Journal of Juvenilia Studies

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EDITORIAL

WITH THIS first issue of volume 6, we look backwards to our origins and forwards to a future of growth and new initiatives. In June 2023, the 8th International Literary Juvenilia Conference and AGM of the International Society for Literary Juvenilia (ISLJ) was held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in conjunction with the annual Jane Austen Summer Program, which chose Austen's juvenilia for its 2023 focus. This happy alignment of interests is reflected in the contents of this issue, where you will find two peer-reviewed articles on Jane Austen's youthful work. The historical significance of Austen to the emergence of the field of juvenilia studies is also reflected in the two Invited Contributions: revised versions of speeches given by Juliet McMaster and Christine Alexander on Wednesday, 14 June 2023, during a Special Session in honour of these two scholars, whose contributions to the founding of this scholarly field cannot be overstated. At this time the ISLJ executive also announced the creation of two new awards: the Juliet McMaster Award for Emerging Scholarship in Juvenilia Studies, shared this year by Anna Merz and Katherine Stein; and the Christine Alexander Award for Mentorship and Services to Juvenilia Studies, shared this year by Laurie Langbauer and Beverly Taylor.

Our next issue, *JJS* vol. 6, no. 2, will contain essays by Eliza Richards and Eric Bontempo, who won the inaugural ISLJ awards for the best conference paper overall and the best paper presented by an emerging scholar, respectively. Look for essays by Anna Merz and Katherine Stein in future issues of *JJS* as well. You will find essays by Laurie Langbauer and Beverly Taylor in past issues of *JJS*, and this issue features Part I of a two-part essay by Laurie Langbauer on the juvenile tradition and the American dime novel. We also offer one book review (of a never-before–published novella by the Victorian novelist Edmund Gosse) and one website review (another first for us).

Finally, we draw your attention to *JJS*'s new Spotlight section, created to feature short essays designed to introduce the work of a little-known young writer to a wider readership. We were fascinated to learn from Audrey J. Gibson about the writings of the African American youth John H. Crowder, a soldier during the American Civil War, and we encourage all our readers to consider contributing to the Spotlight section of future issues.

Lesley Peterson

INVITED CONTRIBUTIONS

Founding the Juvenilia Press

Juliet McMaster
University Professor Emerita, University of Alberta

ON DIFFERENT occasions I have explained how the Juvenilia Press was born after I had taken on illustrating an early work by Jane Austen. But the last time I told the story, at my Community League, an audience member asked, "But what got you interested in kids' writing in the first place?" So I had to think back further.

Yes, I wrote up a storm myself when I was a kid, usually illustrating as well as writing. But as an adult and a professional? I remembered an ongoing project with my kids and their neighbourhood friends. The school my kids went to didn't do art lessons. So I thought, being already a dedicated picture-maker, that I would take on their art instruction myself. And other kids joined in. It became an on-going project. Every Sunday afternoon about ten kids (the numbers fluctuated, and so did their ages) would assemble at our house, and I'd supply large pages and boards for each (no hole-in-corner compositions!). We used good black sharpies for outlines, and non-toxic markers for colours.

Rather than more formal branches of art training—figure drawing, still life, and so on—I settled for compositions that were essentially illustration. I ransacked history, myth, and literature for subjects: we did Odysseus and the sirens, Samson in the temple, Rapunzel in her tower, the Pied Piper, Gulliver among the Lilliputians,

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EDITORS' NOTE: The two essays in this section are revised versions of speeches given by Juliet McMaster and Christine Alexander on Wednesday, 14 June 2023, as part of the 8th International Literary Juvenilia Conference and AGM of the International Society of Literary Juvenilia (ISLJ), which was held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. During a Special Session in honour of these two scholars, the ISLJ executive announced the creation of two awards: the Juliet McMaster Award for Emerging Scholarship in Juvenilia Studies and the Christine Alexander Award for Mentorship and Services to Juvenilia Studies.

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the three Wise Men, Spiderman, the Easter Bunny, the Annunciation, the Nativity. We did knights and witches and Vikings and cowboys on bucking broncos, and the old lady who swallowed a fly. We branched out into watercolours ("Tiger, tiger, burning bright!") and then into ceramics, getting their work custom fired. First we did low-crawling critters like crocodiles, turtles, and mermaids. Then they wanted to do a stand-up human figure. Wet clay legs tend to buckle; so I said we'd do a King in his robes. (The gold crown called for an extra firing.) He stood at about four inches. "Now the Queen," they said. So we did the Queen, crown and all. "Now the rest of the chess set!" they said. (Turned out they were all precocious chess players.) That was some project!

Someone in my Department of English at the University of Alberta was organising a conference on Children's Literature, and I was on the conference committee. I proposed a paper on "The Home-Made Children's Book." And my proposal was accepted. And the "children's books" I was talking about were *by* children, not just *for* them.

"You're all going to make a book!" I declared to my Drawing Class students. Not just a story or a poem on loose sheets of paper, but a *book,* to be bound between covers and stored alongside other books on a shelf. They took to it like ducklings to water. I had the materials to hand: blank index cards of different sizes, pens and markers, sturdy coloured cardboard to be cut to size for covers. By now they were a bunch of young pros. For those who felt the need of some assignment, I provided a suggestion or two: Write a story about a toy you are fond of; or a story or poem with the title *Trapped!*

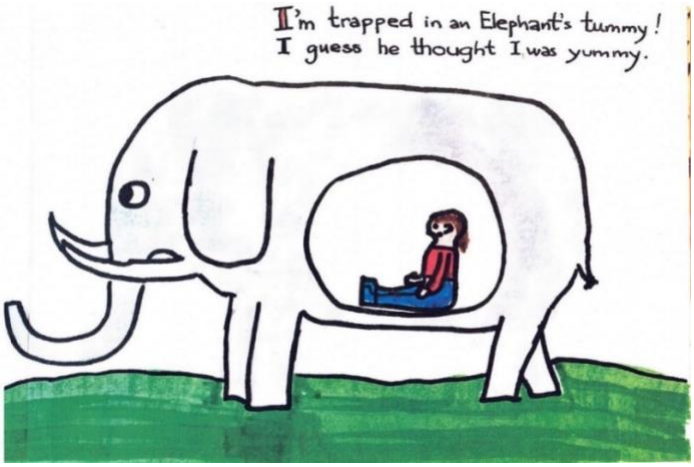


Figure 1. Cath inside the Elephant*, first illustration to* Trapped!, *by Catherine Smith. With kind permission.*

Ten-year-old Catherine swung into action, and produced this gem (Fig. 1):

Trapped!

I'm trapped in an Elephant's tummy!
I guess he thought I was yummy.
Yesterday at the Zoo
I was tying my shoe
By the elephant's cage with my mummy,
And that big brute of a dummy
He swallowed me whole;
And I ended up down in his tummy.

My mom was so desperate out there in the breeze
That she sprinkled pepper to make the elephant sneeze.
Her idea was wonderful, great as can be,
And I think she thought of it 'cause she loves me.
At last the great beast sneezed a big sneeze,
And I was blown out to the cool autumn breeze.

Now I warn you, all folks of different ages,
Stay far, far away from elephants' cages.

I'm proud of helping to make that youthful creation happen.

The many other books the kids produced—*The Foot That Stamped*, *Mr. Bunn Goes to the Rockies*, *The Hunchback*, and others, with pictures and in various collaborations, were on display at the conference. Publication!—of a kind.

SO, WHEN an audience member at my Community League talk on the Juvenilia Press asked me how I became interested in writing by children, out came this story about the drawing lessons! I have had happy times enabling and promoting the creative work of children.

My kids and their friends in the drawing class grew up and took wing; and I proceeded with my university teaching and more academic studies, teaching, writing criticism, and giving papers. Then in 1987 came the conference organised by Jack Grey, co-founder of the Jane Austen Society of North America (or JASNA). This AGM was specialised to Austen's juvenilia. Jack was a fan of Austen's early writings: he used to say that only two artists had produced world-class work before they were adults: Mozart and Jane Austen. It was on that occasion that I fell in love with Austen's cheeky tale written at twelve, *The Beautifull Cassandra*. It was my inspiration to turn the characters into small animals, *à la* Beatrix Potter. Cassandra was to be a mouse (I'm fond of mice); the Marquis a lounge lizard, the coachman a frog in a caped great-coat, his horse a tortoise (I could show him cheerfully immune from the coachman's long whip!)

By now I had some standing as a Jane Austen critic; but I had none as an illustrator. It took me long to find a publisher. But finally, with a kind grant in aid from JASNA, the small press Sono Nis took it on; and *The Beautifull Cassandra*, in full glorious colour, was launched at the JASNA AGM of 1993 in beautiful Lake Louise (Fig. 2). It had been a labour of love; and the emergence of my first published picture book was an occasion more joyful than the publication of my more academic critical books.

A further serendipity was that Joanne Foreman, a composer in Taos, New Mexico, fell in love with my version of *The Beautifull Cassandra*, and put it to music for flute and Celtic harp; and presently a choreographer was inspired to create a children's ballet: I could see my Marquis and Pastry-cook and Widow turned into children dancing the roles. The whole can still be viewed among "AGM Publications" on the JASNA website.

Most of that—the work with children, the making of the pictures and my picture book—is pre-history to the Juvenilia Press: but that project grew out of joy and delight in the creative work of young people.

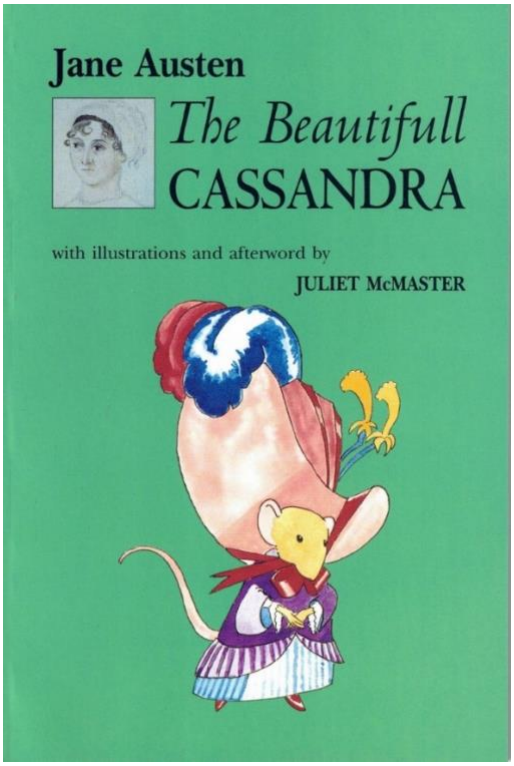


Figure 2. Cover to Sono Nis edition of The Beautifull Cassandra*, 1994.*

I found that in thinking hard about young Austen's *The Beautifull Cassandra*, as one has to do when illustrating a work, I had learned things about her vision and

development. If it works for me, why not for students? In a senior-level course on Austen I offered, as one essay topic among many, "Make an edition of *Jack and Alice*." Two students took it on, and did a good job—one with the introduction, one with notes. With their permission I decided to invite illustrations from other class members (including me), and I printed up the result, in a slender saddle-stitched pamphlet, as a souvenir for class members. To recover my expenses, I printed some extras, which I sold. And I found to my embarrassment that I had made a profit!

The next specialised course I taught was on the Brontës: and I offered a similar project on Charlotte's *The Twelve Adventurers*. It was a student who told me that the best copy text would be the edition of Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia by one Christine Alexander at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. We wrote for her permission: it was the beginning of a beautiful friendship! (I nearly wrote "Beautifull Freindship"—I wonder why.)

Again we had fun contributing pictures, though they hardly qualified as professional. And this time I found I could sell some copies to the Brontë Museum at Haworth. Ah yes, we received recognition in high places.

Next, in another course specialised to Austen, came a pamphlet edition of *The Three Sisters* and *Amelia Webster*. One student in that class, Michael Londry, went on to do a master's thesis on juvenilia; and from there to Oxford. At the Bodleian Library, no less, he typed in a request for recent work on "Jane Austen"; and what should appear but the little pamphlet that he had co-edited!

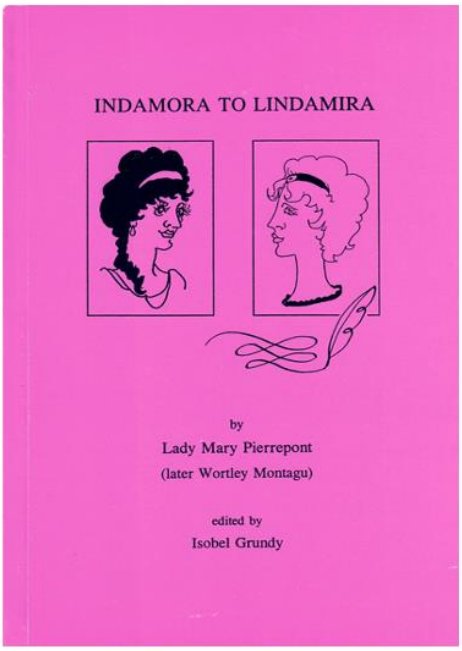
Figure 3. Juvenilia Press logo.

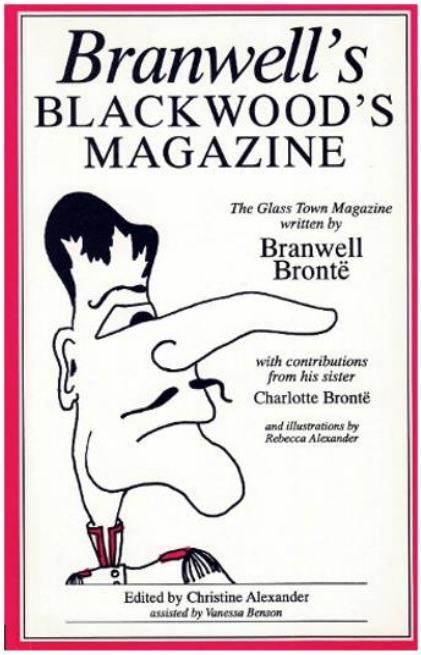
Then came a game-changer. My friend and distinguished colleague Isobel Grundy was completing her biography of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; and she had her hands on an unpublished manuscript Lady Mary had written at fourteen, *Indamora to Lindamira*. Isobel had enjoyed the little books my classes had produced. And she asked me to produce and illustrate this narrative, which she proposed to edit with a student assistant, Susan Hillabold. Ha! I thought: an edition of an early work by a major author, hitherto unpublished, edited by a major scholar. Time for a Juvenilia Press.

I sought permission from our Department Chair; put together an Editorial Board (including Isobel and Christine); started a competition among students in Art and

Design for a logo: and lo, The Juvenilia Press was launched upon the astonished world (Fig. 3).

Because the project had started in the classroom, I made it part of the Press's mandate that one or more students, or apprentice editors, should be involved in the editing process, working alongside experienced scholars; and so learn by hands-on experience such skills as textual editing, annotation, even book design—skills not usually available to them. The university liked the pedagogic element, and put up a modest grant as seed money: so did Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council; and I won a grant for research assistance. Isobel's *Indamora to Lindamira*, now not merely saddle-stitched but "perfect-bound," was our first volume with the Juvenilia Press imprint (Fig. 4).





Figures 4 and 5. Cover Indamora to Lindamira*, Juvenilia Press, 1994; cover of* Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine, *Juvenilia Press, 1995.*

The pedagogic element has proved an eye-opener for many a student co-editor. Students in English courses use edited texts of classic works all the time; but they take the texts of such works as *Great Expectations* or *Wuthering Heights* as ready-made and God-given. They seldom read the "Note on the Text," or wonder about editorial principles or choice of copy text. But when they come to edit from manuscript to print—as is often the case—they realise that an editor is making critical decisions all the time about the best presentation of each text. Should underlining be turned into italics? Should spelling errors be corrected, or preserved? Once they become aware

of the issues, these fledgling editors can become passionate. I have heard fierce arguments, for instance, on whether or not "&" should be rendered as "and." Writing a "Note on the Text" becomes a challenging enterprise.

Book design? Our designer Winston Pei is ready to share his expertise on this front. As part of his project for a course in book design at the Banff School of Fine Art, he took with him the files of our *Love and Freindship* edition and *Branwell's Blackwoods Magazine*, edited by Christine Alexander and illustrated by her daughter Rebecca. Winston gave us our "look" (Fig. 5), and he has been our designer ever since.

Annotation too is a discipline worth learning. A good note, students learn, should be informative, yes; but also succinct and relevant and if possible elegant. When I launch on an edition with an editorial team, an early exercise is to identify what needs annotating; and team members can define themselves by the division of labour: who takes on the notes on, say, historical reference?—or literary allusion, period dress, carriages and transport?—all depending on what text is undergoing editing.

My last year of teaching was 1999–2000; and in the same year Christine Alexander invited me to speak at a conference in Sydney on "The Victorians and Their Children." I took the occasion for asking Christine if she would take over the Juvenilia Press. Very fortunately, she was amenable—but not for another two years. I applied for another two-year grant from our Research Council. Since I was retired I was technically ineligible. But they recognised a special need and bent the rules for me, because they approved of the Press and the opportunities it offers for students' professionalisation.

Meanwhile, said Christine, we should co-edit a collection on the child writer for Cambridge University Press. So we swung into action on that, while she guest-edited volumes of Charlotte Brontë's *Tales of the Islanders*, and I wound up my General Editorship with editions of Opal Whiteley and Anna Maria Porter. (Lesley Peterson, now Editor of the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies*, was a co-editor on both.)

In November of 2002 Christine threw another conference in Sydney, this time specifically on juvenilia. I came with a fat suitcase of Juvenilia Press volumes for the hand-over.

Our co-edited collection for CUP, *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, came out in 2005, and it received a front-page review in *TLS* by Dinah Birch. She praised "the quiet work of the Juvenilia Press," and went on, "The larger intention [of the collection] is nothing less than the definition of a new genre within the literary academy" (2). Ha! Now this was something like proper appreciation.

Christine has been Director of the Press since that hand-over. And though I'm retired from teaching, I have continued to edit some volumes with such apprentice editors as volunteer. Having added art history to my research interests,[1] I have brought out some early diaries by artists, such as *Dick Doyle's Diary*, written and illustrated at fifteen by the famous *Punch* artist Richard Doyle, and extracts from the early diaries of Elizabeth Thompson Butler, who stirred the Victorian art world by her dramatic renderings of military heroism. She was inspired by a visit to the field of

Waterloo; and we brought out *Waterloo Diary*, illustrated with her splendid paintings, on the bi-centenary of Waterloo. This volume was nominated for the Burger Prize in British Art History. And—lucky me!—I continue to snatch the chance at illustrating some of the Press's volumes. The editing and illustrating continue to offer enjoyment, as well as professional training and opportunity to emerging scholars, and visibility to young writers. It has been a joyful and productive journey.

NOTES

[1] My latest book is a biography of the distinguished Victorian painter James Clarke Hook, R.A.

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Birch, Dinah. "Eager to Please." Review of *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, edited by Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster. *Times Literary Supplement* 10 February 2006, p. 2.

McMaster, Juliet. *James Clarke Hook, Painter of the Sea*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023

Research in Juvenilia Studies: Speech of Acknowledgement and Thanks

Christine Alexander
Emeritus Scientia Professor, School of the Arts and Media
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales

THANK you for your generous words and for the unexpected news that you have instituted an award named in my honour. This is a humbling experience, especially when your other award is named for Juliet McMaster, who has been an inspiration to all of us over the years. And I'm delighted to hear that the inaugural Alexander Award winners are Laurie Langbauer and Beverly Taylor, two other scholars whose research I much admire.

I'm so sorry not to be with you in person at the International Society for Literary Juvenilia Conference—for the first time ever. I'm sure you are having stimulating discussions on early writings and a great time under Laurie and Beverley's expert management. I spent a wonderful time with them at UNC Chapel Hill many years ago as a visiting scholar, so I can picture clearly where you all are, even last night at Beverly's home near the little lake in the woods. I'm sorry too not to hear all your papers and will look forward to reading those that are published. I know there will be a special edition of the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies* following this conference, as there was in the case of the Juvenilia zoom conference on "Literary Juvenilia, material imagination and 'things,'" that we held here in Sydney last year.

I'VE BEEN asked to say few words about my research in juvenilia studies. Let me start with an anecdote that recalls the low esteem in which literary juvenilia were held in the academy during the early days of my research on early writings. When I started my first job in Sydney, at the University of New South Wales, the Head of the English Department was scornful of my work: he commented that "no one will be interested in reading that kids' stuff!" A year later, I was pleased to be able to show him the publication of my first book published by Blackwell's Oxford: *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë,* which had just won a British Academy prize (Fig. 1).[1] My boss was still rather unimpressed, but I felt elated that juvenilia studies were now more generally recognised by other scholars as a worthwhile topic of research.

Juvenilia studies were certainly non-existent when I began my PhD research in the UK—in the mid-1970s. I had started working on poetry and mid-eighteenth century landscape gardening (which was a passion of mine), but in my first term I came across a rather intriguing early story by nineteen-year-old Charlotte Brontë

called *The Spell, an Extravaganza*—a type of gothic spoof, fabricated by a cynical narrator to explore his elder brother's duplicitous character and love affairs. I was hooked. I changed my topic and went in search of other juvenilia by Brontë. Very few people had bothered about the Brontës' early writings: they were generally considered literary oddities—miniature hand-made booklets of recycled scraps of paper measuring about 3.5 x 5 cm and later loose sheets crammed with tiny writing and very difficult to read (Fig. 2). A librarian had written a fascinating book on the Brontë childhood writings based on the manuscripts in her collection at the Humanities Research Center (now Harry Ransom Center) in Austin, Texas,[2] but it was only a partial picture and proved not to be especially accurate, though inspiring.

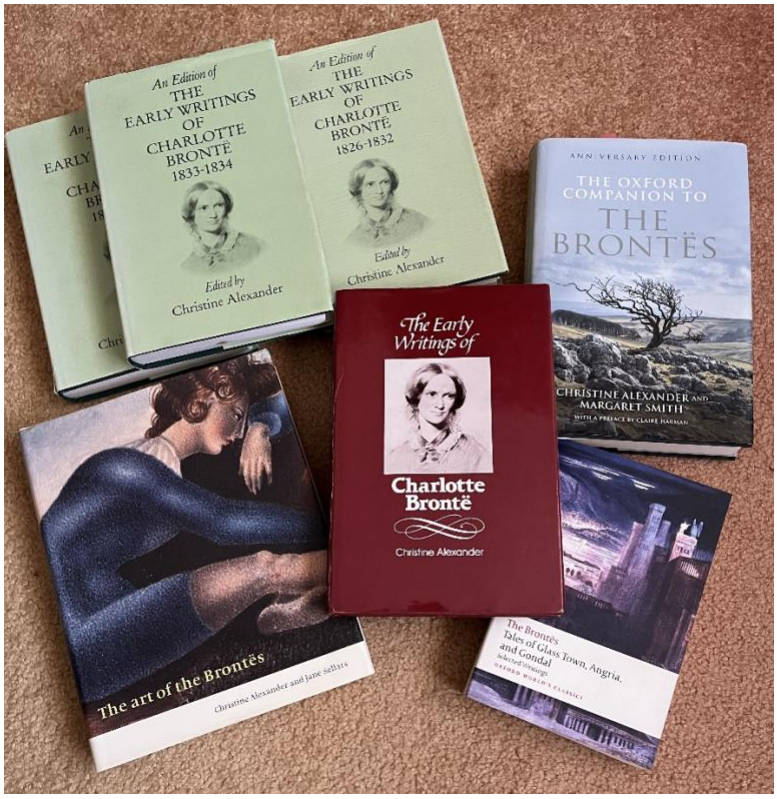

Figure 1. Cover of The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë *(Blackwell, 1983), by Christine Alexander, pictured here with other books written or edited by Christine Alexander on the Brontës.*

So I set out to find all the Brontë manuscripts still extant. I worked at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, the British Library and other UK sources of manuscripts. I wrote copious letters (by hand in those days) and searched the musty old sales catalogues of Sotheby's and Christie's. I applied for small travel grants from a variety of sources. Then with addresses and some invitations, I put a pack on my back and flew to North America.

I took a Greyhound bus and travelled the length and breadth of America and Canada—working in libraries and private collections, knocking on doors and meeting some wonderfully generous people. I found over one hundred unpublished manuscripts and almost an equal number of drawings and paintings by the Brontës. The former provided a fascinating insight into their early creative play and their imaginative response to nineteenth-century literature and publishing practices; and the latter enabled me to write a book on the art of the Brontës with the curator of the Brontë Parsonage Museum[3]—a project that led to an examination of early artistic creativity and material culture involving research into the manufacture of paints, papermaking and watermarks, the cultural significance of paintboxes for women, albums and drawing manuals, and exhibition catalogues.

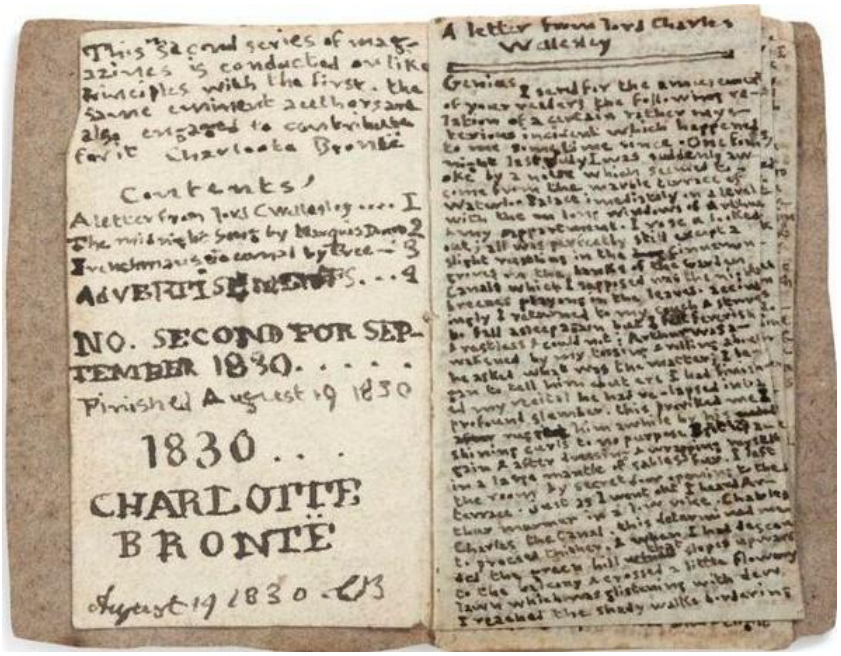

Figure 2. A typical contents page of The Young Men's Magazine *by Charlotte Brontë, composed at the age of fourteen, "written" by and for characters in the imaginary Glass Town saga, and indicative of her early literary ambition. This 19–page booklet was missing for many years but was acquired by the Brontë Society in 2013 for the grand sum of USD 864.*

During my travels I persuaded the owners of a short story to give the manuscript they had locked away for investment to the Harry Ransom Center in Texas so that they would not have scholars like me requesting access; a manuscript that led to my first publication.[4] Other significant items also came to light in the private collections I examined—items like Charlotte's humble engagement ring which had travelled with relatives of her husband to Canada.[5] The detective work was great fun, and I loved every minute of it.

Figure 3. A stylized study of a heartsease by Charlotte Brontë, 3 November 1832, probably copied from a drawing manual rather than real life (courtesy of the Brontë Society).

Back in Cambridge at university, I transcribed and analysed the manuscripts, and this formed the basis of my PhD, allowing me to write on all the extant early writings of Charlotte Brontë. This was followed by an edition of *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* for which I needed to acquire skills in textual editing that have since proved valuable in guiding the editions for the Juvenilia Press. I was especially encouraged when I produced an edition for the British Library of Charlotte's *High Life in Verdopolis*, and the *TLS* review stated that the edition was "illuminating both in literary and editorial terms, expounding a considered compromise between a near diplomatic edition and a modernized text."

This literary and editorial work, coupled with my interest in art history, formed the basis of my research career and led not only to further work on the Brontës but also to my interest in the larger topic of literary juvenilia in general. I taught a Masters course for many years on early writings, in which the students also learnt textual editing and produced a number of volumes with me for the Juvenilia Press. I arranged for these post-graduates to teach several first-year tutorials on early writings, a project I titled "Literary Apprenticeship, Genre Study, Editing and Publishing," and thus we introduced the topic of juvenilia to a wide range of younger students. Throughout this time I collaborated with Juliet McMaster, whom I had met at the first Juvenilia Conference at Durham University, UK. (1996), organised by Gillian Boughton, at which I gave the keynote paper titled "'What Geni-elixir or Magi-distillation?': Towards a Theory of Juvenilia." Here I examined, using a post-colonial model, "the

imaginative process" by which child writers "transport, relocate and rewrite the adult world from their experience" ("In Search" 3).

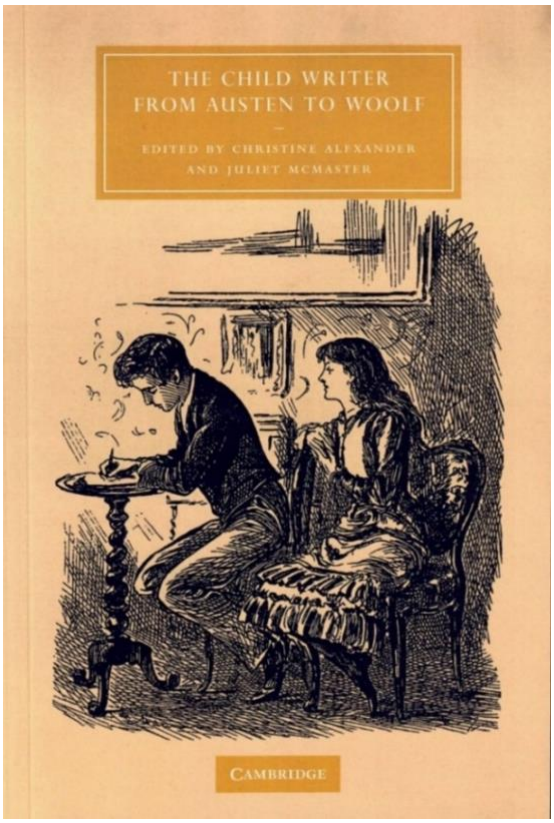

Figure 4. Cover of The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf *(Cambridge UP, 2005).*

At the conference a group of international scholars with shared interests agreed to meet every few years, and many also contributed to the Juvenilia Press, which Juliet had established. We collaborated on a book on *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*,[6] which the TLS judged as "Deceptively modest in tone," but "in fact a determinedly ambitious book." The reviewer, Dinah Birch, recognized the work we were doing to establish "a theoretical framework and distinctive identity, which claims consideration and respect" for the new genre of literary juvenilia (2). We trust the book, which also includes essays by other academics, has indeed helped to establish the parameters of juvenilia studies and to inspire other scholars (Fig. 4).

When Juliet retired, I took over her good work with the Juvenilia Press and have now been running it for some twenty years. It remains an unconventional press, essentially a non-profit international research and pedagogic initiative that works chiefly with university academics and students, especially post-graduates. All students study an author in depth and gain experience in editing a text; in working on

annotation that involves research into historical or geographical background, customs, early dialect or idiom, and various allusions; and in the writing of specialised appendices. Occasionally students work on illustration, and drama and music students have also joined us in producing a play or musical for the book launch, as the Juvenilia Press Website records.[7]

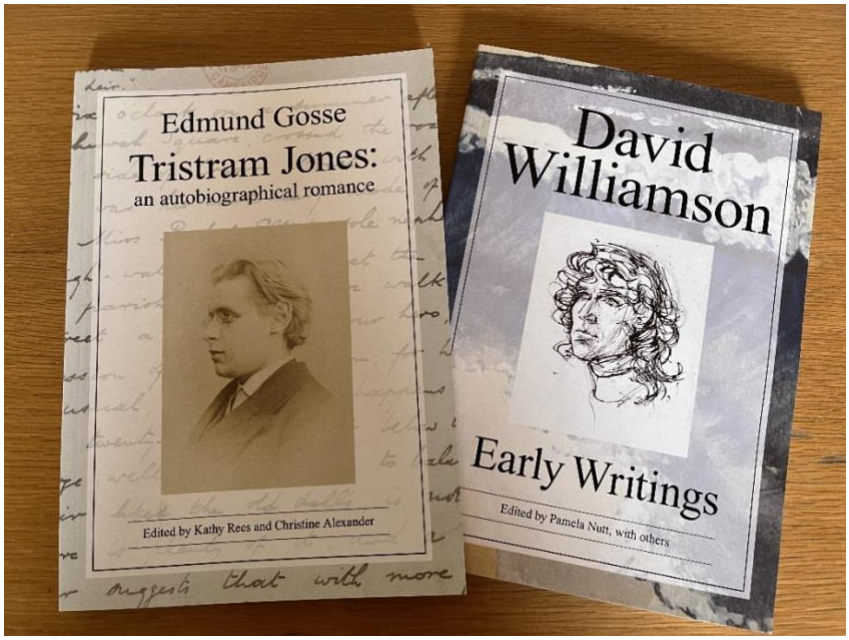

Figure 5. Recent publications of the Juvenilia Press: Tristram Jones: an autobiographical romance*, by Edmund Gosse, edited by Kathy Rees and Christine Alexander (2022); and* David Williamson: Early Writings*, edited by Pamela Nutt, with others (2023).*

I have recently had fun working with a former PhD student on a manuscript in Cambridge University Library (UK), for an edition of Edmund Gosse's early tale *Tristram Jones*, a coming-of-age narrative, previously unpublished, and an intriguing forerunner of Gosse's classic memoir, *Father and Son*. I also continue to work with Pamela Nutt, the new Chair of the International Society of Juvenilia Studies, and her talented secondary school students. Just last year I had the pleasure of working with them on the early published poems of thirteen-year-old Felicia Hemans, who eventually outsold both Wordsworth and Coleridge. And just this year we completed and launched the adolescent juvenilia of Australian playwright David Williamson (Fig. 5).

I TELL you all these personal details and describe my career trajectory in relation to juvenilia studies because I know there are many PhD students at this conference, and I'd like to urge you to pursue what really excites you, even if you have to change your

topic and take a little longer as I did. A PhD can be great fun and lead to a life of exciting research and a rewarding teaching career.

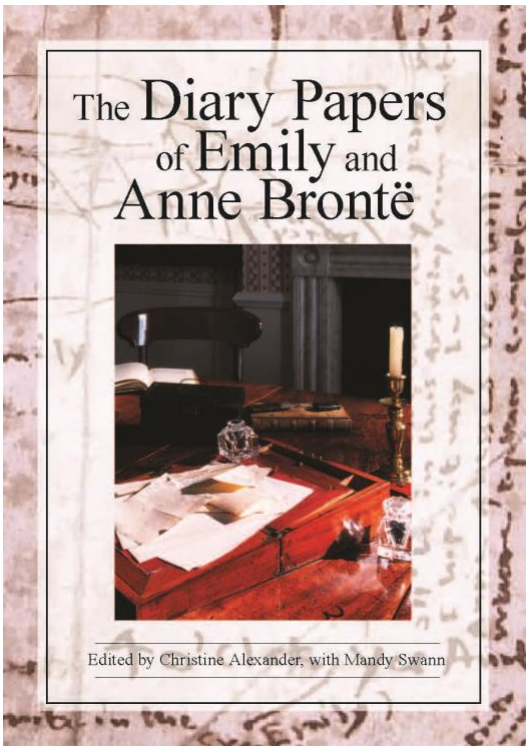

Figure 6. The Diary Papers of Emily and Anne Brontë*, edited by Christine Alexander, with Mandy Swann (Juvenilia Press, 2019).*

As a coda, you may like to know that the little manuscripts I located were not considered of much value at the time—they were generally thought of as curiosities and unrelated to the Brontës' later writings. This has changed totally over the years, and a miniature Charlotte Brontë manuscript I worked on years ago sold in 2013 for just over USD 864 (c.£513) (see Fig. 2). Fortunately, such items are now finding their way back into library collections, as in the case of the recent Honresfeld Brontë collection, now known as the Blavatnik Honresfield Library. I was one of only four scholars who traced this so-called "lost" collection and who had private access to the manuscripts over the last 40 years—but this is another story for another time. Nevertheless, I should note that all my transcriptions and editions of the Brontë manuscripts from this source are from the originals, including those in my 2019 co-edited Juvenilia Press edition of *The Diary Papers of Emily and Anne Bronte*, which features several photographs of manuscripts from this collection (Fig. 6).

NOTES

[1] 1984 British Academy Rose Mary Crawshay Prize, for Christine Alexander, *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (Basil Blackwell, 1983; paperback 1984; American edition Prometheus Books, 1983; translated into Japanese: Aries Shobo Publishers, 1990).
[2] Fannie E. Ratchford, *The Brontës' Web of Childhood* (Columbia UP, 1941).
[3] Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of The Brontës* (Cambridge UP, 1995).
[4] Christine Alexander, editor, *Something about Arthur, by Charlotte Brontë* (U of Texas P, 1981).
[5] "Arthur Bell Nicholls and the Adamson Saga: New Discoveries of Brontë Memorabilia," *Brontë Studies* volume 31 (November 2006), part 3, pp. 195–210.
[6] *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, edited by Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge UP, 2005; rpt. Paperback 2009; translated into Japanese: Sairyusha Publishers, 2010).
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SPOTLIGHT

The Civil War Letters of John H. Crowder

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IN A LETTER written from the thick of battle in the Civil War, sixteen-year-old John H. Crowder posed a question to his mother: "If Abraham Lincoln knew that a colored Lad of my age, could command a company, what would he say[?]" ("Letter, April 23rd 1863"). With this question, Crowder sought to establish his place in history as a young person of colour, confident in his abilities to create a future for himself against all odds. Crowder's story gives invaluable insight into the experiences and perspectives of youth and African Americans, voices that are too often missing from the historical record. In a collection of Crowder's letters written between early 1862 and 5 May 1863, mostly addressed to his mother, the young man reveals the hopes, obstacles—including others' jealousy over his youthful success—and discrimination faced by young African Americans in the Civil War era.

The case of John H. Crowder allows us to explore an important facet of African American writing, political involvement, and civil rights activism that is also often omitted from conversations concerning African American life in the post-Antebellum South. Mary Naill Mitchell's foundational work exploring African American juvenilia has helped scholars appreciate the significance of Black youth to our understanding of the contested social and political aspects of slavery's legacy. Though Mitchell does not study Crowder's letters, her assertion that Black youth who wrote letters in the antebellum and post-antebellum periods were "active participants in the chronicling of their community" and their "collective history" also applies to Crowder (64). Examining Crowder's letters in light of such scholarship further illuminates the activities and perspectives of young African Americans during the post-Emancipation period, a transitional time of continued struggle for racial equality.

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Fortunately, in 1994 Joseph T. Glatthaar brought Crowder's letters to light; his transcription and contextualization of these documents makes it possible for us to examine this significant example of African American juvenilia. Approaching Crowder's letters through the lens of juvenilia studies can yield insight into how young soldiers of colour experience and respond to the realities of war. They provide glimpses into Crowder's budding political and civil engagement and his navigation of the challenges of racial prejudice and the responsibilities of early adulthood, in the context of his social, emotional, and intellectual development as a young person and a writer. Crowder's writing often reveals his close, caring relationship with his mother, shown by his frequent expressions of concern for her well-being and his desire for her approval as he strove to become a respectable young man. Studying these letters enriches our understanding of Crowder's life, not only as an African American soldier, but as a youth.

Born in 1846 in Louisville, Kentucky to free people of colour, Crowder moved to New Orleans with his mother, Martha Ann Stars, before turning five years old (Glatthaar 203). He spent the remaining twelve years of his life working in order to support himself and his mother financially. At eight years old, Crowder began working on steamboats on the Mississippi River for five dollars a month. Although he started out as a low-ranking cabin boy, he eventually climbed the ranks to the position of a steward, raising his income to twenty dollars per month. At age twelve, Crowder worked in a jewellery store for twenty-five dollars per month (Affidavit of Martha Ann Stars). Despite the obstacles faced by someone of his age, race, and economic status, Crowder persevered in pursuing his education and career. He eventually joined the Louisiana Native Guard as an officer at the age of sixteen, though he had to lie about his age in order to join, as all commissioned officers had to be at least eighteen years old (Glatthaar 205).

The Louisiana Native Guard was a significant force during the American Civil War—though it is often left out of conversations concerning nineteenth-century American history—as it represented one of the first instances in which African American soldiers were allowed to fight in the Union Army.[1] Composed primarily of free men of colour and formerly enslaved men, the Native Guard challenged and undermined the then-prevalent belief that African Americans were unfit for military duty, and it ultimately played a crucial role in advancing the cause of civil rights in the United States. It is therefore crucial to view Crowder's letters written during his service in the Civil War as part of a broader tradition of African American progressive action at the time. As a member of the Native Guard, Crowder found himself among a larger cohort of soldiers who were outspoken in their advocacy for equal rights and believed in taking tangible action to secure them. As a young writer, moreover, Crowder provides valuable insight into the hopeful and ambitious mindset of the youth in this community of progressive social and political activists.

On the one hand, Crowder joined the war for practical reasons: to provide an income for him and his mother (Affidavit of Mrs. Maria Wilson). On the other hand,

it is likely that he joined because of the morality that was imbued in him by one of his mentors, John Mifflin Brown (1817–1893). Brown, a prominent abolitionist, bishop, and leader in the underground railroad, was a longtime friend of Crowder's mother; after they moved to New Orleans and joined Brown's African Methodist Episcopal congregation, he had many opportunities to mentor and teach Crowder throughout his childhood (Deposition). Crowder's drive and informal education from Brown equipped him with the skills needed not only to write exceptionally well but also to meet the demands of an officer at an early age.

Tragically, Crowder died in action at the Siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana, on 27 May 1863 (Glatthaar 206). For ten years after his death, Crowder's mother battled the United States Government for a dependant's pension, submitting her son's letters as corroborating evidence for her claims (Glatthaar 207). Without his mother's efforts in a system stacked against her, Crowder's letters likely would have been lost, as correspondence by a young person of colour was rarely preserved in the United States at that time.

His letters quickly make us aware of Crowder's longing for the future. He looks forward to a world in which a young man like himself could command an army, as he says in one letter: "none would believe my exact age; and I find that the white officers in the service are men averaging from 25 years to 45 years. none [*sic*] that I have seen yet, are as young as I am and even then at that age, I give no exception to color, and have the advantage to excell me in military matters" ("Letter, April 23rd 1863"). Crowder's proud and determined statements in his letters reveal both his response to the numerous rumours and stories his fellow, older soldiers spread about him, as well as his ambitions of rising to leadership in the future. For Crowder, maintaining a clean and honorable reputation was imperative if he wanted to advance through the military ranks. In an earlier letter, Crowder writes of these rumours:

> I am sorry but I cannot help the reports that my enemies have circulated. I now [*i.e.*, know] you have heard it all. It is said that I was put under arrest It is not so I have neither been put under arrest nor have I been lectured by any of my superior officers. It has been said that I was the cause of Sergeant Francois Death he was my warmest friend we always was friends. And I was not the one that caused his death so healp me God. It has also been Said that I was married and I was cashered for marring a Contraband I am neither married nor have been cashered. I did not send home a woman as my wife, but I sent her to help you at home her mother to wash and Iron for you and father. ("Letter, November 20th 1862")

These lines illustrate Crowder's desire to prove himself a capable soldier, as well as his resilience in the face of prejudice. They suggest that, in Crowder's vision of the future, he will be a respected man no longer ridiculed for his age or status. Crowder's

anxiety about being misrepresented speaks to his budding concern for equal rights, as he has a desire to make a name for himself outside of the labels his senior officers try to impose upon him.

Crowder becomes increasingly concerned with his appearance as a reputable young man when he learns that his mother has heard of the rumours. He writes to sternly defend himself:

> But Mother, Your Son has been Missrepresented to you by one that is unknown to him, and dare not meet him for I have dear Mother resolved if I ever meet him one or the other fall. And let me tell you Dear Mother you have believed what the reports about me to be so. You Know That I never touch licqor and farther more i never smoke, but you believe me to do such but I do not smok nor drink licqor and you Know it. but you will listen to the trash of everbody. ("Letter, January 2nd 1863")

As he came of age during the tumult of the Civil War, maintaining a reputation as an honourable young man took on increasing importance for Crowder, not only for his status in the military but also due to his financial responsibility to support his mother and family. The sole male provider, after enlisting in the war Crowder sent money home from the front lines and hoped to reassure his mother of their family's stability. In this pivotal stage of stepping into an adult supporting role at a young age, defending himself vigorously against false rumors circulating about his character was imperative. In correcting this narrative, then, Crowder strove to prove himself a capable soldier and man dedicated to creating a stable future for his loved ones.

Crowder's ongoing struggles to protect his honourable reputation and prove his trustworthiness to his mother are especially revealed in his discussion of conflicts with other soldiers, such as his developing rivalry with "Capt Lewis":

> Mother my opinion of Capt Lewis and Lieut Moss has been reduced since my arrival in this city. They are the most pucillanamous dirty Low life men that I ever seen. Like many others they have no respect for no one. they seem to think there is not a woman that they cannot sleep with. every woman seems to be a comon woman with them. they have grown hateful in my sight. I will relate an incident that happened in camp a married Lady with a young girl came to camp to see us. while siting und[er] our little harbor one of the privates, made signs at the married lady of the most disrespectful Kind. She told the capt in this maner, that, that man, pointing toward the man, insulted me capt and grocly [grossly] and then left camp. Capt Lewis seen the man do it, and did not say one word it was his duty to have had him arrested as he belonged to our Regt. he did not do it. I taken the

> responcibillity upon myself and arrested the man and had him punished for it. Capt Lewis from that day taken a more disliken to me, but I care not, if it had of been you it would have been the same.
>
> I remmember your first lesson, that was to respect all females. I do respect all. that lady is a respectful lady every way shape or form. she is a lady, and I had the man punished, that insulted her. did I do right, or not mother.
>
> I understand since my arrival in this city that Capt Lewis is trying to get me out of the regt. and he has said to persons that he thought would not tell me, that he would get me out if he had to tell Gen Banks that I was not of age/and of course would be dismissed from service. there is but one thing now that I wish and you must do it. let no one know-no mater who it is, that wants to know my age, how old I am never from this day tell any one my age under no circumstances had you not told Capt Lewis my exact age, he could not do it, but you told him that I was you-know-so do not tell none under the sun of heaven if you do you ruin me. by holding my position at an unknown age when I do leave the service (if not discharge for not being of age to hold a commission) I shall raise myself much higher, in the next country, that I want to hold a position in. I hope that you will not gratify any one else, by telling them my age you will not mention this to any one, for I wish it to remain quiet, untill I can act, as I want. we will not be in the service lifetime, and when he, capt. Lewis does leave, I shall avenge the wrongs that he has done to me; remain quiet, some of these days, I will have him as I want him. ("Letter, April 27, 1863)

These conflicts suggest that many of his officers were envious of his youthful success and forward-thinking ambition. In this detailed letter, Crowder not only continues to defend his moral character but also stresses how crucial it is that his exact age remains unknown, as he faces prejudice due to his status as one of the youngest soldiers. In defending himself so vigorously against false allegations, Crowder seeks to overcome the odds stacked against someone of his race and age to continue his ascent up the military ranks. In doing so, he hopes to assure his mother he is the one in control of his future.

As Glatthaar suggests, it is likely that these conflicts and rumours were started because Crowder's white commanding officer found an African American youth in a high military position to be a threat; moreover, it was likely that, in general, "most white soldiers found any black officer disturbing, let alone one so young and proficient as Crowder." For this reason many "whites insulted black officers, protested vigorously to authorities and folks at home, and threw every impediment

in the path of these" black soldiers (Glatthaar 206). As he climbed ranks unusually quickly, Crowder faced resentment of his success in surpassing older men, a success that underscored how youthful achievement could stir jealousy when conventional hierarchies were challenged. In spite of these rumours and harassment, however, Crowder was determined to "stay in the service, as long as there is a straw to hold to," and was adamant about never resigning—and about earning his payment for his service before he did ("Letter, April 18, 1863"). Despite other soldiers' envious efforts to impede the young Black leader, Crowder's words reveal his unwavering dedication to his future and to achieving more than others would allow or expect of his youth and race.

In other letters, Crowder turns from his military future to his family. Particularly, he frequently returns to his love for his mother and his desire to secure a stable life for her, as well as his affection for another mother and daughter pair he had met shortly after joining the Native Guard ("Letter, November 20, 1862"). As he explains, Crowder met the two after they had escaped from slavery, and he quickly grew fond of the daughter, Liser. He sent the two to help provide for his mother in New Orleans while he continued his service ("First letter, undated"). His letters frequently ask his mother to care for Liser, while he continues to earn money for the family, such as in a letter from 23 April 1863, in which Crowder writes:

> I do not intend to resign, nor will I resign unless I am the only black officer in the Service. as long as there is a button hold to I will hold to it. I know the Goverment is bound to pay me if I live and if I fall, you can get it all that is coming to me every coper cent of it, and with this I will put up, for it is my desire some of these days, to able to Genl an army. […]
>
> You will Keep my name in Liser's mind, that she may grow more constant and learn to love me though I am far away. if you do this, and, repeat my affectionate wishes to her, and tell her my greatest desire is when I leave the service to make her my wife, by this you shall be satisfied with my marriage. a heap depends on you in Keeping my name constantly her years [*i.e.,* ears], and she will never cease to think of [me] if you do this. ("Letter, April 23rd, 1863")

This letter provides insight into how Crowder's aspirations within the military support his ambition to provide for his family. As a young black soldier, achieving high rank would be an impressive accomplishment, and Crowder hoped such a position would establish long-term stability and security for his family. Determined to earn enough money from his service to support his mother, marry Liser, and provide for the entire family, Crowder exhibits a deep-rooted commitment to lifting himself and the ones

he cares for out of the poverty and instability that plagued many African Americans in the aftermath of slavery.

One letter from Crowder addressed to Liser was preserved, in which Crowder's emotions reveal a tension between his desire to return home to be with his family and the awareness that in order to provide for them, he must stay at war:

> I would like very much to see you and mother, and you may look for me soon. Sister do not think that brother does not want to come home. brother is very anxious to come, but it hurts brother to come and not have any money to leave with mother. howsoever, brother will come soon. ("Letter, April 18, 1863")

Despite Crowder's resolute commitment to remaining in the military to support his family financially, this letter also conveys a sense of sorrow at being separated from his loved ones for long periods. As a young man shouldering the significant responsibilities of an early maturity necessitated by circumstance, Crowder is acutely aware of the tension between fulfilling his duty to provide for relatives and his longing to be with them.

Crowder's desire to create a life for himself, his mother, and Liser shows his consistent proleptic glances into the future, as he longs for the moments when he can see his love again, embrace his mother again, and secure for himself a more stable future. These letters reveal a forward-thinking youth, envisioning life beyond the challenges of the present, and overcoming limits on what youth could achieve or handle. Though still a teenager in the military, Crowder takes responsibility for loved ones, demonstrating not only his optimism and resilience but also his sense of duty and hope for the future.

All of Crowder's letters—as well as forty-eight pages from the deposition of his mother as she fought to obtain Crowder's military pension—can be found in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in the form of photocopies of originals housed at the National Archives in Washington, DC. These photocopied documents were acquired by Wilson Library at a time when the original documents were thought to have been lost, and although they have since been recovered, their status at Wilson Library raises questions of archival access, acquisition, and preservation. What motivated the preservation of these letters at each stage of their history, and what else may have been lost to history? For groups often underrepresented in archives, even copies of writings may be better than exclusion. The unlikely preservation of Crowder's letters and their photocopies reminds us that we must be more diligent in our efforts to preserve documents from marginalized voices.

Crowder's writing fills a particular gap in archives that often overlook the experiences and personal expression of African American youth during this time in American history. His letters exhibit a youthful optimism and sense of responsibility

that resonate with other works of juvenilia produced during times of upheaval, inviting us to consider his experience alongside those of adolescents like Anne Frank, who wrote so observantly from the margins of armed conflict. They offer an intimate perspective on coming of age during the American Civil War and demonstrate how one ambitious young man pushed back against the racial barriers of his time through his commitment to duty, family, and dreams for his future.

NOTES

[1] The Louisiana Native Guard was the first official black regiment in the Confederate Army, and was formed 2 May 1861, as a regiment designed to defend the state of Louisiana. When Louisiana fell to the Union, most of the original members switched sides to form a new Louisiana Native Guard—also known as the Corps d'Afrique, the first all-black regiments in the Union Army—on 27 September 1862. This second regiment—consisting of soldiers from the Confederate regiment, free men of colour, and formerly enslaved men—was the group that many Afro-Creole writers and community members rallied around during the Civil War. See Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718–1868* (Louisiana State UP, 1997); Clint Bruce and Angel Adams Parham, *Afro-Creole Poetry in French from Louisiana's Radical Civil War-Era Newspapers: a Bilingual Edition* (Historic New Orleans Collection, 2020); Clark, Emily Suzanne Clark, *A Luminous Brotherhood: Afro-Creole Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans* (UNC Press Books, 2018).

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JANE AUSTEN'S YOUTHFUL ART OF ANTICLIMAX

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JANE AUSTEN wrote three volumes of juvenilia, entitled *Volume the First*, *Volume the Second*, and *Volume the Third*. Most scholars agree that they were written between the ages of 13 and 18 (1787–1793). These stories are hilarious and outrageous, particularly considering the understated decorum of her later novels. Indeed, as Juliet McMaster writes, "The adjectives applicable to Austen's juvenilia might include irreverent, rollicking, spontaneous, hyperbolic, violent, indecent, indecorous, outrageous; the very opposite of the familiar descriptors of the canonised work of the mature Jane Austen" (70). Margaret Anne Doody contributes to this generally accepted polarisation when she writes that these youthful writings "point in directions in which their author was later not permitted to go" (103). Yet in many ways, these teenage writings nonetheless proleptically define Austen's taste and mission in her mature works. This essay focuses on one aspect of her style in these teenage writings, as well as its afterlife in her later writings. In considering her use of a*nticlimax,* I will also suggest the ways in which this particular stylistic device or figure of speech shapes her greater mission and strategy as a novelist, suggesting continuity rather than discontinuity between the teenage writer and the mature author. In fact, the use of anticlimax is directly related to the critical disputes over Austen's endings and whether or not she is impatient with conclusions in general.[1]

Anticlimax is a figure of speech that consists in an unusually sudden transition in discourse from a significant idea to a trivial or ludicrous one. The suddenness and contrast are key. Anticlimax entails a surprising deviation from what one was led to expect, and thus exposes literary expectations and literary conventions. Austen's use of it tells us about Austen's assessment of the conventions surrounding the novel and novel reading. It also reveals her assumptions regarding her *readers'* constellation of conventions.

In terms of upsetting readers' conventions and expectations, we might first think of the opening of *Northanger Abbey*, where Austen tells us at great length what her

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heroine will *not* be, assuming that the reader has grander expectations of heroism, virtue, and overall perfection from reading novels by the likes of Ann Radcliffe and Frances Burney. *Northanger Abbey* is her novel dedicated to the art of the commonplace, intended for readers acquainted with novels of romance. It is therefore appropriately *replete with anticlimax*—syntactic, dramatic, and other forms.[2]

A reader of Austen, when hearing the word *anticlimax*, might be even more apt to associate the word with Austen's endings, particularly the way she likes to upset expectations for the romantic endings of her novels. This is most pronounced in *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park*, where she screeches to a halt, but present in all her mature novels. In her juvenilia, the young Austen enjoys upsetting all sorts of conventions, and anticlimax is one of her favorite tools for doing so. One small example of dramatic anticlimax comes from "Jack and Alice." Lady Williams wipes her eyes and tearfully remembers the final words spoken by her "worthy Preceptoress" who was "torn from her arms." What was this final deathbed pronouncement? "Kitty, Good night t'ye." Both the diminutive (Kitty rather than Catherine) and the colloquialism (t'ye) enhance the anticlimax—make the statement even more common.

"The Beautiful Cassandra" opens with an exquisite example of anticlimax, in one of the young Austen's favorite forms: *the list*. Often Austen embeds anticlimax within her individual sentences or creates it through several parallel sentences. The list is a favorite way of startling her readers out of complacence. A humorous arrangement of items might list them descending from grandiosity to absurdity. In Austen's case though, the decline tends to be very sudden. Often she uses parallel phrases and triplets to achieve this disruption—she feigns symmetry and balance for the sake of disruption.

In the dedication of "The Beautiful Cassandra," Austen grows eloquent in praise of her only sister and best friend, Cassandra. After a catch-all compliment, she writes three successive triplets (Table 1), with the anticlimax at the end of the third:

> Madam you are a Phoenix. Your taste is refined, your Sentiments are noble, & your Virtues innumerable. Your Person is lovely, your Figure, elegant, & your Form, magestic. Your manners, are polished, your Conversation is rational & your appearance singular. (*Juvenilia* 53)

She capitalises most of her abstract nouns, adding to the Johnsonian neoclassical balance and philosophical import of the sentence, but the dedication is not nearly as serious as its form and sound suggest.[3] I have used colour-coding to indicate the implied reader response and degree of cognitive dissonance created by Austen's juxtapositions. Embedded in her list is a dramatic decline (yellow) and sudden rhetorical cliff (red) at the end of the sentence. Only by rolling off the cliff do we see the humour, and then probably reread the sentence for new meaning as we recover from our fall.

Triplet 1	Taste	refined
	Sentiments	noble
	Virtues	innumerable
Triplet 2	Person	lovely
	Figure	elegant
	Form	magestic [*sic*]
Triplet 3	Manners	polished
	Conversation	rational
	Appearance	singular

Table 1: Triplets in Austen's dedication to "The Beautifull Cassandra," colour-coded to indicate degree of cognitive dissonance.

One of my favorite twists here is the word *rational*: Austen creates a sly cultural critique by indirectly remarking on the rarity of common sense, probably related to the fashion of extreme sensibility. The word *rational* gives us a clue that the elevated thoughts (flattery) are coming to an end. But the word that fully achieves it is *singular*—not just meaning *rare*. It was more often an insult than a compliment in Austen's time. See the definition in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*: "Having something not common to others. It is commonly used in a sense of disapprobation, whether applied to persons or things." After the exuberant, extreme, hyperbolic compliments, the words *rational* and *singular* come as a surprise or let-down. Of course there are other jokes here, such as illogical repetition—do we *need* separate entries in this catalog for person, figure, form, and appearance? (They are distinctions without a difference.) For the reader, the final word of this forty-word encomium is the lever that overturns it: the anticlimax.

We might afterwards consider how nice it is after all to be a phoenix. And does one really want one's form to be majestic? Austen's rhetorical devices and word choice turn an encomium into a silly mix of positive and negative exuberance. In its overall effect it ridicules not her sister, however, but the custom of writing exaggerated tributes to wealthy patrons and illustrious figures at the beginning of published works of literature. This dedication is an interesting foreshadowing of the actual dedication Austen was later forced to write to the Prince Regent in *Emma*.

The gratifying sensation of puncturing excessive grandiosity is far from new. I am reminded of Montaigne's *Essais*, where, in a famous example of anticlimax, he puts royal pretentions in their place with a coarse turn of phrase:

> "If you walk on stilts, you're still walking on your feet. If you sit on the highest throne in the world, you're still sitting on your ass."
> [*Si, avons nous beau monter sur des échasses, car sur des échasses encore faut-il marcher de nos jambes. Et au plus élevé trône du monde, si ne sommes assis que sur notre cul.*] (book 3, chapter 13 [1580])

The end (in two senses at least) of the sentence dramatically punctures aspirations of grandeur along with any stiff sense of decorum. Austen's art is more understated than this in the mature novels, but pretty comparable in the juvenilia.

So far I have described a few aspects of the dramatic effect of anticlimax, but Austen does not only use it for drama and comedy. As she matures, she increasingly uses it for didactic purposes. Some darker didactic uses also appear in the juvenilia. Near the opening of "Henry and Eliza," Austen uses parallel structures with surprise endings to show a more serious commentary on cruelty:

> As Sir George and Lady Harcourt were superintending the Labour's of their Haymakers, rewarding the industry of some by smiles of approbation, & punishing the idleness of others, by a cudgel, they perceived lying closely concealed beneath a thick foliage of a Haycock, a beautiful little Girl… (27)

In this case the triplet is embedded in a dependent clause (Table 2). The anticlimax is sandwiched between two instances of sweet sentimentality: the sweet innocence of the benign "smiles" and happy farmers, as well as the childish delight and pastoral innocence of the ensuing clause. This context makes this example of anticlimax less humorous than shocking, as it shows the darker edges to Austen's satires of human behaviour and abuses of power.

Activity	**Object**	**Reward/Punishment**
Superintending	Labours	—
Rewarding	Industry	smiles
Punishing	Idleness	cudgel

Table 2. Parallel structures with surprise endings in "Henry and Eliza."

We might wonder, where did Austen encounter anticlimax? Mock heroic and anticlimactic conjunctions of high and low are not new, but the name most associated with them is Alexander Pope. The first use of the term "anticlimax" occurs in Pope's pseudonymous essay "Peri Bathous: On the Art of Sinking in Poetry." This essay appeared in the *Miscellanies* Pope wrote with three Johns: Jonathan Swift, John Gay and John Arbuthnot. It was published in 1728 under the name of Martinus Scriblerus. It is also an essay that Austen had access to at the library in Godmersham (South Wall, Column 2, Shelf 4) in the *Collected Works of Alexander Pope* (Sabor).

The interesting thing in this essay is that Scriblerus (i.e., Pope) uses anticlimax as an example of aesthetic *failure.* In particular, he uses it to show how banal modern English poets fall short in comparison to the ancient Romans. Anticlimax is not only surprise but also *disappointment* in his eyes: a sudden descent from something sublime to something ridiculous or common, in contrast to the previous moment of sublime interest. It is a triviality that upsets expectations of grandeur. Pope uses the word to describe incompetent authors who in striving so hard to be passionate or elevated fall into trivial or banal imagery, phrasing, or ideas.

By contrast, Pope's comical poem "The Rape of the Lock*"* (1712) satirises the lofty language of previous epics by routinely engaging in anticlimax. Consider this example:

> Here thou, great **Anna**, whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea.
> (vol. 1, canto 3, ll. 3–8; original emphasis)

Here, he contrasts the extensive and powerful reign of Queen Anne with her propensity to drink tea just like the rest of her subjects. The strategy of Pope's mock-epic is not to mock the form itself, but to mock his society in its very failure to rise to epic standards, exposing its pettiness by casting it against the grandeur of the traditional epic subjects and the bravery and fortitude of epic heroes. In both the poem and the essay, then, Pope describes a failed attempt at sublimity, a ridiculous failure to sustain it, or, more generally, an anticlimax: "Many Painters who could never hit a Nose or an Eye, have with Felicity copied a Small-Pox, or been admirable at a Toad or a Red-Herring" ("Peri Bathous" vi).

From her earliest writings, we can see Austen purposely toying with reversing expectations. Austen uses anticlimax and its close kin (aposiopesis and omission) to manipulate the responses of her audience. In other words, whether she accomplishes this effect through lists, syntax, or through plot, Austen is a consummate tease. In her short drama called "The Mystery," written in her *Volume the First*, the fifteen- or sixteen-year-old Austen very explicitly and teasingly manipulates readerly anticipation. In the second scene, several characters gather on stage as the dreadful news emerges, and amidst the general lamentation, only one thing is omitted: *the cause.* All the most significant phrases uttered by each character are in "whispers" (*Juvenilia* 72); therefore,

the audience never learns enough to solve the mystery. (The other two scenes are equally unilluminating!) Refining her techniques in her novels, Austen still frequently raises and encourages expectations in the reader only to thwart them, not only at the end of the novels, but also at the end of a scene, or individual sentences—once again revealing not only her function as tease, but also her expert manipulation of readers' (and viewers') responses from an early age.

In addition to "The Beautiful Cassandra" and "Jack and Alice," "Love and Freindship [*sic*]," is a great example of Austen's youthful experimentations with anticlimax. Writing in 1790 at the age of fourteen, Austen frequently uses anticlimactic lists in dialogue to reveal characters' moral and intellectual deficiencies. Laura, for example, sums up Isabel's worldly past in the following sentences:

> Isabel had seen the World. She had passed 2 Years at one of the first Boarding-schools in London; had spent a fortnight in Bath and had supped one night in Southampton. (*Juvenilia* 105)

The anticlimactic ending (Table 3) not only enhances the humour but also reveals Laura's lack of ability to prioritise experiences.[4]

Duration	**Activity**	**Location**
Two years	School	London
Fortnight	Stay ("spent")	Bath
One night	Supper	Southampton

Table 3. Anticlimactic ending of Laura's description of Isabel in "Love and Freindship."

She goes on to quote Isabel's deathbed warning to her, clearly based on her aforementioned experience of "the World" (Table 4):

> Beware my Laura (she would often say) Beware of the insipid Vanities and idle Dissipations of the Metropolis of England; Beware of the unmeaning Luxuries of Bath & of the Stinking fish of Southampton. (*LF* 5)

The repetition of the word "Beware" places equal weight on the elements in her series, and reveals the indelicate mind that cannot distinguish between the relative importance of two years of a fine education and one night's inferior supper: lumping stinking fish with serious moral issues, in other words, again shows Laura's (and Isabel's) humorous inability to discriminate.

Duration	Activity	Location	Danger
Two years	School	London	insipid Vanities and idle Dissipations
Fortnight	Stay ("spent")	Bath	unmeaning Luxuries
One night	Supper	Southampton	Stinking fish

Table 4: Isabel's deathbed warning to Laura in "Love and Freindship."

Sense and Sensibility offers an another instance of this technique, except it emanates from the mouth of the narrator near the very end of the novel: "They [Elinor and Edward] had, in fact, nothing to wish for but the marriage of Colonel Brandon and Marianne, and rather better pasturage for their cows" (Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, 374–75). Here, the anticlimax does not so much indicate mistaken priorities or intellectual weakness on the part of the characters, but rather serves to jostle the reader's sense of involvement in the resolution of the novel, chasten the reader who may be beginning to engage in a rapturously romantic enjoyment of the incipient happy ending (according to the younger Marianne's aesthetic sensibility), and remind the reader of the imperfections and mundane considerations of quotidian existence (see Brodey, "Making Sense").

A final example from the juvenilia may shed light on why the young Austen is attracted to anticlimax. Remember, in relation to plot, anticlimax happens when an event causes disappointment because it is less exciting than what was expected or because it happens immediately after a much more exciting event. "The Beautiful Cassandra" is a "novel in twelve Chapters" (*Juvenilia* 53). Each chapter imitates an aspect of popular novels of adventure that Austen's audiences might have come to expect. The difference is that the teenage Austen's chapters are only one or two sentences long and repeatedly exhibit anticlimax. Austen economically overturns readers' expectations in relation to things like rank, romance, and the heroic quest, as the following outline shows:

> Chapter 1: Rank
> Cassandra was the Daughter and only Daughter of a celebrated Milliner in Bond Street. Her father was of noble Birth, being the near relation of the Duchess of —-'s Butler. (*Juvenilia* 54)

> Chapter 3: Romance
> The first person she met, was the Viscount of ——— a young Man, no less celebrated for his Accomplishments & Virtues, than for his Elegance & Beauty. She curtseyed & walked on. (*Juvenilia* 54)

> Chapter 5: The Heroic Quest
> She next ascended a Hackney Coach & ordered it to Hampstead, where She was no sooner arrived than she ordered the Coachman to turn around & drive her back again. *(Juvenilia* 55)

Cassandra defies expectations of rank, shows no interest in the stereotypical romance (preferring ice cream to men), and is oblivious of typical duties like paying for merchandise and services. She is a refreshingly *free* young girl, a predecessor of both Lady Susan and Elizabeth Bennet. And she is rewarded with a "day well spent."

As "The Beautiful Cassandra" demonstrates, Austen's use of anticlimax is often also *anti-romantic*. She uses it to liberate her characters—and vicariously her reader—from many societal expectations as well as literary conventions. I would also argue that, as she worked throughout her mature career within the confines of the marriage plot, anticlimax was a handy tool for expressing her disdain for defining a woman's life according to romance.

This brings us to one of the key differences between Pope's treatment of anticlimax and Austen's. Both authors excel at using anticlimax and its kindred mock-heroic tone. Pope's mock-heroic treatment in "The Rape of the Lock" underscores the ridiculousness of a society in which values have lost all proportion, and where the trivial is handled with the gravity and solemnity that ought to be accorded only to truly important issues. The society on display in this poem is one that fails to distinguish between things that matter and things that do not. The poem mocks the men it portrays by showing them as unworthy of a form that suited a more heroic culture. Thus the mock-epic resembles the epic in that its central concerns are serious and often moral, but the fact that the approach must now be satirical rather than earnest is symptomatic of how far the culture has (supposedly) fallen.

The "Rape of the Lock" is perhaps the most outstanding example in the English language of the genre of mock-epic. The epic had long been considered one of the most serious of literary forms; in the classical period, the epic treated the lofty subject matter of love and war, and, more recently, via Milton, the intricacies of the Christian faith. Yet Pope describes it as a failure in his own day—the product of modern poets who are attempting to be sublime and fall far short. Even in "The Rape of the Lock," Pope uses mock-epic to criticise his society's frivolity. The difference is that Pope mocks modern poets and modern frivolities. The mock-heroic form and anticlimax are both means of satire and demonstrating shortcomings. Austen's use of these things is also didactic, but inherently liberating.

Austen's use of anticlimax is key to her revision of heroism. Men traditionally own the heroic, grand epic poem with its sublime or martial climax, so why cannot women own anticlimax? Yet this is not a form of compromise. Is it not as heroic in its own way? And might the commonplace be better suited to the novel than its masculinised counterpart? Austen's rhetorical devices celebrate what I like to call "parlour heroism" and the art of the commonplace. Cassandra experiences a "day

well spent," but her success is not the object of mockery. If there is a critique in this story in miniature, it is of us. We readers are expecting more than Austen gives us.

For Pope, anti-climax is a vehicle for revealing failed attempts at writing significant (sublime) works or leading significant lives. Austen instead redefines what is significant. She celebrates the understated but hard-earned victories available to unmarried women in her day. Examples include Elinor Dashwood's "exertions" in the drawing room conversations with the Ferrars, Steele, Jennings, and Middleton families (*Sense and Sensibility* 154, 211); Elizabeth Bennet's efforts to "unite civility and truth in a few short sentences" (*Pride and Prejudice* 239); Fanny Price's courage to tell Sir Thomas that he is mistaken, while he hovers over her in his looming authority (*Mansfield Park* 363); and Anne Elliot's voyages from "commonwealth" to "commonwealth" across the distance of only three miles (*Persuasion* 45–46). In *Sense and Sensibility*, the narrator repeats "exertions" to emphasise the challenge and difficulty of Elinor's parlour heroism (e.g., 8, 150, 407); the narrator in *Pride and Prejudice* describes one of humanity's central challenges; and in *Persuasion*, Anne's heroism metaphorically spans continents.

Even when she uses anticlimax and the mock heroic, Austen celebrates the seemingly insignificant or ordinary (read: the female and domestic) as heroic. Her art of anticlimax shows us the beauty and significance of overlooked things. More than anything else, though, what Austen overturns through anticlimax is an unfairly gendered and grandiose expectation of both life and the novel.

NOTES

[1] This issue of the motivation of her curtailed endings and her reluctance to show proposal and marriage scenes has generated a great deal of debate. I summarise these strands in chapter 1 of *Jane Austen and the Price of Happiness* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2024).

[2] Anticlimax is closely related to mock-heroic, mock-epic, bathos, elision, apophasis, and aposiopesis, for example. All of these techniques involve what Ann Toner calls "referential paradox" or "the dynamic of denying and disclosing" (83).

[3] Toner gives an excellent summary of the historical associations between Austen and Dr. Johnson, calling her use of triplets "Johnsonese" in particular (126–27).

[4] Austen's form of irony here, which reappears in *Pride and Prejudice* and elsewhere, is using parallelism and structure to reveal subjectivity and lack of rational or objective thought.

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THE JUVENILE TRADITION AND THE FICTION FACTORY, PART 1: WIDE-AWAKE YOUNG WRITERS

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IN THIS series of two essays, I consider the relation of the juvenile tradition to cheap, mass-produced fiction in America from the 1860s through the turn of the century.[1] Part One provides a survey of fiction-factory writing during that period by now-unrecognised young writers; my interest lies in recovering what juvenile writers who worked in that industry thought about it. Retrieving their work demonstrates a shift in the juvenile tradition over the nineteenth century. While it had flourished in Britain in the first part of the century by embracing established models of writing as art (stressing inspiration and genius), it shifted in America in the second half of the century to embrace writing as work (demanding productivity and skill).[2] Dime-industry authors—expressly articulating their own youth in this mode, and speaking as young to one another—were at the forefront of nineteenth-century literature's well-known shift into mass market publication.

That many skilled hacks were *teenagers* changes our understandings of how the juvenile tradition evolved—but it also offers a new vantage point on the connection of youth and American literature. Youth was a central value in a new nation looking to the future to declare what America might be. Even before the dime novel, this seemingly indiscerptible yoking of youth and America appeared vested in the medium of cheap print. As I've suggested in a previous essay on "Young America," writers in that 1840s literary movement felt their youth allowed them to recognise the value of the mass production that new technology had underwritten, a value they thought the older generation could not see. The Young America movement hoped just that mass marketing would deliver high literature and established classics cheaply to the masses, but new technologies and distribution actually changed the type of literature available. As print historian Christopher Wilson argues, "the mass literary marketplace which emerged in American life during this era" carried with it "a fundamental reorientation which altered the way America looked at itself" (1). It demonstrated that "the market was more than a medium; it was also a crucible of a new cultural style" (2), and in so doing it recast the nation as technologically innovative, productive, and practically minded.

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Enter the dime novel. "The term dime novel was coined to describe the pocket-sized original novels … of one hundred pages or so published by the New York firm of Beadle and Adams" in 1860 (Blackbeard 221). Cheap and portable, at first sent through the mail at the lower periodical rate, and very quickly seized for "the reading convenience of Civil War soldiers" (221), dime novels were disseminated across the nation and helped to create a mass readership, especially among the young. By the time, a decade or so later, they were reissued as shorter half-dime novels "intended to attract nickel-bearing boys," they became "almost universally read" by youth (222, 223)—both boys *and* girls.[3] So many competitors "joined the ranks of Beadle imitators" that "their wares … literally papered the nation …. Such mass merchandising played a part in the shaping of American literary taste" (Stern xv).

My two essays here are more interested in the *mode* of the fiction factory, the dime industry itself (including story papers, pulps) than in just the dime novel per se. The term "fiction factory" makes clear what stands out about that literature: its mass-produced, fabricated quality, its machine-made output, its notoriously formulaic character. That character instituted what Wilson calls a "new cultural style" and Stern a new "literary taste"—changes which also demanded a new kind of writer.[4] This type of author takes up work "like a wage laborer or industrial hand," as Richard Brodhead states. "Writing in this form paid a standard amount for a standard job of work. Its insistence on pre-established formats narrowly delimited the space for authorial self-expression, in effect making a trademarked generic formula the work's creator" ("American" 27). It was almost as if the books could write themselves; this formulaicness of dime novels *is* their message, Brodhead argues: "Their point as stories is that they replay a formula already fully known" (24). Whether stories of adventure on the frontier or of urban domestic romance, this kind of fiction was so "popular precisely because it followed a formula, because it reflected assumptions held in the culture at large" (Hamilton-Honey, "Turning" 88).

This assembly-line, convention-heavy mode of production was especially consequential to juvenile writers. It established a new American form so popular—its sub-genres so numerous, and dime publishers so many—that their industry "created a heavy demand for writing in these formats…. Dime-novel writing gave work literally to hundreds" (Brodhead, "American" 26), both male and female. Young writers looking to break into print seized the professional opportunities of this market—hundreds of teenagers "rushed to submit" when cheap markets opened mid-century (D. Cohen, preface vii). Sarah Lindey notes that boys as young as age "ten to eighteen" used their readership of dime forms to craft "themselves as writers": through submissions to story paper columns they worked together to define themselves as determined and knowledgeable professionals (73). Sally Mitchell stresses that girls too aimed at "writing trash." In England, Walter Besant (she recounts), "as secretary of the Authors' Society," was "'inundated with packages from the country containing the verse and fiction of young ladies in their teens who are wishful to earn money'" (109).

In America, youth lent itself to the new dime mode because juvenility was represented through a modern rhetoric that understood youth as adept and pragmatic, self-sufficient, with an eye to the future and the main chance—youth understood as "wide-awake." *Wide-awake* meant alert, sharp-witted, noticing and vigilant, but also shrewd and savvy, handy and skillful, enterprising, full of energy, far from naïve—largely, but not only by any means, applied to promising young white, Anglo-Saxon males. My first essay (Part One) stresses the ways that youth were in the very thick of the professional transformation of authorship in American writing in the nineteenth century. But considering young people as producers (not just consumers) of dime industry texts reveals how they remain an important "part of a larger communications circuit that blurred the boundary between literary and sociopolitical activity," as Susan Williams calls it (99). As I will consider in Part Two, the pernicious insularity of dime formulas haunts the dime novel's afterlife in the juvenile tradition of the 1920s. Part Two considers how young writers negotiated the barriers of exceptionalism and intolerance built into the literary nationalism that connected youth to America. Dime plots, seeking "the lowest common denominator," Merle Curti writes, "became stereotyped" in their sense of what American meant ("Dime" 761). "Conveyer[s] of popular attitudes and beliefs," they reflected the "particularly ugly xenophobia and racism" proliferating at this time of "nativist nationalism" (C Smith 10). Nevertheless, some juvenile writers in the dime industry still offered what Christine Bold, a dime-novel scholar recovering work by Indigenous writers and writers of colour, suggests is a "record of marginalized cultures as agents" ("Review" 207)—explored in Part Two, for example, through the work of teenage Latino writer Luis Senarens (I mention him briefly in Part One).

Part Two goes on to discuss the long influence of late nineteenth-century dime writing; its afterlife extended to the reflorescence of the juvenile tradition within mainstream publication in the early twentieth century. The early work of Richard Wright in the 1920s, for instance, was haunted by his dime reading. Dime formulas also shaped the work of other young writers in the twenties less known today: the nineteen-year-old African American writer Harry Liscomb or the white teenagers David Putnam and Horace Wade. This afterlife of the dime novel exemplifies a paradox constitutive for all writers, but for emerging young writers in particular, and especially for young writers of colour—how to negotiate signifying systems that offer authorial identity but also encode preconceptions and stereotypes. Ultimately, both Parts One and Two argue that youth is subject and object of a modality—cheap fiction produced in the dime industry by wide-awake young hacks: capable, hard-nosed, self-sufficient and self-aware—a modality that not only mesmerises; it alters historical understanding. Young writers as well as readers were constituted by, even as they sought to shape, an America imagined through such dime industry fantasies.

Young America

IN "YOUNG America," I argued that the long roots of an American discourse connecting youth and nation became manifest in the literary "Young America" movement, which was part of what Brodhead calls the "general reorganization of the industry of literary production in the 1840s" ("American" 23), a watershed moment for print, as he defines it.[5] Literary Young America was founded by young Americans proclaiming their own youth—Evert Duyckinck was not quite twenty when he brought together a circle in New York of other literary teenagers, who would go on to write for Duyckinck's later periodicals. This group issued an express call to young writers to forge America's literature: they naively believed that "the nation's youth seemed to promise unprecedented possibilities for authentic literary expression untrammeled by convention" (L. Cohen, *Fabrication* 27). Though this shared movement of serious-minded young intellectuals (which advocated the mass delivery of serious literature) barely lasted out the forties, their promotion of America as quintessentially young continued to justify a connection of youth and literature even when that association took on other forms widely different from literary weightiness (as it would do in the cheap dime novel).

Young America capitalised on a connection between youth and Americanness already residual in literary nationalism, however. A decade before Duyckinck and his friends came together, the Harvard professor and editor of the *North American Review* Edward Everett had given a Phi Beta Kappa address in 1824 to the young men at Harvard (it propelled him to fame), in which he both anticipated Young America's call for a national literature and issued the caution to wait—"the peculiarity of our condition and institutions will be reflected in some peculiarity of our literature; but what that shall be it is as yet too early to say" (E. Everett 489–91). Young America considered the *North American Review* to be everything it hoped its youth would replace—"torpid and respectable," Cornelius Mathews called it, "that calm old adder slumbering upon the lawn of Harvard" (Review 197).[6] Yet Young America singled out Everett (old enough by the 1840s to be its members' father) by remaking his identity to validate theirs, recasting him as a prodigy. "Mr. Everett may be ranked among our instances of an early exhibition of talent," Jones wrote. For him, the Everett of the Phi Beta Kappa speech was worthy of note because he exemplified the juvenile genius "peculiar to American literature thus far: the early age at which our authors have attained the maturity of their powers—generally, in their first works" (W. Jones, "Edward" 223, 221).

In that speech, Everett cautioned that American literature must remain unanticipated in both content *and* form: "There is little doubt that the instrument of communication itself will receive great improvements. … where great interests are at stake, great concerns rapidly succeeding each other[;] … there language and expression will become intense, and the old processes of communication must put on a vigor and a directness, adapted to the aspect of the times" (E. Everett 491–92). Everett may have simply been prophesying that the English language would be

revitalised in America, but his vatic reference to "instruments" and "processes" of communication left open the possibility of more: that forward-looking America might also invent new technologies, new devices, new modes. The dime novel, as modern scholars define it, provides exactly that new technology of publication—Thomas Roberts, for instance, argues that Beadle and Adams innovated not new content but a new kind of "delivery system" for writing: "The dime novel manufacturing and distribution network … requires that it be approached as a communications system" (406).

In 1864, forty years after his father's speech, Everett's son William reviewed "Beadle's Dime Books"—an early notice of them that was a surprising move for that stuffy cultural guardian, that old adder *The North American Review*. He might have chosen to notice dime novels because he saw in them the new American writing delivered through such an emergent instrument of communication as his father had foretold.[7] According to Kermit Vanderbilt, anyway, the *Review*'s editor Charles Eliot Norton had commissioned William Everett's essay because Norton did see the possibilities of this new delivery system, but (like Young America before him) wished that dime novel publishers would confine themselves to cheap editions of Shakespeare and other "great English authors" (Vanderbilt 91). As one of the first reviewers of Beadle, however, what William Everett made clear was that he was prompted to read this form by youth—or, rather, *a* youth: he was alerted to the phenomenon, he tells us, by a young boy he knew, who was convalescing, longing for a dime novel to pass the time. After reading over several himself to see why they speak to the young, what stands out to Everett is the form's enormous reach: Messrs. Beadle & Co, he writes, "are wielding an instrument of immense power in education and civilization." He raises, but leaves unsettled, the question of what such a popularly-disseminated instrument can do and what its power means: "Why these works are popular," he writes, "is a problem quite as much for the moralist and the student of national character as for the critic" (W. Everett 308).

But even before Everett had asked this question, Beadle and Adams had adopted the rhetoric of Young American literary nationalism proleptically to provide the answer. They advertised the first novel in their Dime Series, their 1860 reprint of Ann S. Stephens's frontier novel *Malaeska: the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, as "American in all its features" ("Publishers" v).[8] Retrospective early twentieth-century critics echoed this promotion: "The aim of the original dime novel was to give, in cheap and wholesome form, a picture of American wild life" (Harvey 42). They were "popular because the era they depict was picturesque, violent, and authentically America" (A. Jones 37).

Though these books are as "intensely nationalistic" (Murphy 42) as Young America might wish, however, their formulaicness offered the very cheap and "degraded" product that Young America had hoped to deflect. Spurning James Fenimore Cooper as a false American antecedent, Duyckinck had warned: "The Romance of history is an exhausted vein of writing." He felt "the production of a

work of this kind was soon made … mechanical" because "romances were written to order: the annals of all nations were ransacked to furnish a plot and story; no country was spared; not even our own forest land, which must give up its buried Indians…. History and fiction were both degraded" (Duyckinck, "Mr" 90).[9] Though Young America tendentiously had hoped to cordon off national literature from formula, dime novels collapsed the two, raising the uncomfortable prospect that fantasies of the nation might be equally as bankrupt as the popular form that recycled them.

How young writers would negotiate the various degradations done to American writing through the treatment of "its buried Indians" is the subject of my second essay (Part Two of this series). Suffice it to say here that the form caught on because, as one Tennessee newspaper at the time called it, the dime novel was "the most convenient, as well as the cheapest volume of reading matter yet issued" ("Green" 3). After a century of second-hand British fiction (not yet protected by international copyright) had been pillaged for cheap reading, the reading public was ready to hail the convenient new dime novel as "perhaps the first uniquely American form of literature" (Gardner 283). That timely combination of ease and economy was enough to make it "a journalistic revolution that had a lasting impact upon all aspects of American cultural life" (D. Reynolds 171).

More specifically, this revolution foregrounded the centrality of youth to America. William Everett recognised that its huge popular sway rested on the kind of distinctively American subjects transfigured by youth that Young America had touted. A later *North America Review* essay saw the dime novel's brand of wild and violent Americana as "an influential outlet for adolescent restlessness"—a restlessness both of youth itself and also of the young country's national "undercurrents which were to merge into America's 'manifest destiny'" (A. Jones 39).[10] Manifest destiny becomes the allegedly natural trajectory of an adolescent nation outgrowing its childhood. Youth functions as the cover story for the particular "national stories" the dime novel tells (Wingo 126)—stories about appropriation, imperialism, violence, and racism[11]—casting them as (supposedly) normal development.

Wide-Awake

If American national character seemed epitomised by youth, its distinction lay in being "wide awake" about it—in the sense through which Young American writer W. A. Jones understood Americans as "confessedly an acute and shrewd race"; in quoting Jones, Lara Cohen underscores "Americans' reputation for hard-nosed rationality, or what Neil Harris has termed their 'operational aesthetic'" (*Fabrication* 44).[12] Harris defines this aesthetic as one "that concentrated on the methods of operation, on aspects of mechanical organization and construction, on horsepower, gears, pulleys and safety valves" (407). "Wide awake" could be applied to all youth, including girls, as *Missions Made Fascinating for Wide-awake Girls* demonstrated, defining youth

particularly as "the 'teen' period" (Durfee i)."Wide awake" applied to young women particularly when the middle-class values of economic ascent it encoded were translated to moral terms of virtue and merit. The resolutely middle-class and evangelical 1875–93 children's magazine *Wide Awake* adopted those moral terms in expressly catering to girls as well as boys, "children in their teens (the right kind of children)" ("Story" 195). It associated the term "Wide Awake" with "the right kind of ambition" (194).[13] "Let the young people have a name all to themselves," the magazine declared (196), "something up to the times" (195); and it claimed that "to-day WIDE AWAKE is known throughout the land as just another name for the best—the very best that can be done for the young people of America by the brightest workers … the best workers alike in literature and art" (196).[14] Yet note that even this orthodox publication assumed that regarding the writer as a literary *worker* constituted part of reflecting the times.

Though *Wide Awake* magazine set itself up as "right" by directly opposing cheap blood-and-thunder stories—it was four-square against "the vices of reading trash" (Chlebek 458)—the term "wide awake" was also current in the dime-industry's lexicon. At the same time as *Wide Awake*'s founding (in the 1870s), the dime-publishing juggernaut Tousey issued a series it called *Wide-Awake Library* (Fig. 1). *Joe's Luck, or Always Wide Awake* was a later (1909) Horatio Alger novel that similarly exemplified this way of being in the world as proper to youth. Indeed, Alger's rags-to-riches formula, catapulting youth to money and fame, grew out of and summed up the mode of adroit and clever modern juvenility that had already defined dime stories for a generation.[15] Such operational aesthetics characterised the publication industry's own public profile. One business manual of 1892 writes of "a bright, wide-awake writer … always searching for new and improved methods" (Duryea 225n). Another observes: ""The youth,' says a wide-awake writer, 'who comes to the city to make his way, and is not afraid of doing his best, whether paid for it or not, is not long out of work'" (Marden 74).

His Last Cent recounts fantasies of the publication industry as much as tells a story about its hero; "nearly fifteen years old" (Shackelford 2) when his father dies, Joe parleys his last cent into wealth and prosperity through selling newspapers—turning one cent into two, and two into four, until he becomes a millionaire. Because he also makes headlines by fighting off criminals, "his popularity aided him in selling his papers," so that his earning power skyrockets (10). He appreciates that earning power, turning down a respectable job in an office because "I can do better than that selling papers" (10). After Joe recounts his sensational exploits (he is kidnapped and almost killed but stabs the criminal instead) to the merchant whose watch he has recovered, "Mr. Mallory was amazed. He had read of such things, but this was the first time in his life that he had realized the truth of their existence" (8). Not only do readers follow Joe's sensational escapades directly but they also watch him narrate them repeatedly to appreciative audiences like this, who "made him tell over again the story of his adventures, which he did in a boyish kind of way" (10).

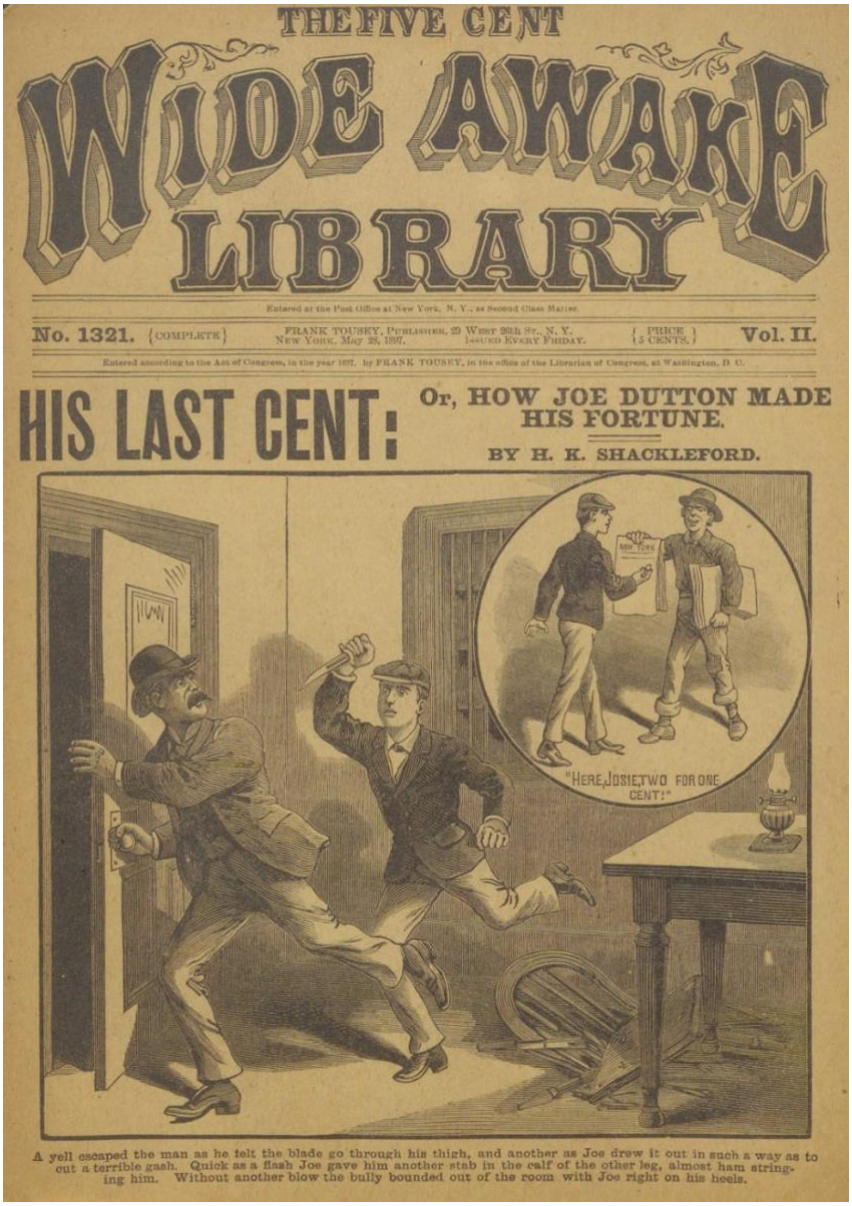

Figure 1. Cover of the Wide Awake Library, *vol. 2, no. 1321, H. K. Shackelford, "His Last Cent; or, How Joe Dutton Made His Fortune," Frank Tousey, May 28, 1897. Nickels and Dimes: From the Collections of Johannsen and LeBlanc, Rare Books and Special Collections, Northern Illinois University.*

His Last Cent shows how the formula of the dime novel points to young people as producers as well as consumers of stories (although there is no record of Shackelford publishing as a teenager himself). Christine Bold argues that such self-referentiality was a hallmark of dime novels—justifying their own kind of amazing accounts as "truth" but also paralleling their narrative practices through their heroes'

("Voice" 30). Like Joe (who vows just to "pitch in and work like a beaver for myself" [2]), shrewd and handy youth went to work with a will as professionals in the fiction factory of the dime industry. In this "transformation in the meaning of authorship" (Streeby, "Dime" 586), the "Man of Letters" became "a Man of Business" (Williams Dean Howells's words, qtd. in Wilson 114). More than that, for these young writers the very mode of production became their writing identity—or, as the writer Robert Carlton Brown declared: "*I* was a fiction factory" (Brown, "Appendix" 159, emphasis added).[16] Shackelford may not have written as a youngster, but Bob Brown decidedly did. Brown started out writing dime fiction as a teen, and bragged that he "averaged two hundred dollars a month" before he was twenty (154)—after which career, he went on to be an experimental modernist.

Such self-referentiality also underscored the imbrication of dime novels with what youth meant as its very mode. William Everett's early review of dime novels did not condemn their moral influence on youth—just the opposite. It took a generation (during which the connection between youth and the dime novel came to seem more absolute) before adults like the moral crusader Anthony Comstock began to censure them for pernicious influence.[17] The growing moral condemnation of dime novels had nothing to do with their content, Paul Erickson argues, because their content never changed. The very "same novels were reprinted again and again" over the years (Erickson 249)—what varied was their mode of representation and, in particular, their more explicit targeting of young readers. They were repackaged over time, ultimately into different, eye-catching "colored covers as raw and bright as a new fire engine" that "stunned, then charmed a new generation of boys" (Holbrook E5), as Fig. 2 literalises.

This repackaging provided the mechanism by which the dime novels' mode of publication specifically addressed and called together its particular social grouping, conveying "a very clear social message of who, socially, they understood themselves to be 'for'" (Brodhead, *Cultures* 5, 6)—it concretely hailed youth as youth. "Format and distribution—what books look like and how readers get them," Erickson agrees, "assist in both constructing and instructing an audience" (249). As their covers grew more vivid and arresting, their price dropped to a nickel, and (rather than being delivered to the home through the mail) they started being sold at newsstands outside home control—that is, their "cultural signals" changed (250): they became cheap enough and available enough for independent young consumers.[18]

They also became a signal of what independent and canny young people could *produce*. Young writers' declarations of success in the dime industry confirm how dime novels provide the implicit structural and generic hailing for youthful authorship that make them a signifier of youth, their insignia, a trademark. Elizabeth Traube, discussing American youth culture of the time, states that youth adopted "outrageously expressive practices," visual markers to indicate youthful agency and camaraderie (such as working girls wearing flamboyant clothes, clothes that rejected home values, outside the home) (Traube 140). Similarly, the dime novel instantiated

youth through the visual signal of its arresting paratext—their covers forcefully depicted young people's agency—the cover of *His Last Cent* (Fig. 1), for instance, shows Joe Dutton not just about to go to work but directly on the attack. Such signals came to be even more eye-catching when in later years covers became garishly coloured.

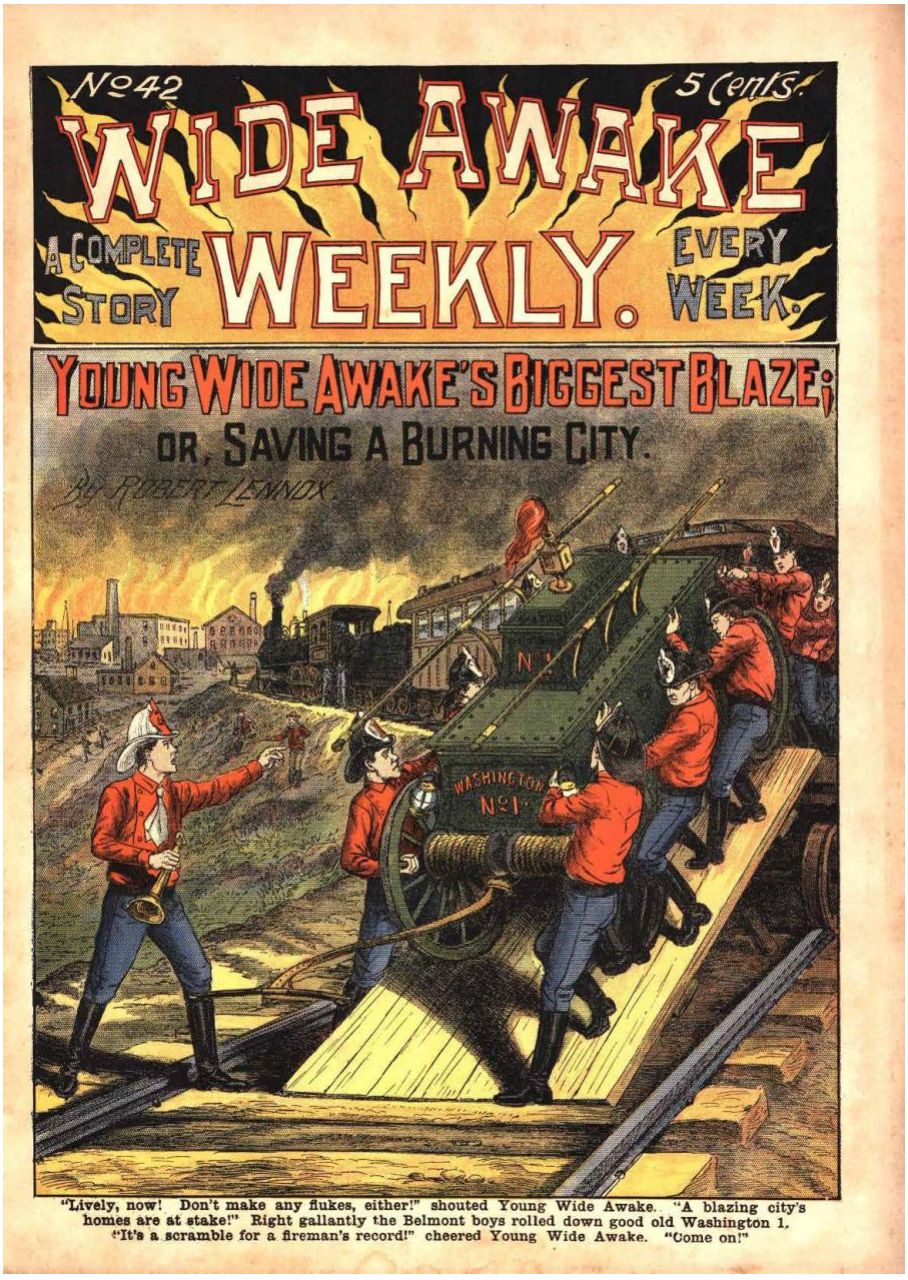

Figure 2. Cover of Wide Awake Weekly *no. 37 [not no. 42, as shown in the image], Feb. 1, 1907, "Young Wide Awake's Biggest Blaze; or, Saving a Burning City," by Robert Lennox. University of South Florida.*[19]

Though (starting in the 1860s) youth had always read this fiction, by the 1870s and 80s the form came to *mean* youth. Figure 2 (depicting the "juvenile fire company … composed of boys from fifteen to eighteen") demonstrates this shift by showing how the Wide Awake series had become personified in its young hero, Dick Halstead: "Owing to his always being alert, often scenting duty even before the call came, he was known as Young Wide Awake" (Lennox 1). Yet the status of individual names is always in question in the fiction factory. Unlike Shackelford, "Robert Lennox" could have well been a young writer since (as the dime novel collector and expert Edward T. LeBlanc writes) "this name was a stock name used by the publisher indiscriminately. Any of the Tousey staff writers could have written under this name" (LeBlanc 87n1); Tousey employed various writers who started publishing in their teens, as the early careers of Bob Brown and Luis Senarens attest. Young Wide Awake's series makes clear that he is simply one in a brigade of young men working together, all of whom get their own stories, just as Bob Brown recounts the young staff writers at Tousey sharing the labour of spinning out copy under whatever house name required their work. Despite the anonymity of their conditions of employment, therefore, rather than dismiss their own writing as hackwork, as dispossessed literary labour, wide-awake young writers see the dime industry as constitutive, calling them into being. As hack writers, young dime novelists came to embody a mode of being, in Northrop Frye's sense of ontology: what made possible anything that they "can do or could have done" (Frye 33). As an effect of that shift, their new kind of writing identity "challenged the very binaries of 'literary' and 'popular,' or 'high' and 'low' art" (S. Williams 90–91) to redefine what American literature could be.

Young Writers

YOUTH, of course, was not actually the same experience for people of different circumstances. "Youth" is such a powerful signifier, Robert Latham writes, precisely because it pretends that it is the same for everyone: it seems to "objectify a common structure of feeling" (13)—but "the perceived homogeneity and mutuality of interests across divides of difference—regional, racial, and so forth—that seemed to link young people as 'youth' was an entirely artificial construction" (15). In offering this constructed sense of youth itself, of youth understood *as* construction, connected through performance and mode—a way of being, a kind of action (wide-awake young men, like Joe and Dick, always on the move)—the dime industry consolidated youth culture, reciprocally and tautologically calling youth together, working from an appearance of youth's homogeneity. The mobility that dime novels depicted seemed to promise an imagined sameness that—especially in terms of equal opportunity—could never pan out. (Part Two explores how African American writers such as Harry Liscomb or Richard Wright use dime formulas ultimately to depict the bankruptness of such proffered equal access.)

Oded Heilbronner writes that "a major sign of the existence of a unique youth or teenage culture was the marketing of goods directed towards them by well-informed manufacturers" (578). What got marketed in part was the new practical and modern understanding of the capacity of the young, a fantasy of youth that young consumers were happy to indulge and purchase in the pages of their popular reading. Such modernity stresses the new rhetoric of wide-awake youth—its art of seeming up-to-date, which went hand-in-hand with the depictions on the dime-novel covers of their heroes and heroines, arrested in dramatic action—youth as dynamic, equal to urgent and pressing circumstances, always full speed ahead. Sociologist Mark Swiencicki charts how the story papers and dime novels helped young men and women assert this youthful and ostentatious modern fashion "to express their new personas" (786; see also 790). Historian Kathy Peiss maintains that adolescents at this time included the cheap amusements they read as part of a new "mode of cultural expression" (66). This mode was one way that the dime industry, in Bold's words, "offered readers accommodation to the speed, change, and growth of modern America" ("Popular" 291). The poet William Logan calls this a "vision of a nation filled with forward-looking go-and-get-'em types" (299) when writing about the sometime fiction-factory writer John Townsend Trowbridge. Trowbridge (first published at age sixteen) summed up this sentiment in his memoir when he wrote: "Here was life, and I was young" (89).[20]

The dime industry relied on an endless stream of young writers, both male and female, who were like Trowbridge feeling their youth. Daniel Cohen calculates there were "many dozens, if not hundreds" of teenagers who began writing for this demand ("Making" 99).[21] The cheap labour of young authors was indeed an important social determinant that helped to float the rise of popular mass media. How many young people were trying their hand at writing is revealed by the 1863 *Beadle's Dime Letter Writer*, one of the other dime publications beyond blood-and-thunder fiction, such as songbooks and cookbooks, which rounded out Beadle's list. In a collection of boilerplate correspondence, its chapter on "Writing for the Press: Offering Contributions to an Editor" clearly mentors *young* writers (those in danger of having "no respectable value" because "harvested too soon"): "Never tell how young you are, for, rest assured, an editor wants no other evidence of your years than the contribution itself." Self-serving in its advice—"It is presumption in young and nameless authors to expect pay" (*Beadle's* 64)—this advice manual makes clear the kind of contributions Beadle had frequently seen.

Considering a group of young male correspondents submitting to the 1870s Frank Tousey story-paper *The Boys of New York*, Sara Lindey outlines how the notion of writing as mass-produced, "mechanical and reproducible" (Lindey 83), encouraged these adolescents' ambition to authorship.[22] Writing lay in formulas they could imitate, techniques they could master, a profession they could learn. Their very fantasy of imitation, repetition, and replication was thematised within the plots about the boy inventors in the Frank Reade Jr. dime-industry stories carried in *Boys of New*

York and reprinted in the *Wide Awake Library* of half-dime novels. Frank Reade Jr.'s robot-like inventions—a steam man, an electric man—replace each other in a chain of rapid obsolescence, as he too had replaced his father (once a teen in an earlier series of Edisonades).[23] The Frank Reade Jr. books were written by "Noname" [24]—Luis Senarens, who started turning out dime novels as a teenager. Nathaniel Williams calls the Noname stories "a celebration of self-determination" ("Frank" 281). "Their aesthetics were those of the boys' subculture of" the time (Bleiler, "Luis" 666). Through his Noname pseudonym, Senarens gave a shout-out to other anonymous young dime-novel hacks who staked the possibilities of their writing selves on the conditions of modern production.[25] In writing about the 1870s Roberts Brothers' No Name Series, Lara Cohen argues that the No-name pseudonym was meta-discursive about contemporary possibilities of authorship; the anonymity that for many authors (youth, women) had seemed a condition of their "participation in public literary culture, is transformed by enterprising publishers into a clever marketing device" ("Perils" 211).

These unheralded American teenagers were no-names who aspired to money and success—to a job writing for the popular genres in a new market in which they might get paid. An article treating young Upton's Sinclair's early dime-novel writing calls the dime novel a mode of production running at a "steam engine rate" ("Upton" H6).[26] Young writers understood this mode of constant production expressly in terms of themselves. Freeman Putney, Jr.[27]—who described himself as "a writer only of magazine stories, who has not yet risen to the height of dime novel composition (which I understand is a somewhat difficult art, granted by the muse only to a favored few)"—tied it explicitly to the "present generation" (8). Dime novels, he informs the *New York Times,* are important as the expression of the moment and the youth who inhabit it. He singles out "the quick action of the dime novel, the impatience of circumlocution, the tendency to 'something doing' in every paragraph" (8). Such action is evident in the novels of the *Wide-Awake Library* and *Wide-Awake Weekly* (See Figs. 1 and 2): in fact, "quick as a flash"—a phrase in the cover caption shown in Figure 1—is a characteristic dime construction (Shackelford uses it multiple times throughout Joe Dutton's story). Young Wide Awake's juvenile crew also "dash" and "dart" throughout his story, dispatching fires with great speed, an alacrity which causes even the skeptical veteran fire chief to marvel that even though the crew is young, "you've sure got a genius for fighting fire at railroad speed" (13). Putney argues that the dime novels' recounting of such rapid feats "may have had a stronger influence than we realise in forming the character of the present generation of Americans. We are certainly displaying all of these tendencies in our National life and work" (8). He associates such modern action with youth—the dime novels he read "as a boy," the young people shaped by them—reinforcing youth as an explanatory category for the press-and-go of the contemporary moment, underscoring youth's modern capacities to meet that moment.

Connections between youth's proficiency and a modern technological world which required their know-how were not, of course, new. What changed was the packaging, the ways new technologies could blazon their interconnection so patently—starting in the 1830s and '40s with the steam-driven rotary press all the way to chromolithography at the end of the century.[28] By the time of the late-century dime-novel industry, with its mass-produced, replicating stories and its lurid covers, up-to-the-minute youth was a commodity that could be advertised (and advertised to) with the full armament of these tools: this new mechanical mode—"written almost automatically"—was also "painted in colours so strong and vivid there is no mistake about it," as one dime writer put it (Burgess, "Confessions" 530). Its actual "colored covers" were "gaudy and joyous to the young," another wrote (Pearson 54).[29] "The boy's romance of today is literal, technical, tight, efficient, and matter-of-fact. There is less blood in it, and more machinery," stated a third (Edgar 60)—consider, for instance, Young Wide Awake's fire engine which its young crew loves and names "good old Washington 1," featured so centrally throughout his story (Fig. 2). The dime novel provided the conditions of self-determination in allowing young writers to write, but also affirmed juvenile writing as an inherent function of such machineries of production, not outside or above them.

"Inspiration is only another name for industry," the dime writer William Wallace Cook said (qtd. in Scott 8). The shift in the identity of writer from inspired genius to professional practitioner went hand-in-hand with a shifting sense of literary writing as a learnable craft, open to any youth with a how-to manual. Paul Collins begins his study of the emergence of creative writing instruction in America by considering the more elite bastions for the training of youth, such as college literary societies, that provide evidence of young people's literary aspirations. Undergraduate literary magazines were records of their achievement, and widely circulated across the nation (Collins 66).[30] He quickly moves from such elite circles, however, to "author publication guides" directed to a wider audience (5) as a more popularly available support for young people's writing, marking the shift from ivory tower to the marketplace.[31] The publication of writing advice was one outcome of a rhetoric of youth like Young America's that had urged young writers to take up the pen: as John Stafford states, "Young America's awareness of the democratization that had overtaken literature also led to the prescriptive attitude: many of the new young writers who were flooding the market with volumes of their 'effusions' undoubtedly needed advice" (*Literary* 43).

Recent scholarship has begun to recover those young writers of the fiction factory through popular story papers and dime novels. Daniel Cohen has collected and analyzed the work of the young writer Mary Gibson (pen name Winifred Woodfern)—already, when she was a teenager in the 1850s, "a story-paper 'star' with a diverse mass audience of tens of thousands of readers" ("Winnie" 376), whose tales continued to appear "as dime novels throughout the 1880s, 1890s, and even into the early 1900s" ("Making" 135). For Cohen, the work of these young authors challenges

the standard division "of antebellum American popular literature into … woman-identified 'domestic' or 'sentimental' fiction … and male-oriented 'adventure' or 'sensation' fiction" (369).[32] He finds these young writers' blithe disregard of established boundaries a direct function of their youth: starting out and eager to publish, "aspiring young authors of the period" were not restricted to "a single genre or literary voice but … responded quickly and opportunistically to the shifting needs of editors" (380). Later dime-novelist Brown gloried in such versatility: "We didn't know under what classification our writing fell," he wrote. "We didn't care. We just wrote it. To order" ("Swell" 480). "It is no small gift, this successful writing of dime novels," an article looking back at the dime novel concludes. "More people are born to tight rope walking than to dime novel writing," which "requires something more than mere knack," but "if you haven't the knack it is hopeless to try it, as they will carry you out raving after a week of effort" (Chapman D5).

Young dime-industry writers, reveling in that knack and something more, felt they could write because other young people had. Cohen describes the interactive "poetry columns of mid-nineteenth-century story papers"—in which young women writers exchanged their writing back and forth—as "sedate, slow-paced precursors to modern on-line social networking sites, in which aspiring young authors could … communicate with each other, and craft public personae" ("Winnie" 383): he sees "the columns of antebellum story papers … still haunted" by the records of such "dreams … yet to be exhumed" (408). Young male writers also wrote back and forth to each other in these columns, Lindey notes, carving out authorial identities through their mutual appreciation and notice (73 and *passim*).

A first-prize story in *Boys of New York*—the "Juvenile" periodical Lindey singles out as demonstrating that such youth magazines addressed young writers as well as young readers—asserts that its schoolboy author's inspiration came from this kind of juvenile tradition (young writers calling up other young writers in their wake): that is, he was prompted to write because of "stories by boy contributors" which were "to me the most attractive portion" of the Juveniles he read (Fig. 3). Edgar Rexford Hoadley (1859–1925) would have been about sixteen when this story was published. Active in amateur journalism (the guild of young boy printers turning out their own newspapers and journals, one departure point for this kind of wide-awake and production-minded juvenile tradition), the teen-aged Hoadley had by 1876 also set himself up as a dime writer. As Thomas Harrison recounts in his 1883 *Career and Reminiscences of an Amateur Journalist*: "At this time, sensational literature was in high favor with the amateur press," and, Hoadley, along with other young pressmen, "were popular writers of this kind of fiction … contributing prolifically to the press," by churning out the familiar blood-and-thunder soft-backed "pamphlets from their pens" (141).[33]

FIRST PRIZE.

My First Story.

BY HARRY HAZLE, JR., (E. R. HOADLEY.) 303 BY JOHN STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

I REMEMBER very distinctly the circumstances which attended my first effort in the literary line—the first time I had occasion to experience the feelings of a disappointed young author.

Perhaps the relation of it may warn many aspiring youths who are longing, yet fearing, to make their first effort, and take their first step to "immortal fame."

I was a school boy, as I am now, at the time, and, like most boys of my age, was in the habit of writing long compositions on various topics. Occasionally—in perfect confidence I impart it to you, dear reader—I would scribble a few lines which I called poetry, but in truth they were anything else but that.

It chanced that a "Juvenile" of a popular character was published in a neighboring city, of which a large number of copies were sent weekly to the city I resided in. These contained every week, one or two stories by "boy contributors," who had been fortunate enough to make no mistakes in grammar or punctuation.

This was to me the most attractive portion of the paper.

Figure 3. Excerpt from Harry Hazle, Jr. [E.R. Hoadley]. "My First Story." The Boys of New York: A paper for young Americans*, vol. 1, no. 15, 29 November. 1875. Digital Library@Villanova University.*

"Youth … was its own publicity" (Hentea 174), thematised in the stories it told, and also very publicly foregrounded as an advertising draw by publishers from at least the mid-century on.[34] In *Pierre*—Melville's spoof of juvenile writing in Young America—the author describes how bills "every month covered the walls of the city with gigantic announcements" of Pierre's name (339). The actual young author Ellen Louise Chandler remembers "the huge posters with which they placarded the walls, headed, 'Read this book and see what a girl of eighteen can do'" (qtd. in D. Cohen, "Making" 123).[35] Firms promoted youth because it raised their editors' professional standing, attesting to their sharpness and acumen as men who recognised talent. Nathaniel Parker Willis (brother of the widely popular author Fanny Fern), editor of the *Home Journal*, in the late 1840s had already advertised the youth of sixteen-year-old Metta Fuller, who went on to become a famous dime novelist: "Willis had a passion for thus picking up young authors who gave signs of genius, and … pushing them before the public," in that way giving his magazine "a distinctive reputation for the employment of brilliant literary talent" while paying nothing for it (Sikes 5).[36] In the 1890s, William Dean Howells still suggested that "the value of the young author" reflected on "the editor's pride, self-interest, and sense of editorial infallibility" ("Editor's" 418).

But young writers also touted their youth themselves to attest to their own professional savvy and success. The celebrated Fuller sisters—both recognised newspaper poets before they were fourteen, who "wrote at a time when precocity was regarded as an asset" (Sussex 144)—made the most of that initial precocity when they ultimately moved into the dime novel.[37] Later dime author William Wallace Cook—who "started writing when only a child" (Scott 5)—made sure in his 1912 memoir *The Fiction Factory* that readers knew that he wrote his first work "at the age of 12" ([Cook] 16) and that, at age fourteen, he won an "Award of Merit" "for excellence in literary composition" (17) from *Frank Leslie's Boys' and Girls' Weekly*. The young Louisa May Alcott had won a prize from Leslie's too, and still as an adult published her pseudonymous thrillers in his publications.

Later dime novelist Gilbert Patten, who published his first stories at age fifteen, also advertised his youth: "I was trying to write stories even before I knew how to spell some of the simplest words" (6).[38] Latham argues that, by the first part of the twentieth century, advertising "not only began explicitly to target youth markets but also mobilized an ideology of youth as the organizing principle and ultimate goal of mass consumption" (13). In his account, youth became the rationale for the entire system of marketing, which sold the fantasy of youth to those who were past it. The planned obsolescence of the cheap paper books in dime-industry serial publication—each book leading to a new and better one, as its heroes never stop and rarely age or, if they do, are immediately replaced by a younger version[39]—all exemplify this kind of degenerescent, self-engendering economy.

Such self-creations held open a fantasy of parthenogenesis, even as their paradoxes seemed to conform to a truism of modern teenage identity—the overwhelming impulse to be just like everyone else understood as the way to distinguish one's own peculiar selfhood. The fantasy of youth playing out in these pages, Emily Hamilton-Honey argues, "gave young adults agency in a way that conventional literature for young people did not." She quotes Deirdre Johnson, who thought the syndicate series which grew out of the dime novel were popular with young readers because in them "adolescents make their own crucial decisions" and seem the "shapers of their fate" (Hamilton-Honey, *Guardians* 773). The image of youth promulgated by the culture industry "projected adolescents as active participants in the social order … capable of consequential behaviour" (Hendrick 253). Alcott, in *Eight Cousins* (1876), had already marked such stories as fantasies: "'Now, I put it to you, boys,'" says the mother, objecting to what her sons like in such books, "'is it natural for lads from fifteen to eighteen to command ships, defeat pirates, outwit smugglers, and so cover themselves with glory?'" (198). While this youthful swagger might be wishful, Alcott nonetheless proffered it gleefully in her own blood-and-thunder writing, as much in the narrator's attitude as the characters.'[40] In an 1889 editorial in *The Writer*, dime novelist Patten suggests young workers in the trade should adopt this "kind of never-say-die pluck that every young writer needs" (qtd. by R. Anderson 14). In 1895, *Munsey's Magazine* touted its own virtues by

claiming it drew on this new "Generation of Writers": "we are surrounding ourselves with the clever young men that mean growth, that mean a wide awake, up to date, magazine" ("Publisher's Desk" 438).

It mattered to the juvenile tradition, and to American letters, that a wide-awake generation had grown up on dime novels—because that generation was also now turning them out. "More than one dime-novel publishing firm has made a fortune at the business of providing literature for Young America," an essay in *The Writer* could report in 1903 ("Writing Sensational" 119). By the beginning of the twentieth century, the dime industry seemed typified by "kids just in from the prairies with their heavy office typewriters in cardboard boxes unloaded on wooden tables in shabby Manhattan furnished rooms" (Blackbeard 234).[41] Citing Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, and Sinclair Lewis (all of whom wrote blood-and-thunder fiction before they were twenty-one), one essay claims that the story-paper and dime-novel publishing house Street and Smith "has probably printed the early work of more successful writers than any other American firm" (A. Jones 39).[42]

"Dime and pulp writers were always hacks, in Walter Benjamin's terms" (Bold claims), because Benjamin defines *hack* as a writer "'who refuses as a matter of principal to improve the production apparatus'" ("Voice" 29). For young writers in the fiction factory, the term "hack" was indeed a matter of principal, a badge of membership and achievement.[43] Rather than protest against the conditions of labour that produce them, Bold argues such writers take their creation of authorial identity *as* their story. When Lindey argues that young writers welcomed the fiction factory as a technology to develop the writing self (77), she underscores their self-regard as well as self-creation.[44] Bob Brown, who worked under Senarens at Tousey, recalls the "wide-awake eagerness" with which his group of young writers took New York by storm ("Swell" 482). "Give us a stint to do for our day's bread, even 5000 words for $15, and we were up and at it," Brown wrote. "We made our typewriters dance" (481). Dime-novel hacks "develop a story-telling voice" about "the process of composition," which "often constitutes the most interesting story told in the dime novels" (Bold, "Voice" 30)—an understanding of their writing as meta-discursive and self-reflexive as Senarens's pseudonym.[45]

Part One of these essays has recovered those meta-reflections—it has argued that dime fiction represented not just a particular format but a distinct and modern literary mode of production with a new understanding of authorial identity: "inspiration forms a small part of the dime novel writer's stock in trade," *The Writer* declares. "Nearly all his stories are written to order" ("Writing Sensational" 119). This was also an understanding of the modern identity that youth felt awaited them. In his 1899 commencement speech about dime novels to his fellow young graduates of Harvard, the twenty-one-year-old Robert Peabody Bellows stressed that the dime writer knows that "no suspicion of genius can be conceived to lurk" in "his machine made weekly output" (Bellows 98). Yet such supposedly degraded works sold like crazy—already "as early as '64 five millions of dime books had been circulated," he

estimated (97), though "we are told that the dime novel, after flourishing for some forty years, is dying" (97).

Part Two explores how the dime novel actually persisted long past that death. Historians of popular fiction, such as Madeline Stern, note that publishers "continued to flood the country through the turn of the century with dime and nickel libraries" long after their "peak had passed" (xvi)—a persistence registered nowhere better than in the continuing evolution of the juvenile tradition in the early twentieth century. Part Two explores the dime industry's continued afterlife in American literature by considering how the formulas of dime writing that persisted made patent the hierarchies of power within the new nation's authorising assumptions.

To take up their authorial identities, young writers in the juvenile tradition of the early twentieth century, negotiating its inherited dime formulas, had to work within attitudes about race and imperialism that were part of American exceptionalism. For young writers restricted to the margins by the social order, using such popular formulas to break into print meant negotiating social prescriptions at odds with their very selfhoods. Part Two considers the paradoxes of such writing for young writers such as Senarens—or young African American writers such as Wright or Liscomb.

NOTES

[1] Part II will be published in *JJS* vol. 6, no. 2.

[2] Yet young writers had always been sharp about the demands of the market and adapted to them deftly. Though commercialised, standardised writing might seem very different from the works of the earlier young Romantics in Britain, who seem to address posterity, not the marketplace, juvenile writing had always been opportunistic, as the figure of Thomas Chatterton demonstrates. As much as he symbolised inspired genius, he also mattered to the early juvenile tradition in his status as a forger: a canny adept, who knew better than his elders and could easily put one over on them, a streetwise author who turned newspapers to his own account and died, by the age of seventeen, a Grub Street hack writing for his bread. For a discussion of Chatterton as representative of the "anxious shortcomings of the creative underclasses of the mid-eighteenth century Georgian literary economy" whose work "survives as a record of the more common, unremembered failures of Grub Street journalism and the tragic poets in the period," see Sumner 163.

[3] Dime novels span a myriad of genres, and many of the critics I cite take, as shorthand for their discussion, its early frontier novels to represent the form—these appealed most, though not exclusively, to young men. The first dime novel, Ann S. Stephens's 1860 frontier story *Malaeska: the Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, however, was actually also a sentimental love story that exemplifies the form's cross appeal. The early male collectors and the critics first discussing this form (such as Blackbeard, Bleiler, Brodhead, Curti, Denning, Saxton, Springhall) were mostly interested in dime fiction as boys' stories of adventure or mystery. Yet a committed group of feminist critics (including Bold, Carr, D. Cohen, Cummins, Hamilton-Honey, Masteller, Peterson, Papashvily, Sussex) have

been working to recover the women who wrote, and read, popular dime novels of sentimental domestic fiction, as well as of adventure and mystery. For a statement of the importance of this recovery work, see Carr's *American Women Dime Novels Project*. The topic of young women writers in the fiction factory deserves extended treatment, especially because Laura Jean Libbey's immensely popular love stories explicitly recount the travails of girl factory workers. Libbey's books are important not only because they appealed in record numbers to actual girl workers (as Denning and Peterson argue) but because (I think) they directly reflect on the fiction factory in which Libbey herself laboured from an early age. Throughout her career, she also consistently and explicitly foregrounded that initial precocity and reflected on her youth. While I discuss here teenage female writers such as the Fuller sisters, Mary Gibson, as well as Libbey, the discussion of the publication apparatus enabling young women writers deserves the continued comprehensive discussion begun by critics like Mitchell.

[4] By *mode* I mean Northrop Frye's category of how stories reflect their worlds to make meaning, the framework that shapes what is even imaginable, the formulas and conventions that make up its fabric. Mode establishes ontology; it sets the unspoken assumptions of the possible, what anyone in that world "can do or could have done" (Frye 33). When explaining Frye's understanding of "mode," Robert Denham quotes Foulke and Smith's *Anatomy of Literature*: "'the most effective use we can make of the concept of mode is to think of it as representing those general historical presuppositions that modify or shape narrative patterns to the tastes of a particular period'" (22).

[5] See my "Young America: Dime Novels and Juvenile Authorship."

[6] This essay is quoted in Miller (190), and ascribed by him and by Emerson's biographer Ralph Rusk, among others, to Mathews (Rusk, *Life* 323).

[7] Beadle and Adams did not see the review as endorsement. Vanderbilt writes they "angrily replied at once to this criticism of their dime novels and authors" (91).

[8] Johannsen describes the early Beadle novels as burning with a "spirit of patriotism" (1: 4). "The dime novel is an American institution," writes one twentieth-century notice (Currier 8). "They are authentic Americana," agrees another (Lutes 153), and a peculiarly American institution" writes a third (Q. Reynolds 72). The whole world "looks upon them as interesting items in the development of American culture. They are typically American…. The situations could not happen anywhere else," asserts another (Shirk 39).

More recent critics may have overlooked the youth of dime novel writers because they see the form reflecting such ingrained and disturbing nationalist ideology and worry that any connection to youth, could sanitise or idealise it. For instance, Alexander Saxton—in his *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic* (1990)—and Shelley Streeby have amply demonstrated that actual social divisions underly the pictures of American life encoded in dime fantasies. Streeby thinks "youth" deflects attention away from these iniquitous hierarchies, including away from gender ("Cheap" 242) so that, after half-dime novels became specifically marketed to boys, publishers disguised the gender of women who had been writing dime novels all along, or dropped women as writers altogether. But see Springhall, who regards age categories as still vital to any critique of "particular social and cultural circumstances" (*Youth, Empire* 19). He argues that ignoring youth repeats the kind of "age discrimination" which enforces "certain tastes, values, and hierarchies" so that "aesthetic distinctions became a symbolic weapon" ("Disreputable" 122).

[9] In making this critique, Duyckinck might even have had a book like Stephens's *Malaeska* expressly in mind. *Malaeska* had already appeared in the periodical press twice (in 1836 and 1839) before Duyckinck's 1841 essay and before Beadle repurposed it to launch the new form.

[10] Horsman argues that the idea of Manifest Destiny "revealed the extent to which" political Young America "envisioned a world dominated by the white American race" (285).

[11] Wingo argues that such stories "reveal dominant American attitudes toward Indigenous peoples" (122). Henry Nash Smith is blunter: "Orville Victor said that when rival publishers entered the field the Beadle writers had to kill a few more Indians. But it went further than that…. Killing a few more Indians meant, in practice, exaggerating violence and bloodshed for their own sakes, to the point of an overt sadism" (101). Early readers recognised this inequity. The muckraking journalist Herbert Asbury wrote of dime novels: "My grandfather, himself a forty-niner, and with several years' experience among the Indians, was always violently opposed to the novels that purported to describe life among" them, which he called "packed with lies" and "unfair to the Indian" (qtd. in Pearson 237). In 1904, dime novelist George Jenks also thought that they "were designed to sell to the multitude, whose views and understanding of life were largely rudimentary…. The winning—or stealing—of the West from the aborigines was at this point being pursued with relentless ferocity" (108).

[12] Harris describes in detail how P. T. Barnum exploited this aesthetic. For a discussion of Barnum's close connection to the literature of the dime industry, see Kellum. Though largely male, wide-awakeness (in terms of know-how and business acumen) actually extended to women too—as suggested by the 1893 *How: A Practical Business Guide for American Women of All Conditions and Ages, who Want to Make Money but Do Not Know How*, which suggests that women setting up cooking businesses, for instance, should turn to women's clubs and enlist "an organization of wide-awake women," to help them succeed (Taylor 34). When it came to labour in the publication industry, one of the things that especially marked Libbey, for instance, was that she was a savvy business person who knew how to run her own affairs; see Cummins.

[13] This meant aspiration for "higher attainment"—"something that shall be elevating … that shall help to make the boys and girls of America broad-minded, pure-hearted, and thoroughly wide awake," "good but not goody-goody" ("Story" 193, 194, 195).

[14] The 1882 children's periodical *Forward*, similarly claimed "to be helpful, to be elevating, to lead heavenward, whilst also sprightly and wide awake to topics of present interest to young men and young women" (Overby 155). Chlebek argues that *Wide Awake*'s founder, Daniel Lothrop, was a "self-starting businessperson who put moral ideals into successful practice," and who "emphatically stressed the concept of selfhood for youth" (454). The young adult writer Katherine Ellis Barrett (who had been editor of *Wide Awake* before it was taken over by its rival *St. Nicholas*) wrote a series expressly about the "Wide Awake girls," friends who met through letters to the magazine.

[15] In the 1860s, the "Wide-Awakes" were also a male youth organisation associated with Lincoln. Supposedly representing young people's up-to-the minute political attitudes, it became quasi-vigilante in its adherence to them. Grinspan notes of the movement that "more than one-quarter would have been below voting age in the last presidential election," and calls them "a grand generational stirring" that heralded "the political rise of a generation. The Wide Awakes' youth … identifies the essence of the movement" (367, 365-66). He quotes William Seward "the old men are folding their arms and going to sleep, and the young men throughout the land are Wide Awake" (366).

[16] Wide-awake youth were also understood as reflecting their contemporary technological moment. By 1916, the activity book, *Something to do,—Boys!: A Book for Wide-Awake Boys*, took this reflection enough for granted that it could open with a picture it knew would entrance its audience: a description of "a great piece of machinery," of which "each lever, shaft, and axle moves with perfect accuracy and power." It asks its young readers, "Did you ever think that your mind is a machine that loves work?" (Foster 7).

[17] Streeby suggests that a focus on young readers mistakenly plays into the contemporary "moral panic among … middle-class reformers" such as Anthony Comstock (Streeby, "Dime" 592), who attacked dime fiction as a kind of smoke-and-mirrors distraction from real social problems. Its modern editor points out that *Traps for the Young*—the title of Comstock's 1883 screed against "Evil Reading"—"contained no hint of the economic catastrophes, social unrest, and industrial and agrarian protests of the period" (Bremner xiv). Instead, Comstock blames Satan himself, who (he claims) put cheap stories on newsstands for a price that children could afford in order to trap them in wickedness and crime. "Our youth are in danger; mentally and morally they are cursed by a literature that is a disgrace to the nineteenth century. The spirit of evil environs them" (Comstock 6). Springhall asserts that similar "misrepresentation" in England "preferred to target a convenient cultural scapegoat, rather than lend credence to more fundamental social and economic explanations of delinquency" (*Youth, Popular* 327).

[18] I am indebted to Lesley Peterson for pointing out how news-delivery becomes thematised in and central to dime novels, both in *His Last Cent* and—see Part 2—in the very style of *The Prince of Washington Square*, which mimics newspaper headlines, but turns them wild. Just as Brown is both hack writer and Modernist, such blurring of boundaries continues the breakdown of categories between types of discourse.

[19] This issue is cataloged by the University of South Florida as no. 37. The issue's cover, however, as well as "Nickels and Dimes", the Johannsen and LeBlanc collections in the Special Collections of Northern Illinois University, designate it as no. 42.

[20] William Logan calls Trowbridge a "literary odd-job man, who turns his hand to whatever a hand can be turned"—"having started with hack work in New York, with hack work he continued" (Logan 286).

[21] Daniel Cohen lists Ellen Louise Chandler (b.1835), Louis E. Cutter (b. 1835), Clara Augusta Jones (b. 1835 or 1839), and Virginia F. Townsend (b. 1836) ("Making" 100), as well as Hattie Burleigh. He refers to Helen Papashvily's *All the Happy Endings*: she lists sixteen-year-old Mary Hawes writing in *Godey*'s as Miss Marianne Harland; another Mary Hawes, age fifteen, writing as Mrs. Mary J. Homes; Augusta Jane Evans who wrote *Inez, a Tale of the Alamo* at seventeen; and Isabella MacDonald, who published her first story in a local paper at ten (Papashvily 61).

[22] There were similar venues for girls—in 1875, Beadle and Company issued a nickel weekly they titled *Girls of Today*.

[23] Lindey suggests that Reade's robots and inventors endlessly replacing each other allegorise writing in the dime-publishing system: "engaging in the mass market hinges on replication: the replication of imitative writing in order to secure the successful printing of a replicated self" (81).

[24] The first "Steam Man" novel was by Edward Ellis, Beadle's American Novel No. 45 (August 1868), *The Steam Man of the Prairies*. Harry Enton wrote four knockoffs for Tousey under the pseudonym of "Noname," beginning with *The Steam Man of the Plains* (28 February 1876). See Evans about how these machine men replicate racism. Bleiler states that Senarens inherited the pseudonym with the series in February of 1879

(starting with *Frank Reade Jr and His Steam Wonder*), when Senarens would not yet have turned fourteen (Bleiler, "Senarens").

[25] Randolph Cox writes of Senarens that "he may have used" Noname "more than any other writer" (237). Tousey continued to advertise Noname into the twentieth-century, identifying upcoming reprints as "by your old favorite Noname" ("Happy Days Catalog Advertisement" 8). Senarens inherited the name around the time of the No Name series of serious novels, written anonymously for Roberts Bros. publishers in 1876–87—Alcott published *A Modern Mephistopheles* in it.

[26] This article is subtitled "Men Who Are Doing Things," underscoring Frye's sense of mode as what could be done.

[27] Putney had started writing young, publishing verse while an undergraduate at Brown (see Boone 85). He was identified in *The Writer: A Monthly Magazine for Literary Workers* as "a New York businessman" with savvy and success enough to publish in higher-paying venues like *Harper's Weekly* ("Writers" 122) by the time he wrote to the *Times* in defense of dime novels, which he found "much and long maligned"(Putney 8).

[28] Jones argued in 1844 that these new media were a period of youth for the nation: "Our middle age epoch may not come for ten centuries; meanwhile we need to read much and rapidly" ("Horne's" 61–62). For identification of Jones as author, see Stafford, "William" 290, 296.

[29] Almost every early critic remarks on the visual paratext shaping the dime-novel industry—"the blood-curdling frontispieces" that "hark at you from the nearest news-stand" (Burgess, "Half Dime" para 3). After describing in depth the stationer's display presenting such pictures, Bishop writes of dime-novel art: "It haunts one. It is a nightmare" (Bishop 387). But Maidment describes a different reaction by the teenage artist Richard Doyle; who drew "a celebratory image" of these displays, instead of "the dangerous and disruptive potential of the print shop window" that adults saw. The youth's picture of the display window instead "has become a peaceable space" of happy schoolboys and pleasure in images (Maidment 141).

[30] Collins notes that the seniors publishing *The Harvard Lyceum* in 1810—where they state that "the subject of American literature will receive our particular attention"—provide a direct "nod towards the incipient 'Young America' movement" (65).

[31] Collins singles out an 1846 a manual by George P. Quackenbos, who "can trace his beginnings to the early dime-novel market" (71). Quackenbos entered Columbia at age thirteen, and published—at age twenty—*St. Jean's Evening: or, Crime and Mystery*—Paul Collins calls it "a dime novel" (in his preface, Quackenbos writes: "The Author is aware that it is no recommendation to a work to be published in the *shilling* form" [5]). Quackenbos's experience writing the "'cheap publication' of poison" (72) made his prompts for young writers reminiscent of dime plots: write about meeting banditti in Italy, he tells them, or having adventures in California (73). Henry James was actually one of Quackenbos's young pupils in New York. Collins also points to Jesse Haney, who "launched Boy's Own dime novels" (57) and published a successful writing *Guide to Authorship* (1867). Experience in "dime novels" (59) means Haney "trusts the marketplace and starkly rejects any Romantic notion of defiant genius" in his advice to young writers (60). For a similar treatment of writing considered a profession by guidebooks in Britain, addressed to young writers trying to learn their trade, see Vlitos 2021.

[32] See also Sussex's discussion of how, in "cheap exciting literature" (151), women writers traversed these boundaries in their crime and detective fiction, which focus on thrilling

mystery instead of romance—see especially her discussion of the importance of the Fuller sisters to the dime novel form (142–63).

[33] For Hoadley's participation in the 1876 National Amateur Press Association convention, see Hall. For a discussion of boy printers, see L. Cohen, "Emancipation." Harrison credits the young Hoadley as having written the 1876 *Double Dream*, but the teenaged Hoadley was much more prolific than this. According to the edition of *The Double Dream*—a dime-novel-length, fifteen-page pamphlet published by a fellow amateur—available at the American Antiquarian Society, Hoadley was also the "Author of 'Rowland Randall,' 'Benjamin Boggs,' 'Doing and daring,' 'Lionel Lancer,' 'Cheerful Charley,' 'Rover Ralph'" (Hoadley, title page). The Edward T. LeBlanc Memorial Dime Novel Bibliography at Northern Illinois University also credits him with the 1890 *Cruise of the Bianca*, published by the professional firm of Frank F. Lovell (https://dimenovels.org/Item/20044/Show).

[34] Cohen focuses on Mary Gibson because her identity as a young writer was well-known to her audience; she made it part of her distinctive trademark through the "uninhibited, even reckless, ways in which she thrust" her own youthful persona explicitly into her writing ("Winnie" 372). Such stories of self-realisation were neatly thematised within the plots of dime novels, as Edmond Pearson (who himself started writing young for *The Harvard Advocate*) notes in his history of the form—for instance, in one tale "of a crossing sweeper in New York, who rises to fame as an author" (Pearson 29). Pearson thinks Mary Agnes Fleming is the author of this book: *Madge Wylde* (1861). Carr writes of Fleming that: "She began her writing career early, around the age of seventeen" (Carr para 1), but Johannsen finds it "impossible" that Fleming could have written *Madge Wylde* because she would have had to have started publishing around age twelve (2: 272). Lee states, however, that Fleming "began writing at the early age of thirteen" (Lee para 2). Johannsen suggests the author was possibly A. J. H. Duganne (Johannsen 2: 273)—but he too had published newspaper poems and a novel before he was twenty. Hentea points to a twentieth-century novel by a young novelist in this meta-discursive vein, Allen Clarke Maple's 1930 *Best Seller: the Story of a Young Man Who Came to New York to Write a Novel about a Young Man Who Came to New York to Write a Novel* (175).

[35] Her *This, That, and the Other* was published in 1854 by Phillips, Sampson, and Co. in Boston (who carried the likes of Shakespeare and Scott). Chandler's book was reviewed widely, selling thousands, and passing into multiple editions. Her youth was consistently noted in reviews. See Whiting 29–37. Hentea points out that this practice continued into the twentieth century, and not only in North America. When Mary Panter-Downes serialised a novel in London's *Daily Mail* in 1923 at age sixteen, "the sides of London buses featured prominent advertisements emphasizing the author's age" (174).

[36] Indeed, Sikes writes (just as *Beadle's Letter Writer* had advised), these "young and promising persons … proud of seeing themselves in print, charged Mr. Willis no money for their effusions, and received their pay in the most titillating doses of flattery" (5) Sikes's essay was reprinted in the New York *Saturday Journal*, published by Beadle, so this discussion of Victor (the wife of Beadle's editor) was a marketing strategy—they stressed how young she began writing as a way to promote her. According to Johannsen, the dime novelist Sikes had himself written for some time before his work was collected at age twenty-two (2: 256).

[37] Victor was first advertised as a prodigy in the 40s, as "the gifted young Poet Girl … the 'Singing Sybil' of the *Home Journal*—and her no less talented sister Frances A. Fuller…. Few, if any female writers id [sic] our country have, in so early years, given such brilliant

promise, or won, while yet in bright girlhood, such a wide meed of praise" (Osceola 5). Another piece placed her firmly within the canonical juvenile tradition: "It was at the early age of nine years that her taste for poetry began to betray the genius within. Moore, Scott, Byron, and Wordsworth then became her best, familiar friends…. At *thirteen* she commenced the career of authorship, which she has followed up to the present time. It is said of Bryant that, at fourteen, he made his mark in literature, and Dr. Griswold is fain to regard it as something remarkably precocious. At thirteen our subject wrote a story which yet occasionally 'goes the round,' from its beauty and rich glow of fancy…. At fifteen, she wrote her first lengthy work…. At seventeen Metta V. became a favorite of the *Home Journal*"; it quotes Willis, who discerns "more unquestionable marks of true genius" in Metta and her sister Frances than any others he has published though "both still in the earliest youth" and yet "undoubtedly destined to occupy a very distinguished and permanent place among the native authors of this land." ("Metta" 86). Victor's 1885 obituaries all mentioned how young she started; the *New York Times* pointed out her "publications ranged from the yellow covers of Beadle's dime novels to the jealously guarded pages of *Harper's Magazine*" ("Death" 8). After her death, mentions of her early literary prowess continued to circulate (See "Literary" 6).

[38] Gardner writes, "At age fifteen, he quickly drafted two pieces and sent them off to Beadle's. He received six dollars and was taken on as a regular contributor" (290).

[39] "As part of an ongoing series, each dime novel had to say to the browser at the newsstand in its day, 'Buy me'" (V. Anderson 120). "The title and the 'cover situation' are what usually sell the book" (Burgess, "Confessions" 530). "A single offensive or inept cover may drive a magazine from the newsstands and hinder the sale of other pulps in the same category for months to come" (A. Jones 37).

[40] Hamilton-Honey suggests Alcott's hypocrisy was strategic because "librarians' endorsement of Alcott probably resulted, at least in part, from her denouncement of story papers, dime novels, and 'bad' series within the pages of her novels" (*Guardians* 777).

[41] Of the original authors for Beadle's first dime novel series, however, many had published as juveniles: Joseph Badger, Mary Dennison, A. J. H. Duganne, Edward Ellis, William R. Eyster, Thomas Harbaugh, Clara Augusta Jones, Ann E. Porter, Scott R. Sherwood, Frances Fuller Victor, and Metta Victor were all known to have published before they turned twenty. Other dime writers—Charlotte Brame, Ned Buntline, Francis W. Doughty, Harry Enton, Harlan P. Halsey, Laura Jean Libbey, George Lippard, Gilbert Patten, and Luis Senarens—had started that young too. Obituaries provided a vehicle for the circulation of juvenile prowess—Victor's, Senarens's, and Libbey's told and retold their early authorship in notices across the nation, as if the death of any one-time prodigy encouraged the succession of the next.

[42] Their writer Laura Jean Libbey became a brand in herself: her name came to mean the kind of factory-based dime-novel romance she wrote. She trademarked that name for writing and film and considered merchandising Laura Jean Libbey candy and toiletries as well (Masteller 206). Though Libbey did not actually publish until at least her mid-twenties (as Cummins recently uncovered), scholars still mistakenly refer to her as a juvenile writer because she deliberately and relentlessly constructed herself that way in every interview or notice—advancing her birth date by a good six years (Cummins 242) and repeatedly circulating stories about her discovery, supposedly at age fourteen, by the premier story paper editor, Bonner of the *Ledger* (see Rousseau 12). By so systematically

manufacturing the persona of juvenile authorship for herself, Libby demonstrated its salability as well as its cultural consequence.

[43] In his essay on "Literary Property" in Duyckinck's *Arcturus*, G. A. Sackett explicitly asserts that demands for proper pay for work horrify the public: "What exclamations of *hack* literary drudge!" greet any writer who raises the subject (111–12). Yet he argues that the writer *is* a "literary laborer" (110) bringing his productions—products of "days and nights of unceasing toil" (111)—to the marketplace.

[44] Rather than the status-based humiliation that Brodhead imagines Alcott felt, D. Cohen argues that young women writers—like Alcott moving between domestic and blood-and-thunder fiction—were "more optimistic" than their contemporary elite-aspiring male authors, believing "that literary achievement can be combined with commercial success" ("Making" 120). They felt encouraged to write, not threatened, by the women bestsellers whom Hawthorne considered a damnable mob.

[45] Bold quotes dime author Ned Buntline's self-reflexive chapter titles: "'The Plot Drawing to a Knot,' … 'A General Clearing Up of Mystery'" and his direct address to readers about "market-place conditions": "'I hope you feel as if you have got your money's worth'" (33). I suggested earlier that in a similar vein *His Last Cent* symbolically represents its characters as storytellers of sensational deeds.

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Intimations of Maturity in Jane Austen's Youthful Writings

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Most of us who enjoy Jane Austen's juvenilia came to them by way of her classic six novels.[1] And, if we are admirers of the novels, chances are that we have been delighted by this extended knowledge of her work, but also somewhat astonished, not to say gob-smacked, by the huge *difference* between the novels, with all their delicate nuance, their restraint and subtlety, and the juvenilia, with their outrageous characterization, unashamed greed, and over-the-top action. Can they be by the same author? In what follows I explore—as others such as Q. D. Leavis have done before me—some of the ways in which the rowdy items of Austen's juvenilia provide intimations of more serious things to come. I pay close attention to the visual elements in these early writings, since my initial project was to illustrate one of them. In what follows here, then, I write as a literary critic and an illustrator too.

Love and courtship are prominent in the juvenilia as in the novels. We have relished the delicate touch on love matters in the novels: for instance, Anne Elliot's careful assessment of the degrees of attraction between the eager Musgrove girls, Henrietta and Louisa, and the dashing Captain Wentworth, the man Anne still loves:

> She could not but think … that Captain Wentworth was not in love with either. They were more in love with him; yet there it was not love. It was a little fever of admiration; but it may, probably must, end in love with some. (*P* 82)[2]

Note about figures: All the graphic illustrations in this essay are by Juliet McMaster, © Juvenilia Press and used with kind permission. Those from *The Beautifull Cassandra* (first published by Sono Nis Press in 1996, and subsequently in a revised edition by the Juvenilia Press in 2022), are scanned from the originals still in the artist's possession. The others are from the Juvenilia Press editions of Jane Austen's *The Three Sister*s (2004) and *Lesley Castle* (1998). All three volumes are acknowledged in the Works Cited.

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We note the fine discrimination between "love" and the "little fever of admiration." And how careful is that wording, "She could not but think …." It conveys Anne's hesitance to conclude what she knows she *wants* to be the case.

By way of contrast, consider the courtship tactics of Lucy in *Jack & Alice*, when she falls in love with the irresistible Charles Adams: "I could not resist his attractions," she confesses. "Ah! who can?" moans Alice.

> "I was determined to make a bold push, & therefore wrote to him a very kind letter, offering him with great tenderness my hand & heart. To this I received an angry and peremptory refusal, but thinking it might be rather the effect of his modesty than any thing else, I pressed him again on the subject."

And when he will not answer, Lucy chooses "to take, Silence for Consent" (*Jack & Alice* 16–17).[3]

Not much fine discrimination here! Can this wild unbridled narrative, with its bold switch of active courtship from the man to the woman, really be by Jane Austen? And yet the comic effect is echoed in proposal scenes in the novels (not surprisingly, in the proposals that are refused): in Mr. Collins's assumption that Elizabeth's refusal of his proposal must be simply delaying tactics; later in Mr. Elton's interpreting Emma's "interesting silence" as an admission of his attachment (*Emma* 131).

For all the astonishing differences between the novels and the juvenilia, however, attentive readers can recognize in both the mature novels and the juvenilia the unmistakable Jane Austen DNA. So here I want to pursue the continuities rather than the contrasts between the youthful writings and the novels.

I start with a recurring motif: what I call the Bombshell Signature. In *Henry & Eliza*, of *Volume the First*, the heroine, cast out by her adoptive parents, is taken as a companion by the powerful "Dutchess of F." "She was a widow," we hear, "& had only one Daughter who was on the point of marriage with a young man of considerable fortune" (*Henry & Eliza* 1). Remind you of anyone?—Lady Catherine, perhaps?[4] Eliza promptly elopes with the young man of fortune, leaving a note: "MADAM / We are married & gone. HENRY AND ELIZA CECIL" (6).

The fury of the "Dutchess" on receipt of this note knows no bounds. She sends after them "300 armed Men, with orders not to return without their Bodies, dead or alive" (6). And once she lays hands on Eliza, she throws her into her own private "snug little Newgate" (8). Surely this vengeance of the aristocrat deprived of her daughter's affianced husband is echoed in Lady Catherine's nighttime journey in a chaise and four, to bully Elizabeth into refusing Darcy. Given the more realistic mode of the novel, the threats are commensurate: "You will be censured, slighted, and despised, by every one connected with him." Elizabeth's cool response matches Eliza's resourceful escape out of the Dutchess's Newgate: "These are heavy

misfortunes. … But the wife of Mr. Darcy … could upon the whole, have no cause to repine" (*Pride and Prejudice* 355).

Elizabeth and Darcy do not actually leave a note to tell Lady Catherine that "We are married and gone," with the bombshell signatures; but the plot parallels with the early *Henry & Eliza* suggest that when Austen writes "Mr. Darcy's letter to Lady Catherine [on his engagement], was in a different style" (383), she may have amused herself with a fleeting memory of her early tale. In the novel it is Lydia who would like to do the bombshell thing: her family will learn of her marriage, she chortles, "when I write to them, and sign my name Lydia Wickham. What a good joke that will be!" (291). The same joke has come a long way.

In *Lesley Castle* comes another bombshell. Charlotte Lutterell asks her London friend Susan about rumours that Sir George Lesley may be considering marriage. She receives the reply,

> "Sir George is certainly married; I was myself present at the Ceremony, which you will not be surprised at, when I subscribe myself your
>
> Affectionate Susan Lesley." (*Lesley Castle* 11)

This is the letter that Charlotte forwards to Sir George's daughter!

Lucy Steele, of *Sense and Sensibility*, does not quite pull off the bombshell signature; but she does her malicious best. She tells the Dashwood servant Thomas that she has "changed her name," and gives her compliments and those of "Mr Ferrars" to the Dashwoods. Clearly she has instructed her newly-wed husband, *Robert* Ferrars, to lean back in the carriage, so that Elinor will assume she has married *Edward*. The joke from the juvenilia continues to serve Austen well.

There is no bombshell signature in *The Beautifull Cassandra*. (Perhaps the literacy of Cassandra the milliner's daughter and the bonnet she elopes with is in question.) But when Cassandra the milliner's daughter takes off with the bonnet "bespoke by the Countess," it is again clearly one in the eye for the possessive aristocrat.

To move from the signature motif to other tempting links between the juvenilia and the novels: I cannot resist lingering a while with *The Beautifull Cassandra*, since my project in turning that engaging story by a twelve-year-old into a picture book for children, with the characters turned into small animals *à la* Beatrix Potter, was what first got me hooked on juvenilia; and not just Jane Austen's, but youthful writings in general. Of that enterprise was born the Juvenilia Press.

I had long been a closet illustrator, making picture books for and with my kids. But when I fell in love with *The Beautifull Cassandra*, at that JASNA AGM organized by Jack Grey in 1987, I made the decision to go professional if I could. (See "Founding the Juvenilia Press," elsewhere in this issue.) I took time off all other entertainments to make my pictures. Then I went to market with them.

Figures 1 and 2. Cassandra Falling in Love; Ice Creams*, from* The Beautifull Cassandra.

When you illustrate a work you have to think very hard about it; and I found that in working on this story by a twelve-year-old, I had *learned* things about her development. If it works for me, why not for students? I got them "editing" youthful works by Austen, and Brontë, and Alcott, and other budding authors. And the Juvenilia Press was born.

Figure 3. Rides to Hampstead, *from* The Beautifull Cassandra.

Austen's resourceful and beautifull Cassandra, as we know, is hardly a model daughter. She goes on a day's binge of conspicuous consumption: falls in love with somebody else's bonnet and elopes with it (Fig. 1); guzzles six ice creams in a row and won't pay for them (Fig. 2): and takes a gratuitous trip to Hampstead and back

(Fig. 3). But she is never punished or made to feel guilty, but rather welcomed home by a loving mother (Fig. 4); and her last words are, "This is a day well spent" (Fig. 5).

Figures 4 and 5. Loving Mother; "Day well spent," *from* The Beautifull Cassandra.

It is not all fun and triumph, however. And Cassandra gets into serious trouble. After the joyride to Hampstead, we hear, "the Coachman demanded his Pay" (Fig. 6); and he won't take No for an answer. Up to now she has had things her own way. But this is the very nadir of Cassandra's adventures, her descent into the underworld of this epic saga. In vain she desperately "searched all her pockets over again & again" to pay the peremptory coachman his fare; her head is bowed, her bonnet is ruined, her tail—that expressive member—is downcast and flaccid.

Let me remind you of a parallel case in *Northanger Abbey*, the novel with the most youthful heroine. When General Tilney discovers Catherine is not as good a catch for his son as he had thought her, he expels her from paradise. She is to catch the early morning coach homewards. Fortunately, Eleanor Tilney realizes Catherine "might not be provided with money enough for the expenses of her journey." And, sure enough, "it proved to be exactly the case." Catherine and Eleanor ponder the awful possibility of her being "turned from the house without even the means of getting home" (229). That is Cassandra's case too. The adult Austen expects her reader to shudder. And indeed there is a much *worse* fictional precedent.

In Frances Burney's *Cecilia* of 1782, a novel that I believe young Jane already knew well, a demanding hackney-coachman forms the climax of the action. Cecilia is in desperate pursuit of Delvile, the man she loves, who she believes is on his way to a duel with a rival. When the coachman refuses to go further, she tries to continue on foot; "but the coachman … protested she should not stir till he was paid. … In the utmost agony of mind, … she put her hand in her pocket," ready to "pay him any thing" (895). Others get involved. "'Let me go! Let me pass! … detain me at your peril,'" she cries in desperation. And presently, "confusion, heat and fatigue, all

assaulting her at once … her reason suddenly, yet totally," fails (896), and she goes mad, and is presently incarcerated as a lunatic.

Figures 6 and 7. Peremptory Coachman*;* Plonking Bonnet, *from* The Beautifull Cassandra.

Some fictional precedent! But Cassandra, in a comparable dilemma? Not without reason does she bear the name of a classical heroine. Does she sink in madness like Cecilia? No! Threatened with the Underworld of Debt and Despair, like Odysseus she resourcefully throws a sop to Cerberus: she plonks the now worthless bonnet on the head of the "peremptory" coachman, and takes to her heels (Fig. 7). (Note how efficiently she bundles her tail over her arm, to prevent capture by that trailing handle.) Now unburdened, she gets the hell out of hell.

I like the feminist aspect to these parallels. Burney's Cecilia, though one might expect that as an heiress she would have clout, is more victimized than empowered by her inheritance: she becomes victim to fortune-hunters. Unpretentious Catherine Morland, though unjustly used by General Tilney, manages her challenging journey well, and proves to her mother that she is no longer "a sad little shatter-brained creature" (*Northanger* 234). The beautifull Cassandra, however, pulls off more independence than either her predecessor or her successor: she not only deals resourcefully with the peremptory coachman; she subsequently walks through London unescorted—against all the rules—and without any head covering—outrageous!

At the end of her adventures, Cassandra returns to the "paternal roof in Bond Street" (Fig. 8). *Paternal* roof? But it is Cassandra's *mother,* the milliner, we gather, who is the bread-winner in this family. The dad is a would-be aristocratic lay-about, proud of being "the near relation of the Dutchess of Blank's butler."[5] I decided to draw him picking his teeth, to connect him with that connoisseur of toothpicks, Robert Ferrars.

There is development *within* Austen's juvenilia too. And I want to linger on two works of what might be called the "middle period" of her early writings, *The Three Sisters* and *Lesley Castle*. The many short works, in different genres, of *Volume the First* feature characters who are single-mindedly in pursuit of what they want, with no self-analysis and no qualms. But in these two works—both epistolary, both unfinished—we have stirrings of conscience among the protagonists, and stirrings of satire among the spectators. And *between* the two works, also, there is interesting artistic development.

Fig. 8. Parental Roof*, from* The Beautifull Cassandra.

As Katharine Sutherland has shown, *The Three Sisters*, though it appears in *Volume the First,* actually belongs chronologically with the items in *Volume the Second* (213). It is easy to consider *The Three Sisters* as an ur-version of *Pride and Prejudice*—which we know is the story of *five* sisters. The suitor, the loathsome Mr. Watts, who has nothing to recommend him but his fortune, is courting the oldest sister, Mary. But like Mr. Collins he is perfectly ready, if the oldest is not available, to switch from Mary to Sophy, and if necessary from Sophy to Georgiana.

The Three Sisters was a challenge to illustrate, since so much of the action is postulated rather than enacted: particularly the central proposition, Mary's marriage to the disgusting Mr.Watts. Will it happen, or not? To deal with this, I invented a system of "Thinks" balloons, as in comics. When Mary delivers her list of goodies

that she expects at marriage, I show the carriages, horses, servants, etc. as items in her speech balloon (Fig. 9).

Figure 9. Mary's Desiderata*, from* The Three Sisters.

When Mr. Watts plays "eeny-meeny-miney-mo" among among the sisters, I show the girls as dummies on display for him in a shop window (Fig. 10). And please note that while Mary's balloon is all curves, Mr. Watts's vision appears in a manly squared-off balloon.

Figure 10. Watts and Dummies*, from* The Three Sisters.

The speculation I had most fun with was Mary's wishful thinking that a brother—if she had one—would challenge a defecting Mr. Watts to a duel. (Mrs. Bennet, you will remember, has a similar vision of Mr. Bennet's challenging Wickham.) I could show a handsome brother, a Mr. Watts stripped of his wig, his knees knocking in terror (Fig. 11). But Mary's gratifying vision is dispersed when she is reminded that Mr. Watts would simply "run away first" (6) – and he nimbly takes his wig with him (Fig. 12). As a lifelong fencer, I was glad to get a chance to illustrate a duel, even one that doesn't happen.

Figures 11 and 12. Duel 1 *and* Duel 2*, from* The Three Sisters.

Mary's unashamed greed for marriage settlements matches the cheerful self-seeking of other characters in the juvenilia, such as Lucy of *Jack and Alice*, or Sir William Mountague, who hardly pauses after one fiancée dies before he proposes to another. Mary Stanhope gabbles, "I am to have a new Carriage … a new saddle horse, … and an infinite number of … jewels" (11). She and her mother both seem like ancestors of Mrs. Bennet, who like them is broadly drawn. "Oh, my sweetest Lizzie!" Mrs. Bennet gushes when she hears of Elizabeth's engagement to Darcy, "what pin-money, what carriages, what jewels, you will have!" (*Pride and Prejudice* 378).

Unbridled greed is the norm in the juvenilia. But Mary's sisters Sophy and Georgiana suddenly surprise us by being self-aware, and having qualms about claiming they will marry Mr. Watts if Mary does not. "Yet after all my Heart cannot acquit me & Sophy is even more scrupulous," Georgiana writes (11). (What, moral scruple in the juvenilia? This is a new thing.) And here too we meet a spectator, Mr. Brudenell, who casts a satirical eye on Mary's boasting (as Mr. Bennet might): "Mr.

Brudenell … even encouraged her by his Questions & Remarks, for it was evident that his only Aim was to laugh at her" (22). "This is surely an intimation of Mr. Bennet's delight in drawing out absurdities, as when he asks Collins about his fawning compliments to Lay Catherine: "May I ask whether these pleasing attentions proceed from the impulse of the moment, or are the result of previous study?" (*Pride and Prejudice* 68).

In the use of epistolary narration, however, *The Three Sisters* has its failings. Time and place are not fully realized. We have only two letter-writers, and each writes her letters to an off-stage correspondent who does not respond; so there is no interaction among them. Their voices characterize the two letter-writers (especially Mary); and to some extent they characterize others (especially Mr. Watts). But as a developing narrative it is rather thin. One can see reasons for Austen's abandoning it. It stands out, however, as a forerunner of *Pride and Prejudice*, and for its achievement of a degree of self-awareness by two of its characters.

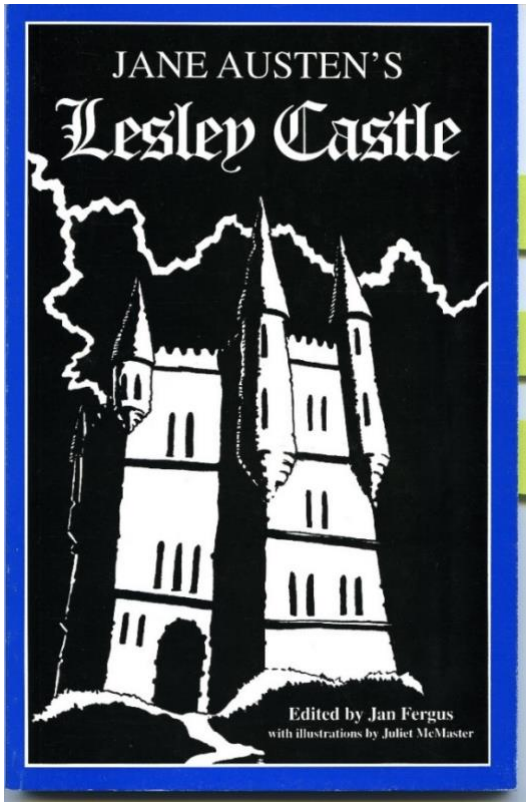

Figure 13. Cover, Lesley Castle.

The Juvenilia Press edition of *Lesley Castle* was sponsored by JASNA, back in 1998, to go with its AGM on *Northanger Abbey*—so I could emphasise the Gothic element. Please note the gothic script for the title, and the bolts of lightning (Fig. 13). But I could also provide a daytime picture, with an attendant Scotsman complete with

bagpipes (Fig. 14). (Lady Lesley may "hate everything Scotch" (22)—but I don't.) My model was Craigievar Castle in Aberdeenshire (Fig. 15).

Figures 14 and 15. Lesley Castle, Daytime, *from* Lesley Castle; *Craigievar Castle, Aberdeenshire, photo by Richard Slessor (*Wikimedia Commons).

Lesley Castle shows a leap of development in epistolary narration. As Jan Fergus points out in her introduction to the Juvenilia Press edition, Austen "exploits epistolarity wonderfully in *Lesley Castle*" (viii). More than in *The Three Sisters* we have specificity in time (January to April 1792, probably the year Austen was writing) and in place too: the Castle; Charlotte's home Glenford, Bristol; and two venues in London, Grosvenor Street and Portman Square. (I could design letterheads—and I did.) And the interaction *between* the correspondents is intricate and amusing.

As *The Three Sisters* provides intimations of *Pride and Prejudice*, so *Lesley Castle* has certain vibrations of *Sense and Sensibility*. The Lutterell sisters, Eloisa and Charlotte, are very broad versions of Marianne and Elinor. Eloisa is all tears and sensibility; Charlotte's very down-to-earth preoccupation is cooking. We all remember her reaction to Eloisa's report of the fatal riding accident that has befallen her fiancé: "Good God! … You don't say so! why what in the name of Heaven will become of all the Victuals?" (*Lesley Castle* 8) (Fig. 16). And presently, she and her mother settle down to eat their way through the wedding food, while Eloisa succumbs to "dreadful convulsions" (Fig. 17).

The different correspondents have their own recognizable styles and expressions—even to consistent eccentricities of punctuation, as Jan Fergus has shown (xiv). In Margaret Lesley of *Lesley Castle*, as with Laura of *Love and Freindship*, Austen parodies the convention of the perfect heroine by having this heroine describe *her own* perfections, and her sister's: "We are handsome my dear Charlotte, very handsome and the greatest of our Perfections is, that we are entirely insensible of them ourselves" (5). The first-person claim to this particular virtue comes out rather differently from Mr. Knightley's comment on Emma's beauty: "I love to look at her; and I will add this praise…. Considering how very handsome she is, she appears to be little occupied with it" (E 39). *Not* like Margaret Lesley!

Figures 16 and 17. Charlotte at the Wedding Feast; Charlotte Eating, Eloisa in Convulsions, *from* Lesley Castle.

A special benefit for the illustrator of *Lesley Castle* is the ample information provided on bodies and complexions. Moreover, as in the novels, these correspondents have plenty to say *about* each other, as well as to *write to* each other. The author shares her job of characterizing. These interactions notably thicken the interest, making the characters more three-dimensional. Charlotte is friends with both the Lesley sisters and their new step-mother Lady Lesley, and can comment on the relations between them. "You are both downright jealous of each others Beauty," Charlotte writes to the step-daughter (27) (Fig. 18). Diminutive Lady Lesley pours scorn her step-daughters' "tremendous, knock-me-down figures" (25); Margaret Lesley despises her step-mother as an "insignificant Dwarf" (19). I had fun with their

getting together in the "dismal old Weather-beaten Castle" (20). Margaret Lesley tends to gush over her little niece Louisa; but in keeping with other satirical elements, I decided to make Louisa a cheeky brat. Watch her stick out her tongue and make a rude gesture. (And please don't miss the mouse, which casts a very Gothic shadow.)

Figures 18 and 19. Lady Lesley and Lesley Sisters in the Castle; Lady Lesley and William, *from* Lesley Castle.

In *Lesley Castle*, more than in the earlier juvenilia, we have shrewd ironic commentary on one character by another. Charlotte enjoys the competing commentary of the different Lesleys on each other. And Lady Lesley's brother William, proceeding to fall for Matilda Lesley, can pull off some satire on his sister's rougeing. When she complains "They are so horribly pale," he responds, "Well, … if they *have* but little colour, at least, it is all their own" (26) (Fig. 19). This is vigorous give-and-take: not so elegantly nuanced as in the novels, but wonderfully boisterous and inventive. Young William's attraction to Matilda offers one promising romance. Her sister Margaret complains of the excessive admiration she receives in London. ("How often have I wished that I possessed as little personal Beauty as you do" she writes to Charlotte). But presently this willowy beauty too succumbs to the manly attractions of one Mr. Cleveland: "His elegant Manners and Delightful Bow at once confirmed my attachment," she confesses (36). One bow and she's a goner!—and I show her promptly dropping a come-hither handkerchief (Fig. 20). "Even so quickly

may one catch the plague?" Margaret might say with Shakespeare's Olivia (*Twelfth Night* act 1, sc. 3). We are on the way to the characteristic three-match plot of the novels.

Figure 20. Margaret Lesley Meets Cleveland, *from* Lesley Castl*e.*

Here are riches of human interaction—such as we are to see more of, though more refined in quality, in the fictional works yet to come. To adapt Milton: I long to "Call back her that left half-told / The story of the Lesleys bold."[6] How I wish that Austen would return to complete this rich and vigorous epistolary tale, and *The Three Sisters* too. *Lesley Castle* promised to be a broad and boisterous comedy, alongside those elegant and ever-re-readable six novels.

NOTES

[1] This paper was invited for the Jane Austen Summer Program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, which in 2023 was specialized to the juvenilia.

[2] I use the Oxford edition of Jane Austen's novels, edited by R. W. Chapman, third edition.

[3] For Austen's juvenilia I use the Juvenilia Press editions.

[4] Joseph Weisenfarth has also explored this connections between *Henry & Eliza* and *Pride and Prejudice*.

[5] "Blank" was my editorial addition. Jane Austen's manuscript has only a dash.

[6] The poet of Milton's "Il Penseroso" wants to "Call up him that left half told / The story of Cambuscan bold" (lines 109–110)—that is, to bring back Chaucer to complete the unfinished Squire's tale in *The Canterbury Tales*.

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Reviews

Kathy Rees and Christine Alexander, Editors. *Tristram Jones*, by Edmund Gosse. Juvenilia Press, 2022.

xxxviii + 76 pages. Paperback, AUD 20.00.
ISBN: 978-0-7334-4048-9.

THIS BEAUTIFULLY edited first edition of Edmund Gosse's novella *Tristram Jones,* written in 1872 but never previously published, has several *raisons d'etre*: it is part of the Juvenilia Press's mission to bring to light early writings by children and adolescents, both those who went on to become professional writers and those who did not; it focuses on a man who became eminent, not only for his own writings, but for his unparalleled readings of Victorian and Edwardian literature; and, lastly, it sheds light on that man's masterpiece, *Father and Son* (1907), the crucial text in the transition from Victorian to modern life-writing.

It is this last function that provides, arguably, the ultimate justification for the study of juvenilia and therefore the ultimate justification for the existence of the Juvenilia Press: the belief that these early productions can be crucial for the understanding of later masterpieces. They are to be read, it is implied, not for any intrinsic literary merit of their own, but as signposts towards later achievement.

Even if this point is acknowledged, Gosse's early "fragment of a novel" (his own words) provides much enjoyment for the reader in its own right. It is set in a vividly evoked late-Victorian London and tells the story of the eponymous hero, a pompous young man who wishes he had been named after the Arthurian Tristram but, as the reader quickly recognises, has much more in common with Sterne's comical anti-hero, Tristram Shandy. The central relationship between Tristram and Emma turns out to be not so much a love affair as two parallel *self*-love affairs. Both protagonists are dealt with ruthlessly by the narrator: "It will be perceived that neither Tristram nor Emma doubted the heat of the other's devotion. It was their own that was so rapidly falling towards zero" (51).

Young Gosse was famously prohibited by his puritanical parents from reading fiction in his childhood. *Tristram Jones* is nevertheless full of echoes of Dickens and Austen. There is a painful Austenian picnic, a cast of Dickensian grotesques, including the inevitable Cockney servant ("Oh Susan, if you was an iron block you couldn't speak harsher to me!" [43]), but in addition, most tellingly, there is a ruthless narrative voice that cuts through any trace of Dickensian sentiment with a cynicism more crude than Austenian irony, and which is obviously young Gosse's own.

Rees and Alexander argue cogently that the narrator's appeal to an educated readership, as it were behind the backs of the novel's characters, is a valuable experiment with narrative voice drawn upon later, much more subtly, in *Father and Son*—and that the juvenile novel thus prepared the way for the later masterpiece. However, for me, the cynical narrative voice is the most fascinating feature of *Tristram Jones,* particularly since it is *not* a voice that is heard in *Father and Son*. Gosse's cover note to the early novel unambiguously confesses, "I am Tristram Jones." There is a degree of unself-pitying self-knowledge here that is absent from *Father and Son*, where the plight of the child is what is stressed. Consider this extract, in which the narrator draws the reader into comic disparagement of Tristram:

> And, first, we must make what seems a painful discovery, namely, that though Tristram has plenty of characteristics, he has as yet, properly speaking, developed no character at all. The best thing we can find in him is a happy negation of all strong vicious impulses. He is good-natured, affectionate, impressible, but the impressions fade away like morning dew beneath the ray of a new book or a new friend. (3)

This is a remarkably astute piece of self-analysis from a young man in his early twenties. It is much more unforgiving than Dickens's treatment of the young David Copperfield, a slightly more disguised self-portrait. Dickens also treats of First Love—but with nothing of the young Gosse's precocious world-weariness. It is only years later, in *Little Dorrit*, that Dickens can see through his youthful passion for Maria Beadnell and reinvent Dora Spenlow as garrulous, comical Flora Finching. Young Gosse's feelings for Emma Beddow, whom he courted and almost married, are presented with considerable cynicism through Tristram's feelings for Emma Fields: "Tristram Jones supposes that he is going to drink tea with his beloved, and yet his steps have none of the fierce swiftness that an ardent lover's has when he moves to meet his mistress" (2).

Later, when Tristram meets Margaret, a girl full of imagination and infinitely more suitable to be loved than Emma, he is nervous and glad when she departs. The narrator takes the reader into his confidence and comments, "Stupid Tristram!" (25).

The whole novella has the feel of someone delighting in the playfulness possible in fiction. This certainly does put it in dialogue with *Father and Son*, where the son's

escape is into the world of the imagination he has been denied by his parents, through their interdict on his reading of fiction. In particular, Edmund seems infatuated by what must have been his recent discovery of Dickens. *Tristram Jones* is full of Dickensian touches as well as direct allusions. At the opening party there is a reading from *The Pickwick Papers*; among the guests is a "Miss Finching" (a reference to the Flora Finching already mentioned); there is a "violent newness" to the décor of the vulgar Field family (8)—recalling the disconcerting newness of the Veneerings in the opening chapter of *Our Mutual Friend*; the two Miss Campions, one sweet, the other sour (13), have a Dickensian flavour about them; a Virginia creeper is personified as it "clutched the very chimney pots, as though to save itself from falling" (14) in a way that, as the editors note, also sounds "very Dickensian" (14n34); and little Mr Cartwright, "The Old Bibiographer," with his papers and busyness, initially seems to have more than a touch of Mr Dick.

However, Mr Cartwright turns out to have a much more serious function in the narrative, as the genuine disinterested scholar used to expose Tristram's shallowness. The young Gosse is, with breath-taking clear-sightedness, condemning his own desire for publicity and fame in Tristram's response to Mr Cartwright's self-abnegation (31). Again, he seems, as a very young man, to see through himself with uncomfortable acuteness, indeed, to pre-empt criticisms later made of his older self. In his reveries before meeting the author, Tristram imagines "the veteran author pronounce him the Man of the Future and pledge himself to further his genius" (27). The older Gosse's self-aggrandisement and simultaneous tendency to sycophancy would, on this evidence, have been seen through at once by his clear-eyed younger self—a self whose nature seems worlds away from that of the young protagonist of *Father and Son*, at least as imagined by his parents. The theme of parental misunderstanding and misappropriation is there even in Tristram's name, which he takes to be a reference to the knight of Arthurian legend but which (as the narrator divulges to the reader) is actually a parental reference to Tristram Shandy, in other words, a figure of comedy. This is therefore a comic inflexion of the theme treated tragically in *Father and Son*, where the child cannot bear the weight of parental expectation that he will succeed in a world for which, he increasingly realises, he is intellectually and temperamentally peculiarly unsuited.

The lightness of touch of *Tristram Jones* is given a tragic inflexion in *Father and Son*—and Rees and Alexander's argument is that the former contributes to and possibly enables the latter. The two works are certainly in dialogue: the editors, in their introduction, point to the common theme of "restraint and release"; the shared use of bird imagery; and a narrative voice that draws the reader into complicity and excludes the protagonist. Again, the comparison with Dickens is striking: in *Great Expectations*, which was written only after Dickens had reread *David Copperfield*, the adult narrator treats his younger self, the protagonist, with humour, condescension, only occasionally real empathy. In Edmund Gosse's case, the older man never, to my mind, measures up to the heroic clarity of his younger self. There is something

disingenuous even about the older Gosse's reference to this slight but enjoyable novella as a "fragment": Rees and Alexander have sensibly recognised that the work does in fact stand on its own, and have changed Gosse's numbering of the chapters so that what the author called "Chapter II" becomes, very plausibly, "Chapter I." This is a long short story or a novella, rather than a fragment of something much greater.

Rereading by an author of an earlier work, in preparation for the writing of a later one, is, on this evidence, a process worthy of much more critical analysis. It is certainly arguable that Dickens and Gosse could not have written *Great Expectations* and *Father and Son,* respectively, without recourse to work written when they were younger. The final sentence of the fascinating introduction sums up the editors' argument about the significance of *Tristram Jones*:

> Just as Tristram's misgivings about his union with Emma Fields mount during the course of the narrative, so the protagonist of *Father and Son* develops doubts and questions about parentally-imposed religion, and hence the fundamental drive of *Father and Son*—a journey from restraint to release—repeats the trajectory of *Tristram Jones*. (xxix).

In revealing these parallel trajectories, the editors have amply justified the mission of the Juvenilia Press: but, in introducing the ruthlessly clear-sighted, precociously world-weary narrator of *Tristram Jones,* they have in addition given a new and unexpected insight into the nature of the young man who emerged, newly fledged and vulnerable, into the adult world at the end of *Father and Son.*

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Tim Fulton and others. *Henry Kirke White, 1785–1806.*

https://kirkewhitecom.wordpress.com
ISBN: 978-0-7334-4048-9.

Tim Fulford's website kirkewhitecom.wordpress.com is at once an advertisement for and complement to his scholarly collected edition of Henry Kirke White's poetry, which is a work in progress. Fulford notes that this edition will be the first of its kind,

providing readers with the historical context and literary analysis Kirke White so richly deserves. The Wordpress site that is my subject here sets the scene for Kirke White's formal debut into literary study. The site consists of biographical material and a series of short essays or extended notes that either examine Kirke White's poetry or connect his work with that of his peers and successors. Featuring contributions from several scholars and treating topics such as working-class authorship, poetic patronage, transatlantic exchange, and, of course, published juvenilia and the cultural impact of young poets, Fulford's website will attract the interest of scholars working in all areas of Romantic studies.

What becomes clear after only a few minutes of perusing Fulford's site is that Henry Kirke White is a figure worth learning about. A prototype in more ways than one for Keats, Kirke White was a juvenile, Romantic poet who died early in his pursuit of a Cambridge education after succumbing to consumption. His illness had worsened because of years spent trying to balance his working-class responsibilities with his academic aspirations. Consequently, many of his poems are melancholic contemplations of mortality, illness, and earthly inequities, though as Fulford and others show Kirke White's deep faith and writerly finesse prevent his work from sliding into self-pitying complaint. Kirke White's biography and literary chops tie him closely with Thomas Chatterton, who died thirty-five years before him; as did Chatterton, Kirke White (briefly) overcame his economic circumstances because of his demonstrated poetic skill and relentless work ethic, and, as with Chatterton, his untimely death consolidated his cultural reputation. A genius poet all the more alluring because of his youth and the toll his genius took during his short life, it is easy to see how Kirke White and his work resonate with some of the major Romantic figures and themes that would emerge in the years following his death.

Fulford's website is effective because it so clearly situates Kirke White as a figure significant to his moment and, consequently, as someone with cultural relevance throughout the nineteenth century. This is achieved through a series of short essays: either close readings of specific poems by Kirke White alongside those of others or dives into various archives to illustrate the reach of his published work as well as his cachet as a tragic figure. Fulford is responsible for many of these short pieces; his entries are especially successful at succinctly and convincingly making the case for Kirke White's literary influence. Fulford positions Kirke White in a broader network of writers including John Keats, John Clare, Robert Southey, William Bryant, Walt Whitman, and the Brontë family. In some cases, the story is really one of personal interaction or biographical influence. Fulford's analysis of the material at Haworth, for example, paints a picture of intergenerational influence beginning with Patrick Brontë's acquaintance with Kirke White at Cambridge and perpetuated by family lore surrounding Maria Branwell's possessions. Kirke White in this story is clearly something of a celebrity, a name Branwell considered worth dropping as much because of his reputation as a genius cut down in his prime as because of his poems.

This appears to be how others like Walt Whitman understood Kirke White; Fulford explains in his entry on Southey that "Kirke White was read, almost from the start, as a dead poet." In fact, the "dead poet" characterization is largely because of Robert Southey. Though Kirke White had published a collection during his lifetime (*Clifton Grove,* 1803), the poet's posthumous reputation was really the result of Southey's publication, *The Remains of Henry Kirke White … with an Account of his Life* (2 vols, Vernor and Hood, 1807). As the title suggests, this collection comprised Kirke White's work and a biography of the poet, the latter of which Southey composed with the help of Kirke White's brother. Fulford tells us in the same entry that "the *Remains* went through eleven editions in seventeen years before copyright was broken in 1824. After that, dozens more collections followed from over twenty different publishers: Kirke White was one of the most widely printed poets of the entire nineteenth century." Southey's text did much to reinforce Kirke White's image as a tragic genius and his reputation as a poet.

Fulford's website effectively demonstrates that Kirke White's poetry merits that reputation. In his essay explicating "Ode on Disappointment," for instance, Fulford shows that Kirke White was both a technical innovator and an educated emulator whose creativity with form and even word choice recurs throughout his corpus, as does evidence of his deep reading across genres and topics. Fulford explores the latter in his entries on rural, comic, and graveyard poems, underscoring Kirke White's participation in and influence upon some of the poetic trends of his day. He was at his most influential as combined poet and cultural icon: Fulford's essays on Bryant (who composed a pale, and very American, imitation of Kirke White's poetry), Clare and other working-class poets, and Keats suggest that part of Kirke White's significance to the Romantic period is that his particular persona (brilliant, moral, natural) paired with his poetic output in a way that is representative of the literary period. That is, Kirke White's story and work is in some senses the story and work of Romanticism. Because of Keats's legacy both during his period and ours, Fulford's assessment of the dialogue between Keats and Kirke White does much to advance this interpretation of the latter's importance. Drawing thematic and stylistic parallels between Keats's "Ode on Melancholy" and Kirke White's "Clifton Grove," as well as between the two poets' use of figures like Endymion, Fulford shows that the young poet's influence on his literary successor is worth investigating further.

The impact of Kirke White on a range of writers and topics is explored further in a series of entries by other contributors. R. J. Ellis, in "Harriet Wilson, Our Nig [*sic*] and Henry Kirke White's Poetry," notes the frequent appearance of Kirke White in *Our Nig* and speculates about the connotations and attraction of a figure like Kirke White for marginalized writers like Wilson. Johnny Cammish applies a fine analytical lens to "To the Herb Rosemary," supporting Fulford's claim that Kirke White's poetry is learned and complex; Alexander Freer does similar work in his entry on "moongazing," which considers several moon-themed poems that have a Wordsworthian flavour. Joseph Phelan and Nora Crook contribute pieces that

connect Kirke White to still more major literary figures of the period. Phelan uses a reference to Kirke White in Browning's courtship correspondence with Elizabeth Barrett as a launching point for considering the young poet's lasting impact on Browning's literary imagination; Crook likewise identifies notes of Kirke White in Shelley, occurring sometimes on the level of a single word (as in the appearance of the world "solium," which features in Kirke White's "The Christiad" and in a fragment from Shelley). In two especially interesting contributions, John Goodridge and Christopher Catanese provide historical and archival context for the publishing atmosphere of the time and that of the decades that precede and succeed Kirke White. Goodridge's "Henry Kirke White and the Labouring-Class Poets: a Preliminary Survey" traces interactions between Kirke White and other poets of his background who strove to make a similar transition into the opportunities afforded by a Cambridge education, both during his lifetime and after (in all cases these poets use Kirke White as a model or inspiration). Catanese's essay, detailing the complicated relationship between Kirke White and his desired patron, Capel Lofft (a relationship represented in two odd, public, and pointed sonnets authored by each), works to showcase Kirke White's talent as well as provide useful information regarding his path to becoming a known, polished poet.

While these essays do much to communicate the significance of Kirke White to the nineteenth-century English-reading public, the difference in scope and even tone between these entries is one of the website's shortcomings. The contributions at times read like informal blog posts or notes and at other times like scholarly essays. What is more, because there is little introductory material explaining the goals for the site, it comes a little as a surprise to stumble upon a guest-authored entry midway through the reading experience. More information about the website's intended audience and its relationship to the in-progress scholarly edition of Kirke White's poems would help readers better appreciate the material hosted on kirkewhitecom.wordpress.com.

That so much excellent research is available for free on Fulford's site is of course one of the many benefits of using digital space to share academic work. Yet in many other ways, kirkewhitecom.wordpress.com does not take advantage of its online platform. While the sparse, black and white design works nicely to focus users on the content, it is ultimately a little too sparse with respect to user engagement. The mechanics of the site are inconsistent (sometimes entries open in a new tab, for instance, but other times they do not). There is a notable lack of interconnectivity. Why is there not more of a wiki-like design, with key names or events linked, or at the very least indexed? Why are the entries not arranged more thematically or chronologically, and organized in a dropdown menu? Why is there not more information about the contributors or links to existing resources to do with Kirke White or other relevant juvenile or under-researched poets? To engage with kirkewhitecom.wordpress.com is to feel both excited about the wealth of information being presented and frustrated by the site's unfulfilled potential as a digital hub for

Kirke White studies. Here again, though, more information about the intent for the site would help—as an informative blog, however, it works very well.

Issues with presentation aside, Fulford's website is a welcome addition to juvenilia and Romantic studies. Kirke White's poetry and legacy was clearly important to readers and aspiring writers of the nineteenth century, and consequently should be important to those of us who study the period. Fulford's blog makes the case that Kirke White deserves attention from literary scholars as well as cultural historians, and especially from those interested in the creative and intellectual work of young people. That scholarly material of this calibre is available to all who wish to learn from it makes Tim Fulford's project especially admirable.

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