some likeness to thy sublime nature. Grant this, O Father, through thine only-begotten Son, that all we who have been redeemed by the mystery of his Incarnation may remain united in the fellowship of perpetual peace. Amen. (Manual 31)

**For the Reunion of Christendom**

BEHOLD, O Lord, how thy faithful Jerusalem rejoices in the triumph of the cross and the power of the Saviour; grant therefore that those who love her may abide in her peace, and those who depart from her may one day come back to her embrace; that when all sorrows are taken away, we may be refreshed with the joys of an eternal resurrection, and may be made

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partakers of her peace, world without end; through thy mercy. Amen.

VOUCHSAFE unto us, O Lord God, with knowledge and fear and beauty of spiritual order to stand before thee in purity and holiness and to serve thee as the Lord and Creator of all, to whom, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is due worship from all forever. Amen. (Manual 31-2)

### **Simplicity of Life**

COMPANIONS shall strive after simplicity of heart toward God and man. They shall try to live simply, while keeping themselves in bodily and mental health. They shall use freely all means, material and immaterial, which may preserve them in a condition of efficiency for the work to which they may be called; but they shall at the same time seek to live a disciplined life, guarding against any form of self-indulgence.

The following suggestions are offered, in the belief that they may prove helpful to definiteness in thought and action, but they are not to be considered binding.

1. That each Companion have a carefully considered private rule in regard to the distribution of time and the expenditure of money.
2. That in the expenditure of money she have regard to the moral character of investments and the social conditions of the work for which she pays. (Manual 8-9)