

**WRITING FOR OR WRITING ABOUT CHILDREN? THE REPRESENTATION OF
CHILDHOOD IN DAVID GIAN MAILLU'S CHILDREN FICTION**

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Abstract

Building on Roni Natov's concept of a 'poetics of childhood' and on recent debates about the image of the child in literature, this paper looks at how David G. Maillu promotes relational models of interaction between adults and children, thus challenging the patriarchal concept of authority that has always conditioned people's understanding of childhood and is responsible for the unproductive tendency to retrospectively idealize childhood as an idyllic phase in life, the abuses of power which too frequently characterize the adult-child relationship. The authors dispel the myth of childhood as an age of innocence and argue that children should be seen as human agents for social change.

Key words: childhood, poetics, literature, Adults, Children.

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Introduction

Eleven of David Maillu's Children novellas, which include: *The Poor Child* (1988), *The Government's Daughter* (1996), *Journey to Fairland* (1992), *The Lost Brother* (1994), *The orphan and his Goat Friend* (1990), *Tamatm's Adventure* (2006) *Kisalu and his Fruit Garden* (1989), *Sasa and Sisi* (1994), *Looking for Mother* (1981), *The Priceless Gift* and *The Last hunter* (1981) constitutes the primary texts of the study. The eleven novellas were chosen for they represent the image of childhood, which is an attractive field for research as it represents a number of challenges because it is multi-disciplinary and it portrays children relating with adults. The study was confined to the eleven novellas because of the content and limited time.

In this study, Maillu's children fiction books were examined. The books are used as authorized instructional material by the department of education for children in Kenyan primary schools. A textual analysis of the primary texts was undertaken in the study with the view to unpack the concept of childhood.

Research Design

This research is a qualitative library research because it entails reading and analyzing of textual materials. The theory of narratology was used to provide a systematic and a coherent way to talk about the primary texts, analyzing and evaluating them. It also involved a critical reading of David G. Maillu's children books (novellas) particularly the primary texts which are subjected to literary and criticism. Secondary materials which included journals were also used. The paper was aimed at discussing the different perspectives of childhood, their contribution to childhood

and how Maillu has represented childhood from a child's point of view.

Results and Discussions

The concept of childhood continues to undergo tremendous transformation especially in Africa and particularly in Kenya. Some of the most influential factors responsible for this change among other things include economic, socio-cultural and political dynamics.

Through his children fiction, the narratives of Maillu transcend most of the cultural assumptions about children. A cultural assumption is when we believe that a person has particular values and attitudes based on their cultural background. As we had observed in cultural perspective, children are assumed to be vulnerable, indecisive and in need of protection. Understanding cultural assumptions and how they work helps to analyze written texts. Writers of childhood often use cultural assumptions about children. Maillu counteracts this idea and shows that children are able to make good choices which suit their needs, through characterization; he paints children making independent choices and succeeding. In *The Last Hunter*, the character child makes his own decision by venturing in the dangerous forest and later succeeds on his own. Maillu's *Government's Daughter* also, reveals a number of cultural assumptions about the girl-child. He subverts the cultural perspectives' assumption that the child is vulnerable through Tamia's determination to acquire education and the future implications of her education. The writer realizes that children are stakeholders in acculturation and that culture changes result from contact among various societies over time, unlike the African perspective whose traditions and cultural practices value boys than girls. The girls are generally

marginalized in socio-economic advancement even when it comes to decision making such as when and who she marries. According to the African perspective; the African child is trained to conform to tenets of the culture. Children are trained to follow the prescribed paths set by the custodians of the culture. Childhood as a social construction is very relevant. Children in traditional Africa were perceived to be human beings in need of help and direction. Maillu transcends the cultural notion of childhood about the child as having no say in his or her life. He highlights the position given to the child in the narratives and thus points out the problems of childhood. The psychoanalysis theory states that each individual is unique. In *The Government's Daughter*, Tamia is an orphan who lives with foster parents in a big family of nomadic pastoralists. Although Tamia does not directly tell the story, it is her point of view that predominates in the narrative. It is what she wishes for in her life that eventually triumphs over the impositions of her family and community. Gender-based socialization as portrayed in the novella creates a plethora of feeling in the child (Tamia) ranging from ambivalence to equivocation or rebellion against social tenets. Tamia in her own peculiar ways tries to carve a heaven in which to escape the realities of her femaleness. Tamia's rebellious actions provide an insight into the dynamics of gender construction in patriarchy. Through her characterization, Maillu emphasizes the necessity of cultural transformation on the making of gender identity (Maillu, 1996:47).

Maillu presents Tamia as a strong character who transcends her society by a form of self-reliance. She lives in a society that is less ethical than her. Her society's need to improve its values is made evident either by directly depicted flaws in the culture or

when the character is falsely repressed by it. Tamia through her determination, experiences, growth and transformation process provides a commentary as to how the society itself might also "grow" (that is, improved). The character's growth is thus a sign that the society can, indeed, potentially change too. It is a means of communicating. Tamia's growth implicates that the experience of the characters in the story leads to at least one person's ability to live in the world more justly. Today, Tamia is in her third year in Secondary school. Since her first year in school, her grades have been very good. Every teacher and everybody in 'Mapia valley knows that the Government's Daughter will end up in the University' (1996:47). He reflects change in thinking about childhood by representing the girl-child in a positive way. The story of Tamia is an example of the archetype of the girl-child, which transcends cultures through societal ideas of the female. Maillu uses the characters to catch our imagination; his texts play to the fantasy of childhood and resonate in the psyche of adults by using archetypal characters to express cultural norms and expectations. The story of Tamia in the *Government's Daughter* represents the child at her most vulnerable and at her most alluring according to cultural standards. The worried child runs away from home, encounters danger alone in the forest, stays with foreign people and, eventually wins the heart of the District Commissioner and she is taken to school. Tamia is portrayed as a girl who sleeps in the soot and is kind in the face of evil. She is the girl-child who embodies her culture's ideals of perfection to show the apparent worth of childhood. This is achieved by using specific motifs and socially constructed ideals of wisdom. More specifically, the child has a lesson to learn and a goal to achieve, and must do so by conforming to mold of the desired child of any given culture. The themes found in

the story are symbolic in nature and they enable the girl-child to meet the challenges of conformity.

In *The Poor Child*, Maillu transcends the cultural assumption of the child as being vulnerable and indecisive; the child character is portrayed as a brave child. My research draws this tenet from the consequential cosmopolitan theory which includes the notion of freedom of choice and the capability of self-determination as responsibility and vulnerability. Responsibility affirms that freedom means fitness for responsibility and that in order to enjoy fully the value of freedom, one needs to be ready to be held responsible for the consequences caused by his or her actions. The vulnerability principle implies that freedom means avoidance of total dependency, and that in order to enjoy fully the value of freedom, one needs not to be held under the sway of external factors that could deprive one the opportunities. According to the developmental perspective, young children's development is especially sensitive to negative impacts from early malnutrition, deprivation of care and responsive parenting or disturbed and distorted treatment. Where children's basic needs are not met, or if they are maltreated or abused, the repercussions are often felt throughout childhood and into the adult general years.

Mwende's story is about her life with a brutal and uncaring stepmother. However, it also highlights the plight of the girl-child in Kenya. In this case, it is Mwende's labor that is exploited. The stepmother beats her up without much reason. Mukulu seems to naturally hate Mwende and saddles her with the household chores, which denies her the opportunity to concentrate on her schoolwork. When Mwende tires of her step-mother's harassment, just like Tamia, she makes a conscious decision to leave

home and go to search for the father who works in Nairobi. This act of defiance only leads her into the hands of another woman all too eager to exploit her. Mwende gets lost at a bus station in Nairobi because she cannot trace her father. A woman that she meets at the bus stop lies to Mwende that she would help her trace her father. Instead she travels with Mwende to Western Kenya where she uses her as a housemaid. Therefore, the cycle of childhood exploitation continues and it only comes to an end when Mwende is rejoined with her father and she resumes her education. Like Tamia, we can only hope that she will have a trouble-free future after successfully completing her education. Therefore Mwende's story captures the complexity of the (adult) world for the girl-child. For instance whereas she is willing to invest her trust in an adult, significantly a woman in this case, the same person cheats her and ends up exploiting her labor. Mwende is restricted in every aspect of her life. Her step-mother goes further to make sure the child does not communicate with her father both culturally and economically. She is tied up. "When Mukulu returned home at about ten o'clock, she came looking for her and said, 'Mwende, bring me the money your father gave you!'...On weekends and during school holidays, I was made the shepherd" (Maillu 1988:13). Through the act of bravery, Mwende transcends all this and makes her decision to run away from home. Her heroic deeds are seen when she boards a public vehicle without the bus-fare and promises to pay the conductor when they reach Nairobi. "Okey now pay me for taking you to Machakos'...I was shattered nobody had told me that all the country buses I had always seen passing near our home didn't go as far as Nairobi." (Ibid:32)

The author seems to suggest that the child either initiates processes that will better her life, in a manner similar to both Tamia and

Mwende running away from a hostile domestic environment or they speak up for themselves. Their desire as children to create a better society is seen in their actions. Contrary to the African perspective which perceived children as human beings in need of help and direction, Maillu's children emerge as creative and imaginative, which leads them to use their self-knowledge and wisdom to transform the society. In either case, the two novellas engage with practical questions and issues in the lives of the girl-child in present Kenya. Forced marriage, forced girl-child labor, lack of educational opportunities for the girl-child and her marginal status in the home are all current experiences in Kenya. These issues demand that the girl-child be cast in an active role in which she can influence her destiny. Tamia and Mwende are portrayed as active, assertive, and independent. Maillu satirizes the patriarchal belief system that discriminates against and demeans the child. His girl-child emerges dignified, proving that girls can do what boys can do equally well if given the same opportunities. Through carefully crafted plots involving Tamia and Mwende, the author demonstrates that children's literature is an indispensable medium which can be used to empower the girl-child. Maillu attains change through the style in his two Novellas; *The poor child* and *The Government's Daughter*, he uses the first person point of view in that the children tell their own stories. He allows the girl-child literary space in which her world of childhood and experiences are foregrounded. The transition from the omniscient-adult narrator to the girl-child storyteller introduces new narrative elements in Maillu's children fiction. He privileges both the girl-child as a narrator and a subject of the story. He endows the girl-child with the power to narrate, to tell the story of her life, and enables the girl-child to occupy the

centre stage in the narratives as the protagonist of the story, which naturally positions her as an agent in the development of the plot of the story.

The Child as Vulnerable and Indecisive.

In another of his novellas, *The Last Hunter*, Maillu transcends the cultural assumption of the developmental perspective which portrays childhood as a time of vulnerability and resilience and the child as being in need of protection against evil. In the story, Kimuyu is a boy who lives in a village called Mbukoni. To the north of Mbukoni, there is a huge forest called Makongo. Nobody knew exactly what was in that forest, but the Mbukoni elders believe that there were hungry and dangerous spirits and so nobody hunts in that forest. No medicine man goes there to look for herbs and no children collect firewood or look for fruits there. Kimuyu, who was the only child of his parents, was very curious about the forest. His parents cautioned him but he became more and more curious as days went on. He once visits the forest and nothing happens to him. He is then convinced that there are no spirits in Makongo and so he decided to venture in the depth of the forest. He then rescues a skull hanging from a branch of a tree and the skull enslaves him for sometime. Kimuyu eventually saves himself from the skull and marries a very beautiful woman. He becomes a hero and earns the title of *The last Hunter*. Maillu portrays Kimuyu as daring. He puts him in a superior position to all his mates. His sensitivity and curiosity made him to discover his environment and then the encounter with the skull proved his bravery. Kimuyu as a child has ventured where the adult dared not.

In his novella '*Journey into Fairly land*', Maillu tells a story of two sisters, Kaluki

and Wayua. Kaluki was the eldest daughter of Mbuvi and Kalekye. Kaluki is very beautiful but Wayua is very ugly, so ugly that no one wants to look at her twice. Because of their differences, the two sisters are no longer close. Kaluki then distances herself from her sister because she does not want to be associated with her. She tells her she is very ugly and does not want her friends to meet her. Wayua tries to beg her sister to accept her but she refuses to listen. At the end Wayua has no choice but to keep away from Kaluki. Wayua has a dream in which a voice told her that the beauty she wants was in fairyland but she had to pass a test first. She passes the test and she comes back a real beauty. And though she is beautiful herself, Kaluki is very jealous of her sister and sets off to look for more beauty. She fails all the tests on the journey to fairy land and returns ugly. Wayua transcends the cultural assumption of the child as being in need of protection. She alone ventures into the world of the spirits and makes the right choice when given a test. "Wayua saw two animal skins lying on the ground...Never mind! Choose one of the two. Lie on it and see what happens to you, Wayua chose the rough and ugly skin; the other one looked too beautiful to sleep on. She lies down and fell asleep". Maillu portrays Wayua as imaginative, daring and a winner. She carefully follows all the instructions of the voice and is not too ambitious when making her choice. She makes the right choice and independently emerges as a winner. Maillu presents Wayua and Kaluki at various stages of their childhood through contrast in order to illustrate two aspects of positive and negative manifestations in life. Kaluki is bad hearted and dislikes Wayua because she is ugly. Wayua on the other hand pursues her sister and tries to explain that they are sisters. "I should not even be seen talking to you, get out of my sight, you look

terrible...! I'm your sister and I love you". Through Kaluki, Maillu shows the competition between women and children. Women, like children are portrayed as competitive and not contented with what they have. "I'm so happy sister, said Kaluki, I would like to visit fairy land and get more beauty for myself...

The cultural notion of the child as innocent has had, and still has, a powerful hold on the imagination. Its origin or appeal seems to reside in one or more (or possibly an undifferentiated amalgam) as seen in Dickinson's poem, "*The children*".
*They are idols of heart and of household;
They are angels of God in disguise;
His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still gleams in their eyes.*

Maillu seeks to represent more immediate 'real' childhood experiences which is beyond time, and often archetypal. In his novella, *Journey into Fairy Land*, Maillu uses the story of two sisters Kaluki and Wayua to transcend the archetypal notion of childhood as being innocent. The story is about two sisters who in their childhood portrayed very different characters, although they had been raised by the same parents and shared the same environment. Maillu uses the character traits of Kaluki to contradict the idea that children are angels of God in disguise. "Because of their difference, the two girls were no longer close. Kaluki became proud that she did not want to be seen with ugly sister" (Maillu, 1996:3) Maillu portrays Kaluki as proud and unwilling to listen to her parents. "But they could do nothing to change her no matter how hard they tried" (Ibid: 4).

Traditionally, the child is seen as being in need of protection. Childhood and children's lives have solely been explored through the views and understandings of their adult

caretakers. To developmental perspective, childhood is the period when humans are most dependent on secure responsible relationships with others (adults, siblings, and peers). In his novellas, such approaches have, in part, been challenged by Maillu, who, avowedly sees children as possessing distinctive cognitive and social developmental capabilities. In his texts, he shows that, it is not the unformed child but the deformed adult who is the problem. The child possesses, as his or her birthright, capacities for candour, understanding, curiosity and spontaneity that are deadened by literacy, education, reason and self-control. In *The Government's Daughter*, Tamia is curious to go to school and gain education. She, despite much discouragement from her father and step-mothers, is determined to be literate and bring some change to her community. After she runs away from Oloita, Tamia for sometime misses her family and is worried about her father. Maillu portrays children as having one chance of childhood and that they deserve to be given the freedom to enjoy and exercise their capabilities. He criticizes the family and the community as a whole for failing to offer a helping hand to children.

The child as savage positions proceed from a re-established but tacit ontological theory, a theory of what makes up the being of the other be it savage or child. It is these unspoken forms of knowledge that give rise to the accepted definition of the savage or the child as a 'natural' meaningful order of object. Such implicit theories serve to render the child-adult continuum as utterly conventional and thus taken for granted for the modern social theorist as the distinction between primitive thought and rational thought was for the early anthropologist. These assumptions embody the values and

interests of the contemporary culture, which in turn generate normative expectations within the wider society. However, the history of the social sciences has attested to a sequential critical address and debunking of the dominant ideologies of capitalism in relation to social class, colonialism in relation to race, and patriarchy in relation to gender; but as yet the ideology of development in relation to childhood has remained relatively intact. Cunningham contributes to this question when he states that: Analogies between children and savages do not exist in a social or political vacuum.' He seeks to relate such analogies precisely to their contexts or, to use his own terms 'to identify discourses about childhood, and the power relationships which they embody.' At risk of exhausting the previously developed analogy it may be suggested that whereas the early anthropologist had to voyage to his chosen phenomena, like an explorer, across social space, the child as a contemporary topic has been most vividly brought into recognition through the passage of social time. Both of these journeys symbolize a questing after control through understanding but neither are appropriately exclusive in as much as both the synchronic and diachronic dimensions are pertinent to our knowledge of any socio-cultural form.

What we should recognize however, is that both such processes are significant in fashioning their object; that is to say, comparative and historical analyses, in different ways, succeeded in establishing different classifications and boundaries around their phenomena. The manner of our assembling and the character of our distancing are significant in the constitution of either savage or child. Maillu examines childhood and demonstrates the erratic evolution of the image of childhood and its changing modes of recognition and

reception. In *the Governments Daughter*, Maillu averts the idea of a child as a savage or undeveloped. He builds his support from Freud's psychoanalysis theory that the child is born with abilities of survival in any environment. Through the portrayal of the major character, the author positively convinces the whole society that a child is able to make the correct choice regarding what is best for him or her. Tamia climbs up to the rank of the most respected child in the society, without the support of her family. What she encounters ensures that the child is realized as the social construction of a particular historical context and this provides a major platform for much contemporary theorizing about childhood; however it is the child's identity as a social status that determines its difference and recognition in the everyday world.

The status of childhood has its boundaries maintained through the crystallization of conventions and discourses into lasting institutional forms like families, nurseries, schools and clinics, all agencies specifically designed and established to process the child as a uniform entity. Comparative material drawn from cross-cultural contexts reveals divergent set of conventions and discourses, and thus institutional forms, some utterly different from our own but others bearing strong resemblances, all are bound together through homology. The comparative material, instructs us to think more profitably of childhood(s) rather than of a singular and mono-dimensional status. In the same way that the 'savage' served as the anthropologist's referent for humankind's elementary forms of organization and primitive classifications, thus providing a speculative sense of the primal condition of human being within the socio-cultural process, so also the child is taken to display for adults their own state of once untutored difference, but in a more collapsed form: a

spectrum reduced from 'human history' to one of generations. Maillu portrays Tamia as a child who transcends all the odds in her present situation as well as thinking about the future. Through her education, Tamia can boast of a bright future.

In the everyday world the category of childhood is a totalizing concept, it concretely describes a community that at some time has everybody as its member. This is a community which is therefore relatively stable and wholly predictable in its structure but by definition only fleeting in its particular membership. Beyond this, the category signifies a primary experience in the existential biography of each individual and thus inescapably derives its common-sense meanings, relevance and relation not only from what it might currently be as a social status but also from how each and every individual, at some time, must have been.

In his novellas, Maillu transcends the early 'evolutionist' anthropologists' thought of the child as a savage and different from the self-styled civilized person. He paints the childhood as a field worthy of study and recognizes the child as fully developed. He encourages the society to make a critical reconstruction of such sets of assumptions and makes positive difference in literature concerning childhood. In this way, the child might be reinvented or at least recovered positively, perhaps because of this seemingly all-encompassing character of the phenomenon as a social status and because of the essentially personal character of its particular articulation, common-sense thinking and everyday language in contemporary society are rife with notions concerning childhood. Being a child, having been a child, having children and having continuously to relate to children are all experiences which contrive to render the

category as 'normal' and readily transform our attribution of it to the realm of the 'natural' (as used to be the case with sex and race).

Such understandings, within the collective awareness, are organized around the single most compelling metaphor of contemporary culture, that of 'growth'. Stemming from this, the physical signs of anatomical change that accompany childhood are taken to be indicators of a social transition, so that the conflation of the realms of the 'natural' and the 'social' is perpetually reinforced. All contemporary approaches to the study of childhood are clearly committed to the view that childhood is not a natural phenomenon and cannot properly be understood as such. The social transformation from child to adult does not follow directly from physical growth and the recognition of children by adults, and vice versa, is not singularly contingent upon physical difference. Furthermore, physical morphology may constitute a form of difference between people in certain circumstances but it is not an adequately intelligible basis for the relationship between the adult and the child.

Maillu portrays childhood to be understood as a social construct, he makes reference to a social status delineated by boundaries that vary through time and from society to society but which are incorporated within the social structure and thus manifested through and formative of certain typical forms of conduct. Childhood then always relates to a particular cultural setting. Our early anthropologist would readily recognize the significance of such concepts within the social life of his 'savage'; he would demonstrate that the variety and hierarchy of social statuses within the tribe are plainly prescribed by boundaries which are, in turn, maintained through conventional practices deeply bound within ritual. Any transposition from one status location to

another is never simply a matter of physical growth or indeed physical change. Such movements require transformatory process such as valediction, rites of passage and initiation ceremonies, all of which are disruptive and painful and have an impact not just upon the individual but also upon the collectivity. The recognition that we are addressing the somewhat more diffuse and volatile boundaries that mark off childhood today, and the fact that we are considering such a transition from within the mores and folkways of a modern secular society, is no guarantee that the ritualism will be any less present. Rather, the rituals will have become more deep-seated and ideological in their justification. Whatever, the experience of change through ritual will continue to exercise a violent and turbulent constraint on the individual's consciousness. (Bohm, 7)

We might argue, in fact, that since the turn of the twentieth century we have developed a psychoanalytic vocabulary of motives that ascribe all pathologic conduct to the dysfunctional integration of the effects of the culturally based rituals that are instrumental in our becoming adult. (Jenks, 35) The widespread tendency to routinize and 'naturalize' childhood, both in common sense and in theory, serves to conceal its analytic importance behind a cloak of the mundane; its significance and 'strangeness' as a social phenomenon is obscured. Within everyday rhetoric and many discourses of theory childhood is taken for granted, it is regarded as necessary and inevitable, and thus part of normal life—its utter 'otherness' seems to foster a complacent attitude. This naturalism has, up until fairly recently, extended to the social sciences, particularly psychology, where childhood is apprehended largely in terms of biological and cognitive development through concepts such as 'maturation'.

Sociology, in search of explanations through structural causality, has independently sought to understand the problem of the child's acquisition of specific cultural repertoires through the largely one-sided theories of socialization. According to Maillu the natural child is able to progress in the natural environment. In his novella, *The Last Hunter* the child character finds his own way to and out of the dangerous forest without any help from the adults (Maillu, 1996:29).

Maillu has portrayed childhood and its experiences to illustrate the literary changes in his fiction. This is portrayed within a cultural and social background that is experiencing rapid social, demographic and cultural transitions and formations such as urbanization, emergence of nuclear families, single-parenthood or street families and is also being sucked into the web of modernization and globalization, which are determined and influenced by both local and external dynamics. For instance, the ideal of an educated and professionally qualified girl/woman in a society that is still dominated by patriarchal ideologies can only be realized in some instances when influence to change is initiated and enforced by the government.

The government has the responsibility to provide role models, who as Maillu suggests in the case of *The Government's Daughter*, would preferably have to be individual women that other marginalized women-the girl-child in particular-can relate to. Maillu directly articulates a progressive ideology, and Tamia's idealism contrasts with the culture's corruption. By narrative implication, Tamia and Mwendu in Maillu's novellas emerge superior to the culture in which they live, which is how they ultimately emerge as metaphors for the need for cultural change.

The invocation of the government's name in the story is meant to highlight the role it is expected to play in the initiation of development and change in the country. The writer, however, uses the image of the government to outline several problems faced by the girl-child in contemporary Kenya. First, it is clear that patriarchy wields and exercises immense power and control over women's lives in this community. Tamia is betrothed to Oloita without consultation. Whereas we expect her to be attending school, she is instead being prepared to start a home whilst still a child.

Ignorance and what is presented as backward cultural practices of betrothing and forced marriages of young girls in a society dominated by men is juxtaposed with the introduction of the government's presence in this community in the form of a woman administrative officer. This officer becomes the role model for Tamia who desires to become a government officer in the future.

Conclusion

The premise of this study was based on the assumption that representing childhood in fiction is problematic. Maillu emphasizes the need to 're-present' childhood. He adopts a different approach by using narrative strategies, which seeks to capture the progressive essence of childhood. By doing this, he transcends the typical, archetypal and stereotypical representation of childhood in his children's fiction. Maillu symbolically presents childhood in some kind of mystical manner, uniting a mythical past with a magical present. He ventures the concept of childhood through fiction. While the social and cultural perspectives emphasize the redemptive and innocent nature of the child, Maillu acknowledges the rebellious and resistant capacities of

children. He uses literary creations and struggles with the world of childhood not in a passive way, but to articulate its contradictions and questions some childhood values and even argues against them. He recommends that the social perspective of childhood should not be guided by the constitutive practices that provide for the child and the child-adult relationship.

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