

REVIEWS

Juliet McMaster. *Jane Austen, Young Author*. Ashgate (now marketed by Routledge), 2016.

187 pages. Paperback, USD 41.95 / Hardcover, USD 160.00.

“LOVERS of Jane Austen, and there are many of us, have long been waiting for a book devoted to her early writings.” So begins Peter Sabor’s “Foreword” to Juliet McMaster’s *Jane Austen, Young Author*, a groundbreaking, important book. Sabor is certainly right. Austen scholars have long lamented that the juvenilia—sometimes called her youthful writings or, more recently, determinedly, and anachronistically, her “teenage writings”—had not inspired book-length critical treatment. (As Sabor notes, there has been but one collection of essays on the subject, *Jane Austen’s Beginnings* [1989].) In setting out to provide extended insight, McMaster more than answers the wishes and hopes of Austen lovers, while also providing much food for thought to scholars of children’s literature. *This* is the book on Austen’s juvenilia that we have been waiting for, one that sets out to understand and to weave Austen’s childhood writings into our understandings of the “mature” author and into literary history.

McMaster is uniquely situated to write this book on Jane Austen (1775-1817). As the founding former director of the Juvenilia Press, and its long-time illustrator, McMaster has guided student editors through the textual and paleographic minefield, annotations, and introductory materials required to bring Austen’s juvenile writings into new print editions. Her and their work stands on its own, as scholarly accomplishment and proof of McMaster’s putting her money where her mouth is in taking first-time authors and editors seriously. These collaboratively produced, beautiful volumes reprint Austen’s youthful writings as serious scholarly subjects and treat new scholars as capable experts. Indeed, several chapters of *Jane Austen, Young Author* describe the ways in which McMaster’s Juvenilia Press has been (and still is, under the directorship of her successor, Christine Alexander) a field-changing powerhouse, serving as a textual training ground and a teaching tool. McMaster’s book’s chapter five, “‘Love and Friendship’ in the Classroom,” and chapter two,

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“Jane’s Juvenilia Illustrated,” discuss how she approached the major texts of Austen’s juvenilia through her work with students and at The Juvenilia Press.

But *Jane Austen, Young Author* is important not only for its showing us how juvenilia might most effectively be brought to classrooms, to print, and to new readers. McMaster persuasively documents, through accessible, original, informative, and joyful close readings, how Austen’s three fair-copy manuscript volumes of writings of the late 1780s and 1790s offer a sophisticated response to novel culture and literary history. McMaster shows us how the juvenilia made its mark on the “mature” novels, which were published some twenty years later, between 1811 and 1818.

Chapter one, “Energy Versus Sympathy,” discusses the juvenilia as prelude and inspiration of the fiction that would come later. McMaster describes the juvenilia as its “own separate place of dizzy raptures, ... offering intimations of the immorality that is to come” (2). Her readings show us the important roles of excess, motion, and gender reversal, as well as how the narratorial voice takes over “traditionally male territory” (6). Noting how few of the works include punishment meted out to misbehaving characters, McMaster concludes, “Young Jane does not want to turn her fictions into moral tales,” leading to “the pattern of the moral tale ... [being] resoundingly rejected.” McMaster also shows continuities between the juvenilia and the later novels, including things such as syllepsis or “incongruous yoking of the literal and figurative application of an idiom” (14). The chapter is compelling in showing the juvenilia to be a remarkable body of work of literary experiment and mastery, predating and standing apart from, not to say predicting, her later genius. After the juvenilia, as McMaster both celebrates and laments, “some of the best fun will be over” for readers of Austen (15).

The pleasures of close reading continue in chapters three and four, “Self-conscious Author” and “Greazy Tresses, Base Miscreants, and Horrid Wretches: Teenage Jane Does Dialogue,” which offer close readings of significant juvenile texts. These chapters illuminate its use of alliteration, irony, mischief, dialogue, tone (which McMaster cleverly identifies as “tonal oxymoron” [108]), letters, parody, humor, drama, conversation (again cleverly rebranded as “unconversation” [113]), and narration. In chapter four, McMaster uses the later plots to cleverly telescope out the likely endings of some of the unfinished juvenile writings, with their well-timed introductions of heroes and anti-heroes and their frequent three-marriage groupings.

The juvenilia are inspired by previous literary works, as McMaster shows. Chapter six, “‘Love and Freindship’ and its Targets” (which McMaster earlier declares “the best single work of the juvenilia” [9]), shows the ways in which it may have grown out of earlier novels by other authors: the anonymous *Laura and Augustus* (1784) and Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769). McMaster’s speculations and connections will leave you wanting to know more about Austen’s early reading. Chapter seven, “Partial, Prejudiced, and Proud: *Pride and Prejudice* and the Juvenilia,” heads in the other direction, describing how the juvenilia, rather than texts that were left behind as the young author aged, also came forward in specific ways in Austen’s second published novel.

McMaster's book is remarkable and delightful, not only for its copious, raucous, funny quotations from and explications of Austen's juvenile writings. There are also regular delights in the book's well-crafted sentences. As McMaster argues, Jane Austen "famously considered *Pride and Prejudice* 'too light & bright, & sparkling,' but "earlier the young author felt no need to hide her sparkle under a bushel" (95). McMaster's amusing and well-crafted line here serves as an example of the many pleasures of this book writ small. Although McMaster writes of Austen's "gleeful delight in her medium" in the juvenilia, *Jane Austen, Young Author* evidences the literary critic's gleeful delight in her medium as well. Brilliant flashes of wit await not only those who are discovering or returning to Austen's juvenilia, through McMaster's fine eye, but also the readers of McMaster's illuminating book. This is a tour de force book, treating a surprisingly neglected subject, brought to us by one of our foremost, pioneering, and accomplished scholars of Austen and children's literature.

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Pamela Nutt with others, editors. *Tales from "The Parthenon,"* by Ethel Turner. Illustrations by Naomi Harris. Juvenilia Press, 2014.

162 pages. Paperback, AUD 15.00.

Pamela Nutt with others, editors. *That Young Rebel,* by Ethel Turner. Illustrations by Jacqueline Meng. Juvenilia Press, 2015.

105 pages. Paperback, AUD 15.00.

PAMELA Nutt, together with two small teams of year 11 students from Presbyterian Ladies' College in Sydney, Australia, has carefully edited and annotated two volumes of Ethel Turner's juvenilia: *Tales from "The Parthenon,"* which collects the future best-selling author's shorter contributions to the monthly magazine for young people that Ethel, along with her co-founder and sister Lillian, published from 1889 to 1891; and *That Young Rebel*, the serial Ethel wrote for the final year of the *Parthenon* (1891–92). Whether you are interested in Australian literature or literary juvenilia, these volumes

should not be absent from your collection, as they offer invaluable insights into a young Australian woman writer's literary goals and creative skills. The editors' impressive undertaking also offers us a closer look into a young woman's development as a professional writer, casting light on some of the struggles Ethel encountered in her literary quest.

It is clear that, right from the start, Ethel's aim was to challenge Victorian beliefs regarding gender roles and find her own voice in modern Australia. As the editors inform us in the Introductions to both volumes, Ethel Turner was born 24 January 1870 and emigrated with her mother and three sisters to Australia in 1880, supposedly at the age of six. (Who has not lied about their children's age to get a transport fare reduction?) They settled in Sydney, a rapidly developing urban world. It was while still a pupil in Sydney Girls' High School that Ethel showed her interest in the writing business, developing her skills with the intention of becoming an adept professional: she was involved in the production of the school newspaper, the *Iris*, which paved the way for her subsequent newspaper work, with the *Parthenon*. In both of their well-researched Introductions, Nutt and her co-editors offer illuminating selections from the author's personal diary that show how Ethel was determined to gain financial independence and stability.

Ethel and Lillian's aim, in co-founding the *Parthenon*, was to support themselves as professional writers while contributing to the future education of Australia's youth. The sisters wrote most of the articles in the *Parthenon*, with Ethel also in charge of the "Children's Page," a section dedicated to short serials, puzzles and various competitions. As Nutt and her co-editors demonstrate in their Introductions to both volumes, the sisters' project was initially handled with great care and attention to detail. They understood the hard work and commitment that founding and maintaining a successful business entails. Nonetheless, as the editors also reveal, the constant search for new contributors, material, and sponsors eventually took its toll on the magazine's creators. They were involved in a lawsuit after accusing a child of cheating in a competition, and towards the end of the magazine's existence the sisters showed signs of "careless editing" (Introduction to *That Young Rebel* xvi) and struggled to find new material to keep the serials going. In the Introduction as well as in the endnotes to *That Young Rebel*, Nutt and her co-editors highlight a number of editorial mistakes and inconsistencies as well as spelling and punctuation errors: evidence of the impact of Ethel's circumstances on her work. The young author herself, we learn, claimed in her diary, "I'm not sorry the Parthenon has gone, it is such a relief. Forced writing is bad I am sure" (4 April 1892). It is this raw honesty on the writer's part that helped to make her the responsible author and editor of a successful magazine, which attracted many young readers and received a favourable review from the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Also valuable to our understanding of Ethel's development as a writer is the Introduction to the *Tales from* "The Parthenon," in which Nutt and her co-editors showcase Ethel's writing process, aptly documented with passages from the author's diary. These analyses of Ethel's evolution as a professional writer constitute a welcome contribution to juvenilia studies.

Ethel's early preoccupations also receive thoughtful treatment, as the editors document her emerging abilities to engage and entertain her young readers through

tales adapted to an Australian setting. The short serial “Gladys and the Fairies” (January 1889), one of the stories included in *Tales from “The Parthenon,”* includes references to emu eggs, grasshoppers and cicadas, which young Australian readers would easily recognise. The numerous references to public transport taking characters in and out of Sydney also point to the new Australian context of Ethel’s tales, as do the mentions of the entertainment choices in *That Young Rebel* (the Cyclorama theatre, the Sydney Zoological Gardens, the Coogee beachside and Aquarium). One of the most helpful aspects of these editions is the editors’ analysis of the ways in which Ethel “consciously presents the world and experiences of her young readers as the subject for fiction, rather than the settings of the English world from which many of their parents may well have come” (Introduction to *That Young Rebel* xix). Victorian England is not Ethel’s world, and her stories celebrate this fact.

The main characters in the *Parthenon* tales, all girls (Gladys, Midge and Bobbie), come from affluent middle-class families with the means to provide their children with governesses and private education. Yet in some of her tales, Ethel also chooses to explore another side of Sydney, one in which poverty prevails, in some ways resembling the London of Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*. This concern is most evident in “A Dreadful Pickle” (October 1889), in which Midge takes the tram to one of Sydney’s poorer neighbourhoods and goes on a somewhat conventional quest to find and help “the poor people.” However, Nutt and her team of student co-editors point out that Ethel also breaks away from the “stereotypically didactic” treatment of the “reformed child trope” that characterised Victorian literature (Introduction to *Tales* xxxii). Although she writes “in the tradition of the reformation of the naughty child,” argue the editors (Introduction to *Tales* xxix), it is the naughtiness, rebellion and mischievousness of her characters, more than their admirable qualities, that make them appealing and loveable.

Bobbie, the titular heroine of the last of the three stories included in *Tales from “The Parthenon,”* takes her naughtiness even further than Gladys and Midge—the heroines of the two earlier stories collected here—take theirs, and yet she does not end up entirely reformed. As the editors observe, the playful and witty “Bobbie will remain recognisable for her own particular qualities, not for those that would be thrust upon her” (Introduction to *Tales* xxxiii). Those of you with an interest in women’s studies will find the editors’ discussion of “The Evolution of Bobbie” particularly thought-provoking (Introduction to *Tales* xxxiii-xxxix). They argue convincingly that Bobbie, like Ethel herself, mirrors important changes in late-nineteenth-century Australian society, especially regarding women’s roles: both character and author are in the process of breaking with restrictive conventional Victorian attitudes. The heroine is “an image of the emerging young woman in Australia and her independence is unassailable”; she is both boyishly adventurous and educated in the “virtues of young womanhood” (Introduction to *Tales* xxxviii). Who would not want to become acquainted with such a likeable character?

If after meeting Bobbie you are curious to see how Ethel continued to evolve as a writer, you will definitely enjoy *That Young Rebel*, a serial written by nineteen-year-old Ethel Turner under the pseudonym of Princess Ida and originally published in the *Parthenon*, running from January 1891 to March 1892 (when the newspaper ceased

its activity). The main challenge for Turner was, as the editors point out in their Introduction to this edition, to sustain the narrative for such a long period of time. In other ways the narrative recalls Ethel's earlier tales for the *Parthenon*. The protagonist is a thirteen-year-old orphan boy (Keith Farndon, or Taffie), who spends his time between boarding school and his uncle's home. Taffie is described for us by a tolerant, youthful narrator, writing for a similarly young and tolerant audience; his rebellion is not punished but rather cherished and celebrated by the narrator and other characters alike.

The narrator herself admits not writing the typical moral tale whose purpose is to instil proper behaviour:

Alas, and again alas! I shall never be able to write moral tales, I am sure. Such a tale as this will never be allowed by the authorities into a Sunday-school library; it will never be placed into a child's hands, with a view to improve him by showing what haps [*sic*] to bad boys. (*That Young Rebel* 56)

Instead, she is keen to encourage the character's mischievousness and allow him to escape any form of discipline or punishment:

Now, I suppose, were my story of the same highly moral nature as that in which disobedient children were eaten up by bears, I should go on to tell you how this boy was picked up either dead or with a broken back, to act as a perpetual warning to other children naughtily inclined. But no such thing happened. (*That Young Rebel* 40)

In fact, it is the adult characters (teachers, parents, relatives, guards, governesses, etc.) in both *Tales from "The Parthenon"* and *That Young Rebel* who, typically, appear unkind, insensitive, silly and ignorant. (Some of the scenes guarantee readers a good laugh!) It is the rebellious characters we are meant to feel sympathy towards. The adults are often mocked by other characters, whereas the narrator often steps in to invite the young audience's compassion for Taffie, despite his naughty behaviour. Such exclamations as "poor little Taffie" (42) and "Alas poor abandoned Taffie" (78) are ones we might imagine hearing from a younger sibling—or a loyal friend.

No wonder, then, that Nutt and her co-editors argue that Ethel is not interested in writing in the tradition of moral and didactic tales; in fact, as she matures as a writer in a journey chronicled by these two volumes, she moves away from them, increasingly choosing to celebrate the (Australian) child, rebellious, independent, and lively as she (or he) might be. Turner has long been acknowledged as a prolific and popular writer: her books (e.g., *Seven Little Australians* [1894] and its sequels, *The Family at Misrule* [1895] and *Little Mother Meg* [1902]) have been placed in millions of children's hands worldwide, providing them with entertaining tales and delightful characters many readers have identified with. In her juvenilia as with her mature writing, Turner shows herself a writer for and about children, who emphasises those qualities that she admires in them: determination, stubbornness and mischievousness.

It is with the juvenilia collected in these two volumes that she begins to depict (Australian) children as attractive figures because of their rebellious nature rather than in spite of it. As Taffie's narrator proudly announces, her "young rebel[s] came off scot free" (*That Young Rebel* 85). And perhaps even more importantly, by the time she has ended her *Parthenon* project, this young woman writer has challenged Victorian stereotypes in order to find her own literary voice in a rapidly changing Australia.

Both of these Juvenilia Press editions offer invaluable insights into Ethel Turner's literary ambitions and creative abilities. They make a strong case for the artistic quality of her juvenilia. What is more, they contribute to the ongoing project of establishing the value of studying juvenilia as literature in its own right and not merely as a starting point for subsequent works. Whether your chief interest is Australian literature or juvenilia studies, you will appreciate Nutt and her co-editors' presentations of young Ethel Turner's impressive commitment to a professional career and to her unconventional stories about wicked, albeit loveable, and entirely Australian, characters.

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Laurie Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition: Young Writers and Prolepsis, 1750-1835*. Oxford UP, 2016.

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DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198739203.003.0001

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ...

WE ALL know how Keats's poem continues and concludes, and to what class of travelling and discovery it truly refers. Readers of Laurie Langbauer's *The Juvenile Tradition*—like those watchers of the skies—will similarly be left feeling that something quite remarkable has just swum into their ken. Langbauer's study is erudite and hugely informative. It is also admirably comprehensible, beautifully written and (most impressively, given the subjects it touches upon) refreshingly free of any stylistic opaqueness.

Langbauer, Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a specialist in the long nineteenth century, has notably worked on the novel, with publications such as *Novels of Everyday Life: The Series in English Fiction, 1850-1930* (1999), and *Women and Romance: The Consolations of Gender in the English Novel* (1990). But she is very well placed to develop this current monographic study, having also written a number of works on children's literature.

The Juvenile Tradition sets out what appears to be a highly engaging discussion; indeed, the dust-jacket blurb promises us that the author “rewrites one of the most important periods in British literature.” For once, the blurb is not mere hype: this book most certainly makes good on its promises. And those promises are raised, I would say, from the very outset; the subtitle (*Young Writers and Prolepsis, 1750-1835*) points to an original argumentative framework on which the six individual studies within the book will be constructed and which accords this work its distinctiveness and its special worth. The term *prolepsis* will probably send many of us scuttling for our dictionaries, if only to *remind* ourselves of what it refers to. As Langbauer indicates, its meaning is somewhat complex:

The *OED* defines prolepsis first through anticipation—“the action of representing or regarding (esp. as a rhetorical figure, originally in speech or writing) something in the future as already done or existing; anticipation.” Gérard Genette calls this “narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later.” (4-5)

Langbauer argues that prolepsis can also do more than anticipate or evoke; it can in fact become a means—attained through the very act of writing—of bringing into existence an authorial status and validity by asserting it to be so. Langbauer's compelling thesis throughout this book is that, through the trope of prolepsis, the young writers considered here (Thomas Chatterton, Henry Kirke White, Robert Southey, Leigh Hunt, Jane Austen and Felicia Hemans, primarily, in addition to the young Byron, Mary and Percy Shelley, Keats and others) empowered themselves to stake a claim for their contemporary significance and—additionally—to avouch their literary legacy in the future. In rewriting this period (as the blurb would have it), *The Juvenile Tradition* essentially aims to recover these young voices that have in many cases been lost but that were, at the time, anything but lost. In parts of this period, unlike in our own senior-oriented demographic triangle in the West, around 50% of the population in Britain was under 19 years of age. This sizeable group vigorously took advantage of whatever literary opportunities were available to it through a range of means and media so as to present itself in print to a readership, one that responded in turn by eagerly devouring the literature these writers offered and, at one and the same time, vociferously judging its qualities and marvelling at (or doubting) its originality. This is the lost juvenile tradition that Langbauer so ably recovers; and

further, by focussing on the proleptic character of this juvenilia, she does indeed present us with a rewritten account of the period.

The book is structured into five main chapters: a review of the juvenile tradition followed by four chapters each focussing primarily on specific authors; a conclusion both summarises and points forward through an assessment of the work of Hemans. Langbauer's sensitive and insightful reading of her authors—supported by a spectacular array of footnotes, in themselves worthy of a separate review—clearly establishes the historical parameters within which the authors were working and deftly reveals their individual approaches towards literary creativity. I find particularly commendable those moments in which Langbauer brings to the fore the perennial critical problems familiar to many of us who work in this ambit, namely the crushing tendency of the world at large to dismiss this literature as marginal, trivial, derivative, or simply inferior, and shows us how these young authors faced up to such obstacles, transcending them time and again. For instance, in the first chapter (on “Backgrounds and Traditions”), she points out that “juvenile writers used their juvenility to refuse others’ attempts to define them” (51); clearly, prolepsis also implies counting on a healthy dose of authorial self-belief when staking claim to a future reputation. This much we have perhaps always instinctively known about such authors; Langbauer shows that it actually forms a part of an entire rhetorical strategy.

The book's chapters cover issues as diverse yet clearly interconnected as the technology of newspaper and journal publication; the tradition of juvenile writing (including the ever-controversial notion of *child genius*); education; the subsuming of the juvenile tradition into Romanticism; and the recalibrating of what *juvenile writing* actually means. In all of this, however, the overriding thrust of the study is towards emphasising the ways in which these writers proactively take control of the cultural factors of influence and importance in their world and, in doing so, make for themselves a plausible present through which to project an equally plausible future. Speaking of Henry Kirke White, though in terms applicable to all these writers, Langbauer reminds us that “the importance to juvenile writing of prolepsis” is as “a trope that yokes immediacy to the future Future fame will validate the poetic identity that his contemporaries doubt, but that fame can only come because the young poet already asserts himself as poet in the face of disbelief that anyone so young could possibly write” (110).

As a means for approaching literary juvenilia, and of understanding both its underlying rhetorical *modus operandi* and the very particular qualities that this produces, I believe that this book is a most significant contribution to juvenilia studies.

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