

ABSTRACT

By analysing six of Charlotte Yonge's domestic fictions, this study seeks to demonstrate the effects of dogmatic purpose and religious ideals upon the forms of her work.

The first section discusses the interaction between nineteenth-century conventions of realism and Charlotte Yonge's dogmatic purpose. The relationship of Romance forms and realist presentation of character and motive in *The Heir of Redclyffe* is considered, as well as the intermingling of realism and religious beliefs in the forms of two of the Family Chronicles, *The Daisy Chain* and *Pillars of The House*. It is shown here that although the conventions of realism sometimes undermine dogmatic intentions, the forms of the novels are largely constrained by religious aims.

The second section focusses upon the relationship between religious belief and the conservative woman's "Bildungsroman." Three such novels are analysed, *Heartsease, Hopes and Fears* and *The Clever Woman of the Family*. And by using the theory of the muted and compromise models, derived from anthropology, this section illustrates how religion is incorporated into an idealized vision of human life that compensates women for their position in society without disturbing dominant ideological assumptions. It also indicates that, despite the ideal vision, the moral order of the "Bildungsroman" is threatened by a muted protest at the pain and loss involved in submission to the ideal of feminine conduct taught at the surface level.