

# Journal of Juvenilia Studies

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## EDITORIAL

THIS ISSUE of the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies* is the third we have published in our history and the second we have published in 2019. As such it marks the successful completion of our second year of publication, an ambitious year in which the International Society of Literary Juvenilia (ISLJ) challenged itself to publish two issues instead of one.

More immediately, this editorial is the third I have written. The *Chicago Manual of Style* instructs me that “An editorial is not a regular feature in most academic journals but appears on a particular occasion” (1.102). Yet it seems to me that each one of our first three issues has been, in its own way, an occasion. And so I recite statistics in celebration of our survival. Moreover, I take this opportunity to draw your attention to a feature new to this issue: with Laurie Langbauer’s “Young England: Part One” we publish the first part of a two-part essay. The concluding part of this substantial work of scholarship will appear in *JJS* 3.1 (June 2020).

As an open-access, peer-reviewed journal, published by the ISLJ and hosted by University of Alberta Libraries, *JJS* will always be available online at no charge. However, in the new year we will be printing a limited number of bound copies of volume 2 (containing both the July 2019 and the December 2019 issues). These will be reserved for current members of the ISLJ. If you are not already a member and would like to reserve your print copy of *JJS* 2.1–2 while supporting the ISLJ in its many projects in support of literary juvenilia studies, the link is on our home page.

**Lesley Peterson**

# **AUTOBIOGRAPHY, WISH-FULFILMENT, AND JUVENILIA: THE “FRACTURED SELF” IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË’S PARACOSMIC COUNTERWORLD**

**Nicola Friar**

*Alumna, Liverpool Hope University, and independent scholar*

IN THE introduction to their ground-breaking collection of essays on juvenilia, *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster write that “there should be a place for what children have to tell us of themselves” (2). Most immediately, Alexander and McMaster refer here to juvenilia’s lack of “a place” within the literary canon, the result of a historical prejudice towards writing by children that has led to critical neglect. However, their emphasis on “what children have to tell us of themselves” also reflects a scholarly tradition of reading juvenilia for what we may learn about the child writer—whether as autobiography or as wish-fulfilment.

Although both of these approaches to literary juvenilia have been productive, they are somewhat contradictory and therefore have not always been practised in tandem. Juvenilia that are traditionally interpreted as autobiographical include the *Hyde Park Gate News* periodicals, a series of family newspapers produced by a young Virginia Woolf and her siblings in the 1890s that document the day-to-day life of the Stephen family. Despite the writings’ featuring a mix of fact and fiction, recording everyday life alongside stories and parodies, most scholarship of *Hyde Park Gate News* to date focuses on what the siblings have to tell the reader about their own life experiences and the middle-class nineteenth-century society they were a product of. Examples from the texts include reports of illness in the family, such as “that horrible epidemic influenza” (6), and the arrival of visitors to the siblings’ family home, including “Mr Russel Duckworth and his wife who conversed affably with Mrs Leslie Stephen for a few minutes when they declared they must depart which they accordingly did” (9). Gill Lowe comments that “the journal form provides us with a vivid impression of daily family life” (xiii), despite the fact that there are some fictional elements to *Hyde Park Gate News*.

By contrast, the element of wish-fulfilment has often been a focus of scholarship on the Brontë siblings’ juvenilia, produced in the 1820s and 1830s. As Alexander

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points out, “the empowering act of writing [sometimes] defines the child’s self in relation to the adult world and thereby overcomes the position of ‘social nullity’ and inferiority that the culturally specific concept of ‘child’ implies” (“Autobiography” 155). Pointing specifically to the Brontës, who “assumed a power and authority over their creation that no one could achieve in real life” as examples (“Nineteenth” 16), Alexander highlights that when juvenilia depict both socially and supernaturally powerful characters, they allow “the neglected child some ability to control the world” (22). To this important observation I would add that the neglect that prompts such writing does not necessarily stem from the immediate family circle; children can also experience and react to societal neglect of their rights, status, visibility, and collective voice. Consequently, children who are excluded from the adult world, and from the power associated with it, often create powerful characters that allow them imaginative entry into the spheres of adult society that they associate with authority and acceptance. These may be the literary world, for children with aspirations to write professionally; the aristocratic world, for those from lowly socioeconomic backgrounds; or even, as in the case of Branwell Brontë, the adventurous world of pirates in tales such as *The Pirate* (1833).

In the case of Charlotte Brontë’s juvenilia, several scholars (as detailed more fully below) have argued that the appearance of dominant male characters in her work is evidence that the powerful world she joined through wish-fulfilment was a world of men; that her juvenilia allow her to assume a power denied to her in reality by her gender. Charlotte’s influential and politically powerful male characters include the Duke of Wellington and the Marquis of Douro/Duke of Zamorna (the King of Angria), who appear alongside celebrated male authors such as Charles Wellesley/Townshend and Captain Tree. Zamorna and Charles originate as the wealthy and aristocratic sons of Charlotte’s chief man in the earliest Brontë juvenilia, her fictional Duke of Wellington; as Charlotte’s writing progresses and moves from Glass Town to Angria, Charles and Zamorna continue to dominate the narratives (through narration, political conquests, and romantic adventures), which is why they have often been read as a form of wish-fulfilment that allows the female child writer to trespass on the male public sphere. As Sally Shuttleworth explains, “Puzzled by this persistent choice of a male voice, critics have tended to treat it as an aberration, an attempt to enter a male realm of power and privilege” (106).

Charlotte’s depiction of supernaturally powerful Genii is often similarly read as evidence of power assumption and wish-fulfilment. Genius Tallii is widely understood as an alter-ego who rules over Charlotte’s imaginary world of Glass Town alongside the alter-egos of her siblings (Branii, Emmii, and Annii),<sup>1</sup> and as Alexander points out, through the figure of Tallii, Charlotte “could ‘play’ with power and direct social and political events” (“Experimentation” 12). As the four Genii are named after their creators, we may interpret their creation as wish-fulfilment. By the time she had reached the age of nine, Charlotte’s mother and elder two siblings had died, and in their earliest stories, the Genii rule over the Brontës’ imaginary world like gods; they have the power to control and alter events, even resurrecting deceased characters in narratives such as Charlotte’s *The Foundling* (1833). Discussing Glass Town, Melodie Monahan argues that, in “a fantasy world designed partly to compensate for the

limitations of real life, the permanence of characters is essential" (496); this suggests a desire by the Brontës to gain an element of control over life and death following the loss of their mother and sisters. As Heather Glen observes, the siblings' "assertion of absolute power, the power to determine existence itself, is made in the face of an apprehension of absolute powerlessness, potential non-existence" (*Charlotte* 18). However, despite the fact that historically, literary juvenilia such as Charlotte's have been interpreted as platforms through which children can make sense of and articulate their experience of the world around them, the suggestion that a literary text reflects either the reality of an author's life or her desires, whilst plausible, remains a matter of interpretation.

The powerful nature of the Genii should not be taken as evidence that either they or the male figures in Charlotte's juvenilia serve only as vehicles for power assumption. As Alexander notes, Charlotte "participated in and developed a complex world of interrelated characters and events that both mirror and imaginatively reorder knowledge of the 'real world'" ("Experimentation" 12). Some critics have stressed the limitations to Charlotte's male characters' powers. Helen Moglen, for instance, argues that whenever Charlotte uses the voice of Charles, "although cast as a male, she is—as the *younger* brother—completely vulnerable" (49, original emphasis). Karen Chase similarly reads Charles as "a peripheral figure" (10). Whereas the first approach emphasises juvenilia as wish-fulfilment, reading Charles and the Genii as expressions of Charlotte's desire for power; the second approach emphasizes juvenilia as autobiography, reading Charles, at least, as an expression of Charlotte's powerlessness in reality. But there is no need, I would argue, to choose one reading over the other. To use Alexander's terms, Tallii is *both* a "mirror" *and* an "imaginative" reordering of Charlotte's known world, and so is Charles.

This appreciation of complexity is evident in Joyce Carol Oates's discussion of the Brontë children's paracosms, which she refers to as "ingeniously labyrinthine counterworlds" (255). Like Alexander, furthermore, Oates invokes the image of a mirror in her description of the paracosm as a "counterworld [that] both mirrors the 'real' world and distorts it; in it, you both are, and are not yourself" (254). Such descriptions invite us to consider Charlotte's paracosm of Glass Town and Angria as neither strictly autobiographical nor complete escapism. Moreover, such an approach is consistent with the concept of "the fractured self" that Alexander invokes in her description of Charlotte's juvenilia as an exploration of multiple voices and levels of consciousness ("Autobiography" 154). Although Tallii may be viewed as a distorted representation of a powerless child author, she also represents her creator's knowledge (of the type of literature that inspired the young Brontës to create and maintain their paracosmic world) and her creator's dreams and desires.

The Genii signify the ties (shared experiences, shared books) that bind the siblings together in reality; at the same time, they can also be interpreted as signifying what the siblings desire to be. Similarly, the figures of the Little Queens and the Little King also signify ties binding the siblings in reality as well as in their fantasies. However, the gender divide between the characters complicates simple ideas of wish-fulfilment and autobiography that can be interpreted from a close reading of the texts in which they appear. Charles Wellesley/Townshend, an alter-ego of his creator

and—ostensibly—initially a wealthy and successful child author turned wandering outcast and struggling writer, is also a character who invites us to consider how elements of autobiography and wish-fulfilment can intertwine in Charlotte's work.

While much might be learned about the imaginative play of children from studying juvenilia, other approaches to studying children's play can helpfully illuminate Charlotte's youthful writings. In particular, scholars of children's paracosms,<sup>2</sup> or imaginary worlds, who also study other forms of documentation such as observation and oral interviews, offer valuable insight into the paracosmic worlds of the Brontë children. Before the Brontës began to write about their imaginary worlds, they invented those worlds in physical play with toy soldiers given to Branwell by their father, Patrick. Few children have written as they did;<sup>3</sup> as David Cohen and Stephen A. MacKeith point out in their full-length study of paracosms, such creations are normally a feature of physical childhood play that are lost to history once their creators reach adulthood. Nevertheless, many children do create paracosms, and Cohen and MacKeith make a compelling argument that literary paracosms like the Brontës' share many of the same characteristics as those centred around physical play.

One particularly valuable aspect of Cohen and MacKeith's study is their recognition that adults "are only too ready to presume that children will use it [the paracosm] to create fantasies of control" (19) and their assertion that "children have many *different* motives for setting up their dream worlds" (19, original emphasis). These scholars "try to avoid [an] over-simple analysis ... of the sort that suggests that because children had an unhappy childhood, they devised a cuddlesome imaginary world where they were loved and in total control" (14). Accordingly, they identify several different categories of paracosms, each of which, they argue, has distinct origins and purposes. Their list of categories is worth quoting at length:

First, there is a group of worlds centred on animals and on toys. A second group centres round countries .... A third category involves fantasies of schools. Fourth ... some worlds are 'technological', mainly railway systems of various sorts. Fifth, there are some worlds grouped round a theatre, and finally, a few miscellaneous ones. (22)

The testimony of other paracosmists whose worlds focused on "countries," as collected by Cohen and MacKeith, strongly supports scholars such as Shuttleworth and Glen who, when analysing Charlotte's juvenilia, focus on aspects of wish-fulfilment and control arising from a sense of marginalization in real life. For instance, Cohen and MacKeith cite a "countries" paracosmist named Jane who says that she "used it [the paracosm] to withdraw from a slightly oppressive real world" (55), and another named David who reports having detested school life, an experience that gave him "a hatred of wasting my time under other people's control" (65).

Yet Cohen and MacKeith also argue that paracosmic worlds centred on toys (such as that of the Brontës') are the products of largely happy, fulfilled, and creative children: for the creators of such worlds, "They [the toys] were the scaffolding, and spark, for a new world" (24). In toy-centred worlds, the paracosm typically functions as an extension of the happiness initially provided by the physical objects that inspire

them. Here the child's intention may simply be to prolong a positive experience by moulding the paracosmic world to mirror her experience in the real one—quite a different thing from the wish-fulfilment of a child who feels isolated and oppressed. Unfortunately, focused as they are on their goal of defining and distinguishing their several categories, Cohen and MacKeith do not consider the possibility that a paracosm might have multiple origins, and, for example, be centred on both “toys” and on “countries,” or that it might function both as wish-fulfilment and as an extension of lived reality—or even that the reality prolonged through play may not be an entirely happy one. Nevertheless, we may recognize from their analysis that Charlotte's paracosms of Glass Town and Angria fit into (at least) two of their categories. This is a recognition that challenges us, ultimately, to reject fixed boundaries between Cohen and MacKeith's categories and, instead, to understand the paracosm as, at least in Charlotte's case, a melting pot of ideas, influences, and experiences demanding an approach that looks for fractures, contradictions, and multiplicities rather than singularities.

This, then, is the approach I take in critically reconsidering some of Charlotte's figures who are often interpreted as vehicles of wish-fulfilment and power assumption. Perhaps the most obvious candidate for such a study is Tallii, the Genii who, along with Annii, Emmii, and the Little Queens, is a supernaturally powerful female figure in a fantasy world otherwise full of mortal women who are restricted by their gender. Mary Percy is a pawn in the political battles between her husband Zamorna and her father Alexander Percy, with the former declaring that “I had decided to let her die if her father cut loose and deceived [me] with agony” (*Passing* 70); Zamorna's mistress Mina Laury lives to serve her lover, stating, “I've nothing else to exist for, no other interest in life” (*Passing* 44); and the teenage Caroline Vernon longs to break free from the expectations placed upon her by a patriarchal society in order to have adventures and to “be tryed to see what I had in me” (*Caroline* 266). By contrast, Tallii, Annii, and Emmii are powerful Genii and “tyrants of the air” (Brontë, “Song” 80); Alexander quite rightly refers to them as “pseudo-gods” (“Autobiography” 156). Moreover, Tallii is a more prominent figure in Charlotte's narratives than Annii and Emmii are; the only Genii to really rival Tallii in terms of power is Brannii, the sole male Genii in Glass Town and the alter-ego of Branwell, the only male Brontë sibling in reality. Carol Bock stresses Charlotte's dominance in this rivalry, pointing out that “The introduction of the ‘Chief Genii,’ for example, was originally Charlotte's idea and was less than enthusiastically received by her brother” (35–36). However, Brannii's reappearances throughout the Brontë juvenilia in incarnations such as the dastardly and scheming S'death who creates havoc and chaos may suggest that, despite his initial reluctance, Branwell enjoyed seizing power and inspiring fear through his alter-ego.

More compelling support for reading Tallii as representing Charlotte's desire for power may be found in the written texts themselves. For example, in an early Glass Town fragment dated 1829, Charlotte (and possibly Branwell) describe the power and ferocity of the Genii: “by their magic might they can reduce the world to a desert, the rivers to streams of livid poison and the clearest lakes to stagnant waters” (“Sir” 39).<sup>4</sup> The Genii may represent a desire on the siblings' part to destroy the world as



well as create, but both creation and destruction are expressions of power and forms of control. In the passage I have just quoted, Tallii is Brannii's equal; no distinction is made between them. In the figure of Tallii, in this fragment at least, Charlotte achieves an equality to Branwell that she could only achieve on the page, due to the different expectations placed upon male and female children and adults in nineteenth-century Britain. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Charlotte chose a female supernatural being to represent herself within her work when she could have selected a male persona as rival to her brother's. In making this choice, Charlotte perhaps places limits to her wish-fulfilment, a choice that may be interpreted as reflecting the reality of the gender difference that contributed to her relative powerlessness.

This combination of fantasy and autobiography is also evident in the characters of the Little Queens, powerful female characters who appear in several of Charlotte's narratives, including *Tales of the Islanders*. Like the Genii, these alter egos are "supernaturally gifted" (Bock 37); they are strong women who can assume a power on the page that has been denied to Charlotte in reality. The Little Queens inhabit Vision Island and associate with members of the aristocracy such as Lord Charles Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington, the latter informing them in the first volume of the tales (June 1829) that "I remain your obedient subject" (*Tales I* 25). Their power is further evident when, during a period of rebellion in the second volume (November 1829), Charles begs for their help, writing that, "if you don't make haste and come to our help, we must surrender" (*Tales II* 101). Nevertheless, in granting Charles's request, the Little Queens are allowing themselves to be commanded by him, even though—despite Charles's social power and position in Glass Town society—he is just a mortal child.

Similarly, although the Little Queens clearly have authority over Wellington, even commanding him to become the governor of the school that is erected on Vision Island, he refuses the post, and the role is passed to Charles and his brother, the Marquis of Douro. Once again, we see that Charlotte's powerful Little Queens can be resisted and commanded by her male characters, a pattern suggesting that the power balance is far from straightforward, and that these characters could plausibly be interpreted as mirroring the reality of the position of women as subordinate to men in nineteenth-century Britain. Moreover, in the fourth volume of *Tales of the Islanders* (July 1830) in particular, the character of the Little King is Charlotte's central focus. In the first chapter, Wellington meets the Little King accompanied by three old washerwomen; the Little King proceeds to offer the women to Wellington as servants, stating, "if you would consent to take them into your service it would be conferring a great obligation on me as well as them" (197). Wellington refuses this offer but invites them to speak with his housekeeper regarding positions in his household. The washerwomen eventually depart with the Little King leading the way, and they walk behind him, almost subservient. Charles eventually discovers that the three washerwomen were actually the result of spells cast by the Little King and Queens; Charlotte writes, "One of them gave him a hearty slap on the shoulder saying, 'Charles, don't be frightened, they were only our enchantments'" (203). However, at the end of this chapter, no distinction is made between the supernatural power of the Little King and that of the Little Queens, exactly as in the passage quoted

above in which no distinction was made between the power of Brannii and that of Tallii, Emmii, and Anni, suggesting once again that the power balance is far from straightforward in Charlotte's early fiction.

Of course, as Robert Keefe has observed, Charles himself is a distortion of his creator on the page, a "masculine projection of herself" (51), so his dominance of the Little Queens in stories such as the first volume of *Tales of the Islanders* can still be read as wish-fulfilment. Charles shares part of Charlotte's name, and he is endowed with the kind of success, wealth, and power—including authorial power—that the young Charlotte could only dream of. Even in his earlier incarnation he is, as Alexander describes him, "an accomplished reporter of Glass Town gossip" (*Early* 61). In an early Glass Town narrative, Charles is the author of a short play, *The Poetaster*, which Victor Neufeldt reads as "mercilessly satirizing" the character of Young Soult (176), a creation of Branwell and rival author to Charles in the two siblings' shared paracosmic world. Here Charles joins fellow authors Douro and Captain Tree in mocking the work of aspiring poet Henry Rhymer, whom Charles labels "a poetaster" (485). Wellington's instructions to let Rhymer into the palace only as far as the antechamber further demonstrate the gulf between the status of the poetaster and Charlotte's powerful personae. Charles's authority is further evident when he saves Rhymer from execution for the murder of Tree with his announcement that "Tree has at length been brought to life again, and Rhymer's pardoned" (496). In this tale, then, Charles has power over life and death that recalls the power the Genii have in other tales, which can plausibly be read as strong evidence of a young author's seizing of power through fantasy.

Given such evidence, it is unsurprising that Shuttleworth, as we have seen, reads Charlotte's use of male voices as an attempt to enter a male-dominated sphere in order to achieve a power denied to her in reality. Similarly, Alexander argues that the creation of the Brontës' earliest miniature magazines, such as *Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine* and *The Young Men's Magazine*, enabled the siblings to play at being authors, editors, and publishers, "with all the freedom and authority this implies" (Alexander, "Play" 32). Nevertheless, this play did not mirror reality as they understood it; to the Brontës, as Alexander points out, the literary world was "very much a male domain" (*Early* 227). Accordingly, Charlotte depicts a number of powerful male authors in her juvenilia, including Captain Tree, Douro/Zamorna, and Charles. Nevertheless, a close examination of the character of Charles, considering the full range of Charlotte's Glass Town and Angrian writings, demonstrates that he is not the all-powerful figure that Shuttleworth and others perceive him to be. In fact, Charlotte depicts the celebrated "gossip" Charles in his earliest incarnation as a powerless, snooping child who is prone to bouts of wandering; in the fourth volume of *Tales of the Islanders* he spies on the Little King and washerwomen, with Charlotte writing, "he determined to walk close behind and remain a concealed listener to their conversation, promising himself much amusement from the scheme" (199).

*The Poetaster* is a complex text that does both more and less than celebrate the male figures' power.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the play exemplifies the co-existence of wish-fulfilment and autobiography in Charlotte's juvenilia and, as such, may convincingly be read as evidence of a "fractured self." Despite Charles' privileged position, it is evident he is,

as Moglen states, “the *younger* brother” (49), who lacks the same kind of authority as Douro or Wellington and here he must entreat them both to relent and allow Rhymer into the palace. Furthermore, despite Charles’s place of honour in what Monahan terms the “hierarchy of poets” (476), and despite being the author of the tale within Charlotte’s paracosmic world, he is never depicted in the act of writing in the play and is actually absent during a large part of its performance. Even when he saves Rhymer’s life at the play’s conclusion, Charles is merely a messenger; unlike the Genii, he does not have the power to actually revive the dead.

The character of Rhymer similarly contains elements of both autobiographical realism and wish-fulfilment, and insofar as he can also be read as an alter ego of Charlotte, emphasizes the writer’s fractured self. Ostensibly, Rhymer represents autobiography whilst Charlotte “aligns herself with the respected Glass Town writers whose names provide her with a pseudonym here and elsewhere in the juvenilia (Monahan 476). Rhymer is an ambitious writer from a lowly socioeconomic background, as is his creator. By setting foot in Waterloo Palace and invading Tree’s study, Rhymer penetrates social barriers and physically enters the world of the aristocratic and elite writers he desires to join. His murder of Tree is, clearly, a seizing of power; this, combined with the absence of Charles, Wellington, and Douro for most of the play, strongly suggests wish-fulfilment.

However, none of these four writers’ stories ultimately end in triumph; these male characters, who may have begun as vehicles of power assumption through whom Charlotte could gain imaginative entry into a sphere she was barred from in reality due to her age, gender and social status, fall from grace. In *The Poetaster*, the final redistribution of power sees Rhymer pardoned through Charles, Tree restored to life, and Rhymer banned from writing but employed as Charles’ undersecretary, kissing his feet. Here Rhymer once again represents autobiography, and perhaps that which must be rejected (ambition, social mobility, and female authors if he is interpreted as an alter-ego of his creator), whereas Charles and Tree, exulting in their power, provide wish-fulfilment. But, by the time Charlotte ceased writing narratives set in her paracosmic world in 1839, the character of Tree had long since been abandoned, Douro/Zamorna had evolved into more of a despot and libertine than a writer, and Lord Charles Wellesley had become Charles Townshend, wandering dandy and “penniless hack writer” (Glen, “Background” lv). Clearly, there is more to be found in Charlotte’s early fiction than simple fantasies of power and control.

Even before he devolves from Lord Charles Wellesley to Charles Townshend, we may find elements of autobiography and wish-fulfilment intertwined in Charles’ character in another early Glass Town tale, *Strange Events* (August 1830). Once again, however, Charles’ weakness leaves room for another character to enact the wish-fulfilment. Sitting alone in the library, Lord Charles muses, “It seemed as if I were a non-existent shadow, that I neither spoke, eat, imagined, or lived of myself, but I was the mere idea of some other creature’s brain” (257). He hears noises and voices, “one like my own but larger and dimmer” (258); he witnesses books moving “apparently of their own accord” (258). He then encounters a god-like presence who picks him up like an inanimate object: “I felt myself raised suddenly to the ceiling, and ere I was aware, behold two immense, sparkling, bright blue globes ... I was in [a] hand wide

enough almost to grasp the Tower of All Nations..." (258). Despite his privileged position in Glass Town society, Charles is powerless to act when he meets the god-like being whose supernatural power supersedes his wealth and social status. If this being is Genius Tallii, then, instead of functioning here as a vehicle for power assumption through his position as a celebrated and wealthy male author, Charles becomes powerless and small—like a child—under the control of a higher, quite possibly female, authority. When Colonel Crumps enters the room the apparition disappears, leaving Charles to wonder if it was all a dream, and the tale ends with control restored to Charlotte's male persona. However, the overall effect of the narrative is to dramatize just how complex the division of power is between Charlotte's characters, each of them representing aspects of her fractured self, and few of them consistently representing the same aspect in every moment.

The co-existence of fantasy and realism within one character is exemplified in Charlotte's later stories featuring Charles. Charles's eventual abandonment of his title and name change from the aristocratic Wellesley to Townshend in *Passing Events* (1836) follows his bouts of "voluntary exile from those higher circles of society" (Brontë, *Something* 31) in 1833.<sup>6</sup> This is a turning point, as with the name change Charles also transforms from privileged and celebrated author to wandering and struggling narrator with no place in the narrative action. Charles may have been born into society's upper echelons, but from this point on Charlotte depicts him as an outcast and a self-proclaimed "unsettled wanderer from one low haunt to another" (*Something* 31). He becomes, as Philip Momberger terms him, a "placeless person" (350) who wanders in search of occupation and purpose. However, Glass Town texts such as Charlotte's *A Day at Parry's Palace* depict Lord Charles as a wanderer in search of occupation and amusement as early as August 1830; this suggests that, despite the explicit shift in his role and status following his name change, the fusion of fantasy and realism within an individual character is also exemplified in Charlotte's earliest tales featuring Charles.

Charles's restless and wandering nature is most explicitly presented in Charlotte's later Angrian writings, such as her experimental flâneur novelette *Stancliffe's Hotel* (1838), which also exemplifies the fusion of wish-fulfilment and autobiography within this single character. Ostensibly, Charles remains a wealthy aristocratic writer in this text, declaring, "I've cash sufficient ... I've just rounded off my nineteenth year and entered on my twentieth; I'm a neat figure, a competent scholar, a popular author, a gentleman and a man of the world" (77). So far this sounds like the wish-fulfilment such critics as Shuttleworth and Glen have noted. However, in this tale Charles is also a flâneur who is estranged from aristocratic family ties following his name change. Furthermore, although he is well known, a "popular author" as he says, he no longer knows how to be a writer, now that he has ceased to be the celebrated child prodigy he once was. In one episode of *Stancliffe's Hotel* he recounts how, while watching the tumult in the streets from the window of his hotel room, "My chamber door burst open, and twenty persons were at my back, pressing one behind another to get a glimpse from the window" (111). These riots have been caused by Zamorna's political troubles, but Zamorna still clings to power, while Charles clearly has no greater place in his brother's social circle than the other guests in the hotel. Charles is again, as

Moglen and Chase suggest, the powerless and “peripheral” younger brother rather than a means of seizing power—whether for Zamorna or for Charlotte.

Charles continues to narrate Charlotte’s later Angrian tales, but his standing in society is steadily waning. In *Henry Hastings* (1839) for instance, despite his aristocratic background, he is forced to advertise for a wealthy wife because “my pockets are empty” (202). In this tale Charlotte even relegates him to the role of co-narrator, sharing the job with his former friend, Sir William Percy. This change is part of a general shift in style and focus; the Genii and Little Queens, along with the supernatural elements, also disappear from Charlotte’s later juvenilia, which suggests that she moved away from fantasy and towards a greater sense of realism as she left Glass Town behind in favour of Angria; Glen asserts that Charlotte was engaging with “the common cultural currency of her time” (Introduction xi) in her Angrian novelettes. However, there is no fixed boundary separating the stories in which Charles functions as wish-fulfilment from those in which he serves as a reflection of Charlotte’s autobiographical reality; even in *Henry Hastings* he retains his aristocratic stance and habits. From the earliest Glass Town narratives to the Angrian novelettes, then, Charles’s changing character and varied roles within the narratives demonstrate that wish-fulfilment and autobiography can co-exist within a single paracosmic counterworld, and underscore the multiple levels of consciousness, reality, and story-telling that characterize the writing produced by Charlotte’s “fractured self,” calling for a complex and nuanced analysis of that which “children have to tell us of themselves.”

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Named after Branwell, Emily, and Anne Brontë.
- <sup>2</sup> *Paracosm* is a term coined by Ben Vincent to describe the imaginary worlds of children and is defined by Robert Silvey and Stephen A. MacKeith as “a spontaneously created, but maintained and elaborated, imaginary private world” (24). Alexander defines paracosms as “sophisticated alternative realities with their own history, culture, geography, politics, publications, and language” (JJS 5).
- <sup>3</sup> Other well-known instances of documented paracosms include Hartley Coleridge’s Ejuhria and C. S. Lewis’s Boxen.
- <sup>4</sup> The fragment is known as “Sir – it is well known that the Genii,” and Alexander suggests that this piece may be a collaboration between Charlotte and Branwell due to the signature UT (Us Two) being used (see under Brontë, “Sir” 39n1).
- <sup>5</sup> See also Monahan, who plays down the importance of power in *The Poetaster*, arguing instead that, despite the presence of four of Charlotte’s most powerful and wealthy figures (Charles, Douro, Wellington, and Tree), Charlotte’s “emphasis is not on their affairs so much as it is on aesthetics, on defining great literature and determining how it is produced” (475).
- <sup>6</sup> The name Townshend is actually first used by Charlotte in a recently discovered fragment dating from 1833 where it is used as an alias for a character named Charles Wellesley during his trip to the village of Haworth, where the Brontës resided. This fragment was published in *Charlotte Brontë: The Lost Manuscripts* (The Brontë Society, 2018).

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# YOUNG ENGLAND: PART I

**Laurie Langbauer**

*Professor, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **The Juvenile Tradition as Young England’s Pre-history: Byron and Strangford**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

imitation and juvenile influence as more than simply causal. “If they are unfaithful translations, they are, indubitably, beautiful poems,” wrote the *Poetical Register*, echoing other reviews (“*Poems*” 461).<sup>20</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

### George Smythe’s Might-Have-Beens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> He adds in explanation: “Young England would proselytize for a nostalgic Old England that never was as ‘Merrie’ as its proponents described it” (207).
- <sup>2</sup> W. A. Speck takes this novel to be the product of “the German Romantics,” with the conceit of the two nations direct from Heine (198).
- <sup>3</sup> One note: although my essay does not discuss homosexuality, the connections between it and performance in Young England are vital. See Faber and Millar (*Disraeli’s*) for discussions of



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

- <sup>4</sup> Critics have seen *Adonais* as testimony to an entire juvenile tradition (Alexander, "Defining" 77; Langbauer 7–12).
- <sup>5</sup> Milnes would go on to become the literary promoter of the dying young poet David Gray in the 1860s. Though never on comfortable terms with Smythe or Disraeli, Milnes is sometime credited with coining Young England's name (in the 1830s) for an undergraduate dining club, borrowing it from such romantic nationalisms as Giuseppe Mazzini's "Young Italy." Speck quotes another source for the name, an 1837 review by Robert Southey, who asks "what, in conformity with the ominous language of the times, may be called Young England" (206). Speck argues that Southey's reference to "ominous language" suggests that the phrase 'Young England' "was very much 'in the air' in 1837" (206). Whether uncomfortable or ominous, though the term Young England may have been "a taunt 'given to us in derision,'" as Disraeli said, the movement embraced it, and "the rapid way in which this title spread suggests that what struck outsiders most about the movement was the obvious fact of its members' youth" (Faber 46).
- <sup>6</sup> Byron used his role of assailed young writer to encourage youth who (he implied) followed a path he had opened to them. In his early twenties, he walked the nineteen-year-old John Hamilton Reynolds through the pitfalls awaiting "a young writer," justifying his avuncular tone because he had written "a few years, and many changes" before Reynolds and when "I was very young." Byron, "To [John Hamilton Reynolds], February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1814" (*Wedlock*'s 68). Byron requests him to "excuse me for talking to a man perhaps not many years my junior, with these grave airs of seniority;—but ... it was my lot to be thrown very early upon the world" (68). Reynolds had sent him his juvenile "Safie, an Eastern Tale" which he had dedicated to Byron (68 n1). Byron told another "young and unknown man of letters" (Byron, *Letters* 212 n1) of his hope "to be allowed to guide your poetic flight to fame and to usher to the world your future labours" ("[To ?] Piccadilly Terrace, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1815," *Wedlock* 304). He could be liberal in praise of others not his rivals, consistently lauding the "Poesy & Genius" of Henry Kirke White (a baker's son who got to University), who had published poems of a religious bent before him but was dead by age twenty-one (Byron, "[To Robert Charles Dallas], Newstead Abbey, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1811," "*Famous*" 76).
- <sup>7</sup> Brougham was no stranger to juvenile achievement himself. At seventeen, Brougham had been (and remains) "the youngest person ever to contribute a paper to the *Philosophical Transactions*" of the Royal Society (Moxham para 3); one biographer recounts all the ways Brougham "takes credit to himself" for such success, so that "at this time," he "seems sincerely to have believed that he was another Newton" (Campbell 227–28). Brougham had founded the *Edinburgh Review* when he was "a cocky 24-year-old," full of confidence about his own juvenile prowess (Moxham para 10). By the time he was reviewing Byron, Brougham (at thirty) may have been more concerned with revising his own past when he ridiculed another writer for being "peculiarly forward in pleading minority" ([Brougham] 285). Byron thought the reviewer was Francis Jeffrey—and Jeffrey had far surpassed Brougham in juvenile output; "from his very boyhood," he wrote "lectures, essays, translations, abridgements, speeches, criticism, tales, poems, & c."—"the papers of his composition that remain" from between the years fifteen and seventeen "are about sixty in number" (Cockburn 19, 22); he did not publish them, but mined them for the rest of his life. See Joline 15.
- <sup>8</sup> The editor of this volume ascribes this to a letter of Feb 2, 1818 to Thomas Moore.
- <sup>9</sup> "To Thomas Moore, Sunday Matin" [May 8?, 1814].
- <sup>10</sup> See Schoenfield, "Byron" para 3, 4. Interested readers kept seeking out *Hours*: as late as 1841, John Clare was still lending out his copy (Elfenbein, *Byron* 62). For Clare's own self-fashioning in terms of the juvenile tradition, see Keegan and Goodridge.
- <sup>11</sup> Byron sneers at Clarke's origins and poverty. Clarke was so impoverished he had applied to the Royal Literary Fund in 1806, explaining: "At the age of 17 I published a book under the title of 'The Saunterer,' which whatever its merits procured me so much patronage, as recommended me

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

- <sup>12</sup> For the original riddle, see *Weekly Entertainer*, vol. 45, Jun 3, 1805, p. 438.
- <sup>13</sup> Perhaps ironic in 1805 when Croker was himself not five years out of college. He made it in a book closely modelled on Moore’s Thomas Little, *Familiar Epistles to Frederick J-s Jones*. Croker became an unrelenting critic of young authors later: he wrote the 1818 essay on Keats’s *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review* that Byron and Shelley blamed for Keats’s death. Croker also panned Tennyson’s first collection. Though he repudiated Moore here, Croker was a good friend and old Trinity College classmate of Moore’s housemate, Percy Smythe (later Lord Strangford).
- <sup>14</sup> It was reviewing a now-unknown “school boy poet” who, it felt, “equals in genius, in force, and in harmony of numbers, most of our modern bards” (440).
- <sup>15</sup> Crawford travelled in Strangford’s circles because she was related to earls on either side (one of them, her great uncle, prime minister to George III), although she was herself a writer earning a living, like the Smythes when they first started writing. See Stafford.
- <sup>16</sup> Letzring points out that the translation also received “a new edition in 1824 and a French translation in 1828” (302; see also 306 about its active reprinting in America).
- <sup>17</sup> For a fuller summary of the accusations and Byron’s ultimate—but ambiguous—retraction, see Letzring 294.
- <sup>18</sup> Letzring also connects the references to Strangford in *English Bards* to Jeffrey’s review (307–08).
- <sup>19</sup> Strangford was unhappy enough about such criticism that (the British Museum reports) he destroyed a plate of his portrait “so that it would not be used ... by extra-illustrators” of that passage in *English Bards* (Curator’s). Donald Reiman, however, takes Byron’s references to Strangford as “praise” (195 n5). When anticipating Brougham’s panning of his juvenilia in that journal, Byron did console himself that other writers, including Strangford, received the same treatment: “It is nothing to be abused when Southey, Moore, and Strangford ... share the same fate,” “[To the Rev. John Becher] Dorant’s, February 26th, 1808” (Byron, *In* 157-58).
- <sup>20</sup> Strangford had sent his poems to that journal. “Publish the translations from Camoëns most certainly,” Moore told Strangford. “I have seen your gems on the dunghill of the *Poetical Register*, and I am convinced that a collection of such things would do you infinite credit. Besides, you are already well known and looked to, and celebrity would follow upon the very heels of publication” (qtd. in de Fonblanque 108). Letzring identifies one of these poems in that journal, published in 1801 (293)—demonstrating that Strangford had been at work on them long before he passed his majority.
- <sup>21</sup> They remained staples of articles such as “Authors from the Ranks of the Aristocracy.”
- <sup>22</sup> Cunningham is harsher about Strangford’s empty and self-destructive posing. He writes that, by the time he was in his forties, the elder Strangford’s critics considered him a “born loser” who always undermined what should have sources of distinctions (188).
- <sup>23</sup> The wantonness of his father’s early writing seemed to be assumed in the family. Later the young Smythe wrote to his father about a failed historical novel with “colossal portraits, imagine, of Canning and Napoleon” that he had discarded because “my subject grew erratic, till every line threatened to become as licentious as your Camoëns” (de Fonblanque 233).

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# “WHAT ONE SEES ANOTHER SEES”: SYNCHRONICITY IN THE JUVENILIA OF ANNA KINGSFORD AND RICHARD JEFFERIES

**Peter Merchant**

*Principal Lecturer, Canterbury Christ Church University*

BEHIND the coupling attempted in what follows stretches a track long since laid by the leading figures in juvenilia studies today.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the invaluable and pioneering work done by them or because of them on the early writings of the Brontës and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in particular, the pre-Victorian nineteenth century has deservedly drawn a good deal of traffic. If that traffic were to move a little further up the road, however, Anna Kingsford (1846–1888) and Richard Jefferies (1848–1887) would be waiting at the next junction; and it is there that the present essay felt the need to go. It emerges from an experiment aimed at identifying two young writers of the High Victorian years between whom there exist parallels of analogy and contrast no less richly revealing than those between the pair that in 1993, at the beginning of her book *Godiva's Ride*, Dorothy Mermin took to represent “the transition from Romanticism to Victorianism” (Mermin 3). For this, Mermin chose Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Charlotte Brontë. As she notes, both went without the advantages afforded to their younger brothers; but it is a measure of how much both nevertheless did for women’s writing that, if we turn to a time only five or ten years after their deaths, it is possible to put a young female author with a young male counterpart and feel that like is being compared with like.

By the time Kingsford and Jefferies came to make their respective literary debuts, in the early and middle 1860s, not only women writers but child writers of either gender seemed to have a more secure foothold in literary culture than ever before. Part of the impetus for this came from the contents of perhaps the most celebrated parcel in nineteenth-century literature: the “curious packet ... containing an immense amount of manuscript” from which Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, published in March 1857, extracted extraordinary revelations about the very large-scale literary project in which the Brontë children had engaged (Gaskell 62). Suddenly it was easier for those who believed that children could be authors to imagine the

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three best-known parcels of eighteenth-century literature, in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740), as filled not with the clothes but with the uncollected papers of Richardson's sedulously scribbling fifteen-year-old heroine. Suddenly it was harder for those who were sceptical to put any kind of minimum age limit on the act of authorship, for the Brontës had very emphatically reset the bar. The spring of 1857 also saw Margaret Oliphant's novel *The Athelings; or, The Three Gifts* nearing the end of its year-long run in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. In it, Oliphant told the story of a young writer—Agnes Atheling—who at the age of twenty managed to have her work published. In reporting and reflecting on this serialisation, five months after it had started, the Philadelphia-based *Godey's Lady's Book* emphasised the thrilling allure of the dream that Oliphant's novel was feeding:

The first appearance in print is an era never to be forgotten by the young author. The first story or poem "accepted" by the editor of a periodical from some new contributor, what a tumult of hopes and fancies it awakens in the mind of the literary adventurer who has thus launched his or her little skiff into the ocean of authorship! Dangers are forgotten, difficulties vanish, impossibilities even are overcome—in imagination—and the happy aspirant for literary glory sees the gate of the temple of Fame swing wide to welcome a new genius to her honors and rewards. (Hale and Godey 463)

Even as those words appeared in print, in November 1856, two children were growing up in southern England who within a decade would not only repeat the feat of Agnes Atheling but do so in less time than she had taken. The first was Annie Bonus, the future Anna Kingsford, born in September 1846. The second was Richard Jefferies, born in November 1848. Both she and he were to make their first appearances in print, as writers of both poems and stories, before they reached the age of eighteen.

For the remainder of their careers, after those first appearances in print, little more than twenty years were left them. The interval between their deaths was even shorter than between their births. Jefferies died in August 1887, and Kingsford died in February 1888. From beginning to end, therefore, the courses of their lives ran nearly parallel. There was no documented crossing of paths (although circumstances conspired to bring both, at separate stages, to Brighton); but their aspirations and their artistic choices were always closely aligned. Both worked as journalists, both wrote fiction, and both felt moved to write at length about their ideas and beliefs. Kingsford was never known as a nature writer in the way that Jefferies was; and Jefferies's writing, for all its visionary leanings, did not invite the type of label—"esoteric Christianity" or "Christian Theosophy"—to which Kingsford's lent itself. That both have been added to the roll-call of English mystics, however (Kingsford by William Kingsland in 1927, and Jefferies by Gerald William Bullett in 1950), indicates considerable common ground between them. In some lectures that Kingsford gave in 1881 and that she then published in 1882, assisted by Edward Maitland, she exhorted her listeners and readers to redirect their attention from the

phenomenal to the spiritual, so that they could discover “substantial verities lying eternally within and beyond the range of our transient perceptive organs” (Kingsford and Maitland 127). Richard Jefferies was at that time writing (for publication in the following year, 1883) his spiritual autobiography, *The Story of My Heart*, which similarly urged its readers not to stop at the surface of the self but to explore both within and beyond. The grand end in view was acquaintance with—and access to—both “that inner consciousness which aspires” and “the immensity of thought which lies outside the knowledge of the senses” (Jefferies, *Story of My Heart* 144, 184).

### 1866: Approach and Aftermath

THE OPENING sentence of Jefferies’s autobiography is startlingly specific about the first dawns of awareness: “The story of my heart commences seventeen years ago” (*Story of My Heart* 1). “I was not more than eighteen,” he insists, “when an inner and esoteric meaning began to come to me from all the visible universe” (181). The year was 1866, and the place was Liddington Hill in the North Wessex Downs. In Jefferies’s life it was an experience so pivotal as to remain with him, and actually to gather intensity, until the skills that he would need in order to articulate it properly were in place.

If 1866 must therefore be reckoned “a crucial year in Jefferies’ spiritual development,” as his latest biographer Andrew Rossabi puts it (651), it represented just as great a leap forward for him in the professional sense. In March of that year, at the age of seventeen, and impelled by financial necessity, Jefferies started work on *The North Wilts Herald* (Rossabi 692–93). This was a weekly newspaper based in Swindon, which alongside his routine reporting allowed him to contribute a range of other items: short stories, most notably, and accounts of his rambles. Some were substantial items, spread over several Saturdays. By the end of the year, the material that Jefferies had had serialised in the pages of the *Herald* included three short stories and a couple of “Chapters on Churches,” credited to “the Peripatetic Philosopher.” This material, in all its salutary and surprising variety, could be seen as laying the foundations for Jefferies’s future literary career. He learnt the discipline that—if *Ben Tubbs* (sic) *Adventures* is what it feels like, the author’s earliest extant work (Rossabi 33) and possibly predating his first assignment as a *Herald* journalist by as much as fifteen months—would seem to have eluded him before. At twice the length to which *The Story of My Heart* would later run, and squeezed incongruously into a very prosaic exercise book (British Library Additional Manuscripts, no. 58826), *Ben Tubbs* is a tearaway tale taking its hero to a California obviously beyond the wildest dreams of the Wiltshire lad who wrote it.

It was not long before Jefferies progressed from exercise books to newspaper columns; and on the final Saturday of June 1866 *The North Wilts Herald* allowed its new cub reporter to spread himself over three of these, on page six of an eight-page issue. Most of the space that Jefferies on this occasion commanded was given over to a short piece of metaphysical fiction, “A Strange Story,” which is discussed in the next section of the present essay; but to the left of it were two poems, “To a

Fashionable Bonnet” and “The Battle of 1866.” Some deft rhyming partly redeems the otherwise flat-footed attempt at light verse that is made in the first; and the second faces up to the Parliamentary big hitters of the day (“Earl Derby brewed the storm, / Sent 14-pounders, 20-pounders whistling ’gainst Reform”) with some booming fourteeners of its own. All three pieces were signed “Geoffrey,” making this the first instance of Jefferies being identified as the author of a published work.

The 30 June edition of *The North Wilts Herald* was still hot off the presses when an Anglican High Church periodical called *The Churchman’s Companion* brought out its latest issue. While purchasers of *The North Wilts Herald* could reckon on eight pages a week, *The Churchman’s Companion* offered its readers eighty pages a month. The enclosing endpapers would regularly carry announcements advertising whatever books might be forthcoming from the publishers of the periodical, Joseph Masters, and this was where, on 2 July 1866, the following line appeared: “RIVER REEDS. Poems. Fcp. 8vo. Nearly ready.” In August 1866, that “Nearly ready” became “In a few days,” and by September 1866 the waiting was over: “Now ready, in fcap, 8vo., price 2s 6d. / RIVER-REEDS. / A volume of Poems.” These were signs that, in the same summer that saw Richard Jefferies begin to build up his portfolio, the career of another teenage author was similarly striding forward; for the poems were by Annie Bonus. The volume was published shortly before she turned twenty. It preserved her anonymity, however, and what little biographical information it gave about the writer was entirely concentrated into the final adjective and noun of a dedication plainly prompted by the death in 1865 of Bonus’s father: “TO YOU, / OUR FATHER IN PARADISE, / WHOM LIVING, WE DID DEARLY LOVE, / YOUR LITTLE DAUGHTER / DEDICATES THESE” ([Bonus] v).

Already, in fact, the young woman in question was well known to Joseph Masters—and to Felicia Skene, who in 1862 had embarked on a spell of twenty-eight years “as editor of the *Churchman’s Companion*” (Malkovich 228). By the time *River-Reeds* was published, its author’s association both with the periodical and with the publishers dated back at least three years. In 1863, as a sixteen-year-old, she had had a poem entitled “The Maries” accepted by *The Churchman’s Companion* and earmarked for its July issue, though then “deferred till our number for August.” In August it duly appeared, albeit with a misprint that required an Erratum notice in September: “The signature to the poem ‘The Maries,’ in our last number, should have been A. Bonus instead of A. Boncer.” In November *The Churchman’s Companion* was hailing the same A. Bonus as “a young and very promising author,” not just of verse, but now of prose as well.<sup>2</sup> She had just made her début between hard covers with *Beatrice*, a fictionalised saint’s life. The interest of this work extends far beyond the age of its author,<sup>3</sup> although—since she reportedly wrote it not weeks or even months before she gave it to Joseph Masters, but years before—that inevitably plays a part. In December, this time with the correct credit (“A. BONUS”), a further poem appeared in *The Churchman’s Companion*: “S. Stephen’s Death.” In *River-Reeds* three years later, there would be room for this and room for “The Maries” as well ([Bonus] 30–31, 51–52).

Both the precocity and the versatility that Kingsford—as Annie Bonus—had first shown in 1863, and that she then emphatically confirmed in 1866, were curiously in keeping with her earliest beginnings; the family into which she was born lived just

a few minutes' walk away from Gerard Manley Hopkins's family in Stratford, London. Hopkins was two years older, and destined in some ways to become the figure with whom both she and Jefferies would have to try to keep up. The summer of 1866, when Hopkins turned towards the Catholic church, proved nearly as pivotal a period for them as for him. By the end of 1866 Bonus was breaking into the literary mainstream, with a story accepted by *Macmillan's Magazine*. ("The Flower Girl of Sicyon" appeared, unsigned, in its January 1867 number.) At the end of the following year, 1867, came her marriage, and the consequent subsuming of the name of Bonus under the name of Kingsford. Jefferies, meanwhile, would continue throughout this period to publish in *The North Wilts Herald*. When his most substantial serialised contribution—a history of Malmesbury—"sounds a theme already heard at the beginning of 'A Strange Story'" (Rossabi 743), it is as if to acknowledge that, for him as for Kingsford, the work done in the summer of 1866 had set a pattern for the literary endeavours of at least the following year and indeed for some time beyond. In particular, although both he and Kingsford became better known for their non-fictional outputs, there continued to the very end to be significant imaginative creation in the best and most distinctive writing of each. The post-apocalyptic novel *After London* (1885) demonstrates the power that Jefferies can pack into a narrative; the posthumous volume *Dreams and Dream-Stories* (1888) does the same for Kingsford.

### ***River-Reeds* and "A Strange Story"**

"DIVERSE" and "reserved," both of which words are contained in its title anagrammatically, are two terms that might fitly describe Anna Kingsford's 1866 collection *River-Reeds*. Although the author's Christian faith forms a framework for many of the poems, either because they are based on biblical subjects or because they are born of the struggle to sustain belief, the volume exhibits the kind of commitment to variety that commonly characterises a young poet experimenting with her techniques both of versification and of description. Inhibiting the emergence of any distinctive style, however, is a tendency—also typical of a young poet so well-read as Kingsford was—to defer to the established poets of the day. Kingsford seems in places rather reticent about developing a personal poetic voice, despite the scope for this that seventy pages obviously afforded, and inclined to focus instead on ventriloquizing the voices of others.

Thus it is that the longest poem in the volume, "Doubting" (3–13), finds the poet apparently doubting her own unaided capacities at the same time as it shows the speaker doubting what Tennyson had tried to trust in *In Memoriam*: "that good shall fall / At last—far off—at last, to all, / And every winter change to spring" (909). For immediately Kingsford not only harnesses part of what was compelling about the early sections of *In Memoriam*—the death of the loved one and the graveside meditation—but, as if she were seeking shelter under Tennyson's skirts, combines it with the same tetrameters and the same envelope rhyming:

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Here, where each evening, from the west  
Falls the last radiance, and strews o'er  
With garlands all the sacred floor,  
They laid my darling down to rest.

Here, underneath the marble, white  
And calm and cold as her dear brow,  
She lies in death and darkness now,  
Who was my only life and light. ([Bonus] 3)

This captures the atmosphere as well as the manner of *In Memoriam*, distant though the monumental marble may be from “the pleasant shore” by which Hallam is laid in Tennyson’s poem (Tennyson 881).

It is not long before voices other than Tennyson’s begin to be woven into Kingsford’s verse. The sixth stanza of “Doubting” runs as follows:

Thou wast a flower fair and sweet,  
In my heart’s garden reared with care,  
But in the fervent noontide glare  
Didst fall and wither at my feet. ([Bonus] 4)

Kingsford here is recalling, but transposing, the main elements of William Tatton’s poem “Babe Lilian,” published in 1860: “In our hearts’ garden there lives a flower, / Fair and sweet as the white wild rose” (Tatton 83). The ninth stanza of “Doubting” attempts a similar appropriation:

Beneath us lie the graves of men,  
The silent stars are overhead;  
The silent stars,—the silent dead,  
And we, the living, stand between... ([Bonus] 4)

Those lines seem to be channelling William Walsham How, the author of a volume of verse which—like Tatton’s—came out when Kingsford was a studious teenager. (This volume, “*Three All-Saints’ Summers, and Other Teachings of Nature to a Busy Man*,” appeared anonymously and bears no date; but in the second week of May 1861 an advertisement in *The Athenaeum* described it as “just published.”) One of the poems included in the volume is “Stars and Graves”:

The silent stars are overhead,  
The silent graves below;  
A dream between—how quickly fled! —  
Is all we know” ([Walsham How] 80).

Kingsford takes over the stars and the graves but again transposes the borrowed elements.

The polyphony of voices heard at the start of “Doubting” sets the pattern for what ensues. That “Doubting” is one of two poems in *River-Reeds* whose final words are “no more,” and that in the volume as a whole there are no fewer than fifteen other instances of the phrase, may serve to underline Kingsford’s interest in the same emotional territory that Tennyson began to stake out in 1830: “Oh sad *No More!* Oh sweet *No More!*” (Tennyson 161). She follows him in applying deliberately and repeatedly the long-established principle that the words “no more” are infinitely evocative because they “have a singular pathos; reminding us at once of past pleasure, and the future exclusion of it” (Shenstone 2: 187). Elsewhere, she follows where Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning had led. “In the Firelight” ([Bonus] 32–34) is a dramatic monologue in blank verse replicating the “your hand in mine” opening of the former’s “Andrea del Sarto.” The collection’s title poem, “River-Reeds” itself (1–2), resembles the latter’s “A Musical Instrument” in being simultaneously a tale of the riverbank and an exploration through metaphor and myth of poetic inspiration.

Both Barrett Browning’s poem and Kingsford’s focus on the reeds into which Syrinx was transformed and the sounds that were drawn from them. Kingsford’s equivalent for the breath of Pan in “A Musical Instrument” is “the breeze that comes soft from the westerly sky” (1). That gentle blowing provides her poetry—still figured as a playing on the pipes—with its own origin myth. The thoughts that she is secretly harbouring, “far down out of sight” (2), grow into poems when the wind conjures music from them. She can then form them into a bundle to be offered to the reader:

Reeds in the river! reeds in the river!  
 My thoughts and my rhymes are like reeds in the river!  
 Some that go past tread them down in disdain,  
 But the winds of GOD’s heaven that over them blow  
 Shall presently wake them to music again,  
 May be of gladness, or may be of woe!

Reeds from the river! reeds from the river!  
 O I bring you a bundle of reeds from the river!  
 Fresh smelling reeds, newly gathered and green:  
 I bring you a bundle of fancies and rhymes,  
 Though I know that my gift is but lowly and mean,  
 And fair are the flowers that bloom in our times! ([Bonus] 1-2)

The equation that those lines assume, the reeds with the fancies and rhymes, is of course the basis on which Kingsford has her entire bundle of poems taking its title as well as its point of departure from the poem placed first in it. That poem’s advertised subject gives Kingsford a means not just of suggesting what sort of song it is that her *River-Reeds* constitute but of defining her own status as singer. She uses the green reeds in the river—downtrodden but then resurgent, and waving but not drowning as the stream of tendency seizes them—to paint a poignant and pertinent picture of herself, at the age of not quite twenty, as a thinking reed (Pascal’s “roseau pensant”) and as a

young shoot of individual talent working out how it might meet and merge with, or face away from, the onward flow of tradition.

More detail is added to the picture in the prose counterpart of “River-Reeds,” a tale entitled “The Water-Reeds” that according to Kingsford’s biographer can likewise be assigned to her late teens (Maitland 1: 7), but that came out in hard covers, as the third of four so-called “Flower-Stories,” only in 1875. In it, “the tall green water-reeds at our feet” are treated as emblems of “the soul that abides in patience” (Kingsford, “Water-Reeds” 116). Green, says the Spirit of the water-reeds, is “the colour in particular of hope and refreshment” (123); and to the wind among the reeds, “which surrounds and supports her so mysteriously” (134), she gives a meaning that W. B. Yeats’s 1899 volume of verse—taking *The Wind Among the Reeds* as its title—would amplify and make more mystical still. (During the 1880s, in time for the experience to contribute to *The Wind Among the Reeds* but of course too late for it to be reflected in either *River-Reeds* or the “Flower-Stories,” first Kingsford and then Yeats both briefly belonged to the Theosophical Society.) The culmination of the tale is the Spirit’s revelation that, “as the Water-reeds cannot utter their music unless they are stirred and awakened by the breath of the wind, so neither can the soul of man give forth its melody of itself alone, but must be moved thereto by the power of the Spirit of God” (134). Particularly if Kingsford wrote her prose parable about “the power of the Spirit of God” blowing over the riverbank at the same time as she wrote her poem about “the winds of GOD’s heaven” doing so, it would appear that Jefferies was not alone in having been “not more than eighteen” when he felt “an inner and esoteric meaning” yielded up to him by “all the visible universe” (Jefferies, *Story of My Heart* 181). At a similarly early age, or even earlier, Kingsford felt the same: “I have always from childhood entertained a great fancy for finding parables in Nature. It has ever been my special delight to frame for myself stories and allegories out of the voiceless things around me, and to discover in the silent insensate life of flower, stream, or sea, lively images of the mysteries of God’s spiritual kingdom” (Kingsford, “Water-Reeds” 115).

It is clear from this that, for Kingsford, the imaginative life of the child is as much to be celebrated as the silent insensate life of nature. That celebration extends even to the title under which, as she leaves her childhood behind her, she gathers the poems that it has produced: not “Water-Reeds” but “River-Reeds.” The appeal of the latter in this context has partly to do with its teasing proximity to “reveries.” If “statistics” can strike the ear of the wondering child as “stutterings” (Dickens 59), “river-reeds” might just as easily and just as appropriately be turned into “reveries.” The dreamy atmosphere that this inspired mishearing spreads over the entire volume ties in with its attraction to liminal spaces (windows, riverbanks, seashores) and its interest in transitional times of the day, such as sunset or dusk, when the physical senses are subsiding and inner states are heightened. The faint but felicitous suggestion of “reveries” also serves to define as fugitive and visionary the impressions to which Kingsford considers herself, in so far as she resembles the reeds in the river, peculiarly and perpetually prone. As according to Virginia Woolf “a plant on the riverbed feels the shock of a passing oar and shivers” (59), so Kingsford’s river-reeds vibrate in sympathy with their surroundings: “All the long day through they tremble



and shiver!” ([Bonus] 1) Finally, Kingsford’s emphasis upon the creative potential of reverie continues a campaign in which, as Stephanie Schatz has very valuably shown, Lewis Carroll and the *Alice* books were at this time instrumental. Schatz demonstrates Carroll’s opposition to a medical establishment that, in the years when Kingsford was growing up, became increasingly inclined to regard daydreaming in children (and especially in girls) as deplorable and dangerous. Indulging the habit might bring on mental disorders. Kingsford, fully twenty years before her *Dreams and Dream-Stories*, is already begging to differ.

Even as *River-Reeds* went to press, some of the most intoxicating reveries in the whole of English literature were unfolding west of London. In 1866, Richard Jefferies took to visiting Liddington Hill. As he recalled in his autobiography seventeen years later, he would lie down in a spirit of “deep reverence” (Jefferies, *Story of My Heart* 5–6) to become “lost, and absorbed into the being or existence of the universe” (9). Once, resting by a tumulus where he used to walk, he felt his thought slip back twenty centuries, in such a way as to abolish the future and the past and create an eternal present (33f). What Jefferies experienced then was so powerful that, before he felt ready to deal with it directly and in detail in *The Story of My Heart*, traces of it appeared in several previous pieces of writing. Rossabi points to passages of the same sort—in which either the visible scene or the history inscribed in it comes compellingly to life—from two years before, eight years before, and sixteen years before (Rossabi 469, 683–84, 742–44). The earliest treatment of all, however, is at the start of “A Strange Story.” This story had to wait thirty years for its first appearance in hard covers, but *The North Wilts Herald* printed it across two columns on the sixth page of its issue for Saturday 30 June 1866.

“A Strange Story” leaves Liddington Hill behind, but only to move a few miles further along the Ridgeway Path (and across the Wiltshire-Berkshire border) to another Iron Age fort on White Horse Hill. As he gazes up at it, Gerald Fitzhugh experiences a phenomenon to which an untitled manuscript, tentatively dated by Samuel J. Looker to 1875, tells us that Jefferies himself was prone. Jefferies, calling himself “Hyperion,” writes of conjuring “figures of history and romance” so potently in his fancy that they were “brought before his eyes” as living realities (Looker, *Beauty Is Immortal* 51). Gerald Fitzhugh also sees and hears across a “chasm” of centuries as vividly as he sees and hears what is immediately present; so he finds that the past has “rushed back” upon his mind (“Strange Story” 19–20). In his mental eye he sees “the forms of the ancient Northmen warriors,” and the congruence he senses between the sunbeams that catch the dew now and those that struck the warriors’ lances then serves “to render as naught the wide abyss of a thousand years.” In the wind he hears “the shout which greets the advancing Saxons.” There are literary echoes in the wind as well. Jefferies seems conscious of his proximity to Salisbury Plain, where Wordsworth—in a passage from *The Prelude* that Rossabi relates to Jefferies’s impressions of Malmesbury—“had a reverie and saw the past” (Rossabi 743n31). Contributing even more directly to “A Strange Story,” since the territory that it maps out tallies exactly, is Thomas Hughes’s *Scouring of the White Horse* (1859), the story of a London clerk’s excursion to the Vale of White Horse. The clerk, whose name is Richard, attends the festival centred on the cleaning of the chalk horse and finds out

about an area that, as Hughes later observed (Hughes, *Tom Brown* 15), “teems with Saxon names and memories.” When Richard takes the train home, the figures associated with it—including King Alfred himself—begin to flit about in his imagination “in the oddest jumbles” ([Hughes], *Scouring* 199). It is a vision of Alfred and his troops coming back to “triumph over death, and hell, and ... Time” (201). Like “those great dead” in Francis Thompson’s *Victorian Ode*, “They passed, they passed, but cannot pass away, / For England feels them in her blood like wine” (8).

The strange story that Jefferies has Gerald Fitzhugh going on to tell requires a frame, so it is both relayed and completed by his friend Roderick. Gerald having experienced what he terms a “conversion” (Jefferies, “Strange Story” 22) from scepticism to belief in the supernatural, it is a strange story indeed. Gerald tells it in order to persuade Roderick to accept prophecies, premonitions, “the ‘second sight’ of the Highland Seers” (21), and the ability of “the mental eye” (20) to see more than is apparent to the “mortal eye” (24):

“Roderick, I see, like the majority of mankind, you are content to ignore that which you cannot understand, instead of seeking to unravel the mystery. You are acquainted with the written history of the human race, and you must be aware that in every age, in every clime, under every condition of life, mankind has tacitly believed in the existence, outside as it were of the material world, of an invisible power, an omnipresent, ethereal substance—how shall I give that a name that is nameless?” (20–21)

Dwelling as it avowedly does upon things supernatural and nameless, the tale that Gerald and Roderick eventually deliver amounts to a chronicle of two deaths foretold, as if Jefferies’s thought had slipped forward a century and he had somehow contrived to relocate twentieth-century magic realism to the Berkshire countryside. Gerald Fitzhugh and a “*savant*” from what must be London—“some seventy miles distant” (29)—are seen by the wife of the local squire walking past the place where, one year later in the savant’s case and seven years later in Gerald’s, both will be buried. At the time they are seen, however, neither man is physically there. The squire’s wife has therefore seen their wraiths; and such apparitions of living persons inevitably portend their deaths. The inset narrative, which is Gerald’s part of the text, duly concludes with the fate of the savant. The death of Gerald then follows, at the very moment that was prophesied, in Roderick’s frame narrative. At this point the veranda from which Gerald falls dissolves into the vault in which he is laid, the inset story spills over into the frame, and a story that began with visions of past violence ends with a vision of the future lethally fulfilled. Jefferies engineers an ending whose artistry is all the more remarkable in view of the loose ends he had left in *Ben Tubbs Adventures*.

For Andrew Rossabi, “A Strange Story” is very much of its time and “shows the influence of the sensation novels of Wilkie Collins and Mrs Braddon” (708). Even more likely to have rushed back upon Jefferies’s mind as he wrote the story, however, is Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s novel of the same title—which Dickens had installed in *All the Year Round* (directly after his own *Great Expectations*) for a seven-month run

beginning on 10 August 1861, and which had then appeared in book form in 1862. Just as Gerald Fitzhugh in Jefferies's "Strange Story" is a former sceptic who proclaims his conversion to belief in the supernatural, so Bulwer-Lytton's *Strange Story* is narrated by a "self-boasting physician, sceptic, philosopher, materialist" (2: 36) who at first dismisses phenomena such as "the gift which the Scotch call second sight" (1: 193) but subsequently has to shift his ground. He is seen to have "fled from the commonplace teachings of Nature, to explore in her Shadow-land marvels at variance with reason" (2: 379). Accordingly, the novel is filled with omens, visions, and presentiments. It examines the proposition that we may sometimes have vouchsafed to us sights as yet unseen by any, or else seen by others either long ago or far away. Its central chapter, the forty-fifth out of a total of eighty-nine, contains extensive discussion of these "coincidences." "What one sees another sees, though there has been no communication between the two" (2: 55).

Jefferies's preoccupation with the same phenomena in "A Strange Story," which ends by throwing at us "one question: Reader, what is a coincidence?" (34), is either a further coincidence or evidence of some indebtedness to what Bulwer-Lytton had written. At the same time, "A Strange Story" also reads like a prefiguring of what Anna Kingsford would later write. Together with her companion and collaborator Edward Maitland, Kingsford accepted and explored the paranormal—including thought transfer—and she incorporated those interests into weird tales that might easily pass themselves off as written by the same hand as "A Strange Story." In her *Dreams and Dream-Stories*, the first of the stories is "A Village of Seers," which deals with clairvoyance as a blind man's recompense for the loss of his physical sight. He becomes capable of seeing, not with his "outward eyes" (Kingsford, "Village of Seers" in *Dreams* 98) but "with the inward senses of the spirit": "The power of interior vision came upon him in sleep or in trance, precisely as with the prophets and sybils of old, and in this condition, sometimes momentary only, whole scenes were flashed before him, the faces of friends leagues away became visible, and he seemed to touch their hands" (99). This "seeing gift" (115) is shared with the dumb animals that supply the story with its climax: the rescue of a lost child by clairvoyant dogs. "A Village of Seers" originally appeared in the December 1885 edition of a monthly magazine, nearly twenty years after Jefferies had likewise based a short story upon clairvoyance. Jefferies himself at the end of 1885 was still very much a writer of fiction, having published *After London* earlier that year; but principally, by now, he was a nature writer. His latest publication was a collection of essays entitled *The Open Air*. "Another charming volume," one reviewer would term it, "from the singer of the woods and open ways" ("General Literature" 304).

## Critical Reception

BEFORE Jefferies could hope for any small favours from the periodical press, some were shown to Kingsford. In the week of her twentieth birthday, a paragraph in *The Athenæum* noticed *River-Reeds* as a "little volume of poems, by a lady," that in varying degrees exhibit promise. Who exactly the "lady" was is hidden from this reviewer;

but, since Kingsford's dedication points to somebody young, the review concentrates less on applauding what is already achieved than on gauging potential for the future. It commends *River-Reeds* as follows:

The author has a pretty knack of versification; her lines are polished, her language is well chosen, and she has some power of thought; so that we cannot doubt her capabilities of producing some work of greater pretension than the present. ("New Poetry")

"Little" and "pretty" also occur, a fortnight later, to the reviewer for *John Bull*. Here, *River-Reeds* is said to be

a pretty little volume of gracefully written verses on miscellaneous subjects, which will give pleasure to most readers .... the writer possesses no small skill in the art of word painting, and those who love such pictures will do well to possess themselves of this little book. ("Literary Review: Poetry")

The assumption here is that the author's appeal must be limited, for the time being, to connoisseurs of the minor and devotees of the slight.

Once the weeklies had had their say about *River-Reeds*, it fell to the monthlies to follow suit. Naturally, the journals with most time and space for books from Joseph Masters were those that shared the same publisher. *The Ecclesiastic* was first to take up position, and in its issue for November 1866 described *River-Reeds* as

a collection of graceful verses, some of deep pathos, some of high devotion, and all finished and poetical. Occasionally the deep problems of human thought are touched upon, but it is in a comfortable, *débonnaire* way, not as if the writer's mind had an experimental knowledge of the doubts and struggles described, and thus the poems of this kind are less real than the lighter ones in the volume, whose great charm is their soft pathos and tenderness. ("Poems by Plumtre and Others" 518)

Six months later came the turn of *The Churchman's Companion* itself, which reviewed the volume with a privileged prior knowledge of the writer's identity and readily conceded both the technical skill and the slight lyric grace. At the same time it felt compelled to administer a reproachful bite to the hand that formerly fed it:

River Reeds (Masters) is a small collection of poems containing the germ of very decided genius which will make itself known in future years if the promise of the present is fulfilled. When that time of mature judgment has arrived the authoress will probably greatly regret the publication of various of the poems in this volume. It is with no surprise, though of course with regret that we perceive, by

the strong internal evidence of her writings, that she has not passed unscathed through a course of Germanizing authors who have suggested baneful doubts to a naturally devotional mind, but it must be a very young writer indeed who could venture to patronize the Christian faith after the manner of the following lines:

Nor let us in our pride be rathe  
To crush the hopes we deem unwise,  
For much of wholesome sweetness lies  
In the fair flower of Christian faith.

The poems untainted by this fashionable scepticism are for the most part of undoubted merit, full of rich thought, and very harmonious and musical. (“Reviews and Notices” 468)

Even as the reviewer commends her, therefore, the aspiring “authoress” is treated to a long lingering taste of the same condescension with which she is being charged.

Attitudes evolved, and the tendency to patronise faded, but so slowly that even after three decades it was hard to detect any difference. In 1866, condescension about the youthful writings of Anna Kingsford was licensed by the expectation that better work would probably follow. In 1896, the knowledge that what he had subsequently produced was indisputably superior became a licence to be condescending about the youthful writings of Richard Jefferies. The classic example of wisdom after the event is the compilation made in that year by Grace Toplis: *The Early Fiction of Richard Jefferies*. Toplis even evinces embarrassment about what she is exhuming. She tends to equate “early” with “crude,” and to use “boyish” and “youthful” as limiting terms (viii–ix). She draws on Walter Besant’s *Eulogy of Richard Jefferies* (1889), but in respect of Jefferies’s early fiction the closest approach to “eulogy” that she permits herself is the capitalised “APOLOGY” with which, in its heading, her prefatory statement feels bound to couple its “INTRODUCTION” (vii). The reason is that the young Jefferies was misguided, even deluded. He had not yet discovered what he wanted to say, nor found the tree up which he wanted to bark. He “fondly fancied that it was through his fiction that Fame would come to him” (viii). The disinterring of “these almost forgotten writings” will therefore be met with “inevitable criticism” (vii), Toplis thinks, except from the type of “book-lover [who] yearns to make his collection complete” (x); but awareness of the better things to which Jefferies then proceeded—notably “the gorgeous word-painting which has placed him with the Masters” (viii)—entitles him to some forbearance, and his earliest efforts may then invite our “loving toleration” (xv). Their main claim to our attention, according to Toplis, is as “*intellectual curios*” (x). That is, they serve to measure the huge advances made subsequently. Thus it was that Jefferies’s early work, which when it first appeared had received no reviews at all, was considered worth reprinting. At best, the juvenilia might provide the occasional “whisper” or “faint indication” (xi) of the heights which Jefferies would later reach.

That presence in an author’s early writings of the “germ” of mature genius, as *The Churchman’s Companion* had expressed it, is obviously easier to pick up with the

benefit of hindsight. However, even fifty or sixty more years of hindsight than Toplis had had could not persuade Jefferies's strongest twentieth-century advocates to see the imaginative writing carried by *The North Wilts Herald* as in any way continuous with the defining achievements that came long after. Samuel J. Looker dismissed Jefferies's juvenilia as "melodramatic trash quite alien from the true bent of his mind" (*Jefferies Companion* 4). W. J. Keith found little to say about "a number of early and worthless short stories" (18). On Kingsford's juvenilia, meanwhile, there was complete critical silence. Initially, it had appeared that the growing interest in Jefferies might revive interest in Kingsford. When Toplis brought out *The Early Fiction of Richard Jefferies*, at least, there were some signs of overlapping. The critic and animal rights campaigner Henry Stephens Salt (1851-1939), for example, had by 1896 written both about Jefferies and about Kingsford (though not with unqualified admiration about either). In the event, none of the modest attention posthumously paid to Kingsford extended to her early writings. Unlike Jefferies's, and despite the respectable number of reviews that they had attracted when they first appeared, these were never reprinted.

As the divide that time has made between the reputations of Jefferies and of Kingsford continues to widen, however, it may behoove us to look back at both writers' beginnings. 1866 could be considered the *annus mirabilis* of their emergence. As the summer of that year turned into autumn, they already both had publications to their names in prose fiction and in poetry too. What kind or kinds of writing they would go on to prioritize could not have been predicted, and which of the two young writers would outshine the other lay equally open to question. Each one at that time, he with "A Strange Story" and she with *River-Reeds*, was a teenager paying studied stylistic homage to several of the leading writers of the day; yet both were determined, as soon as they could, to set sail alone. Of all the skiffs that young Victorian authors ventured to launch into what *Godey's Lady's Book* termed "the ocean of authorship," no other pair slid so similarly down the slipway.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> My essay owes in addition a debt that it cannot properly repay: to the necessarily anonymous reader by whose suggestions its discussion of both Kingsford and Jefferies, but especially the latter, is informed.

<sup>2</sup> The poem appeared on p. 106 of *The Churchman's Companion*, vol. 34. The other specified mentions of "The Maries" and of Annie Bonus were also all made in vol. 34: p. 80 (July 1863); p. 238 (September 1863); and p. 400 (November 1863).

<sup>3</sup> See Peter Merchant, "Magnifying" and Merchant, "Double."

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## REVIEWS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Rob Breton**

*Nipissing University*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Katharine Kittredge**

*Ithaca College*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Peter Merchant**

*Canterbury Christ Church University*