

*Precocious Children and Childish Adults: Age Inversion in Victorian Literature* By Claudia Nelson

Though far from ubiquitous the terms child-woman child-man and old-fashioned child appear often enough in Victorian writings to prompt critical questions about the motivations and meanings of such generational border-crossings. Nelson carefully considers the use of these terms and connects invocations of age inversion to developments in post-Darwinian scientific thinking and attitudes about gender roles social class sexuality power and economic mobility. She brilliantly analyzes canonical works of Charles Dickens Charlotte Brontë William Makepeace Thackeray Bram Stoker and Robert Louis Stevenson alongside lesser known writings to demonstrate the diversity of literary age inversion and its profound influence on Victorian culture. By considering the full context of Victorian age inversion *Precocious Children and Childish Adults* illuminates the complicated pattern of anxiety and desire that creates such ambiguity in the writings of the time. Scholars of Victorian literature and culture as well as readers interested in children's literature childhood studies and gender studies will welcome this excellent study from a major figure in the field. *Precocious Children and Childish Adults: Age Inversion in Victorian Literature* Once again cultural approach to Victorian society and how child was perceived used psychoanalysis feminist theory queer theory marxist theory.

Especially evident in Victorian-era writings is a rhetorical tendency to liken adults to children and children to adults, Claudia Nelson examines this literary phenomenon and explores the ways in which writers discussed the child-adult relationship during this period: Once again I feel like literature was used only to bring forth ideas about other things and not about literature itself: It seems that literature does not worth anything if it's not about some popular political or cultural problem. We have this huge problem today. English

