

## REVIEWS

**Keith Hanley and Caroline S. Hull, editors. *John Ruskin's Continental Tour 1835: The Written Records and Drawings*. Oxford, Legenda, 2016.**

x + 303 pages. Hardback, GBP 45.00.  
ISBN: 9781906540852.

WHEN first reading John Ruskin's diary entries for the continental tour he took with his family in 1835, readers might first be struck by the sixteen-year-old's impressive descriptive powers or his clear ability to sketch. Soon after, however, it is likely that something else will emerge: the scope of the young man's interests and the relevance of those wide, almost excursionary interests to who the mature man would become. It is a bit like witnessing the formation of Victorian thought, or at least the part of it that Ruskin can be seen to represent. Recollecting the tour years later in *Praeterita* (1885), Ruskin ascribes "the revelation of beauty" he expresses in the poetry and prose he wrote during the tour, as well as the sketches, to "science mixed with feeling." He would, of course, continue to travel to the continent his whole life, commenting so forcefully on nineteenth-century England by comparing it to what he had seen and would continue to see in continental Europe, especially Venice.

Ruskin's first tour of the Continent took place in 1825 when he was six and included time in Paris, Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges. The 1835 tour would take the family to Calais, Rouen, Dijon; then to Geneva, Chamonix, Courmayeur; to Innsbruck; then most importantly to Venice from 6 to 12 October: in total, over 90 different sites. In *Praeterita*, Ruskin recounts how he received from Henry Telford, his father's business partner, a copy of Samuel Rogers's *Italy* on his thirteenth birthday. Ruskin claims that this "determined the main tenor of my life," for inside of it he first came across steel engravings by J. M. W. Turner (*Complete Works*, 1903–12, 35:79). The following year he received a copy of Prout's *Sketches Made in Flanders and Germany*. Ruskin continues:

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We got the book home to Herne Hill before the time of our usual annual tour; and as my mother watched my father's pleasure and mine in looking at the wonderful places, she said, why should not we go and see some of them in reality? My father hesitated a little, then with glittering eyes said—why not? And there were two or three weeks of entirely rapturous and amazed preparation. (*Complete Works* 35:79–80)

The Ruskins began the 1835 tour on June 2—they often left for a family trip soon after celebrating his father's birthday on May 10—and returned six months later on 10 December 1835.

*John Ruskin's Continental Tour 1835: The Written Records and Drawings*, edited by Keith Hanley and Caroline S. Hull, provides a splendidly full account of Ruskin's most significant and formative tour: it includes the diary, letters, poems, and drawings—in fact, “All Ruskin's known contemporaneous written materials related to the 1835 tour” (39). Making the case that the 1835 journal “is an important document in the history of nineteenth-century cultural tourism, since it occupies a crucial position in the development and focusing of the interests and methods which were to find expression ultimately in his best known and variously influential publications” (27), Hanley and Hull offer the kind of detailed scholarship of primary source material that is too often ignored by print publishers. Though they do not entirely read the sixteen-year-old's work in the context of juvenilia per se, they do elaborate on the relationship between the early diary and the mature works, suggesting that “It established his composite Romantic, picturesque and scientific gaze which was sustained and elaborated throughout his future travels” (28). This is the standard way into Ruskin's early work—looking at the relationship between it and the mature compositions—but this edition of it is so complete that one hopes that it will also offer scholars new and different ways into Ruskin's early works.

Hanley's opening essay in fact is an excellent example of what can be done with the edited materials. Though he discusses Ruskin's early biography, picking up on Ruskin's own version of it in *Praeterita*, Cook and Wedderburn's editorializing for the *Complete Works*, and both Tim Hilton's and David Hanson's subsequent contributions to the study of the biography and the juvenilia, Hanley excels when examining Ruskin's tour in the context of seventeenth- to nineteenth-century tourism and travel. Hanley notes how the “Ruskins' tours were middle-class emulations of the aristocratic ‘Grand Tour’ ... with an explicitly educational and cultural emphasis” (6). He even examines the modes of transportation that the Ruskins used on the tour, making the compelling case that Ruskin's later aesthetic and social theories owe something to the culture of travel the sixteen-year-old experienced and mulled over:

His personal nostalgia for pre-railway travel is bound up with his pervasive lament for a kind of seeing that was about to disappear from general experience at the time of his earliest travels. His appeal to his age to look—at what there was in creation, and at what was happening to it—was largely one to slow down, as he insisted in the third volume of *Modern Painters*. (11)

The edition provides a meticulous, scholarly, comprehensive, and fully-annotated transcription of all young Ruskin's records and drawings produced during his tour. It includes all the original sketches that he made in their original positions. With *John Ruskin's Continental Tour 1835* and the release of David Hanson's brilliant *The Early Ruskin Manuscripts 1826–1842* (<http://english.selu.edu/humanitiesonline/ruskin/search/index.php>), early Ruskin studies should enjoy a decidedly productive future.

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**Victoria Ford Smith. *Between Generations: Collaborative Authorship in the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. University Press of Mississippi, 2017.**

342 pages. Hardcover, USD 65.00.  
ISBN: 9781496813374.

IT IS important not to leap to the wrong expectation when embarking upon a reading of Victoria Ford Smith's richly generative *Between Generations: Collaborative Authorship in the Golden Age of Children's Literature*. The inattentive reader, looking at the title, and reading the Introduction—"A Child's Story," which opens with the fascinating tale of how the child-artist W. C. MacReady collaborated with Robert Browning during the genesis of "The Pied Piper"—might expect this book to be a collection of stories about extraordinary young children and the composition of some of the most revered children's classics of the Victorian Era. The book *does* include some fascinating stories: Robert Louis Stevenson's art and writing projects with his stepson, including the printing of editions of Stevenson's poetry on a toy press; David Jordan's *The Book of Knight and Jordan, Being a Series of Stories Told to Children, Corrected and Illustrated by the Children* (1899); and a wider view of the collaborative and elastic nature of Barrie's evolving *Peter Pan*. However, the book is far more than a telling of new tales from the Victorian nursery. Smith places each account in the larger context of Victorian culture, describing the myriad forces that shaped the perception of children and the way these forces influenced children's agency in the construction and consumption of child-culture. Smith's work intermingles golden-age texts (both canonical and obscure) with detailed and tightly focused anecdotes, competing theories of

education, accounts of children's recreational activities, publishing trends, and emerging ideas about "good" art.

This multi-faceted vision reflects Smith's expansive definition of cross-generational collaboration, in which she gives equal weight to "both the real and the imaginary," believing that "imaginative and material practices" are "mutually constitutive, each transforming the other" (7). Smith proposes this definition as "an apt analytic" that allows scholars to parse "the place of the child's voice as a force that sometimes submits to, sometimes inspires, and sometimes informs the direction of texts for young people" (256–7). In her conclusion, she aligns herself with the work of Marah Gubar, Robin Bernstein, and Rachel Conrad, all of whom are moving scholarship away from a close reading of literary texts in favour of seeking "ways to talk about real children" (256). As Smith herself says, the historical picture that emerges from these new works is of "the agentic, creative child" who "was not only a figure but also an actor vital to authorial practice" (8). The real children we meet in this book are engaged in activities that bely the traditional image of idealised Victorian children tucked away in well-furnished nurseries and, instead, appear as active participants in the period's intellectual and artistic scene: authors of stories and books, professional artists, editors and publishers of magazines and newspapers, reviewers of adults' writing for children. They are not presented as rogue "genius" children who defy expectations for their age group but, rather, as children who are trained and nurtured by adults who believe both in the superior capacities of children and also in the role that original creativity plays in child development and growth. For example, the first chapter, "Active Listeners," brings together images of William Thackeray reading manuscript pages of *The Rose and the Ring* to convalescent six-year-old Edie Story; Rousseau's rejection of children's reading; the emergence of the Child Study movement in the late nineteenth century; the "Berkshire gabble," a private language invented by two 'tween girls in the 1890s, the English translations and illustrations of the tales collected by the Brothers Grimm discussed in the context of earlier and later orally-sourced tales, storyteller-auditor relations in *Kit Bam's Adventures; Or, the Yarns of an Old Mariner* (1849), and feminine storytelling traditions that include *Aunt Judy's Magazine* (1866–1885), which Smith identifies as a "significant work of intergenerational collaboration" (88).

This (partial) listing is evidence of both Smith's extraordinary mastery of her subject and the impact that *Between Generations* will have on scholars at all levels. Those who already have a solid grounding in nineteenth-century children's literature will find their understanding enriched by seeing familiar names and titles placed in the larger context of contemporary theory and less-studied texts. For those who are new to the field, or who are ready to move beyond the established parameters of traditional literary scholarship, this book will serve as a model of what can be achieved by breaking down the artificial barriers erected by entrenched disciplines in favour of seeking a truer understanding of the impact that these widely varied elements had on literature and the children who consumed it.

As a literary scholar, I was fascinated by Smith's final chapter, "Pictures of Partnership: Art Education, Children's Literature, and the Rise of the Child Artist." Smith patiently lays out the conflicting perceptions of children's art that rose and fell

from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, and the impact that they had on art education. Central to this discussion lies the fundamental questions: are children “natural” creators or ineffective artists? Does their work mirror that of primitive people (a variation on “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”), or are kids just too uncoordinated to recognise their inner vision? Smith’s account raised issues that I had never thought about before, leading me gently but surely through an astonishing array of new material. The information I learned from this chapter will have a significant impact not only on the way that I think about children’s art as it appears in the texts that I study, but also on my response to child artists in such diverse twenty-first century works as Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* and Laura Lee Gulledge’s graphic novel *Page by Paige*. This, I think, is the best measure of the power of a work of scholarship: it not only changes the way that we look at the past, but also gives us a more educated view of the future—our present—that grew out of it.

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**Leslie Robertson and Juliet McMaster, with  
Alexandra Allen, Jasmyn Bojakli, Adela Burke,  
Aaron Mazo, Nicholas Siennicki, and Heather  
Westhaver, editors. *The Journals and Poems of  
Marjory Fleming*. Juvenilia Press, 2018.**

xxxii + 114 pages. Paperback, AUD 15.00.  
ISBN 978-0-7334-3753-3.

TOM STOPPARD’S play *Arcadia* (1993) opens in 1809 with Septimus Hodge tutoring Thomasina Coverly. He is twenty-two, while she is nearly fourteen and—according to her mother—“not due to be pert for six months at the earliest.” *The Journals and Poems of Marjory Fleming*, now available in a captivating new precision-engineered edition from the Juvenilia Press, opens in 1810 with Marjory likewise entrusted to a twenty-two-year-old tutor: her cousin Isabella (or “Isa”) Keith. Marjory is only half Thomasina’s age but possessed of a pertness that makes Stoppard’s character look like a very late developer: “To Day I pronounced a word which should never come out of a ladys lips” (35); “I pretended to write to a lord Yesterday named Lord Roseberry about killing crows & rooks that inhabit his castle or estate but we should excuse my Lord for his foolishness ... for people think he is a little deranged” (52).

What she does there with the epithet “deranged” demonstrates Marjory’s Malapropian talent for the nice derangement of epitaphs. The underlining is one of Isabella Keith’s corrective interventions, taking Marjory to task for faulty spelling or grammar. Their retention in this edition typifies the tact with which the team of editors, led by Leslie Robertson and Juliet McMaster, treat the text: annotating generously—the endnotes on one item, “The life of the King James” (30–32), occupy more space than the poem itself—but adjusting as little as possible. It is recognised that the reader needs the cousin’s corrections, to paint a proper picture of the dialogue that developed (and the warmth there was) between student and tutor, but also needs the errors that prompted them. Marjory’s writing is most arresting and most compelling when she is, as Robertson’s introduction puts it, “not quite in control” (xxi) or, as Thomasina’s mother might say, getting ahead of herself. The journals have no compunction about performing sudden midstream shifts between quite different types of entry: glimpses of life at the home of Marjory’s uncle and aunt, reactions to her current reading, random facts stored up for future use, fleeting fragments of hand-me-down homilies and awful warnings about the wages of sin. The result resembles a compacted and disarticulated version of the Thought Book that in Kate Douglas Wiggin’s *New Chronicles of Rebecca* (1907) the heroine begins to compile, under the watchful eye of Miss Dearborn, as she enters her teens.

Just as giddy, in Marjory’s thought book, are the zigzags between the Romantic period and the age of satire. The writing honours Wordsworth by conveying notions and feelings in simple and unelaborated expressions, but there are also the following disclosures: “I have got some of Popes works by hart & like them very much” (7), “Doctor Swifts works are very funny & amusing & I get some by hart” (54). The breadth of Marjory’s reading and the range of her knowledge are truly startling. So young a writer may appear to need a new “XXS” category of juvenilia but, Robertson insists, this is also an author whom we patronise at our peril. The Juvenilia Press edition accordingly provides everything necessary for us to take her seriously: thirty pages of endnotes, helpful parallels with the young Jane Austen, and plenty of painstaking contextualisation. Marjory is firmly placed in Edinburgh and what are now its western outskirts, and there is even a tartan cover. All that the edition might have done to make itself more useful still is extend its already extensive List of Works Cited and Consulted (101–07). Among those who are absent, but have offered immensely stimulating readings of the journals and poems, the names of Alexandra Johnson, Laurie Langbauer, Mitzi Myers, and Judith Plotz stand out.

Although the scholarly attention paid her here is a world away from the sentimentalising admiration of her Victorian and Edwardian biographers, the writer of those journals and poems is always “Marjory” in this edition, rather than “Fleming” or (her own suggestion at one point) “MF.” It is a measure, perhaps, of the closeness that the editorial team came to feel: “In our many months of reading and working with her journals and poems, we have grown very fond of her...” (xxviii). That indeed seems an appropriate response to a writer whose own stock in trade is the similarly disarming avowal of enthusiasms: “I am very fond of the Arabin nights entertainments” (2), “I am very fond of the country” (7–8), “I am very fond of Spring

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Summer & Autun” (16), and—perhaps relatedly—“I am very fond of some parts of Tomsons seasons” (5).

Informed by her mother that “[w]e must have you married before you are educated beyond eligibility,” Stoppard’s Thomasina retorts: “I am going to marry Lord Byron.” If Marjory Fleming had married Lord Byron, some of the audacities of *Don Juan*—and particularly the way Byron builds his poem’s artlessness into its art—could have been credited to her extraordinary youthful example:

He was killed by a cannon splinter  
In the middle of the winter  
Perhaps it was not at that time  
But I could get no other ryhme (31)

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