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EDITORIAL

WELCOME, on behalf of the *JJS* Editorial Team, to *JJS* vol. 6, no. 2, which offers you the latest scholarship in juvenilia studies, as well as book reviews. Laurie Langbauer's contribution concludes her magisterial two-part essay "The Juvenile Tradition and the Fiction Factory"; you will find Part 1 in our previous issue, *JJS* vol. 6, no. 1. Eric Bontempo's essay on Tennyson's juvenilia is based on the presentation that earned the ISLJ Best Conference Paper by an Emerging Scholar Award at the 2023 conference of the International Society of Literary Juvenilia. We look forward to publishing more such prize-winning work in future issues.

Marjorie Stone's essay on Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Kathy Rees's essay on Edmund Gosse both offer compelling arguments for paying attention to neglected works by authors who are or who once were well known; moreover, all four essays collected here make strong cases for examining in fruitful ways what *popular writing* might have meant to these young writers, both in their reading and in their aspirations.

Lesley Peterson

ISLJ Best Conference Paper by an Emerging Scholar Award 2023

RECUSATIO, PROLEPSIS, AND POPULAR SENTIMENT IN TENNYSON'S JUVENILIA

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IN MARCH 1827, Charles Tennyson and his younger brother, Alfred, published a volume of 109 poems "written from the ages of fifteen to eighteen, not conjointly but individually" (Tennyson and Tennyson, Advertisement). They entitled their volume *Poems, by Two Brothers*, even though they enlisted their eldest brother Frederick, then aged nineteen, to contribute four of his own poems. Charles seems to have spearheaded the endeavour, penning the volume's prefatory poem and contributing 53 additional poems.[1] The younger Alfred contributed 50 poems to the volume as a fifteen- to seventeen-year-old, most of which have largely gone unnoticed in recent studies of Tennyson's juvenilia; these have, instead, tended to focus on such later teenage works as "Timbuctoo." Moreover, most such critics have approached Tennyson's juvenilia as merely showing signs of the poet's later mastery of sound and metre.[2]

However, Tennyson's early poems in *Poems, by Two Brothers* are remarkable for their insistence on maturity, a feature that Laurie Langbauer calls prolepsis. Juvenile writers in the early nineteenth century, according to Langbauer, "would not await the expectations of childhood development … that they had to grow and mature to be good writers. They acted proleptically, they wrote and published to seize their future immediately instead" (4). This prolepsis is evident in what is presumably a jointly written advertisement for their volume, in which the two brothers boldly announce their entry into the profession of poetry: "But so it is: we have passed the Rubicon, and we leave the rest to fate; though its edict may create a fruitless regret that we ever emerged from 'the shade,' and courted notoriety" (Tennyson and Tennyson, Advertisement). With this language and their subsequent volume of poems, Charles and Alfred Tennyson participate in a common schoolboy tradition of writing poetry as if already imagining themselves fully fledged poets. Moreover, in announcing their crossing of the Rubicon and "submitting to the microscopic eye of periodical

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Criticism" (ibid.), they strategically decide to disavow their youthful influences by means of the classical rhetorical strategy of *recusatio* (disavowal).

Yet while both Tennyson brothers participate in the normative schoolboy tradition of writing poetry in imitation of classical Greek and Latin poets, Alfred's imitation also extends into the vogue for sentimental literature, including the gothic, that was popularized in Tennyson's boyhood in such novels as Ann Radcliffe's Gothic romances and in gift books, poetry albums, and literary annuals like the *Keepsake* and the *Forget-Me-Not*. In so combining his schoolboy training in classical poetry with his reading of popular sentimental and Romantic literature, which were generally considered feminine and commercial, Tennyson forges a distinctive poetic voice and effectively launches himself into the vocation of poetry. This distinctive poetic voice, I argue, links to what Harold Nicholson has elsewhere referred to as the "School-Miss Alfred style" (103). Encoded in several juvenile poems is an "aesthetic considered traditionally feminine, and therefore distastefully sentimental to … critics," which "involved themes and expressions of the heart, usually involving women characters and domestic situations" (Ledbetter, "Protesting" 57). Tennyson, on his entrance into the vocation of poetry, self-consciously wrestled with his own inheritance as a reader, the male-dominated world of poetry criticism, and the evolving literary marketplace that had become more populated by women readers.

Like that of many Victorians, the Tennysons' childhood included a thorough education in the Greco-Roman literary tradition. According to Theodore Redpath, a young Alfred was made by his father to "recite by heart on successive mornings all the four books of Horace's *Odes*. That amounted to over one hundred poems, a good three months, autumn discipline!" (qtd. in Wright 143). The young Tennyson later reflected that his expertise in Horace's *Odes* made him stand out amongst his peers: "They use *me* as a lesson-book at schools, and they will call me 'that horrible Tennyson.' It was not till many years after boyhood that I could like Horace" (qtd. in Wright 143, original emphasis). In *Poems, by Two Brothers*, both Tennyson brothers call upon that schoolboy training in Greco-Latin poetry in order to establish themselves as poets in their own right, oftentimes quoting Virgil, Horace, Anacreon, Cicero, Ovid, and Juvenal, among others, in epigraphs for their original poems.[3] In so doing, the Tennyson brothers imitate fundamental rhetorical strategies that they learned from these classical poets, including the *recusatio*.

The classical *recusatio* developed in the Augustan Age as a way for poets to elevate their own contemporary aesthetic by disavowing its preceding antitype (Davis 92); it is a strategy of negation that offered Charles and Alfred Tennyson a template for imagining themselves as mature, professional poets through disavowing their youth and the works associated with it. The brothers learned *recusatio* from Horace and Virgil and employ it time and time again throughout *Poems, by Two Brothers* as they experiment with many different poetic forms, metres, and *topos*. One example of the *recusatio*, which a young Tennyson would have read, may be found in "Nolis longa ferae": one of Horace's odes addressed to Maecenas (book 2, poem 12).[4] Here,

Horace presents himself as unfit for the task of composing an encomium to Caesar in the elevated manner required by the ode. Feigning humility and explaining that his own Muse is the lyre (symbol of pastoral poetry), he disavows the ode, citing his own poetic limitations and the constraints of the genre: "On me the Muse has laid her charge to tell / Of your Licymnia's voice, the lustrous hue / Of her bright eye" (lines 13–15). Yet, through this disavowal, Horace elevates his status as a pastoral poet. Virgil also employs the same basic rhetorical strategy in Eclogue 6, "To Varus."[5] Under the guise of self-deprecation, Virgil represents himself here as being inadequate to the task of writing an epic in celebration of the emperor, using that argument to justify the pastoral mode he employs in the Eclogue: "When I sought to tell / Of battles and kings, the Cynthian god / Plucked at mine ear and warned me" (lines 3b–5). As Gregson Davis points out, though, these examples of the *recusatio* are ambiguous because both Horace and Virgil include epic (elevated) diction in their disavowals. Thus, they include the very thing they are telling their audience they are excluding.

It is Horace and Virgil's *recusatio* model that both brothers, Charles and Alfred, adapt in *Poems, by Two Brothers*, in order to bolster their claims as poets. In some poems, this disavowal serves a proleptic function as the brothers feign maturity by disavowing their youth (even though both are still schoolboys at this point). In others, Charles and Alfred disavow the poetry (and poetics) of all their predecessors in an attempt to establish—and elevate—their own contemporary aesthetic. By implementing the *recusatio* model that they learned from Horace and Virgil, then, they align themselves as close students and experts of Augustan and modern poetry, while at the same time rejecting that mode, in order to dispel any notion that the young Tennysons were *too young* to be published as poets. Not merely imitating to flatter, the Tennysons sought to use the *recusatio* model as an inheritance that could open out onto new futures for their own contemporary poetry.

Charles Tennyson, for example, situates his poem "In Early Youth I Lost My Sire" near the beginning of *Poems, by Two Brothers*, quoting Virgil in the epigraph ("Hinc mihi prima mali labes [Hence my first evil slips]"). It is a poem that employs both prolepsis and *recusatio* to construct the speaker as a grown adult lamenting, and reflecting on, the loss of childhood innocence. To achieve this, Charles simultaneously attaches himself to Virgil through the inclusion of the epigraph while, at the same time, distancing himself from that educational bedrock by claiming that he has lost his (poetic) sire. Insistently using the past tense in order to write proleptically from the perspective of reflective maturity, Charles laments that his "youthful heart" has become "A play-thing for the fiends of hell" (lines 31, 33). The young poet describes how a seemingly irrevocable distance has developed between himself and the "fruits of virtue" that the youth's sire had previously inculcated in him (line 11). The basic strategy of the *recusatio* operates in two steps: in the first stanza, Charles claims to have lost his sire, occasioning his disavowal of virtue; in the second stanza, Charles then uses the disavowal to justify the poet's development of

the "chief" vice of "vast ambition" (line 26), a sad but seemingly necessary pre-requisite for the young Tennyson's future prospects as a poet.

The logic of this *recusatio* thus accomplishes two rhetorical aims for young Charles. First, it allows him to subtly include evidence of virtue even as he laments the loss of virtue. In particular, he displays the wisdom to recognize his errant ways:

> From this I date whatever vice
> Has numb'd my feelings into ice;
> From this—the frown upon my brow;
> From this—the pangs that rack me now. (lines 17–20)

This cataloguing of the poet's felt shortcomings implicitly endorses the virtue of wisdom. It is a thorough, introspective cataloguing, emphasized by the weightiness of the long dashes. Nevertheless, I would also argue that, under the guise of self-deprecation (disavowal of virtue), Charles actually constructs a virtuous persona; after all, the chief vice to which he admits in this poem is nothing worse than that of poetic ambition.

Second—and crucial to the logic of the *recusatio*—the young poet finds an antitype through which he can cast himself as a mature poet ready to be put "under the microscopic eye of periodical Criticism" (Tennyson and Tennyson, Advertisement). In closing the poem, Charles remarks, "I knew the rainbow soon would fade!" (line 40). Representing himself as inadequate to the task of composing an encomium to the virtues of childhood, Charles also takes up the role of cynic; in this way, he gives himself an air of experience and postures himself as having crossed the Rubicon into adulthood.

Alfred, likewise, practises the *recusatio* throughout *Poems, by Two Brothers*, and it is Alfred's contributions to the volume that occupy the remaining space in this essay. Both brothers had ambitions of becoming professional poets (as did many young boys in the nineteenth century), but Alfred alone would achieve this rank while Charles would become ordained as a minister and write poetry in his spare time. One early observable difference in their work is Alfred's interest in the popular, sentimental style of poetry—an interest that critics of the day would have dismissed or condemned but that cultivated wide reading networks among the general public (which was becoming increasingly female). Much as his older brother does, a young Alfred experiments with his poetic sense of self through the basic rhetorical strategy of the *recusatio*, disavowing classical genres; however, Alfred's juvenilia show him looking for his antitypes not just in competing classical forms but in modern, sentimental poetry.

Arranged near the beginning of the 109-poem volume, Alfred's "The Exile's Harp" contains a post-Romantic depiction of the exiled, isolated, wandering (male) poet with which the young poet wants to identify.[6] Using the logic of the *recusatio*, Tennyson disavows the "Harp of" his "fathers" (line 13), announcing his intentions

and poetic allegiances in the process; specifically, he intends to distance himself from the pastoral mode. Harps, lyres, and fountains are all associated with pastoral poetry, and the poem begins with an assertion that Tennyson will "hang" the harp, the poet's lyre, "by the side of the fountain," leaving it behind forever (line 1). Ironically, however, the ensuing lines display Tennyson's already adept ear for the pastoral cadence: he writes of the "whispering branch of the long-waving / willow" (lines 2–3) and the "hoarse gale of the / mountain" (lines 3–4). These enjambed lines place the direct object on its own line, thereby giving the pastoral description its own space. Furthermore, this stanza's Alexandrine lines are characteristic of the pastoral genre and would normally be used to describe an idyllic, pastoral setting.

Such a demonstration of skill in the rejected genre is characteristic of the classical *recusatio* that Tennyson would have encountered in his Horatian training as a child, a key feature of which is the adumbration and incorporation of the rejected material (Davis 94). In this poem Tennyson claims to abandon the harp because he feels unfit and unworthy to play such an instrument: "For where," he asks, "is the heart or the hand to awaken / The sounds of the soul-soothing sweetness again?" (lines 11–12). With such a question, Tennyson strategically feigns humility; as the poem's deft handling of pastoral elements demonstrates, he actually believes that he does possess the heart and the hand to awaken "soul-soothing sweetness."

The *recusatio* continues in the chorus of "The Exile's Harp," where, instead of offering "soul-soothing sweetness," the young poet is now positioned through the preceding disavowal to launch into a different poetic mode and metre. Underscoring his claim of being an exile from the idyllic pastoral, Tennyson launches a chorus composed in rapidly succeeding lines of trimetre:

> Oh! Harp of my fathers!
> Thy chords shall decay,
> One by one with the strings
> Shall thy notes fade away;
> Till the fiercest of tempests
> Around thee may yell,
> And not waken one sound
> Of thy desolate shell! (lines 13–20)

The hastening pace of the chorus constructs a dichotomy dividing that which is being disavowed (the pastoral) from that which is being promoted (a neo-Romantic elegiac mode). Sensing that the harp is ill-suited for the compositions of an exiled poet (which, proleptically, the poet already envisions himself as), Tennyson uses this elegiac mode to express the loss he feels at finding the harp barren and "desolate." It is mute for him; it can "not waken one sound"; therefore, he must disavow it if he is to continue on this self-selected path of exile poet.

To make it clear that he is disavowing the harp by choice (and not because he lacks the skills), Tennyson then uses the next stanza and the closing chorus to demonstrate his facility with the whole range of skills required of a poet (at the young age of fifteen or seventeen years old no less). Before leaving the harp behind forever, the young Tennyson remarks that he will "fling a wreath round" it (line 21) so that others "shall remember the hand that hath / crown'd thee" (lines 25–26). These actions are adumbrations that Tennyson includes in his *recusatio* to demonstrate that he can be the type of poet he is disavowing *if he wants*. Here in this poem, however, he strikes out on his own path, conveying at once a respect for the traditional pastoral mode of Virgil and others, as well as a desire to take his own poetry in new directions:

> One sweep will I give thee,
> And wake thy bold swell,
> Then, thou friend of my bosom,
> For ever farewell! (lines 41–44)

Like his brother Charles's poem "In Early Youth I Lost My Sire," which announces the loss of childhood innocence, Alfred's "The Exile's Harp" concludes with a severing of old ties.

The *recusatio*, then, is one rhetorical strategy by which Alfred Tennyson thinks, writes, and acts proleptically, thereby posturing himself as the antithesis of the inexperienced poet that he actually was. Prolepsis itself, defined as "the action of anticipating a possible objection or counter-argument in order to answer or discount it, or to deprive it of force" (*OED*), can also be understood as a rhetorical stance and a style of argumentation that young Victorian boys learned in grammar school in their studies of classical rhetoric (Langbauer 5). Alfred Tennyson understands the rhetorical limitations faced by an adolescent who pens poems in modes not meant for juvenile poets, so he works out ways to discard childish or child-like qualities from his poems. Cognizant of the periodical critic's gaze from the very start in the volume's Advertisement, Tennyson proleptically anticipates their objections to his youth and naïveté by imagining himself as the poet who can always-already resist and overcome those critiques.

"The Sun Goes Down in the Dark Blue Main" finds Tennyson again practising those rhetorical strategies of prolepsis and disavowal that, I argue, go hand in hand in his juvenilia. At a very basic level, this poem is about poetry's inability to restore youth once it has departed, which is an appropriate thesis for a poet seemingly obsessed with moving past youth into maturity: "what charm can restore the flower / Of youth to the old and hoary," it asks (lines 11–12). His youth has, surely, not departed. Nevertheless, Tennyson invokes Virgil for his poem's epigraph ("Irreparabile tempus" [irretrievable time]) to announce his intention of proleptically narrating "in advance an event that will take place later" (Genette 40). Tennyson envisions a specific moment in time in the future when he will look back on his lost

youth wistfully. Can the act of constructing a poem retrieve lost time? Although this three-stanza poem repeatedly asks the question with some degree of hope, the epigraph from Virgil as well as the internal rhyme scheme point to the ultimate futility of reclaiming lost time. Moreover, in this early poem, a young Alfred not only reflects on this futility but also does so in a way that anticipates and defends against criticism that may ask how a young person could possibly have anything serious to say about such a thing.

The three stanzas of this poem are eerily similar, almost frustratingly so. As Jane Wright notes, the poem can seem redundant due to "the reduplication" of the poem's main question along different lines (143). Further, as the three stanzas unfold, both rhetoric and metre contribute to the frustrating reduplication of the poem's themes. Rhetorically, each of the three stanzas follows a statement-exclamation-question pattern in *abab* rhyme scheme; each considers a different scenario but then turns from that scenario to ask a question, each beginning in the same way: "what charm can restore." However, each stanza ends without offering an answer to this question:

> The sun goes down in the dark blue main,
> To rise the brighter to-morrow;
> But oh! what charm can restore again
> Those days now consign'd to sorrow?
>
> The moon goes down on the calm still night,
> To rise sweeter than when she parted;
> But oh! what charm can restore the light
> Of joy to the broken hearted?
>
> The blossoms depart in the wintry hour,
> To rise in vernal glory;
> But oh! what charm can restore the flower
> Of youth to the old and hoary?

On Wright's reading, the speaker of the poem tries, but ultimately fails, to tempt (charm) readers into believing that poetry should have the power to restore the losses of time, joy, and youth, respectively (143). The answer to the three questions should be poetry itself; it should be this very poem. However, the enjambed lines in the questions in stanzas two and three ("light / Of joy," "flower / Of youth") generate a "self-conscious displacement" of charm's power (Wright 143). As a result, the poem cannot complete the restoration; it can only continually return to what has been lost. Disappointingly, that is the extent of charm's power, Tennyson suggests. By the third stanza, the question becomes more personal and more metaphorical. The speaker's initial optimistic recognition that the "wintry hour" gives rise to "vernal glory" is immediately undercut with the exclamation "but oh!" because the restoration of each

season with each passing year ultimately frustrates the task of the poet. No charmed language can restore "the flower / Of youth to the old and hoary" (lines 11–12). That time is irretrievable, according to Virgil, and Tennyson applies that wisdom without being trite about it.

Though in his juvenilia Tennyson consistently strives to elevate his stature as a poet through the rhetorical strategies of prolepsis (always-already envisioning his future self as a poet) and the *recusatio* (disavowing his youthful identity in order to arrive at that always-already achieved destination), Tennyson's use of *recusatio* cannot be fully appreciated if we only consider it in terms of competing classical genres (epic, ode, pastoral, and so on). As part of his journey to "cross the Rubicon" into the professional marketplace of poetry and of "periodical Criticism," Tennyson also disavows the idea that good poetry has no dealings with the marketplace but belongs to a higher realm. In other words, his juvenilia seek to establish credibility in part by demonstrating that it can meet the expectations of a general reading public that has been rapidly growing and diversifying (St Clair 13). Whether participating in the normative schoolboy tradition of writing poetry in imitation of classical Greek and Latin poets or writing in the popular, sentimental style that Nicholson calls the "School-Miss Alfred" style, he uses the classical strategy of *recusatio* to both disavow certain classical genres and to demonstrate his mastery of antitypes—classical and contemporary.

Read in this way, the poems Alfred contributes to *Poems, by Two Brothers* that experiment with a sentimental mode are not completely at odds with the volume's main intention to present a thorough schooling in and mastery of the classical tradition in poetry. Several of the 50 poems that Alfred contributes as a fifteen-year-old reflect his childhood encounters with popular literature, and in some of these, including "The Passions," "I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow," "On Sublimity," "We Meet No More," and "To Fancy," Tennyson branches out into a sentimental mode. Andrew Lang, in his recent biography of Tennyson, finds little to praise in Tennyson's juvenilia: "These poems contain, as far as I have been able to discover, nothing really Tennysonian" (5). Lang takes his cue from Tennyson's own perception of the poetry he composed as a youth. When, in 1868, Tennyson learned that copies of *The Lover's Tale* (composed at age nineteen) were circulating, he apologetically remarked, "Allowance must be made for abundance of youth. It is rich and full, but there are mistakes in it …. The poem is the breath of young love" (qtd. in Lang 5). While modern literary critics will typically reproduce Tennyson's own stance towards his juvenilia, I argue that *Poems, by Two Brothers* affords readers a glimpse into Tennyson's quite successful experimentation with a sentimental mode that had overtaken the poetry marketplace in the 1820s.

"The Passions," for example, attests to Tennyson's engagement with a popular, sentimental mode as part of his efforts to write and act proleptically. He uses the most popular of Gothic romances, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, as a platform from which he can make yet another *recusatio*, this time disavowing the passionate,

sentimental feelings that are at the very heart of the genre. Here, Tennyson constructs a future self who reaches back to tell the fourteen- or fifteen-year-old some crucial information that only a poet with significant life experience can apprehend. It begins with the speaker stating "Beware, beware, ere thou takest / the draught of misery": a warning given from the perspective of one who has already taken that draught and awoken "the scorpions that sleep" within. The imagery in these opening lines is derived from a passage in volume three of *Udolpho*: "You have passions in your heart—scorpions; they sleep now—beware how you awaken them! they will sting you even to death!" (455). Sister Agnes, who is soon to be revealed as Signora Laurentini, heiress of the house of Udolpho, speaks these words to Emily St. Aubert as a warning. That dynamic of an experienced woman (Sister Agnes) giving advice to a young person (Emily St. Aubert) is reproduced in Tennyson's poem: the young poet already envisions himself as the Sister Agnes figure, one who has experienced much sadness from awakening the "scorpions."

As in his later poetry, a young Tennyson here demonstrates "a thorough integration with the aesthetic and literary community of women writers" (Ledbetter, "Protesting" 57). Just as Tennyson's later poem "The Victim" was inspired by Charlotte Yonge's *A Book of Golden Deeds*, "The Passions" is rooted in his reading of Radcliffe's Gothic novel and his exploration of feminine subjectivity (ibid. 58). In this imitation, however, there is a slippage. The epigraph that Tennyson chooses from the novel very clearly states, "beware *how* you awaken them [the scorpions / the passions]" (emphasis mine). Radcliffe's emphasis is on the proper mechanics of awakening: Sister Agnes warns Emily St. Aubert to awaken her passions cautiously (recognizing that the awakening is inevitable in a young girl). By contrast, the speaker in Tennyson's opening stanza warns the youthful person to keep the passions asleep and dormant—to repress the passions even: "Beware, beware, *ere* thou wakest / The scorpions that sleep in thee" (emphasis mine). By replacing *how* with *ere*, Tennyson offers a reinterpretation of *Udolpho* from the perspective of an adolescent boy imagining himself as an experienced man. Thus, he inadvertently reveals the strictures and expectations of Victorian manhood foisted upon his boyhood. The putting to sleep, or death, of the passions here is also consistent with the Christian consolatory rhetoric that can been seen in the Tennyson brothers' other juvenilia in this volume.[7] Even though Tennyson may be reading *Udolpho* with some unavoidable boyish bias, "The Passions" nonetheless works rhetorically as an act of prolepsis.

Moreover, in the third and fourth stanzas, Tennyson also performs a *recusatio*, disavowing the very thing that he enacts. Both stanzas begin passionately with two exclamations of "Yet oh!" even as the speaker exhorts the listener to live in tranquility and to avoid rousing the passions. Through the *recusatio* in these specific stanzas, Tennyson deftly showcases his range as a poet to encompass both the reflective and the sentimental. The internal rhyme scheme, moreover, permits Tennyson to create strong associations between youth and tranquility that outmatch "the rancour of hate" incited by the passions:

Yet oh! yet while the rancour
  Of hate has no place in thee,
While thy buoyant soul has an anchor
  In youth's bright tranquil sea:

Yet oh! yet while the blossom
  Of hope is blooming fair,
While the beam of bliss lights thy bosom—
  O! rouse not the serpent there! (stanzas 3–4)

Here, similar to what we find him doing in "The Sun Goes Down on the Dark Blue Main," Tennyson uses enjambment to link concepts together metrically: "the rancour / Of hate" (stanza 3) and "the blossom / Of hope" (stanza 4). While the first enjambed phrase is immediately stifled because "rancour" (presently) has "no place in thee," the "buoyant soul" can stay afloat in "youth's bright tranquil sea" because, crucially, it has an "anchor." Tennyson does some anchoring of his own across these two stanzas: there is internal rhyme and alliteration between "buoyant" and "bright" that outmatches the now stifled "rancour / Of hate" mentioned in the preceding lines. Even though Tennyson transitions from a nautical metaphor to a botanical metaphor in the fourth stanza, he maintains the alliteration of "b" words: "blossom," "blooming," "beam," and "bliss" continue the hopeful tone begun in the third stanza with "buoyant." Between the buoyancy in the nautical metaphor and the "blooming" that occurs in the fourth stanza, Tennyson expertly promotes youth from a place of distanced reflection.

Even so, the syntax in these two stanzas betrays Tennyson's reflective posture. With both stanzas beginning with ejaculations ("Yet! Oh!") and ending with subordinated dependent clauses ("While …"), the tranquility of youth is unstable. Despite the internal reflective mood of the two stanzas, each is enclosed by exclamation points as a reminder that, in this poem, the as yet still slumbering passions exert their will. The speaker's imperative to "rouse not the serpent there!" conveys the sentiment and the feeling belonging to an individual who has experienced the throes of passion and is not yet fully distanced from that experience. Sentiment, feeling, and passion creep into Tennyson's poem just as Sister Agnes forewarned that passion is wont to creep into a maturing young person's mind in *Udolpho*. In constructing this strongly worded imperative, Tennyson can demonstrate proleptically a posture of maturity based both on reflection and sentimentality. In a later stanza, the speaker, presenting himself as experienced, reflects on the dangers of succumbing to passion by foregrounding feeling and sensation:

When the world has rent the cable
  That bound thee to the shore,
And launched thee weak and unable

To bear the billow's roar;

Then the slightest touch will waken
Those pangs that will always grieve thee,
And thy soul will be fiercely shaken
With storms that will never leave thee! (stanzas 6–7)

Tennyson's allusion to the conversation between Sister Agnes and Emily St. Aubert in Radcliffe's novel here guides the reader in interpreting the poem's complex rhetoric, all of which develops the argument that there is no safe way to awaken the sleeping passions. The "buoyant soul" that had been anchored inevitably becomes unmoored and realizes that it is actually "weak and unable" in the event that the sea is anything but "tranquil." This realization by the speaker is made real through the emphasis of touch in stanza 7. With some sexual undertones, the speaker explains to the auditor that even "the slightest touch" will set in motion feelings and passions that cannot be rolled back. As a poet who is attempting in *Poems, by Two Brothers* to represent himself as a mature poet whose course has already been rolled out, "The Passions" provides Tennyson ample opportunity for this self-authentication. That explains why the final stanza's emphatic warning—"Beware, beware" (lines 29, 31)—works proleptically: he already envisions what it is like to have experienced this awakening; thus, a poetics of sentimentality is an important mode for him to establish credibility as a poet.

Unsurprisingly, while the epigraphs that Tennyson selects are predominantly from male writers and primarily reflect his schoolboy training, the way that the poems operate in relation to those epigraphs suggests that a teenage Tennyson was feeling out his own poetic stance—points of alignment with his male predecessors and points of departure. Still, his engagement with more contemporary source material, such as Radcliffe, Edmund Burke, James Beattie, and Lord Byron, fosters a curious blend of classical and contemporary aesthetics. It should be remembered that Charles, too, engages with many of the same literary personas as Alfred. In this blending of aesthetic movements, however, Alfred more frequently found opportunity to experiment with sentimentality. "The Passions," as well as other sentimental poems in *Poems, by Two Brothers*, was composed at about the same time as a notable rise in periodical poetry printed in gift books and literary annuals, such as the *Keepsake* and *Forget-Me-Not*, which ran through enormous print runs and various editions until the 1850s when those specific titles fell out of vogue. Tennyson, in his early twenties, looked ambivalently at this genre of popular poetry, writing in a letter to Richard Monckton Milnes on 21 December 1836, "Provokt by the incivility of Editors, I swore an oath, that I would never again have to do with their vapid books …. To write for people with prefixes to their names is to milk he-goats: there is neither honour nor profit" (qtd. in Ledbetter, *Tennyson* 8). As Ledbetter observes, Tennyson here makes a pointed critique of the efforts of aristocratic editors like, for instance,

Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley and other editors "with prefixes to their names," because they "often sought authors who would write without pay while saving their large budget for literary celebrities such as Scott" (ibid.). Tennyson's own romantic ideals about poetry, espoused throughout the Advertisement in *Poems, by Two Brothers*, existed in tension with a growing understanding of the business of poetry as it stood in the early nineteenth century. Even a fifteen-year-old Tennyson challenges himself to write poetry "of sparkling thought untouched … as old as the truth" that is also consciously seeking to "court notoriety" (Tennyson and Tennyson, Advertisement). He strikes a delicate balance between more masculine poetry that he learned from his schoolboy training and the contemporary vogue for expressive, sentimental poems of the heart that had recently been penned by Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley—and other models that had been circulating in the popular periodical press.

"I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow" stands out as Tennyson's disavowal of a particular type of expressive poetry (reflection) that is also an avowal of his own aesthetic preference (a poetics of sensation). When a teenage Tennyson composed this poem, he set out to imitate the popular Romantic trope of the isolated (male) poet wandering in a natural scene from which he is alienated. Christopher Ricks identifies Shakespeare's Lear as a primary source for this juvenile poem because the first stanza depicts a maddened, solitary wanderer trapped within a storm. The transformation of this stormy scene into a "waste of existence" in stanza 4 also hearkens back to Lear's growing insanity on the heath induced by his daughters' desertion. Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" may be additional source material for the young poet; in this case, however, instead of Wordsworth's reflective aesthetic being Tennyson's prototype, it is the antitype. Unlike Wordsworth's ubiquitous lyric that commences, "I wandered lonely as a cloud / That floats on high o'er vales and hills," Tennyson's wanderer lyricizes:

> I wander in darkness and sorrow,
> Unfriended, cold, and alone,
> As dismally gurgles beside me
> The bleak river's desolate moan.
> The rise of the volleying thunder
> The mountain's lone echoes repeat:
> The roar of the wind is around me,
> The leaves of the year at my feet. (lines 1–8)

In addition to Tennyson reworking Wordsworth's positive view of the natural environment into a threatening one, he also notably chooses the present tense for his lyric, eschewing the "renovating virtue" of the reflective past tense so common in Wordsworth's lyrics. Tennyson abides in the sensory world, in the felt realities of the speaker he is inhabiting.

Reading "I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow" as a *recusatio* of "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" only makes sense if the poem is understood as Tennyson acting proleptically. The closing refrain, which is repeated with some variation in every stanza, conspicuously refers to "leaves" and "feet," which, of course, are both terms with double meanings: "The roar of the wind is around me, / The leaves of the year at my feet." Situated in this melancholic, alienated setting, the speaker feels the gravity of his task as a poet in the mid-1820s. Conscientious of the "leaves of the year," that is, the abundance of contemporaneous poetry, "at his feet," that is, influencing his metre, the speaker must decide what to do with this poetic inheritance. Will it inspire him to greatness, or will it leave him stymied and impotent?

Read proleptically, the poem's second stanza shows the speaker's initial paralyzing despair: "Not a friend that I lov'd but is dead." Feeling out his own future as a poet, Tennyson recognizes it as a lonely, perhaps empty, future. By 1827, many of Tennyson's boyhood poetic idols were dead—Keats, Shelley, and Byron all died in their primes—and Tennyson muses in this lyric poem whether his fate must necessarily be the same: "Oh! when shall I rest in the tomb; / Wrapt about with the chill winding sheet?" Like the double meanings Tennyson employs with "feet" and "leaves" in the refrain, here is another obvious reference to the act of writing poetry: the "sheet" enwrapping him evokes the very poems composed on sheets of paper. In the third stanza, he looks back on "visions of youthful delight" as bygone times despite the fact that he is, in reality, in the prime of his youth.

In the final two stanzas, Tennyson becomes reconciled to his fate, deciding that he has no choice but to pursue his poetry. As stated in the Advertisement to *Poems, by Two Brothers*, he has crossed the Rubicon. Poignantly, the final refrain in the last stanza becomes Tennyson's own invitation: "*Let the roar of the wind be around me, / The fall of the leaves at my feet*" [emphasis original]. The use of the present tense registers immediacy and finality. By leaning on sensation rather than balanced reflection, Tennyson can assert himself as a fully fledged poet.

Likewise, another sentimental poem, "We Meet No More," eschews reflection and instead meditates on present-tense sensations felt by the poet. It closely follows "I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow" in the sequence of *Poems, by Two Brothers* and may also be classed as a sentimental poem of the "School-Miss Alfred" style so important to Tennyson's early poetry. Similar terrifying elements—"the roaring blast," "angry seas," and "a distant shore"—exist concurrently with the "lonely thoughts" of a fully fledged poet. The lyric is directed inward and conveys alienation. However, what makes "We Meet No More" distinct from Tennyson's other sentimental poems in this collection, such as "I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow," is the direct address to the unknown, possibly imaginary, female figure Ellen, the object of the speaker's affections:

> We meet no more—the die is cast,
> The chain is broke that tied us,

Our every hope on earth is past,
And there's no helm to guide us:
We meet no more—the roaring blast
And angry seas divide us!

And I stand on a distant shore,
The breakers round me swelling;
And lonely thoughts of days gone o'er
Have made this breast their dwelling:
We meet no more—We meet no more;
Farewell, for ever, Ellen! (lines 1–12)

In recent assessments of Tennyson's juvenilia, scholars have dismissed the young poet's pronouncements of finality and permanence in poems such as this one as the immature ramblings of a fifteen-year-old. For example, the editor of the 1999 Norton Critical Edition of Tennyson's poetry leaves a condescending footnote to the lines in the fourth stanza of "I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow": "Shall I fly to the friends of my bosom? / My God! I have buried them all!" This note reads, "The degree to which Tennyson was aware of the incongruities in the pose of a boy of seventeen speaking out on a wasted youth filled with vice and mortal sin is open to speculation" (23). Committing one of the cardinal sins when approaching literary juvenilia, this editor supposes that this young boy cannot possibly understand what it is like to feel the type of loss that he is describing because of his youth and inexperience. The Norton editor frames "I Wander in Darkness and Sorrow" as unoriginal because the young Tennyson must have merely been imitating mature poets with little thought of his own. A more robust understanding of the juvenile tradition in the nineteenth century, however, can open up new, more generous readings of such apparently melodramatic poems.

One could imagine a condescending footnote in the Norton style following the final line, "Farewell forever, Ellen!" that says, "Forever is a long time. Whether a fifteen-year-old could appreciate such finality is open to speculation." A more generous reading of this poem could acknowledge that, by including this personal love poem in a volume of poetry intended to launch a poetic career and "court [public] notoriety," Tennyson envisions a future for himself as a sentimental poet, understanding this mode's popularity with the reading public that was becoming increasingly female. Less than five years later, Tennyson would re-work his meditation on this melancholic sentiment and publish "No More" in the literary annual *The Gem*. In "No More," the speaker grieves with "gushing" tears over his dead love—a common trope in gift book poetry.

Despite Tennyson's reticence about a poetics that seeks notoriety, he relied on literary magazines, annuals, and gift books to expose his poetry to new readers and to provide him with much needed financial support. After Tennyson revised his

adolescent poem "Armageddon" into "Timbuctoo" during his first year at Cambridge, for instance, he submitted that poem to the *Cambridge Chronical and Journal* where it was published on 10 July 1829. With the encouragement of his best friend Arthur Hallam, he would go on to publish individual poems in *The Gem* (1831), *Friendship's Offering* (1831 and 1832), the *Yorkshire Literary Annual* (1832), *The Keepsake* (1837), and *The Tribute* (1837). Ledbetter points out the irony: "Tennyson's entire career is inseparable from a dependence on the very format he supposedly hated, and generations of scholars have largely ignored or devalued important contexts provided by periodicals" ("Protesting" 54). Yet such publication is entirely consistent with Tennyson's objective in adolescence, if we take the advertisement that he and Charles co-wrote seriously: to "emerge from the shade" of easy youth and court "notoriety" in their bold poetic venture.

Repeatedly throughout *Poems, by Two Brothers*, Tennyson experiments with different poetic modes and engages with widely different poetic muses, all to achieve this emergence. In another instance of prolepsis and *recusatio*, the philosophical poem "On Sublimity" finds Tennyson envisioning a future for himself as a poet by demonstrating that he understands literary history and the poetic tradition that he is joining. Drawing on his learning from Edmund Burke, whose work on the sublime he quotes in the poem's epigraph, he offers a rejoinder to the pastoral poetry of the Latin and Greek poets that constituted his childhood education:

> O tell me not of vales in tenderest green,
> The poplar's shade, the plantane's graceful tree;
> Give me the wild cascade, the rugged scene,
> The loud surge bursting o'er the purple sea:
> On such sad views my soul delights to pore …. (lines 1–5)

The rest of the poem amounts to an encomium to sublimity and those poets who take up the sublime in their work, despite the fact that doing so is melancholic work. The teenage Tennyson uses this poem as a metric to identify the stuff of his poetry as that which deals in the immense, the sublime, the magnificent, and the profound; he also uses it to demonstrate the confidence to give a blessing in the final stanza to those bards who feel "the genuine force of high Sublimity" by willingly straying from "the emerald green of Fancy's vales" into the gloomier, more melancholic terrain of sublime poetry.

This is an early instance of Tennyson striving to aestheticize death and grief—subjects that he will take up again and again throughout his lifetime. Several more lyrics by Alfred in *Poems, by Two Brothers* seek to be tear-jerkers as the young poet has surmised this to be an essential tool in the poet's toolkit. This toolkit, again, Tennyson has inherited from his grammar school lessons as well as from his reading of contemporary popular, sentimental verse. Eloquently written verses and tales about love or lost love, death, nature, and children dominate the contents of gift books.

Poems about Christianity, exotic travels, married life, moral lessons, and medieval romance were acceptable and typical subjects. Consequently, most of the poems included in the volume contain an epigraph taken from some classical source—such as Horace, Milton, or Beattie—that afford him the opportunity to delve into these topics. In "And Ask Ye Why These Sad Tears Stream?" Tennyson quotes a line from the Ovidian ode, "Sappho to the Absent Phaon," which translated means, "You my dreams bring back to me." Essentially, then, Tennyson imitates this epigraph in his poem but repurposes it according to the conventions of modern sentimental poetry, that is, in order to induce genuine tears in readers. In doing so, Tennyson does not just recapitulate a classical source to legitimate his boyish feelings; rather, he attempts to demonstrate a mastery of this classical source material to show that he is up to the task of being a professional people's poet. He wants to capture the Sensation that Ovid brings to mind.

The guiding aesthetic in the literary annual and gift book genre popularized during Tennyson's teenage years was to give voice to the desires of the heart, particularly the hearts of female readers, the primary audience for gift books and poetry albums. When Tennyson contributes to such publications in his early twenties, he is inhabiting a poetic persona quite distinct from the kind of persona associated with the sublime: "Tennyson had long been writing in context with women readers and writers, enough to inspire criticism from Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1864 when he derided Tennyson as 'a poet adapted to a mixed audience of school-girls and Oxford dons'" (qtd. in Ledbetter, "Protesting" 57).[8]

It is not the intent of this essay to chart out a new trajectory of the growth of a poet as Jerome Buckley once did; only to seek foreshadowing of Tennyson's later greatness in his juvenile poetry would do his juvenilia injustice. My goal, rather, is demonstrate that, when composing his fifty-poem contribution to *Poems, by Two Brothers*, a young Tennyson does more than imitate—he acts proleptically, already envisioning himself on an equal plane with the many authors he quotes in his epigraphs or otherwise invokes. More concretely, we can see him following a *recusatio* model initially inherited from his Horatian training as he feels out the continuities and disjunctions between his own work and that of his literary models, necessary to developing his own original poetic persona. By consistently disavowing youthful immaturity and other antitypes brought to the fore by his engagement with outside sources, Tennyson can find his own type. This process, which began for Tennyson in childhood, continued into adulthood in his Cambridge years with Arthur Hallam. Hallam's classification of Tennyson as a Poet of Sensation rather than as a Poet of Reflection is, of course, well-known. Hallam praises Tennyson's first solo publication in 1831, *Poems, in Two Volumes*, saying, "He sees all forms of nature with the 'eruditus oculus [learned eye],' and his ear has a fairy fineness. There is a strange earnestness in his worship of beauty which throws a charm over his impassioned song, more easily felt than described, and not to be escaped by those who have once felt it" (1195). To make his argument, Hallam disavows Wordsworth and the poetry of Reflection in

order to align Tennyson with Keats, Percy Shelley, and the Poets of Sensation: the same logic of prolepsis and disavowal is at work here in Hallam's essay as in *Poems, by Two Brothers*.

NOTES

[1] For the 1893 facsimile edition of the 1827 first edition, editor Hallam Tennyson relied on his uncle, Frederick, to assign authorship to the poems published in this volume, and many of the poems cannot be accurately assigned. Hallam observes his father's wish that none of the poems in this volume be included in any future edition of Alfred Tennyson's collected works.

[2] For examinations of Tennyson's closet drama "The Devil and the Lady," see Tucker, "Strange Comfort." See also Peterson, "'And envy me.'" For examinations of Tennyson's "Armageddon," which would be revised into "Timbuctoo," see Ricks, "'Armageddon' into 'Timbuctoo.'" See also Kroll, "Tennyson and the Metaphysics of Material Culture" for additional analysis of "Timbuctoo" and for brief remarks on the juvenile poem "Memory."

[3] The following poems by Alfred in *Poems, by Two Brothers* are but a few that quote a Greco-Latin poet for the epigraph: "Remorse," "The Dell of E—," "The Vale of Bones," "Did Not Thy Roseate Lips Outvie," "Friendship," "And Ask Ye Why These Sad Tears Stream," and "The Walk at Midnight."

[4] See Wright, "The Charm of Tennyson" for an account of Tennyson's Horatian education (143). See *Carmina* 2.12 for the text of this ode, and see Davis, "The Disavowal" for an analysis of Horace's *recusatio* (93).

[5] See *Eclogue* VI. 3ff.

[6] When Byron died in 1823, a distraught fourteen-year-old Tennyson purportedly ran out of his home and carved "BYRON IS DEAD" into a tree. See Ricks, *Tennyson*, p. 13.

[7] See "On the Death of My Grandmother" (Charles), "Time: An Ode" (Alfred), "The Grave of a Suicide" (Alfred), "On a Dead Enemy" (Alfred), "The Dying Christian" (Charles), and "The Dying Man to His Friend" (Alfred) in *Poems, by Two Brothers*.

[8] Ledbetter also notes that "Harold Nicholson recalls yet an earlier complaint in Lytton's *The New Timon* (1846) about Tennyson's … style. The aesthetic traditionally considered feminine, and therefore distastefully sentimental to these critics, involved themes and expressions of the heart, usually involving women characters or domestic situations" ("Protesting" 57).

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THE JUVENILE TRADITION AND THE FICTION FACTORY, PART 2: AFTERLIFE

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PART ONE of this series surveyed the attitudes of young writers working in the dime-novel industry. It built on recovery work in juvenilia studies by critics such as Daniel Cohen and Sarah Lindey exhuming records of dime writing "still haunted" by young and forgotten writers (D. Cohen, "Winnie" 408). New publication technologies fostered assembly-line writing and mass marketing that fueled the public's demand for cheap and formulaic stories and built a blood-and-thunder dime industry, which flourished from the 1860s through the beginning of the next century. Its immense popularity meant a need for scores of nameless and dispensable producers of this fiction. This new kind of authorship—that defined authors as anonymous workers in the fiction factory rather than as geniuses or artists—was an opportunity for young writers who read dime novels and rushed to write them. They knew the conventions and would work for practically nothing (or even for free).

Youth was so linked to dime writing that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the industry could seem practically constituted 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). They were part of an economic system that took youth as a commercial value—up-to-the-minute youth provided a fantasy that such new modes of publication seemed to advertise—while also making use of young writers glorying in such hype. Part One of these two essays explored this new character of young people's writing to indicate an evolving understanding of the juvenile tradition. Young writers now asserted themselves as modern hacks, celebrating their proficiency in dime formulas, and in their almost superhuman productivity turning them out—and did so with what one erstwhile teenage dime author, Gilbert Patten (1866-1945), called a "never-say-die pluck that every young writer needs" (qtd. by Anderson 14).

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Yet this "never-say-die" attitude also suggests that a different afterlife might await the return of the juvenile authors haunting the records of cheap print—for what gets recovered as well are the never-buried social tensions underlying dime writing.[1] In surveying the literary nationalism encoded in dime formulas, Part One explored how dime fiction kept alive a sense of perennial youth in part through youth's recurrent and lasting association with the American character. Young writers working in dime formulas by necessity worked within these attitudes—and the baldness of dime formulas made obvious how these so-called "American" attitudes were ideological, encoding troubling assumptions when it came to race and imperialism, part of the manifest destiny and American exceptionalism that cheap print reflected.

Recent social historians, including Shelley Streeby, argue that dime formulas make patent the hierarchies of power within the nation's authorizing assumptions. These critics have turned to the dime novel as a clear record of how "class and racial formations and popular and mass culture … are inextricable" in American (literary) history. Quoting Michael Paul Rogin, Streeby argues that the dime novel shows that "early forms of U.S. popular culture 'created national identity from the subjugation of its [nonwhite] folk,'" making it "even more necessary to come to terms with the culture of sensation and its effects on U.S. history and culture"—consequences she sees in part as continuing "a legacy of racism that has haunted the house of labor" when it comes to popular writing (*American* 15, 28, 15; insertion hers). Young aspirants to this industry had to negotiate these constraints, working within them to publish. Such negotiations were especially complicated for young writers of colour such as a dime author I discussed in Part One: Luis Senarens (c.1863–1939).

Part Two is about the afterlife of the dime novel—both in terms of how its formulas continued to haunt American letters, but also in terms of how ongoing literary-critical recovery of texts in the archive of the fiction factory have expanded possibilities for how to regard them. It starts again with Senarens, a Cuban American writing during the complex history leading up to the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the US occupation of Cuba until 1902. It outlines an incongruity that critics have noted between his investment in his Cuban heritage and the dime novel formulas he used, which have been understood as providing "a predominantly young white male working-class readership with fantasies of colonial power," fantasies that perform "the cultural work of preparing U.S. readers for their country's subsequent forays into imperial conquest" of neighbour nations such as Cuba (Williams, "Frank" 279–80). Senarens's work in the appalling polemics of dime formulas illustrates the challenges that dime-novel authors of colour faced and some of the strategies available to them. Publication in the fiction factory for him entailed being subjected to an incompatibility: achieving authorial identity through churning out plots that denied or disparaged subjectivities like his own.

Considering Senarens as a Latino writer of popular fiction is part of a larger interest in book history that looks at the demographics of who actually wrote and how they published, an approach that has also fueled work in the field of juvenilia

studies. When it comes to the lost history of popular writing, as Samuel R. Delaney asserts, a whole tradition of minoritised writers remain hidden behind anonymity: "we know dozens upon dozens of early pulp writers only as names: They conducted their careers entirely by mail—in a field and during an era when pen names were the rule rather than the exception …. We simply have no way of knowing if one, three, or seven of them—or even many more—were blacks, Hispanics, women, Native Americans, Asians, or whatever. Writing is like that" (qtd. in Wythoff 227n2). Yet the recent recovery of popular texts *has* restored the work of young writers of colour—Cuban American writers such as Senarens, African-American writers such as Harry F. Liscomb (1905–?), and Indigenous producers of dime-related popular entertainment, such as poet and performer E. Pauline Johnson/Tekahionwake (1861–1913) of the Mohawk Nation. These producers expand the archive of texts to be considered, and they also offer more multifaceted ways to consider it by uncovering shared traditions overlooked by establishment culture.

Part Two, then, concentrates in part on how ideological prescriptions continued to shape expectations, and to shape young writers' work, in the early twentieth century—after the dime novel seemed to have waned in popularity.[2] At the same time, it foregrounds how the critical afterlife that has sifted that archive informs an understanding of how to read this ongoing work. In the first decades of the twentieth century, after the decline of the dime industry, young writers, if anything, became even more noticeable, and continued to publish even more. A 1913 *Times* article stated, "There are now more youths than ever eager to be writers. There are more, indeed, than the public could possibly read" (quoted in Hentea, "Late" 167).[3] Demographics kept the category of youth manifest in culture then—the US Census reported that about 52% of the population was under age 24 in 1910 (*1910 Census* 298)—though the dime industry no longer seemed youth's reigning mode. The 1920s saw a resurgence of a more mainstream juvenile tradition published by firms that leaned toward the literary rather than the sensational; Marius Hentea argues that established "publishers targeted and advertised youth, and they made a whole series of efforts to encourage young writers" (*Henry Green* 168). Yet such later opportunities can only be fully understood by appreciating their debt to the previously burgeoning dime industry. This continued juvenile boom in writing extended the possibilities for young writers to middlebrow venues, but the influence of dime fiction remained, both in calling youth to write and—because of popular fiction's more obvious ideological burden—troubling what they could say.[4]

The work of critics like Christine Bold, carefully identifying the diversity of writers actually working in that boom, reconsiders the "dime industry's more general reproduction of sensational caricatures of Indians (as well as black, Mexican, Chinese, Irish and other minoritised figures)" ("Did" 142)—complicating, through newly recovered practitioners, the preconception (not fully supported, she claims) that "while dime fiction has been persuasively analyzed as empowering in class and gender terms, its handling of race is generally considered to be irredeemably repressive"

("*Vaudeville*" 95). Considering the youth of such writers provides additional nuance in recovering their reception and meaning; Clark Barwick, for instance, in his study of Liscomb's *The Prince of Washington Square,* turns to children's literature as the closest model for it, rather than recognize the boom of writing by young people then also operative at the time. Though he recognizes that "what makes *Prince* unique—and particularly valuable to the study of early twentieth century American popular fiction—is that Liscomb was actually a teenager," he treats him nevertheless as supposedly only "the rare example" of juvenile writing (202).[5]

In the 1920s, widely publicised young male writers negotiated the legacy of racism haunting the fiction factory. While publishers capitalised on Daisy Ashford's bestselling 1919 *The Young Visiters* by featuring girl poets—Helen Douglas Adams (1909–1993), Nathalia Crane (1913–1998), Hilda Conkling (1910–1986), and Julia Cooley (1893–1972)—they brought out a number of books by boys at that time as well, including those by the white writers David Putnam (1913–1992) and Horace Wade (1908–1993), both of whom published as preteens, as well as by the teenaged Liscomb. All these young male writers were heavily influenced by dime novels. Putnam, the wealthy publisher's son and Amelia Earhart's stepson, lived out the dime novel's "ludic imperialism" (Lieffers 33) through travel accounts of actual expeditions his family's business could afford to float. Wade, a middle-class eleven-year-old, became a new exemplar of what Part One termed "wide-awake" youth. Enterprising, opportunistic, savvy, determined, with an eye to the main chance, he performed modern youthful writing identity. Building on his fame as a young novelist, Wade became a boy reporter, but also a product spokesman and ad man.

Though the formulaic racism of inherited dime plots appears in the margins of Putnam's story and in the later works Wade went on to publish, Liscomb demonstrates how young writers of colour at this time also confront dime fiction's afterlife. Richard Wright (1908–1960) remembers his own struggles when young to come to authorship at this time, and those conflicts between a self at odds with the assumptions structuring publication opportunities also shape Liscomb's writing. The paradox of (writing) identity for these African-American youth meant that its very possibilities and successes had to be wrested from the place of its traumas—a process intensified for Liscomb who, unlike Wright, remained fully committed to being driven by "popular impulses" and working in a "commercial vein" (Barwick 200).

One tactic of negotiating the fiction factory was to unsettle its assumptions from within, to try surreptitiously to call into question what it demanded they say. Such ironic—because double-voiced—inflections are akin to what Michel de Certeau long ago termed "*la perruque,*" a covert strategy that finds ways, when working within a factory system, of also using its machinery for different ends:

> the worker who indulges in *la perruque* actually diverts time … from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit. In the very place where the machine he must serve

> reigns supreme, he … [finds] a way to create gratuitous products whose sole purpose is to signify his own capabilities through his work and to confirm his solidarity with other workers. … succeed[ing] in "putting one over" on the established order on its home ground…. *la perruque* reintroduces "popular" techniques. (de Certeau 25–26)

De Certeau terms such practices a kind of "making do" (29); these practices, or "'ways of operating,' are similar to 'instructions for use,' but they create a certain play in the machine" (de Certeau 30). The recovery of the juvenile tradition in the afterlife of the dime novel, through the recovery of different young writers of colour working within its shadow, reveals such "making do" writ large in texts that find ways to play the machine.

The literary critics who have written on Senarens—Nathaniel Williams—and on Liscomb—Barwick—emphasise the ironic double-voicing of those writers as they say one thing and mean another, undercutting the ideological prescriptions shaping their plots. They stress how these writers kept looking for that "certain play" (to adopt de Certeau's term) in the system that employed them. They strove for a degree of work that was "free [and] creative" by using "'popular' techniques" against the grain. My own essay is concerned with how they signified their "own capacities" as *youth*, in solidarity with others like them, as they negotiated what the fiction factory demanded in return. In order to publish, they could not escape dime formulas, but they could also engage them with a different inflection, meta-discursively, telling the story of navigating their constraints. The story they told was about their own writing—demonstrating that "the market that enabled authors to create a viable profession writing American literature eventually became a subject of that literature" (S. Williams 116).

The young writers I treat here all—from their different vantage points—addressed the afterlife of the dime novel through telling a story about creating a writing identity; importantly, what they told showed that "relating to that market was not always a simple choice between resistance and collusion" (91). These internal conflicts set the terms for the rhetoric of American youth, and for its aesthetics. Senarens shows how dime-fiction formulas provided publication opportunities for writers who had been marginalised; Liscomb shows that the use of such formulas in the dime novels' afterlife continued to involve marginalised writers in attitudes that had silenced or ignored them.

Looking at the critical afterlife of the dime novel also opens new questions of how to think through and beyond irony itself as a strategy. Critics including Christine Bold or Manina Jones and Neal Ferris consider how Indigenous writers of the dime era deploy but also change popular preconceptions to redefine American identity by restoring the presence of Indigenous culture. They consider non-white artists as not just at the margins of hegemony (and, hence, needing to ironize its meanings) but also centrally placed within cultural traditions and expressions unfamiliar to white

audiences and critics, including long-standing "genealogies of Indigenous performance" (Bold, "Violence" 100). These writers use Indigenous-"centric understandings of self in agential relation to the emergent colonial world" (Jones and Ferris 126). Rather than just an ironic or reactive stance, this kind of doubleness takes on a productive "'Two-Spiritness—'an Indigenous identity category'" that constitutes rather than annuls the self (Bold, "Violence" 103).

Though the fiction factory might seem to reduce all writers of colour to some general otherness that is contained within its workings, the different heritages of young writers who took up identity in that factory suggest different possibilities for refusing "American" hegemony. Juvenilia studies recovers work of neglected writers to recognize how the shared category of youth, which has remained largely unnoticed, is shaping. At the same time, however, youth, as a mode, is not single but shaped by other kinds of shared experience, often overlooked. Those differences determine the ways young artists make do within inherited formulas—but they also indicate whether and how particular young writers might discover new models and affiliations in their place.[6]

Haunted

In treating young writers for the blood-and-thunder industry, the literary critic Sara Lindey argues that such writers leave their mark on the form of what they write as much as they are informed by it. Because "late nineteenth-century story papers provided unique spaces and special opportunities for young writers to enter the marketplace" (72), she contends, seizing those opportunities meant that youth helped "direct and produce the print entertainment they consumed" (73). In her reading, taking up the pen allowed for self-determination—so that, when young writers "write themselves into adulthood" (73), they aim not only to shape themselves but to shape the category of youth in general.

Nevertheless, such agency also had to confront the machinery of its possibility. That the formulas of dime writing precede young writers was also part of the young writers' story. The dime mode provided openings for young writers to publish but also structured what they could say. "Once the conventions were established, *they* [the conventions] seemed to write the book," historian Carl Smith contends (7; insertion mine). The "trademarked generic formula" almost alone comes to seem "the work's creator," Richard Brodhead agrees ("American" 27).[7] Readers at the time understood the dime novel's bald assertions to be prescriptive of popular preconceptions: "It is true, and it is unfortunate, that literature, especially light literature, has much to do with the shaping of a people's views" (Fleming 7).

Young dime novelists also recognised the plots they worked in to be palpable and shaping. Former teenage novelist William Wallace Cook (1867–1933) suggests the eeriness of a sense of reality's being contingent on what stories get told about it

when he writes of how "by an extraordinary coincidence [he] had invented a story that actually had happened" (Scott 6). The story that Cook thinks invented reality into existence was one of the many standard dime plots that aestheticised the death of Indigenous people underlying the United States' creation. One of Cook's tales had employed the stock caricatured formula of a Native American willingly sacrificing his own life to save a "beautiful young white girl"—in this iteration "from a broken dam" ([Cook] 79)—only for Cook to receive a letter from a young man from the Maricopa Nation, convinced that the story described what his own father had actually done.

Such racist and patriarchal formulas are fantasies of the privileged, who imagine their advantage as a gift freely given by those they subjugate. Circular and self-justifying, they explain away the culpability of those in power who sacrifice others, recasting that sacrifice as an act of supposed self-determination, willingly taken (they imagine) by the ones oppressed. This fantasy may indeed shape understandings of history—so that actual young writers, such as this young letter writer, are only recognised when current formulas authorize them to be heard, and produce and guarantee their signatures, according to those laws.

Juvenile writing is by definition tied up with questions of this kind of law. Defined by juvenilia studies as under twenty-one (the representative age of majority), "juvenile" writers are precisely those too young to have any legal right to sign their name. Such young writers may epitomize how all authors borrow authority from the structures of writing that predate them, but *Pierre*, Melville's Young America satire of juvenile writing, underscores how youth's legal nonidentity makes such contingency determinative for them. Young writers, even "the greatest lettered celebrities of the time"—if they "had, by the divine power of genius, become full graduates in the University of Fame, while yet as legal minors"—must like Pierre fully accede for their meaning to "the sophomorean insinuation of the Law," which holds an authority they do not (Melville 341).

This circularity—of law calling up a self that confirms the law by being in thrall to it—in fact remains endemic to retrospective accounts of the dime industry by erstwhile young writers in it—a history that makes up a part of the fiction factory's afterlife. One-time teenage fiction-factory writer Robert Carlton Brown (1886–1959)—who started writing by penning dime novels at the tail end of their boom—describes how the young authors entered that factory "yet only boys" (Brown, "Swell" 482); these boy writers had always before them the cautionary sign of writers who had given their lives to the work, ones he called "the ancient mariner group" (481), referring to that archetype of a teller possessed by his tale. Such monitory figures had retained their "eternal youth" (482) but only because they were caught in the form's repetitions: "all of us had the horrible example of the ancient mariners before us and were constantly afraid" of turning into them (481). Patten recounts a dime editor similarly possessed, kept alive only by his endless reprints of old dime issues long after they no longer sold. In denial that his own publication had been canceled, he kept coming to the office, and "regularly every week he got together a new issue of

the paper he loved and in which his very life seemed wrapped up … by culling material from the early numbers of the same publication." Those around him would quietly print two copies of what he recycled and put them on his desk to keep him thinking the magazine lived on. When he finally learned that it did not—that the paper hadn't been sent to the newsstands for years—"the shock was too much for him. He ceased to come to his office and he did not survive long" (Patten, "Dime" 59).[8]

Like the dead men rising up to sail the mariner's ship because sailing is what they do, this zombification translates self-determination into "degenerescent self-engendering"—Derrida's term that means both creation and grave at one and the same time (Derrida 74). Or, as Brown characterised this dime-writing experience: "Wherever we went we carried whiffs of Spring, whiskey, and the fresh earth-plot smell of rich loamy fiction …. We were the Word" (482). "The fresh earth-plot smell" may be redolent of the garden when it carries "whiffs of Spring," but at the same time it conjures up the freshly turned plot of the grave. So does Brown's invocation of the Christian concept of "the Word"—the Logos which for Derrida always already involves "death or absence" as underlying writing as "the condition of all discourse" (Kates 1025). Social critics of the dime novel—such as Streeby or Alexander Saxon—argue compellingly that the whiff of death arises from the logos of this writing because the dime novel "aestheticizes the genocidal foundation of the nation, turning conquest into a literary enterprise" (Streeby, *American* 216), but remains inexorably haunted by that fatality.

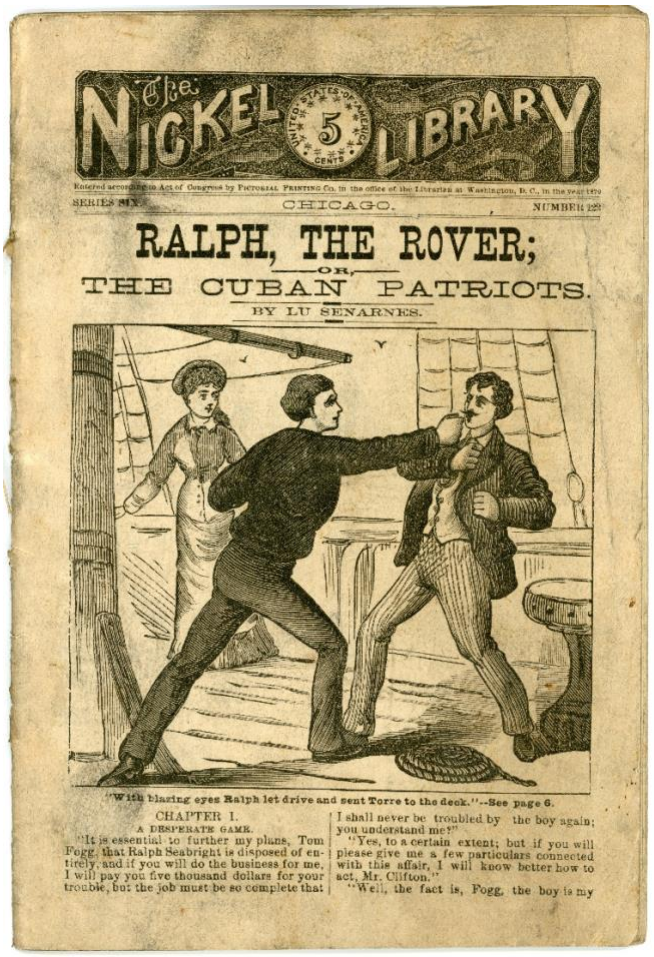
Those writers in groups outside privilege are especially disenfranchised by being caught in this *mise en abyme* reflected between self and ideology. Yet these writers are aware of the machinery they are caught in and strive to use it to different ends. Michael Denning famously locates a dissident force in dime-novel formulas by qualifying their reflection of ideology as not complete and entire but "a contested terrain" (3); similarly, when Bold works to recover dime novels by writers of colour, she argues that such writers may not resolve their incompatibility with the formulas that bestow writing identity; instead, they use that incompatibility to expose and indict the inequity of those formulas. She notes that "some dime novelists managed to invent a new kind of creativity out of their position of limited autonomy" precisely "by making the business of writing to order part of the formulaic action" ("Voice" 30).[9] Indeed, as Derrida suggests, this kind of degenerescent self-engendering is "about the very subject of those limits" (62). To push the constraints of that autonomy, to write anyway despite their restrictions, I suggest, provides one tactic: what de Certeau describes as working within signification to use it against itself, which makes "a kind of *perruque* of writing itself" (28).

In de Certeau's description of this kind of making do, such responses become

> … operational schemas. Just as in literature one differentiates "styles" or ways of writing, one can distinguish "ways of operating"…. These styles of action intervene in a field which regulates them at a first level

> (for example, at the level of the factory system), but they introduce into it a way of turning it to their advantage …. (30)

Employed within the operational aesthetic of the dime industry, I argue, some young writers looked to a kind of juvenile mode—a particular style—for subtle ways to adjust ideology's law as they operated in it—a pressure all the greater for writers of colour like Senarens or Liscomb. Yet Bold suggests that "as much as they were contained by" the cultural power encoded into popular fantasies, writers of colour in the fiction factory, who found work purveying such fantasies, "also pressed closely" on that entrenched power (*Frontier* 222), not just by making do in it but also by deploying other systems of meaning in it too. What those working in the fiction factory left behind was this double heritage.



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SERIES SIX. CHICAGO. NUMBER 122

RALPH, THE ROVER;

—OR,—

THE CUBAN PATRIOTS.

BY LU SENARNES.

"With blazing eyes Ralph let drive and sent Torre to the deck."—See page 6.

CHAPTER I.

A DESPERATE GAME.

"It is essential to further my plans, Tom Fogg, that Ralph Seabright is disposed of entirely, and if you will do the business for me, I will pay you five thousand dollars for your trouble, but the job must be so complete that I shall never be troubled by the boy again; you understand me?"

"Yes, to a certain extent; but if you will please give me a few particulars connected with this affair, I will know better how to act, Mr. Clifton."

"Well, the fact is, Fogg, the boy is my

Fig. 1. Cover page of Ralph, the Rover; or, The Cuban Patriots, *by Lu Senarnes [Luis Senarens]. Nickel Library, Series 6, no. 122, 1879 (Courtesy IUP Special Collections and University Archives, Indiana University of Pennsylvania).*

Noname

FIRST published at age fourteen (the 1879 *Ralph the Rover, or the Cuban Patriots*, about Cuban independence; see Fig. 1), Senarens is now understood as a pioneering Latino writer, who "clearly had an interest in his Cuban heritage" (N. Williams, *Gears* 61).[10] Williams argues that, by presenting "Cuban patriots in an overwhelmingly favorable manner," Senarens's first novel demonstrates that dime novels "do not consistently offer stories that readily conform to imperialist views regarding race or nationalism, and they frequently contain elements that undermine assumptions of Anglo-Protestant authority that enabled empire" ("Frank" 297, 299). Yet, like the Frank Reade, Jr. Edisonades by Noname that Senarens took over writing when also just a youth—the speculative dime novels for which he is famous—his first novel employs "a heroic but heavily caricatured African American who speaks in heavy dialect" (297). This particular distortion is just one of the reasons critics have repeatedly noted that Senarens's books used ugly dime formulas that blatantly and disturbingly "foregrounded a thoroughgoing racism that ranged from crude ethnic stereotyping" to the mass slaughter of colonised races—"inextricably linking technology with racism" in the Noname series (Brooks Landon, qtd. in Wolfe 198).

The connection between the two is built into these books' very assumption of how machinery works. As Taylor Evans has pointed out, the actual machines in these stories—the robot prototypes that marked them as speculative fiction—themselves encode racist distortions: they look like popularly circulated caricatures, borrowed from minstrelsy, of Black servitude. Such assumptions, encoded into the very appearance of these robots, parallel the dominance of the young white inventor in Senarens's stories over his stereotyped Black servant, Pomp. As a result, Senarens's plots depend on caricatures that assume that only some youth—exceptional young white Americans—could command technological expertise. They exemplify new hierarchies between savvy white technocrats and Black labour subordinated to serve the machine:

> Frank Jr.—wealthy, young, strong, a crack shot, and generally unflappable—is as physically exceptional as he is tech savvy … exerting his power instead through mechanical means …. [T]he racial hierarchy (Frank Jr. superior, Pomp subservient) is … validated by their respective abundance or lack of technocompetence, which was shaping up to be a key twentieth-century skill at the time of Senarens's writing.
>
> In other words, Frank Jr. and Pomp occupy their "natural" place in the new machine culture hierarchy, one that conveniently replicates the old social hierarchy with high fidelity. (Evans 576)

Given how visibly Senarens's stories replayed such disturbing formulas, the question remains: just how much could he re-inflect their hierarchies meta-discursively?

Though he could make do in what de Certeau terms "the instruction manual," how far could he make it over?

Part One of this essay discussed the paratext of dime fiction's eye-grabbing covers, showing active young (white) men engaged in heroic feats. In some of Noname's covers (including the ones where Reade travels to Africa), on the other hand, the heritage of racism comes out plainly. These pictures go well beyond depicting just the subtler caricature of his racialised Steam Men to celebrate scenes of blatant colonial oppression. On these covers, Noname's heroes violently subjugate people of colour, who are caricatured as so-called "savages."[11] The sheer visibility of such illustration makes the racism encoded in these stories conspicuous and palpable. The dime mode itself was distinguished by stressing the obvious; it worked through bold relief to "sharply outline, with a few strokes" so that whatever it presented was "instantly recognizable" (Jenks 108). It worked through "simple declarative sentences, one-sentence paragraphs, the ready exclamation point, and bare, undeveloped statements" (Bleiler, "Luis" 663).

De Certeau's irony may work within to unsettle such blatant figurations, but the necessary understatement of a covert strategy makes it hard for that strategy to *counteract* such blatancy. Other responses counter it instead with their own open representations. Literary critic Michelle Raheja builds on the work of Randolph Lewis to identify a mode of "visual sovereignty—the creative self-representation of Native American visual artists" (9) that "interact with older stereotypes" but at the same time also (as Lewis wrote) "'depict themselves with their own ambitions at heart'" (19, 30). Such alternatives that involve ownership of image, and code switching for audiences who can recognize narrative conventions unfamiliar to white viewers, rely on an independent machinery of production—such as that used by early Indigenous filmmakers or in Indigenous-owned theatrical troupes.[12] Such alternative venues were unavailable to Senarens—the avant-garde Latino/a-based art magazines that existed in the 1920s had a very different mandate from the fiction-factory mass market (see Montgomery). Though later writers such as Brown launched experimental careers by leaving that market, Senarens never left Tousey.

Nevertheless, Williams does find traces of a tacit struggle by Senerans within his novels' encoded attitudes, a covert and oblique struggle that is by necessity "both palpable *and* conflicted" (*Gears* 78; emphasis mine).[13] Though he built a lifelong career at Tousey, Senarens explicitly disclaimed some of the dime industry's most jingoistic categories: he wrote that he turned out "comic stories and stories of every description, except bandit and Indian stories" (Senarens "Biography" 10)—that is, he did not take on the explicit plots of manifest destiny (Mexican *bandit* stories) or of the frontier (*Indian* stories) that were fully invested in border conquests or the extermination of Indigenous people.[14] Senarens also "used his editorship at Tousey to counter pro-imperialist attitudes towards Cuba" (N. Williams, *Gears* 7).

"Words of action. Words of venom," one twentieth-century retrospection upon the dime-novel called its insistent and disturbing formulas (Menaugh D1). Senarens's

reactions, as Williams acknowledges, his attempts to negotiate the obvious "venom" of popular racism, remain much more muted and indirect than the sensational marketing mechanism—such as immediately recognizable formulas and eye-catching covers—of the mode of publication in which he worked, showing the difficult intermediations of young writers of colour caught within assembly-line writing without alternative models for working in popular modes.

"The story of Lu Senarens's career shows the possibility of doing the impossible," concluded one contemporary interviewer referring to technologies ("cars without horses, diving boats, winged aircraft") unthought of at the time until he imagined them into existence (Alden 52). That claim could also apply to his attempt to work within dime-novel formulas while also (however indirectly) questioning them. Confronting the impossible becomes the subject of his writing, understood not so much in terms of the triumphant heroism (one convention of the dime novel, which claims to resolve all dilemmas in the final chapter) but through that paradoxical other aspect of the form: the dime novel's episodic interminability: the same old story begins all over again in a never-ending struggle for its wide-awake young heroes. Dime-writer Brown calls this ongoing struggle "a kind of endless serial that was linked together in equal lengths and served up steaming hot" (482). Though no "natural" place (as Evans calls it) seems offered to Latino writers (like Senarens) or other writers of colour within techno-hierarchies, this young author claims one anyway by becoming a recognised speculative writer and technological visionary. In the new machine-culture hierarchies emerging at the time, Senarens assumes and commands the "techocompetence" allegedly impossible for those relegated to the margins. He seizes the very (tech)-savvy rhetoric of youth supposedly denied anyone outside white privilege, even while his stories replay the ugly conventions that seek to deny him that place.

Bringing out dime-novel subtexts of such struggles that have up to now operated under the radar has become the work of critics like Williams or Bold. They strive to recover a record of marginalised agents who push at "the framework of 'AngloSaxon superiority'" that, as they demonstrate, only appears to be unchallenged (Bold, "Popular" 208). In this they advance Denning's earlier work: in proclaiming the dime novel to be contested terrain, Denning's study had also stressed a kind of de Certeau-like "free play and undecidability" in what he called its "multiaccentual texts" (262)—but he concluded that, when it came to challenging entrenched racial attitudes, "the dime novel was a failure" (210). He came to this conclusion, however, because (he thought) writers of colour were absent from the ranks, so no one working in the form could supply significant-enough resistance to its formulas. Subsequent scholarship has actually recovered diverse writers: African-American writers such as Philip Schuyler Warne/Howard Macy (1843–c.1892), the male Cherokee writer John Rollin Ridge (1827–1867) along with women working in dime-related popular forms, such as the Seneca playwright and performer Go-won-go Mohawk (1889–1910) as well as Johnson/Tekahionwake.[15]

Though Senarens was Cuban American, his pseudonym hid his identity until the 1920s. Yet Senarens's repeated stories about the importance of Cuba, Williams implies, may have spoken to other young Cuban Americans even if they only knew him as Noname. Once this identity was known it was important to others: The Facebook page of Ornamental Publishing devoted to Senarens as "the Cuban-American Jules Verne" cites a full-page Sunday story about him in a 1937 Havana newspaper ("*Lo Que*"). Lindey suggests that Senarens's stress on young inventors probably similarly inspired other young aspirants to authorship. She challenges us not to be dismissive of Senarens's covert and oblique strategies of resistance, pointing out the very utility of operating under the radar to get around racist exclusions. Senarens's anonymity, she suggests, might have inspired "a child whose race marginalized him" to speak up without fearing consequences (83); one boy correspondent seeking to write dime fiction who signed himself "Pomp," she proposes, might have been an aspiring young African-American writer (though she acknowledges the "impossibility" of ever knowing, given "the limits of the archive" [83]). The limits of the anonymous fiction-factory archive mean that the formulas that obscured such writers also make it more difficult to register vantage points subtly at odds with those formulas in the face of the obvious messaging their lurid covers provide. The work of Williams and Bold demonstrates how ongoing recovery work and careful rereading, painstaking and ambiguous, can bring to light more complex histories about those who had to work within the fiction factory and even suggest additional strategies they adopted beyond covert resistance.

To undo the pernicious legacy haunting dime fiction, Denning looks ahead to its afterlife—to later known authors from more diverse backgrounds who were prompted by the dime novel to write, singling out how "Richard Wright recalled [dime novels] as 'part of the dreams of my youth'" (264). Wright published his first story (in the 1920s) at age fifteen. In his memoir *Black Boy*, he explains that he was inspired to write when young because of the fantasies of young people's achievements in dime-novels—he had "read my Horatio Alger stories, my pulp stories" ("Black" 147). Yet even though the "bloody thunder" (136) of these stories "enlarged my knowledge … more than anything I had encountered so far," so that to Wright "they were revolutionary, my gateway to the world" (113), ultimately a family friend pointed out to him the ugly rhetoric of white egalitarianism, hate, and violent Ku Klux Klan propaganda in the pages of the newspaper that carried them (115). Made aware of the context—and how they had called him to writing within a racist structure at odds with his identity—Wright gave up those papers. This incompatibility of African-American expression within the language of a nation hostile to its meaning, however, shaped Wright's subsequent work and became its story. Bigger's tragedy in *Native Son*, for example, reflects Wright's own struggle as an American author, exposing how the plots at these authors' disposal speak a brutality against Black being that poses an existential threat.

The paradox of speculative fiction—attempting to imagine difference using the formulas of the same—not only grows out of "the excessive violence that created the American nation" but also tries to aestheticize that past, Maia Gil'Adí argues (107, 113). By turning its ugly realities into fictions, such plots hope to cover over reality—yet this "aesthetic remedy" they offer is only an illusion (Gil'Adí 96). In this reading, boy inventors are one instance of how youth is instrumentalised as the symbol of a future solution to current insoluble problems. Nevertheless, I would argue that this impossibility is one that young writers (like Senarens) take on anyway through the act of writing before their time. Though the dime novel's ideological violence continues to inform the juvenile tradition in the twentieth century—so insidious that, as Evans shows, even Senarens's imagined automata were shaped by racist caricature—the category of youth can still provide new ways to read if young writers are no longer romanticised as able to escape ideology but understood as working in and against it. The afterlife of the dime novel haunted other young writers—white writers as well as writers of colour—long after its era had passed. The ongoing recovery of work by a range of unanticipated young writers suggests not just how these writers operated within these persistent confines but also their need to find other traditions to complicate and supplant this legacy.

Afterlife

THE LEGACY persisted for young writers attempting to publish because an idea of dime writing seemed indiscerptible from youth. In 1878, Bret Harte (1836–1902), an erstwhile young author and a sometime dime novelist, wrote what he called a "Young America" spoof of that form, highlighting the centrality of juvenility to it—starting with its title, *ad absurdum* "The Young America Condensed Novel. By Bret Harte. The Hoodlum Band; Or, the Boy Chief, the Infant Politician, and the Pirate Prodigy, by Jack Whackaway. Author of 'The Boy Slaver,' 'The Immature Incendiary,' 'The Precocious Pugilist,' etc. etc."[16] In this exaggerated send-up, Harte lampooned the "youth of America, conscious of their power and a literature of their own" (Harte 33)—by which he meant the dime novel form he was parodying, a mode then at its height.

Within his spoof, Harte caricatures a Native American "Chief" precisely because doing so was conventional in frontier dime novels. His stereotyping, however, is also meant meta-discursively to call attention to those conventions. In fact, in Harte's foregrounding of what Philip Deloria calls "playing Indian," his Indigenous character confesses that he needs to read the latest dime novels as soon as they come out because, without them, he does not know how to understand his Native American identity; he laments that "without a dime novel or a 'Young America,' how am I to keep up" (37).[17] Harte's winking humour makes clear that contemporary readers were conscious of the ways that dime-novel representations shaped understandings of

America (especially of its Indigenous people) in recognizably conventionalised ways. At the same time, however, Harte denatures this critique by depicting those sacrificed to dime formulas as happily in cahoots with their stereotypical depictions, and supposedly lacking identity unless mimicking those conventions.

That people might be defined by what they read was a general concern of the time. The rise of the popular and commercial periodical press meant that readership itself was changing. This changed subject position promised readers agency, but actually just sold them things, print historian Christopher Wilson argues, positioning them as passive consumers in "a world of illusory power and participation that masked delimited options and prefabricated responses" ("Rhetoric" 44). In his 1907 retrospection upon the dime novel, Charles Harvey captures the impulse in the dime novel's particular prefabrications—a fantasy of a time-gone-by, but one explicitly recognised as altered by that act of recollection. Such alteration—and its acknowledgement—are vital; they remade history into a "usable past," Bold argues (borrowing Van Wyck Brooks's term), a remaking which provides the dime novel's very appeal and utility ("Review" 206). Using his recollection of youth to epitomize this fantasy of a usable past that promises the future people think they want, Harvey echoes Wordsworth's treatment of the French Revolution in *The Prelude*, which collapses revolution into nostalgia: "Through Beadle's hypnotic spell,—Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven" (Harvey 37).

Youth is subject and object of this spell—reciprocally created by, even as it seeks to shape, such historical fantasies. "We have heard too much about boys," writes in 1906 the unnamed author of the "Slick Parker" detective novels, referring to the myth of boy readers so caught in the dime novel's spell that they run away or commit crimes in its name (Author 60). He stresses instead how the novice dime-novel *author* also "soon falls under the spell—that mystic influence which sends boys to the Rockies armed to the teeth and gravely cocking their pistols at every turn of the road. Author, publisher, and boy reader—all live in a world that is a distorted creation" (60). The problem for dime writers aware of the form's limitations—as Harte (and the Slick Parker author) seem to be here—is how both to conjure and puncture its ideological spell.

A spell that if anything made its distorted creations more diffuse, and harder to escape, after the era of the dime novel seemed passed into history. The dime novel's "mass techniques left their imprint on novelistic rhetoric and reception" that followed (Bold, "Popular" 307). The very identity of writers in general had been changed by the fiction factory. Even as they vied for more serious attention, young twentieth-century writers still saw their writing "predominantly as the product of technical expertise rather than inspiration" and "viewed the market as the primary arbiter of literary value" (Wilson, qtd. in Hentea, "Late" 179–80). That such fiction-factory values had become so widely disseminated may explain the vehemence against the dime industry long after it might have ceased to matter. In 1914, Frank K. Mathiews, the librarian of the Boy Scouts of America, was still at war with a form he knew to be

vanishing: "slot-machine Juveniles," he called dime novels, "mile-a-minute fiction," which he felt "are, not written, but manufactured" (652). He called for books about real life that rejected "the cleverness of these hustling boys … these up-to-the-minute boy heroes" of dime fiction (652). Yet, even as he inveighed against them, he knew the "the volumes of the dime or the nickel novel are fast disappearing," estimating that "the circulation of the leading nickel novel has been reduced from 200,000 to 50,000 a week" (652). Other pundits ascribed this decline to the efforts of Boy Scouts themselves, for the Scouts organization had started its own library—"a careful selection of books" envisioned by Mathiews—in hopes that these books of rousing non-fiction would "compete with the dime novel type" and remake history in the image it wanted of young America (Merritt 191).

Putnam's Boys' Books by Boys

STARTING in 1925, New York publisher G. P. Putnam brought out a line of juvenile-authored books meant to redefine (and profit from) what American youth was and could do.[18] Putnam tried expressly to transform dime fiction escapades into the real-world stories of travel and exploration that Mathiews described. He commissioned go-ahead writing by young men embarked on genuine adventures, bringing out a series he called "Putnam's Boys' Books *by* Boys" ("Advertisement 21" 722). Putnam promised that his "young adventurers wrote accounts of their travels" (Lieffers 31) in order to offer genuine experience in the place of fantasy. Putnam's own son, David Binney Putnam, wrote five travelogues for the series, starting when he was twelve.[19] Though the books proffered real-life adventures by capable youth as their appeal to young audiences, who were meant to identify with the authors' skill and prowess as explorers, I would argue that they also marketed the capability and accomplishments of their young writers *as* writers. "What is the use of waiting to grow up before producing a 'best seller?'" one story about David Putnam begins ("David" 124); it profiles him even less as an explorer than as an already expert and professional author: "David not only writes, but has given talks …. He has something worth while to say and the faculty of saying it in an interesting way" (124–25).

Juvenilia scholar Caroline Lieffers points out that Putnam stressed that his series offered "educational content beyond the exploits of Tom Swift and the Hardy Boys" (34). An article in *The Youth's Companion* shared Mathiews's and Putnam's aspiration of literalising old formulas into actual modern life, arguing that dime-novel adventures were bankrupt because merely imaginary; as cheap fantasies, they can only give a reader "his own old ideas in a new dress … because it takes so little effort to read them. These Indians and the heroes of these novels are the Indians and heroes of the boy's imagination; not real Indians and heroes" (Hadley 523). Yet Lieffers shows how Putnam's series grew out of the fictional context he was attempting to displace—out of both "popular frontier nostalgia" and his own personal disappointment that "I had not been in on the making of the 'real west,' in those roaring days of Bret Harte

heroes" (Lieffers 40). She points to the "formulaic narratives" (40) that are characteristic of Putnam's Boys' books despite their claims to be real. Indeed, *The New York Times Book Review* explicitly saw them as an up-to-date version of old scripts. It calls Putnam's explorations "really not a bad ambition for an adventurous boy who knows that cowboys and Indian fighters are going out of style" (Duffus X19).

Boys' stories *by* boys deploy this old and persistent ideology, maintaining long past the closing of the American frontier the violent white fantasy of subjugating Indigenous people. They do so, Lieffers argues, to "exemplif[y] a new, transnational, and territorially flexible frontier mythology for the interwar American imagination" that she defines as a kind of "ludic imperialism" (33). My research suggests that the desire Mathiews expressed for such new stories invoked dime modes—fueled by such dime series as Frank Tousey's 1898 "School-Boy Explorers"—so much that Tousey actually brought out an additional "Boy Explorers" novel in 1923, probably seeking to capitalize on the renewed interest in exploration revealed by the founding of the Boy Guides and Boy Scouts about a decade earlier. Just as Senarens's hero Frank Reade had done, Putnam's actual boy explorers went all over the globe and "achieved symbolic conquest through science, technology, and know-how" (33).

The ludic imperialism Lieffers notes was ever-present, and only partly disguised by play; it showed through in the margins: David Putnam's product endorsements—the Daisy rifle, Western Lubaloy ammunition, and the Zulu blowgun ("Advertisement 9," "Advertisement 25," "Advertisement 37")—encoded the violence and purported racial superiority of boy's fantasy fiction. The expressly juvenile-authored accounts of these skilled and confident explorers recycled old plots for present social needs, making clear how this dime-novel heritage remained "a tool of legitimacy and a saleable commodity in a larger project of business" and ideology (Lieffers 55). Lieffers does record "at least one moment of ambivalence" that initially unsettled the scripts of the social order—the Scouts initially resisted when told to "let their African guides do the work" of building camp (46, 47) because at least for a moment "Scouting's emphasis on industry and readiness" (that is, on youth's capacity to make its own way) came into conflict with imperial hierarchies (47). But in general, the authors of these books continued the myth of Young America as "mentally awake" (55)—and, because their authors were "uniformly white, [and] clean-cut," in "Boys' Books by Boys" such wide-awakeness manifestly became "a kind of shoring up of American racial and cultural superiority" (38).

Horace Wade

THIS DIME-inspired fantasy of "clean-cut," young, and white America remained enormously saleable in the 1920s. Eleven-year-old Horace Wade's 1920 dime-inspired best seller *In the Shadow of Great Peril* "sold out in three days"; it went "to a fifth edition within three months," and "publishers predict[ed] a sale of 1,000,000" ("Reilly & Lee Ad" 777; Burroughs 48; "Horace Wade" 4K). Wade's publishers both parlayed and

disarmed his dime heritage—promoting Wade's hypnotic spell as "a composite Standish-Alger-Henty memory" ("Reilly & Lee Ad" 777; "Burt Standish" was fiction-factory author Gilbert Patten's penname; G. A. Henty wrote historical adventure tales for boys about empire and conquest). They asked George Ade to write Wade's preface—Ade, another tongue-in-cheek humorist like Bret Harte, was simultaneously sincere and ironic about fiction's dime heritage.[20]

Despite his publishers' attempt to play both ends against the middle, the middle-class Wade—who explicitly wrote to get paid, proud to have earned an identity as a professional writer—was much more open, even unabashed, about his dime background than was Putnam (the gentleman-amateur). In accounts of his writing, Wade told how he had "poured [*sic*] over the thrilling adventures of Deadwood Dick" ("W. A. Pinkerton" 28) and in his memoir credited as early influences "the Rover Boys, Tom Swift and the inspiring Horatio Alger books"—the very books with which Putnam's series took issue (*Boy's Life* 7). Wade extoled their formulas, in which "boys could work miracles" and "win fame and fortune" in adventures "dripping blood from every page" (10)—he found them successful as well as thrilling. His audience thought so too, lauding his book in the same terms.[21] "It is a story of action," the papers wrote, "so much action in fact that at times the pages seem to turn themselves" ("Chicago Boy" 14). "He will enthrall the youth of his generation with just such stories as made the creator of Frank and Dick Merriwell [dime novelist Patten/Standish] immortal" ("Book a Week" 4).

Wade remembered his publisher promoting him as "'America's Youngest Author'" and "the World's Only Boy Novelist'" (Wade, *Boy's Life* 10). His fame and success were repeated in numerous newspaper stories, meant to figure young writers like Wade as no-nonsense wide-awake heroes themselves, equal to anything. Yet Wade satirizes such cultural expectations of juvenile writers in a critique of prodigy he wrote in his mid-twenties when he was past his juvenile fame: in that book, *Great Scott* (1932), he expressly fictionalizes his own career. At one and the same time the innocent victim of adult ambition and an unlikeable little schemer, this character's deflation from boy wonder is in part effected when he is kidnapped by gangsters, who give him a dime novel to read (the only kind of book they know).[22]

Wade was in fact a serious professional writer; *Great Scott*'s version of youth exploited by adult need was not the comedy of its well-known predecessor, O. Henry's 1907 "The Ransom of Red Chief" (in which the hapless criminals are defeated by the irrepressibility of the boy they kidnap, tellingly symbolised through his play impersonating an Indigenous "Chief").Wade himself had been targeted for an actual mob kidnapping after he wrote some articles about the Leopold and Loeb trial when he worked as a newspaper reporter between ages eleven and fifteen (see Wade, *Boy's Life* 101–04).[23] Despite a wise-guy tone, Wade's pictures of being a young writer openly sketched the youthful trauma of working within the system. His memoir, recounting how adult managers swindled the child-star Jackie Coogan out of his fortune (23–24), was aware of the harm caused by adult power: "My boyhood

had been stolen from me like Peter Pan's shadow," he wrote, looking back; "I was doomed to be capitalized, commercialized, limited, insured, and all rights reserved" (11). At age eleven, he was sent to report on serial killers such as Charles Newton Harvey (see Wade, "Boy Novelist" 1).[24] He was passed off as a patient in a pediatric psychiatric institution, spending a week in it completely on his own to try to expose its abuses (*Boy's Life* 48–60).[25] He was sent undercover as a Bowery newsboy. At age fourteen, he was assigned to write about the drug trade (Wade, "Boy Journalist" 12). "My disillusion was complete," he wrote about those experiences. "So much for dreams" (*Boy's Life* 42). But, as a professional writer, he did not believe in such dreams anyway: when a dime-novelesque character "known as the Rocky Mountain kid and a dead ringer for Buffalo Bill" showed him "the very room in which O. Henry, John Howard Payne, and Nathanial Hawthorne composed many of their immortal works" (43), Wade already knew that the dismal garret would not be bathed in romantic light; "the light it offered … cast a dull gray tinge over the scene" instead: "Crust of bread and an attic. Beware! Beware! Such is the destiny of writers everywhere" (43–44).

In his memoir, Wade explains that he did all that was asked of him as a young author because he considered writing his job, and he was good at it. "Horace takes his authorship seriously," newspaper stories about him reported ("Horace A. Wade" 13).[26] Wade's allusions in the newspaper accounts and interviews he produced demonstrated that he had read widely. "The boy spoke like a veritable young Scott or Dickens or Balzac," a newspaper interviewer wrote (Hale 4). The *New York World* pundit Irvin S. Cobb recommended Wade's first book not for its novelty but because he thought the boy was already a craftsman with "a natural aptitude for words, for plot, and for sequence, which most writers lack" (qtd. in Denton SM4). "If Horace's style is juvenile I freely confess my stories are baby prattle," wrote the Chicago society columnist Patricia Dougherty (5). Serious about his fiction, Wade corresponded with George Bernard Shaw, Theodore Dreiser, and F. Scott Fitzgerald—the latter gave Wade sound advice about writing, and shopped the sequel to *In the Shadow of Great Peril* (entitled *The Heavy Hand of Justice*) to Scribner's for him.[27]

Proud of his status as young author, Wade refused any understanding of juvenile writing that diminished it. He passed all the usual tests to prove his prodigy, including extempore examination and the display of his boyish and unformed handwriting, so that readers could feel that Wade "was all that he boyishly claimed to be" ("Boy Author Makes" 14).[28] He thought Daisy Ashford a fraud because her *The Young Visiters* was written in 1890 (when she was nine) but not published until 1919, and he thought no young writer would wait "twenty years before publishing." He was sure J. M. Barrie must have written *The Young Visiters* instead—a subterfuge that he considered not "fair to children who write" because built on the premise that they were incapable of doing it well ("Chicago Produces" 537).[29] On the speaking circuit, he urged advertisers to hire boys and girls to write their ad copy ("Hire Kids" 5), out of the assumption that kids speak best to other kids. "You can't imagine how great is

the inspiration I get from meeting boys and girls. I am writing for them," he stated. "I am writing for the boys and girls of America" ("Junior" 2). [30]

After his heroes break into an old shack, they quip: "One thing about this place is that they don't use much style" (*In the Shadow* 62). As a writer, Wade was well aware of using what the papers at the time, mimicking his understatement, called "not a little style" (P. Cook 12). "Book reviewers in America and England confessed their amazement at the command of literary 'technique'" (Robinson 29). One repeated talking point of his lectures was that adults could not reach youth because they simply could *not* write as young people could—adults did not understand nor could they reproduce youth's up-to-the minute language ("Hire 'Kids'" 5). "To write you must have words," he deadpanned, and spoke of his interest in language at almost every interview ("Boy Author Is Peeved" 5). Wade was "a veritable worshipper of his own youth" (Hale 4), and his youthful aesthetics retroactively underscored the understanding that dime literature is indissoluble from youth: "One is not so much amazed by the fact that this novel of adventure was written by a boy of eleven, as seized by the suspicion that all popular novels of this thrilling character might be written by children of eleven" ("Chicago Produces" 535).

The structures of the dime formulas that gave rise to Wade's writing fashioned his sense of what young people could do and say—and particular dime beliefs inform Wade's characters: "They seek the strenuous days and ha-ha at danger—calm in the presence of their persecutors; modest in victory," Ade observes. Moreover, "They are fond of food and fighting—quite Anglo-Saxon, one might say. Regular fellows!" ([ii]). Though its characters are fond of fighting, *In the Shadow of Great Peril* does not blatantly intrude the (usually violent) "Anglo-Saxon" sense of superiority held by its "regular" fellows—what one popular account (Josiah Strong's 1885 text of Christian nationalism) called the "'competition among races for which the Anglo-Saxon is being schooled'" (qtd. in Saxon, *Rise and Fall* 343). In *To Hell with Hollywood* (1931), however, written when Wade was in his mid-twenties, the use of racist and ethnic epithets for all groups is widespread and "particularly offensive" (Carr 149). This book is explicitly anti-Semitic; more, as Steven Carr argues, it assumes that "the inclusion of any minority ethnic group" is "at odds with Anglo-Saxonism" (150). Such outspoken prejudice can be traced back to inherited notions of American exceptionalism, of Young America's ideas of "Manifest Destiny and other traces of supposed Anglo-Saxon superiority" (Carr 150). Later in life, Wade seemed to backtrack from such intolerance (however partially or belatedly): in his memoir, he celebrated Will Roger's Cherokee heritage (*Boy's Life* 30) and recounted how becoming "an honorary member of the Winnebago tribe" (149) supplanted his earlier unenlightened ideas of "playing 'Indians and Cowboys,'" which had involved "wiping out whole tribes of" the former "with gory delight" (149)—seeming, by that time, to some degree to question rather than just repeat received racist fictional formulas.

Harry F. Liscomb

NINETEEN-year-old African-American writer Harry F. Liscomb was another *phenom* of the 1920s directly inspired by dime novels, but one who did not need to wait till middle age in order to try to undermine their racist formulas. As Clark Barwick, who has dedicated a full-length study to the work of Liscomb, emphasizes, this young Black writer had to navigate "the stereotypes and oft-racist expectations of the readership that he was attempting to court" in order to publish at all (200). Just as Williams's reading of Senarens highlights his subtle subversion of the tropes he uses, Barwick's reading of Liscomb's 1925 *The Prince of Washington Square,* subtitled *"an Up-to-the-Minute Story*," emphasises his use of the double voice of irony to negotiate these paradoxes. One doubleness of his book lies in the incongruity between what made it up-to-the-minute—its stylistically innovative account by a writer of colour of jazz-age youth culture in Greenwich Village—and the persistent and troubling influence of dime conventions in it. In fact, Liscomb's book opens with its hero "vainly essaying to peruse the opening chapters of the current dime novel thriller by Nicholas Carter" (21). Reviewers of the time almost universally understood the dime novel as the shaping inspiration for Liscomb's book, "inspired by the combined styles of Horatio Alger, and the masterly creation of that superman, Nicholas Carter" (Carter 281); "a combination of Diamond Dick and Ethel M. Dell" ("*Bookman's*" 217); but they were less sure what to think of his pronounced stylistic inventiveness, and some reviewers mocked him for combining both.[31]

One summarised the novel's Algeresque formula: "The plot is the conventional tale of the courageous newsboy, who is without a peer among his companions; who, presented with the opportunity, rescues a young heiress from a perilous situation or two; and, in consequence, is taken from his surroundings by her father" (Carter 281). The *New York Times Book Review* found it "the first effort of a jejeune mind fed by the poison weeklies of the bookstall, the less honestly comic of the comic strips and the meaner section of the press" ("Master Ashford" BR8). *The New Yorker* considered it "just the story that would be written by a clever kid with the kind of head big words stick wrongside-up in, after consuming bales of magazine and newspaper trash and acres of movie captions. Our difficulty is that what's supposed to make you laugh is his largely unintentional burlesque of all that trash—and we found the burlesque too close to the originals" ("Books" 26).[32]

Yet Liscomb told a reporter that he used familiar dime formulas with a double purpose—deliberately to capture "the ear of a larger group" in advance of a body of novels about African-American experience that he planned to be "significant and enduring" (Moon 9). For Barwick, the notoriously tricky instability of irony (as it says one thing and means another) meant that Liscomb's irony about the conventions he had to use escaped many cultural gatekeepers, tone deaf to his ironising and oblivious to the contradictions of the lived experience he depicted. Unlike Senarens, Liscomb published under his own name, and photographs of him circulated in the newspapers from the book's first publication so that his identity as an African-American writer

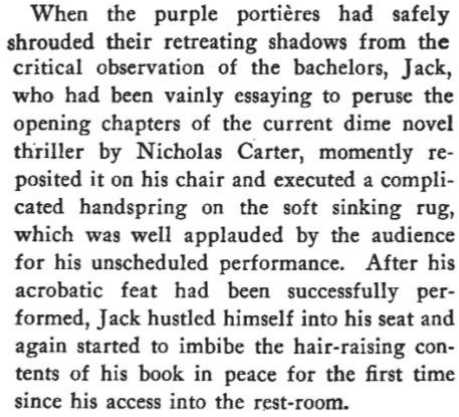
was known from the start. How far Liscomb's race influenced the reviewers of the polite press to pan his book remained unspoken—explicitly, at any rate, they condemned the book instead for the youth of its writer and the influence of popular fiction on it. Unable to see this young Black writer as intentional or ironic, at best these reviews acknowledged that they didn't know what to make of the book—though they were usually happy enough to decry its "air of a mystification" or pronounce it as "mirthless and nasty" ("Master Ashford" BR8). Even Liscomb's publishers were unable to give Liscomb any credit for intending or controlling a send-up of dime novel conventions. They promoted his book not for its conscious wit but as "a gem of unconscious humor" ("Advertisement—Frederick" viii).

"That a collection of white critics in the 1920s would deny the legitimacy of an African American author and his text was nothing new," Barwick observes (53). He directly connects these critics' misprision of Liscomb to a cultural turf war over who gets to represent *Young* America, arguing that the "suspicion about *Prince* particularly recalls the language used to describe the life and work of Phillis Wheatley" (who published as a teenager in the 1790s) (53n170). He also links Liscomb to the young Langston Hughes and to Countee Cullen, Liscomb's friend and classmate (56), sketching out a Black juvenile tradition during the Harlem Renaissance that is still overlooked today. Sympathetic reviewers at the time, however, instead directly ascribed Liscomb's expertise to his early achievement as a writer: the *Afro American* called him "a veteran in the writing game … contributing short stories and articles to the newspapers and magazines ever since he was fourteen years old" ("Youthful" 10). Calling "Liscomb's style … a remarkable mixture of … the yellow journals, and the *Bronx Home News,*" the *Daily Eagle* reminded readers that Liscomb had published his first story when an early teen by winning a contest for youth in that newspaper ("Negro Customs" 3).[33]

Liscomb's example garnered enough interest from other youth—and African-American youth in particular—that the poet Melvin B. Tolson (then on leave from a teaching job at the HBCU Wiley College) wrote an article on Liscomb—"The Lone Wolf of Harlem"—for Wiley's college-age readers.[34] Most reviewers, whether or not they approved, regarded *The Prince of Washington Square* as depicting its up-to-the minute modern scene as the province of youth—or, as Barwick puts it, "here we encounter America's 1920s youth culture as actually presented by a young person" (205). The *Negro World*, in fact, in an article entitled "The Young Negro Is Doing Things," feels Liscomb captures youth's modern mode. His is such a distinctly cutting-edge world that "if some of our forefathers could come back for a few minutes, they would declare it is not the same world they had left" ("Young Negro" 4).[35] "He keeps his head and points to the future," Tolson claimed (1), stressing how Liscomb performed youth's up-to-the-minute style.

Despite the nay-saying by the stuffier journals insensible to his wit and double meaning, Liscomb's book was enormously popular—a blockbuster proclaimed as "one of those spontaneous combustions of youthful genius" that had definitely

caught on (Paterson D13). It "created a sensation in literary circles … and sold about 10,000 copies" ("Young Liscomb" A2).[36] Liscomb became an example of modern youthful professionalism and skill, who, in a "methodical" way, "applies himself with diligence to the business of writing and turns out his quota of three thousand words a day" (Moon 9). But even given his wideawake, workaday approach, his modern style stood out. "YOUTH'S NEW STYLE NOVEL BIG SUCCESS," one headline screamed—that style led to its "amazing success and record-breaking sales" ("Youth's" A1).[37] The very incongruity between its retrograde dime-novel residue and its newfangled and unprecedented language—"the disjunction between the book's dime-novel plot and its polysyllabic rendering" (Barwick 50)—struck readers. Barwick calls its new style "a modern mash-up of genres and influences" (200), bringing a dime heritage together with newer American innovations in popular form. Even as they panned it, the *New York Times* had recognised the influence of comic strip on it; the *New Yorker* of moving-picture intertitles.[38] See Figure 2 for an example.



When the purple portières had safely shrouded their retreating shadows from the critical observation of the bachelors, Jack, who had been vainly essaying to peruse the opening chapters of the current dime novel thriller by Nicholas Carter, momently reposited it on his chair and executed a complicated handspring on the soft sinking rug, which was well applauded by the audience for his unscheduled performance. After his acrobatic feat had been successfully performed, Jack hustled himself into his seat and again started to imbibe the hair-raising contents of his book in peace for the first time since his access into the rest-room.

Fig. 2. From The Prince of Washington Square; an Up-to-the-Minute Story*, by Harry F. Liscomb, pp. 20-21.*

Liscomb's style—poetic, obtrusive, original—was not just distinctly modern but implicitly Modernist—at least in the sense that Gertrude Stein may have been a direct influence on the sheer verbal play that defamiliarised and foregrounded its language.[39] Stein also directly influenced Richard Wright, who characterised her mode as an "experiment in words" (Miller 108). Given the experimentation and play of sound in Liscomb's writing, it's not surprising that he was a favourite author of the celebrated improvisationist jazz singer Florence Mills (Egan 124). The white humorist Lawton MacKall, known for his intricate word play, described Liscomb's style as "genteel yet jazzy," acknowledging "a felicity of diction which is all his own" (MacKall D5).[40] "His diction has the merit of, let us say, complete uniqueness," the activist, writer, and (later) jurist Eunice Carter wrote of Liscomb. "His dictum is something marvelous to

contemplate." Though not yet a famous prosecutor, Carter was using "dictum" in its legal sense of something said, language itself as a fact and inescapable presence: "The full force of one of his most complete and involved sentences is positively overwhelming …. There are words, torrents of words; great and small, and strung into sentences that captivate by their sheer naivete and puerile self-confidence" (Carter 282). What such reviews demonstrate is that some readers understood Liscomb's dazzling wordplay to be as spectacular and noticeable as the bald dime-novel formulas he also deploys. The style through which he recycles old formulas, so at odds with expectations, makes those expectations visible by adding unexpected virtuosic wordplay to them, thus to some degree destabilizing the transparency of his plots. Refusing the incongruity between his avant-garde style and mass-market formulas makes his book about the making (and unmaking) of meaning. Yet, as Barwick carefully details, *The Prince of Washington Square* disappeared from literary history—despite Liscomb's arty style. It is left off of the list of notable African-American books kept by Liscomb's own 135th Street Library and remains absent in subsequent academic bibliographies—"discounted," Barwick argues, "for its mass-audience design" (200).

While the white-owned slicks and his own stodgy publisher could not accept a juvenile writer of colour as a wide-awake and self-confident young professional—or as a representative Young American at all—some reviewers (largely, but not solely, in African-American newspapers) appreciated his achievement: "He's a hero here," one African-American newspaper claimed about Liscomb ("Prince" A6). They did so in part because they appreciated Liscomb's double voice. "At the office of Stokes they believe him to be a second 'Merton of the Movies,'" wrote the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, referring to a 1922 novel about a gullible character who represents the very opposite of astute and savvy (so naïve he unwittingly becomes a comic sensation by delivering lines he believes wholly serious).[41] "They think he doesn't know how funny he is," the article goes on. "But Harry declares he knows he's funny and intends to remain so for two more books, after which he is going in for serious stuff" ("Negro Customs" 3).[42] As Williams and Barwick have done recently, such critics at the time emphasised irony's strategic use. Eunice Carter—herself, as Lorraine Roses argues, "by no means averse to the use of subverted literary conventions to undermine white social conventions"—regarded *The Prince of Washington Square* as engaged in such deliberate subversion, considering the book "Harry Liscomb's singularly absurd parody of Horatio Alger tales" (Roses 48–49).

Like Robert Carlton Brown, dime novelist turned experimental modernist, Liscomb saw no disjunction between serious literary aspirations and dime novel standards of productivity, proficiency, and profits. The young Henry Lee Moon—writer, scholar, later public relations officer for the NAACP—recognised in Liscomb's "swift-moving" plots his ambition as a professional writer to achieve both best-seller status and serious literary fame—"He expects the fruition of his efforts to land him on the top notch of American writers … to make his pile from books which

he believes are adaptable for Hollywood productions …. 'I am writing now for the general public,'" Liscomb told him (Moon 9).[43] Barwick argues that Liscomb's "desire to write bestsellers" (48)—and "by the age of 21" (87)—led to his neglect as a writer: "he harbored a passion for genre fiction, and he unabashedly sought literary and commercial fame" (62). Though conventional wisdom considered high literary ambition and popular forms incompatible, their conflation distinguishes the modern mode in which youth barreled over outdated axioms. "Mr. Liscomb resembles a dynamo in action. He keeps going at top speed. He writes in a bold, fearless style" ("'Missing'" 6). "His tale rushes along with the fury of a runaway milk wagon. He overturns … applecarts" (MacKall D5).

Liscomb traded on the conventional formulas of a dime mode familiar to readers, while also seeking to upset apple-carts, to subvert literary conventions, to undermine "white social conventions" (Roses 48). The structural irony of his writing assumed that the parody of dime formulas could defuse the invocation and recycling of their attitudes—but the question remained: whether the collapse of citation and use involved in irony made it by necessity still "too close to the originals" ("Books" 26). Mary White Ovington, white activist and children's writer, one of the founders of the NAACP, like Carter understood *The Prince of Washington Square* as a send-up—an "absurd, highly entertaining tale" and "a delightful departure" for a Black writer. Nevertheless, she wondered where Liscomb's writing could go after he "drops his burlesque," for, without it, "he cannot again throw Chinese and Negro, millionaire and bootblack, Italian tough and flapper, into the same drawing room" (Ovington 2).

In 1925, Ovington implied it was some suggested mockery of the dime heritage behind *The Prince of Washington Square*, its parody of dime stereotypes, that allowed Liscomb latitude when it came to the dime novel's baggage of intolerance—a tenacious burden of prejudice (she suggests) that might prove difficult in future works to shed. More recently, Barwick also reads those traces of bigotry as part of a covert critique. He does note the book's most visible legacy of racism: the "strange, racist explosion" within Liscomb's book, which offers his own explicit and disturbing use of anti-Asian slurs and caricature. Yet these ugly depictions, as Barwick argues, mark Liscomb's attempt to identify and refuse the racism in *white* culture (102). Barwick identifies one salient scene, in which a character named Lee Fung, whom Liscomb depicts as a Chinese mobster, assaults a white flapper named Pauline. He locates the scene as "directly inspired by a villain of the same name who appeared in 'The Bradys and the Opium King' [1907], a popular detective story published in *Secret Service"* (105–06), a Tousey nickel weekly (1899–1925) that traded on anti-Asian storylines. Barwick contends, however, that—because Liscomb has the white character Pauline recount the assault—Liscomb's treatment of this scene becomes a subtle burlesque that does not endorse dime stereotypes but indirectly refutes them (123). In Barwick's view, what seems racism inherited from dime formulas is actually the opposite, meant to highlight the white narrator Pauline's racism, not share it. In this reading, Liscomb presents without comment this scene of "modern, cross-ethnic encounter in all of its

ugliness" (Barwick102) as a considered and "subversive, cutting critique of whiteness" (104).Yet it seems to me that painful moments like this one demonstrate the limits of irony—because of its notorious instability, it can only take critique so far, unable ultimately fully to recuperate or to counter such pernicious attitudes precisely because, even if it tries to refuse them (always difficult to determine), it recycles them in doing so.

Barwick would like to turn these uncomfortable moments fully into a critique by Liscomb "to illustrate the backwardness of white racial anxieties" (106). The young author subtly "challenges and undermines" that ideology, Barwick argues, through presenting "a corrective or redemptive counter-act" to the formulaic action (107n361) that must fly under the radar in order to get published at the time (just as Senarens did, as we have seen). For instance, though Liscomb seems to caricature his hero's friend by giving that character a minstrel-show name, Barwick contends that he reveals that figure to be "an intelligent, perceptive African-American character who in many ways facilitates the novel" (128)—a father figure to the hero, a member of the Harlem Hellfighter battalion (heroes of the Great War)—and concludes that this character actually "emerges as a forceful symbol for full Negro citizenship in America" from behind a stereotype that slips to show this subtext (131). In a book that subjects all groups—Chinese American, Irish American, Jewish American—to clear ethnic stereotyping and identifies them by bald racial epithets throughout, however, such correctives show the limits of how muted ironic inflections still remain.

For, *pace* Williams and Barwick, irony is so not easily parsed or stabilised, but remains messy, complicated, and unpredictable. The complex afterlife of the dime novel exemplifies the difficulty, absent control of or choice between mainstream means of production, of recalling the fiction factory's formulas without also putting them into play. Jonathan Culler long ago considered how "repeating a formula in different circumstances" calls to mind and never fully annuls its prior (or future) meanings—any one separate iteration cannot "arrest the play of meaning" along the line of such repetitions, making it impossible fully to discern when that formula is strictly meant and when it is merely cited (Culler 123, 125). In connection with an "unsettling instance of domestic abuse" in this novel (184n634), Barwick concedes that, just because a book "stages these tensions (rather than imagining that they do not exist), does not mean that the novel's representations are above scrutiny or critique" (187n640). No matter how deliberate Liscomb's irony, given irony's difficult doubleness, it also risks "reinforcing racist attitudes and stereotypes" even as it critiques them (Barwick 103).

While the intense stylistic play of this book asks readers to identify a different system of aesthetics and a different mode of representation than dime predecessors alone provide, the legacy of dime attitudes in it remains starkly present. The book foregrounds those tensions without yet being able to follow any alternative model to take it beyond them. Though Liscomb had little but mainstream dime precedents as models for his popular writing ambitions, however, his example offered an alternative

model for the genre writing that followed: as Barwick argues, "Liscomb deserves credit as a pioneer, especially for later African American writers such as Frank Yerby and Willard Motley, both of whom achieved massive popular success in the 1940s" (206–07).

In part, Liscomb also offered a model of future possibilities for other young writers to achieve because he had tried to do so when young. In 1934, in hopes of providing a new outlet precisely for young Black writers, Dorothy West (who herself began publishing as a teenager) founded the *Challenge: A Literary Quarterly*. Liscomb's cohort Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen would publish in it; Richard Wright became associate editor for the one issue of the rebranded *New Challenge* that followed in its wake. By that time, however, Liscomb had vanished entirely from the literary scene. Yet Yerby, coming after Liscomb, *did* publish in *Challenge* as a young writer (a teenager).[44] Initially regarded as "a pulpster peddling stereotypical images to a predominantly white audience" (Teutsch) because of his "decision to write financially rewarding, commercially successful fiction, as opposed to literature with more overt social and political resonance" (Massé), Yerby became "the first black novelist to become a millionaire from writing" (Barwick 207n691). But he is also now enjoying recovery in academic circles by critics such as Teutsch and Massé. "In many ways," as Barwick concludes, this writer who came after "realized the caree[r] that Liscomb had hoped for" (207).

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THE QUANDARY of the popular lies in these complications. William Charvat contends that "nothing better demonstrates the dilemma of literary history than its uncertainty about what to do with popular writers in general" (290). One strategy, Bold suggests, is to go beyond the either/or thinking (capitulation or rejection) that ultimately over-simplifies formulaic writing by ignoring its material publication context. "Reducing this publishing contest to a binary opposition marginalizes a range of other interests," she writes (317). She encourages readings that move "away from dualism and dichotomy towards complicity, resistance, hybridity, mutuality and exchange"—a negotiation of their publication context that she finds in Indigenous writers when they insert their own cultural narratives into the midst of mainstream popular ones ("Did" 136).[45] Barwick emphasizes that Liscomb too—"one of only a few known African Americans actually working in this mode"—was "charting unfamiliar territory in popular literature" by actually writing in it (203n683). In the same way, Williams suggests Senarens wrote speculative fiction even when it could not yet imagine any techno-savvy agency beyond white privilege.

Bold highlights the "reIndigenising" of dime culture to contest the oversimplification in which "the dime-novel industry is routinely considered as white cultural production" alone (Bold, "Did" 151). She cites the way that, in her stage play *Wep-ton-no-mah, The Indian Mail Carrier* (in which she played the male lead), "Go-won-

go Mohawk's intervention constitutes more than slotting herself into a fixed paradigm" because of "her multiple capacity as playwright, actor, and costume and scene designer" ("*Vaudeville*" 83). In part Mohawk ironised the formulas she inherited: "although the script deploys stock caricatures galore" in its Irish, Mexican, and Black characters, Bold claims "they are most often used to parody, and potentially unfix … race-based relations" so that what are usually understood as "'others' come riotously together on the staging ground of the frontier" (ibid. 88, 89). More than that, however, reviews at the time understood that "this play is entirely different from any other so-called Indian plays" because it was "the creation of an Indian woman" portraying "Scenes of actual life of the American Indian" (ibid. 97). Such stagings were inherited from, but also revised, the fiction factory's conventions in a complicated but reciprocal dialogue. Mohawk re-appropriated her title if not her storyline from an earlier 1871 Beadle and Adams' dime novel (ibid. 96), and her own play—including her part in it as cross-dressing hero—provided the subject for another three 1891 Beadle dime novels (written by Prentiss Ingraham).[46]

Though it seems that neither Mohawk nor Ingraham wrote until their mid-twenties, E. Pauline Johnson/Tekahionwake was already composing poetry in her teens. She used that "double signature" to represent in her later poetic performances how she came out of both Anglo and Haudenosaunee traditions (Tekahionwake, her family Mohawk name, itself meant "double life"), but such doubleness for these Indigenous writers suggests more than ironising the racist "prerequisite conventions of the period" (Bold, "*Vaudeville*" 103). Mohawk and Johnson/Tekahionwake also import self-defining Indigenous modes into their works, and such negotiations of popular culture "reveal more about survival, flexibility, and agency than about declination and oblivion" (Jones and Ferris 143). [47]

The humour magazine *Judge*, when, in 1920, it looked back on America's dime past, wanted to preserve its intolerant prerequisites alone, the familiar ideological territory that had for so long connected the dime industry and Young America: "If you have kept the Dime Novel Emotion intact, you are still young" (de Casseres 15).[48] This author sees the meaning of dime novels as a kind of unconscious embodied sensation, the "blood curdle and goose flesh" that tell him when "the Dime Novel Emotion surged into my nerves" (15). Such youthful ideology depends on nostalgia about the good old days with all its intolerance still unbroken. De Cassires similarly explains how the plot of a dime novel recently called up the feelings of his youth through this *frisson*, in this case by explicitly indulging a fantasy of exotic otherness—"it all happened in the Orient, where things still happen" (15). He turns to youth as symbol to prop up this legacy of racism "intact"—to keep it seeming essential and natural, rather than constructed and open to question. This version of the dime industry's hypnotic spell reveals its ideological character—constructed attitudes taken by white audiences to be natural, preconceptions that are taken just to *feel* right, so that the supposed exoticness of "the Orient" (where things still happen) supposedly strikes right in the nerves, confirmed by the payout of one's own usable past rushing

back—"you are still young." This palpable confirmation of the perceived possibilities of what people can do or could have done in this world, as literary critics Melissa Adams-Campbell and Matthew Short describe these inherited conventions, "not only *reflects* the attitudes of the time, but also, *produces* racialized attitudes"—disseminated through the form's "repeated racial stereotypes in place of actual characterization, racially charged language, and formulaic plot lines" (25).

If mode identifies the terms by which things can happen—what subjects "can do or could have done"—then separating the operational aesthetics of youth from the dime novel aesthetic will depend on whether the hurtle of so-called American progress continues to assume the (supposedly willing) sacrifice of others through their objectification and stereotyping. The usable past that the dime novel has provided, the appeal of its spell, rests on this utility of youth as supposedly innocent symbol of what came before and what is to come—as guarantor of (the fantasy of) an American literary history that keeps things moving ahead without ever needing to change. In this way, youth is meant both to justify and to hide the preconceptions underlying racism, inequity, injustice. As Martin Woodside suggests, casting such stories as childhood ones was meant to turn these ugly American realities into "a child's game adults used to smooth over the messy contradictions of the past and imagine a brighter future" untroubled by them (188).[49]

The fantasy of Young America that tried to keep it white depended on consolidating racial differences under a constructed category of generalised otherness. Young writers of colour trying to work in the mainstream came from different backgrounds, which allowed for their non-hegemonic depictions of Cuba, Harlem, and the Western frontier—though Senarens's Edisonades also traded on Black stereotypes to promote sympathy with Cuba, Liscomb inherited anti-Asian caricatures from dime-novel detective stories in his depiction of Harlem's youth culture, and Go-won-go Mohawk and Johnson/Tekahionwake negotiated Wild West fantasies of Indigenous assimilation. De Certeau's notion of playing the system presupposes there is only one system, which makes irony just one way that scholars can understand how to recover popular writing as it opened up publication for young writers. The more recent afterlife of critical attention to the fiction factory offers alternative strategies, as critics such as Bold, Barwick, Jones and Ferris, and Williams recover the real variety of young people addressing its forms. So too the definition of what it means to be double-voiced—to mean both working within but also adding to—continues to develop through critics such as Deloria, Evans, Gil'Adí, and Reheja.

In this way, the afterlife of these past forms lives on in a "continually recursive and revising process"—one Jones and Ferris identify as being of endless becoming for "the multiplicity of identities people negotiate and differentially reinforce, remember, and forget." Meaning is constantly being revised in dialogue with the past: "Becoming thus informs and logically connects past events that help shape identities, even as those categories of identity are continually revised in the living of them" (150–51n4). Recovering the work of skilled and capable young writers brings into relief the

incommensurable demands on them as they try to change the meaning of childhood stories to be the ones that young people *tell*. I have turned to juvenile writers in this essay because they declined to see themselves as mere symbols or simply to wait for the future. Within the dime novel's "contest of resistant, assumed, and dominant voices," as Bold terms it ("Voice" 305), their very doing was the tactic by which writers such as Senarens and Liscomb tried to negotiate the entrenched structural prejudice of dime formulas. In trying to imagine their way outside of, even when they redeployed, the racism within those formulas, at the very least they punctured the sensational essentialism of the form's fantasy and brought deep-seated discords into view. That matters for literary history because—by coming to epitomize popular, hack writing—the juvenile tradition brought to the fore paradoxes in American letters, and American history. This is the story that Indigenous inheritors of dime formulas pushed past simple ironies. It reveals the faultline over which American literature itself has been formed.

NOTES

[1] An early twentieth-century retrospective article asserts that the dime fiction plays on "the frustrations of a large stratum of the American people" in order to "proffer immediate, if somewhat phantasmal, wish-fulfillment in their stead" (A. Jones 38–39).

[2] For an early recognition of the afterlife of the dime novel, see the 1907 *Literary Digest*—which feels that, "if we do it justice, this class of fiction, now so much reprobated, must be given an important place in the literature of this country" ("Dime Novel" 94). It goes on to argue (from R. L. Stevenson's expressed debt to them) that other artists have "worked upon the lines of the dime novel until to-day America has a school which may very properly be designated as an artistic development of the dime-novel idea" (95).

[3] Hentea quotes Evelyn Waugh from 1920: "'The very young have gained an almost complete monopoly of book, press and picture gallery. Youth is coming into its own'" (*Henry Green* 32). "Nothing cleverer than America, or more characteristically youthful," wrote a 1917 editorial, arguing that "Europe says of us that in literature our tastes are juvenile. Perhaps they are. Juvenilia, after all, is the sort of thing our reading public pays for" ("Editorial" 4). Louis Untermeyer, a twentieth-century impresario of youth (touting pre-teen Hilda Conkling and teen-aged Nathalia Crane), declared the twenties "the era of the child"–an era in which youth "suddenly stops being a creature and becomes a creator" (Untermeyer 186). Hentea sees such texts as Modernist, and argues about such serious literature (as I do about pulp fiction) that "because publishers in the 1920s consciously targeted young writers, the norms of the publishing world were instilled in them at an early age" (*Henry Green* 17).

[4] They published with firms more established than dime presses: Putnam in his father's press, Putnam & Son; Liscomb with Frederick A. Stokes, "a major New York imprint with a reputation for publishing literary 'greats'" (Barwick 82). Stokes had an interest in advancing juvenile writing—it published Hilda Conkling's *Poems by a Little Girl* in1921 and went on to publish the travel books of the preteen Abbe siblings in 1936. Wade's press Reilly & Lee did face some pushback from librarians who saw it as too popular:

they thought its Oz series became a cheap syndicate series when it continued after Baum's death in 1919.

[5] Though Barwick recognises that the success of *The Young Visiters* created a market for young writers, he remains suspicious of the authenticity of juvenile writing, asserting as if to counter that "Harry F. Liscomb and his novel *were* real" (52).

[6] When "youth" as a category is left general and uninterrogated, it provides its own prescriptive scripts. "The rhetoric of youth is not restricted to liberalism," Edward Widmer cautions (Widmer 211). Lara Cohen argues that when privileged young writers understand themselves as oppressed simply because they are young, such "oppositional postures may actually work in tandem with … conservatism, as much as in tension with it" ("Emancipation" para 14). Comfortable white boy writers, playing at being marginalised, strip marginalisation's injustice "of its politics" to "make it available as a style" (last para).

[7] Yet Streeby also qualifies this view, writing that the dime novel mode "mediated the conflicts of its era in diverse ways rather than ignoring them" ("Dime" 586). Brodhead similarly suggests that "no culturally enforced model of authorship can wholly dictate the experience an author can attach to it" ("American" 27) so that its authors can find ways "to produce highly individualized imaginative content within highly standardized forms" (28).

[8] The dime industry actually worked through this practice of the zombification of old material: "After a certain number of years," the author of "Slick Parker" writes, "youth having outgrown itself—and a new reading generation arisen—the old novels are picked up, rehashed, and reproduced with new illustrations. It would be utterly impossible" otherwise (Author 60).

[9] Streeby and Bold both discuss Ned Buntline (Edward Zane Carroll Judson)—who published his first story at age sixteen ("My Log Book" in the 1838 *Knickerbocker*) and later became a leader of the staunch anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant Know-Nothing movement—as example of the way that even politically conservative young writers nevertheless also registered internal formal conflicts. See Bold's discussion of Buntline's ambivalent meta-discursiveness, "Voice" 34.

[10] Senarens cited his "Cuban father and American mother" to explain his heritage ("Biography" 10). Moskowitz seems to have directly interviewed Senarens's children in the 1960s; he states that Senarens visited Cuba (123).

[11] For examples of such racializing covers, see the 2021 exhibition at the West Virginia University Library: "American Dime Novel: Racialization / Erasure," curated by Nancy Caronia, https://omekas.lib.wvu.edu/home/s/dime-novels/page/introduction.

[12] For instance, Raheja points to the importance of Edwin Carewa of the Chickasaw Nation and James Young Deer of the Nanticoke people as "prominent filmmakers of the silent era" (17) in the 1910s and 1920s. Mining the records of another popular form, Bold has also "produced a list of three hundred (and counting) Indigenous and Indigenous-identifying performers on vaudeville stages between the 1880s and 1930s.… Cumulatively Indigenous performers shaped vaudeville into a transitional space important in the making of public Indigenous voice and presence within a climate intent on their erasure" ("Vaudeville"). See also Deloria, discussing the relation between "the dime novel; and a small but important tradition of travelling Indian performers" in the 1850s (57).

[13] Though "as a genre writer" Senarens's work had to "inherently fit a given paradigm" that was often intolerant, demeaning, and dehumanizing (Wythoff 227n2), Williams argues that Senarens provided a handling of "categories of race and nationalism" that was

"more fluid" than what was found in other dime fiction ("Frank" 281)—for instance, he provided his African-American character Pomp with some degree of interiority, even heroism; he imagined Frank trying less violent means in battles with other races, and even had him speak out for tolerance of others (71–79).

[14] "Bandit stories" could be double-voiced in the sense of ironic too. They included popular outlaw-heroes such as Deadwood Dick and the James brothers but also the legendary Joaquin Murrieta (the Cherokee writer John Rollin Ridge wrote a dime novel about him). Streeby traces the "contradictions of ideologies of U.S. empire-building" in Murrieta bandit stories as reflecting border tensions (*American* 57). Bleiler suggests that, for Senarens, "Mexico was a somewhat hostile power that needed to be shown" US dominance—unlike Cuba, which the young writer saw as "a little different," "because of Senarens's Cuban ancestry" ("Introduction" XI). Williams argues that Senarens' works set in Cuba "ultimately undermine the very notions of race and nationalism that enable imperialism" (N. Williams "Frank" 282).

[15] For Warne/Macy see Bremseth and Streeby, "Dime." For John Rollin Ridge, see Streeby, *American*. Ridge was another writer first published as a teenager. The Boston abolitionist publisher James Redpath also issued William Wells Brown's *Clotelle: A Story of the Southern States* in 1864 "in a series of dime novels he called Books for the Camp Fires" (Greenspan 403). The American Antiquarian Society website states that the African-American amateur boy journalist Herbert A. Clark "contributed to the professional periodicals *Boys of New York*, *Boys' Own*, and *Wide Awake*"—though his contributions seem to have been puzzles rather than stories ("Cincinnati's *Le Bijou'*). Bold also mentions that "Indigenous authors such as Luther Standing Bear (Lakota) and Mourning Dove (Okanogan) knew and took on dime-novel formulas; later, Maliseet author Chief Henry Red Eagle/Henry Perley was a successful author of pulp magazine stories" (*Vaudeville* 95). She argues that actual dime-industry texts by writers of colour unsettled the populist preconceptions of race at the time and that scholars' careful recovery of these writers now points out blindspots in "our scholarly knowledge of the genre, its histories, and its uses," which she specifically identifies as blindness to non-hegemonic modes of performance and storytelling ("Violence" 112).

[16] Harte published his first poem in the *Sunday Atlas* at age eleven, but was so ridiculed by his family for doing so that "'sometimes,' he has said, 'I wonder that I ever wrote another line of verse'" (Pemberton 6)—yet he went on to edit a book by the time he was twenty and was publishing verse again before the next year was up.

[17] Harte writes that his character thinks this has become even harder since the postal service stopped delivering dime novels so that he now has to buy them from "a book peddler" (a change to dime-novel delivery that did happen in the 1870s) (37).

[18] Similarly, in Britain "Chatto & Windus succeeded in branding itself as the house for young authors in the 1920s" (Hentea, "Late" 173), offering its cultural imprimatur to capitalize on youth's presence. Putnam's was decidedly American, following that sense of the American wide-awake spirit I explored in Part One of my essays. George Palmer Putnam, editor at the time, was named for his grandfather, who had started the firm and, in an 1836 essay, had already expressed his belief in the new machinery of production: "In this age of ballooning and railroading—printing by steam—where the machinery of book-making is such … there is no telling what human invention will accomplish next. We like this go-ahead of spirit" (qtd. in S. Smith 181). Though they disparaged the dime novel, such cultural gatekeepers worked to appropriate its mile-a-minute mode anyway, conceding that "the red-blooded boy, the boy in his early teens,

must have his thrill; he craves excitement, has a passion for action, 'something must be doing' all the time; and in nothing is this more true than in his reading" (Mathiews 653).

[19] Two of Putnam's books were excerpted—in the Boy Scout magazine *Boy's Life* and in *Youth's Companion*. Putnam's firm also held a contest to select actual Boy Scouts, sent them on a bona fide expedition, and published the account in *Three Boy Scouts in Africa* (1928). Other young authors writing boys' books for boys included Halsey Oakley Fuller, Robert Carver North, Deric Nusbaum, and Deric Washburn, Jr.

[20] Ade also got a boost from this connection. In 1928, after his preface for Wade reacquainted audiences with his 1890s dime-humor columns, he collected them as *Bang Bang! A Collection of Stories Intended to Recall Memories of the Nickel Library When Boys Were Supermen and Murder a Fine Art*.

[21] "No creator of yellow backs and penny dreadfuls can surpass" his style, one article writes ("Another" 131); another lauds his evocation of the dime novel's spell, understood as the sheer nostalgia of lost youth: "one is irresistibly reminded of Penrod's literary efforts in the piano box" ("Infant" E2), referring to the dime novel attempted by the boy hero in Booth Tarkington's 1914 book of that name. Robert Gottlieb remarks that the Penrod stories are unreadable now because of their use of racialised dialect ("Rise and Fall").

[22] *Great Scott*'s hero, for instance, is born on Wade's own birthday and writes a book entitled *In the Shadow of Great Peril*. It was foretold before his birth the hero would write the Great American Novel, a prediction to which he must painfully try to live up. The same was predicted about Wade ("Another" 131).

Eleven-year-old Wade had other novels underway, "with stirring titles" ("Young Boy Author" 3): *The Heavy Hand of Justice* (the sequel) or *Tracking Whisky Wolves*, and *Daggers in Boots*—that last "a stirring adventure of the Mexican border" ("Boy-Author" 2), as well as *The Gray Man of Montana* ("Boy Author Makes" 14). "'It will take four more books to get my characters placed,' he says, 'and I don't want to leave them as they are'" (Denton SM4). The *Herald* quotes a paragraph from the sequel ("Horace A. Wade" 13)—the only part of any of these subsequent manuscripts to see print, despite newspaper claims to the contrary. Wade also planned his "reminiscences" ("Boy Author Makes" 14) plus "a book for 'little tots' entitled, 'The Land of the Teddy Bears,'" because he famously had a Teddy bear himself ("Regular" 1).

In the early thirties, Wade brought out two novels with Dial Press. *To Hell with Hollywood* was reported to have reached a third printing ("Former" 4). Though his juvenile novel had received some praise in its *New York Times* review—which commended its "entirely earnest and youthful passion for bloodshed," and found it "funny, often very funny" ("Young Visiter's" X2)—the *Times* panned *Great Scott* (see "Dark Dawn") and was silent about *To Hell*. Wade did not bring out his next book—a collection of horse-racing stories—until 1956; he also published several collections about gambling.

Liscomb also projected writing many more novels—he "expects to write at least three books annually, plots for some seventy-five of which he already has plans" (Moon 9). "Expects to Write 100 Novels" was the headline of another story about him (A1)—later he upped that goal to 300 ("'Missing'" 6). He supposedly had a three-book contract with Stokes ("Missing" 1925); Moon, among others, reported that Liscomb had submitted at least one more manuscript (of "100,000 words," supposedly due to be published in the summer; see "Missing," "Young," and also "Youthful"). Yet there is no record of any more publications from him.

[23] Before he was arrested, Loeb told Wade that he had marked him as another young victim (Wade, *Boy's Life* 100). Wade supposedly lived under bodyguard until Al Capone told the underworld to leave him alone. As an adult, Wade used this story for his own publicity (see Haight).

[24] He also reported on the serial murderer Louise Peete, getting an exclusive interview with her (Wade, *Boy's Life* 21). He gave his views on the love-triangle murder trial of Arthur Burch (Wade, "Boy Author" 13).

[25] He found instead overworked staff doing the best they could for powerless youth who had been cast aside. Wade took the vantage point of powerless youth consistently, considering the experience of the young daughter of a woman tried for murder (Wade, *Boy's Life* 18), or adopting the point of view of the murdered boy in the Leopold and Loeb case (qtd. in Higdon 51). He also reported on Cyrus McCormack's attempt to maintain his youth with a gland transplant ("Wade, "M'Cormick" 3), or on a boy who had supposedly willed himself never to grow up past the age of ten (Wade, *Boy's Life*, 91–97).

[26] Reports at the time also agreed that "Horace is a good business man" (Forbes 8), who "skims the best sellers with an eye to business" ("In the Shadow," *Office Economist* 42). An ad in *Publisher's Weekly* pointed out that Wade was his own best "press agent genius"—scoring notices in all the major papers ("Reilly & Lee Ad" 777). At least in newspaper accounts, Wade's popularity translated into real money. The "Boy Author Makes $40,000 from Books; His Income $15,000" screamed one headline ("Boy Author Makes" 14). *Publisher's Weekly* ran a photograph of Wade alongside his publisher Frank K. Reilly, signing his contract and getting his royalty check ("Good Book" 386)

[27] Fitzgerald was the symbol of juvenile authorship at the time; he published his own first stories in the *Nassau Literary Magazine* in 1915, at age 18. For Wade's exchanges with Fitzgerald, see Bruccoli 261–66. His exchange with Shaw was generally reported. His correspondence with Dreiser is at the University of Pennsylvania, Theodore Dreiser Papers, ca. 1890–1965. Folder 6450, though I have not consulted them.

[28] For the extempore examination, see Keeler: "when reporting for the *World*, he wrote such excellent copy that skeptics insisted on having disinterested persons watch him write it, before they could believe that this youngster was the real reporter" (2). His handwriting was reproduced in the dedication to his novel; see also Bunker, and see MacKall's article on Henry Liscomb, which also includes a specimen of his handwriting (D5).

[29] It is hard to separate Wade's actual resistance to adult definition from the publicity made of it. Reilly & Lee announced in *Publisher's Weekly* that his story of "the Shaw episode … is authentic" ("Chicago's Daisy" 129). When the eminent author refused to endorse Wade's book (accusing him of being an adult), Wade replied: "Some day, if you live long enough, my autograph will be worth more than yours" (*Boy's Life* 11) and used the story to gain notice and sympathy. In his news articles and his later memoir, Wade claims he made his own decisions, but how much agency he had remains open. Assertion of his agency was part of the public relations campaign to leverage his youth before it vanished. The satirical Chicago *Step Ladder* saw it as exploitation for profit: "Infant prodigies have held up well under the stimulus of modern commercial methods. Horace Wade, the boy wonder, has been on exhibition at the store in person, autographing books and doing simple tricks, and this has drawn enormous crowds who have bought liberally under the influence of Horace's childish prattle" ("Books We Have" 9). "Unless he is spoiled beyond repair by his friends," writes another account, "he may outlive the effects of their foolishness" ("Infant" E2).

[30] It is this attitude that makes George Ade, in his preface to his novel, call Wade himself "the most recent model of Young America" ([i]). At one point, the movie in which Wade featured was entitled *Young America* (Kingsley III4). Similar understandings of him were rife throughout his press—"He is a thoroughly red-blooded American boy" ("People" 6); his is "a career that will shed unusual glory on American letters" (Robinson 32). Sometimes they were openly jingoistic: "Americans interested in juvenile literary genius … should read American first, for America has its own Daisy Ashford" ("Horace A. Wade" 13). Asked about whether "he's going to write THE great American novel," Wade answers: "That's my Idea … and I suppose that's the idea of every ambitious writer in this country. I'm going to make patriotism the big theme of that novel. I'm going to show how it is felt by different classes of Americans" ("Boy Achieves" 3). Thomas Alva Edison said that "Horace Wade 'belongs to America,'" and reviewers suspected he just might "change the current of national life" by injecting himself "into the literary consciousness of the nation" (Robinson 29). In looking back on his own youthful capabilities, Wade characterizes himself as someone who "might *do* all, *dare* all, *be* all" (*Boy's Life* 2)—a comment that recalls Northrop Frye's definition of mode: what those in the world that is imagined "can do or could have done" (Frye 33), a definition that underlies my own discussion of youth as a mode outlined in Part One. This assertion of youth's go-ahead style shapes the attitude of the characters in Wade's novel too: "Master Wade's lads," as Ade writes, "are young persons devoted to action rather than moody self-analysis" ([ii]). In the novel, Wade himself calls them "fine, brave American boys" (*In the Shadow* 171).

[31] Nick Carter was Street and Smith's most successful and long-running detective hero. George Jenks was one of the writers of the Street and Smith dime hero Diamond Dick. Ethel Dell was another popular writer who started writing early, known for her pulp romances.

[32] Fanny Butcher, a *Chicago Tribune* book reviewer who had written approvingly of Wade (see Butcher, "Books" E19), was also baffled—to her, Liscomb's book was "very modern and full of sheiks and shebas and whatever. It is written badly—as it would be of course—but I can't seem to see that it is naively funny" ("Frank" 13).

[33] "When a lad of twelve, his first article had appeared in the 'Bronx News,' and he had received the commendation of Robert W. Chambers for winning a short story contest" (Tolson 11).

[34] For information about Tolson's articles for the *Wiley Reporter*, see "Sketches."

[35] It promises a futurism worthy of the most exaggerated dime novel speculative fantasy: "it would not be surprising to see in 1950 young men commuting in aeroplanes to and from school" or finishing their schoolwork using information technology that would be a cross between the radio and the dictaphone ("Young Negro" 4).

[36] Though six years later Moon writes: "he has of yet reaped little return in terms of money for his first novel" (9).

[37] The "work of a young novelist with a penchant for long words and amazing situations" ("Books on" 46), what mattered was "the way these happenings are told," which "has made this little book run rapidly through its large first edition" (Ovington 2). Told in a "most 'hifaulting' style, it depicts the dime novel adventures of a real 'sheik' and its pages are inhabited by cake-eaters, flappers, shebas and the whole modern tribe. Slang abounds and the fun rises largely out of the style of writing" ("Realist" 13).

[38] As did others: "Let us not hastily relegate this young moralist to Ashfordism. He is the Boy Scout who would be Balzac, with the help of what he has seen in the movies" (MacKall D5).

[39] One of his circle, Carl van Vechten, was corresponding with her at the time and later became her executor. Like van Vechten, Stein was critiqued for appropriating Black culture. For the vexed relation between Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, see Baker.

[40] MacKall had been a young writer himself for the *Yale Record* humour magazine. He may have been asked to review Liscomb's book expressly because of his association with wordplay; he was part of the notorious "Three Hours Club," which indulged in exaggerated punning, written about often by his fellow member, Christopher Morley.

[41] *The Saturday Review of Literature* made the comparison to Merton in its blistering review ("Prince" 780). Gertrude Stein thought *Merton* "the best description of America" and "the best book about twentieth century American youth that has yet been done" (287, 288).

[42] The *Boston Evening Transcript* did not think his book was funny precisely because its burlesque was "too deliberate" ("Prince" 4).

[43] Moon himself had been successful as a young writer at Howard University (when even younger than Liscomb) and was on his way to fame as a reporter.

[44] In his 1934 Foreword to the first issue of *Challenge*, James Weldon Johnson discusses new possibilities for writing in terms of young writers, and regrets the difficulty for Black youth to chart new paths even during the 1920s at the height of the Harlem Renaissance: "The term 'younger Negro writers' connotes a degree of disillusionment and disappointment for those who a decade ago hailed with loud huzzas …. We expected much; perhaps, too much. I now judge that we ought to be thankful for the half-dozen younger writers who did emerge" (qtd. in Baker 89). Johnson's 1929 essay "Negro Authors and White Publishers" points directly to how young writers felt limited by restrictive publication opportunities—caught in a dilemma between the literary and the popular, trapped in their doubts about whether work could be "*too good*" to publish, their fears of the inescapable contradictions of "'superior work—sordid publishers—low-brow public'" that kept them from coming to print (Johnson 229). Johnson insists this is a false dilemma and—trying to assuage young writers' worries that popular work, the work that "leading white publishers" wanted, entailed a "standard which Negro writers must conform to or go unpublished," a standard that recycled racist attitudes (229)—he offers Liscomb's *The Prince of Washington Square* as an example of a good work successfully avoiding this Hobson's choice (229). The tensions in Liscomb's work depicting race, and his own disappearance from the literary scene, speak to the actual difficulties of his position.

[45] For Bold, this more complex array of simultaneous and conflicting responses is in keeping with the dime novel as itself a complicated "mixture of commercial rhetoric, fictionalized history, and democratized sensationalism," which "created stories that could be appropriated and accented by quite opposite groups" ("Voice" 304).

[46] Bold argues that Mohawk's cross-dressing on stage put these dime novels on "the queer end" of "the spectrum of popular western formulas" in a way that "played on class, race, gender, and sexuality crossings with a slipperiness that" calls hegemony into question ("Violence" 109). Bold argues that in a meaningful way Go-won-go Mohawk did co-author this "dime series in that she created the central figure and much of the plot around which it revolved"; hers is the "originating authorship" ("Did" 148).

[47] They argue "it is vital to see Johnson's recitals as emerging from a deeper tradition of performance in the drawing rooms and longhouses of Mohawk people themselves" and not just as a negotiation of "colonial commercial culture" (149).

[48] The author of this article, Benjamin de Casseres was himself once a young writer, publishing editorials in newspapers by the time he was seventeen.

[49] Woodside has looked at dime novels to explore how "the rhetorics of boyhood and the frontier worked together in complex ways to inform as well as enforce burgeoning notions of American adolescence and national progress"—in part by considering "how children engaged with and responded" to that connection (though he does not consider young authors) (16, 15).

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THE UNDERWATER ADVENTURE OF "ONLY A LITTLE BOY": EDMUND GOSSE'S JUVENILIA

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IN THE Gosse archive at Cambridge University Library, a grangerized copy of Evan Charteris's biography, *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* (1931), bulges with family memorabilia: photographs, letters, drawings, and keepsakes (Add. 7027).[1] At some point in the decade between 1931 when Charteris first published the volume, and 1941 when this uniquely transformed version of it was donated to the University Library, artefacts salvaged from Edmund Gosse's life (1849–1928) were carefully embedded into his narrative *Life*. Whether Edmund's son, Philip Gosse (1879–1959), carried out the act of grangerizing himself, or whether he arranged for it to be undertaken by another, is not known.[2] Philip seems to have regarded this as the safest way of curating the ephemera in his keeping, even though grangerism had been lately ridiculed by Holbrook Jackson as a form of bibliophilic eccentricity in his 1930 *Anatomy of Bibliomania* (737–40). Jackson's views notwithstanding, the grangerised Charteris has an undeniable charm. One of its opening references is to the diary entry made by Philip Gosse senior (1810–1888) on the birth of his son in 1849: "E[mily] delivered of a son. Received green swallow from Jamaica," and with appealing immediacy there follow two of Philip's watercolours, the first depicting a white-gowned and bonneted baby with blue shoes (8.7 x 6 cm), and the second, a lustrous image of *Hirundo euchrysea*, the aforesaid bird (19 x 14 cm). The delicate subtlety of both paintings evokes a tenderness that belies the blunt economy of the diary entry.

Although the grangerizer has tried to locate each artefact in relation to the appropriate stage in Charteris's narrative, some inserts are randomly positioned. One of the most puzzling and unanchored of these is a handwritten story entitled "Sleep in the Deep," a document that has not hitherto attracted any attention within the Gosse critical corpus, possibly due to its undated and unfinished condition. This piece of juvenilia may be viewed not only against the familial, social, and cultural matrix of Gosse's early life as narrated in *Father and Son* (1907), published when he was a 58-

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year-old man of letters, but also in light of the contemporary writings of his two author-parents, allowing us to consider how far he imitates, reworks, and resists their respective discourses. His father, Philip, was a self-taught marine-zoologist and populariser of the domestic aquarium, while his mother, Emily (1806–1857), was a tract-writer who also produced a manual, and occasional articles, on the principles of Christian parenting. Emily's strong conviction about the heinous nature of fiction meant that Edmund was never told fairy-tales or nursery rhymes during his infancy. Indeed, it was not until the age of eleven that he was exposed to fiction for the first time in the form of Michael Scott's *Tom Cringle's Log* (1834), a swashbuckling novel of heroism on the high seas (*F&S* 117–19).[3] I will, therefore, discuss "Sleep in the Deep" as an amalgam of three discourses that blends the Latinate precision of Philip's work in natural history; the sounds and spirit of Emily's biblical lexicon; and the impact of Gosse's belated and dramatic discovery of fiction.

Unlike such child writers as Jane Austen or the Brontës, Gosse lacked the richness of stimulation associated with sibling make-believe or peer-group play. Rather, in the spirit of Philip and Emily's "Great Scheme" that their son "should be exclusively and consecutively dedicated to the … uncompromised 'service of the Lord'," Edmund's childhood was carefully monitored to keep him "unspotted from the world" (*F&S* 153, 8).[4] These circumstances create unusual quasi-experimental conditions that permit the study of a child's response to the influences within a controlled environment. Given that the three influential discourses are so clearly delineated, it is conducive to read "Sleep in the Deep" as a case-study that explores the child-writer's acts of imitation, appropriation, reworking, and play, as well the impact of audience, all factors fundamental to the larger critical conversations about Victorian juvenilia.

The Manuscript

"Sleep in the Deep" is written on four sides of a single folded sheet of flimsy paper (24 x 19 cm), with sketched illustrations at the top of the second and the fourth sides. Margins have been drawn on all four edges in pencil, and the writing is in purplish-black ink. The story commences at chapter 2, but there is no indication of Gosse's intentions for chapter 1. It is notable that Gosse's novella, *Tristram Jones* (c. 1872), manifests the same practice of commencing at Chapter 2, and although that later narrative is a complete story, it too lacks an opening chapter, which Gosse presumably envisaged as a general introductory preamble (Rees and Alexander xxxiii). It is possible that Gosse had learned from his author-parents that an opening chapter should serve a prefatorial function and should therefore be composed at the end of the process. The reference to "Chapter 2" also reveals that this was conceived as an extended project, with multiple episodes.

What follows is a transcript of "Sleep in the Deep":

Chapter 2.
When ~~d~~ Dowley fell into the sea, he found himself in a magnificent grotto, edged by magnificent sea weeds; ~~o~~\i/n the furthest corner seven beautiful fishes reposed. All seemed afraid of him, but one, the larges~~es~~t, E~~sn~~\ns/imanus ~~,~~ by name, being armed with a sharp sword came up to him, and in a haughty tone, spoke thus to the affrighted Dowley; "O strange and shapeless being of earth, Who art thou? Are you one of our enemies, the Mermen of the upper world, for if you are, I will pierce you through.
Dowley frighte\ne/d dreadfully, meekly ~~pr~~ replied, that he "was only a little boy." Ensimanus had never heard of "little boys", but supposed that was all right; and so, patting him on the back with his sword, said pitifully in the Pisci~~al~~\ne/ language, ~~cried,~~ "Poor Peter, pat him on the back. Poor Peter, cheer ~~him~~ up Poor Peter."
Dowley, always stupid, ~~a~~immediately began to grumble; saying that his name was Dowley not Peter. Ensimanus, (who was very proud) was offended, and calling for a cane ~~v~~ made of seaweed, beat Dowley. He soon, however, recovered his equanimity, and taking Master Dowley by the hand, took him to the door of the grotto and led ~~into~~ through some more, till he came to one more than ordinarily beautiful; this, said Ensimanus, was the cave of \the/ Mermaids of the North; Ensimanus took Dowley and pushed ~~a~~ him into the room, telling him that he might not venture there; on our fr~~ei~~\ie/nd's entra\n/~~l~~ce, he saw ~~in the~~ opposite him, in a ~~ma~~ ~~spe~~ splendid apartment, four lovely Mermaids. Dowley was terribly afraid and hid his face with his hands; and when one of them swam up to him, and led him lo~~v~~vingly to the others, he began to sob; they however played with, and kissed him, till he began to gain

Most of the emendations appear to have been made synchronously with the composition, suggesting self-correction rather than adult intervention; Gosse's early spelling mistake with the invented name "Ensimanus" is, for example, not repeated in subsequent usage. The final unfinished line is two-thirds of the way down the page and, not being a natural end-of-page break, suggests that the author was interrupted by someone (his father?) or something (his own mounting emotion?) and that, consequently, the narrative was never completed.

Paternal Influence

GIVEN that Gosse claims to have grown up as "a satellite" in his parents' "atmosphere," with "no young companions, no story books, [and] no outdoor amusements," the question of influence is more straightforward than for many Victorian child-writers (*F&S* 19). Indeed, the underwater context of "Sleep in the Deep" is a natural element for a boy who was schooled in the divine wonders of God's Creation, particularly marine life, from birth. Occasionally, Philip mentions young Edmund in his published writing, presenting him as a "little naturalist in petticoats," an enthusiastic researcher into natural history (*A Naturalist's Rambles* 3). In his account of a seaside outing on the Welsh coast, Philip characterizes Edmund (known always by his middle name) as earnest and solemn:

> … our little Willie was embayed as he was intent on making a pool with his wooden spade for the reception of a colony of *Purpurea* [sea-snails] that he had gathered from the rocks; and he related very gravely his apprehensions of being drowned, when he had to wade through the water, which was actually over the soles of his shoes!" (*Tenby* 18)

Like most Victorian child-writers, Edmund is growing up in a middle-class family where reading and writing are integral components of daily life, but these skills were to be directed towards natural history and theology rather than anything imaginative or poetic.

We may assume that Philip imparts the same pedagogy to his son as he directs to his readers, lessons that combine the workings of natural history with the wisdom of the believer. Philip's typological approach is exemplified by his description in *The Aquarium* (1854) of the *Cystoseira ericoides,* a seaweed that is dull when removed from the water but brilliant when re-submerged: "thus it may be compared to some Christians, who are dull and profitless in prosperity, but whose graces shine out gloriously when they are plunged into the deep floods of affliction" (100). It is notable that Philip intensifies the biblical phrase, "the water of affliction" (Isaiah 30:20 and 2 Chronicles 18:26) to evoke "deep floods"; Edmund clearly grew up with such watery metaphors. These typological axioms were, furthermore, put to the test when "deep floods of affliction" threatened Philip in February 1857, when Emily died of breast cancer. This event precipitated the removal of father and son from London to the village of Marychurch, near Torquay, situating Edmund from the age of seven close to the seashore with its diurnal overspill of God's natural wonders; this is the setting for "Sleep in the Deep."

Grangerized in the Charteris volume are a few of Edmund's letters to Philip, written age eight to nine, during the period when Philip undertook lecturing work away from Marychurch, leaving the now motherless Edmund in the care of the housekeeper-cum-governess. The letters reveal the child's precocious knowledge of

fish and plants, attained by daily observation of the household aquarium. Inspecting the anemones on 6 February 1858, he writes "I send you Bolocera's[5] observations; he is quite splendid this morning," demonstrating his confidence in using scientific nomenclature related to sea-anemones (Add 7027/ 24). Again, on 3 April 1858 he notes: "Three Pipefishes[6] swimming this morning when we went to see the tanks. I have only seen the Eolis despecta [sea-slug] once after you left" (Add 7027/ 27). On 8 February 1859, he returns his focus to the anemones, exclaiming: "This morning a Cerianthus Lyodii[7] came (Oh! Such a monster) but I fear it is dead" (Add 7027/ 31). Charteris quotes some of these earnest missives, as does Ann Thwaite, as they manifest Gosse's trait of advanced knowledge combined with childish sentiment (Charteris 6–8, Thwaite 40–41). They provide, in addition, a notable parallel, for just as his parents monitor his moral and spiritual behaviour within a prescribed environment, so young Edmund superintends the creatures within the confines of the aquarium.

Imitating the World of the Aquarium

"Sleep in the Deep" includes a drawing (Fig. 1) in which Edmund depicts an underwater scene that resembles an aquarium in shape and arrangement. Each one of the seven fish that swims amidst the marine flora represents a different species, and this is in direct imitation of Philip's underwater scenes. Jonathan Smith argues that Philip's style of illustration is typological, presenting "a sort of aquatic peaceable kingdom, with different species coexisting in a benign setting, each with adequate resources," rather like "a millennial vision" of "the unfallen Garden of Eden" (257–58). Into such a scenario, Edmund introduces the naked and ungainly figure of Dowley who sits, straight-legged, on the ocean bed, waving his arms to fend off a large sword-fish that is bearing down upon him. Dowley is positioned at the edge of the picture frame, literally driven into a corner with no escape-route, and his unruly hair—which goes beyond the picture frame—increases his expression of fear and dread. Edmund encourages us to view Dowley from the perspective of the sea-creatures, as a "strange and shapeless being of earth."

To draw the inhabitants of an aquarium probably became second nature to Edmund, the fish-tanks having for so long been part of Gosse family life. In 1853, Philip had been responsible for sourcing over 5,000 specimens and plants to stock the first public aquarium, known as the Fish House or aquatic-vivarium at Regent's Park Zoo, and had thereafter popularized the domestic aquarium that frequented many Victorian drawing-rooms during the "aquarium mania" of the 1850s.[8] Indeed, the aquarium contributed to the development of new visual technologies that promoted a culture of constant surveillance in Victorian institutions, as illustrated by the influence of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon scheme on the design of prisons and factories.[9] Michel Foucault argues that Victorian prisoners and factory-workers never

knew whether they were being observed at any given moment, a visual discipline that "produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies" (60). The figure of Dowley in the corner suggests that very docility; his vulnerability also evokes the hierarchy of nature, wherein the strong prey upon the weak.

Fig. 1. Edmund Gosse, drawing in "Sleep in the Deep" (10.5 × 5.5 cm) (reproduced by kind permission of Miss Jennifer Gosse, and courtesy the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).

Having plunged the hapless Dowley to the ocean bed, Edmund stages a confrontation with Ensimanus, probably modelling the aggressive swordfish-character on Philip's description of that powerful predator in *The Ocean* (1844). The swordfish can "alarm even the leviathan of the deep" by attacking it from below with "the long and bony spear that projects from its snout" (*Ocean* 146). Philip emphasises that its habit of attack "is confirmed by the frequency with which ships are struck with great violence, most museums possessing fragments of the planking of ships in which the 'sword' of this finny tyrant is embedded" (*Ocean* 148). He also portrays the swordfish as "a very cautious fish" that, when preying on Albacore, will be found "lurking astern, awaiting a favourable opportunity to rush upon his prey when they should be unconscious of danger" (*Ocean* 301). Even with his limited understanding of fiction, Gosse recognizes the narrative potential of this "finny tyrant," giving him a temperament not only savage but also shrewd.

Appropriating Language

As Juliet McMaster observes, many child-writers "are in pursuit of language, and some savour and collect certain unfamiliar words as though they were precious

objects" ("What Daisy Knew" 52). Young Gosse clearly savours Philip's language in *The Romance of Natural History* (1861, 2nd series), from which he appropriates Philip's over-used adjective "magnificent" (employed twenty-four times in the pages of *Romance* to express the wonder of God's creation) as well as more distinctive words such as "piscine," used by Philip five times, and "mermen," appearing once, in his discussion of mermaids (this chapter to be addressed in more detail below).[10] Edmund's name for the swordfish—"Ensimanus" (lit. *sword-handed*)—merits particular attention, the word seemingly coined partly from examples of Latinate compound words that appear in Philip's chapter on Mermaids, such as "quadrumanous animals" (lit. *four-handed*) and the "natatorial type of the *Quadrumana*" (126, 127).[11] In the context of so circumscribed an existence, Edmund seems to seek power over words, and these borrowings and manipulations corroborate Gosse's later claim that as a child "I had the greatest curiosity about words" (*F&S* 94).

Instances of more polished prose in "Sleep in the Deep" are attributable to Philip's quotations in *Romance* from Walter Scott's notes to *The Lord of the Isles* (1815), where the novelist and poet describes how in "our own northern islands" he discovers an "extraordinary grotto" about which the "[i]magination can hardly conceive anything more beautiful" (134). Edmund's translation of Scott's generalised phrase, "northern islands," into the more definitive and assertive noun, "Mermaids of the North," suggests an ability as a storyteller to forge significance by wordsmithing. Edmund's description of the cave as "one more than ordinarily beautiful" shows a confident adaptation of Scott's comparative construction. Scott's novels provided "a strong impulse" to creativity among such child-writers as the Brontës, Mary Augusta Arnold, George Eliot, Thackeray, Byron, and Louisa May Alcott (Alexander 15, 18; Taylor 136; McMaster, "Choosing" 188–89). Such is the strength of Scott's prose that not only does the novel-starved Edmund respond to Scott's explanatory notes but he also singles out for direct emulation—among the many authorities cited by Philip in his chapter on mermaids—the only one who is a literary rather than a scientific writer.

Reworking Figures

FAR OUTSIDE Gosse's normal diet of religion and natural history is the mythological figure of the mermaid. Indeed, the presence of mermaids in this manuscript constitutes a pressing reason for dating it to 1860–61, as this was the time when Philip was preparing his chapter on Mermaids in *Romance*. Edmund's drawing of the mermaids (Fig. 2) shows them emerging from a dark cavern, with the partially hidden Dowley watching warily from the other side of a sea-channel. The configuration of the mermaids' tails and arms suggests a reworking of Philip's illustration of Dagon, god of the Philistines (Fig. 3), in his *Assyria: Her Manners and Customs* (1852), probably the only image of this hybrid creature available to Edmund (84).

The longevity and universality of the *Siren Canora* tradition made it a fascinating topic for the Victorians, and the publication of *Origin of the Species* (1859) and the dissemination of Darwinian theories of variation and natural selection re-energized that debate. A fixist conception of Creation, governed by taxonomies, laid down that animals should be grouped in families according to shared internal or external characteristics, while evolutionary theory argued that creatures like mermaids demonstrated the adaptation of life-forms from aquatic to terrestrial environments.[12] It seems strange that Philip, who clung tenaciously to his belief in the fixity of species, should interest himself in such controversial creatures as mermaids, but as Heather Brink-Roby argues, Philip's openness to wonders is "a religious imperative": an insistence on what was possible and what was not was considered "hubristic" (8).

Fig. 2. Edmund Gosse, drawing in "Sleep in the Deep" (10 x 5.5 cm) (reproduced by kind permission of Miss Jennifer Gosse, and courtesy the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).

Philip's discussion of mermaids in *Romance* is wide-ranging and open-minded. He weighs his evidence and marshals his data with care, pointing out that the narratives he cites "are given by eye-witnesses of the facts they vouch for: men of honesty and probity, having no object to gain by deception, and whose accounts have been confirmed by other witnesses equally trustworthy" (127). He cites references to mermaids by ancient authors like Polyhistor and Apollodorus, by antiquarians like Erik Pontoppidan (*The Natural History of Norway*, 1752–53), by fellow-FRS's such as Samuel Hibbert-Ware (*A Description of the Shetland Islands*, 1822), Robert Hamilton ("History of the Whales and Seals" in the *Naturalist's Library,* 1843), and Sir Emerson Tennant (*Ceylon, Physical, Historical and Topographical*, 1859), as well as considering

accounts based on the statements of ordinary men such as "six Shetland fishermen" (*Romance* 144). Philip concludes that such evidences, taken together, "induce a strong suspicion that the northern seas may hold forms of life as yet uncatalogued by science" (*Romance* 145). And Philip was not unusual in this conviction: Harriet Ritvo observes that there were many attempts "to account for reported sightings of live mermaids … and thus to relocate potentially anomalous data inside the conventional confines of natural history" (181).

Figure 3. Philip Gosse, drawing of Dagon, God of the Philistines, from Assyria: Her Manners and Customs *(1852.)*

Philip's influence on Edmund was clearly very strong. Although we can often trace imagery and figures to specific books, we should not discount the impact of Philip's everyday oral interactions with his son in the transmission of facts, debates, and principles relating both to zoology and to religious belief. Gosse describes in *Father and Son* Philip's passion for disputation, illustrated by his animated recounting "evening after evening" of the "pros and cons" of evidence in the unsolved Thames Carpet-Bag Mystery of 1857 (67).[13] We can therefore envisage how in 1861 Philip might have rehearsed a similarly well-informed appraisal of data relating to the existence of mermaids, inadvertently kindling Edmund's imaginative response in "Sleep in the Deep."

Incorporating Personal Experience into Child-Writing

As PHILIP stated in a letter to his son of 21 January 1870, Emily had left Edmund to him "as a solemn charge … to bring you up in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord. That responsibility I have sought constantly to keep before me" (30). Impelled by that charge, Philip arranged for Edmund to undergo the ritual of baptism usually reserved for adults, being anxious to secure him in the faith before he was beset by the temptations of adolescence. Baptism in Brethren practice involved full immersion, an experience that Edmund seems to replicate by plunging Dowley into "the deep." Although Edmund recalls briefly enjoying being the centre of attention, he soon realised that his new status came with a price, for Gosse became the only child at the meeting who "broke bread as one of the Saints," and was therefore under pressure as "one so signally enlightened" to be always "an example to others" (*F&S* 110, 111). Philip, furthermore, allegedly drew "dreadful pictures of suppositious little boys who were secretly watching me from afar" and whose eternal salvation could be compromised by a failure to "keep my lamp burning" (*F&S* 110). Edmund could never escape his "curious history," especially at school where his baptismal status caused him to be "instinctively avoided, as an animal of a different species, not allied to the herd" (*F&S* 124). The naked figure of Dowley expresses not only difference, but also exposure, Edmund also feeling constantly under scrutiny with nowhere to hide.

Gosse's mother, anxious to keep her son pure by banishing all fiction from the household, explained her strategy to readers of *The Mother's Friend* in 1855:

> You may feed the young mind and infant imagination on these things [trite and foolish nursery ditties] and your child will like them. But if you make the mistake of thinking it is too soon to begin with spiritual teaching, and that you had better pave the way with nursery rhymes and other trash, you will find not only that you have lost the fairest and most favourable opportunity one human being ever has of influencing the mind of another … I was reminded of this yesterday morning, on being awakened by a little fellow at my side, who had crept out of his crib at daybreak, "Mamma," said he, "what is that about 'Heigh diddle diddle,' and the cow jumping over the moon?". I said, "Do you believe that story dear? Do you think that cows ever can jump over the moon?" "Yes, I do, ma" "And do you suppose that dishes can run away with spoons?" "Yes, mamma." "What a stupid child!" you will exclaim. Very well, your children may be wiser; but what I should think of great importance is—are you wiser than to teach your children all the nonsense you learned when you were a child? (29–30)

Since Emily's commitment to truth required her never to invent a fictional episode, we may assume that the "little fellow" in this anecdote is Edmund, who would have been six at the time. Although the epithet of the "stupid child" is attributed to the reader and not to the narrator, it is an ambivalent textual transition that a sensitive

child might take to heart; it may have fuelled Edmund's characterization of Dowley as "always stupid."

By regulating Gosse's contact with the world so rigorously, Emily could be said to have "interpellated" him into a "subject" (Althusser 115–24), one who in this case is *subjected* to God's commandments. Without any alternative language available to him, Gosse's religious discourse is precocious, and he remembers that before his baptism, "I testified my faith in the atonement with a fluency that surprised myself" (*F&S* 105). The absorption of the King James biblical lexis and figures into "Sleep in the Deep" should not therefore surprise us. Dowley is, for example, "affrighted," a word that Gosse would have heard regularly at the meeting-house: multiple references in Deuteronomy urge believers to "be not affrighted," and it is also the injunction that the angel makes to the disciples after Christ's resurrection (Mark 16:6). Similarly, Gosse would have been well-acquainted with biblical talking animals, such as the cunning serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1–5), the faithful donkey that revealed the angel to Balaam (Numbers 22:22–40), and the eagle that warns humanity of the ending of the world (Revelation 8:13). As Christine Alexander notes, there is in children's writing "no contradiction between the literal and the fantastic," and it may have seemed quite logical for Edmund to give his fictional swordfish, Ensimanus, a voice (18).

Certainly, that voice of Ensimanus is peculiarly resonant in relation to the symbolism of baptism. Ensimanus's inquiry of Dowley, "Who art thou?" echoes the question put to John the Baptist by the Jewish priests (John 1:22). In his reply, John the Baptist intimated that his identity was irrelevant other than as the herald of Jesus; in other words, he had already died to self and was now assimilated with Christ. The notion of sharing Christ's crucifixion is reiterated by Dowley's experience of being beaten, recalling Pilate's scourging of Christ (John 19:1), and of being intimidated by Ensimanus's threat to "pierce you through," a phrase that evokes the act of the soldier who pierced Jesus's side with his spear at Calvary (John 19:34). Edmund would have been well versed in the meaning of the rite of baptism, immersion symbolizing the believer's desire to share Christ's suffering, and emergence signifying new birth fired by the Holy Spirit. Nor would it have seemed far-fetched to situate Dowley's "baptism" in open sea, given that Philip had long conducted baptismal rites at the shoreline near Oddicombe (*F&S* 107). After Dowley's immersion and suffering, he emerges into a space that is "beautiful" and "splendid" to be greeted "lovingly" by mermaids, conceivably Edmund's notion of the new birth. However, there is something ominous about these "loving" mermaids. Just as for Edmund, the act of baptism was believed to fix his future for eternity, so Dowley seems to intuit that interaction with the mermaids may herald something irrevocable, and he becomes troubled.

In Figure 2, we see four mermaids in the grotto and a fifth diving into the pool to greet Dowley. In his text, Gosse mentions only four mermaids, and I suggest that his specificity may reflect his thinking of the four women who during his own lifetime

had been, or had attempted to be, in a loving relationship with his father. Juliet McMaster uses Henry James's fictional child, Maisie Farange, as "a paradigm for the epistemology of the child, especially the Victorian child, because her case epitomizes the crisis of the child's urgent need for knowledge," that is, the forbidden knowledge of such adult subjects as sex and death ("What Daisy Knew"). Emily, as the first of the four women in Philip's life, is associated with sleep and death. In *Father and Son* Gosse remembers how his night-time routine was suddenly changed as her death became imminent: "I no longer slept in her room, no longer sank to sleep under her kiss" (43). Death and the kiss thus become associated with displacement. The epitaph on Emily's grave at Abney Park Cemetery, moreover, insists—confusingly for a child—that she "*slept* in Jesus" and that her dust "*waits* here the morning of the first resurrection" (emphasis added).[14] Even if Philip had explained the doctrinal niceties of "sleeping in Jesus" as espoused in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17, the close association of the kiss, sleep, and death may have long been troubling for the child.

As Gosse records in *Father and Son*, Philip the widower attracted the attentions of three aspirants to matrimony: the headmistress of a nearby boarding-school, Miss Wilkes; the housekeeper Sarah Andrews (a.k.a. "Miss Marks"); and a middle-aged Quaker lady, Eliza Brightwen. Now it is Edmund's turn to be a "jealous monitor," as he scrutinizes the behaviour of Miss Wilkes "with a suspicious watchfulness that was above my years" and expresses to Miss Marks his "horror" at the very idea of her becoming his "mamma" (*F&S* 128, 92, 127). Like Maisie Farange, young Gosse is aware of adult doings that he is supposed not to understand. Philip's marriage to Miss Brightwen in December 1860 (which Edmund did not attend) is marked by his "own possessions" being removed "to a private bed-room" (*F&S* 127). Just as on his mother's death, now on his father's re-marriage Edmund is ousted from the parental bedroom, abruptly expelled first by the prescience of death and second by the prospect of sex. Through all these changes, the boy is expected to remain innocent of and unquestioning about adult motives and conduct.

Experimenting with Genres

AMIDST this confusing world of adult obfuscation, Edmund was inadvertently introduced by his father to the genre of fiction in the form of Michael Scott's *Tom Cringle's Log*, the story of a thirteen-year-old midshipman in the Royal Navy who has various encounters with Napoleon's sailors, pirates, smugglers, and slave-owners. We must try to conceive the effects of Edmund having read only factual material for the first decade of life, and understand how, having never been told fairy-tales and the like, he had developed no sense of the protective devices that soften the impact of metaphor and style; he had no repertoire of frames and filters allowing him to understand irony and paradox; and he had no awareness of the fabrication of fiction, or the distortions of subjectivity, or the weight of inscribed cultural codes. Emily's

prohibition of fairy-tales would have contributed to Edmund's struggle not only with genre but also with emotion. Unlike other children who routinely engaged with Grimm's fairy-tales and the like, Edmund never learned to experience the threat of death, forests, witches, and giants in safe symbolic contexts. He could never take a break from parental "protection" and test the boundaries of autonomy. In retrospect, Gosse compares the impact of "Scott's wild masterpiece" on his psyche with "giving a glass of brandy neat to someone who had never been weaned from a milk diet," a bewildering and disorienting experience (*F&S* 118).

Through the eyes of his fellow-innocent, Tom Cringle, Edmund encountered in the *Log* scenes of violence, rape, and prostitution. Cringle sees a young woman who is mentally and physically traumatised by pirate assault, "blood on her bosom … gibbering an incoherent prayer," and he finds his friend in a brothel, "pinioned into a large easy-chair … by four beautiful young women, black hair and eyes, clear white skins, fine figures and little clothing" (Scott 50, 280). As Morris Mowbray warns in his introduction to the 1895 edition of the novel, "fastidious souls" might be "shocked," for "it was Scott's habit to paint with a full brush" (xvi). Critical interpretations of Edmund's response to *Tom Cringle's Log* have invariably accepted the adult Gosse's romantic view expressed in *Father and Son* that the book produced a "hope … that I should escape at last from the narrowness of the life we led at home" (119).[15] This reading accords with the book's thesis of Gosse's gradual emancipation from the bondage of religion through the boundlessness of literature. What has been overlooked, however, is Gosse's rather rueful remark that "certain scenes and images in *Tom Cringle's Log* made not merely a lasting impression upon my mind, but *tinged* my outlook upon life" (118 emphasis added). Even if the book *had* opened up a prospect of future escape, its more immediate effect seems to have been to mark the end of innocence and the threat of a world inhabited by menacing male figures (like the swordfish) and potentially treacherous females (like the mermaids). The sudden shift from a "milk diet" to neat brandy may appear intoxicating and liberating, but it is more likely to have been nauseating and numbing.

Philip's aquaria and Emily's legacy of baptismal immersion, as well as daily life by the seashore, accommodated Edmund to watery environments, and yet the reading of *Tom Cringle's Log* was like falling in at the deep end, never having been taught to swim; we might say he is "all at sea," that is, lost and confused. And Edmund expresses this in "Sleep in the Deep" by making Dowley emphatically *un*heroic. Not only does Dowley "fall" rather than dive into the sea but he is also "affrighted" by the swordfish, and he describes himself in the diminutive, as "only a little boy." Edmund highlights Dowley's timidity three times in this short piece, asserting also that he is "always stupid," conceivably the unfortunate echo of his mother's tract. Michael Scott bolsters his protagonist's marine identity by giving him a nautical name, a "cringle" being the hole in the corner of the sail through which a rope is passed, a small but crucial component of the ship's workings. Of the name Dowley, however, the nearest dictionary equivalent is *dowly*, a dialect word meaning "doleful, miserable,

and lonely" (*OED*). Ensimanus, furthermore, intimidates Dowley psychologically by challenging his identity, addressing him thrice as "Poor Peter." Given that most of Edmund's role-models were biblical, he may be identifying Dowley with Peter, the disciple who denied Christ three times. Certainly, denial was much on Gosse's mind during his schooldays: the duty of testifying his faith to fellow-pupils caused Gosse much anxiety and "prevented my forming any intimate friendships," rendering him lonely or *dowly* (*F&S* 123).

The Struggle to Invent

THOUGH Edmund is comfortable with reworking parental discourses, he has no model for the mermaid behaviour of playing and kissing, and it is at this point that the story falters. It is notable that in Figure 2 Edmund represents Dowley behind a rock, seemingly wary of approaching the mermaids. Having no siblings and no peer-group, play did not come naturally to Edmund: it was not until 1859 that "I was allowed, at last, to associate with a child of my own age," and what he learned from that experience was that "I had not the faintest idea how to 'play'" (*F&S* 91). The act of playing has long been paralleled with the act of child-writing because, as Leslie Robertson observes, it permits "the creation of model situations, of fictional worlds, of an invented reality, over which" the child "is master" (294). Edmund's inability to play makes it difficult for him to represent Dowley in that role, and inhibits the continuation of the story.

The introduction to the world of adults through *Tom Cringle's Log* "tinged" Edmund's outlook and darkened his perceptions. Not only are sex and death brutalized in that novel but Edmund's own experience of those events has also been shrouded by displacement (removal from the parental bedroom) and secrecy (no participation in Emily's funeral nor in Philip's remarriage). Kisses, therefore, may be even more disconcerting than play. As Joy Morse observes, the kiss is "both a performance of assertion (for the giver) and of submission (for the receiver)" and, as such, it conveys "a spectrum of power-positions" (282). Edmund would have been familiar with biblical models of kissing as routes to power and wealth: to usurp his brother's birthright, Jacob tricks blind Isaac into kissing him instead of Esau (Genesis 27:25–27), while Judas betrays Jesus to the Sanhedrin by a kiss (Matthew 26:48). Gosse seems to sense that the mermaids would gain a dangerous power over Dowley by their kisses, an uncanny anticipation of J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1906), where the "lost boys" have an ambivalent relationship with mermaids.

Conclusion

As SCHOLARSHIP in literary juvenilia has demonstrated, the imitation of sources by the child-writer involves complex acts of personalization and distancing, appropriation and reworking. "Sleep in the Deep" provides many nuanced insights into Gosse's adolescent psychology and situation, as well as his ability to transform and fuse three separate discourses—the realm of marine zoology; the spiritual significance of baptism; and the quest of the seafarer—combining their physical, symbolic, and fictional forms as watery domains. Though clearly envisaged as an extended project of several chapters, the first was never completed, possibly due to emotional inhibition but also audience disapproval. In the days of those bright and earnest letters to his father when all that mattered was how often the "Eolis despecta" was sighted in "the tanks," Edmund was confident that his "extremely precious Papa" would be a receptive audience (Add. 7027: 32).[16] However, with regard to "Sleep in the Deep," Edmund may have sensed Philip's disapproval; indeed, there is a hint of this in an anecdote in *Father and Son*.

In that memoir, Gosse claims that aged ten, he was "preparing little monographs on sea-side creatures" modelled "as exactly as possible on the pattern of those which my Father was composing for his *Actinologia Britannica*," a work published in 1860 (*F&S* 98). The theme that this anecdote illustrates is the Victorian debate about imitation versus originality, with Gosse criticising the emphasis on the latter, the fact that "in these days … children are not considered promising, unless they attempt things preposterous and unparalleled" (*F&S* 97). Gosse argues that a child should rather "imitate closely and carefully what is being said and done in the vicinity," then describes how he "emulated" his father's painstakingly-detailed illustrations (*F&S* 97–8). This sense of apprenticeship is important to our understanding of "Sleep in the Deep," for although Gosse became a man of letters—a classifier of literature, unlike Philip who was a classifier of fauna and flora—there is undoubtedly an acknowledgement here that Gosse learnt his craft in the paternal workshop.

However, as with many of Gosse's anecdotes in *Father and Son*, there is a twist in the tale, for he suggests that his imitations inadvertently parodied Philip's work: "If I had not been so innocent and solemn, he might have fancied I was mocking him" (*F&S* 98). Gosse alleges that he "invented new species, with sapphire spots and crimson tentacles … which were close enough to his [Philip's] real species to be disconcerting," but that because of his childlike "innocence" his father could not reprimand him, but only "good-humouredly, deprecate" his efforts (*F&S* 98). It is possible that, during his research for *Father and Son*, Gosse found the manuscript of "Sleep in the Deep" and recalibrated its content and tone to construct this anecdote foregrounding the sort of child-writer or incipient parodist he wished he had been, or desired his audience to imagine him being, at the age of ten. As Ann Thwaite observes, Gosse "changed things deliberately very often to make a better story" (3). In this retrospective version of events, then, Gosse suggests that as an adolescent, he could produce an allusive, playful, and confounding critique of the work of an

established author, evincing the traits requisite for his later role as a man of letters. He wants the world to believe that, despite the many parental prohibitions and prescriptions, young Edmund Gosse's essential nature as a witty, incisive, and shrewd commentator manifested itself against all odds. Manipulated by its own author, and overlooked for over one and a half centuries, "Sleep in the Deep" constitutes a moving testimony to a child's attempt to use all the resources at his disposal to make sense of his environment, his adolescence, and his emotions.

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NOTES

[1] The practice of grangerism takes its name from Rev. James Granger (1723–1776), whose *Biographical History of England, from Egbert to the Great Revolution* (1769) was physically expanded by Richard Bull (1721–1805) into thirty-six large folio volumes, containing over 14,500 prints. See Megan Becker-Leckrone, "Grangerism," in *The Microgenre: A Quick Look at Small Culture*, edited by Molly C. O'Donnell and Anne H. Stevens (2019), pp. 71–81.

[2] Philip Henry George Gosse was a medic, naturalist, and writer, and should not be confused with his grandfather, Philip Henry Gosse, who is the Philip discussed hereafter. For details of the former's life, see Fayette Gosse, *The Gosses: An Anglo-Australian Family* (1981), pp. 2–9, 141–45.

[3] In *Father and Son*, a work that alludes to well over one hundred titles, Gosse devotes more space (over one thousand words) to *Tom Cringle's Log* than to any other text: it was first published intermittently in *Blackwood's Magazine* (1829–34).

[4] Gosse uses the phrase "unspotted from the world" (from James 1: 26–27) three times in *Father and Son*, mostly with an ironic inflection, pp. 8, 118, 173.

[5] Philip discusses the genus *Bolocera* in his *Actinologia Briannica* (1860), pp. 351–52.

[6] In *A Naturalist's Rambles on the Devonshire Coast* (1853), Philip describes how a pipefish survives in his aquarium for a period of four weeks, pp. 178–85.

[7] *Cerianthus Lyodii* is a species of tube-dwelling anemone; see illustration in *Actinologia Briannica*: Plate VII, no 8, p. 228.

[8] Philip describes his involvement with that project in *The Aquarium,* Van Voorst, 1854, pp. 3–4. See also Henry Humphreys, *Ocean Gardens: The History of the Marine Aquarium,* Sampson Low, 1857, pp. 27–28. For a contemporary report on the popularity of the aquarium across all social classes, see "The Aquarium Mania," *Titan*, vol. 13, 1856, p. 323.

[9] Pentonville Prison, London, with its central surveillance tower, was opened in 1842.

[10] Philip produced *The Romance of Natural History* (first series) in 1860, and *The Romance of Natural History* (second series) in 1861. In *Father and Son*, Gosse described this second book as "the most picturesque, easy and graceful of all his writings," attributing Philip's "unusually humane mood" to his marriage to Eliza Brightwen in December 1860 (130).

[11] From the age of nine Gosse learnt Latin, albeit fitfully, with his father (*F&S* 95).

[12] See Béatrice Laurent, "Monster or Missing Link? The Mermaid and the Victorian Imagination," *Cahiers victoriens et édouardiens*, vol. 85, Spring 2017.

[13] This refers to the press sensation caused by the gruesome discovery of a carpet-bag, containing a headless and mutilated body, hanging on a rope beneath Waterloo Bridge. See Jeffrey Bloomfield, "The Bag that Nobody Claimed," *Medicine, Science, and the Law*, vol. 38, no. 4, 1998, pp. 335–40.

[14] "Grave of Emily Gosse, Abney Park Cemetery." *Brethren Archive*, www.Brethrenarchive.org/on-the-brethren-trail/grave-hunting/abney-park-cemetery/emily-gosse.

[15] See Francis O'Gorman, "Romance and Victorian Autobiography: Margaret Oliphant, Edmund Gosse, and John Ruskin's 'needle to the north.'" *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*, edited by Corinne Saunders, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 360–74 (369); Michael Newton, introduction to *Father and Son*, Oxford UP, 2004, pp. ix–xxviii (xxi–xxii); Samuel Clark, "Pleasure as Self-Discovery," *Ratio*, vol. 25, no.3, 2012, pp. 260–76 (272).

[16] Edmund's salutation to Philip in letter dated 16 Feb. 1859 (MS Add. 7027: 32)

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A Spirit of the Age: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 1822–26 Notebook, Romantic Writers, and the Commonplace Book Tradition

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"Question. Why does the mind find pleasure in the representations of anguish?" This fundamental problem in ethics and aesthetics is posed in a 231–page manuscript notebook that Elizabeth Barrett Barrett (EBB)[1] used in the years prior to publishing *An Essay on Mind, with Other Poems* (1826) at age twenty (Fig. 1). Following the catalogue title in *The Browning Collections: A Reconstruction,* the notebook—now in Wellesley College Library—is customarily identified simply as the "1824–26 Notebook."[2] In this article, I present a detailed overview and analysis of this neglected archival text, arguing that it is a valuable research resource for multiple reasons and for differing audiences: not only Victorian poetry specialists, but also Romantic and Victorian literature scholars more generally and investigators in the fields of juvenilia, manuscript and print culture, and history of the book. I also present evidence that EBB used this particular notebook for a wider span of years than its catalogue title indicates and identify it accordingly by the dates "1822–26" in my title and throughout. The notebook includes commentaries on a wide range of authors and books (principally though not exclusively Romantic writers publishing at the time), as well as "Stray Thoughts," textual extracts, notes and memoranda ("List of Books I wish to have," "Addresses of Editors"), and drafts of original writing.[3] Its contents open a window on a transitional period in nineteenth-century literary history and also cast new light on the intellectual and artistic formation of a writer who would become England's most internationally influential nineteenth-century woman poet by mid-century. Beginning when she was sixteen, probably after her prolonged illness and return to the Barrett family estate at Hope End in May 1822, the young author left a documentary trail of her omnivorous reading across fields and genres: not only

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literature (poetry, fiction, essays) but also philosophy, rhetoric, political theory, history, letters, memoirs, and biographies. In effect, the notebook suggests, she was fashioning her own autodidactic version of a liberal education in a period when women were shut out from the formal advanced schooling provided to her brothers.

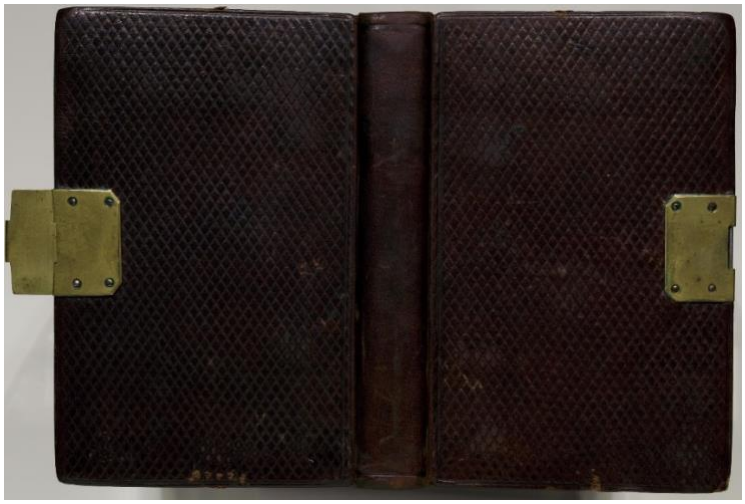


Figure 1. EBBCB *exterior view, showing binding and clasp.*

Like the juvenilia and notebooks of other Romantic and Victorian poets such as Alfred Tennyson, EBB's 1822–26 notebook includes much that speaks to issues, themes, motifs, and artistic tendencies in her mature works. For example, the college-age young woman querying the mind's paradoxical pleasure in representations of anguish would go on to write antislavery poems like the sonnet "Hiram Powers' Greek Slave" (1850) and "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (1847): one addressing the limits of art's "ideal beauty" in representing a white enslaved woman's "house of anguish" (l. 2), the other immersing readers in the dramatic representation of a Black fugitive enslaved woman's traumatic suffering.[4] As a key resource for understanding both the contexts that shaped EBB's mature poetry and the literary works she copiously produced before turning twenty, her 1822–26 notebook thus complements the lively autobiographical essays dating from an earlier phase of her adolescence. These essays, published in 1984 by Philip Kelley and Ronald Hudson, are now much cited by scholars (in part due to the pathbreaking example of Dorothy Mermin), and include vivid self-portraits of the precocious girl "mount[ing] Pegasus" at four, showing "feats of horsemanship" at six, and from age seven on reading histories of England, Rome, and Greece; Alexander Pope's translations of Homer; Milton, and Shakespeare.[5] The extraordinarily large body of poetry EBB produced after ambitiously "mount[ing] Pegasus" is now evident in hundreds of pages of annotated fine print in volume 5 of the 2010 *Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning,* beginning with her "earliest-known literary works" collected in fair copy in the album "Poems by Elizabeth B. Barrett."[6]

Laurie Langbauer rightly points out that the existence of a "movement of juvenile writers, beginning around the Romantic period," is still a tradition that is not "fully established" or sufficiently theorized.[7] Langbauer characterizes "the British juvenile tradition during this time" as "usually" made up of "schoolboys and undergraduates published in their teens," such as Henry Kirke White, Robert Southey, and George Gordon, Lord Byron ("Prolepsis and the Tradition" 889). However, gifted girls such as the young Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters were also a key presence in this tradition, their works now increasingly available in reader-friendly formats in editions from the Juvenilia Press established by Juliet McMaster and Christine Alexander. In the case of EBB, two major works have long dominated critical discussion, treated most fully in studies by Mermin, Simon Avery, and Donald Hair—each study of great value, but focused on other issues and contexts than a tradition of juvenilia.[8] The first of these works, EBB's Homeric epic *The Battle of Marathon* (1820), was published in fifty copies by her father when she was fourteen; the second, *An Essay on Mind*—completed and with a prospective publisher months before she turned twenty (*BC* 1: 221)—ambitiously treats "two classes" of "mental operations, or productions of the mind," as the young author explains in the verse essay's preface: "the philosophical" (divided into "History, Physics, and Metaphysics") and "the poetical."[9] Aside from these two long poems and her autobiographical essays, EBB's juvenilia remain under-investigated, despite a growing body of scholarship indicating how fruitful such research can be. This includes three pioneering articles by Beverly Taylor exploring the poet's childhood writings in relation to her views on education and cosmopolitan politics; Jerome Wynter's discussion of EBB's liberalism in "The African" (c. 1822), her first extended poem on slavery (published *WEBB* 5: 391–408); and Rachel Isom's analysis of "the language and figures of 'enthusiasm'" (29) in EBB's juvenilia. Inspired by Taylor's example, six young scholars are also editing a Juvenilia Press edition of selected works by the young EBB.[10]

Since its miscellaneous contents make it a hybrid, borderline genre liable to remain lost in the archives, EBB's largely unpublished 1822–26 notebook has been even less explored than many of the poetical works among her juvenilia.[11] Uncharacteristically, even the catalogue entry describing its contents in *The Browning Collections* is far from comprehensive, in contrast to the meticulously cross-referenced cataloguing of published and unpublished poems in her many notebooks used for composing and inscribing fair copies. Taylor underscores the importance of studying EBB's juvenilia together with her mature works by demonstrating that her engagement with contemporary subject matter is evident in her early poems and letters from the start, contrary to the view that she turned to such subjects in mid-career, then addressed them most vigorously and extensively in representing "this live, throbbing age" (V. l. 203) in *Aurora Leigh*.[12] The contents of the poet's 1822–26 notebook reflect the engagement with contemporary politics and issues that also characterizes her juvenile poetry, further illumining the underpinnings of her later

artistic practice. Much as EBB took her subject matter "from the times, 'hot and hot'" (*BC* 21: 111) in *Aurora Leigh*, many of the works she comments on or sometimes acutely criticizes in the notebook she began using in 1822 were "from the times," published in the first half of the 1820s.

For this reason, EBB's 1822–26 notebook offers a kind of mirror of the period itself—much as, in very different ways, William Hazlitt's *The Spirit of the Age: or, Contemporary Portraits* does in a series of essays published in 1824–25. Several of Hazlitt's essays were first published in the *New Monthly Magazine,* prominent among periodicals the young poet was reading and aspiring to publish in herself, as her notebook indicates. Hazlitt does not figure among writers treated in the notebook, while EBB, of course, was still far from figuring among spirits of the age in Hazlitt's terms. However, her record of her exploratory reading across genres, fields, national boundaries, and genders presents a striking contrast to Hazlitt's all-male, exclusively British cast of influential thinkers, writers, and politicians. It offers what historians might term a "history from below" in some respects (age, intellectual networks, gender), if not others (EBB's privileged social class and race). Although private, her notebook commentaries on books and writers also reveal how she began to hone a critical voice shaped by the public voices of reviewers in the periodical press of the period. The 1822–26 notebook thus offers fuller understanding of the writer who by the mid-1840s would not only be a leading transatlantic poetical spirit of the age herself, but also a collaborator with Richard Hengist Horne—more extensively than is often recognized—on the essays in *A New Spirit of the Age* (1844). Even specialized studies of *A New Spirit of the Age* acknowledging that EBB had some role in the collection tend to refer to Horne as the collection's solo author. For example, in a 2005 article, Horne's "insightful" criticisms on Alfred Tennyson in various passage are praised, even though some of these passages were written by EBB, as a volume of *The Brownings' Correspondence* published in 1990 demonstrates.[13]

EBB's 1822–26 notebook offers such a revealing mirror both of her own formation and the period it dates from because it is, in effect, a commonplace book, although one that, even as it continues the early-modern commonplace book tradition, reflects Romantic and later nineteenth-century transformations in that tradition. Commonplace books were traditionally used "to collect aphorisms and other extracts of texts ('commonplaces')" considered to "be worthy of remembrance" or of value as aids to composition, or both (Brewster 12)—particularly important when access to books was often highly limited. "As a device for assembling passages, lines, or words of special moment, the commonplace book served as both a memory aid and a mirror of the mind of its owner," as Jennifer Jenkins observes; "Thomas Jefferson's literary commonplace book documents his reading from adolescence to age thirty, and contains 407 entries" (1375). Such books thus played an important role in storing and organising knowledge, either under pre-determined categories or, after John Locke published "A New Method of a Common-Place-Book" in the late seventeenth century, using Locke's alternative method involving both a "pre-

prepared index" and the categorising of entries by "the first letter and first vowel" in the "head that they had been assigned."[14] Contrary to views in some quarters that the commonplace book tradition declined after Locke, the now burgeoning research on commonplace books across fields and periods emphasises continuation of the tradition in altered forms, as scholars discuss its relation to changing historical contexts and its overlap with other forms: diaries, journals, albums, scrapbooks, the "repurposing" of digital texts in social media, and the "global commonplace book we now know as the World Wide Web."[15]

In the nineteenth century, commonplace books were still widely used, as George Eliot's "Quarry" for *Middlemarch* suggests. They were also published or presented as gifts on occasion: Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge published "extracts from their commonplace books together" (Hess 469); Anna Jameson gathered "unconnected fragments" and "collections of notes" (vi) in *A Common-Place Book of Thoughts, Memories, and Fancies* (1855); and Felicia Hemans's son Charles presented a commonplace book belonging to his mother to EBB, with a note affixed dedicating it to "*Mrs Browning in token of admiration & respect."* After the dedication, in its recipient's hand, appear the words, "*Mrs. Hemans's Commonplace Book. EBB.*"[16] These words suggest that EBB may well have identified her own 1822–26 notebook (in which Hemans figures among authors treated) as a commonplace book too. Another notebook among her scattered manuscript remains is catalogued by the Huntington Library as a "[Commonplace book, containing passages copied from various authors]." As Mermin notes, this "undated commonplace book opens with an excerpt from Coleridge's *The Friend* on the theme that 'Every power in Nature & in spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole means & condition of its manifestation: and all opposition is a tendency to re-union.'" In this instance, as the Huntington Library's catalogue designation suggests, the notebook's contents more clearly correspond to traditional conceptions of the commonplace book's function and form.[17]

Romantic Transformations in Commonplace Books: EBB and Coleridge

As Jillian M. Hess demonstrates, Coleridge's notebooks (which he referred to as his '"common-place books,"' among other terms)[18] offer particularly striking examples of the Romantic evolution of the commonplace book from a compilation of "readerly extracts to a fusion of readerly and writerly notes," thus mediating between "original and received ideas" in keeping with "Coleridge's theory of the mind as an active participant in knowledge formation."[19] EBB's 1822–26 notebook takes a similarly mixed form to Coleridge's early "Gutch commonplace book," which combines "reading notes, textual extractions, memoranda, and original writing"; like his notebooks too, hers reflects a fascination with both eighteenth-century philosophies of mind and the Romantic movement towards "post-Kantian

transcendental theories of knowledge."[20] EBB's question about the mind's paradoxical pleasure in anguish is one of numerous examples of "textual extraction" in her 1822–26 notebook, in this case in an extended entry quoting, paraphrasing, and selectively summarising various theories set out in George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776).[21] Even in this instance, however, she is not merely copying extracts so much as analytically synthesising theories in a section of Campbell's comprehensive "philosophy of rhetoric" that seems of particular interest to her.

In other cases, she quotes selectively in order to question, as when writing of a passage in David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*: "To be questioned. 'The most lively thought inferior to the dullest sensation'— p 17 v. 2."[22] Similarly, in an entry on Immanuel Kant's theories of knowledge, she places a passage in quotation marks and underlines it: "he asserts 'that experience is the productrice of all knowledge & that we could not have a single idea without it.'" She then remarks in parenthesis, "This passage is extracted from Rees's new Cyclopedia & I cant help thinking the last line a misconstruction of the original Author. Surely experience is not necessary for the reception of simple ideas!"[23] Such remarks underscore the keen young autodidact's difference from the readers who simply copied extracts into their commonplace books, prompting the parody of one such figure in Jonathan Swift's "A Tale of a Tub" (1704): "For, what tho' his Head be empty, provided his Common place-book be full?" (qtd. in Brewster 33).

Much as Coleridge's notebooks are "sites not just of reception, but of conception," used to "experiment with ideas" as well as "to record quotations" (Hess 475, 471), EBB's 1822–26 commonplace book contains creative compositions and numerous original speculations mixed in with notes and commentaries on her reading. An entry titled "Stray Thoughts. April 1825" employs terminology similar to Coleridge's, who titled one of his notebooks "'Fly-Catcher / a day-book for impounding stray thoughts" (qtd. in Hess 474). In EBB's case, some of these thoughts take the simple form of a metaphor to illustrate a commonplace: "A habit of severe study gives energy to thought. As lute strings by excess of tension are made musical"; "Silen[c]e & stil[l]ness the precursor of all passionate feeling. The very waves have silence when they raise their dark brows upon high & look around Before they bay the Heavens, bursting in foam & sound!" (*EBBCB* 88–89). The most extended notes among these "Stray Thoughts" mix textual extraction and reflection in quoting John Milton's *Areopagitica* while expressing various thoughts about the value of "Mixed Reading." They thus speak to Milton's influence on both the young poet's Dissenting belief in the need to "wrestle with wrong" (as the notebook entry puts it) and the mature poet's defence of uncensored reading of "books bad and good" in a key passage of *Aurora Leigh*, in which Aurora describes herself as "dashed / From error on to error," with "every turn" bringing her closer to "the central truth."[24] In this case, we can clearly see how an apparently random "stray" thought in a writer's juvenilia can underlie and inform a major work published decades later. Another stray aside in EBB's remarks on Bernardin de St. Pierre's *Harmonies of Nature*

(1815) offers an intriguing gloss on her later choice of the protagonist's name and her mixing of the poetical with the prosaic in *Aurora Leigh*: "M^r. St. Pierre follows the example of many poetical prose-writers, making a mere dray-horse of Pegasus — & as L^d Bolingbroke said "I really can[']t stand the rose-fingered Aurora in prose" (*EBBCB* 168).

Other more substantial entries in EBB's 1822–26 commonplace notebook take the form of more purposeful notes or drafts of text for her own compositions, like "Hints for my Preface to 'Essay on Mind"' (*EBBCB* 57–61),[25] and a draft of a submission titled "For the New Monthly Magazine" (*EBBCB* 33–50). The latter corresponds closely in wording with an early text of "A Thought on Thoughts" sent to the magazine's editor (Thomas Campbell) and first published by Kelley and Hudson, who date it "ca. May 1823" (*BC* 1: 180–83).[26] Although not accepted and published at the time, this "descriptive narrative" of the "ancient and respectable house of the Words," in "former times … the most intimate friends of the Thoughts" is one of EBB's most delightfully witty youthful compositions. It parodically details the quarrels between the Thoughts and the Words ("little gentlemen … of very inflammable tempers," proverbially at war). The young author vividly describes the eccentricities of "M^r. Philosophical Thought" ("rather too fond of studying his own pedigree") who dictates long chapters "to his secretary (M^r. Locke)" on disputes over whether "the young Ideas" had "the free use of their eyesight before they came into the world." In contrast, "M^rs. Poetical Thought" is "a venerable old Lady who boasts of having wet nursed Homer, and led Shakespeare about in leading strings." We also meet "Concise Thought," who has "a dwarfish form" contracted by "the help of tight stays" because he "holds the Words in utter detestation."[27]

The most substantial original composition in the notebook is of an entirely different nature than this fanciful *jeu d'esprit*. Dated 1822, it is titled "Defence of the Bishop of Worcester[']s Objection to Mr. Locke[']s assertion 'that possibly we shall never be able to know whether any mere material Being thinks or no"' (Fig. 2). This "Defence" bristling with learning is itself an example of armed "Philosophical Thought" demonstrating its "pedigree," as the sixteen-year-old sets out to "prove" that Locke's "doctrine of materialism" and views on the "immateriality of the soul" are invalid, by analysing his use of authorities in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew sources.[28] Yet, despite the striking differences between this learned philosophical disquisition and the playful parody of "A Thought on Thoughts," they both underscore EBB's interest in the metaphysics of mind expressed elsewhere in her 1822–26 notebook and in *An Essay on Mind*. In this "astonishingly complex" verse essay concerned with "the power and politics of knowledge" (Avery 57), there is an evident fascination with turning "the pow'rs of thinking back on thought" (l. 201) and the "nature" of mind's "substance"—despite the young author's prefatory claim that the poem is more concerned with the "productions" and "effects" of the mind than its "operations" (*WEBB* 4: 78).

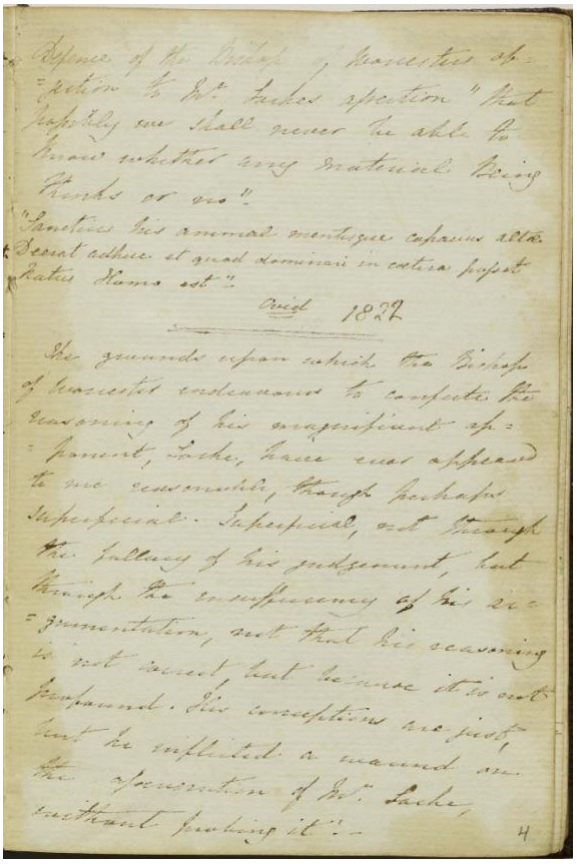


Figure 2. Essay on Bishop of Worcester and Locke, 1822*,* EBBCB*, p. 4.*

As in the case of Coleridge and other Romantic writers, EBB's notebook is not organised by topic or indexed by Locke's or any other method; instead it moves towards a "more flexible" chronological structure (Hess 468). The notebook may have been catalogued as dating from "1824–26" in part because the notes by EBB on "Kant[']s Philosophy" beginning on the verso of the marbled end paper are clearly dated in her hand "4. 1824." However, these notes are written in darker ink and a more compact hand than several items that immediately follow it in the notebook, among them the essay on Locke and the Bishop of Worcester, dated 1822, and the draft of "A Thought on Thoughts" for the *New Monthly Magazine* submission, dated "ca. 1823" in the case of the later version published in *The Brownings' Correspondence.* Thus, the Kant notes seem to be a later insertion.[29] EBB may have numbered the pages in her commonplace book when she inserted these notes, since the numbers are similarly written in dark ink and a compact hand.

The structure and sequencing of the notebook is further complicated by the fact that EBB flipped the notebook around and wrote from the back of it; the writing from the back is thus upside down to the writing from the front, although she

numbered the notebook sequentially from the front (with occasional missing pages or misnumberings).[30] The two directions meet on the middle of page 182, where a brief comment on a recent tale by Jeannie Halliday appears above "Addresses of Editors" (Fig. 3); however, the addresses are written upside down to the comment because they are written from the reverse direction of the notebook. The tale by Halliday is evidently "A Tale of Our own Times" in *Tales Round a Winter Hearth* (1826); the editors' "Addresses" include Campbell's for the *New Monthly Magazine* and another evidently copied from an advertisement for [John] "Thelwall's Monthly M. The Panoramic Miscellany[.] Italian & English Poetry received there" (*EBBCB* 182).

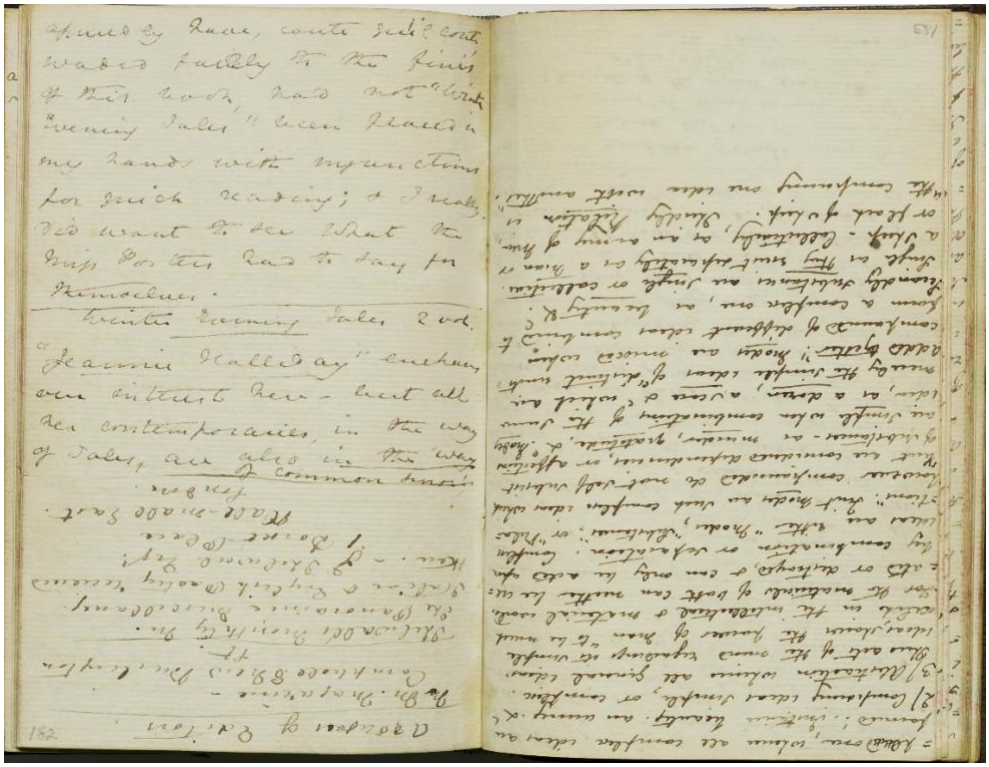


Figure 3. EBBCB, *pp. 182–83.*

Chronological sequence is also complicated if one considers the end of the notebook (or the new beginning marked by EBB's flipping it around and writing from the reverse direction). The verso of the marbled end paper inside the back cover (*EBBCB* 231) features a sketch and memoranda, one of the memoranda dated "1825." An unfinished opening of a "Short Analysis of Locke's Essay on Human Understanding. Book I[st]." is similarly dated "1825" (198). If one reads from the back of the notebook (i.e., from page 231 in reverse order), the few entries dating from 1826 in the notebook appear after this Locke analysis dated "1825," and thus appear to follow a chronological sequence. Most notable among these is an entry recording EBB's comments on Anna Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée* (178–79).[31] However, the

dating and order of entries between the back cover and the Locke analysis (including notes on Italian and middle-English authors among other contents) are unclear.

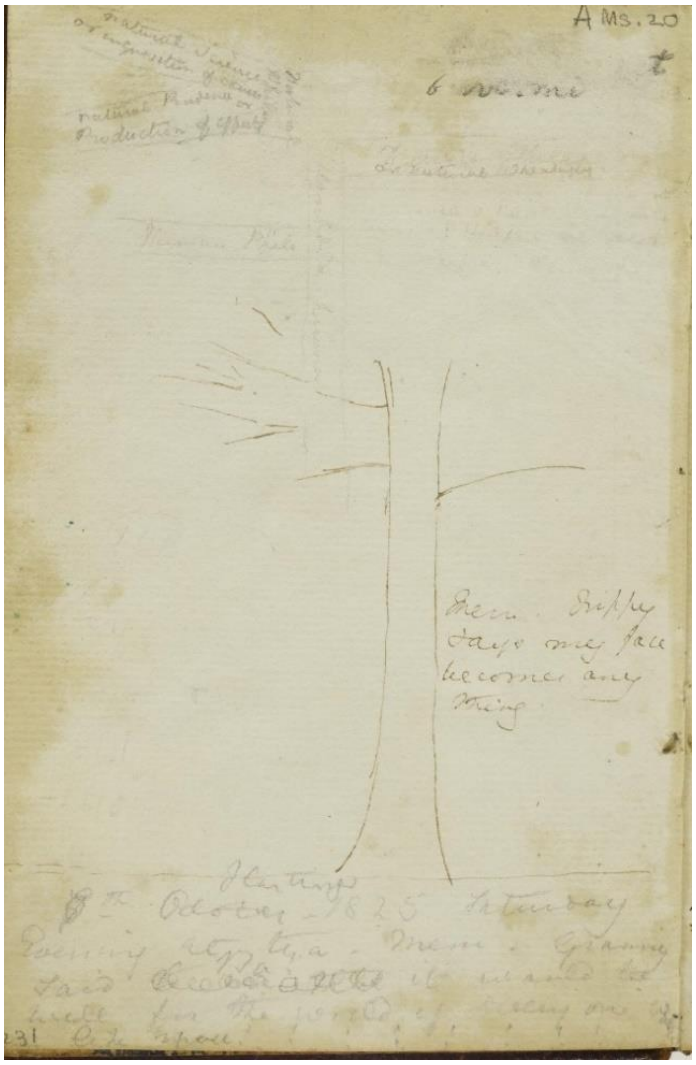


Figure 4. Tree sketch with memoranda, EBBCB*, p. 231.*

The sketch and accompanying memoranda on the verso of the marbled end paper at the back of the notebook are particularly intriguing (Fig. 4). The sketch (evidently drawn over an earlier partially erased sketch) represents a tree with labelled branches. These labels suggest that the tree relates to the departments of knowledge treated in *An Essay on Mind.* "Natural Philosophy" is written sideways where the top left branch emerges from the tree: the upper branch emerging from this in turn is labelled "Natural Science / or [?]Inquisition of Causes," and the lower branch, "Natural [?] Evidence or / Production of effects." "Natural Theology" appears on an upper right branch, with other words too faded to discern. The two memoranda

written beneath the tree's branches offer a charming glimpse of EBB's bantering exchanges with her paternal grandmother Elizabeth Moulton and her grandmother's life-long companion, Mary Trepsack or "Treppy" (also sometimes "Trippy")—the orphaned daughter of a Jamaican planter taken in as a ward by the poet's great-grandfather. Both were very enthusiastic fans of the young poet's literary endeavours, as the memoranda beneath the branches of the tree suggest; indeed, Treppy, acting as a "most munificent patroness" according to EBB's father, underwrote the publication costs of *An Essay on Mind, With Other Poems* (*BC* 1: xlviii, 237). At the bottom of this last page and the sketch of the tree, EBB wrote, "Hasting. 8th October. 1825. Saturday Evening at tea. Mem. Granny said [illegible deletion] it would be well for the world if every one was like you! ! ! ! ! ! ! !." This is accompanied by a similar statement above it on the page, to the right of the tree's trunk: "Mem. Trippy says my face becomes anything." As the "Chronology" (xlviii) and numerous letters in Volume One of *The Brownings' Correspondence* indicate, EBB and her sister Henrietta went to Hastings in July, 1825 for an eleven-month stay with Granny and Treppy.

This record of a domestic scene on a particular date intermingling with signs of intellectual and artistic activity (in the sketch of a tree of knowledge) is not unlike the "Diary Papers" of Emily and Anne Brontë. Much as in their diary papers the two sisters cast their vision towards the future; by October 1825, EBB, her grandmother, and Treppy were all looking forward to fulfilment of the young poet's hopes, since *An Essay on Mind, With Other Poems* had been with a prospective publisher since mid-August (*BC* 1: 221). As Langbauer establishes, juvenile authors are especially inclined to adopt a stance of prolepsis, "oriented towards the future."[32] In a tongue-in-cheek poem by her loving brother Edward or "Bro" for his sister "Ba" written three years earlier, we catch a glimpse of a similar domestic scene, underscoring the nurturing support of her intellect and aspirations for future fame that EBB, unlike the orphaned Brontës, received from her grandmother and Treppy alike. Bro's poem dates from 28 July 1822, shortly after his sister's long illness and time in a spine-crib subjected to treatments such as leeches. Alluding to these treatments, he describes proud "Granny" singing of Ba "till her cough interferes":

> "What a wonderful child, of all knowledge no lack
> What a contrast her brains to her leachy old back,
> Her strains are well worthy the very best of the Nine,
> And her head how deserving a far better spine–
> But look at her extracts—'Tis not to abuse you
> Though in Latin it is 'tempore et usu'
> Greek, Latin, & Hebrew, serve her for quotation,
> And in Justice, she brings them out in rotation, …." (*BC* 1: 162)

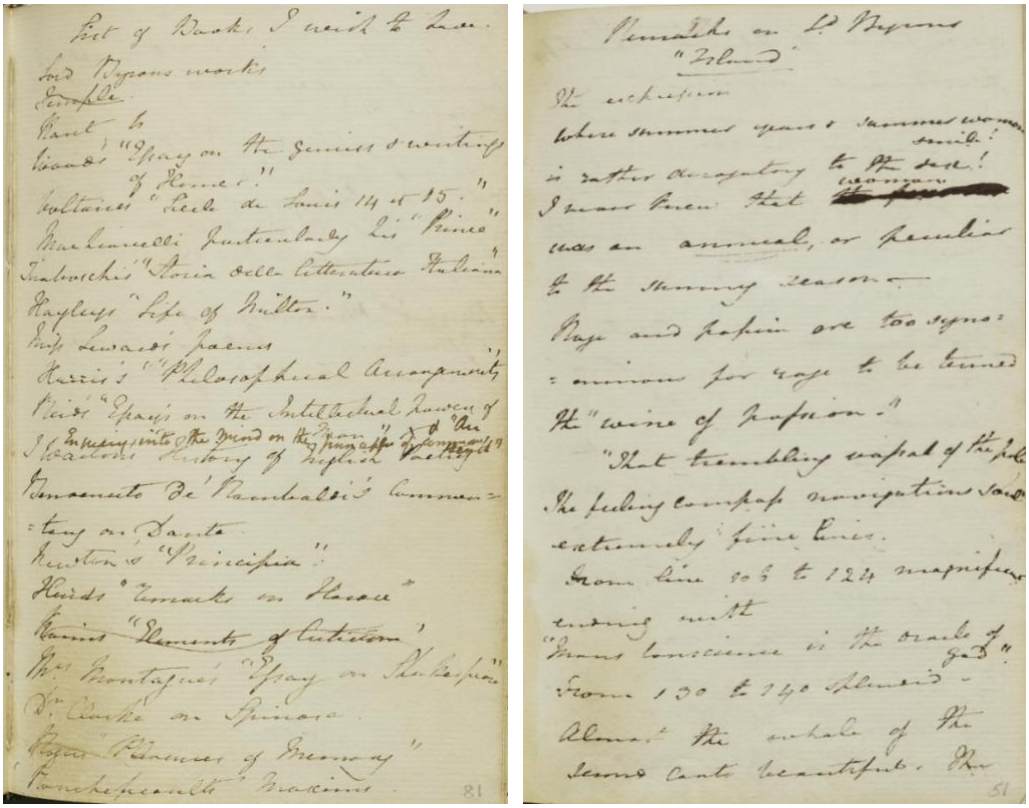
One wonders if Bro had read EBB's essay on the Bishop of Worcester's dispute with Locke, dated the same year, where she does, in effect, bring out quotations in "Greek,

Latin, & Hebrew" in rotation. Evidence elsewhere in the correspondence and juvenilia suggests the siblings' influence on each other's writing. Moreover, commonplace books in general were of a "semi-public, semi-private nature" and often shared with friends (Hess 466, 469). Possibly EBB's sketch of the tree of knowledge was shared with her grandmother and Treppy in order to explain the "productions" of the mind in *An Essay on Mind* to them. Certainly, "Ba's *pome*," as one of her little brothers (Septimus) termed it, was considered difficult to comprehend even by EBB's most literary sister, Arabella (*BC* 1: 235–36).

The Apprentice Critic: Reviewing Contemporary Authors and Books

WHILE EBB's 1822–26 commonplace book includes some original compositions, memoranda of various kinds, and textual "extracts" from established works of history, philosophy, and rhetoric, the largest category of entries is made up of commentaries on more contemporary works. Many of these are written in a voice and manner that seems to be patterned on the voices of reviewers in periodicals, while others seem more informal and private as the keen young writer waxes eloquent in satirically dissecting the books she assesses. On occasion, as the examples below indicate, she even refers to a notebook commentary as a "review," or titles it in a way that emulates the format of published reviews. She also focuses largely on recently published books, as a reviewer would do. Authors treated or mentioned in the notebook range from major figures like Lord Byron, Letitia Landon, Madame de Staël, and Mary Shelley to others influential at the time (Robert Southey, James Hogg, James Montgomery, Anna Jameson, James Fennimore Cooper), to a host of writers more obscure now but not necessarily so at the time. EBB comments, for instance, on William Lovell Edgeworth, Maria Edgeworth's father—whose 1820 *Memoirs*, completed by Maria, indicate that he "was not a man of Genius," but "suspected he was."[33] Recurring topics include poetry, fiction, the French and Greek revolutions, liberalism, and religion. EBB also routinely comments on aspects of form (versification, metaphors, prose style) or, less often, on material aspects of books now analysed in histories of print studies.

Among the poets whose books EBB assesses, Byron stands out: "Lord Byron[']s works" top a two-page "List of Books I wish to have" (*EBBCB* 81, Fig. 5).



Figures 5 and 6. "List of Books I wish to have," EBBCB*, p. 81 (left). "Remarks on L*d*. Byron[']s 'Island',"* EBBCB*, p. 51 (right).*

Given her focus on books published in the period covered by the notebook, however, Byron is a less pervasive presence than one might expect of the chief formative influence on her more ambitious adolescent narrative poems (for example, "The African" and "The Enchantress"). She seems to have been shifting, as she matured, from idol worship and emulation of Byron to a more scrutinising attitude, judging by Her "Remarks on L[d]. Byron[']s 'Island'" (Fig. 6). She may well have read this when it was hot off the press in the summer of 1823, and she expresses mixed views on the poem:

> The expression ["]Where summer years & summer women smile![”] is rather derogatory to the sex! I never knew that woman [written over "the fair sex"] was an annual, or peculiar to the summery season — Rage and passion are too synonimous for rage to be termed the "wine of passion." (*EBBCB* 51)

However, she goes on to praise several lines, passages, and "the whole of the second canto," along with the "exquisitely beautiful" description of Newton (*EBBCB* 51–52). Other entries not directly on Byron but including references to him make it clear, as

her "Stanzas on the Death of Lord Byron" (1824) and *An Essay on Mind* do, that she values him as much for his Hellenism and liberal politics as for his poetry.[34] She describes "Greece in 1823 & 1824, by Col. [Leicester] Stanhope" as a "fine spirited generous book which lets us look on the face of Greece unmasked," singling out "one pathetic letter descriptive of the last moments of Byron, addressed to Stanhope by the friend of our Poet Trelawney" (*EBBCB* 124–25).

In contrast, in what she terms her "little review" of the 8-volume *Memoirs de Madame de Genlis,* she finds it "absolutely ridiculous" for "an old woman on the wrong side of 80" to talk of "our Childe Harold, our Corsair, our Manfred, & say thereupon — leur vogue passera.' I am indignant in thinking of these things." Here, she is clearly not emulating the public voice of a reviewer. She goes on to check the ageist attitudes informing her remark on "the wrong side of 80" (initially she wrote "70") by observing, though somewhat condescendingly, "I can hardly get up a sufficient portion of unprejudiced candour to allow that it is a pleasing sight to behold an aged person in undiminished mental energies." Nevertheless, she quickly reverts to critique again, as she sets out a writerly rule of conduct that she certainly does not follow herself: "I do wish Philosophers would write about Philosophy, Politicians about Politics, Poetical critics about Poetical criticism, & Ma^me^ de Genlis about things she understands" (*EBBCB* 154–56).

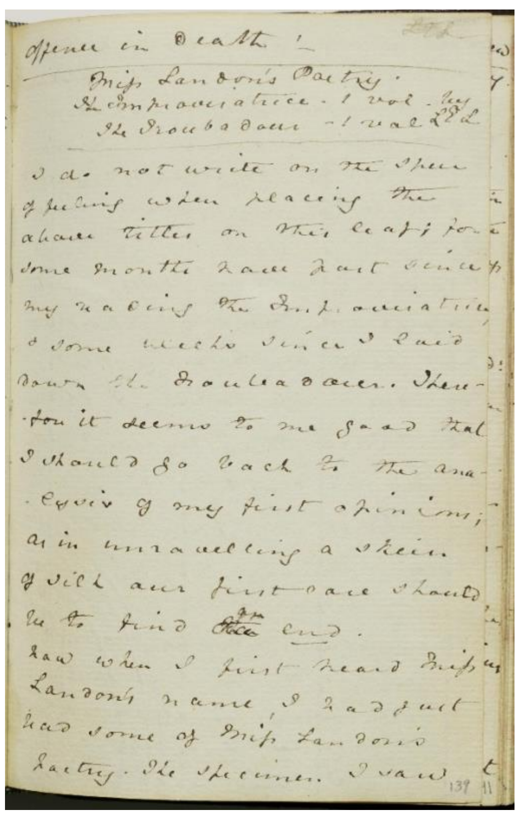

offence in death! —
Miss Landon's Poetry.
The Improvisatrice. 1 vol.
The Troubadour — 1 vol.
I do not write on the spur of feeling when placing the above titles on this leaf; for some months have past since my reading the Improvisatrice & some weeks since I laid down the Troubadour. There-fore it seems to me good that I should go back to the ana-lysis of my first opinions; as in unravelling a skein of silk our first care should be to find the end. Now when I first heard Miss Landon's name, I had just read some of Miss Landon's Poetry. The specimen I saw

Figure 7. "Miss Landon's Poetry," EBBCB *139.*

EBB's extended comments on Landon's poetry (139–44) express her evolving view of a woman poet emerging during the early 1820s as both a model and a rival. They also anticipate the contrasting representations of Hemans and Landon in her later elegies addressed to each poet. This entry appears under the title "Miss Landon's Poetry. / The Improvisatrice — 1 vol. by LEL / The Troubadour — 1 vol," with a line beneath, as if it were an actual review title in a periodical (Fig. 7). (Intriguingly, "LEL" is inserted in pencil and crossed out in the top righthand corner of the page, as if she were taking note of Landon's trademark use of her signature initials in publishing.) However, despite the entry's review-like features, EBB also employs a conversational tone, as if she were writing a diary entry or letter to a close friend:

> I do not write on the spur of feeling when placing the above titles on this leaf; for some months have past since my reading The Improvisatrice, & some weeks since I laid down The Troubadour. Therefore it seems to me good that I should go back to the analysis of my first opinions; as in unravelling a skein of silk our first care should be to find an <u>end</u>.
>
> Now when I first heard Miss Landon's name, I had just read some of Miss Landon's poetry. The specimen I saw was in the Literary Gazette: & it was entitled "<u>The [?Deserter],"</u> if I remember right what I have no pleasure in remembering. This specimen was undoubtedly very weak — weak as to its versification & its fancy — common-place as its [*sic*] subject. I therefore laughed outright on hearing Miss Landon's reputation. I deemed her Critics transformed [her] into divine without a Circe; I considered her fair self a very ordinary, poetry-writing young Lady.
>
> Circumstances prevented my meeting with The Improvisatrice before the expiration of some months; & in the meanwhile I laid hold on an article of the Westminster Review strictural on Miss Landons Poetry.[35] This article by the way is one of the [?silliest] things I ever read. It contains in the first place a misstatement of the commendation expressed by the Literary Gazette towards the Poet. "Miss L" say the Westminster, "is according to the Literary Gazette the first of bards living or dead: Homer Shakespeare! '"Hide your diminished ray!'"— Now the fact is that the L.G. merely encourages Miss L. in the cultivation of her superior understanding; assuring her that by the dint of cultivation she may surpass in poetical genius all <u>female</u> writers whose works have yet been given to the world. In this statement after an unprejudiced examination of Miss Landon's merits, I fully agree with the Literary Gazette. While saying so however I contemplate the improvement incident to cultivation; for at <u>present</u> I

> am far from considering Miss Landon superior or even equal to Mrs. Hemans in poetical execution. She writes more negligently but less daringly — with more <u>flow</u> but less power. But Mrs. Hemans is older; and her time of improvement has narrower limits than that allotted to Miss Landon. Therefore I agree in the expectation cherished by Mr. Jerdan; tho' conditionally. "The Improvisatrice" is beautiful & graceful; its versification is a characteristic & easy drapery for practical thoughts which put themselves into the prettiest attitudes in the world. The worst of it is, that they are fond of ever & anon putting themselves into the <u>same</u> [triply underlined] attitudes, whereby arises tautology. But where there is so much beauty we forgive expectation; & are rather glad to be haunted by the old faces of Miss Landon's ideas!

EBB goes on to cite an example of a repeated motif in Landon's poetry and to dispute the objection that her rhymes "are often imperfect," instead observing that "there are some faults more agreable than faultlessness"—an early articulation of theories of rhyme that she would embody in her own rhyming practice and articulate in both her correspondence and her overview of English literary history, "The Book of the Poets" (1842).[36]

More than most other entries in EBB's 1822–26 notebook, her comments on Landon's poetry convey the reading process unfolding over time. In part, this feature arises from the common delays or difficulties in obtaining access to books that contributed to the practice of keeping commonplace books (in this case, the "some months" that expired before she could obtain a copy of Landon's *The Improvisatrice*). More notably, however, this entry embodies to an unusual degree the process of evolving reflection at work in the apprentice critic's formation of her own considered opinions on other writers. Thus, she turns back to reassess her first impressions and initial judgements of Landon's poetry; she takes into account the samples these are based upon; and she further reflects upon her judgments in light of the conflicting critical views expressed in *The Literary Gazette* and the *Westminster Review*. While her stated objective is to engage in "an unprejudiced examination of Miss Landon's merits," the very care that she takes to ensure that her opinions are "unprejudiced" hints at her underlying feelings of identification and rivalry with Landon. The sense of identification comes to the fore in the conclusion to her entry: "If I were acquainted with Miss Landon,—or if I had one of the privileges of intimacy," she remarks, "I "might enquire with something of anxiety wherefore her subject should be <u>toujours perdrix.</u> Is it necessary that to preserve the excellence of her poetry, love & love only should constitute the 'head & front'?" (144). As EBB expresses a desire for "the privileges of intimacy" with a fellow woman poet, she also seems to wish that she could warn Landon of the perils of an obsessive focus on love (which she emphasises in the allusion to *Othello* [1.3.420]), much as she might offer advice to a

young female friend. Her age-based contrast between Hemans and Landon in relation to their "poetical execution" and "power" similarly brings out her identification with the younger woman poet, although in a manner that marks both as models and rivals. EBB would later reverse her opinion of these two influential female precursors, finding Landon the more powerful poet, though still lacking in the polish and execution of Hemans.[37]

EBB's complex, nuanced and generally favorable response to Landon's poetry contrasts sharply with the most highly critical review among her commentaries on contemporary authors: a satiric dissection of Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins's *Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts, and Opinions* (1824). The most striking aspect of this entry is EBB's elaboration of a gendered analogy between the physiognomy of books and differing kinds of faces. "I have not lived very long in the world; but I have lived an observing time & have seen many kinds of faces," she begins, describing numerous types before she classifies Hawkins's book, using her numbered table of "face modifications":

> 1st. moderate sized regular features, with expression/. Do.tt without expression.
> 2d moderate sized, irregular features with expression/ Do.tt without expression.
> 3 little pretty features, with expression. Do.tt without expression.
> 4 little ugly features with expression. Do.tt without
> 5 large coarse features with expression—
> 6 large coarse features without expression—
> Now the physiognomy of Miss Hawkins' book seems to me to coincide precisely with the last division of my face-regulation—It is precisely a large & coarse & inexpressive physiognomy.
> If her book were a powerful book, I would excuse coarseness; & if it were an eloquent book I would excuse trifling: But in good sooth, it is neither powerful or elegant, tho' coarse & trifling. I don't see any interest in her stories, & cant for my life laugh at her good jokes.
> Her style is very unwomanly, but not a whit the more masculine fore that!" (*EBBCB* 130–32).

EBB's concluding remarks in this entry—addressing Miss Hawkins's puffing of her brother's essay on "The Reform of Parliament; The ruin of Parliament"—suggest that her animus is intensified by her Whig opposition to the book's conservative politics.

In most cases, her comments on books are more balanced than her dissection of Miss Hawkins's "large & coarse & inexpressive" book. Of James Hogg's *Queen Hynde* (1825), she observes, "We shall find here some very fine lines, & some deplorably bad ones — some admirable poetry, & some excelling nonsense." Yet she finds a virtue in the mix: "Mediocrity is what we can least bear in poetry, & Hogg never tries our

patience in this respect. He will either sink or swim, he will either dive or fly, but he wont be content with a vulgar walk on dry ground. He may break a string of his lyre thro' excess of rapture; but he will never turn a hand organ till his auditor turn sleepy. With him there are 'ups & downs' in poetry as in life, but there is no wearisome highway on a flat" (*EBBCB* 122–23). Here as in other entries in her commonplace book, one can see the young poet-critic trying out the assertive, conventionally male "editorial 'we'" that she would later satirise in *Aurora Leigh,* where Aurora remarks of her journeyman work for periodicals to earn a living: "I learnt the use / Of the editorial 'we' in a review / As courtly ladies the fine trick of trains," sweeping it "grandly through the open doors" (Book I, ll. 312–15). EBB's comments on Hogg's poetical "'ups & downs'" are immediately followed in her commonplace book by the opposing example of a poet who furnishes his readers with "a highway on a flat": Samuel Jackson Pratt in *Sympathy: or a Sketch of the Social Passion* (1788). She remarks, "his poetry puts me in mind of that celebrated race, 'good kind of people'; not that it is by any means a good kind of poetry,— but that it is very amiable & very dull — respectable & tedious" (123). Her longer remarks on another eighteenth-century collection of poems by William Shenstone similarly express her Romantic dislike of poetry with "cold & inanimate" versification, a lack of "visions or even sensibility," and "pastoral allegories" she judges "phlegmatic"—"as ineffectually pastoral as if [Shenstone] had spent his life in town." While these comments on Shenstone resonate with EBB's later depiction of Aurora rejecting her pastorals as "pretty, cold, and false" (Book 5, l. 130), this entry is chiefly of interest because it leads her to an early articulation of her own poetics: "I am more and more convinced that an unagitated life is not the life for a Poet," she reflects. "His mind should ever & anon be transported like a young tree. It should be allowed to shoot its roots in a free soil, & not vegetate in a corner. Look at the lives of our great Poets — Shakespeare's, Milton's, Byron's — & find the truth of this!" (*EBBCB* 157–59).

EBB remarks on James Montgomery's *The Wanderer of Switzerland and Other Poems* (1811) allude to the practice of textual extraction in commonplace books, suggesting how this private practice carried over into the public discourse of reviewing: "I have no room or leisure for making extracts — or I might extract passages from this poem of prodigious strength & poetic excellence," she begins. Typically, however, like many reviewers she does not provide any examples of excellence. Instead, she first notes formal faults: "As a poem it is defective in plan; & it is moreover laden with an unmanageable kind of metre which tho' good for fugitive pieces, will give no room for the carrying on of action — and conceptions. Stanzas of four lines are miserable vehicles for a lengthened composition." Then, she refers once more to passages "replete with poetical power," but again does not cite any; instead, her fault-finding becomes more satirically exuberant. Montgomery

> not only sometimes but oftentimes sinks into commonplace; & then (woe unto his poetical character! For he endeavours to swell out his

> flat cadences, as people swell out balloons . . . [*sic*] with air![38] He calls in the help of pitiful allies indeed — such as marks of admiration, long dashes, ohs & ahs, & the repetition of nouns substantive. Here is an example apposite enough —
> "O Britain! Dear Britain! The land of my birth;
> O isle, most enchantingly fair!
> Thou pearl of the Ocean! Thou gem of the Earth!
> O my Mother! My Mother! Beware!"
> Oh Montgomery, Montgomery beware: say I! This is very bad; & I might, if I liked, quote worse still! (*EBBCB* 152–53).

The apprentice critic turns a contemporary ballooning metaphor to very different ends in her praise of the Gothic tale "Matthew Wald. By the Author of Adam Blair" (i.e., John Gibson Lockhart). In this case, her reflections on laying *Matthew Wald* down "[a]bout three months ago … with an awakened imagination, & thrilling heart" lead into more general reflections on novels as being "like water colours" that "generally fly with time." Readers "look at them as we did the other day at Mr. Courtney the Aeronaut, in a wondering, breathless, admiring mood till they have fluttered down" and then "wonder again how we could have wondered so easily." *Matthew Wald*, however, is one of those "rare works" that, even three months later, can "conjure up the passionate feeling" that it evoked in a reader's first experience of it. The novel is animated by a "spiritual sensible soul," and has "the expressive countenance of poetry," a "fitful wildness, & startling passion, & subduing energy" (*EBBCB* 113–14).

Her comments on "The Pilot by the Author of the Spy" [James Fenimore Cooper] make use of metaphors of painting and drawing, not ballooning, to advance a more mixed assessment. Despite "some fine drawing here," and "a masters touch" elsewhere, there are "no subdued lights" and "shadows." "Our Author does not excel in delicate finishing," she observes, focusing on the representation of women in the novel. The author makes "sad work" of portraying "feminine gentleness" in Cecilia Howard, but his Katherine "is a free spirited, free spoken maiden, interesting withal" (*EBBCB* 112–13).

Not so the protagonist of Anna Jameson's *Diary of an Ennuyée,* published anonymously in 1826. Like other readers at the time, EBB reads this as the journal of an actual heartbroken young English lady, but finds the book "a little Ennuyeuse": "At first setting out I deemed my travelling companion vastly agreeable but for her blue devils; & at taking leave, I was inclined to suspect the blue devils of being the most agreeable part of her." She also finds its style, both in English and French, marked by "affectation": "I should even say the blue Devils were affected if the poor Author did not die at the end!." EBB also "cannot forgive the Lady" for the "non-divulging of her agonizing mistery [*sic*]," exclaiming, "Surely the interested reader might be made the confidante!" (*EBBCB* 179–80).

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* (1818) appeared prior to the years when EBB was using her 1822–26 commonplace book. However, in the course of making notes on John Dunlop's *History of Fiction* (1814), she pauses to speculate about a possible prototype for Shelley's creature in a "tract" by Avicenna (the preeminent Muslim philosopher and physician). "N.B.," she writes,

> the celebrated Avicenna feigns that a human being was produced in a delightful but uninhabited island without intervention of mortal Parents, by mere concourse of the elements. The Being thus hatched; without instruction obtains knowledge by its own exertions —— !
>
> Perhaps it was from this work that M^rs^. Shelley took the idea of her Modern Prometheus, whose acquisition of knowledge is related in an interesting manner —— ! (*EBBCB* 110–11).

EBB may have been especially interested in this passage not only because of the parallels with *Frankenstein* but also because Dunlop goes on to emphasize that the creature in Avicenna's "sketch," though "destitute of instruction," "obtained what is most essential to personal convenience and finally arrived, by meditation, at the abstract truths of religion."[39] Such an example would be appealing for a young woman who defended the Bishop of Worcester in disputing Locke's claim "that the immateriality of the soul is not demonstrable," arguing in defence of "not only the soul's immateriality," but also "its immortal capabilities." As she reasons, "The soul is a cogitative Being! Cogitation is a spiritual mode. Nothing can be invested with a spiritual mode but what is spirit."[40]

Despite these speculations on Shelley's *Frankenstein* and her comments on recent novels by Jameson, Cooper, Lockhart, and others, poetry figures more prominently in EBB's 1822–26 commonplace book than fiction. Notably, there is also very little attention to drama aside from a play by Sophocles (*EBBCB* 127–30). This stands in contrast to her commonplace book now in the Huntington Library (noted above), which includes passages from the Elizabethan dramatists and from August Wilhelm von Schlegel's dramatic criticism, as well as extracts from religious writings and transcriptions of poems by William Blake.[41] Of the two commonplace books, the generic mix in her 1822–26 notebook more directly reflects the interests she earlier describes in "Glimpses into My Own Life and Literary Character": "At ten … I read that I might write. Novels were still my most delightful study.… At eleven I wished to be an authoress. Novels were thrown aside. Poetry and Essays were my studies" (*BC* 1:350).[42] During her mid- to late adolescence, as her 1822–26 notebook testifies, essays in philosophy, rhetoric, and politics by authors such as Locke, Campbell, Kant, and Hume, among others, remained important in the study she undertook as an autodidact fashioning her own liberal education. She was also reading a remarkably wide range of other prose genres: history, letters, memoirs, and biographies. Religion is an undercurrent or explicit focus in more of the notebook's entries than is initially

apparent, as her remarks on Avicenna's possible influence on *Frankenstein* suggest. For instance, she is deeply moved by the "apostolic spirit" of William Cowper's letters and their revelation of his "harassed, consumed, gentle & most angelic mind. There are passages in these letters fitted to drown us in tears," she observes (*EBBCB* 134). This reading would later influence one of her most widely praised and polished early poems, "Cowper's Grave" (1838, *WEBB* 2: 322–29).

Her reading is also notable for the European and cosmopolitan interests that are a pronounced feature of EBB's later works as well as works of juvenilia analysed by Taylor (2020)—although her 1822–26 notebook registers her Anglocentrism as well on occasion. She translates from the Spanish two tender personal letters by the Jesuit author José Francisco de Isla to a friend and to his sister,[43] and after reading *Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini* in a recent English translation (1822) by Thomas Roscoe, she observes, "I should like to have fallen upon this work in its original tongue" (*EBBCB* 149–50). She comments at greater length on Lord Holland's *Some Account of the Lives & Writings of Lope Felix de Vega & Guillen de Castro* (1817), agreeing with the Whig Lord's scepticism of reports that "'no less than 1800 plays'" by Lope de Vega had been acted on the stage and "'twenty one million three hundred thousand of his lines actually printed.'" This would entail his writing "on an average more than 900 lines a day"—not credible even if he did commence writing "at thirteen years of age" (*EBBCB* 172–73). Nevertheless, the prolific Spanish author would figure among the pithy portraits of classical, European, and English "king-poets" (ll. 728, 379–81) that she would later present in a much-cited passage of "A Vision of Poets" (1844, *WEBB* 1:179–223).

EBB's transnational and political interests are further reflected in the numerous books that she discusses concerning the French Revolution and British liberal modes of governance. After reading Madame [Henriette] Campan's *Memoirs of the Private Life of Marie Antoinette* (1823), she expresses some sympathy with the French queen, but also states that she "grew angry once or twice with the Author—but remembered she was a French woman, & forgave her sins" (*EBBCP* 138). She expresses less mixed feelings about Jean-Louis De Lolme's *The Constitution of England* (1771), a book by a "Genevan Republican" which "should be read by every Englishman," given its "excellent reasoning," although "a fault is that he can find no fault" with the British "temple of liberty" (160–62).

Other works discussed in EBB's 1822–26 commonplace book that reflect both her interest in politics and in the French Revolution include "Las Cases' Journal of Napoleon's Conversation" and Madame de Staël's "Considerations on the French Revolution."[44] The first engages her "deepest interest." Although she finds Las Cases "too monarchical" as a follower of Napoleon, she especially admires his comparison of Napoleon to "Prometheus chained to his rock," remarking that "[t]he heart of this modern Prometheus was exposed to the vulture; but tho' daily devoured never became less great" (*EBBCB* 147–48): a response reflecting the strain of Romantic Prometheanism in her earlier works. Her reading of Las Cases also resonates in her

later representation of the French Emperor in "Crowned and Buried" (1844), first published in 1840 as "Napoleon's Return."[45] She comments on Las Cases again in responding to de Staël's sharply critical representation of Napoleon (who exiled her).

As references in EBB's juvenilia and later letters attest, de Staël was an empowering example of a woman writer and intellectual for the young poet: author of that "immortal book" *Corinne* (1807) and among the inspiring female figures she salutes in the concluding lines of "Fragment of 'An Essay on Woman'" (c. 1822), written under the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft (*WEBB* 5: 16–19).[46] However, her opinion of de Staël's *Considerations* on the French Revolution is more divided—and chiefly because of the work's critique of Napoleon:

> Mme de Stael's "Considerations' are amazingly eloquent & wonderfully prejudiced. We think too much of the exile as we read her animadversions on Napoleon, & too little of the Philosopher. Place De Stael versus Las Cases, & it will be hard to say where enthusiastic attachment & where enthusiastic prejudice should have their barriers. The poor Emperor Alexander has a 'thick & thin advocate' in the daughter of M. Necker — whether consistently or not I abstain from saying. It is my opinion that the latter chapters of this work on the subject of the English Constitution & the Love of Liberty are more strikingly eloquent than the prior ones. Indeed in the detail of facts by which these prior ones are occupied there is less room for oratorical display. This work, as a whole, is a very masterly work — written with freedom both of style & sentiment — Its writer is endowed with the masculine faculty of being comprehensive. (*EBBCB* 166–67)

De Staël's similarly eloquent invocation of England as an example of liberty in abolishing the slave trade may underlie one of two quotations from her works written on the last leaf (page 230) of EBB's 1822–26 commonplace book: "Il n'est aucun pays sur la terre qui ne soit digne de la justice [There is no country on Earth that is not worthy of justice]." In this case, EBB includes the source of the quotation beneath, citing de Staël's 1814 title in full, though without accents: "Appel aux souverains reunis a Paris pour en obtenir l'abolition de la traite des negres [Appeal to the sovereigns gathered in Paris to obtain the abolition of the slave trade]." Although this might be seen as simply an example of the aphoristic quotations often copied into commonplace books, it is of particular interest as EBB's first explicit manifestation of interest in a specific abolitionist text that I am aware of (evidently dating from after her composition of "The African"). It also points to de Staël's hitherto uninvestigated impact on EBB's later political engagement with the antislavery movement. Significantly, however, de Staël's 1814 *Appel* is a text that praises England as a model to other European nations for its past abolition of the slave trade, rather than

criticising it for its ongoing exploitation of the enslaved in its colonies. EBB would not overtly and unequivocally express her views on this latter issue, including the condition of slaves on her father's Jamaican estates, until after the passing of the Abolition Act in 1833, when she stated to Julia Martin, a close family friend, that the bill emancipating slaves in British possessions had "ruined the West Indians," but she was "glad, and always shall be, that the negroes" were "virtually—free!——" (*BC* 3: 86).

Concluding Questions

THIS ESSAY opens with a question posed by the young EBB in the commonplace book that she began using in 1822 and closes with a series of questions or lines of inquiry arising from the contents and form of that book. Some of these relate to the light it might cast on the poet's later development, poetics, and writing as a literary critic. One wonders, for instance, how the omnivorous reading across genres that the commonplace book reflects may have contributed to her experimentation with hybrid genres in works like *Aurora Leigh*, much as Coleridge's commonplace "style of note-taking influenced the form of his published works—particularly his commitment to working within multiple genres at once" (Hess 464). *Aurora Leigh* is an epic verse-novel, but it also incorporates several genres that jostle together in the young EBB's commonplace book: memoir, letters, journal-like writing, and the philosophical argumentation characteristic of essays and Victorian sage discourse.

A second question I have touched upon at points also calls for deeper exploration. The notable focus on books published in the years when EBB was actually using her 1822–26 commonplace book suggests that her reading was enhancing her awareness of her own age, as she was coming of age. In Book Five of *Aurora Leigh,* she presents a fully developed manifesto calling for a poetics of the present age and embodies it in engagement with contemporary issues throughout. However, this comes after decades and apparent detours into a poetry that is sometimes more oriented towards the past. Is the lively engagement with the present that we see both in EBB's precocious juvenile poetry and in her 1822–26 notebook continuous through her career? Or intermittent and interrupted, and if so, why and in what ways?

Finally, how might more examination of the review-like assessments of works often hot off the press in EBB's commonplace book add to fuller understanding of the later writing she did as a literary critic throughout her career? The critical writing of other nineteenth-century poets like Matthew Arnold is highly visible in volumes of essays. In contrast, much of the literary criticism EBB produced is dispersed and less visible, often because her detailed comments on a wide range of contemporary writers and works are embedded in her correspondence, especially in her letters to Mary Russell Mitford. Or this criticism is published under the name of others, as in the case

of her substantial contributions to the essays on Tennyson and Thomas Carlyle in Horne's *A New Spirit of the Age,* a collaborative collection taking up (though in very different ways) Hazlitt's project two decades earlier in *The Spirit of the Age*.

Another set of questions I have raised but by no means resolved concerns the larger commonplace book tradition. To what degree is EBB's 1822–26 commonplace book similar to others in the same period, as parallels with Coleridge's earlier notebooks might indicate? Or, as commonplace books become more flexible in their form, do they also take more individualised forms? For instance, Ann Radcliffe's commonplace book as Cheryl L. Nixon describes it is "predominantly" comprised of "lists of medicines" and Radcliffe's "descriptions of physical reactions to them." Its material form too differs from EBB's, since it has "pinned-in pages and folded-in scraps of paper," making it like "the bodies of Radcliffe's heroines," trying to "conform to and escape" constraints (356). These differences point to another, more fundamental question. When can we or should we identify a "notebook" as a commonplace book? As Cary Nelson points out, "[t]he commonplace book … is not a fully demarcated category" (qtd. in Feder 546).

Finally, what is the relationship, if any, between Romantic transformations in the commonplace book tradition that Coleridge and EBB similarly exemplify and the movement of juvenile writing that scholars such as McMaster, Alexander, Taylor, and Langbauer have made more visible? Do juvenile writers make more use of commonplace books than mature authors and use them for more varied or different purposes? Do they play an especially vital role when gifted young writers face barriers to education arising out of their gender (like EBB) or their social class (like the butcher's son, Henry Kirke White), or their race (like Phillis Wheatley a generation earlier)?[47] While EBB's use of a multi-function commonplace book beginning at age sixteen suggests that this may be the case, one would need to consider many more examples of commonplace books used by juvenile writers before arriving at any certain answers to such questions.

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NOTES

[1] Prior to marrying Robert Browning in 1846, Elizabeth Barrett Browning customarily used her full maiden name "Elizabeth Barrett Barrett" or often simply her initials "EBB" (sometimes "E.B.B.") in signing many letters and poetical manuscripts as well as in publishing. Both poets were pleased that she would remain "EBB" in taking on her husband's last name (*BC* 11: 248–49). Traditionally critics identified her as "Mrs. Browning," while modern critics have often opted for the anachronistic "Barrett Browning," or alternated between this compound and "Elizabeth Barrett," but neither are forms of her name used by the poet herself. This article follows the practice of using the poet's initials also employed by the editors of *BC* and *WEBB*.

[2] Entry D1405 in *The Browning Collections* (see "R" in "Works Frequently Cited). An updated online version of this invaluable comprehensive catalogue, along with *The Brownings' Correspondence,* is now available as part of *The Brownings: A Research Guide,* hosted by the Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University, Texas. See https://www.browningguide.org. The notebook can be viewed online (catalogued following *R* as the "1824–26 Notebook") in the Digital Repository of Wellesley College Library, Special Collections: see Works Frequently Cited.

[3] *EBBCB* 81–82, 87–90, 182. All page references are to the numbers inserted in this ms. notebook in EBB's hand.

[4] The ethical and aesthetic issues in both poems have provoked much debate. See, e.g., Stone, "Between Ethics and Anguish," Lootens, and summaries of criticism in the headnotes in *WEBB,* vols. 1 and 2, edited by Stone and Taylor: vol. 1, 416–17 for the headnote to "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point," and vol. 2, 147–48 for the headnote to "Hiram Powers' Greek Slave."

[5] See the autobiographical essays "My Own Character," "Glimpses into my Own Life and Literary Character," and "My Character and Bro's Compared" (*BC* 1: 347–58). These are frequently cited by Mermin, especially in "Chapter One: Childhood and Youth" (17 *passim*).

[6] "Poems by Elizabeth B. Barrett" is included among other works of juvenilia published in *WEBB*, volume 5; edited Donaldson, Patterson, Stone, and Taylor. For discussion, see Introduction xxxi–xxxii.

[7] Langbauer, "Prolepsis and the Tradition" 889. See also Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition*, for a fuller exploration of this tradition.

[8] Mermin emphasises the complex gender dynamics in *The Battle of Marathon* and *An Essay on Mind*; Avery addresses the liberal politics shaped by EBB's Whig family background in both poems, and Hair focuses on the philosophies of language and mind shaped by Locke and Francis Bacon in *An Essay on Mind*.

[9] *An Essay on Mind* (Introduction and annotations by Simon Avery, *WEBB,* vol. 4, edited by Donaldson) 78.

[10] See Taylor, "Childhood Writings," "Elizabeth Barrett Browning," and "World Citizenship"; Wynter; Isom; and Bontempo et al.

[11] On the tendency for borderline genres to become lost in the archives, see Feder 541–42. EBB's 1822–26 notebook is briefly described and cited by Mermin (30–31); one original essay from it is published in *WEBB* (see note 29 below). Some transcriptions of selected contents of the 1822–26 notebook are available under "Manuscripts" online: see Stone and Lawson.

[12] Taylor, "World Citizenship" 33; *Aurora Leigh* in *WEBB,* volume 3, edited by Donaldson, "Critical Introduction" by Marjorie Stone.

[13] The first section of Appendix IV in *BC* reprints the essays on Thomas Carlyle and Tennyson in *A New Spirit of the Age* in their entirety (8: 341–67), drawing on the manuscript Horne sent to the printer and using a mixture of typefaces to indicate which passages EBB wrote. Paul Schlicke acknowledges EBB as Horne's "principal coadjutor" on the collection (846), but otherwise repeatedly refers to Horne as the author, praising for instance comments on Tennyson's underlying "'vacillation'" and self-distancing in his poetry (843) written by EBB (see *BC* 8: 367) as an example of Horne's insight.

[14] "Page numbers were then written next to each initial letter and vowel combination in the index indicating where entries could be found" (Brewster 14–15); see also Hess 467.

[15] McPhail O7. I am indebted to my colleague Christina Luckyj for calling my attention to McPhail's article on commonplace books and the internet. Brewster cites but opposes views that the commonplace book tradition declined after Locke (14). On the tradition's continuation, transformations, and overlap with other forms, see also Hess, Feder, Nixon, and Jenkins.

[16] The dedication continues "*from Charles Hemans Rome, May 25th 1854.*" See A1166 in *R.*

[17] See the *Guide to Literary Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (Huntington Library, 1979, HM 4934) 62 and Mermin 31. Examination of its contents indicates that this is the notebook catalogued in *R* as D1415. I am grateful to Sarah Francis, Assistant Curator of Literary Collections in the Huntington Library, for assistance in accessing these contents virtually.

[18] Hess 463, 473. On other terms used by Coleridge for his notebooks—e.g., "full confidantes"—see Hess 473. A revised version of Hess's essay appears in her study *How Romantics and Victorians Organized Information* (Oxford UP, 2022).

[19] Hess 463, 471.

[20] Hess 476, 478, 465. The Gutch notebook differs from Coleridge's later more diaristic and confessional notebooks covering "'every aspect of his life,'" as Richard Holmes observes (qtd. in Hess 466), from his philosophical theories and lecture notes to his dreams, sexual fantasies, and opium addiction.

[21] Pages 95–99 in the notebook summarise and at points paraphrase the hypotheses of philosophers, including l'Abbé du Bos, David Hume, Thomas Hobbes, Bernard Le Bovier de Fontanelle, and Campbell himself on why the mind finds "pleasure in anguish." These views are presented and discussed by Campbell in book 1, chapter 11 (1: 280–338 of the 1775 2-vol. edition).

[22] *EBBCB* 85. EBB is citing a passage from "Of the Origin of Ideas," section 2 of the "First Enquiry" in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.* The context of this passage in Hume helps to explain her questioning. It is preceded by the statement, "All the colours of poetry, however splendid, can never paint natural objects in such a manner as to make the description taken for a real landscape." See *Hume Texts On-Line*, https://davidhume.org/texts/e/2.

[23] *EBBCB* 1–3. EBB appears to be citing Abraham Rees's *The Cyclopaedia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature* (published serially from January 1802 to August 1820). I am indebted to Denae Dyck for first suggesting this source.

[24] See *Aurora Leigh* Bk. 1, ll. 779–800 in *WEBB,* vol. 3; see also *EBBCB* 88–89. EBB cites "As Milton hath it 'A wise man may learn more from an idle pamphlet than a fool from sacred scripture.'" For the original statement by Milton, see https://milton.host.dartmouth.edu/reading_room/areopagitica/text.html.

[25] Additional drafts of the preface and text for *An Essay on Mind* appear in another notebook, inscribed by the author "E. B. Barrett Boulogne 1824" (see *R* D1404 and D0248).

[26] Not accepted by Thomas Campbell, but EBB persisted and a revised version was published in the *Athenaeum* in 1836 (see *WEBB* 4: 275–85).

[27] Cited passages are from the University of Texas fair copy of "A Thought on Thoughts" as published in *BC* 1: 181–83, which varies at numerous points from the earlier wording in the 1822–26 notebook; e.g., in the notebook, instead of referring to her "descriptive narrative," EBB first writes "my faithful family sketch," then crosses out "family sketch'" and inserts "memories" above it (34). The allusions to the British Foreign Minister George Canning and to Byron and other authors in paragraph two of the text published in *BC* (181) also do not appear in the notebook version.

[28] As an original composition in a more polished state than versions in other manuscript sources, this essay is the only content of the notebook included among works published in *WEBB* (5: 420–25). The presence, position, and careful handwriting of this essay suggest that EBB began using the notebook for fair copying some of her own more ambitious works of juvenilia, then turned it to more miscellaneous purposes.

[29] The notes on Kant continue on the first leaf (recto and verso), but it is quite possible that EBB may have initially left this leaf blank when she first began using the notebook in 1822 to draft her essay on Locke and the Bishop of Worcester; in some of her other notebooks, this leaf is used as a title page. "Kant I" also appears high on the "List of Books I wish to have" later in the notebook (81).

[30] The blank page following an unfinished Locke analysis on page 198 is numbered "200"; there is no page 199. Pages 176–77 are also missing.

[31] "1826" only appears in EBB's hand in the notebook in the entry title "Literary Souvenir for 1826" (*EBBCB* 169). As her phrasing implies, however ("for 1826"), she may well have read and commented on this annual late in 1825, given the common practice of post-dating annuals aimed at the Christmas market to the following year.

[32] Langbauer, "Prolepsis and the Tradition" 892. See Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition* for a fuller exploration of the relations between prolepsis and juvenile writing.

[33] *EBBCB* 115. She is responding to *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Began by Himself, and Concluded by His Daughter, Maria Edgeworth* (London: R. Hunter & Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1820, 2 vols.).

[34] On the pervasive impact of Byron on EBB's early poetry and liberal politics, see Mermin 26, 34, 36–37; Stone, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* 59–64; Avery 56, 58–60; and Wynter 302–07.

[35] Mermin, who briefly discusses some of these comments on Landon (31–32), identifies this as an "attack" appearing in the *Westminster Review* (no. 3, 1825, pp. 537–39).

[36] For an overview of EBB's theories of rhyme and debates they occasioned, see Stone and Taylor 45–46; Hair provides an in-depth study of these theories in the context of the poet's study of the history of English prosody and "the relations between music and poetry" (16).

[37] On EBB's later complex and changing response to Hemans and Landon, see "Felicia Hemans" (1835) and "L.E.L.'s Last Question" (1839) and the prefatory information in the headnotes to the poems (*WEBB* 1: 535–43).

[38] EBB does not close the parenthesis that begins before "woe." The three spaced periods after "balloons" seem to mark the empty space in Montgomery's poetry that she is

mocking, not an ellipsis. Her satirical exuberance in remarking on Montgomery's faults is further conveyed through three heavy lines drawn under the close of the entry.

[39] Dunlop 3: 329.

[40] *EBBCB* 19–20, 23–24, as published in *WEBB* 5: 423–24.

[41]See *R* D1415, D1427. As the updated description of D1415 (now in the Huntington) indicates, the Blake extracts (D1427) were originally contained in this notebook.

[42] Her juvenilia do, however, occasionally include experiments with drama: for example, "the blank-verse scene of 189 lines" discussed by Taylor on the tribulations of the Queen Consort Caroline when the Prince Regent "force Parliament to consider a bill to deprive her of her title and to dissolve their marriage" ("Childhood Writings" 147).

[43] *EBBCB* 66–75. "Isla" is mistranscribed as "Zola" in the catalogue description of the notebook in *R* D1405.

[44] EBB's abbreviated titles for *The Memorial of Sainte-Helene: Memoirs of the life, exile*, and *conversations* of the *Emperor Napoleon*, by Comte Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné de Las Cases (which began appearing in eight volumes in 1823), and de Staël's *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la révolution française, depuis son origine jusques et compris le 8 juillet 1815* (1818).

[45] EBB also considered Napoleon as a possible subject for an epic poem in 1841; see the headnote to "Crowned and Buried" in *WEBB* 2: 5–6. On EBB's Romantic Prometheanism, see Stone, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* 53–54, 67–76; Lewis 16–48, and Avery 61–63.

[46] On *Corinne*, see *BC* 3: 25; for an overview of EBB's invocations of de Staël as a woman of genius, see Stone (*Elizabeth Barrett Browning* 41).

[47] On Kirke White and his importance to the Romantic tradition of juvenile writers, see Langbauer, *The Juvenile Tradition*; on Wheatley, see Hodgson's insightful reading of the suppressed trauma in her poetry.

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Reviews

Jane Austen, in collaboration with Anna Austen and others. *Sir Charles Grandison*. Edited by Lesley Peterson and Sylvia Hunt, assisted by Catherine Jones, Laurel Charron, Stephanie Leblanc, Laurie Morin, Ann Vanderaa, and Katarina Valentic. Illustrated by Juliet McMaster. Juvenilia Press, 2022.

l[50] + 81 pages. Paperback, AUD/USD 20.00.
ISBN: 978-0-7334-4042-7.

JANE AUSTEN'S "Sir Charles Grandison" is, on one level, a youthful prank. How do you transform Samuel Richardson's seven-volume epistolary novel into a five-act play written in a mere 52 manuscript pages? The very attempt speaks to the young author's recognition that the exciting portion of Richardson's plot—the abduction of Harriet Byron by Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in volume one—would make a delightful vehicle for performance in the Austen family's private, home theatricals. At the same time, the play anticipates the mature author's craft as an artist who would hone and edit the fiction for which she is known. Family tradition of Jane Austen's fondness for *Sir Charles Grandison*, underscored by James Austen-Leigh's memoir of his Aunt Jane, fails to recognise that she might have loved Richardson's least popular work while recognising its limitations as a novel: epistolary narratives can make for wordy and inefficient storytelling; Richardson's perfect, upright hero—a contrast to the rakes of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*—is hardly a model for Jane Austen's faulty and vulnerable male characters; and Richardson's Harriet falls short of Austen's bold women. "No Austen heroine," Lesley Peterson writes, "ever faints at the prospect of marriage to her beloved" (xxxvi).

"Sir Charles Grandison" is also a literary mystery. It was not available to the public before Brian Southam's 1980 Oxford edition, which includes a manuscript transcription showing changes and corrections as well as the reading text. Southam dared to reject the family tradition that "Sir Charles Grandison" was the creation not of Jane Austen but of her niece, Anna. Scholars followed, divided between those who

dismissed any claims that Jane Austen had a hand in the text and those who argued that Anna's contributions were minor, even if her memory was that she authored the play as a child.

Lesley Peterson and Sylvia Hunt's new edition of Jane Austen's "Sir Charles Grandison" provides an outstanding overview of the arguments about the text, taking a multi-pronged approach to questions about its authorship, the dating of various parts of the manuscript, its value as a work of juvenilia, and the extent to which "Sir Charles Grandison" reflects Austen's interest in drama as a genre. Peterson and Hunt do not make a definitive claim about authorship—this mystery is not entirely solvable—but they make a very strong case for what Peterson calls Anna's role as a "junior collaborator" (xxxix) rather than an "author." They work from the manuscript, not a transcription, a scholarly task not performed by some of the "Anna as author" camp, and they carefully review handwriting, watermarks on the paper, ink and pencil markings, as well as the criticism that addresses such material study. Peterson reflects, for example, on the scholarship that claims Jane Austen was merely Anna's amanuensis. The editors identify three hands in the manuscript—Austen's predominates—and pair that analysis with biographical details. Peterson observes that Anna would not have been available as a co-writer after the Austens left Stevenson for Bath upon Reverend Austen's retirement, and she reasonably asserts that those who feel the full play was written by 1800 must imagine a very precocious seven-year-old author if Anna is responsible for the play's invention and composition.

The Peterson-Hunt edition of Jane Austen's "Sir Charles Grandison" offers a number of improvements on Brian Southam's edition, and it will be of value even for those whose bookshelves already house Southam's volume. Like Southam, the editors provide both a reader's text and a transcript of the manuscript. Peterson and Hunt conveniently set their notes on the physical properties of the manuscript as footnotes, but add interpretive notes after the play. Their explanatory notes are more reader-friendly than Southam's. Both observe, for example, that the words "in 6 acts" on the title page were added in pencil in a different, childish handwriting (the play has only 5 acts). But Peterson and Hunt address a modern reader's inevitable curiosity, suggesting that the "sixth" act could be a joking reference to the anticlimactic volume Richardson adds to his novel *after* the volume in which the long-delayed marriage of Harriet Byron and Sir Charles Grandison takes place. Or, they speculate, a niece or nephew of Jane Austen might have planned a continuation on the blank sheets attached to the final manuscript pages (54). In her notes on "Invention" in Appendix A, Sylvia Hunt points out the significance of the play's elevation of the character Charlotte Grandison over the heroine, Harriet Byron (whom Charlotte makes a point of sending off stage to drink broth or to "gape" in private). Charlotte has more "Austenesque" qualities: she is a quick wit, enjoys lively repartee, and makes suggestive remarks in both Richardson's novel and Austen's play. Just as Elizabeth Bennet shocks Miss Darcy by teasing her brother, Charlotte refuses to idealise her intended husband, Lord G, before her "perfect" brother, Sir Charles.

But the greatest contribution this edition of "Sir Charles Grandison" makes is its serious approach to the play's dramatic qualities. Scholars broadly recognise Jane Austen's theatricality in her fiction, beyond her descriptions of performance (*Lovers' Vows* in *Mansfield Park*) and reading (even Fanny Price warms to Henry Crawford upon hearing him read Shakespeare; and a volume of *Hamlet* pricks Marianne Dashwood's longing for the absent Willoughby). Jane Austen's mature narrative style is most frequently associated with free indirect discourse, but her novels also display her genius for dialogue. The rhetorical duel between Elizabeth Bennet and Lady Catherine de Bourgh could be extracted from *Pride and Prejudice* and performed as a short play.

Peterson's scholarship in drama as well as Austen pushes our reading of "Sir Charles Grandison" to recognise Austen's creativity as a writer who transforms source material, in the manner of Shakespeare's invention in his history plays. Like Shakespeare, Austen takes dramatic liberty with the "truth" of her source text, invoking Richardson's details with a few compressed and efficient lines. "Sir Charles Grandison" includes (and dispenses with) Richardson's three volumes about "The Italians" and Lady Clementina della Porretta, for example, in two lines at the start of act 5. But Peterson further guides the reader in considering Austen's theatricality in this early work in terms of availability of props, actors, and space for a stage in family theatricals. Examining handwriting and maturity of style, most scholars conclude that act 1 of "Grandison" was composed considerably earlier than the other four acts. Peterson adds to this analysis by demonstrating, in the manner of a dramaturg, why a curtain (explicitly mentioned in the play's stage directions in later acts) would not have been used in act 1. Further, in reading the manuscript's two cancelled openings of act 2, Peterson notes that the final version is not only more dramatic than Harriet narrating her traumatic abduction (as Richardson and the first cancelled opening have it) but also more adapted to technical problems like performance space. The second cancelation would have been more dramatic than the third and final version, with Sir Hargrave dragging Harriet into the farmhouse and wrapping her in a cloak, suggesting that the author needed to consider performance perhaps even more than spectacle. In Appendix B, Peterson provides detailed notes for staging Austen's play, including the frequency of characters' appearance on stage, and opportunities—like those employed by the Austen family child actors—for double-casting and quick costume changes.

I am impressed, as well, by the way the Peterson-Hunt "Sir Charles Grandison" contributes to academic studies beyond Austen. This edition is a model for students of literature to think about the process of scholarship. By approaching a small work of juvenilia with a full set of literary tools, Peterson and Hunt demonstrate how critics develop knowledge about a text through dialogue with other scholars, careful examination of a manuscript, deep reading of biographical and historical contexts, detailed annotations, and thoughtful analysis of genre. It is a volume that is simultaneously accessible and academic.

But it's also a volume for Austen fans. Those familiar with the Juvenilia Press's other editions of Jane Austen's early works will be delighted to find the "Readers' Edition" of "Sir Charles Grandison" (pp. 1–24) beautifully illustrated by Juliet McMaster. A few facsimile illustrations show some of Austen's changes and corrections on the manuscript, and places where the manuscript sections have been pinned and unpinned. And the transcript, which Peterson and Hunt call the "Diplomatic Edition," will draw readers of Jane Austen into her family gatherings, where Richardson's well-known novel inspired the voice of a young comic writer and the young actors who brought her words to life.

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Timothy Gao. *Virtual Play and the Victorian Novel: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Fictional Experience*. Cambridge UP, 2021.

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WITH THE phrase *virtual play,* Timothy Gao does not aim to describe the wide world of gaming and ludic practices that are so influential a part of twenty-first-century cultural production; nor does he have scholarly ambitions to tell the whole story of Victorian games and play, as cards and dice were supplanted by an increasing category of board games, and new mechanical gadgets and phantasmagoric optical illusion devices of the magic lantern and zoetrope variety. Although that proliferation is perhaps an implicit backdrop to his analysis, the crux of *Virtual Play and the Victorian Novel* is a particular kind of world invention that Gao sees as a crucial—perhaps even indispensable—backdrop to the elevation of canonical Victorian fiction traditionally classed as realist.

In this elegant and thought-provoking first book, students of juvenilia will likely be especially interested in the connections that Gao draws between the canonised De Quincey and Brontë publications and their earlier creative works; likewise the category of "paracosmic creation" as a way of historically differentiating the

childhood imaginative episteme of the Romantic and Victorian eras from preceding eras. Gao proposes, for example, that "at the heart of the jarring or comical unrealism of the Brontë juvenilia is not its adoption of the 'purely imaginative' over 'real occurrence' … [and] not the violent, hyperbolic and fantastical conceptions of play—but its conception of reading and writing as a form of action between two separate realities" (49). Gao makes an effort to locate the juvenile play as foundational DNA for a consciously metaleptic impulse he sees running through the adult works of child world-creators.

By Gao's account, "what developmental psychologists now neologise as *paracosmic play* or *worldplay,* a practice of extended make-believe premised on the creation and documentation of imaginary lands or worlds … appear[s] ... to have begun with a loose generation of late Romantics and early Victorians: with Hartley Coleridge, Anna Jameson, Thomas Malkin, Anthony Trollope, the De Quincey brothers and the Brontë siblings" (16). Linking that rise to British colonialism and also to an intriguing version of Turner's frontier hypothesis (as the world's explorable limits are exhausted, the pressure to fabricate nonmundane worlds increases), Gao's body chapters focus on Charlotte Brontë, Trollope, Thackeray, and Dickens, as well as Thomas De Quincey. A fascinating and provocative claim that deserves more unpacking: I would have welcomed further discussion of how historically widespread the practice was in the era Gao studies. Was it, in his view, confined to a few breakthrough writers as proof of their brilliance, or pervasive, thus indicating a epistemic drift towards world-making?

The study's core concerns are with the critical contours of a canonical realist tradition. Gao has a bone to pick with Catherine Gallagher's influential notion of realist fiction's cultural dominance in the eighteenth and nineteenth century as "believable stories that do not solicit belief." Such a fictional genealogy by way of "counterfactuals" might be supplemented or even replaced, Gao proposes, in favour of the idea of fiction as "extra-factual"—meaning that fiction is invented and lives *beyond* the boundaries of the known world. Although Tolkien's notion of secondary worlds or subcreation gets invoked explicitly only once, it clearly colours much of Gao's thinking.

That linkage, fascinating in its particulars, only makes clearer the gap between the sweep of Gao's title and the deep narrow focus of the book: paracosmic play, in which childhood fantasy leads on to adult fiction that is less realist than it at first appears. I was not always persuaded. Dickens's choice to situate his characters and events within actual prisons or on the actual London streets strikes me as a reason for classing his impulse as not extrafactual but, if you will, *intra*factual—invention ensconced within actuality. It's for that reason I was disappointed Thomas Hardy does not even appear in the book: his Wessex, actual and invented at once like a palimpsested map, might have been another logical site of investigation.

Although Alex Woloch is not explicitly discussed in Gao's book, behind his commitment to the paracosmic roots of realist fiction can be seen the immense

influence of Woloch's distinction, in *The One Versus the Many*, between "character-space" (presuming characters are persons) and "character-structure (presuming characters are pieces within an artist's elaboration and construction of a fiction as work of art). I understand Gao's interest in what he calls the "fictional" (which is explicitly juxtaposed against the literary or the aesthetic) as a preference for the pleasures of a created world as *space* over the novel's formal dependence on aesthetic *structure*. Indeed, at times I suspected that what he meant by "play" was simply the novelist's taking pleasure in inventing a world that characters could live in and reader could visit. I was not sure what Gao's response was to Woloch's productive emphasis on the inevitable structuring tension between seeing the novel as space or as system: perhaps Gao turns to juvenile imagination and world-creation as a way to avoid the mimetic and realist claims lodged by realist fiction entirely.

Given the vigour of recent work by scholars such as Amanda Shubert on the greater realm of play and games of the Victorian era itself (optical illusions, board games, card games, and all the other forms of play that might also be leisure alternatives to reading a novel), there did seem space for Gao to present an understanding of the childhood-invented worlds as leading into (or even it seems bleeding into) contiguous fictional objects that vied with other imaginative spaces as occupations for readers of their own day. Thus for Trollope, hunting and the various archaic games of the Barchester books would make illuminating comparisons; for Thackeray, gambling and cards are often explicitly thematised as akin to love, to war, and to life itself. Notwithstanding such might-have-beens, Gao's work is a welcome contribution to the field of Victorian fiction, building helpful linkages to formative juvenile acts of imagination.

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