YOUNG ENGLAND: PART I

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THE FIRST decades of the nineteenth century in Britain witnessed an extraordinary display of noteworthy publication by juvenile authors. Recent scholarship, building on the theories of Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster, has restored that Romantic-era juvenile writing to literary history (Kittredge, Owen and Peterson, Stabler). In *The Juvenile Tradition* I argued that writing by young people had a decided cultural presence at that time—juvenile writing was recognised as such and provided young writers with a shared sense of identity and heritage. Young writers looked to others like them, and they were also generally read, reviewed, and understood in this time as participating in a tradition, giving voice to youth.

Literary juvenilia is a new field. Pioneers like Alexander and McMaster, beginning in the latter part of the last century, were the first "to examine childhood writings as a body of literature, almost a genre, in their own right" (3). McMaster pointed to a tradition, arguing the juvenile writer "has her eye on the Canon" (281). Nevertheless, the International Society of Literary Juvenilia was only officially constituted in 2017; the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies* first published in 2018. To advance the new field's importance, scholars have argued that it helps transform literary history. Keeping sight of the influence of this youth movement changes our literary genealogies, for instance. Understanding Romanticism as part of youth movements alters its identity and importance. Additionally, recognising the importance of youth disarms customary notions of developmental history. If early work becomes important in itself—not mere apprenticeship, not subordinated to some looked-for end, not just the first step in a progressive history—then historiography too must change. But what would that really mean in practice? What would that history look like? Now that we have asserted our field, what then?

I consider "what next?" through an exploration of one way the turn-of-the-century juvenile tradition influenced a succeeding generation. To rethink literary history, my project takes up one case of a group of young writers intent on rethinking history. I consider the Victorian movement known (appropriately from the vantage point of literary juvenilia) as "Young England," a Tory splinter group of the early

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1840s, generally considered something of a political curiosity. Rather than an anomaly, I argue, Young England demonstrates the enduring importance of youth to writing at the time. I re-examine Young England's significance in light of the questions implied by that "what next?" so important to scholars asserting literary juvenilia within the academy: what new questions does scholarly understanding of juvenile writing in Britain throughout the nineteenth century allow literary critics to ask? In this essay, the specific question becomes: how does literary juvenilia transform literary history by transforming the practice of historicising, offering new models of history as constructed? In Part One, I will follow one practice of juvenilia studies in undertaking recovery work. How can we continue to constitute the Romantic-era juvenile tradition in new ways? Part Two suggests another contribution of our field. It considers the effect of recovery on what follows: how do new genealogies of literary succession rethink or even refuse traditional models, models of tradition, complicating preconceptions of origins and development?

THE POWER of the past was central to the identity and politics of Young England—whose romanticisation of England's history some traditionalists deem so mistaken as to be "bizarre" (Adelman 54). Young England's conservative platform promulgated "an idealistic, nostalgic vision of a revitalised aristocracy motivated by social duty" (O'Kell, "On" Abstract). It understood the aristocracy to be the time-honoured defender of the people against modern commerce and manufacturing—and looked to youth to pledge it once again to that ideal. Not surprisingly, Young England was made up of Tory aristocrats, aged twenty-something, each more or less attractive, charming, and captivating. Its principal members were George Smythe (1818–1857), later Seventh Viscount Strangford (in 1855), who is one focus of the first part of this essay, and his friends Lord John Manners (1818–1906), later Seventh Duke of Rutland (in 1888), and Andrew Baillie-Cochrane (1816–1890), later First Baron Lamington (1880). The group were friends from their days at Eton and Cambridge, when they had first envisioned a "romanticized medievalism" (Weintraub 207).[1] Through "dreams of a revived chivalry" (Ward 123), the "Young England party … proposed to effect the regeneration of the country" (Graham 186). Regeneration seemed possible to them because they openly asserted their philosophy of history as a vision of and by revitalising youth; they took this understanding of juvenility as a shaping power from the youth movement of the generation just prior, from Romantic-era figures such as George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824) and Percy Shelley (1792–1822), along with Smythe's own father, Percy, the sixth Viscount Strangford (1780–1855), on whom the first part of my essay also focuses.

Smythe, Manners, and Baillie-Cochrane were all celebrated in fiction by Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), whom the second part of this essay discusses at some length, who functioned as the movement's literary spokesman as well as its political mentor. No longer strictly young in the 1840s, Disraeli was on his way to becoming prime minister in 1868 and 1874, and Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876. He gained his position within Young England through celebrating the other members' youth in his novels, which—along with the writing of Young England's members—reveal the prominent role of the juvenile tradition in the movement's identity. Young England's

historian Richard Faber (a publisher's son) recognised in that history that this group had all written as young men (45–99 *passim*). However, although he knew other young people had done so too, he lacked any larger explanatory system for such juvenile writing, so ultimately considered it distinctive to Young England, claiming of Disraeli, for instance, that "no English writer beforehand had used fiction (and/or history) … to propagate an exciting new political creed; nobody has done so since" (255). Recognising the juvenile tradition, gives scholars today a way to resituate Young England's writing in its history—but also to connect juvenility directly to Young England's quest to reframe history.

In later years, after he was Baron Lamington, Baillie-Cochrane (who by then had actually altered his last name to Cochrane-Baillie) reminisced about "a romantic poetic sensibility" inspiring them all "when the memories of Byron and Shelley were still fresh. The air was full of Byronism" (Lamington 146). Indeed, the dashing members of Young England had looked to charismatic heroes like themselves to seize the imagination of England and took Byron and Shelley as their models because—noble, handsome, scandalous in private life, and dead young—these poets represented a lost past, a missed opportunity. They intertwined youthful writing, youthful fame, and unruly politics. They were some of the first literary celebrities—an identity to which Smythe and Disraeli aspired—with all of celebrity's plastic fascination: Byron's attraction was legendary by this time, and Shelley's was "steadily growing but also undecided"; both provided "an index of the Victorians' self-conflicted working through of their own youthful Romanticism" (Eisner 95, 94). As cultural symbols, these young dead poets figured history not as linear and progressive but as immanent and simultaneous. Like Young England, they "turned, Janus-like, both towards the past and the future" (Faber 264), concurrently markers of a lost bygone time and of the power to install a better time to come.

Excellent histories have located Young England in political issues of its time—the condition-of-England question, the Irish question, the revolt against Peel (Faber, O'Kell, Varga). For instance, Young England blamed the hungry forties on post-industrial democratisations that (it felt) had robbed the monarchy of strength, the church of sway, and the nobility of influence, undercutting their ties and responsibilities to the masses once dependent on and (supposedly) protected by the establishment. It maintained class divisions as natural and proper out of belief in benevolent paternalism—though historians remind us that paternalism was "no preserve of the Tories alone" (Roberts 205; see also Faber 262). Certainly more doctrinaire Tories, including Smythe's and Manners's fathers, did not recognise in their sons' imaginative fancies what they felt were *their* party's beliefs. Smythe's father, Percy, agreed with his friend, the King of Hanover, that Young England was made up of "young men who, self-conceited, think that they, by inspiration, know more than their fathers" (de Fonblanque 225).

But what, exactly, was it that they thought they knew? Even at the time, Young England's meaning seemed to lie more in its ways of seeing than in any particular politics. "'Young Englandism' was a sentiment," a series of articles about its members wrote, "not a political system" ("Literary Legislators: No. III" 327). "More than a protest," it "stood for a distinct outlook on life," agreed an early historian of it (Sichel

15). Disraeli himself located its influence in its mode—it worked "rather by the use of ancient forms and the restoration of the past than by political revolutions founded on abstract ideas" ("General" xi). Like other faux medievalisms—the Oxford movement, the Pre-Raphaelites—the ancient forms it adopted were radically transformed if not patently manufactured. Manners himself stressed the act of restoration more than its particular substance: "We have now virtually pledged ourselves … to attempt to restore what? I hardly know—but still it is a glorious attempt" (qtd. in Whibley 1: 66).

To its baffled critics (even today), style over substance appeared a fault. It made Young England seem (they thought) vain, purposeless, and inconsequential, for which they blamed its callow youth. Charles Dickens condemned Young England as a dangerous "hallucination" that "cancels all the advances of nearly four hundred years, and reverts to one of the most disagreeable periods of English History" (265, 267). To writers like Dickens, Young England's nostalgia seemed both naïve and retrogressive, entrenching the status quo. That tradition confers selfhood is not surprising perhaps as a standpoint within a conservative movement—but, because Young England looked to the *juvenile* tradition to undergird its significance, in doing so it redefined tradition as a mode of thinking. Young England took the succession of youth as the premier model of how tradition can constitute those who speak up to join it by retroactively transforming the past. It hoped to relocate agency in a vision of what came before in order to instill a new image of the yet-to-come.

For these reasons, Young England exemplifies how the juvenile tradition provides this kind of counter history. A history predicated on youth can restore the overlooked contributions of youth to the record—and that is important. It can foreground how youth makes history. More to the point for this essay, it can rethink just how history gets made. In Young England's view of history, days are "bound each to each" on a sweeping scale that rewrites history all the way back to England's beginnings, by appropriating Wordsworth's idea that "the Child is Father of the Man" (from his "My Heart Leaps Up," written 1802; published 1807). The children, however, usurp this self-fashioning motto of their fathers' Romantic generation to transform its meaning—to apply it retroactively to those who came before them. The history they imagine looks to youth rather than to elders, but, more boldly, it transforms their elders into youth. This backwards recasting of the past in their own image reimagines genealogy, troubles sequence, and complicates origin.

ASSERTING a remade generational history is not necessarily radical. Young England's mentor Disraeli, addressing income inequity in his novel *Sybil* (a *roman à clef* of the movement), imagined England split into "two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws" (76).[2] In a question of "THE RICH AND THE POOR" (77), Disraeli's silver fork re-imagination of history never strayed much beyond the rich and powerful, whom he hoped to join. Any history reconstituted vis-à-vis youth conforms to some familiar

patterns of historiography, and the history of the group of young peers making up Young England was certainly a history of privilege.

As such, in its history of old and young, it could still maintain privilege—it could still be dynastic: when it comes to Smythe's place in the juvenile tradition, for example, his father's writing and connections shaped that son's career, as the first part of this essay will show. But it could be something else too. The family lines of generational history are not necessarily linear or even patrilineal: after her husband's early death, Mary Shelley (1797–1851), who made such a splash herself with *Frankenstein* as a nineteen-year-old woman writer, took over situating the legacy of Percy Shelley retroactively in terms of youth. Nor do such lines of descent wholly accord with accepted social ascendancy: Disraeli, in his memoir of his father, invented out of whole cloth their derivation from great fifteenth-century Sephardic houses. His appropriation of dynastic logic also intentionally revealed its darker side: although Disraeli's mother's ancestry was actually "of the utmost distinction in Jewish history," that meant it was traceable back to "Torquemada's expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492" (Wolf 214–15). Even Isaac D'Israeli's more humble early-eighteenth-century in-laws had been tortured for their Judaism by the Portuguese Inquisition (Wolf 208). Sorting history by youth may still conform to old patterns that do not necessarily de-hierarchise—do not de-class or un-gender or ignore racial or religious biases altogether. Nevertheless, as it repeats old arrangements, such constructed history also falls into new ones, organised into a different scale of estimation in which established categories get more complicated and unreliable, get cast differently, and even come to question themselves.

To follow the twist and turns of resituating one small group eccentrically in history, this essay splits into two parts. Part One, published here, rewrites the history of the juvenile tradition as Young Englanders saw it—expressly as a pre-history that led to themselves and their movement. Understanding the shaping presence of Byron on that movement, however, involves recovering the still overlooked central influence of Percy Smythe, Sixth Lord Strangford, in the juvenile tradition. Byron had been very conscious of—both inspired and nettled by—Strangford as another titled young Lord who had beaten him to publication. Resituating the elder Strangford's importance among other early writers—Hewson Clarke (1787–1845?), Leigh Hunt (1784–1859), Thomas Moore (1779–1851)—re-constitutes the juvenile tradition as it reveals its continued influence. Percy Shelley was a close second to Byron in influence, gaining meaning as a symbol of youth over the century, with Disraeli in the vanguard of this recovery, as I discuss in Part Two.

The dramatis personae of the Young England movement understood themselves as directly following such predecessors, but they also understood the consequence of their history (both lived and imagined) in rewriting that past—those restless, inconstant players, Smythe and Disraeli, especially. I place George Smythe's early writing against this backdrop to show the ways he located himself within tradition to claim identity even while he understood both identity and tradition as conditional and uncertain. In the same manner, Young Englanders invoke the youth of their fathers and a prior tradition to authorize their aspirations. The young Smythe's poetry already misgives as remedy, however, attempts to transform the past by reimagining it.

Part Two (to follow in the next issue) picks up by considering Young England in light of its own reconsideration of history. Byron supposedly wrote "no man of reflection, can feel otherwise than doubtful and anxious, when reflecting on futurity" (Nathan 6)—undermining the certainty of beliefs with which men prepare for their ends, but also raising doubts about what assurances could be found in the past. The inconsistencies of their visions of the past (at least for Smythe and Disraeli) reflect an almost radical, certainly denatured, understanding of it—as oblique, random, conditional, manufactured, highly performative: a chimera fostering hope but shattering dreams.

"It is the past alone that can explain the present, and it is youth that alone can mould the remedial future," Disraeli wrote in *Sybil* (488). Always ironic and self-aware—a reviewer speaks of Disraeli's "perpetually-recurring paradoxes" (Escott 10)—as Young England's historian, Disraeli exposes that movement's irony and self-critique. Past his youth at this time, this once juvenile writer perforce must perform juvenility—and he foregrounds youth as a performance, openly, explicitly, and boldly. He foregrounds how this youth movement calls upon youth to re-order old categories, and to question conviction in the explanatory power of the history it supposedly proffers. Those complications help to frame the recent argument by scholars such as Tom Mole and Andrew Elfenbein, who insist on the afterlife of Byron and Shelley as more than simple persistence—as something, instead, that "enables a rethinking of the significance of Victorian texts" (Elfenbein, *Byron* 10). Recovering a now-forgotten juvenile tradition may help such rethinking by exposing a relation to the past, in this case that of Young England, as simultaneously "drastic and discontinuous" and unbroken (Mole 12). I suggest here that this forgotten prior tradition had already questioned in what ways a turn to the past can make it new. The juvenile tradition foregrounds the "radically new historical understanding" (12) that Mole and Elfenbein assert the Victorians took from their Romantic past—by questioning how "radically new" such vexed relations to history actually are.[3]

The Juvenile Tradition as Young England's Pre-history: Byron and Strangford

BYRON exemplified the Romantics for the Victorians (Elfenbein). So would Shelley; increasingly over the century, Shelley worship became "a faddish Victorian stance" (Eisner 98; see also Duerksen). In time the two came to stand for youth itself; later generations understood the meaning of their own juvenility through these prior poets. Denise Millstein argues that allusions to Byron in George Eliot's *Felix Holt* demonstrate Byron's works as "foundational of the young" who "it seems read him as a rite of passage" 141; T. S. Eliot describes taking "the usual adolescent course with Byron [and] Shelley … until about my twenty-second year (Eliot 33). George Bernard Shaw wrote: "when I was nearing twenty, Shelley got me" (qtd. in Duerksen 167), and Duerksen notes Robert Browning's "enthusiastic response in youth" (27) to Shelley when writing his juvenile work *Pauline* (29–30). In 1829, the young men at Cambridge and Oxford held a debate: was Byron or Shelley the greater poet (Allen 50–51)?

Byron, better known at the time, won, but Arthur Hallam (1811–1833), one of those debaters, "and other young admirers of Shelley," subsequently reprinted *Adonais* to boost Shelley's fame (Duerksen 22–23).[4] The undergraduates debating between Byron and Shelley included Richard Monckton Milnes (1809–1885), who went on to have direct early ties to Young England.[5]

Byron's preeminence within the juvenile tradition was an identity he proclaimed about himself at the time.[6] "Fame is the thirst of youth," Byron famously wrote in *Childe Harold* (*Childe* 3.112.46). Byron began publishing when he was eighteen (*Fugitive Pieces*, 1806), and brought out the most circulated of his four juvenile attempts, *Hours of Idleness; a Series of Poems Original and Translated. By George Gordon, Lord Byron, a Minor* (1807), at nineteen. In part Byron derived his preeminence—as misunderstood youth (such injustice would symbolise why the juvenile tradition mattered to subsequent young writers)—from the notorious notice in the *Edinburgh Review* (1808) by Henry Brougham panning this juvenile work.[7] That criticism had a "galvanizing effect" on Byron (Schoenfield, *British* 135). The young poet turned such ridicule to good account by repeatedly reminding readers of its unfairness—at length (and throughout repeated revisions) in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809)—but also of his defiance of and profit from it. "I will work the mine of my youth to the last vein of the ore, and then—good night" (Byron, *Trouble* 31).[8]

Byron's sense of a tradition around him of other juvenile writers, however, is manifest in the way he refers everywhere in his letters to his cohort as "us youth." In 1814, for instance, he asked his friend Thomas Moore for a new play as good as Shakespeare's: "I wish you or Campbell would write one:—the rest of 'us youth' have not heart enough" (*Wedlock*'s 115).[9] By that time, he had met Brougham's criticism of his prematurity by himself skewering a range of young writers in *English Bards* and then by suppressing the poem (in 1812) due to belated second thoughts about that response. Second thoughts may have been one way to meet an increasing sense of his own belatedness. Byron refers to himself, Thomas Campbell (1777–1844), and Moore as youth in his 1814 letter because they had all established themselves as poets before they were twenty-one—but they were no longer juvenile. Byron was in his mid-twenties by this point, Moore and Campbell in their thirties. Byron may have so emphatically maintained their juvenility because he felt he was losing that identity: the next paragraph in his letter refers to a cutting review that considers youth as just an empty stance through which Byron attempts to excuse his "sweeping invectives," but asks: "what connection is there between the open simplicity and good-natured confidence of boyhood, and the fierce hate" of Byron's satire (Barnes para 1). In retrospect, Brougham's denouncements seemed preferable, or, at any rate, simpler. Brougham's criticism had always confirmed—never questioned—Byron writing from the stance of youth.

The phrase "us youth" comes from Shakespeare—from the history play *Henry IV* Part I. Ronald Levao notes Byron's "fondness (often noted) for the cry uttered at the Gad's Hill robbery: 'They hate us youth' (1 *Henry IV* 2.2)" (129). The context emphasises Byron's preferred sense of juvenility as a defensive position against others' assaults. But it also emphasises juvenility *as* a position, an assumed one at that. Falstaff, who speaks this line, is not at all young and must strike a pose even to utter

it. In quoting the phrase in *Don Juan*—"Who've made 'us youth' wait too—too long already" (1.125.386)—Byron strikes a pose as well: ironic, complicated, perhaps sophistical. "Setting the phrase in quotation marks amplifies it by calling attention to the voice quoting it," as Levao argues (134). "It licenses the unreflecting, selfish pleasures of youth, mocks one's right to that claim, then exploits the charm of self-mockery to renew the license" (129). Such complications in Byron's understanding of youth do not undercut its importance to his identity—epitomizing juvenile writing remains central to how Byron represents himself and how he was received—but they do emphasise his understanding of this symbol's waywardness. Youth may have waited too long, but can that be any guarantee of what comes next?

Through his persistent quotation marks around "us youth," Byron maintains a "varying distance between ardent youth and self-aware sophisticate," as Levao argues (134). Byron keeps juvenility at arm's length and keeps the upshot of the impatient ambitions of juvenile writers undecidable (does he mean the phrase as citation or use?). This is "a meditation by turns poignant, ruthless, and self-aware" (135). It registers the fissures within the convergence of then and now, such as in the incommensurable past and present selves (ardent and sophisticated) that Byron wishes to occupy simultaneously as premiere juvenile writer no longer strictly young. Its context in *Henry IV* is simulation and authenticity: a feigned robbery after which young Prince Hal vows—in his famous "I know you all" soliloquy—to reveal his true mettle and extinguish his undeserving companions: "Redeeming time when men think least I will" (1 *Henry IV* 2.2.221). The context in *Don Juan* is youth's frustration, denied too long its rights. The context for Byron's request of Moore to rival Shakespeare is jealousy: he tells Moore he had just seen Edmund Keane acting Iago to perfection. All these sources—with their epistemological quandaries, sense of thwarting, and envious desire—underlie Byron's vexed relation to "us youth" as the "foil to set it [himself] off" against a literary past, a juvenile tradition (1 *Henry IV* 2.2. 193). In his customary ironic (and anxious) way, then, in using this phrase Byron leaves undecidable whether his youth is simulated or authentic: does he have "heart enough," not just to succeed established predecessors like Shakespeare, but to move beyond the youth of the day, leaving them over and done?

These were shaping questions because, even as Byron fashioned himself into the symbol of juvenile writer, he knew he was belated, by no means the first young poet to publish. He had himself been inspired by several youth before him who not only wrote good poetry but had made a splash, most notably Moore, Hunt, and Percy Smythe (both before and after he became sixth Viscount Strangford). If Byron had a tendency to forget their antecedence, his youthful rivals reminded him of it; Hewson Clarke—who first published essays in the *Tyne Mercury* when he was seventeen (collected as *The Saunterer*, 1805)—was the most scathing. A drugstore apprentice, Clarke earned a sizarship at Cambridge through the promise of his juvenile writing, and become Byron's classmate. Clarke drew "on his own experience as a young author" to pillory Byron's *Hours* in a London monthly, *The Satirist*—an attack so protracted and relentless that (perhaps more than Brougham's) it helped keep Byron's juvenilia alive.[10] Clarke continued the attack in *The Scourge; or, Monthly Expositor of Imposture and Folly*, and it was Byron's imposture he mocked the most. When Byron

struck back at Clarke in *English Bards*—Schoenfield calls the exchange "the juvenile squabbling of two under-achieving Cambridge students" ("Byron" para 12)—his sneering, class-based response boosted the obscure writer in the public eye and placed Clarke within the juvenile tradition.[11]

In 1811, in his mid-twenties, Clarke, no longer a juvenile, went on to ask the question that Byron in 1814 would deflect through irony: now what? In his "On the Encouragement of Juvenile Poets" Clarke writes: "About thirty years ago such productions as those of Dermody, and Bloomfield, and Thirwall might have been admired as curiosities; but their merit is entirely dependent on their rarity, and the effusions of youthful and uneducated genius are now to be found on every book-stall, and adorn the mantle-piece of every village inn" (57). Clarke answered this question about imminence for himself by going on to write history (before he vanished from the historical record entirely). Before Clarke asked the question, the answer to a charade had already posed a similar riddle to the future:

> To old correspondents no doubt it seems hard
> To be puzzled so much by a juvenile bard;
> Then drop the pursuit—your conjectures give o'er,
> If you think of a hundred, 'tis certainly MOORE. ("Answer" 18)[12]

This riddle appeared in 1806, the year Byron had just started publishing his literary juvenilia—by then, young writers already seemed ubiquitous, their tradition established. *More* juvenile writers were to come "certainly," but hundreds were already on hand.

Moore most certainly. In his book on Byron, Moore would later state that among us youth "young Byron stood forth alone" (118). Such deference perhaps suggests why Byron usually considered Moore more friend than rival, since rival he could easily seem—as the riddle suggests, MOORE had pride of place as a prior cultural emblem for juvenile writing. When Moore had published his juvenile *Odes of Anacreon* in 1800, it met with such "instantaneous success" that the then twelve-year-old Byron "went to school to Moore" to learn to write (Jones 53, 55). Moore followed with the *Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little, Esq* (1801), collecting poetry written from age fourteen. That book went through fifteen editions in twenty years. Byron said he knew it "by heart in 1803, being then in my fifteenth summer" (Byron, *Between* 117); Mary Shelley told Moore that her husband had read his works too (Vail 30). So had "all the young people in the Empire," John Wilson Croker lamented in 1805 (Croker, *Familiar* xv note).[13]

Leigh Hunt, another known influence on Byron, was an equally iconic prior young writer. His *Juvenilia* (1801), published at sixteen (the same year as *Thomas Little*), asserted itself as youthful writing in its title. Hunt often repeated how his *Juvenilia* had inspired Byron's writing (Langbauer 19). Later, Moore and Hunt quarreled over who controlled the dead Byron's image, in essence quarreling about their own juvenile priority. In *his* book on Byron, Hunt maintained his own "first published verses" (181) as a provocation for the entire juvenile tradition. He recalled being warned at the time against youthful authorship by one of his father's friends because "the shelves were

[already] full," and thought "Then, Sir … we will make another" (182). The "we" of this burgeoning tradition—"us youth"— had filled that new shelf so fully that, four years after Hunt's *Juvenilia* (and a year before Byron began to publish), *The Monthly Review* could conclude: "Youth, at the present day, seems to contest the prize of fame with mature age" ("Art. 27" 440).[14]

BEFORE Moore and Hunt, however, and as central to Byron, but still overlooked by modern scholars of literary juvenilia, was Percy Clinton Smythe—George Smythe's father. Percy Smythe was good friends with Moore: as young writers, they had shared a house in London (in 1801). Smythe's active part in the juvenile tradition is harder to see nowadays because most of his early work remains unknown (though it is still extant). Like many schoolboy writers, he published a classic translation—*Virgil. The Episode of Aristaeus, Translated from the Fourth Book of the Georgics of Virgil; by the Honorable Percy Clinton Smythe*—in 1795. "I am but a young poet," the fourteen- or fifteen-year-old declares in its dedication to his father (P. Smythe, *Virgil* i). This translation includes a prefatory sonnet by Smythe to Virgil: "first charmer of my infant breast" whose "kindling lustre" awakened and inspired the young poet's imagination—the collapse of his early youth with Parnassian ambition attested to here by an elegantly concise play of words: "(in fancy)" (*Virgil* iii). He would collect this sonnet a year later along with his other literary juvenilia in *Poems by the Honorable Percy Clinton Smythe* (1796). His dedication in that book even more emphatically underscores its juvenility: "juvenile essays," "artless effusions of my infant mind," written at an "early period of Life," guided by sentiments "inculcated from earliest infancy" (P. Smythe, *Poems* v–vi). Byron never mentions any of these first publications at all, nor does de Fonblanque's 1877 history of Smythe's family *The Lives of the Lord Strangfords*, the silence in these sources effectively erasing this work. But in one of her "Autobiographical Sketches," Louisa Matilda Crawford (a noted songwriter) mentions that when she knew Percy, Lord Strangford—"he was then extremely young"—"many lighter effusions of his lordship's own muse—elegant and touching songs and stanzas—were sang and recited in the drawing-rooms of the fashionable" (190–91).[15]

The elder Strangford *was* well-known and celebrated, however, for his 1803 translation of the Portuguese poet Camoëns (work he had started by at least age nineteen, when he had roomed with Moore): "The success of the work was great and immediate; critics were all but unanimous in its praise" (de Fonblanque 108). It "went through more than a dozen editions on both sides of the Atlantic" (Monteiro 46). [16] Reviews emphasised that "Lord Strangford is a very young man" ("Art. III" 608) and touted his book as a work of youthful genius connected to other sensational juvenile work from the new school "of Little Moore" (Art. XXXI 572). It is hard now to understand how enormously this book—almost completely forgotten, a strange amalgam of purported translation and admitted invention—was influential. Camoëns scholar George Monteiro charts the widespread influence of Strangford's translation on a generation of writers to follow: not just William Wordsworth, Felicia Hemans, William Lisle Bowles, and Byron's friend John Cam Hobhouse in Byron's earlier generation, but Victorian authors such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, as well as

Edgar Allan Poe and Herman Melville in America (36). "It was the appearance of Strangford's translations in 1803 that made English poets cognizant of" Camoëns (36).

And what Strangford made English poets cognizant of was as much Camoëns's youth as his poetry itself. As Monica Letzring argues, Strangford's translation "found a receptive audience in his own time" (311), as much for Strangford's biographical notice of what he calls the "youthful Camoëns" as for his poetry (P. Strangford, *Poems* 5). That biography recast the Portuguese national bard into an amorous youth, possessing "all the romantic ardour of eighteen, and of a poet" (7). "Even in his last days," Strangford writes of Camoëns, the poet clung to this early identity: "he feelingly regretted the raptures of youth" (24). Strangford also chronicles the tragic death of Camoëns's beloved: "there can scarcely be conceived a more interesting theme for the visions of romance, than the death of this young and amiable being … torn from the world at the early age of twenty" (11). When Strangford presents his book "as the favourite amusement of a young mind" (31), he underscores its deep connections to juvenility: it was a book by youth, about youth, for youth.

Byron's juvenilia were centrally inspired by it. "Lord Strangford's Camoëns and Little's poems are said to have been, at this period, his favorite study," Moore writes in his reminiscence of Byron (*Letters* 29), letting Strangford share precedence with himself. Byron included "Stanzas to a Lady, with the Poems of Camoëns" in his juvenile collection *Hours*. The urgency with which the young poet presses his "dear Girl" in that poem to "read … with feeling read" Strangford's book (*Hours* 532) reveals the hollowness within Byron's later scolding of Strangford in *English Bards*. He writes in that poem that Strangford's Camoëns has been too influenced by Moore—"Let Moore be lewd, let Strangford steal from Moore / And swear that Camoëns sang such notes of yore" (*English* 10)—and admonishes him to "Mend, Strangford! mend thy morals and thy taste" (4).[17] The quality of Smythe's verse in *Poems* (written years before he met Moore) undercuts Byron's insinuation that Strangford needed Moore's help to write so well. Yet, even in overstating Strangford's borrowings, Byron's dig still records the centrality of juvenile influence.

When Byron sneered at Strangford—"with thine eyes of blue / And boasted locks of red or auburn hue" (*English Bards* 4)—he was following up Francis Jeffrey's criticism in the *Edinburgh Review*, which singles out a note by Strangford (praising such coloration) as a symbol of the fabrication within such writing. These lines must be Strangford's disingenuous praise of his own looks, Jeffrey argues, "there not being found in the original … any mention whatever of blue eyes, auburn hair … or any other of those advantages which the young writer either possesses, or thinks he has the prospect of possessing, over the rest of the world" (50).[18] Jeffrey takes such invention to be an emblem of the empty posing of young writers in general, those of "Mr. Little's School" who "commence authorship at an earlier age than heretofore … as yet unchastised by experience" (48, 46).[19] Most reviews of Strangford's translation noted what they called Strangford's "literary imposition" (Art. XXXII 569) in calling translations what were in effect his own compositions. But Strangford was candid about his invention throughout his book. In this light, another way to see the infidelity of his translation might be as offering juvenile writing as more than mere

imitation and juvenile influence as more than simply causal. "If they are unfaithful translations, they are, indubitably, beautiful poems," wrote the *Poetical Register*, echoing other reviews ("*Poems*" 461).[20]

In lumping Strangford with Moore, another predecessor, and accusing them both of indecency, Byron projected onto others (as if shedding it) the charge that had first met his own juvenilia. More than that, however, he shifted any question of Strangford's priority into a different context—other young poets invalidated by indecency (though Byron was one to talk)—from the one that actually troubled him—his rivalry with Strangford as a young lord. Strangford's early biographer scented in Byron's objections "some jealousy" (de Fonblanque 110) because Strangford had beaten Byron to recognition as a young poet of rank. Percy Smythe's epigraphs to his early *Poems* had included the by-then-conventional juvenile marker—Pope's "I lisp'd in numbers—for the numbers came"—but they also gestured to his soon-to-come title. He included paeans to patrons from Savage and Tibellus meant to underscore his devotion to the muse and his talent, since the lines emphasised that poetic fame could not truly rest on mere renown from ancestry, name, or title.

The competition between Byron and Strangford as two titled young writers was noted at the time. L. M. Crawford wrote, "I can remember when Lord Strangford stood almost alone, as a nobleman of literary pretensions. Byron had not at that time established his lofty pre-eminence" (190).[21] Strangford's family historian thought that peer's priority may have rankled Byron because Strangford handled his rank more diplomatically. He "avoided the mistake into which Lord Byron fell a few years later, when in the preface to his 'Hours of Idleness' he warned his reader that he was no professional author, and did not write for profit" (de Fonblanque 109), a gaucherie or hypocrisy in mentioning money for which Byron was soundly abused. Strangford carefully avoided the subject in his *Camoëns*—though he was aware from a child that (like Byron's) his family had rank but little cash. In a manuscript version (presumably now lost)—*not* included in his early *Poems*—the young poet (aged nine) entitled one "Lines on the Anniversary of the Loss of my Father's Pension, July, 1790" (109 n1). Experience may have taught him to be more tacit; in the dedication of his *Episode* a year before he had made the *faux pas* of assuring his father that he'd "never experienced any of the inconveniences to which your limited income might have subjected me" (ii). By the time of the 1796 *Poems*, he euphemised into metaphor his sense of his father's assailed "estate" and "worth" while still retaining its injustice, in a poem dated to that year, "Sonnet XXIII, Addressed to my Father on the Anniversary of his Birth" (23). As juvenile writer, he meant to regenerate his genealogy, concluding this poem: "Yet let an infant Bard's prophetic lays / Predict the certainty of *happier days*!" (23).

Whether history would validate the elder Strangford's juvenile worth with practical rewards remained an open question. His translation had been "perhaps a means of teaching himself Portuguese with a diplomatic post in mind" (Millar *Disraeli's* 18)—biographers parroted the conventional wisdom of the time that the book was "mainly" the reason he actually received a placement (de Fonblanque 110; Graham 188). Strangford went on to serve in Portugal, Brazil, Sweden, and Russia, and, from his earnings, he was able to buy back a portion of his family's lost estate.

Yet a suggestion of imposture remained a part of his legacy. Strangford garnered "a contemporary reputation of taking credit where credit was not due" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 18), however undeserved the charge might be. Napier's *History of the Penisular War* accused him of "portraying himself in gaudy colours as a man of action" when history actually gave credit to others (Cunningham 188): a charge that shaped his legacy whether or not "modern opinion … has largely reinstated him" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 18).[22]

The question of whether a young writer could turn his knowledge of the past into better days would underlie the writing and identity of Strangford's heir, George—such questions about "what next?" would fuel the dreams of the group called Young England. Behind Byron as icon of the juvenile tradition lies this conflicted legacy: a prehistory of other writers predating Byron's ironic sense of identity within this literary history. Byron—the forerunner and prototype on whom Young England patterned their writing and also their sense of history, symbolising for them the very lost noblesse oblige that must be restored to ensure any better future—put into question assured teleologies. He did so as inheritor of this conflicted legacy, which "made 'us youth' wait too—too long already." So would another of its legatees, George Smythe, when writing out of the lived contradictions of his own genealogy.

George Smythe's Might-Have-Beens

GEORGE Smythe, Strangford's heir, was a study in contradictions—what one friend termed his "strange paradoxes" (de Fonblanque 231). Smythe's sister-in-law thought him as a boy "young, bright, and winning" (E. Strangford x), but an early biographer saw him instead as "wayward and precocious," though with "talent, high spirits, courage, and what he [Smythe] himself calls 'a spice of that genius which borders upon madness'" (Graham 187, 218). "Though consistent," Richard Faber wrote, Smythe "was consistent to conflicting principles" (130)—especially shown through what Faber calls a characteristic Victorian "schizophrenia" about history (55). Critics described Smythe's rhetorical style as "dazzling antithesis" ("Literary Legislators: No. V" 534); biographers stressed his "typical self-mockery" (Millar, "Very" 248). In later life, Smythe cut "a prominent figure in London Society" (Escott 9), but Charlotte Brontë described him as "shy, and a little queer" (qtd. in Graham 191). Mary Millar, Smythe's recent biographer, finds him aged twenty "at Cambridge, acting the *enfant terrible* part in which he had cast himself at ten, alternately flattering and shocking the authorities, brilliantly provocative in Union debates but consistently disappointing the forecasts of academic glory with which he had gone up" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 6). Almost every biographical notice reports that he had fought the last duel on English soil (bloodless), and almost every one concludes that, when he died from tuberculosis and drink at age thirty-nine, he left his "infinite possibilities of promise unfulfilled" (Graham 210).

The family historian ascribes Smythe's inconsistency to his father's capricious extremes, regarding his son at one and the same time as "certain to achieve a brilliant future" and "utterly devoid of every quality that could lead to success in public life" (de Fonblanque 204). The elder Strangford wrote about his son, "I feel and fear the

sinfulness of my adoration for that child, and dread the awful punishment that may one day attend it" (140–41). Relations on both sides worked through such strained incongruities. "It is a horrible thing to quarrel with a father," Smythe would write in his 1844 *Historic Fancies* (39)—and yet, knowing his father's vexed history with Byron, the young Smythe chose Byron as his "hero in all … things" (Blake 168), though he defended himself to his father as being "without any morbid or Byronic affectation" (de Fonblanque 208). Disraeli's biographer Robert O'Kell uses Smythe's imitation of Byron to sum him up (merely a "somewhat deliberately Byronic figure" [O'Kell, *Disraeli* 206]). But in copying Byron, Smythe was trying out a philosophy of history as much as trying on an identity. His imitation zeroed in on the existential quandaries Byron poses through his relation to other young writers.

As his father's heir, Smythe was almost perforce a juvenile writer. The question from his boyhood seemed to be whether his early writing could live up to his father's. When offering his achievements to his father, he was very aware of the yardstick of "your Camoëns" (de Fonblanque 233). Obituary notices would later unremittingly compare his attempts unfavourably to his father's successful early writing, and the young Smythe had already conceded to his father that "in your case, … [your] youth was a brilliant triumph," while "I have had even more than my share of youth's folly" (qtd. in de Fonblancque 218). Nevertheless, the younger Smythe had published earlier than his father (or Byron): "at fourteen he first made a reputation as a writer" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 45), placing poems in the series of elegant gift books the *Literary Souvenir* (alongside work by Wordsworth, Hemans, Caroline Bowles, and the Howitts). His sister-in-law notes that at Eton "he attracted some attention by his English verse" (E. Strangford viii). In these poems, the younger Smythe was already a theorist of youthful writing, articulating the aspiration "to realize an image of himself in an artifice of his own making"—as Jerome McGann described the aim of the juvenile Byron (21). Such epistemologies of youth provide the rationale for the younger Smythe's early writing—as they would for the history and politics on which he (at least for a time) staked his own claims to be a leader of young England.

In one of Smythe's poems in the *Literary Souvenir*, "The Prayer of Childhood" (published at age fourteen), youth expressly figures its existential insufficiency. The poem takes its epigraph from Wordworth's "Immortality Ode"—"Heaven lies about us in our infancy!" (2)—and goes on, in what could seem parodic for so young a writer, "with many a thought of earlier years," to "long to be again a child" (2). This stance is not parodic so much as existential, however: Smythe had lost his mother when he was eight, and that loss symbolises in "The Prayer of Childhood" the insecurity and uncertainty of a supposed childhood heaven he can only imagine. The time before that loss is one he can no longer really remember—like infancy, it is now a time for him irrecoverable and inexpressible. In this poem, then, youthful aspirations are doomed before formulated. Yet that loss nevertheless drives this youthful poet to speak. Out of it, he makes this prayer.

All his poems from this juvenile period mourn a youth irrecoverable even in its midst: "I ask, I seek, but cannot find" ("To a Phantom" 213). His "Fellowship of Nature" regrets "early joys long vanished" (70). Like "Prayer," "Fellowship" seems

"disturbingly adult" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 46) if only in being so proleptic. it turns away from "scoffing worldlings" (69) to reject wealth, pride, pomp, and pleasure, everything this titled Young Englander would find around him in the world in after years. Nature's healing power lies in the Wordsworthian hope that there might be another possibility for the speaker; the young poet begs nature to transfigure him when "thou hold'st communion with thy child" (69). The hope is that nature, through its presence, might actually transform the speaker back into a child, might provide the kind of early youth his other poems withhold from him.

But that's not what the speaker finds in "To a Phantom." Even though in that poem he has sought a "quiet spot" (211) in the natural world to enjoy its pleasures, which he enumerates in detail—the sunset, the flowers—he continues to be haunted there by the ghost of his dead mother, also startlingly material: she is marble-browed, glassy-eyed, pursuing him in her pale shroud. Her haunting particularity transforms the things of nature into "Earth's bitter cares" (212), and confirms that the time "when life looked young, and glad, and fair" is not only gone for good, but was also always an illusion (213). This attitude to the past both anticipates and already rebuts Thomas Carlyle's later critique of Young England in an 1844 letter to Monckton Milnes—that if it were to "address itself frankly to the magnificent, but as yet chaotic and appalling, Future, in the spirit of the Past and Present, telling men at every turn that it knew and saw for ever clearly the *body* of the Past to be dead (and even to be damnable, if it pretended still to be alive and go about in a galvanic state), what achievements might not Young England manage for us?" Milnes 323).

The teenaged Smythe's poems about love also stress youth as a time of haunted emptiness. The poet seeks to recall "Love's young blessed hours ("Oriental" 251). He apostrophises such "days of early bliss" ("Lament" 191), but, as from his silently-haunting phantom mother, he hears no reply. It is by writing from within the vantage point of youth—taking up an unobtainable identity, speaking inside that absent present—that this young writer transforms otherwise conventional tropes about worldly vanity. As when he turned from scoffing worldlings, the poet here rejects "pomp and pride" that he concretely (and prophetically) imagines as having one's "voice … heard where senates meet" (191). Always impossibly placed, the voice of the young poet comes up empty: even though his passion is so strong that "on granite rock no pen of steel / More deeply could indent" its effect, still it cannot be communicated: "the granite rock to time will yield / The words be lost when spoken" ("Oriental" 251). As when in "Prayer" he is haunted wordlessly by a sense of originary loss, the poet here can hope for nothing more than a "silent token" (250). In "Lament," the lover's impassioned call to his lost beloved is scattered by the winds, and the speaker hears "no sound but theirs" (193).

Readers of course hear more than the silent token of the winds; we hear the sound of the young poet's words indicted by his pen in these steel-engraved editions. A decade later, Smythe maintains his *Historic Fancies* as a kind of juvenilia—"most of them the compositions of a very young author" (i)—with an epigraph (from Frederick Faber) that addresses the "Young reader," because "to the old" the poems will seem "unreal, and unlifelike as a dream" (Title page). This redefinition of juvenility as ongoing mode (rather than fixed age or essence) may be Smythe's greatest

Byronism—the same Byronism that would inspire the founder of another faux-medieval-infused youth movement, Young Italy's Giuseppe Mazzini. Mazzini quotes Byron's words—"*Poetry is the feeling of a former world and of a future*"—hearing in them the recognition of the "inevitable incompleteness" of individualism (105), a recognition that—"as if to proclaim its death to the young generation" (101)—puts the end to an outdated past valorizing the individual, and paves the way for "the dawn" of a new epoch (89).

Smythe's worry that he might wind up "a mere footnote to history" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 9) is the worry of any youth movement, disregarded because of youth alone. But youth is what preserves Smythe's memory—a "Monody" to Smythe commemorates him as "Young Seer" who "spoke through words of youth" (Kent 419, 418). Even when reviews and obituary essays compare Smythe to others, they frame his meaning in terms of the kind of shared youthful writing that fills Hunt's bookshelf or populates that scandalous new school to which critics had assigned his father and Moore. The *Examiner* compares Smythe at length to Shelley ("Literary Examiner" 1). *Fraser's* review places him with Strangford and Byron: Smythe "is the eldest son of a coronetted poet, who appeared as a somewhat free translator of Camoëns," and "got somehow mixed up in Byron's promiscuous mob of 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'" ("*Historic*" 310). Smythe had already turned on its head such conventional patrilineage, however, back when he won the prize at Eton for the best poem addressed to William IV. He employs a seemingly dutiful trope of filial piety in that poem—"And here, perchance, some yet may earn a name / Not all unworthy of their fathers' fame" (qtd. in Escott 8). Yet this allusion to his father must have actually also called up for the audience of his classmates the opposite, not duty and respect but waywardness and insubordination, because Smythe's father's youthful notoriety pointed to juvenile licentiousness as much as any patriarchal probity.[23]

George Smythe saw himself as a writer—he would later describe himself as "a sort of cross between Churchill [probably Charles, the satirist] and Chatterton" (de Fonblanque 237)—whose early poems worried at his own youth as at once simulated and irremediable. At Young England's height, in an ironic essay about duty—"The Duty of Self-Commendation"—Smythe would ask: "What desire is more natural, and accordingly more universal, than that of transmitting to posterity some record or tradition of our dearly-beloved selves?" ("Duty" 529). His answer adopted the same tongue-in-cheek and contradictory self-fashioning as Byron had—asserting a tradition of "us youth" that also kept it at arm's length: "Who so fit to reward my own virtues, as I who know them best, nay, perhaps (ordinary fate of modest worth!), am the only person in the world acquainted with them?" (530). His irony mocks his own assertion, implying how much virtues, and any sense of person resting on them, are simulated. Nevertheless, the speaker's regret—that it is "so painful to think or apprehend, that a time will come when we shall be unmentioned and forgotten" (529)—is not fully feigned. The juvenile tradition remains an attractive model to epistemologically anxious writers such as Byron and Smythe—one approach that might provide a history to those who join it, but does so by calling any certainties of history into question.

In 1846 (by which time "he had deserted Disraeli and Young England" [Millar, "Very" 243]), Smythe wrote a long letter to his father recounting all his failings. He vowed to "throw a rapid impartial glance over the past, for the sake of the future—for the sake of seeing what system may be formed out of the chaos of purposes abandoned, promises broken, and good resolutions unfulfilled" (de Fonblanque 236–237). He symbolised this general failure in life by an early political one: "the myth of his maiden speech," also largely fabricated (Millar, *Disraeli's* 121). As he told it, when Smythe first tried to speak on the floor of Parliament, he broke down and had to take his seat: "I might have recovered myself, but this is not a heroic age" he added sadly, measuring his times and himself by Young England's gauge (qtd. in de Fonblanque 216). He knew the romantic version of the past that had constituted Young England in his case was an illusion and an encumbrance. "Were I to die to morrow," he concludes, "I should occupy three lines in a biographical dictionary as a 'might have been'" (237–38).

WHILE alive, Smythe characterised himself as a "might have been"; after he died, Lord Lyttleton termed him "a splendid failure" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 12)—as if his adulthood represented a falling-off from youthful promise. In his late twenties, responding to Disraeli's depiction of his early life in *Coningsby*, Smythe "wrote to Manners: 'I never shall know half as much, feel half so well, be capable of such great actions as I was at twenty'" (Millar, *Disraeli's* 8). If later Smythe "'foolishly fancied that it might be given to one to redisintegrate and restore one's youth's dreams,'" as Richard Faber wrote, that was because "he would never give up the belief that, though dreams might not be real themselves, they could affect and even shape events in the real world" (250). Yet a sense of disintegration and unreality had shaped his understanding of youthful dreams from the start. Smythe's early poems already place him firmly within a stance of regret—the "might have been" of the past unreal conditional—yet taken as the very foundation for the future. Just as Young England creates an "imaginary past" (Blake 171) for its visions of futurity, Smythe constitutes youth as imaginary, irremediable—the abyss demanding words to bridge it even as those words vanish unheard. As he summed up his character: "My life has been made up of two blunders: I am a failure, and—I know it!" (qtd. in de Fonblanque 245). That shaping self-knowledge—which puts all its stakes in a performance that will not succeed but is of necessity still worth the gamble (one way to describe this vision of history)—also describes the character of Young England and the practice of Benjamin Disraeli that I will go on to discuss in Part Two of this essay.

NOTES

[1] He adds in explanation: "Young England would proselytize for a nostalgic Old England that never was as 'Merrie' as its proponents described it" (207).

[2] W. A. Speck takes this novel to be the product of "the German Romantics," with the conceit of the two nations direct from Heine (198).

[3] One note: although my essay does not discuss homosexuality, the connections between it and performance in Young England are vital. See Faber and Millar (*Disraeli's*) for discussions of

homosexuality in Young England's circle. For representative discussions regarding Byron and Disraeli, see Elfenbein (*Byron*) and Poovey. A critique of the normative seems to me central to much notable juvenile writing; I look forward to a scholar undertaking a book about the shaping role of sexuality in literary juvenilia, an important and much-needed study.

[4] Critics have seen *Adonais* as testimony to an entire juvenile tradition (Alexander, "Defining" 77; Langbauer 7–12).

[5] Milnes would go on to become the literary promoter of the dying young poet David Gray in the 1860s. Though never on comfortable terms with Smythe or Disraeli, Milnes is sometime credited with coining Young England's name (in the 1830s) for an undergraduate dining club, borrowing it from such romantic nationalisms as Giuseppe Mazzini's "Young Italy." Speck quotes another source for the name, an 1837 review by Robert Southey, who asks "what, in conformity with the ominous language of the times, may be called Young England" (206). Speck argues that Southey's reference to "ominous language" suggests that the phrase 'Young England' "was very much 'in the air' in 1837" (206). Whether uncomfortable or ominous, though the term Young England may have been "a taunt 'given to us in derision,'" as Disraeli said, the movement embraced it, and "the rapid way in which this title spread suggests that what struck outsiders most about the movement was the obvious fact of its members' youth" (Faber 46).

[6] Byron used his role of assailed young writer to encourage youth who (he implied) followed a path he had opened to them. In his early twenties, he walked the nineteen-year-old John Hamilton Reynolds through the pitfalls awaiting "a young writer," justifying his avuncular tone because he had written "a few years, and many changes" before Reynolds and when "I was very young." Byron, "To [John Hamilton Reynolds], February 20th, 1814" (*Wedlock's* 68). Byron requests him to "excuse me for talking to a man perhaps not many years my junior, with these grave airs of seniority;—but … it was my lot to be thrown very early upon the world" (68). Reynolds had sent him his juvenile "Safie, an Eastern Tale" which he had dedicated to Byron (68 n1). Byron told another "young and unknown man of letters" (Byron, *Letters* 212 n1) of his hope "to be allowed to guide your poetic flight to fame and to usher to the world your future labours" ("[To ?] Piccadilly Terrace, July 18th, 1815," *Wedlock* 304). He could be liberal in praise of others not his rivals, consistently lauding the "Poesy & Genius" of Henry Kirke White (a baker's son who got to University), who had published poems of a religious bent before him but was dead by age twenty-one (Byron, "[To Robert Charles Dallas], Newstead Abbey, August 21st, 1811," "*Famous"* 76).

[7] Brougham was no stranger to juvenile achievement himself. At seventeen, Brougham had been (and remains) "the youngest person ever to contribute a paper to the *Philosophical Transactions*" of the Royal Society (Moxham para 3); one biographer recounts all the ways Brougham "takes credit to himself" for such success, so that "at this time," he "seems sincerely to have believed that he was another Newton" (Campbell 227–28). Brougham had founded the *Edinburgh Review* when he was "a cocky 24-year-old," full of confidence about his own juvenile prowess (Moxham para 10). By the time he was reviewing Byron, Brougham (at thirty) may have been more concerned with revising his own past when he ridiculed another writer for being "peculiarly forward in pleading minority" ([Brougham] 285). Byron thought the reviewer was Francis Jeffrey—and Jeffrey had far surpassed Brougham in juvenile output; "from his very boyhood," he wrote "lectures, essays, translations, abridgements, speeches, criticism, tales, poems, & c."—"the papers of his composition that remain" from between the years fifteen and seventeen "are about sixty in number" (Cockburn 19, 22); he did not publish then, but mined them for the rest of his life. See Joline 15.

[8] The editor of this volume ascribes this to a letter of Feb 2, 1818 to Thomas Moore.

[9] "To Thomas Moore, Sunday Matin" [May 8?, 1814].

[10] See Schoenfield, "Byron" para 3, 4. Interested readers kept seeking out *Hours*: as late as 1841, John Clare was still lending out his copy (Elfenbein, *Byron* 62). For Clare's own self-fashioning in terms of the juvenile tradition, see Keegan and Goodridge.

[11] Byron sneers at Clarke's origins and poverty. Clarke was so impoverished he had applied to the Royal Literary Fund in 1806, explaining: "At the age of 17 I published a book under the title of 'The Saunterer,' which whatever its merits procured me so much patronage, as recommended me

to Cambridge"—the Committee endorsed assistance to him because he was "a young man of considerable literary promise, as well as genius, and it was solely to these that he owes his being sent to University where … his college expenses (he is) not capable of defraying without assistance. … His future prospects in life will much depend upon the aid at present afforded him" (Cross, File No. 185). Clarke left Cambridge without a degree and, a decade later, had disappeared without a trace.

[12] For the original riddle, see *Weekly Entertainer*, vol. 45, Jun 3, 1805, p. 438.

[13] Perhaps ironic in 1805 when Croker was himself not five years out of college. He made it in a book closely modelled on Moore's Thomas Little, *Familiar Epistles to Frederick J-s Jones*. Croker became an unrelenting critic of young authors later: he wrote the 1818 essay on Keats's *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review* that Byron and Shelley blamed for Keats's death. Croker also panned Tennyson's first collection. Though he repudiated Moore here, Croker was a good friend and old Trinity College classmate of Moore's housemate, Percy Smythe (later Lord Strangford).

[14] It was reviewing a now-unknown "school boy poet" who, it felt, "equals in genius, in force, and in harmony of numbers, most of our modern bards" (440).

[15] Crawford travelled in Strangford's circles because she was related to earls on either side (one of them, her great uncle, prime minister to George III), although she was herself a writer earning a living, like the Smythes when they first started writing. See Stafford.

[16] Letzring points out that the translation also received "a new edition in 1824 and a French translation in 1828" (302; see also 306 about its active reprinting in America).

[17] For a fuller summary of the accusations and Byron's ultimate—but ambiguous—retraction, see Letzring 294.

[18] Letzring also connects the references to Strangford in *English Bards* to Jeffrey's review (307–08).

[19] Strangford was unhappy enough about such criticism that (the British Museum reports) he destroyed a plate of his portrait "so that it would not be used … by extra-illustrators" of that passage in *English Bards* (Curator's). Donald Reiman, however, takes Byron's references to Strangford as "praise" (195 n5). When anticipating Brougham's panning of his juvenilia in that journal, Byron did console himself that other writers, including Strangford, received the same treatment: "It is nothing to be abused when Southey, Moore, and Strangford … share the same fate," "[To the Rev. John Becher] Dorant's, February 26th, 1808"(Byron, *In 157-58*).

[20] Strangford had sent his poems to that journal. "Publish the translations from Camoëns most certainly," Moore told Strangford. "I have seen your gems on the dunghill of the *Poetical Register*, and I am convinced that a collection of such things would do you infinite credit. Besides, you are already well known and looked to, and celebrity would follow upon the very heels of publication" (qtd. in de Fonblanque 108). Letzring identifies one of these poems in that journal, published in 1801 (293)—demonstrating that Strangford had been at work on them long before he passed his majority.

[21] They remained staples of articles such as "Authors from the Ranks of the Aristocracy."

[22] Cunningham is harsher about Strangford's empty and self-destructive posing. He writes that, by the time he was in his forties, the elder Strangford's critics considered him a "born loser" who always undermined what should have sources of distinctions (188).

[23] The wantonness of his father's early writing seemed to be assumed in the family. Later the young Smythe wrote to his father about a failed historical novel with "colossal portraits, imagine, of Canning and Napoleon" that he had discarded because "my subject grew erratic, till every line threatened to become as licentious as your Camoëns" (de Fonblanque 233).

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