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The International Society for Literary Juvenilia
c/o Rob Breton
English Studies Department
Nipissing University
100 College Drive, Box 5002
North Bay, ON P1B 8L7
Canada

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EDITORIAL

WE ARE very pleased to introduce the latest issue of the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies*, which is also the first Special Issue: Juvenilia, Trauma, and Intersectionality, Guest Edited by Rachel Conrad. On this occasion we cannot help noting some statistics: after a Covid-related lapse in publication that saw more than a year pass between issues of *JJS*, this one—volume 4, number1—is the second issue published in 2021, and it follows our most recent publication—volume 3, number 2—by only three short months. Moreover, this is, at 115 pages, the longest single issue we have published to date by a considerable margin. Thanks to a growing team of authors, reviewers, editors, proofreaders, and Advisory Board members, we feel safe in stating that *JJS* has recovered from the Great Slow-Down of 2020 and is now well and truly back in business. This is a recovery that speaks to us of the value our contributors and readers place in an open-access scholarly journal dedicated to the field of juvenilia studies; your support motivates us to continue working to keep *JJS* going and to make it ever more timely and relevant.

That said, we also want to note that much of what makes this issue remarkable is the contribution of our inaugural Guest Editor, Rachel Conrad. To this project she has brought a laudable combination of vision, expertise, and patient attention to detail. We especially appreciate her leadership in bringing together the scholarly voices whose work you will find gathered in the Editor's Column, but every one of the following pages owes some debt to her, which we are grateful to have this opportunity to acknowledge.

Because of the length of this Special Issue we do not include any book reviews here, but that section of the journal will return in volume 4, number 2—which is already well in hand.

We look forward to a productive 2022, with the support of you, our readers and contributors. Thank you all!

Rob Breton
David Owen
Lesley Peterson

INTRODUCTION TO THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

Rachel Conrad
Professor, Hampshire College

IN THINKING about young writers, trauma, and intersectionality, it is crucial to recognise young people's agency in conceptualising, naming, and navigating experiences of trauma. How do we know whether and how children consider events of their lives to be traumatic and what that means to them, and how do such experiences and meanings interact with their identities, including their identity as young? We need to take care to recognise contexts of trauma that may frame children's experiences, yet not assume that children who have lived their lives within and alongside potentially traumatic situations are necessarily traumatised. Certain events are potentially traumatic, but children may experience the same event in quite different ways. Each child constructs her own meaning from her experiences, even in the face of trauma. It is also important to acknowledge potentially traumatic situations that are not recognised as such by dominant societal discourses and institutions. In juvenilia studies, we have a window onto young writers' constructions and representations that helps us explore or even reframe these questions.

Young poet Vanessa Howard, a participant in The Voice of the Children workshop directed by poet June Jordan and educator Terri Bush in Brooklyn in the late 1960s and early 1970s, constructs in her extended poem "The Last Riot" the stark landscape of a race riot that seems poised at the precipice of apocalypse: "When black and white will match their wits / and take this human race to bits." Howard's poem, published in the 1970 anthology *THE VOICE of the Children* (collected by Jordan and Bush), begins, "Tension in the heat-filled night / The coming of a racist fight" (8), and the opening word "Tension" as well as the definitive rhyme of "night" with "fight" signal the combination of complexity, clarity, and finality of this evocation of a race riot. As the poem advances, it describes moving beyond "trying to care" and beyond "hurt and fear" to "One last fight" and the start of explicit violence—"A cut of flesh a cry of pain"—that is elemental and beyond punctuation. The violence that erupts from "hatred" wreaks large-scale devastation: "All lives to be drowned in a

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pool of blood / Brought on by a hatred flood" (8). In the poem's second and final section, the ageless speaker breathlessly describes the "last riot" (9) again yet in intensified close-up, with violence being visited on "Children bleeding screaming fearing" before the "Bombs" arrive, whereupon even the "Last baby drops / ... Last of the human race" (9). Not only are children not held in that space, they are "drop[ped]": they fall out of the space that adults have made (or broken). In what ways is this stark and graphic imagery of racial violence a depiction of trauma? In what ways is it an unsparing depiction of realities of racial violence? What are the benefits of referring to it as a representation of trauma, and what are the limitations? In this introduction, I raise these and other questions to invite us to explore complex dynamics of trauma, intersectionality, and juvenilia, as do the writers of the essays that follow.

Trauma itself can be a totalising lens that circumscribes and constricts our view of children's experiences. A child in the act of writing can try to write about, around, over, through, or beyond the constraints of trauma itself. Howard's speaker in "The Last Riot" reads as a lone survivor, as either the "Last of the human race" evoked in the poem's final line or as a presence who has already witnessed the death of humanity. As a young Black poet, Howard crafts her own "terrible beauty" from US racial conflict, to use that bitter phrase from Yeats's poem "Easter 1916" that describes revolutionary possibilities emerging alongside the death of Irish nationalists during the Easter Rising against British rule. How are the multiple and intersecting aspects of a young person's identity—including age—connected to the potential for exposure to trauma, to how a young person ascribes trauma to her experience, to how others ascribe it to her, and to how a young person constructs meaning and makes art from, through, and beyond her experiences?

In thinking about trauma and intersectionality, we run up against immediate roadblocks in standard conceptualisations. The dominant psychiatric understanding of trauma, as delineated in the American Psychiatric Association's current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5), does not account for the range of experiences of racism and other forms of oppression. Potentially traumatic events are specified in DSM-5 as "actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence" (271), and thus the psychological effects of racism and other forms of oppression as stressors are not included in standard psychiatric models of trauma. Robert T. Carter works against such limitations by pursuing a robust and influential line of scholarship on race and discrimination in relation to trauma, efforts which depend on "introducing new ways to recognize and assess race-based stress and trauma" (17). Carter argues that a "race-specific mental health standard" is needed through which to think about the experiences of people of color, and he proposes the notion of "race-based traumatic stress injury" as "a nonpathological category" that can nevertheless "be used by mental health professionals to identify and assess people of Color's encounters with racism that produce stress and trauma" (96). Carter defines "race-based traumatic stress injury" as "involv[ing] emotional or physical pain or the

threat of physical and emotional pain that results from racism in the forms of racial harassment (hostility), racial discrimination (avoidance), or discriminatory harassment (aversive hostility)" (88), and he emphasises the "nonpathological" nature of this category in order to recognise many possible forms of "psychological harm from racism" (93) that may not be clinically severe. While much still needs to be determined in clinical psychological research on and assessment of such aspects as "how specific encounters with racism become traumatic" (95), a first step is to recognise race-related stress as part of the landscape of potential trauma. This is but one example of the conceptual work needed to support our thinking about intersectionality, trauma, and juvenilia.

The concept of intersectionality itself—first delineated by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s—began as a "heuristic term to focus attention on the vexed dynamics of difference and the solidarities of sameness in the context of antidiscrimination and social movement politics" (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, 787). While age-related (child/adult) status is not commonly invoked in discussions of intersectionality, it certainly can and should be, as it is relevant to intersectionality's "generative focus as an analytical tool to capture and engage contextual dynamics of power" (788). In other words, intersectionality is an "analytical sensibility" (795), a way of thinking about power in relation to difference and sameness, that involves "conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power" (795).

A crucial aspect of attention to these questions involves thinking critically about the nature of our access to young people's perspectives, words, and ideas in relation to intersectionality and trauma. For instance, LaKisha Simmons has written about the challenges of finding work by young Black writers (and Black girls in particular) in archives—"searching for girls' own articulations of the pain of growing up in the storm of southern American violence" (449)—since the words "children" and "girls" were racially coded in the US South. As Simmons writes, "in the official archive of the segregated South, 'child' or 'girl' refers only to white children or white girls. To find black girls, I could not go to a catalogue card that read 'children'" (457). Simmons articulates the layering of "disregard" (450) for the lives and perspectives of Black girls, both "in their own time and then again by record-keepers and archivists" (450). One strategy that Simmons pursued was to search the papers of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) or other archives where adults (e.g., teachers and social workers) would have interacted with Black girls and might have preserved their words and work. Such a promising approach models the persistence and ingenuity required to recover voices of marginalised young people in order to enrich our literary cultures.

In the Editor's Column of this special issue, I invited authors to explore complexities of trauma, intersectionality, and juvenilia through focusing on a youth-authored text. The result is a fascinating and provocative set of five essays, which are

from different disciplinary perspectives, attend to a range of historical and geographical locations, and focus on young writers who are from marginalised backgrounds and/or are not typically at the center of scholarly attention. This combination of essays enables us to consider, reconsider, and potentially reframe our questions about young people's experience and writings in relation to trauma and intersectionality. I express my gratitude to the writers of these essays for their compelling and incisive engagement with the focus of this Editor's Column, and to the editors of the *Journal of Juvenilia Studies* for extending the invitation to me to serve as Guest Editor of this issue.

In "Trauma in Phillis Wheatley's Juvenilia," Lucia Hodgson considers eighteenth-century American poet Phillis Wheatley, the first African American poet to publish a volume of poetry, and explores "her agency in grappling with how to represent her traumatic childhood experiences." She examines a key poem by Wheatley as a work of juvenilia, and reads related letters by Wheatley in order to "complicate the unanswerable question of whether she couldn't remember her childhood ... or whether she chose not to share those memories in her written work." Hodgson discusses Honorée Fanonne Jeffers's recent poetry collection *The Age of Phillis* as "likely ... a significant turning point in Wheatley scholarship with regard to perceptions of trauma in her writings," and she illuminates the importance of recognising that "to understand Wheatley's writing requires recognition of her agency in representing traumatic childhood experiences while also navigating the circumstances of her enslavement."

In "Child Journalists, the Civil War, and the Intersectional Work of Reporting Grief," Sara Danger introduces a daily newspaper edited by three young white Northern sisters in the late nineteenth century during the US Civil War, and illuminates how they used journalistic forms to write about their brother's capture and death. Danger examines how the Williams sisters shaped their reporting on their brother's circumstances in editorials they authored in the popular weekly newspaper they edited, as well as in a related periodical they edited and produced. She also calls attention to their incorporation of elegiac poems written by others alongside their own journalistic prose as means of establishing an interplay across genres that worked with and against established conventions of grief.

In "Child Writing and the Traumatised Body," Caroline Lieffers explores a memoir written by a young victim of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan in 1945 at the end of the second World War. She frames her focus on Ishida Masako's representations of bodily pain and trauma as a young survivor of war and violent conflict through the approaches of history of childhood emotion and disability studies. The questions Lieffers asks prompt us to consider how "young people experience, understand, and cope with damage to their bodies," how they use writing to depict and make sense of injury, what stigma they also face, and ultimately how they write about such experiences and—on cultural and political dimensions—how

such young writers "negotiate the meanings that such prose held within societies and cultures that had undergone collective trauma and transformation."

In "Collaboration and Connection: Intergenerational Authorship in Al Rabeeah and Yeung's *Homes: A Refugee Story*," Rachel Conrad and Lesley Peterson consider a text produced through "collaboration and connection" between Abu Bakr al Rabeeah, a young refugee from violent conflict in Syria, and Winnie Yeung, his English as a Second Language teacher in Canada (herself an immigrant from China), who crafted a book of "creative nonfiction" following a careful interview process with al Rabeeah and his family. Through a joint interview with al Rabeeah—now a young adult—and his former teacher Yeung, Conrad and Peterson explore the nature of this intergenerational collaboration between al Rabeeah as "the storyteller" and Yeung as "the writer," with al Rabeeah "guiding the conversation" yet Yeung responsible for crafting the organisation, prose, and voice of the book itself. Yeung concludes the interview with a note of caution about expecting young people to write about trauma and emphasises the importance of young people's choice and direction.

Finally, in "'Because I Won't Ever Forget': Towards Livingness in Youth Poetry," Alisha Jean-Denis and Korina Jocson raise crucial concerns about young people, trauma, writing, and pedagogy in light of "histories of colonialism, enslavement, and dehumanization." They discuss poetry and other cultural forms as "counter-expressions" that "offer creative outlets to break free [from] the imposed silences/silencing within systems of oppression," and they look in particular at one poem composed by a young person in the contemporary US that was performed at a school event for a "Student of Color (SOC) affinity group." Jean-Denis and Jocson advocate for "Healing-centered approaches" which prioritise young people's voices to "widen the learning and teaching spectrum for youth engagement in educational contexts"; they also express caution about "trauma-informed practice" in which young people are invited to write about trauma. They conclude by articulating important questions about "trauma-informed literacies among racialized youth," and about what young people can teach adults to "get past careless assumptions about who/how young people are or are supposed to be."

As these writers demonstrate, to engage with questions of trauma, intersectionality, and juvenilia requires specifying, broadening, and deepening our frames. Further specifying our frames is important to recognise how young people's intersecting identities may expose them to potential stress and trauma, such as that of racism and discrimination. Broadening is necessary so that young people whose lives converge with potentially traumatic situations are not limited and trapped within those frames. And deepening our frames can help account for young people's own interpretations and representations, including whether and how they consider their own experiences to have been potentially traumatic.

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Trauma in Phillis Wheatley's Juvenilia

Lucia Hodgson
Independent Scholar

James Weldon Johnson was the first in a long line of literary critics to argue that the poetry of the trafficked and enslaved teenage girl Phillis Wheatley lacked an emotional connection to her African homeland. In *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922), Johnson finds the reference to her kidnapping in her poem "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth" to be "unimpassioned." And he voices a lament that reverberates through Wheatley reception today: "But one looks in vain … for some agonizing cry about her native land" (xxvii-xxviii). Since the early 1980s, a steady stream of scholars has recuperated Wheatley as an astute critic of slavery and anti-Black racism who ingeniously manipulated Christian imagery, Republican rhetoric, and neoclassical aesthetics to convey a subversive political message hidden in plain sight. But the perception that her poetry does not manifest grief about the separation from her birth family and country has endured. For example, Tara Bynum writes: "[W]hen I listened for this certain suffering in her verses and letters, I didn't find it. I didn't hear the sadness" (42). Reading Wheatley's poetry as juvenilia and reading her poetry and letters in relation to one another can productively complicate the view that her poetry is devoid of traumatic affect. This approach illuminates her agency in grappling with how to represent her traumatic childhood experiences.

When we think of juvenilia in terms of trauma and intersectionality, we are led to ask: How can we recognize childhood trauma in children's writing? How do we distinguish between the absence of trauma, traumatic forgetting, and strategic silence in the writings of dependent subjects? These questions are particularly germane for writing by enslaved children who manifest trauma while subjugated and vulnerable members of the master's household. As Rachel Conrad reminds us, we must resist the tendency to read the first-person speakers in children's poems as voicing transparently autobiographical sentiments of the author. To theorize a child writer's agency in juvenilia requires "recognition of children's agency in using, resisting, and remaking the category of 'child' and other age-related categories" (19). To *hear* trauma

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in Wheatley's poetry requires recognition of her agency in representing her traumatic childhood experiences and their effects on her memory, attachment, and affect. I argue that the poems Wheatley published while under age twenty-one provide insight into the challenge of representing the traumatic separation from her mother when her physical and psychic survival depended on her affective relationship with her mistress Susanna Wheatley. What we can hear in Wheatley's poetry about her childhood in Africa and her upbringing in the Wheatley household must be teased out of the performance of obedience and gratitude expected of her as an enslaved child (Hodgson 676).

Honorée Fanonne Jeffers's recently published collection of poetry, *The Age of Phillis*, likely marks a significant turning point in Wheatley scholarship with regard to perceptions of trauma in her writings. The collection's eponymous poem, "The Age of Phillis," challenges the idea that Wheatley ever forgot what she had been forced to leave behind: "And what was the age // of Phillis when she stopped turning East, / thinking of water in faithful bowls, / of her parents, // of love only ending in death? / There is no such age." The poem paints a picture of Susanna Wheatley insisting that Wheatley renounce her birth name and identity and respond to the new name she has been given: "Enough // punishments—but hopefully, no whippings— / would have broken her boldness, the kissing / of teeth in imitation of her Nation" (58). Phillis Wheatley emerges from this poem as a child who learns early in life that she must stifle her birth language and culture in order to avoid upsetting her new caregiver and provoking harsh disciplinary consequences.

Jeffers's poem "The Age of Phillis" provides a productive heuristic for the reading of trauma in Wheatley's poetry. Scholars have been reluctant to read Wheatley's work as juvenilia, authored from a position of legal, economic, and often psychological vulnerability and dependence. Yet Wheatley's collection of occasional poetry, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), was written and published before she turned twenty-one and before she was legally emancipated, while she was enslaved by people who controlled the life of her body and her writings, and while a parentless child who required adult care in order to survive. Wheatley was indebted to her owners for all aspects of her poetic production, including her education, the time to study and write, her collection's subscribers, and the trip to London that enabled her to edit her collection for publication. It stands to reason that she may have moderated her recollections of her life before enslavement and her expressions of trauma in order to appease Susanna Wheatley, who had apparently devoted herself to Phillis Wheatley's development as a poet.

It is impossible to know whether Wheatley said little about her separation from her country and family of origin in her work because she couldn't remember her early childhood, because she avoided representing this separation in her poetry, because she felt compelled to ingratiate herself to Susanna Wheatley and her community of subscribers, or for some other unknown reason. Certainly, her early life in Africa would have been of interest to her readers, yet she makes only three brief and

relatively nonspecific references to that life in her poetry. "To the University of Cambridge, in New-England" and "On being brought from Africa to America" mention her departure from Africa in the context of Christian salvation, and "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth" stages her kidnapping. All three references establish distance between the speaker and the presumably traumatic separation, and, in them, expressions of loss and suffering must be sought in order to be found.

"To the University of Cambridge, in New-England" and "On being brought from Africa to America" appear to conform to the conventional proslavery belief that enslavement was a benevolent act in that it removed subjects from a non-Christian environment and exposed them to Christian teachings. Susanna Wheatley might well have held such a view, and she apparently encouraged Phillis Wheatley's acceptance of the Christian faith. In "To the University of Cambridge," the speaker tells her audience of college students about her past to emphasize their good fortune as members of a privileged Bostonian elite class and to encourage them to avoid sin:

> 'Twas not long since I left my native shore
> The land of errors, and *Egyptian* gloom:
> Father of mercy, 'twas thy gracious hand
> Brought me in safety from those dark abodes. (11)

On the surface, the poem confirms the Christian perception of Africa as the "dark" continent bereft of the "light" of Christianity. The lines do not contain even a hint that the speaker has suffered from her forced removal from her "native" culture. But a reading of the poem as a whole that assumes a critical attitude toward slavery does find suffering. Katherine Clay Bassard understands the poem as an anti-slavery message from one who has experienced it firsthand, delivered to the very young men who will eventually have the power to curb the slave trade. The "sin" the speaker is telling them to avoid is slavery (42). According to Bassard's reading, Wheatley is "not … thankful for her slavery, but for her safety," and "'dark abodes' could signify nothing but the hateful and unsanitary ship's holds" where the enslaved and perhaps Wheatley herself were kept during the Middle Passage, chained and tortured by the lack of space, sanitation, nutrition, water, and clean air (45). But even this reading puts emphasis on rescue from the horrors of the "dark abodes" rather than on familial and cultural separation.

"On being brought from Africa to America" can also be read as a critique of the slave trade, and contains an oblique expression of the trauma of separation. It appears just one poem following "To the University of Cambridge" in the collection, and echoes its diction and phrasing:

> 'Twas mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land,
> Taught my benighted soul to understand

> That there's a God, that there's a *Saviour* too:
> Once I redemption neither sought nor knew. (13)

While the first three lines of the stanza appear to support the view of enslavement as a benevolent salvation, the last line gestures towards the coercion implicit in "redemption." The speaker's desire to be redeemed follows rather than precedes her kidnapping. "Once" she inhabited a world in which she was content, imbued with an alternate knowledge of life and afterlife. After being "brought" to Boston and "taught" a new religion, Wheatley has little choice but to accept a new identity. The poem implies that Wheatley, removed from her "land," has to seek religious salvation in order to provide financial "redemption" to the Wheatleys who have purchased her. The stanza suggests that a strict obligation to become a convert and protégée requires a renunciation on Wheatley's part of the cultural beliefs of her childhood.

The passage in "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth" that James Weldon Johnson found "unimpassioned" is comparatively the most emotional of Wheatley's references to forced relocation as a seven- or eight-year-old girl:

> I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
> Was snatch'd from *Afric's* fancy'd happy seat:
> What pangs excruciating must molest,
> What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
> Steel'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
> That from a father seiz'd his babe belov'd[.] (40)

In this poem, the speaker hasn't "left" Africa or been "brought" to America; she has been "snatch'd," connoting the surprise, speed, and violence of the removal. Although the descriptor "cruel" is modified by the mitigating word "seeming," it is nonetheless included. Though Wheatley's kidnapping may have only *seemed* brutal to some, it was nonetheless brutal in its essence. Similarly, Wheatley's African home may have only *seemed* wonderful to some, but it was wonderful to someone, likely the speaker. The "pangs excruciating" and "sorrows" of the next two lines are all the more powerful because they are not mitigated by potentially dismissive modifiers. They also take on affective weight in contrast to the "Steel'd … soul" of the kidnapper.

The lines in "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth" about the impact on the speaker's father do establish distance between Wheatley and the kidnapping. The speaker disassociates her present self from the girl who was seized from her father, and the emphasis on her father's suffering deflects attention from her own. But the contrast between the mitigated suffering of the speaker and the unmitigated suffering of the father could imply that the speaker cannot speak frankly

or directly about her own pain. She is nonetheless the "babe belov'd" in the scene, deprived of paternal love and left with traumatic memories and questions about her father's mental state: her father's suffering is her suffering, and her father's loss is her loss. The questions themselves—"What pangs excruciating must molest, / What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?"—tell us that the speaker herself does not know how her father feels, reminding us that she has been irrevocably separated from him. And the last two lines of the stanza remind us that the speaker is telling the story of the kidnapping in order to explain to her addressee, the Earl of Dartmouth, the traumatic source of her "love of *Freedom*": "Such, such my case. And can I then but pray / Others may never feel tyrannic sway?" (30–31). The repetition of "such" emphasizes the weight and impact of her experience on her psychic development.

The poem's omission of any reference to a grieving mother may reflect the fact that the speaker did not have or cannot remember a living mother who experienced and grieved her kidnapping. But it also avoids confronting her mistress with the specter of a mother-daughter attachment. Two letters that Wheatley wrote in the months after Susanna Wheatley's death suggest that her recognition of Susanna as a compassionate caregiver necessarily displaced references to her mother or previous maternal caregivers. In these letters, Wheatley expresses sadness and filial gratitude regarding Susanna's death as if she had never suffered such a loss before. A passage Wheatley wrote to her friend Obour Tanner, a young woman enslaved in Rhode Island, seemed designed to establish her familial relationship to Susanna and simultaneously refute the possibility that her death recalled any previous familial losses:

> I have lately met with a great trial in the death of my mistress; let us imagine the loss of a Parent, Sister or Brother the tenderness of all these were united in her. —I was a poor little outcast & a stranger when she took me in: not only into her house but I presently became a sharer in her most tender affections. I was treated by her more like a child than her Servant; no opportunity was left unimprov'd, of giving me the best of advice, but in terms how tender! how engaging! This I hope ever to keep in remembrance. (153)

In the first sentence, Wheatley eschews the term "mother," choosing the more generic "Parent," evading any implication that Susanna usurped the maternal role she assumed from a preexisting maternal figure. The phrase "let us imagine" implies that Wheatley and Tanner would not have had at the ready any recollections of lost parents or siblings, but would have to make a mental effort to create a parallel sensation. In the second sentence, Susanna's role as ostensible savior and adoptive parent elides her role in rendering the young girl an "outcast & a stranger" in the first place. As the wife of a man who bought and owned slaves, Susanna contributed to the traffic in children that uprooted Phillis from her home. The story of how Wheatley came to be

abandoned is unwritten, keeping the focus on her status after her kidnapping and the Middle Passage that deposited her on the wharf in Boston to be purchased.

At the same time, the passage in Wheatley's letter to Tanner contains subtle hints that there were limitations to Susanna's caregiving. In the last sentence, Wheatley expresses her sense of obligation to Susanna for having advised her as she would a child rather than a slave, using the conventional British colonial term "servant" to obfuscate the legal and economic reality of human ownership. But the "more" in "more like a child than her Servant" leaves open the possibility that Susanna nonetheless treated her like a slave. And the "but" in "but in terms how tender! how engaging!" suggests that Susanna's advice may have been unwelcome, that it may have, for example, required Phillis to renounce her life before she became a "poor little outcast" to be rescued by an apparently benevolent Christian white woman. The phrase "more like a child than her Servant" markedly avoids the possessive "her child," establishing a gap between Susanna's treatment of Wheatley and that of her biological children. Wheatley remains a child in the Wheatley household, not a child of the Wheatleys. Susanna's "tender" and "engaging" pedagogy did not necessarily enact maternal behavior or affection. Wheatley "hopes" to remember Susanna's treatment, as if there is the risk that it could be forgotten or gainsaid over time. Perhaps Wheatley avoided the term "mother" in the first sentence because Susanna's loss could never evoke the loss of her birth mother, in that Susanna never felt *like a mother* or *like her mother* to Wheatley.

A second extant letter that Phillis Wheatley wrote about Susanna's death, in this case to John Thornton, a wealthy English merchant and supporter of the missionary activities of the Countess of Huntingdon to whom Wheatley had dedicated her *Poems,* contains a similar ambivalence to the first:

> By the great loss I have Sustain'd of my best friend, I feel like One [fo]rsaken by her parent in a desolate wilderness, for Such the world appears to [me], wandring thus without my friendly guide. I fear lest every step Should lead me [in]to error and confusion. She gave me many precepts and instructions; which I hope I shall never forget. (158)

Once again, Wheatley avoids the term "mother," this time using "best friend" in addition to "parent." The verb "forsaken" contains a mildly accusatory attitude toward Susanna's departure, which could be interpreted as a commentary on Wheatley's status as a free Black young woman without parents. She finds herself "in a desolate wilderness" at risk of "error and confusion." Before her death, Susanna did insist on Wheatley's emancipation from slavery, but she did not, as far as we know, arrange any form of financial settlement that might have secured Wheatley's future. After Susanna's death, Wheatley had only herself to depend on. She found herself "on her own footing," dependent on book sales for her survival (Carretta 141–42). At the end of the passage, Wheatley once again expresses the possibility that she may

"forget" or even discount the advice she received from the closest thing she had to a mother in her childhood as a natally alienated enslaved person living in a white household.

Wheatley may have articulated and critiqued the notion that she was treated like a child rather than a slave by Susanna because this notion was expressed by the Wheatleys themselves within their social circle and became part of an oral tradition that circulated in Boston at least into the early nineteenth century. The earliest extant posthumous sketch of Wheatley's life by the French abolitionist Henri Grégoire, published in French in 1808 and translated into English in 1810, cemented the enduring conception that Wheatley was "brought up as a spoiled child" in the Wheatley household (236). Grégoire's biographical sketch served as the primary source for brief pieces in works such as Lydia Maria Child's *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833), which perpetuated the neglect of her African childhood and the theme that Wheatley was treated more like a child than a slave. This is also the central message of the first extended biography of Wheatley, Margaretta Matilda Odell's *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a Native African and a Slave* (1834), which has most shaped contemporary interpretations of her work (Elrod 105-107). The *Memoir* fleshes out Grégoire's sentimental narrative with details Odell gathered from white oral histories. Recent scholarship has established that Odell was indeed a "collateral descendant" of the Wheatleys as she claimed (Glatt 155), but the *Memoir* is not a reliable source in many respects (Carretta 175-176). By drawing on an oral tradition promulgated by Wheatley's white owners, their relations and friends, Odell's book reflects less Wheatley's own experiences than the representation of those experiences among white people who sought to present themselves as benevolent saviors rather than exploitative oppressors.

Taken together, Wheatley's poems and letters complicate the unanswerable question of whether she couldn't remember her childhood in her native country or whether she chose not to share those memories in her written work. Nor can we know definitively whether she kept available memories to herself to keep them private or to avoid upsetting Susanna Wheatley. What we can infer from Wheatley herself and from Odell is that maintaining "worth" in the Wheatley household depended on pleasing Susanna and retaining her approval. And this acceptance in turn depended on taking and following her "guidance." All children must subject themselves to the authority of their caregivers to a certain extent in order to survive, and Wheatley must have felt this compulsion more than a free child given the legal ease with which she could have been reduced again to an object to be sold away. The assumption therefore that she was treated *like a child* should not be interpreted to mean that she could exercise a high degree of overt self-determination or willfully resist her owners' demands. Rather, it means that her very survival depended on not having an apparent will of her own and on suppressing her African past. Ultimately, to understand Wheatley's writing requires recognition of her agency in representing traumatic childhood experiences while also navigating the circumstances of her enslavement.

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Child Journalists, the Civil War, and the Intersectional Work of Reporting Grief

Sara R. Danger
Valparaiso University

In 1861, at the age of twelve, Nellie Williams began producing the only local newspaper for her hometown of Penfield, NY, a sleepy farming community ten miles outside of Rochester. Appearing weekly during the height of the American Civil War (1861–66), Williams's *Penfield Extra* foregrounded the editor's youth in the masthead's subtitle—"Little Nellie's Little Paper"—while the same banner announced her paper's fresh vantage point as "Devoted to News and Literature and Neutral in Politics" (Figure 1).

Despite the masthead's assertion of neutrality, the specter of war remained a constant presence in Williams's weekly. Strewn across the pages of "Little Nellie's Paper," poems expressed the loss of loved ones and war-related announcements flanked the advertising pages, while Nellie's editorials mused on the absurdity, hypocrisy, and finality of war.

On 8 December 1864, the personal and public dramatically collided when Nellie Williams reported that her only brother and Union soldier, Leroy K. Williams, had been captured at the Battle of Shenandoah. In "JUST AS WE EXPECTED," she announced:

> ONE reason why we opposed this cruel war was because our only brother has been enduring the hardship of a soldier's life for the past two and a half years ... Although we are deeply grieved, yet we are glad that he is out of his tormentor's hands …, [He was] together with about 60 others of the N. Y. Cavelry [*sic*], overpowered by the rebel cavalry, and we have had no tidings since from any of them.

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In this instance, Williams's language straddles despair and restraint, as private grief verges into public memorializing, tensions that her popular paper (with nearly 3,000 subscribers from coast to coast) would continue to probe during the months and years following her brother's capture. Furthermore, in the same year in which she reported her brother missing, Nellie, along with her sisters (Mary, aged seventeen; Allie, aged twelve), began a second publishing venture, the *Literary Companion*, a monthly literary journal.[1] While this journal has only recently come to light, it proves that Nellie and her sisters worked side by side, in a single print shop producing their papers. In addition, the remarkable cross-pollination between their periodicals illustrate how they employed the miscellaneous forms of nineteenth-century journalism to report on their brother's tragic capture and disappearance.


PENFIELD EXTRA.

OUR HOPE

Little Nellie's Little Paper.

Fifty Cents Per Year. DEVOTED TO NEWS AND LITERATURE, AND NEUTRAL IN POLITICS. Single Copies Two Cts.

VOLUME III. PENFIELD, N. Y. DEC. 31st, 1863. NUMBER 1.

Figure 1. Masthead, *Penfield Extra*, 31 December 1863, p. 1. Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County, Historic Newspaper Collection.

Editorials by the Williams siblings support James Marten's contention that children, including Northern white girls, were dramatically affected by as well as direct participants in the politics defining the American Civil War.[2] In their explicit engagements with trauma and loss, moreover, these young writers upended innocent and "protectionist" discourses which, as Susan Honeyman asserts, have been problematically associated with children's writing about war (75). In their editorials, as the sisters give public voice to private despair, their words illuminate the complexly layered socio-political contexts informing their identities as white Northerners, working-class children, loyal sisters, and professional journalists. The historically situated intersectional identities, reflected in and contested by the Williams sisters' periodicals, expose a kaleidoscope of fissures and collisions between private and public, silence and enunciation, gender and class, trauma and resilience.[3] As such, their accounts provide vital documentation of how genres shaped, and were shaped by, children's articulations of suffering for a national audience during wartime. [4]

Returning to Nellie Williams's editorial "JUST AS WE EXPECTED," its title reveals the complexity she navigated writing about personal trauma in the form of a newspaper editorial for a public audience. By giving a sensational title to a family tragedy, Nellie eschews immediate associations with the sentimental, personal, or literal. Instead, her eye-catching title draws readers in, making them wonder *what* was

so obviously predicted. For readers to discover that this "expected" event was the disappearance of Nellie's "only brother," who had suffered the "hardship of a soldier's life," must have been stunning. Adding to the dissonance, the article's adoption of the editorial "we" ("we have had no tidings since from any of them"), filters news of personal loss through Nellie's voice as editor. Yet thinly veiled behind the vantage point of the child journalist, the grieving sister lashes out at local abolitionists for not fighting as her brother has, as evidenced by the editorial's abrupt conclusion: "We shall glory in the next draft, not that we would wish to see our war abolitionists shot down like dogs, but we would like to see the cowards shake in their boots a little." Prefaced by patriotic language, Nellie's admission that she would "glory in the next draft" merges with hyperbolic metaphor of abolitionists, whom she regards as hypocritical "cowards," potentially "shot down like dogs."

Through this mixture of sensational title, impartial tone, and metaphorical violence, Nellie directs anger toward those who pay lip service to (rather than enlisted in) the war cause, the cause for which her brother volunteered and paid the ultimate price. One speculates on whether, in expressing her political opinions so openly, Nellie's identification as a white Northerner, combined with her role as newspaper editor, bolstered her authority. And yet, when alluding to her possible desire—"to see our war abolitionists shot down like dogs"—Nellie's phrasing is carefully shrouded in the subjunctive and negative tenses ("not that we would"). In this manner, she protectively cloaks her anger and violence in linguistic codes, which would have served at the time of writing to preserve her normative cultural positioning. As Linda Grasso argues, nineteenth-century girls were not expected to demonstrate overt anger or violence (5), a cultural assumption most likely augmented by Nellie's working-class background. Even as Williams reports that "we have had no tidings of [our brother's] existence or whereabouts," raw emotions break through the objective, editorial "we," expressive of a sister "deeply grieved." Her almost vengeful conclusion, stirred by private grief, is fueled also by strident political attitudes inflamed by violent national fratricide. The resulting interplay between Nellie's fraught language practices and her complex social positioning, moreover, must have been compounded by the notoriously difficult human problem of putting words to raw suffering. The strained mix of violence, anger, and patriotism of her essay's conclusion suggests the limits of what could be expressed. When viewed through the lens of current trauma theory, Nellie's aggressive metaphors could also be read as a transference of anger, which current trauma theorists describe as one of the psycho-emotional effects of newly-felt trauma for a child between the ages of twelve and seventeen.[5]

Following on the heels of "JUST AS WE EXPECTED," the editors of the *Literary Companion* also published an announcement of their brother's presumed capture in the issue for December 1864. In an essay entitled "GOBBLED UP," the Williams sisters announced:

> Our only brother [was] … [e]ither killed or taken prisoner on the 12th of November last. ... He did not get the large bounty that is given now. He has undergone many hardships for his country; cheerfully and uncomplainingly; and in all human probability he is now at rest; if not, he must suffer in a rebel prison and await the end.

Commending their brother's heroic volunteerism, the *Companion* echoed the *Extra's* matter-of-fact tone and sober predictions of their brother's fate: "in all human probability he is now at rest," or a rebel prisoner who is soon to die ("must ... await the end"). The *Companion*'s attention-grabbing title was similarly sensational and may have led readers to associate it with a Thanksgiving joke or bit of gossip. Any humorous associations, however, would have been abruptly overturned by the article contents that follow: "Our only brother [was] … [e]ither killed or taken prisoner on the 12th of November last." Punctuating the stunning pronouncement of personal loss, the editors reassure readers of their brother's selfless heroism; as an Army volunteer, "He did not get the large bounty that is given now." Framed by a catchy title ("GOBBLED UP") and narrated by a formal editorial persona, the sisters' tragic personal circumstances are recast as national news, even as the essay's title also alludes to the ways that private suffering and grief may threaten to swallow up those who mourn.

In the 20 July 1865 issue of the *Penfield Extra*, the Williams sisters, with Nellie at the helm, provided a final update on their brother's fate. Starkly titled "STARVED TO DEATH," the front page of the *Extra* reports that "it has been ascertained beyond a possibility of a doubt that our brother L. K. Williams ... starved to death in a rebel prison." Verifying the article's source of information, the editors recount that "a Corporal of Comp. C. Eight N. 1. … was in the prison at the same time and saw [their brother and another young soldier] die with despondency and starvation." The sisters' somber editorial, moreover, was reprinted and ran for a second time in the August 1865 issue of the *Literary Companion*. Reporting the news of the deaths of their brother and another young soldier with cool detachment, both editorials conclude: "in the last few months we have given up the idea of ever seeing them again, and are not the least surprised to hear of their cruel death."

This matter-of-fact objectivity, however, does not have the final word in the Williams sisters' accounts of trauma and grief. As editors of periodicals, the sisters assembled various genres within and across weekly or monthly installments, which offered a range of expressions resonant with their circumstantial suffering as well as broad-ranging domestic and national unrest. In the same volume in which Nellie announces her brother's status as missing in action, a poem entitled "Dear Brother, He is There" appeared in *The Penfield Extra*. Unlike Nellie's sardonic report of her brother's suspected fate, the poem eulogizes a brother, feared dead, while also celebrating the Christian hope in resurrection. Dedicated to "The Penfield Extra" and authored by a regular child contributor, N. D. Howe, the poem concludes:

Upon that bright eternal shore,
Where cruel wars are known no more,
No pain, no grief, no care,
But joys which here, we cannot know,
Like a calm river overflow;
Dear brother, he is there.

Another elegy, entitled "The Dying Soldier," dedicated to Nellie and penned by a (presumed) child author (C. B. L.), expresses the emotional lament of an imprisoned soldier, a subject resonant with the Williams sisters' private grief:

In a dreary, lonely prison,
Where the sunlight never came,
With none to watch, nor cheer, nor tend him
No one there to love his name—
Lay a soldier, sick and dying,
. . . . . .
Who can tell what thoughts passed o'er
Whether of grief, of joy, or pain?

Told from the point of view of one imagining the soldier's experience, the poem recounts his bleak isolation in prison; he is alone, with "no one there to love his name" nor "tend him." The poem also muses on what the soldier's loved ones and the reader cannot know: "who can tell what thoughts … whether of grief, of joy, or pain?" exist within the mind of the one imprisoned. These lines, when read together, thus conjure a dual perspective on the experiences of war. The vivid emotions which haunted those who fought were as inexpressible as those haunting the homebound, who could only imagine what their beloved soldiers might be experiencing in war. Accordingly, we witness how the elegy functions dynamically, as Peter Sacks contends, both as an expression of and outlet for private feelings of grief as well as a public memorial to the cultural "work of mourning" (6). Paying tribute to the profound emotions surrounding love and loss, these poems speak of personal and national trauma and thus may have evoked experiences and feelings familiar to many Americans, like the Williams sisters, who lost loved ones in the wake of the American Civil War. While poetry on mourning and loss clearly alludes to the Williams sisters' private grief and may have provided solace, their direct reporting on their brother's capture remains more firmly enclosed within their professional roles and discourses as newspaper editors. And yet, the close proximity between their sardonic, public accounts and the lyric poems, authored by others, unsettles and enriches the manifold expressions contained within and between each genre.

Through their richly textured reporting, the *Literary Companion* and the *Penfield Extra* reveal how young journalists exploited popular genres and discourses, while

also disrupting their codes. As the Williams sisters' public witnessing to war and trauma demonstrate, by 1860 children's acts of authorship could dismantle cultural attitudes regarding children's innocence and separateness from adult culture—and the fact that they wrote amidst the culture-exploding Civil War makes our interpretation of their entangled accounts even more challenging. Between the adoption of journalistic conventions and their own free play as literary agents, Nellie Williams and her sisters employed established discourses for new ends. As a result, readers witness the profundity of young people's political engagements with war, suffering, and storytelling. Even as these young journalists were dependent upon and limited by language, their charged rhetoric expanded its possibilities.

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NOTES

[1] The *Literary Companion*, a monthly journal produced between October 1864 and September 1865, was conducted by Nellie's older sister, Mary Williams. Mid-volume, Allie Williams, aged 12, took over as editor after Mary married and left home. The periodical was more focused on literature and household tips and was less news-based than the *Penfield Extra*. A digital copy may be viewed at libraryweb.org/~digitized/serials/reynolds/literary/Literary_Companion.pdf.

[2] For more evidence on these points, see Catherine Jones and Andrea McKenzie.

[3] In this essay, I build on Kimberlè Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, a term she coined to "denote the various ways in which race and gender interact" and thus are not isolated categories. Crenshaw developed this concept of intersectionality initially to emphasize how the "intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately" (1244). I draw out the implications of this concept to include other identity categories, including race, gender, class, professionalism, and age, in order to consider how these categories were variously practiced and/or channeled in

children's expressions of grief and trauma. In this sense, I follow the lead taken by Crenshaw herself in a special issue of *Signs*, in which she, Sumi Cho, and Lesley McCall sanction the various ways that scholars have interpreted "the scope of intersectionality, representing the wide variety of projects that make up the field" (788).

[4] By genres, I refer to formal literary categories as well as the dynamic interplay between the discursive and social functions of genres. As Anis Bawarshi argues, genres are more than "analogical to social institutions" (31); they are "actual social institutions, constituting not just literary activity but social activity, not just literary textual relations but all textual relations, so that genres do not just constitute the literary scene in which literary actors (writers, readers, characters) and their texts function, but also constitute the social conditions in which the activities of all social participants are enacted" (31–32). For more on children's awareness and deployments of genre conventions see George Kamberelis.

[5] For recent studies on the range of physical, emotional, and cognitive effects of traumatic experiences on children's lives and the various ways that children manifest and articulate these effects, see Joy D. Osofsky, Michaela M. Mozley et al., Michelle Liu, and Lisa A. Kirschenbaum. For more on how physical and emotional suffering shape access to language and narration, see Elaine Scarry. While intense emotional or physical pain may prompt creative expression as a means of relieving or substituting trauma, pain may also "absorb all of one's energy so that one might not have any resources left over for speech," as Scarry asserts in an interview on this groundbreaking work (Smith 224).

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CHILD WRITING AND THE TRAUMATISED BODY

Caroline Lieffers
Assistant Professor, The King's University

ON 9 AUGUST 1945, fourteen-year-old Ishida Masako[1] became a victim of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. She documented her experiences in *Masako taorezu: Nagasaki genshi bakudanki*, variously rendered in English as *Masako Does Not Give Up*, *Masako Does Not Collapse*, or *Masako Does Not Fall*, among others. Begun in September 1945 for a family newspaper, the book was finally published in 1949 after a protracted battle with American military censors. The short memoir is a catalogue of horrors, including descriptions of a road "so littered with blackened corpses that we encountered one at every step," and "the charred remains of mothers still holding their babies and people who had died clutching the ground in throes of pain" (Ishida 233). Unlike so many other survivors, Ishida—exhausted and covered with scrapes—was soon reunited with her relatives, but her struggles would continue. She described the terrible head and muscle aches that she experienced as she lay in bed in the days after the bombing, and her feeling of "wobbling between life and death" (227). "You've suffered only superficial wounds," said her sister's tutor, Ms. Hayashi. "You can't let yourself become so depressed. Pull yourself together. I think you are exaggerating a little." But Ishida knew better. She wrote that "the pain was terribly real, and there was nothing I could do to drum up strength" (226). Sick with wounds and radiation poisoning that she described as "agonizing" (215), Ishida began to recover under the care of her relatives, but her white blood cell count remained low. She spent a month in the medical clinic at Kyushu University and continued her convalescence until the following March.

Texts by young conflict survivors like Ishida are worthy of historical and literary consideration on many fronts. Heavy with the burden of trauma, these works often reveal intimate knowledge of war and its pain, the politics of rebuilding, and the quiet,

[1] In Japanese, family names traditionally precede given names. This essay adheres to this convention.

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even unutterable, legacies of loss. Somewhat unusually for children's writing, they can also contain significant first-hand descriptions of bodily injury, pain, and even disability. How did young people experience, understand, and cope with damage to their bodies? What stigma did they face, and what emotional or philosophical scripts did they pursue or devise to make sense of their injuries and their changed futures? How did they translate their deeply embodied and arguably indescribable feelings into prose, and how did they negotiate the meanings that such prose held within societies and cultures that had undergone collective trauma and transformation? This special issue suggests that juvenilia offer a deep well for other fields—trauma studies, the history of childhood, and even disability studies—to consider, and juvenilia studies might also deepen its own analyses by incorporating new theoretical apparatuses that can help elucidate the personal, social, and political implications of young writers' experiences of trauma and injury.

To study children's writings about their traumatised bodies is to engage a complex locus of existence and expression. Cathy Caruth explains that trauma involves "a history [that] can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (8). Similarly, James Berger writes that trauma theory might be understood as "a vehicle for catachresis, for a saying [*sic*] the unsayable, or saying that for which no terms exist" (567). Trauma is, almost by definition, beyond articulation; it can be witnessed only through its retrospective construction or narration, at a distance, or through its symptoms—palimpsests that, present though they may be, can never fully represent the original events. Embodiment and its expressions, however, might be a concrete point of access into the largely abstract experience of trauma. Juvenile survivors of the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima offered up tentative but powerful descriptions of acquiring and living with their wounds, illnesses, and scars, as well as glimpses of the accompanying psychic and social pain, both at the time of the bombings and beyond.

In examining trauma's embodiments in young people's writing, juvenilia studies might find meaningful overlap not only with trauma studies, but also with the history of childhood and emotion. The intersection of these fields is a nascent project, marked by important works like historian Stephanie Olsen's 2017 essay, "The History of Childhood and the Emotional Turn." Much of this emerging scholarship has sought to understand how children's emotions respond to, reinforce, or defy social expectations. But while historians of childhood have all too often been starved for intimate records of children's experiences of emotion, the field of juvenilia studies has situated itself at precisely that point of access, privileging as it does the rich inner lives articulated by child writers. Much of juvenilia studies has admittedly and understandably focused on fiction and imagined worlds, but scholars of juvenilia and childhood emotion, perhaps without realising it, are pursuing many of the same questions, albeit with different methodologies. What do children think and feel? How are these thoughts shaped by their environments, and how are they expressed? Attention to children's writing about their injured bodies, as well as the emotional

force and significance of such descriptions, may approach the asymptote of their trauma, and offer insights for scholars working from numerous disciplinary points of origin.

Children's writings about Hiroshima and Nagasaki in particular testify to the deep human toll that the bombs wrought; in Ishida's case, this trauma continued, to some extent, through her medical care. After she first entered the hospital in September 1945, she was delighted with her slowly climbing white blood cell count and, perhaps more importantly, the rich hospital food. After wartime rationing, the dishes seemed extravagant, and she listed them breathlessly: "sushi, flavored rice, rice with chestnuts, rice with red beans, fried rice, sweet soup, tempura, steamed bread with Yukijirushi butter, tekka-miso, sukiyaki, sashimi, fried eel, chicken shish kabob, pancakes, eggs, canned yellowtail, steamed sweet potatoes, German canned salmon streaked with fat, milk, persimmons …. I ate anything and everything made available to me" (Ishida 220). The novelty, however, soon wore off. Though Ishida was feeling better, she was given experimental injections of what she described as "liver hormones" (219). The injection site grew swollen and uncomfortable, and she was also asked to swallow a long rubber tube to allow doctors to examine her stomach fluid. It caused her to gag, but the medical experts kept trying to complete the procedure for several hours. Frustrated and worried, she wrote to her father, pleading for help: "If I stay here they will keep using me as a guinea pig like this" (217). Her father arranged for her release within a week.

Ishida was the victim of horrific wartime violence, violence that also doubled as a grotesque and uncontrolled experiment on the effects of nuclear explosions on human life. Survivors bore the stigma and responsibility of harbouring the A-bomb's terrifying and heretofore unknown consequences, as well as being what historian John Dower calls "deformed reminders of a miserable past" (128). Much of the medical care in the initial aftermath of the bombings was similarly experimental, and Ishida experienced this care as a series of frightening, painful, and, to her mind, unnecessary procedures. Much of her knowledge of what was happening came from rumours, and she had little control of her situation: when a nurse suddenly appeared in her room to give her an injection, she wrote, "I had no choice but to lie face down on the bed" (219). American medical teams were also gathering information about the bombs' effects, and this research was formalised with the creation of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in 1946. This organisation ostensibly worked in partnership with Japanese medical experts to monitor the explosions' effects on the population. Physicians took careful notes and photographs of burns and wounds, measured white blood cell counts, and documented damage to organs. But many of the bombs' victims, like Ishida, felt vulnerable in the face of medical authorities' investigations. The Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, in fact, would not treat the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the Americans feared that treatment would be interpreted as a kind of atonement or admission of wrongdoing, and they were also supposedly worried about taking jobs from Japanese physicians (Lindee 475, 478). Many

survivors were left on their own to negotiate their suffering and their futures, haunted by the sense that they had been, and continued to be, objects of a grand experiment in warfare and medicine alike.

Though Ishida eventually recovered physically, the same was not true of all child survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many of whom bore scars or other permanent evidence of their injuries. Scholars of disability history and disability studies have noted the pervasiveness of stigma—including among atomic bomb victims—as bodies that do not fit normalised modes of productivity and aesthetics are shunned or targeted for repair (e.g. Serlin, ch. 2). Yet the matter of grief has been less well documented. Indeed, disability studies and critical trauma studies have often been at odds, given the former's emphasis on the politics of socially constituted impediments and oppressions. In 2004, Berger called this a "mutual exclusion that constitutes a discursive abyss" (563). While this "discursive abyss" may be beginning to close, few disability historians have examined the emotional lives of disabled children, or the ways that child survivors of trauma made sense of their newly altered and marked bodies, or the altered and marked bodies of others. These visceral experiences had political and social causes and consequences, but they were also intimately and personally felt, known, and expressed. Child writing is an important avenue into a disability studies and disability history with dimensions beyond the political and the social.

Yet Ishida's story suggests that personal testimonies of the atomic bombings and the individual work of knowing and narrating grief could not be separated from national trauma and the collective politics of rebuilding. Initially, public accounts of the bombs' effects were often delayed or suppressed, both within and outside Japan. Survivors' accounts of those days of destruction, as well as information about the serious and long-term health effects of the atomic blasts, might damage both America's reputation and Japan's recovery efforts. But the damage was already marked on the bodies and minds of countless young people, and many, like Ishida, took up their pens to express what they had known and felt. For some, this writing was an intimate project, while other children were encouraged to write as an exercise in personal growth and publicly practised citizenship. Indeed, in 1951, Osada Arata, a professor of education at Hiroshima University, solicited thousands of testimonies from young people who had survived the blast in Hiroshima. Though some were reluctant writers, Osada ultimately published 105 of these personal stories in his edited collection, *Genbaku no ko* (*Children of the A-Bomb*), which he saw as an essential contribution to the movement for global peace.

Ishida, it should be noted, did not initially want to tell her story, but she was convinced to do so by her brother Joichi, who put together a family newspaper to share among relatives scattered by work and the war. They were eager for her account, and Ishida seemingly understood that her survivorship was meaningful, and that she had an obligation to write for others. She began her four-part narrative while she was still in the hospital, and she finished it in late 1945 or early 1946. In an interview for

a Japanese newspaper article in 2014, she said, "There were many things that I didn't write; my arm was hurting from writing and I didn't want to recall it all. I skipped many details and only wrote the main points, but I saw them so clearly" (qtd. in Okada). It is difficult to assess Ishida's intentions and her sense of control as she composed her text. Though her memories of the events were seemingly unobscured, her physical and psychic pain imposed a kind of selectivity on her writing. It may have taken years for Ishida to be able to assess and articulate more fully what she felt about the things that she saw so clearly—the burning buildings, the abandoned friends. Indeed, in the 2014 interview, she confessed that she struggled for years with feelings of remorse, as she could not save the other students and women who died in the fire at the factory where she was working. "I abandoned them; and up to now, I have suffered from a tremendous sense of guilt," she explained (qtd. in Okada). In contrast to these more direct statements, made in her old age, Ishida's sense of culpability and responsibility lingers only in the background of *Masako taorezu*. When a woman factory worker cries to Ishida, "'Forget about me and save yourself,'" Ishida narrates simply, "But it was not easy for anyone to go ahead" (245). That night, as she waited to board a relief train, she notes that she "had forgotten all feelings of shock, pity or compassion" (238). Only years later was she able to recognise the presence of these emotions more explicitly, and the ways that they had haunted her life.

But even with these partial revelations and weighty silences, the significance of Ishida's story was soon evident among her family members. In a letter to the young author, her cousin Tanabe Kenichi wrote that "Perhaps the old Masako died that day in Nagasaki, along with the old Japan. The atomic bombs were like hammers that crushed the evils of old Japan" (qtd. in Ishida 215). Ishida's survival, and particularly her body—its witness, its injuries, and its recovery—were metaphors for the nation as a whole, and their meanings could not belong to her alone. Appearing near the end of her text, her cousin's letter is juxtaposed with her own, quiet reflections. After a long convalescence, she was taking the train back to Nagasaki to begin a new school year, and thinking about "all the things that had happened to date." There was the explosion and devastation at the factory, the tunnel where she found shelter on the night after the bombing, the "agonizing days of acute illness," and the "uplifting hospital life" (214–15). These were, she wrote, "my precious experiences and lessons in life" (215), and she knew they were lessons for her readers, too. Yet Ishida recognised that being able to derive some sense of meaning from her experience was not the same thing as resolution. As the train approached the place where she once took refuge, her narrative ends with the statement that "the painful scenes of that morning outside the tunnel came to mind again …" (214). Her account would not reveal the fullness of her memories and her pain.

Ishida was writing for her family, but it was her father, Hisashi, a judge, who pressed for her story to be published more widely. Perhaps he believed that her narrative of having "emerged victorious over the wrath of the atomic bomb and the blight of radiation," as her brother Joichi put it, deserved a national audience, and it

might serve as inspiration for a country similarly in the process of constructing a new future for itself (qtd. in Ishida 214). Her father arranged for numerous civic leaders in Nagasaki to sign a letter in support of publication (Okada), but the District Censor recommended suppression on the grounds that the book might disrupt "public tranquillity" (qtd. in Braw 99). Though some members of the American military government team in Nagasaki disagreed, the authorities responsible for censorship feared that Ishida's graphic depictions—the raw flesh, the rivers bursting with corpses—could "tear open war scars and rekindle animosity" (qtd. in Braw 99). The very wounds that so many survivors were forced to bear in their own bodies and minds were not allowed to exist in public prose. They were confined to unruly flesh, and in survivors' silenced memories.

The censors finally relented in 1949, as the rules loosened and authorities concluded that it was better to allow "resentment, or even enmity" to be aired out rather than left to fester (Braw 151). The text also underwent a few minor changes, likely at the hands of Ishida's father: "devilish atomic bomb," for example, became "horrible atomic bomb" (Okada). But Ishida herself appears to have been ambivalent about her account. The 2014 newspaper article notes that "she never thought that her memoir would become a book" (Okada), and she had little understanding of the censorship debate; she only realised that her story had been published when she came across a few hundred copies piled in the corner of their house (Okada). Her reluctance then turned to regret. Realising the gravity of such testimony and the guilt of having survived, she said, "I was ashamed that I didn't write about everything. There were so many people who had to face much more terrible situations than I was in, and showing mine as a memoir seemed ridiculous" (qtd. in Okada). Her account had become part of national memory, and she felt she had failed to honour the wounds of others, or to fulfill her own responsibility to witness fully to such a grave event. After having such little control over her experience and the book that recounted it, she chose not to speak publicly about either for decades. It was only in her advanced age that she began to tell her story again, and came to appreciate that her work had served a valuable purpose: "When something remains in print, then someday someone will read it. Then they will know that such an event took place" (qtd. in Okada).

Children's traumatised bodies are powerful objects and subjects. They can be concrete remembrances of horror, sites experienced and interpreted by the individual and society and flooded with emotional, political, and even spiritual significance. Young people's experiences and accounts of trauma, moreover, are embedded in complex networks of self, family, and nation. They hold extraordinary, even dangerous power, but they are unstable nuclei, with meanings and forms that might shift over decades. Juvenilia is a rich and rare vein through which to trace children's experiences and understandings of this bodily damage and its deeper meanings. Combining the literatures of trauma, the history of childhood emotion, and disability

with juvenilia studies holds extraordinary potential for all fields, and for our collective capacity to know and honour wounded children's lives and writings.

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COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION: INTERGENERATIONAL AUTHORSHIP IN AL RABEEAH AND YEUNG'S *HOMES: A REFUGEE STORY*

Rachel Conrad
Professor, Hampshire College
Lesley Peterson
Professor, University of North Alabama (Retired)

JUVENILIA scholarship often privileges the lone child writer and applies a notion of authorship that categorically must exclude adult influence and intervention. Private diaries, such as those kept by Iris Vaughan and Hope Hook, present few difficulties. Collaborative models of juvenilia can involve young people closing ranks, such as writing projects that involve siblings (the Brontës, Jane and Cassandra Austen, Virginia Woolf and her siblings) or friends (Katharine Hull and Pamela Whitlock). Yet child-adult collaborations offer another model of juvenilia that deserves our attention. Victoria Ford Smith has recently illuminated intergenerational collaboration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through studies of publication history that explore "documents that detail authors' creative process" (21); such an investigation can "recover the collaborative child" (21) and, in so doing, "challenges definitions of authorship and of childhood that collectively eclipse the role young people play in children's literature and culture" (240). This generative work helps frame our approach to a contemporary child-adult collaboration entitled *Homes: A Refugee Story* (Freehand Books 2018), an award-winning project by English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teacher Winnie Yeung and her then-student (now in his late teens) Abu Bakr al Rabeeah, who emigrated from Syria to Canada as a young teen.

Unlike a text such as *Children of the A-Bomb*, discussed by Caroline Lieffers elsewhere in this issue, which bears some similarities in terms of child's-eye descriptions of bombings and devastation, *Homes* does not fit the basic characteristic of juvenilia in that it is not written by a child. Yeung crafted this piece of "creative

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nonfiction" from notes she took during months of interviews with al Rabeeah. He is the storyteller and she is the writer. They share authorship on the title page (and in fact al Rabeeah's name is listed first), yet that is often a source of audience confusion, as they reported to us in a joint interview on 13 January 2021, since readers often assume that Yeung has translated the work or has co-written it with al Rabeeah. In actuality, they each had distinct roles in this collaborative venture, roles which we believe are relevant to thinking about juvenilia more broadly.

At the end of our interview with al Rabeeah and Yeung, we asked them if there was anything we should keep in mind in writing about our conversation, and al Rabeeah replied, "I think there's one thing only. A lot of people get mixed between me as the storyteller and Winnie as the writer. We get that a lot. So I would really appreciate it if we would just make that clear." Earlier, we had asked if "collaboration" is the right word to use for their way of working together and they both immediately agreed. Yeung said, "Yes. I definitely feel that 'collaboration' is a great way to talk about it. Without Bakr there's no book, right? … And even though he didn't physically write a story, he's the one that was able to give me the story, right?" Al Rabeeah ("Bakr") himself agreed, and yet offered something more. "I think it is the right word, yes, but also the special connection that I have with Winnie. Also the things we found in common, about my background, culture as an Iraqi and her background, culture as a Chinese. We found some things in common, and that made it more special." For al Rabeeah, then, collaboration *and* connection are what characterise *Homes* and made the book possible: the experiences they found they had in common, through their "background" and "culture" as Iraqi and Chinese, and through both having immigrated to Canada, contributed to their interpersonal connection and helped constitute this intergenerational collaboration.

We were curious about al Rabeeah's thoughts about having relayed his story while a younger adolescent, and he surprised us by asserting pointed views about age and identity. He didn't seem to perceive a gap between his viewpoint five years prior when, at the age of fourteen, he first told Yeung about his experiences, and his viewpoint at the time of the interview; nor did he imagine that his viewpoint on his earlier experiences might change in the years to come. On the one hand, he invoked his identities as Arab and male to account for such continuity, stating that "as an Arab, for us, growing up is like around sixteen or fifteen for boys." Yet at the same time he said, "What I went through made me grow up much faster than I was supposed to." These ideas appear to be in tension with one another, yet it is possible to see this disjunction between having grown up normatively as an Arab male and the trope of growing up too fast—which is often associated with experiences of trauma where such pre-maturing is necessary for survival—as holding a tension that enabled or at least facilitated his adaptation to events.

Yet al Rabeeah also indicated that, over time, he had come to appreciate the transformative effect his storytelling had had on himself. Many of us who are writers and teachers of writing tend to think of the act of writing itself as the process through

which one's understanding can be transformed. Perhaps, in celebrating the power of *writing to understand*, we sometimes forget about the legitimacy and the power of oral storytelling. For al Rabeeah, the creative transformation happened instead—thanks to Yeung's care and the connection they developed together—during their conversations:

> One of the beautiful things that happened while I was telling my story—I think Winnie helped open my eyes to a lot of things I went through before that I didn't think about the way she helped me to think about it. For example, one of the stories I remember I told her about the mass shootings when I was at my uncle's house, Mohammed, and my cousin Yousef was next to me, and he was laughing. But I was a coward, I was scared. And I was wondering why he was laughing, and I told her, "I was a coward. I just was a coward in this story." She was like, "OK, Bakr, how old were you at this time?" I told her I was eleven, or twelve, or maybe ten. And she said, "Don't you think that's a normal thing for a child to be scared of? You were going through shooting. That's not [just] anything." So I think she helped me open up my eyes more about what I went through. I was like, you know what? Yes, you are right, I was young. Even though all of my cousins make fun of me until today.

It seems evident that those crucial conversations allowed al Rabeeah to become kinder and more accepting, in memory, to his younger self. No doubt they also provided Yeung with insight that made its way into the book.

A re-creation of the exchange that launched al Rabeeah and Yeung's collaboration appears at the end of *Homes* (which, as we must remember, is a work of creative nonfiction), when the narrator Abu Bakr recalls Yeung, his "Grade Nine English as a Second Language teacher":

> She tells me about the power of stories, and so we read books together and we trade tales back and forth about our lives before Highlands [Junior High School]. … One day she starts our lesson with a question. "What is a secret wish you have?"
>
> That's too easy. "To be a soccer player, Miss!"
>
> She laughs and says, "Okay, and what else?"
>
> My last night … comes rushing back to me: my friends, the soccer games, the bombs, my cousins who are my brothers. How they told me to never forget. I realize I carry Syria in my heart. I'm not sure if I'm ready to do this yet but I decide to trust and so, softly, I tell Ms. Yeung, "I want to tell my story." (210–11)

In this passage, Abu Bakr (the narrator of the book) recalls his cousins' injunction to "never forget" Syria and its people while he is living far away, and he follows through on his "secret wish" to "tell my story."

In our interview with al Rabeeah (who obviously overlaps with but is also distinct from the book's narrator), he adds other motivations that derived from his "outsider" status in Canada as well as his desire to educate people about the ongoing crisis in Syria:

> I think when I first came to [Canada] as a newcomer I felt a lot more like an outsider, a lot more of a stranger. And that's what really motivated me to tell my story. … Also as an Arab person who lived in Iraq and Syria, I was wondering when I was there, do people really know what we are going through, do people really realize that there's a lot of people who are dying here. So that's what really kept me going, telling my story.

What happened next, as Yeung describes it in her Afterword to *Homes*, is that she "encouraged him to talk to his family first and two weeks later he showed up in my office, fidgeting with a square of folded-up paper. 'I'm ready, Miss, let's go'" (213). In speaking with us, al Rabeeah recalled, "I went to my father to get his permission, and we sat together, me and my dad, and some members of my family, and we thought … what are the most important things that people should know about, like in Iraq, like in Syria, and what should we talk about, and what should we avoid talking about, basically." From the very beginning, then, the project was al Rabeeah's idea, and the content of his narratives was determined by him, with the support of his father and family, in yet another productive intergenerational collaboration. Yet what he and Yeung co-produced is a work of "creative nonfiction" that also involves, in Yeung's words, "stitching together lots of memories from different people."

Yeung recalled facing multiple challenges, particularly at the beginning of the project, in her quest to find a way to establish a narrative voice that was fluent in its register and sufficiently close to al Rabeeah's feelings, perspective, and mode of speech. At the outset, al Rabeeah and his family members were in the midst of learning English, and thus the interviews proceeded through the complications of "communicating in a language they were still struggling with." Part of Yeung's task as a writer, as she told us, was "to make it sound like Abu Bakr naturally and not Abu Bakr struggling with English." She was also clear that she "wanted Bakr to recognize himself in the words." And yet, when we asked him in the interview if the book's narrator sounded like his voice, he said "I don't think my voice is in the story, I think Winnie put parts of me in the story." After we asked for clarification, he said, "I think the book is so much about me, it was more than a voice," which we took to mean that he felt that what Yeung as a writer created went beyond representing his voice to (re)creating his sensibility and giving voice to feelings that he felt but might not

have verbalised as such. Yeung's craft is also evident in the character development that helps makes *Homes* so engaging, and which depended in part on well-developed observational skills: "Watching the family talk and how they interacted with each other, and how they talked to each other, was a big part of the characterization that I was trying to do," she explained to us. The 2018 Freehand Books version of *Homes* enabled Yeung to spend more time with al Rabeeah's family members and develop the manuscript beyond a self-published version which appeared in June 2016, just ahead of al Rabeeah's graduation from junior high school.

The three months of interviews during which Yeung gathered the bulk of the material for *Homes* had begun in the autumn of 2015. Al Rabeeah maintained control over the content across those months and during the intense period of revisions that followed, when what was originally envisioned as a speech for a school audience evolved into a book. As Yeung described in our interview, "We'd sit down, and I'd go, 'OK, so what do you want to tell me about?'" And he was prepared with his answers: "He always came in, and in his mind, … he wanted to talk about *this*, and he wanted to talk about *this*. … Those conversations were really led by him." The choices Yeung made in crafting the narrative of *Homes* underscore her commitment to following al Rabeeah's lead, for the book opens with one of the first memories he chose to share with Yeung: the day of a taxi bombing, the day that had haunted him for years, the day that ended with him, barely thirteen years old at the time, finding and having to bury a man's jawbone.

In this way, Yeung took great care in leaving sufficient space for al Rabeeah to exercise his agency in relation to narrating his experiences. Throughout the process, according to her account, she was ever-conscious of the importance of al Rabeeah "guiding the conversation," particularly "because we're dealing with trauma":

> So when we did an interview, so at lunchtime, he'd come into my library office, and we'd sit down, and I'd go, "OK, so what do you want to tell me about?" And he didn't necessarily go in the order of the list that he made … because to honour that emotional journey, which is so important, because we're dealing with trauma, we're dealing with, really, children, it's so important to be able to say, "OK, you have to have agency here, you're guiding the conversation, if you don't want to talk about something we're not talking about something."

As al Rabeeah recounted, "I told the stories that were most in my mind. The ones that I did not want to be in the book I talked to Winnie, and I said, 'Hey, this is just for you, for your information, I don't think it would be a good idea to put this story in the book.'"

It is clear, then, that al Rabeeah determined not only what was important but also what was public and what was private. In some ways, however, it became Yeung's

role to discern and then honour what was significant in al Rabeeah's stories. In fact, in talking to us al Rabeeah placed his own experiences in the context of the range of situations experienced by other people in Syria in terms of what is "normal" or potentially traumatic: "I think my story is very normal compared to other stories that happened to a lot of people in Syria. For example, if I go now to Syria and meet someone living in a refugee camp they would say, 'Your story is nothing compared to mine, or what my family went through.'" He thus went out of his way to make sure we knew that his experiences were "very normal" in the context of Syria, or even "nothing" compared to what other families suffered. At the same time, Yeung was explicit that she and al Rabeeah did not want *Homes* to center on trauma. She told us, "The war wasn't the center of the book, the trauma wasn't the center of the book. It was this family, and this father, and this son, and this amazing young man that Bakr was, and that was what the centre needed to be." Thus, in navigating this complex terrain while telling and writing the story of *Homes*, al Rabeeah and Yeung tried to acknowledge as well as decentre the trauma experienced by al Rabeeah and his family.

Al Rabeeah described the difficult work Yeung engaged in while needing to "dig the feelings, dig the details. I would tell her, for example, about the car bomb. 'There was a car bomb, fifty people died, I did this, I did this, and that's what happened.' She would go through the story back again and ask more details, like what you were thinking? What your dad was saying? And stuff like this." Yeung's description confirms his: "I would try to craft the story, and start to write a chapter, but then of course there were so many gaps and holes. And I would always come back with many, many questions, and oftentimes he would have to carry home a list of questions for his family." Some of these gaps they filled together, doing research online (to verify the date of a massacre, for instance, or the name of a particular kind of weapon). Some could only be filled from his memory, or his family's. This was especially "difficult," Yeung notes, because of "what trauma does to our memory." When he didn't remember details to an event, she "didn't press." As she explained, "I was able to rely on, let's say footage from a massacre or footage from a car bomb, in order to go, '*I* can look at those things, I can describe them, and spare him that potential … retraumatizing, that retriggering of these really scary sensory things that maybe should be left buried."

While Yeung took such care in crafting her own role so as to enable al Rabeeah to be in control of his process of storytelling, to support his "emotional journey" and his ownership over his experience, al Rabeeah also demonstrated care in relation to Yeung's engagement with records of violent situations. Yeung told a story that she still found remarkable and remarkably moving, of "one of the most jarring moments in our whole interview process," when al Rabeeah demonstrated protectiveness of her in approaching graphic evidence of a violent event:

> There was this one moment where it occurred to Bakr, "Oh, I can show you videos of this." Because there's these YouTube videos

> about people with their cell phones documenting what's happening. And the very first time this happened, I remember that moment so much, because he had it cued up, and paused on my computer screen in my office. It was winter, it was dark, and he looks at me with just the sweetest expression, and he's like, "Are you sure, Miss? It's OK." And I was like, "What do you mean?" And he's like, "Because there's gross stuff, with blood and stuff." … That role reversal, of my student wanting to protect me.

As an educator, she was struck by "that role reversal, of my student wanting to protect me"; she "was so deeply disturbed and saddened that these things happened to kids," that she was emboldened to sometimes include mention of additional contexts of situations that people faced in Syria in order "to use Bakr's story to educate people" about what was happening.

The publication history of *Homes* underscores Yeung's warning that her collaboration with Abu Bakr should not be taken as a model that can be replicated in the classroom. When we asked her, "What would you say to educators who want to do this?" she explained why she is not especially supportive of modelling an assignment on the *Homes* project: "If you've assigned something, it doesn't feel like [students] have a choice, and [perhaps] they're not ready to talk about something, but they have this kind of internal background of, 'I need to do this because this authority figure is telling me I need to do this.'" She concluded, "We can't force a person's hand" in that way, because "if the story-teller … isn't ready for that, we're going to re-traumatize them!" The other practical aspect that Yeung stressed as important for teachers to bear in mind is that "there's a lot of emotional support pieces that need to be in place. I am not enough of a superhero teacher to be able to do that for all of my students, so I wouldn't want to give it as an assignment to everybody to do this." Instead, she encourages teachers to "offer students choices. If they want to talk about it, if they want to write about it, that's the open invitation." But even when writing or talking about trauma is the student's own choice, it is crucial to have resources and time available to help the student work through what arises during the writing process.

Central to the role of the adult collaborator, then, is attention to such ethical principles founded on an understanding of trauma and youth. This was the foundation of the "trust relationship" that developed between Yeung and al Rabeeah and his family, in which they appeared to feel safe sharing their story and setting boundaries, either in the moment or retroactively. As Yeung explained, she assured them from the beginning that "If you're in the moment and you tell me something and then, in the moment or days, months later, you decide, 'Whoops, I don't want that known,'" then, "If you don't want it in the book … it was not going to be in the book." If she thought something al Rabeeah had told her was really important, they'd have a conversation: "Hey, I know you said no, but I want you to think about this. It helps educate and helps people paint a better understanding of what was going on.

How do you feel about it?' Then it was a conversation." But the final decision was always his. Yeung also felt that their mode of collaboration usefully interrupts the "myth of 'Why can't immigrants learn English faster,' because it's so hard. They don't magically write a book overnight."

In Smith's analysis of Victorian "partnerships that provide creative thresholds where both adults and children can meet" (261), she analyses the intergenerational collaboration between Robert Louis Stevenson and his stepson Lloyd Osbourne and concludes that "the pair acknowledged but manipulated the roles usually assigned to adult and child in ways that grant Osbourne creative agency" (34). Based on our study of the publication history of *Homes*, we conclude that Yeung and al Rabeeah were also able to meet on a similarly "creative threshold" where the young storyteller found genuine creative agency, and the intergenerational authorship that proceeded through collaboration and connection between the younger and the older person resulted in a valuable process and text which holds lessons for others. *Homes* results from the fact that for al Rabeeah as storyteller and Yeung as writer, as Yeung indicated in our interview, "It was always a conversation between us." The products of such genuine conversations between co-creators challenge us to acknowledge young storytellers like al Rabbeah as juvenile *artists*, even if they are not juvenile *authors*; and the fact that children seeking to tell stories about trauma often need and deserve significant support, as Yeung pointed out, also suggests that, when it comes to trauma narratives in particular, scholars of juvenilia may need to apply sensitive and fluid definitions to child writing and child agency.

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"Because I won't ever forget": Towards Livingness in Youth Poetry

Alisha Jean-Denis
Independent Scholar
Korina M. Jocson
Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

> I come from a bloodline of survivors whose very palms were the blueprints of my destiny
> – Lily
>
> Trying times all the time
> destruction of minds, bodies, and human rights
> Stripped of bloodlines, whipped and confined
> This is the American pride
> it's justifying a genocide
> – H.E.R.

In recent years, trauma-informed practice has become a buzzword throughout many public school district-wide plans. The mandates for classroom teachers include remaining vigilant for signs of trauma among youth. But what happens when the trauma stems from the very system that is supposedly designed to keep youth safe? For educators and scholars of juvenilia studies, it is imperative to deepen our understanding of the myriad ways that trauma might be expressed in classrooms and, as we have witnessed in our work in the field of education, how it manifests through/despite histories of colonialism, enslavement, and dehumanisation. In other words, we must remain attentive to the hierarchy of humanness and how it may impact youth's well-being when writing about trauma. With Wynter's "coloniality of being," we consider racialising affect—a sociopolitical differentiating of bodies—that must be clearly understood as a "process that is situated in a sociohistorical and material history of colonialism that becomes flesh shaping bodily movement and

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intensities" (Jocson and Dixon-Román 257). There are living intensities that are embodied all the time. Inviting youth to write about trauma may amplify it more if we are not careful about our pedagogical approach. Such are important considerations for engaging the journal's special issue theme on trauma and intersectionality. In this essay, we draw on black feminist theories and methodologies to consider race, gender, class, diaspora, and time-space in poetry. We are compelled by the question, what happens when trauma appears in youth writing voluntarily or when adults ask them to write about trauma directly? As part of our response, we focus on one particular poem to illustrate the complexities of how arts-based approaches might offer some pedagogical possibilities. We begin with a discussion of collective struggles against dehumanisation and counter-expressions, including music and film/television, and conclude with questions to advance the conversation.

Racial violence is rampant globally. For many young people in the diaspora (including those who have come of age), trauma is argued to be an extension of generational suffering. Katherine McKittrick's theorisation of black women geographies (*Demonic Grounds*) and bell hooks's politics of location ("Choosing the Margin") suggest that humans within the diaspora exist with multiple identities and differences; they are bound up in an ongoing geographic struggle, a struggle that is connected to systems of power that seek to define and hold particular humans in place. Yet young people tactically find ways to navigate and rupture the constraints that often shape their socioemotional well-being and identity formation in culturally specific ways. While it is critical to understand the external forces that threaten young people's sense of belonging, safety, and well-being, it is also important to revisit normative discourses because "simply naming structures fails to do justice to how they move against (and inside of) our bodies" (Nash 30).

Key studies have shown that trauma in school settings requires more than individualised plans and solutions. There is potential for classroom spaces to be curated with healing-centered approaches through various counter-expressions such as writing poetry, spoken word performance, visual art, music, and dance, among others. Counter-expressions offer creative outlets to break free from the imposed silences/silencing within systems of oppression. Put another way, as bell hooks writes, "The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves, to reconcile, to reunite, to renew. Our words are not without meaning; they are an action, a resistance. Language is also a place of struggle" ("Choosing the Margin" 16). In what follows, we highlight poetry as a tool to reconcile tensions in school and society. Just as important, we connect youth writing to other artistic genres to suggest the rearticulation of racialising affect or the sociopolitical differentiating of bodies with counter-expressions.

Creative Texts and Praxis

CULTURAL producers in their critique of global forces often utilise their respective mediums to mark the political-historical moment and, more importantly, to *do something* about the moment. Intellectual life is accentuated by the creative praxis of writers, artists, musicians, and filmmakers who are engaging in counter-expressions across disciplinary boundaries. As McKittrick in *Dear Science* asserts about livingness with "relationality, rebellion, conversation, interdisciplinarity, and disobedience":

> Black texts and narratives require reading practices that reckon with black life as scientifically creative; this is a way of being where black is not just signifying blackness but is living and resisting … the brutal fictions of race (we do not just signify). Reading black this way demands a different analytical frame … that honors black creative praxis—the practice of making black life through, in, and as creative text. (51)

Intellectual life demands that we desire to know differently with methodologies grounded in creative praxis. The moment is rife to make knowledge differently. If we choose to build a different world, then "the song, the groove, the poem, the novel, the painting, the sculpture must be relational to theory and praxis" (52). Such is the case in youth writing in connection to other creative texts in music and film/television.

In a 2018 ethnographic study, one of us (Alisha) was introduced to Lily (pseudonym), a rising sophomore attending an all-girls private elite school in the northeastern United States. Lily was a member of the school's Student of Color (SOC) affinity group. SOC offered a space for black girls to commune; it also served as a source of joy and a supportive learning environment for crafting possible responses to trauma experienced within their school. Lily often used that space to express concerns about race and racism that she and other students who deem themselves as part of the African/Caribbean Diaspora were experiencing via classroom curricula, discipline policies, and peer interactions. For instance, in preparation for a Martin Luther King event that SOC was orchestrating, Lily shared with the group her desire to write and perform a poem there. Lily penned a poem entitled "I Can't Breathe," which was among several performances at the school's Martin Luther King Day showcase. Alisha, who had been invited to the event by Lily, listened to her delivery of the poem that day, thinking what it might feel like to be vulnerable in sharing one's racialised and gendered experiences to a large unfamiliar crowd—speaking words of survival while also acknowledging state violence, systemic erasure, and hierarchical relations of power.

At the event, Alisha observed that the SOC members were sitting together, ready to affirm and hold space for each other as Lily spoke her truth. The following is an excerpt from Lily's poem:

I will chant I can't breathe to honor Eric Garner even though my
white principal told me I couldn't
I will repaint the image of a Black woman that society thought they
already painted for me
I will refuse to let the words of the pledge of allegiance escape my lips
Because as that flag waves freely
I remember the freedom my ancestors never witnessed
And when asked what it's like to be Black
I will say amazing
Because I won't ever forget that being Black is an honor
Because I come from a bloodline of survivors whose very palms
were the blueprints of my destiny

Lily's "I Can't Breathe" is more than a scripted poem about race relations between black and white. It is a political/politicised expression, a collective resistance. Like other black radical feminists, Lily employed oral traditions to speak back through poetry, an approach necessary for survival. In Audre Lorde's words, "I speak here of poetry as a revelatory distillation of experience, not the sterile word play that, too often, the white fathers distorted the word *poetry* to mean—in order to cover a desperate wish for imagination without insight" (37). On that Martin Luther King Day showcase, Lily performed her poem against a backdrop of a snowy 100+ acre campus. Her voice filled a fully lit room as she boldly uttered the words "I can't breathe" with a cellphone in hand. She recited the poem with conviction because every single word was important; every stanza illuminated the collective resistance of black girls in SOC, an everyday battle at school and more broadly within the United States. Lily's words reverberated throughout each breath, each line break, a chant, a refusal. Her words unleashed the imposed silence/silencing and repainted struggle in language and imagery, including ancestral "blueprints" to speak truth to power. It was a moment to talk back, a voluntary act of utilising a free verse poem to write outside sanctioned literacies and expectations of the classroom.

Lily participated in collective resistance by joining contemporary adult artists and their legacies of counter-expressions. The production of creative texts marks their realities of/in the world, while also harnessing the power of living or livingness. Specifically, Lily's articulation of survival in her poem echoes in the Grammy award-winning Song of the Year co-written and recorded by artist/guitarist H.E.R. An excerpt from the lyrics is as follows:

I can't breathe
You're taking my life from me
I can't breathe
Will anyone fight for me? (Yeah)
Will anyone fight for me?
. . . . . .

> When you see us, see us
> We can't breathe

In refusing the brutal fictions of race, both Lily's poem and H.E.R.'s song insist on living and resisting, a call to freedom. The ending of the latter—"when you see us, see us"—includes a possible connection to another creative text. It is a connection that honours black creative praxis, a connection not about signifying blackness but about the practice of making black life. *When They See Us* is a 2019 Netflix series created, co-written, and directed by Ava DuVernay. The highly-acclaimed and multiple award-winning four-part television miniseries is a fictionalised drama about the Central Park Five, a restorying of the false imprisonment of five teenagers accused of an assault in New York City's Central Park. For DuVernay, the truth about a flawed justice system tells a crucial but often absent part of the story, similar to what Lily articulates about a flawed narrative of American history in her poem. As DuVernay noted in an interview, reimaging in film/television is significant:

> Because of a lack of access to tools, because of a lack of access to exhibition and distribution …. Every time a filmmaker of color makes a film, it is a rescue effort. It is an act of resistance and defiance to use tools that were kept away from us, tools that were used to harm us for so long. When I get to a film like this, where there are so very many black people in it, every frame becomes a vitally important demonstration of freedom.

The narrative changes and many more truths unravel. Reimaging through artistic counter-expressions, or as Lily exclaims in her poem, "repainting the image" that society has painted, is about "freedom my ancestors never witnessed." These counter-expressions illustrate how creative texts and praxis are relational, to invite different knowledge-making or, as McKittrick (*Dear Science*) reminds us, to build a different world.

Double Edges in Trauma and Literacy Studies

INCREASING interests in and applications of trauma-informed practice in education (or trauma-informed care in counseling and social work) guide us toward scholarship in literacy studies to open up conversations about pedagogy. It is well noted that trauma-informed care has often focused on the individual or on the social emotional learning and resources needed in support of "difficult" students. Rather than extend this approach, there is a call to shift from trauma-informed care to healing in order to more pointedly address historical conditions and sociopolitical processes that sustain different forms of violence in young people's lives. It is this shift that we leverage in this essay.

While trauma-informed practice is important, Shawn Ginwright ("The Future of Healing") argues that it is incomplete (3). The focus on individual versus collective experience tends to center on individual pain (trauma), not well-being (healing). Put simply, the focus on "fixing" the person does not get at the root causes of trauma (i.e., context, social and economic conditions). Drawing on his extensive work in urban education and with black youth in the San Francisco Bay Area, Ginwright in *Hope and Healing in Early Education* encourages educators to consider healing justice practices and suggests ways of supporting youth through complex forms of trauma and through combining healing with hope toward social change (86). Ginwright and colleagues engage in community organising as part of the healing process. Ginwright proposes healing-centered approaches (radical healing) to facilitate quality of life at the level of both individuals' well-being and the community's well-being--that is, to attend to and restore the economic, political, and social conditions that allow people to thrive. Aligned with healing-informed practices, Patrick Camangian and Stephanie Cariaga discuss the limits of socio-emotional learning which, in their view, does not address social forces that shape the health and wellness of communities of colour (3). They call for a process of humanisation, "a reciprocal, mutually anti-oppressive process of self and collective care and development in the context of social transformation" (6). As such, these studies particularly with/for youth and communities of colour indicate the limits of trauma-informed care and the potential of humanising pedagogy in education.

The inextricability of the link across trauma, poetry, and literacy is important to interrogate. In literacy studies, Elizabeth Dutro and Andrea Bien examine the role of trauma in classrooms. Using the metaphor of the speaking wound, they consider the adult-authored representations of lived experience and how they position students within/through stories of trauma (9). In later engagements, Dutro ("Let's Start with Hearthbreak") explicates the prevailing ways that trauma may fuel damage narratives about students and their families (326). More to the point, Eve Tuck emphasises the ways that damage or pain narratives, which are built on notions of brokenness as a "pathologizing approach" (413), reinforce deficit perspectives particularly among indigenous communities and across communities of colour. Kelly Wissman and Angela Wiseman have found in their studies that writing poetry offers an opportunity for students to engage in "narrative control" or "a way of using language to claim the right to name their own experience" (243) as they speak-write in school classrooms about difficult experiences, including family conflict, particularly when conditions at home or constrained relationships limit their conversations. For educators, classrooms necessitate what Dutro in *The Vulnerable Heart of Literacy* calls critical witnessing as a way of paying attention to everyday testimonies (22) while resisting deficit narratives as students receive the support they need.

More recently, Gwendolyn Baxter and Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz demonstrate the importance of poetry as an art form to "mirror Black resistance" against dehumanisation and offer a window into collective struggle in line with the black

radical tradition. In particular, they illustrate through their own poetry how words heal, or how poetry becomes a medium through which to "bare our soul, release our pain and sadness, and restore ourselves" (312). As Audre Lorde has put it, "poetry is not a luxury; it is a vital necessity of existence" (37). Poetry is a site of struggle and, according to June Jordan, a consciousness-raising tool to speak back through "the system of language that excludes her name and all the names of her people" (5). To utilise poetry in the classroom, then, is to provide a critical space for healing. Various studies on the use of written and spoken word poetry in literacy classrooms or after school programs have promoted a range of pedagogical possibilities with youth's voice at the center.[1] Healing-centered approaches widen the learning and teaching spectrum for youth engagement in educational contexts.

Scholar-activists, writers, artists, and educators have been gracious in their analysis of dehumanisation to press upon us what is at stake. For instance, bell hooks in analyzing representations of whiteness in the black imagination writes about whiteness as terror, as "terror*izing*" (*Black Looks* 169). This terror, she argues, is often not talked about especially by black people who are living through impacts of that terror. So, in our work within education, we turn to a set of questions to incite some thought and conversation about youth writing. What does a long history of dehumanisation and terror intimate about trauma-informed literacies among racialised youth? What does it suggest to black girls and young women as they negotiate racial, gender, class, and geographic lines, as in the aforementioned examples, including Lily's poem? How do we as educators hold their inquiries, truths, and creative counter-expressions in classrooms and beyond? How do we work alongside parents and community members to focus on youth's well-being and attend to the sociohistorical contexts that contour their everyday lives?

In asking these questions, perhaps there is an opportunity to imagine healing (*radical* healing) in literacy practices where young people can engage desire and freedom and not (more) pain or broken-ness. Or poetry writing in a *differently* generative learning environment. Perhaps there is a way to consider bodily movements, emergent rhythms, and living intensities in a process of reconstituted racialising affect. To go beyond snaps and applauses in call-and-response. To interrogate the space in between line breaks or the punctuations that appear and disappear. To hear the penned yet unspoken language that may be pointing toward livingness. To be liberated from racial violence.

Pedagogically, it is important for educators to step back from trauma-informed practice. When we ask young people to write (again and again) about trauma, it is very possible that the task may actually be more harmful than we think, not just in the moment but also in other moments to come. Perhaps young people desire something else or would prefer to exercise refusal, because every space is not a space for sharing-listening-witnessing. While it matters to be heard, seen, validated, and affirmed, it also matters to just be, to exist outside the limits of categories. In an adult-driven world where young people are often constrained by rules and norms, the tendency for many

youth is to rely on doing things out of expectations (sometimes against their good sense) in order to be "heard, seen, validated, and affirmed." As Venus Evans-Winters contends, it is very possible that young people may refuse or may not yet be ready to write about particular moments in their lives, that some young women's "experiences are hers alone to experience and decide if they should be shared" (105). There might be a need for discretion to understand time-space or context differently, to not push or make hurried decisions about what works and what doesn't.

Perhaps young people as dynamic social and cultural beings, as co-conspirators, as collaborators in projects of humanisation are already teaching adults to unlearn things that we know. Perhaps they are signaling things that we do not yet know, so that we can get past careless assumptions about who/how young people are or where they are supposed to be. Perhaps young people are inviting us to create openings for different possibilities: to engage writing and learning differently, to seek opportunities for radical healing, to pause and (re)imagine livingness in youth poetry. We believe the openings can be fruitful and enable us to aspire toward pedagogical innovations in juvenilia studies.

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NOTES

[1] For works on youth poetry/spoken word/critical literacy and urban education, see Fisher; Jocson; Kim; Morrell; Sablo Sutton; Watson; Weinstein and West.

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"I AM MAKING MYSELF REMEMBER THAT AWFUL TIME": JUVENILIA, HIROSHIMA, AND THE POLITICS OF PEACE

Caroline Lieffers
Assistant Professor, The King's University

> Cherry petals fall
> Those that cling to the bough
> In their turn will fall.
> – Sumie Kuramoto, *Children of the A-Bomb*

> We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world.
> – Japanese Constitution (1947), Preamble

ON THE morning of 6 August 1945, Hiroshima's residents experienced the unimaginable horror of being the first victims of atomic warfare. The exact number of casualties remains unknown, but some 70,000 people may have perished in the initial blast, and within five years perhaps 200,000 were dead from the effects of injuries and radiation (U.S. Department of Energy). Even the mosquitoes, some early reports poignantly noted, were destroyed that day (Hook 19). As American forces occupied the country, the Japanese press was put under a strict code of censorship. Lasting until 1949, it banned the publication of any media that "might, directly or by inference, disturb the public tranquillity" or be construed as "destructive criticism" of the Allied Powers (Braw 42).

Yet even within this difficult intellectual context, Arata Osada was planning a new project.[1] A professor of education at Hiroshima University, he worked with several dozen schools in the city to solicit between one and two thousand first-hand accounts from young people who had survived the atomic bombing. As the stories

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poured in from mid-March to mid-June of 1951, Osada worked with his sons and several college students to edit and compile 105 of them into a book (Osada, Preface xxxiii; Bajo). *Genbaku no ko: Hiroshima no shōnen shōjo no uttae* [*Children of the A-Bomb: Testament of the Boys and Girls of Hiroshima*] was published later that year. The first English edition was published in 1959 from Tokyo-based Uchida Rokakuho, while an abridged edition from G. P. Putnam's Sons in 1963 gave the book wider distribution in the United States. Though the text had only modest popularity with American audiences, it was translated into fourteen languages, and as of 2015, an estimated 270,000 copies had been sold worldwide ("Hiroshima … Paper Monuments").

Children of the A-Bomb is a remarkable book, a compilation of emotionally gripping and philosophically poignant expressions from young writers ranging from about fourth grade to university age; they were between approximately four and eighteen years old at the time of the atomic blast. But the testimonials also served larger political ends. They spoke to a new, peace-loving identity for Japan and the development of a culture of "victim consciousness" (Orr), part of a larger transformation that Lisa Yoneyama has summarised as "a change from a country of masculinized prowess to feminized innocence" (38). Innocent children's victimhood was also an important vehicle for Osada's larger dedication to the causes of denuclearisation and the global peace movement, which were likewise symbolised in the city of Hiroshima itself. Osada would reportedly inscribe copies of the book with the note, "Listen to the voice of God's small children" (Tashiro), and the letter of thanks he wrote to each of the juvenile contributors made his aims clear:

> When I think of you taking up your pen … when I imagine how the remembered figures of those whom you lost came before your eyes, and how you must have talked to them, I feel that these words which you have written are a sort of proyer [*sic*] for the tranquil repose of their souls. If we can publish them, both within our country and without, these words of yours will build in people's hearts an enduring, spiritual, Memorial Tower which will surely give joy to the spirits of those who have died. And I believe that not only in Hiroshima, but in all of Japan, and in all the world, people of conscience will offer their hearts' prayers at this Memorial Tower which you have built. (x)[2]

Osada articulated his investment in a kind of non-denominational spirituality, as well as a larger vision of peace education that might speak to and benefit all humanity, a project that Yoneyama terms "nuclear universalism" (15). The children's voices, Osada wrote, might help "make this tragedy not the end but the beginning of the new world" ("Prof. Osada's Preface" xxxii).

And yet, the accounts in *Children of the A-Bomb*, as well as the book's reception and afterlife, demonstrate that this could never be a simple project. The "peace" for which the children were writing would be articulated in several different, but interrelated registers: in Japan's new identity and Hiroshima's re-branding as a city of peace, for example; in the often left-leaning anti-nuclear and peace education movements in Japan and abroad; and in the young writers' own, deeply personal attempts to derive meaning from their pain, to prevent further war, or simply to carry on. By being asked to sublimate their grief into the redemptive work of peace, the children would find themselves—wittingly or unwittingly—entangled in all of these registers.

In the first section of this article I historicise Osada's decision to solicit Hiroshima survivors' narratives towards the goal of peace. Movements encouraging non-intellectuals, and particularly children, to engage in personal narration first emerged in Japan in the 1920s and 30s, with the initial aim of helping to develop character and articulate social problems. In this regard, *Children of the A-Bomb* was part of a longer tradition, instrumentalised for the needs of postwar Japan. In the second section I examine young people's navigation through this personal and political work in *Children of the A-Bomb*. The children's testimonies, I note, flex across scales, relating intimate personal experiences to larger themes about their city, their country, and humanity itself. But the work of peace was imperfect, and some of the children communicate their ambivalence or even distrust towards the popular pacifist vision that Hiroshima's and Japan's leaders embraced in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

In the third section I pick up the more explicit politics that the children's stories came to represent. The book was the basis for two Japanese films, both of which were caught up in anti-nuclear, and even anti-American positions, and neither of which fully achieved the goal of communicating both the deplorable intensity of war and the spiritual imperative of peace to a broader audience. This section also examines the book's mixed reception in the United States, arguing that while some critics used *Children of the A-Bomb* to confirm the dangers of nuclear weaponry, they found it difficult to find specific points of intellectual engagement with the unfamiliar genre of juvenile writing.

The concluding section returns to consider the text's ambivalent place in the longer tradition of Japanese life writing. It focuses in particular on the figure of the unwilling writer, or the writer whose capacity for expression fails in the face of the intensity of their experience. In the depths and rawness of their grief, the children's stories transcend the more pragmatic projects of remaking Japan and Hiroshima, as well as the global and local politics of the anti-nuclear and peace movements. These young people were asked to do the work of peace, but their writing also testified to a pain that defied articulation altogether, and to a need for resolution that was ultimately beyond their ability or responsibility to deliver.

Children of the A-Bomb offers a powerful addition to our understanding of juvenile writing. Whether writing for intimate audiences in the context of diaries or family

magazines, finding solace and stimulation in their retreat into paracosms and play, or rehearsing for the serious work of adult writing, young authors are usually intensely motivated and teeming with creative force, and they write for personal satisfaction, exploration, relief, or, in some cases, praise (e.g., Alexander and McMaster; Robertson). But *Children of the A-Bomb* was not clearly a site of artistic, emotional, or intellectual fulfillment for all of its writers. What it does evince are examples of incomplete or ambivalent catharsis, pleas for a deliverance that could not be assured. The contributors were members of the *hibakusha*, the Japanese word that literally means "bomb-affected people," who faced not only the horror of a nuclear attack, but also the responsibility of carrying on with life, enduring loneliness, frightening medical conditions, and often painful stigma (Yoneyama 88–89). They saw their own experiences mirrored in their destroyed city and in its strange rebuilding, creating an eerie geography of grief that was increasingly out of sync with their feelings. And though many of the young authors told their stories with compelling beauty and intensity, using the project of life writing to strengthen personal character and collective citizenship, their works also heave with unresolved anguish. At least some of the accounts suggest that the children were encouraged to put whatever hopes they still maintained into a prescribed political project, or a desperate moral vision that even their best, most sacrificial writing could not be sure to deliver.

Children of the A-Bomb also, importantly, deepens our understanding of trauma in juvenilia (e.g., Alexander), as well as the recent "emotional turn" in the history of childhood (e.g., Olsen). The children draft testaments to human survival, pleas for peace, and expressions of grief and even cynicism at humanity's vile achievements. But this is impossibly grave work, and, as I indicate in the final section of this paper, the young authors are all too often rendered silent by the inexpressibility of their pain. Cathy Caruth notes how the force of a traumatic experience "would appear to arise precisely … in the collapse of its understanding" (Introduction 7). Traumatic experiences are out of reach; they beggar articulation and defy comprehension. "The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess," Caruth explains (Introduction 5). The young writers of *Children of the A-Bomb* were pressed into different forms of political service by a nation in the process of remaking itself, and a community of anti-nuclear advocates that needed their testimonies to plead its case. Above all, they were asked to make their sacrifice and their suffering worthwhile by reliving it, documenting it, and giving it meaning as a call for peace. But this was a task that could never fully express, let alone honour, their sorrow and hurt and rage. Through *Children of the A-Bomb*, juvenilia studies can recognise children's writing as a site of traumatic memory, a tool for political action, and also a fundamentally limited form of communication that could only know the surface of human pain, and leave readers wondering at the unsounded depths below.

I.

AFTER the Second World War, Japanese society underwent a fundamental transformation. As historian John Dower explains, "Defeat, victimization, an overwhelming sense of powerlessness in the face of undreamed-of weapons of destruction soon coalesced to become the basis of a new kind of anti-military nationalism" (493). The country's new constitution of 1947 explicitly emphasised the nation's commitment to peace, and when Osada began his project, Hiroshima was experiencing a kind of engineered renaissance. As early as September 1945, the governor indicated his plans to rebuild the city as "a major inner sea tourist point," and he called for funding to create "a peace memorial city" (qtd. in Zwigenberg, *Hiroshima* 28). The horrors of war would be remade into a politics of peace, signifying postwar recovery and a forward-looking mentality of which the occupying Allied Forces thoroughly approved (Yoneyama 19–20). In 1949, civic leaders passed legislation that would officially designate Hiroshima "a peace memorial city symbolizing the human ideal of the sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace" (Hiroshima for Global Peace 12). They constructed a park, museum, and memorial hall dedicated to peace, and they even held a yearly Peace Festival on the anniversary of the bombing (Hiroshima for Global Peace 13, 20).

This renewed purpose was an important outlet for many *hibakusha* (Yoneyama 105), but it also created a narrow range of acceptable scripts for how they might react to the tragedy. The task of making peace had papered over the lasting health conditions, discrimination, and economic struggle that many *hibakusha* faced in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Neither the United States occupying force, nor the Japanese government, provided any special welfare or medical care for their support, while censorship limited the circulation and publication of some key medical information about the effects of radiation sickness (Shibata 50). Indeed, Ran Zwigenberg notes that the commemoration of Hiroshima was not generally cast "in terms of grief and loss," but rather emphasised "transformation, rebirth and, ultimately, progress" (*Hiroshima* 24).

Like the city of Hiroshima, Arata Osada was experiencing his own rededication to the cause of peace. The events of August 1945 had nearly killed him. He had been wounded by shards of glass from the explosion, paired with radiation sickness, and he later wrote that "for four months I roamed in the land of Death before some fate gave me back my life" (Bajo; Osada, "Appendix II"; Dust Jacket). After his recovery, he committed the rest of his life to the promotion of children's welfare, as well as education for peace. The "renunciation of war is a duty … that the Japanese people owe to the whole human race," he wrote, noting that the "realization of this shall depend fundamentally on the power of education" (Preface xxiii and xxv).

Children of the A-Bomb was meant to be a key piece of this education, and it followed from a longer Japanese history of purposeful life writing. Historians have noted the survival of numerous private diaries by young writers, as well as education professionals' promotion of composition and diary writing in the classroom, dating

back to the Meiji period (Cave and Moore 294). The 1920s and 30s in particular witnessed a new movement for self-narration, aimed especially at working-class children. *Seikatsu tsuzurikata* ("ordinary life writing") was a reaction to the strict bureaucratic control of Japanese elementary education. Taking advantage of relative laxity in the composition curriculum, teachers encouraged students to write honestly about their daily lives. This was not simply a form of writing education; it was also a way for children to develop strength of character, as well as an awareness of social issues. "It is," as some of its first proponents explained, "for accurately observing the actual problems in society and the situations of children's everyday lives, understand[ing] the principles existing and working in daily life, and teach[ing] children to understand them" (Tadayoshi Sasaoka et al., qtd. in Hiraoka 25). Indeed, this was a largely left-wing effort; "existing," as Gerald Figal notes, "as an idea more than as a widespread practice, its aim was toward the development of a proletarian voice and class consciousness" (907).

While some magazines published children's compositions in this early period (Hiraoka 25), the popular writing movement would expand significantly after the war. Mainstream publications featuring personal writing by common people flourished in the late 1940s and 1950s. *Harukanaru sanga-ni* ("In the Faraway Mountains and Rivers," 1947) and *Kike wadatsumi no koe* ("Listen to the Voices of the Sea," 1949), for example, were collections of writings by university students who had died during the war; the books had strong anti-war messages, and the latter was made into a film. Petra Buchholz also notes that the intellectual magazine *Sekai* ("World") invited readers to submit accounts of the day of surrender (15 August 1945), while conservative and women's magazines collected and published personal accounts by war widows in the 1950s. Around 1960, regional papers also began to solicit contributions from soldiers (202). From the late 1950s, grass-roots writing groups would develop into a broader *fudangi* ("everyday writing") movement (Figal 907), exemplifying a quest for self-expression that is also present in the more individualised *jibunshi* ("self-history") movement; popular to this day, *jibunshi* encourages self-publishing of personal histories (Figal; Buchholz).

Although it had diverse supporters, much of this postwar popular writing movement was tied, either explicitly or implicitly, to progressive politics. As Adam Bronson notes, some progressive postwar educators, following their precursors in the 1920s and 30s, encouraged students to write in unadorned language about authentic life in their local communities, particularly as part of their social studies education (128). The left-leaning Institute for the Science of Thought, moreover, sought to promote egalitarian, pluralistic democracy by recognising the philosophical and political significance of ordinary people's observations. This work dovetailed with the larger Japanese "circle movement" in the early 1950s, which encouraged membership in various voluntary associations. Many of these circles focused on producing critical documentary accounts of everyday life that were then distributed and discussed, with the hope that citizens might connect local problems to larger class or national issues.

"Observers of the movement," writes Bronson, "believed that this cycle of observing, writing, and discussing might produce citizens capable of realizing the promise of postwar democracy" (Bronson 124; Hiraoka 22).

Young people's writing was particularly valued through this period. Some circles committed to studying books such as Muchaku Seikyō's 1951 bestseller *Yamabiko Gakkō* ("Echo School"), an edited collection of writings by rural middle-schoolers that was made into a film the following year (Bronson 123). Through such texts, notes Bronson, "adolescent students were empowered to become teachers, educating adult readers about how poverty affected their daily lives and inspiring them with their determination to overcome it against seemingly hopeless odds" (130). Other books of the period similarly compiled young people's thoughts on everything from local elections to their experiences with US troops; the latter was an initiative by the Japanese Association for the Protection of Children, an organisation that elected Osada its first president in 1952 (Centeno Martin 3, Frühstück 157). Osada's decision to gather accounts from juvenile survivors of the Hiroshima bombing was thus intimately connected to a much larger trend of soliciting and employing children's writing for both individual and collective learning. The narratives were believed to have the potential not only to develop the juvenile authors' own strength and character, but also to promote awareness of the horrors of the bomb and nurture a culture of democracy and peace.

Indeed, Osada's prefatory material for *Children of the A-Bomb* cast the children's writing as a matter of purity and truth, appealing to the romantic notion that young people provided access to a shared, inherent human essence:

> For this publication, I made up my mind to collect and classify the accounts written by boys and girls whose thought, at the time they underwent that tragic experience, had not yet been tinted with any specific political ideology or view of the world. It is my hope that these accounts will forever serve as material for "instruction" in the ways of peace, so important for the "education" of the world, and as reference material for studies in the cultural history of the human race. (Preface xx)

The first English-language book jacket similarly claimed that "the youngest witness would be the most impartial," and it added that "of all the literature on the subject of the A-bomb, this is the least propaganda-ridden. The children have no axe to grind. They have simply told their stories." Though the book was clearly engaged in a movement of public awareness and a campaign against nuclear weapons, using children's stories to back these aims seemed to place them a transcendent, apolitical, and universal moral register. Ordinary children's writing about extraordinary experiences could impart powerful lessons.

II.

CHILDREN of the A-Bomb is notable for its candour: though certainly not as impartial as Osada would claim, the book's young authors bluntly narrate their own experiences of the bombing as well as their difficulties in reconciling them with Japan's contemporary political environment. Many offer intense sensory descriptions that make the experience of atomic warfare intimately horrifying. For instance, Junior college student Naoko Masuoka recalled, "My hands are burned black, and a yellow liquid is dropping like sweat from the broken skin. There is a queer smell. Suddenly my tears come" (301). Vivid attention to colour and graphic similes helped express the inexpressible. One adolescent said his sister's face resembled a "burst-open pomegranate" (364); the sounds of people calling for help but necessarily ignored were also a common refrain. "Those voices … they aren't cries, they are moans that penetrate to the marrow of your bones and make your hair stand on end" (273), wrote Hisayo Yaguchi, an eleventh-grade girl who was in fifth grade at the time of the bombing.

For other children, such as eleventh-grader Iwao Nakamura, the experience could be offered only as a series of terrifying images:

> The child making a suffering, groaning sound, his burned face swollen up balloon-like and jerking as he wanders among the fires. The old man, the skin of his face and body peeling off like a potato skin, mumbling prayers while he flees with faltering steps. Another man pressing with both his hands the wound from which blood is steadily dripping, rushing around as though he had gone mad and calling the names of his wife and child—ah—my hair seems to stand on end just to remember. This is the way war really looks. (234)

Some also expressed a sense of detachment from their reality: "'It can't be possible that I—.' I looked at my two hands and found them covered with blood, and from my arms something that looked like rags was hanging and inside I could see the healthy-looking flesh with its mingled colors of white, red and black" (353-4). At a distance from her own trauma, the writer, Atsuko Tsujioka, put her reader in the same position of helpless witnessing. "I could feel my face gradually swelling up," she continued, "but there was nothing I could do about it" (354).

The horror of a young person's own trauma and wounds could be amplified by those of the people around them. Several young writers reported needing medical treatment, but hospitals were overflowing and filled with cases even more frightening than their own (13, 106). Fifth-grade writer Ikuko Wakasa described a man who was terribly burned: "his whole body turned the color of dirt and got soft" (15). Years later, she worried about what poison lurked inside her. "Still people are dying in a way that reminds us of that day," she wrote. "When I only hear about the suffering of

people who have that radiation sickness, it makes me so frightened that I wish I could think of some way to forget about it" (16). Children did not experience trauma and injury alone, but rather as mirrored by those around them, intensifying their sense of the wounds that they had already received—or barely escaped—and freighting them with fears about damage yet to come. Atomic trauma was not momentary; among its greatest horrors was its capacity to linger in the body and haunt the future self.

Indeed, many saw the morning of August 6 as a dividing moment in their lives. The bomb seemed to shatter time, to create infinite, simultaneous instances of change: "I don't know whether the unearthly silence was first, or the flash. All I can say is that in some ten-thousandths of a second, an unimaginably great number of events took place," wrote college student Mitsukuni Akiyama (414). These events separated children not only from loved ones, but also from their own identities. "'Too much sorrow makes me like a stranger to myself'" (227), wrote tenth-grader Masayuki Hayashide. Another spoke of being emptied out by the experience. "This Mieko of the present, who has no dream or anything else, in the past was brought up quietly, wrapped in the warm love of her two parents. In this present Mieko there is not a single trace of the former Mieko" (322). Mieko Hara was not the only young person to feel separated from herself by the scale of her grief and loss. Coming back to a rebuilt Hiroshima, the gleaming city of peace, was an uncanny experience for some. "Every word we hear, every object we see, lacking any connection with the past, makes us feel only 'surprise,'" wrote Yaguchi, adding that "change which transcends such alteration due to time gives me only a strong feeling of incomprehensible surprise" (280–81). This experience of seeing a city rebuilt and memories covered over was nothing to celebrate; rather, it was an unsettling loss of some external confirmation of the personal destruction they had known, and a reminder of how much more difficult the process of personal rebuilding would be.

Caught between the statuses of victim and survivor, and forced to keep pace with a rebuilding nation, the young writers commonly experienced feelings of guilt, distress, and meaninglessness, coupled with stigma and teasing about their injuries. "I got so I couldn't stand my own existence," wrote Yaguchi. "For a while I was troubled by the impulse to throw away my own body. I felt only the meanness of human beings, their weakness, and the distress of human life; and I could not find any pleasure in the fact of being alive. I am going to become a perverse, cynical person—I was terribly afraid of that thought … I was conscious of destruction on all sides" (281). *Hibakusha*, especially those bearing visible scars, were often ostracised for embodying the misery of the past, as well as unknown health dangers, but some writers took solace in a sense of shared purpose. Though Setsuko Yamamoto was teased for her twisted finger, whenever she saw others with similar scars, "I have a feeling," she wrote, "that I would like to run up to them so we could comfort and encourage each other. I believe that this is a common spirit among all the survivors. Those of us who have actually experienced with our bodies the fact that war is a

frightful and wretched business—we earnestly wish to do everything in our power to be friendly with all the people of the world and to make peace last forever" (126).

Like Yamamoto, many young writers were all too aware that they had a job to do. During the war, they had been asked to be icons of patriotism, and many had served as labourers; after the war, as Sabine Frühstück has argued, children were "assigned the task of creating peace" (164). For some, this was personal work, and the students articulated how they strove to develop the right kind of character: they planned to help others, or to focus on their studies and cultivate their minds to honour the dead. Setsuko Sakamoto, a junior college student, wrote that she must "keep my own spirit sternly calm so that I will be able to live worthily on behalf of my forty friends [who died in the bombing]" (307).

Others made sense of their improbable, even reluctant resilience by looking to the city's natural life, which offered a kind of allegory for their own and their nation's rebirth and healing. "A willow tree was already sending out new leaves above a corpse that was without ears, eyes, nose, mouth etc.," wrote ninth-grader Toyozo Kubota. "This was like a picture that went beyond words in symbolizing the image of Hiroshima rising out of the desolation and pressing forward" (203). Eleventh-grader Hiromi Sakaguchi also admired the dauntless persistence of the weeds that sprang up in the blackened wasteland. Sakaguchi saw meaning, too, in the waterways that defined the city's famously beautiful geography:

> Hiroshima was not vanquished. Always the clear water of the Ohta River flows through its seven channels. That pure, limpid water was very beautiful.
>
> I wanted to become that water.
>
> If you ask why, it is because that water knows neither pain nor sorrow. The clear stream of the Ohta River washed away the suffering from my spirit. (255)

Some even extrapolated these personal lessons of resilience to humanity as a whole. As Yaguchi wrote, "Falling down, we rise to our feet; again falling we rise again—the path which humanity follows is a thorny mountain path. Even though we stumble, we may not lie there where we fall. Eventually a beautiful pure spring will appear before our eyes. We must keep on walking until we are able to scoop up the clear spring water with our own hands. That is what it means to live" (281). Though there were common themes, there was no single way to be a *hibakusha*, and narratives of survival and peace took complex forms.

The students were also keenly aware that peace was political work. Some clearly explained the shortcomings of their previous identity, fostered in militarism: "The prayer that we had prayed, 'For Victory's Sake, For Victory's Sake,' had led straight to the path to Hell," wrote one student (342). Now, they would transmute their experience as *hibakusha* into a unifying, redemptive call. The younger authors

articulated the goal of "peace" most explicitly and repetitively, drawing a direct line from their own pain to this new national narrative. "When I remember how my brother suffered and died like that my heart overflows and I can't stop crying," wrote sixth-grader Taeko Matsumoto. "At the same time I think that there must never be another war. I pray that all the countries of the world will become bright with peace" (85). "Just as I am growing up," wrote another, "Hiroshima is growing up to become the City of Peace" (56). She witnessed a kind of geography of healing in the parallel between her own growth and the city's rebirth, and other children explicitly described helping with rebuilding projects. Evidently aware of their country's new positioning, many young writers worked outward from their own experiences to their city and nation, humankind, and the overarching goal of peace, moving from the intimate to the transcendent.

The peace movement, to be sure, was an important coping mechanism for many. A survey of survivors in 2005 showed that many continued to emphasise the importance of peace, and a number indicated that it helped alleviate trauma (Hiroshima for Global Peace 22–23). But in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, some found this shift to peace to be too simple, even distasteful. Mitsukuni Akiyama, a twelfth-grade boy, could not escape the memories etched on his body: "When I look at the ugly scars from my own burns, the faces of those people appear and fade and appear, and in spite of myself tears are drawn from my eyes. It must not happen a second time …. God taught us how to 'forget.' But can I 'forget' that instant, that spectacle?" (417) His wounds were associated with deep grief and trauma whose meanings could not be easily reworked into some new politic.

Taking umbrage with his city's eagerness to move on, twelfth-grader Tohru Hara was more scathing:

> Can we say that true peace has visited Hiroshima?
>
> The "Peace Movement" that traded on the three hundred thousand victims of the A-bomb, and the "Peace Fair," and the goings-on of the August sixth "Peace Festival." Who exactly is it who is doing all this? Were you in Hiroshima on that sixth of August?
>
> If things continue like this, there will certainly be no way to answer those who say that the name "Hiroshima, the City of Peace" is nothing more than a trade name to make outsiders spend their money here. Is it all right if Hiroshima, the City of Peace, in [*sic*] just another tourist resort? It is right that those pathetic human beings covered with keloid scars should be exhibits in a show booth? Or that they should be guinea pigs in a laboratory? You excursionists who visit the Peace Dome on the bank of the Motoyasu River! That is not a side-show you are looking at! (378–79)

Another student, Sumie Kuramoto, similarly dwelt on the terrible irony of the Peace Festival: "I couldn't possibly work up a festive spirit, and I spent that day in smouldering discontent. I saw with amazement how many people have such frivolous minds that they can find pleasure in any little thing so long as someone else pays for it, with no concern at all for how much the victims sorrowed, no understanding of the blows they had suffered" (397).

Hiroshima, indeed, had moved on quickly. As early as 1947, the city's Tourist Promotion Section even went so far as to note that "Hiroshima enjoys a great location on the inland sea, with beautiful nature and ski resorts close by." Immediately after this lighthearted image of recreation, it added that "Hiroshima was made famous internationally by the atomic bomb, and we can make it a world-famous tourist city for both domestic and foreign visitors" (Zwigenberg, "Hiroshima Castle" 204–05). The same year as the publication of *Children of the A-Bomb*, Hiroshima hosted the Sixth National Youth Athletic Competition, inviting students from across Japan. A brochure from the event proclaimed the city as "Castle city Hiroshima! Military capital Hiroshima! Atom Hiroshima! Hiroshima, which was built as a peace city through an unprecedented special law" (Zwigenberg, "Hiroshima Castle" 207).

Without adequate medical care or compensation for their injuries, the rhetoric of peace was cold comfort to some *hibakusha*, and many noted, with varying degrees of directness, their poor treatment and continued suffering, challenging the narrative of progress and rebirth. Fifth-grader Hiroko Harado described her mother being examined by "Occupation Army" but never getting any real medical care (45), likely a reference to the observation-only policies of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission. Lingering radiation disease, combined with serious financial stress, was also a theme in many children's narratives, while a few even noted an epidemic of suicides (e.g., 21). "There are people somewhere who say that these victims were the price paid for the Cause of Peace," wrote Tohru Hara. "But has anything come back to us which is worthy of such a costly sacrifice? Is it not true that while we ask for a real peace, this thing that has been handed out to us is after all nothing but a counterfeit of peace?" (379). Others appreciated the benefits but were troubled by the terrible cost. "Why could we not have won Democracy by some other method which would not have necessitated this most cruel sacrifice of Hiroshima?" wrote Yasuko Moritaki. "In order to achieve this Democracy, which has as one of its chief objects the perfection of this precious dignity of the individual, was it necessary to slaughter these priceless 'individuals,' and moreover, two hundred forty-seven thousand of them in one instant? This great contradiction troubles my mind painfully" (285). Even an honest peace, beyond Hiroshima's seemingly vulgar rebranding, might not be enough to redeem their pain.

Some students confessed a desire for revenge and expressed their bitterness, despair, and resentment at Japan's surrender. Kuramoto explained, "It is not that I like war in the slightest, but I felt that it was unpardonable toward the young heroes who had fallen so valiantly, so beautifully, so manfully" (390–1). Japanese soldiers,

she added, had helped struggling victims, while the American planes seemed only "hateful and inhuman!" (388). While modern-day *jibunshi* accounts of 15 August, the day of surrender, generally include a reflective element that interrogates this wartime attitude (Buchholz 209), many of Osada's young writers had little such sense of closure. The Japanese sacrifice, in fact, seemed all the more bitter and futile because it had not brought the much-promised peace: the students knew they were supposed to give some kind of meaning to their pain, but as the Korean war raged nearby and their islands hosted American troops, they could not control the actions of other nations. Their anguish had seemingly been for nought.

Many young writers, in fact, were deeply ambivalent about the possibility of achieving any sort of spiritual insight or nuclear universalism. "Does this kind of event mean you can only pray to God?" wrote one. "No, it would rather be nearer the truth to say that the feeling of wanting to pray to God was not even aroused. In the figure of this mother [holding the hand of her dying child], as uneasy as if she were haunted by something and quite at a loss to know what to do, there was little room to discover any such reverence" (428). For others, faith in humanity or any transcendent good had been broken by the moral tragedy of atomic violence. Science had clearly outpaced humanity, and they feared there was little likelihood of catching up. "In the left hand, penicillin and streptomycin—in the right hand, atom bombs and hydrogen bombs," commented Yoshiko Uchimura. "Now of all times the peoples of the world ought to reflect coolly on this contradiction" (352). Others questioned even the concepts of good and evil, and pondered their relativism: "I wonder what the feelings of General Tojo were as he died miserably. From the depths of my heart I regretted Mr. Tojo's death. Are dictators good people or bad people? Are black-marketeers good people or bad people? That is just a convenient measuring stick that human beings have made" (399).

The *hibakusha* had been asked to sublimate their pain into peace, to find redemption in their unwilling sacrifice. As many intellectuals predicted, the life writing movement offered up profound philosophy, but it was also a philosophy that challenged any simplistic narratives. Osada's compilation left room for a complex vision of peace that was able to honour the ambivalence and rawness of individual, subjective experience, an important aspect of the life writing movement from its inception. The children saw themselves in the resurrected Hiroshima, but they also questioned the superficiality of the city's new emphasis on peace. They testified to human resilience, but also to lasting pain. They worked for the good of humanity, but they did not always trust in it, nor did they find that their messages were universally well received.

III.

WHILE much Japanese life writing remained private or was shared only in local circles, Osada's decision to publish *Children of the A-Bomb* explicitly drew the students and their sentiments into larger, public arenas of peace education, as well as an emerging global anti-nuclear movement. This was done, arguably, without their full consent. One sixth-grade student, Junya Kojima, for example, did not even know that his essay had been published in the collection until the 1990s, though he was aware of its appearance in *Sekai* in the summer of 1951 (Namba). Participation in anti-nuclear politics, moreover, was not uncontroversial, even in Japan: the movement had strong anti-American and leftist overtones, and though the occupation was slated to end in 1952, there was still substantial concern about antagonising the United States with explicit critiques of American policy or the decision to drop the bomb in the first place. In his accompanying material, however, Osada amplified many young authors' observations that there had been no real warning of the attack, which ensured maximum damage to civilians. He also contended that the bomb was not necessary for Japan's surrender, and he made specific statements against nuclear proliferation and the possible use of nuclear weapons in Korea (Preface xxix and xxx). With regard to censorship or retaliation, Osada's son, Goro, remarked that "fortunately, nothing happened, maybe because the essays were written by children, not adults" (Bajo). Yet as the messages in *Children of the A-Bomb* moved into broader circulation in Japanese anti-nuclear activism and film, and even beyond Japan itself, the children's complex experiences and philosophies were often flattened, sentimentalised, or simply misunderstood. The nuances of children's life writing and their struggles to cope with atomic traumas translated sometimes awkwardly into the ideologically charged work of anti-nuclear activism and its opponents.

Children of the A-Bomb was a launching point for numerous different strands of public engagement. In the Kansai Region, for example, students from Osaka University spearheaded a movement called "In Response to Children of the Atomic Bomb," and Osada also compiled and published a collection of responses in 1953, demonstrating that life writing could form a foundation for reflective discussion and thoughtful citizenship (Namba). Many of the children were also invited to join an organisation called Friends of the Children of the Atomic Bomb in 1952–53. Sometimes also called the Fraternity of Children of the A-Bomb, the group arranged for *hibakusha* to travel around Japan to present lectures and plays for the purpose of promoting peace and condemning nuclear weapons. While at least one member, Yuriko Hayashi, spoke positively of the sense of comfort that came from this community, this feeling was not shared by all of Osada's young writers. "Under the direction of adults," the organisation's vice-president Masaaki (Toshihiko) Tanabe later explained, "the innocent activities of children gradually took on a political tinge. Because of my activities, I couldn't get a recommendation for admission to high school, and I realized I was once again going to suffer on account of the atomic

bombing" ("Translations of 'Children'"). He did not participate in the peace movement again for some six decades.

As with many other examples of popular life writing in this period, *Children of the A-Bomb* was also immediately identified as a good candidate for adaptation into film. The left-leaning *Nihon Kyōshokuin Kumiai*, for example, Japan's largest teachers' union, wanted to ensure that the book's stories and message were widely known, and they commissioned a film adaptation, *Children of Hiroshima* (*Genbaku no ko*), directed by Kaneto Shindō. Released in 1952, the movie was based only very loosely on the accounts in *Children of the A-Bomb*. The plot follows a gentle, compassionate young teacher who returns to Hiroshima several years after the bombing. As she moves through the city, she meets many of her former students as well as other survivors, and the audience witnesses their struggles with health problems, lost family members, and social and economic disruption.

Though Japan's foreign ministry, fearing diplomatic consequences, reportedly tried to discourage any awards for the film, it was screened at Cannes in 1953 ("Hiroshima … A-bomb Films"). But *Children of Hiroshima* in fact addressed very little of the bomb's horror head-on. The young writers' graphic descriptions of death and destruction were reduced to a brief montage of withering plants, flames, and blood dripping down women's naked bodies. This mild approach is clear from a review in the British *Monthly Film Bulletin*, which described the film as moving and sympathetic, and praised it for a narrative "surprisingly free from recrimination and bitterness; there is, instead, a kind of baffled anger and regret that the events of ten years ago should, even now, cast a shadow of death over the lives of the Japanese people" (J. G. 69).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Union reportedly dismissed the film as a "tearjerker" without any real "political orientation" (quoted in Lowenstein 84). Insistent on demonstrating the atrocity of the bomb and the urgent need for a non-nuclear world, they commissioned director Hideo Sekigawa to make a second, more explicit film, which was simply titled *Hiroshima* (1953). If *Children of Hiroshima* "relies on a discourse of healing and forgetfulness," as scholar Bianca Briciu has argued, "*Hiroshima* creates a visceral type of peace education through vicarious traumatic inscription of bodily pain on the bodies of spectators." This second film was indeed much more ambitious in scope. It addressed issues of stigma, the lack of government support, and the health consequences of the bomb, and it also did not shy away from searing depictions of the destruction of the attack. Filming started on location around Hiroshima in May 1953, and some 88,500 locals, including some of the contributors to *Children of the A-Bomb*, participated as extras in the movie's most astounding scenes of destruction. Hayashi, an extra in the film, described how they "smeared a mixture of mud and ink on our faces and went into the river. I remember having a vivid flashback of that day" ("Hiroshima … A-bomb Films").

But *Hiroshima*, too, would face critics. It is a testament to the exceptional boldness and candour of Osada's young writers that almost as soon as the second

film was completed, Japanese authorities were concerned that it was too anti-American ("Hiroshima … A-bomb Films"), and possibly too communist. Yuko Shibata notes that aside from its graphic horror, the film is also notable for its explicit denunciation of the atomic bombing and its leftist orientation. The latter was made clear through the use of a phrase from an earlier Charlie Chaplin film, *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947): "One murder makes a villain, millions a hero." It was no accident, Shibata argues, that the filmmakers chose to quote Chaplin, who was demonised in the American Red Scare and by 1952 was living in Europe in exile (47). As a consequence of this positioning, and probably bowing to political pressure, the original distribution company reneged on their agreement to release the film in August 1953 (Broderick and Hatori 79). The Teachers' Union distributed the film instead, but the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture would not allow it to be shown in schools (Broderick and Hatori 80). Aside from an additional, limited showing in the United States in the mid-1950s, the film was all but forgotten for decades. The experiences of the atomic bomb's young survivors would remain most influential in their original form, as films could not readily convey these complex stories of victimhood, survival, and peace in a politically charged post-war Japan.

As *Children of the A-Bomb* travelled to the English-speaking world, a handful of critics urged serious reading. British philosopher Bertrand Russell's assessment appeared on the dust jacket of the 1963 American edition, and he was unabashedly political, condemning "those countries which decreed or applauded the destruction of Hiroshima," and singling out Harry Truman for his lack of guilt over the decision to drop the bomb. Nuclear armament and the pursuit of peace, he argued, were fundamentally incompatible, and he commended *Children of the A-Bomb* "because it may stimulate sluggish imaginations and turn men away from the pursuit of death and torture to the hope of a happier and peaceful world." But Russell engaged little with the intellectual content of the young writers' reflections, instead employing a broad understanding of their experiences to advance a specific political commentary.

Other reviewers were more sensitive in their philosophising. Psychiatrist Robert J. Lifton, writing in the *New York Review of Books* in 1963, grasped the crux of the work that *Children of the A-Bomb*'s young writers were being asked to do:

> The question of how much the people of Hiroshima themselves should serve as living symbols is perplexing to them and to the city administration as well. To what extent should they leave the experience behind and permit themselves to look ahead, or away? To what extent should they serve as a symbol of death? There is no precedent for how a person or a city victimized by an atomic bomb should behave.
>
> Perhaps we should not be surprised that the children of Hiroshima, in this remarkable collection of compositions, have been called upon to solve this dilemma.

As a universal symbol of purity, children, he pointed out, were an important reminder of essential humanity before the barbarism of adult conditioning. But this same innocence meant that children were all too often asked to do "our historical dirty work," whether assimilating to a dominant culture or "wheeling them in baby carriages at the head of ban-the-bomb parades." This was an unresolved tension in *Children of the A-Bomb*, but Lifton believed it did not preclude the collection's value as a unique testament to the unique experience of atomic warfare. "The book is an extraordinary document," he concluded, "and however its readers may try to fend it off, something is bound to get through. And this might be of great help to us."

Though Lifton, unlike Russell, quoted extensively from the children, his review was more interested in understanding the process of recovery than amplifying the call for peace. The power and intimacy of the children's voices and their message in fact seems to have made little impact on Western thinking about atomic weaponry. A handful of references to and extracts from the book appeared in publications such as *Scientist and Citizen*, which was implicitly anti-nuclear (Brewer 187), and, later, the anti-Vietnam War *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (e.g., Satoh 28), but these were rare.

In his study of the centrality of children in American understandings of the bomb, Robert Jacobs argues that whether "as data points, as celebrity victims, or as martyrs, the children of Hiroshima were a screen on which Americans projected their own relations to the weapons" (270). But at their most generous, these philosophical reflections were often brief, a superficial form of nuclear universalism that only gestured to transcendent messages of peace and humanity and did little to understand the children as individuals or as writers, or to appreciate their various ways of engaging with, articulating, and even challenging the broader rhetorics of peace in which they were enmeshed. Most significantly, these meditations could never match the unknowable intensity and subtlety of the experiences of the *hibakusha*.

IV.

In her work on Japanese people's personal accounts of the surrender on 15 August 1945, Petra Buchholz notes that to "remember and to write down personal memories of the self taking part in history means simultaneously to be a member of a community who shared the same fate" (201). These narratives, she argues, cultivate a sense of belonging and generate a feeling of historical consciousness, a conceptualisation of one's own place in history, and a valuable, shared understanding of the end of the war as a time of new beginning.

Children of the A-Bomb, too, created meaning and community; the "Oleander Club," for example, is a group for the now-elderly writers who contributed to the collection. Some of their adult reflections were also featured in a new collection entitled *Children of the Atomic Bomb: Since Then*, published in 1999 (Namba). But despite

its lasting impact and significance, *Children of the A-Bomb* is perhaps most haunted by what it cannot say, the moments when the young writers' words are inadequate, or simply run into silence, to the edge of human expression. "It is utterly impossible for me to record completely with pen and paper the tragic consequences that were due to that most inhumane A-bomb," wrote twelfth-grader Osamu Kataoka (401). It was emotional intensity that stopped the student cold. "I cannot bear to recall more than this of the scenes that I saw at that time," Kataoka explained. "They were simply too tragic. It was too cruel a business" (411). Some children elected to leave out details that were too raw to utter. "I was told various things about my father," wrote Mieko Hara. "These also I do not want to write down on paper …" (323).

Scholars of childhood have often struggled to know the walled-up inner lives of young people, whose experiences are so often mediated through the ideologies and assumptions of adults. Juvenilia, though sometimes imitative or performative, can offer a glimpse through the cracks in those walls. Yet in cases of intense trauma, even the most intimate and expressive juvenilia cannot articulate the depths of experience and emotion. Mieko Hara's prose simply dissolved into grief: "I hate war! I hate war! To think that my mother, who was so cheerful and energetic, should be crushed beneath that big house—! Oh! I don't want to talk about it, I don't want to write about it! The more time passes, the greater becomes my grief. … Oh, it is cruel. I don't want to publish it to other people. I want to keep it concealed within this little heart" (324). Regarding her mother's last words, Hara could offer nothing: "I cannot write any further …" (323).

Here, the context in which these young authors told their stories is worth further attention. This was not *seikatsu tsuzurikata*, ordinary life writing, which had a long history in Japanese classrooms. Nor did it emerge from the children's own desire to express themselves. Rather, these young people were asked to revisit the darkest moments of their lives, and while many may have believed that this work had value, it seems to have pushed at least some young writers to the limits of their emotional and spiritual capacity. One contributor, Masaaki (Toshihiko) Tanabe, recalled the context of Osada's request: "In Japanese class the teacher urged all of us to write an essay. I thought it was a homework assignment, so I wrote one. Ordinarily we used coarse writing paper, but that time we were given a sheet of nice manuscript paper, so I felt I had to write a proper essay" (Bajo). Fifth-grade girl Ikuko Wakasa similarly felt that she had to write. "Since I was assigned this for homework, and even though I don't want to do it, I am making myself remember that awful time" (12). Many did not hide the fact that the labour of peace was an intensely difficult one. "We stand in awe of touching this part of our minds," confessed Toshiko Ikeda. "If I once let my thoughts revert to that time, those brutal scenes would revolve more than ever before my eyes as vividly as if they were things of yesterday. This was too cruel a sacrifice to be called 'a stepping stone to peace.' Even I have the feeling that I would like to avoid staring too intently at that 6th of August" (308). But the young writers of *Children of the A-Bomb* were told to make meaning of their victimhood and survival, to find

redemption for themselves and their nation by reopening their wounds. To read *Children of the A-Bomb* is thus not only to read children's writing, but also to bear a burden of responsibility. For some, the texts were produced under duress, and in the context of deep pain that they may never have wanted to experience, to recall, or to share.

Some pressed on, though, with the conviction that their work might serve some larger goal. In his preface, Osada quoted Kikuko Nagara, a ninth-grade girl: "Each time I began to write, recollections of the disaster rose up in my mind, one after another. It was a hard job for me to write them down; I faltered several times because the pain was so sharp, as if I had touched a hardly healed wound. I resolved to write this, however, hoping that what I wrote would be a tribute to my father, sister, uncle, many friends and hundreds of thousands of people, who lost their lives" (xxi). But for a few, it is unclear whether there was any sense of tribute, redemption, or meaning to be made in recalling their agony. Yasuhiro Ishibashi, a tenth-grade boy, ended his narrative abruptly: "Into my ears there seeped the voices of the groaning people, the noises of the buildings as they burned and fell, and the faint rolling hum of aeroplanes as they passed beyond the distant edge of the night sky" (244). There was no meditation, no philosophy, and no attempt to link his experience to the peace movement. This should not be surprising. In the larger history of the *hibakusha*, these narratives are remarkable for their existence at all. "Even after nearly half a century," writes Yoneyama, "no more than a small scattering of the over 370,000 survivors who witnessed the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear atrocities have openly voiced their survival memories." Though breaking the silence has been increasingly understood as a courageous act in recent decades, she notes that "survivors themselves are constantly disheartened by the incommunicability of their experiences" (89).

At the core of traumatic narratives, writes Caruth, is "a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (*Unclaimed Experience* 7). The children of Hiroshima were assigned the work of reliving and recounting their unbearable, incomprehensible experiences for untold audiences. They were instructed to trust in the power of their narrative to transform grief into a greater cause of pacifism, a postwar, atomic version of the belief that children's life writing could help identify and ultimately resolve social problems. This was juvenilia for a political end and for a transcendent moral hope; it was also juvenilia of trauma, and juvenilia of silent depth. Osada claimed that the accounts recorded "the cry of the atom bomb-affected child" (Preface xxii). Like a cry, the expression could not fully communicate the complexity and need beneath. The interpretation and action would have to fall to the readers, who would inevitably fail to meet them. Audiences could never begin to comprehend, let alone fulfill, what was laid before them.

"How can I find the words to tell how the burned and festering people spent day after day moaning, how people without anyone to care for them, with maggots

crawling all over their bodies, died muttering in delirium?" wrote ninth-grade student Masataka Asaeda. "These people must have died without knowing about the defeat, hating the war and loving peace" (146–47). By making themselves vulnerable, by sacrificing themselves a second time, they gave readers a chance, too, to hate war and to love peace. Regardless of how they approached their task, and regardless of the difficulties of their work's adaptation into film and the shortcomings of its reception in the nuclear-armed West, what these young writers did was surely enough. Osada's choice to include their halting storytelling, their confused feelings about surrender and good and evil, and even their scepticism of the politics of peace itself, testified to trauma's axes of experience. *Children of the A-Bomb* bears witness to the agony and wisdom that children could know, and from which readers might strive endlessly to learn.

NOTES

[1] While family names traditionally precede given names in Japanese, this article uses the given name–family name formulation that was employed in English-language editions of *Children of the A-Bomb*.

[2] All English-language translations, except those from the Preface, are taken from the 1959 edition of the book, translated by Jean Dan and Ruth Sieben-Morgen. The translations of the Preface are taken from the 1982 Harper Colophon edition.

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SILENCE, GUILT AND INSIDIOUS TRAUMA IN AUDEN'S EARLIEST POEMS

Cristina Pividori
Lecturer, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

THE TITLE of the book of poems published in 1941, *The Double Man*, defines much of W. H. Auden's life, constantly driven as it was by a sense of duality and paradox. The double functions as a complex, subtle phenomenon in Auden's case: it highlights an unresolvable tension between his private and public personae that is reflected in a characteristic doubleness, or "duplicity."[1] The search for a compromise between personal wishes and social duties is a recurring theme in Auden's later works but appears with particular intensity in the poems of his youth, resulting in a complex entanglement in which the poet's identity is often (traumatically) negotiated. Richard Davenport-Hines describes these existential border-crossings as typically "Audenesque" (275): the poet's attitude to his literary production, like his attitude to his private life, reveals an ambivalent interplay of repression and desire.[2]

Since Auden's life extended throughout most of the twentieth century—he was born in 1907, in York, and died in Vienna in 1973—his work provides a useful lens through which to examine some of the events and ideas that would change the world in unprecedented ways: the worldwide economic depression, the Spanish Civil War, the rise of fascisms, the beginning of the Second World War, the emerging science of psychoanalysis.[3] Precisely because of the turbulent times in which he lived, Auden was also confronted with major life changes and had to adjust to new situations and contexts that required being positioned or positioning himself in terms of identity: his father's long absence during the First World War (he was only seven when Dr George Auden enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was posted overseas); the poet's homosexual and artistic awakening at the age of fifteen and his subsequent struggle with family and social opposition; his trip to Spain during the country's civil war; his controversial decision to move to the US with Christopher Isherwood in the late 1930s;[4] and his embracing and discarding political and religious beliefs, among others. Speaking of the poet's life in context, Tony Sharpe claims that Auden "himself was very aware of the power of contexts to shape or distort thought and action and

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aware, too, of a certain ambiguity in their nature: there were contexts one could choose and others which claimed you for themselves" (2). When being compelled to meet certain expectations or to define himself in terms of binary oppositions, the poet always struggled to overcome or reconcile these oppositions.

Living in a time in which homosexuality was both legally forbidden and considered despicable by most people, Auden's options were severely limited. For much of his career, he was worried about the impact his homosexuality would have on his attempt to fashion himself as a public poet, as the risk of public scandal and even imprisonment was high in Britain and the US until the late 1960s. Looming over his sexual life was the fate of Oscar Wilde in 1895 and the anti-sodomy laws, which had remained in force and sent a distressing word of warning to all those who did not conform to strict gender roles.[5] Despite Auden's initial attempts to "cure" himself—he was psychoanalyzed in 1928 "to improve" his "inferiority complex and to develop heterosexual traits" (Bucknell, "Freud's" 140)[6]—the issue of his homosexuality remains one of the most significant contexts for the study of Auden and of the ways he imagined himself. The impossibility of coming out in the 1920s, when he was an adolescent, placed a heavy burden on him and determined to a great extent his future identity and thus his way of life as a whole.

Nevertheless, Auden's homosexuality, as Richard R. Bozorth suggests, "has historically had a peculiar status" in the existing biographies of the poet: "obvious to some, invisible to others, and with some notable exceptions, consciously or unconsciously treated by critics as a matter of little or no importance" (4).[7] Among the "notable exceptions" that deserve mentioning, there is a praising chapter on the poet's work in James Southworth's *Sowing the Spring* (1940) that acknowledges "the prominence of an unconventional (the homosexual) theme" (135). In the second of the several lectures Randall Jarrell wrote on Auden's poetry in the 1940s, he lists a few "individual interests and dislikes" from which the poet built "the materials for his new order" and argues that, unlike "the ordinary sexual values," which were "rejected as negative and bourgeois," homosexuality was for Auden "a source of positive revolutionary values" (qtd. in Burt 33–34). Likewise, when speaking of Auden's literary achievements in 1973, Clive James identifies sexuality as one of the most influential elements in the poet's writing, arguing that in "an epoch when homosexuality was still a crime," Auden's "talent was the very one which could not be used unguarded to speak of love" and that "for that, he was forced from the concrete to the abstract, and so moved from the easy (for him) to the difficult" ("Auden's Achievement").

More recently, especially since the advent of queer theory in the early 1990s, literary critics have increasingly sought to "queer" Auden, exploring the significance of homosexuality in his poetic output. The term "closeted" (which literally alludes to being deliberately hidden away in a dark, closed-in space) is now an unavoidable concern in Auden's work and in Auden criticism. The term is central to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's pioneering study, *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), where she describes the

closet as "a defining structure for gay oppression in this [the twentieth] century" (71) and an image that has been euphemised (or stigmatised) in literature as representing silence. In his analysis of Auden's poems from 1927 onwards, Bozorth argues that the poet's career was tied to "a process of homosexual self-interrogation" (3) unparalleled in modern poetry: "his ongoing grapplings with these fraught binaries [the relation between public and private, the personal and the political] reflect in large measure his negotiation of the constraints of speakability traditionally faced by gay, lesbian and queer writers" (3–4). Until now, however, the question of how Auden's earlier poetic output, that is the 1922–27 poems, has been "marked and structured and indeed necessitated and propelled by the historical shapes of homophobia, for instance, by the contingencies and geographies of the highly permeable closet" (Sedgwick 165), has remained largely overlooked, and much uncertainty still exists about the extent to which the poet's "coming out" experience circulated in the vicinity of trauma and was marked by it.

To approach this important issue in Austen's juvenilia I draw in part on Ann Cvetkovich's queer approach to trauma studies. She argues for the necessity of recognising forms of trauma that, apart from relying on experiences of war and catastrophe, belong to the domain of the everyday. By rejecting rigid distinctions between private and public trauma, Cvetkovich identifies a category of "insidious trauma" that, while neglected by psychiatry and psychoanalytic studies, operates nonetheless—and mainly—on sexual minorities (21). In this essay, therefore, I examine the extent to which Auden's embattled and necessarily secretive approach to sexuality was learned in childhood and adolescence when the vulnerability of his body and psyche was traumatically negotiated against what Adrienne Rich calls "compulsory heterosexuality"[8] and Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner regard as "heteronormativity."[9] I rely on both Sedgwick's and Bozorth's explorations of certain key binaries—secrecy/revelation, speakability/unspeakability—that, I argue, provide shape to the implicit doubleness that characterises the formation of Auden's identity. Cvetkovich's notion of "insidious trauma" provides the basis for interpreting this doubleness as the subtle and unusual vestige of trauma, trauma that helped to forge Auden's early poetic representation of sexuality and intimacy and had an impact on his sense of self.[10]

Based on the analysis of some of the poems contained in Katherine Bucknell's second edition of Auden's *Juvenilia: Poems 1922–1928* (*JV*), in this paper I explore an important period of Auden's creative development—the age of fifteen up to the age of twenty-one—to study the traumatic impact that his religious upbringing, his father's long absence during the First World War, his consequent exposure to the influence of his mother, and his reading of Freud's theories on sexual repression all had on his sexual awakening and on the development of his sexuality. My contention is that the poet's guilt and silence, and hence his invisibility and privacy—both chosen and enforced—were a decisive influence on his use of gay subtext and the language of the closet to address homosexuality in his poetic output in this period. Although

it is in the late 1920s and 1930s that Auden started using the coterie language of "Mortmere" to articulate, as Bozorth claims, "the psychic dynamics of closeted desire and the social dynamics of writing for readers knowing and unknowing, known and unknown" (20), his juvenile poems constituted the appropriate space to initiate this "self-conscious coding" (19) and develop challenging ideas about his self-understanding (Bennet and Royle 130).[11] In a Ricoeurian sense, Auden's juvenilia functioned as a laboratory in which the poet experimented with judgements of approval and condemnation (Ricoeur 115), negotiated life choices, and struggled over circumstances of traumatic anxiety surrounding the shaping of his gay identity, circumstances that seemed to be closely connected to those surrounding the impact of the Great War on British consciousness. By acknowledging the trauma of coming out, Auden's personal story also embraced a collective story. My contention is that his implicit disclosure of the dilemmas of post-war national identity was, moreover, significantly inflected by his attention to gender and to his disturbing sexual awakening.

From 1922 to 1928, Auden wrote about two hundred poems—most of them published in Bucknell's *Juvenilia*. Throughout those six years, he was a dedicated apprentice, reading, learning, and mainly imitating other poets: "He looked for examples everywhere [including the teachings of Marx and Freud] and imitated everything he liked" (Bucknell, Introduction xix). Yet his own emotional experiences also weighed heavily in his early work. Most of these poems, as Roger Kimball suggests, "betray false or incomplete starts, uncertain development and various failures of taste and tone." Like most juvenilia, they are a "curious blend of the childish and the mature … adding the freshness of childhood perceptions to an awareness, often unconscious, of adult realities on the fringes of the childhood world" (Tanner).[12]

These "false starts" and "failures" may be understood in part by considering the fact that Auden's poetic initiation as a fifteen-year-old adolescent coincided with his sexual awakening. When Robert Medley—the boy who inspired his earliest love poems—asked Auden during a school trip in 1922 if he wrote poetry, he realised that that was his true vocation:

> Kicking a little stone, he turned to me
> And said, "Tell me, do you write poetry?"
> I never had, and said so, but I knew
> That very moment what I wished to do. (Auden, "Letter" 208)

Of particular significance at this early stage is the simultaneous construction of the intellectual/textual and the real: Auden's personal life, as this poem suggests, was deeply entangled with his literary life from the very beginning.

More specifically, Auden's writing vocation and sexual identity—together with guilt and a possible (associated) loss of faith—seem to have been equally important

concerns to him at that time.[13] Humphrey Carpenter, one of Auden's biographers, suggests that—like most children who grow up to be gay—the young poet felt guilty about his homoerotic desires during his school days. Although "mild homosexual intrigues and scandals were part of daily life" in most public schools, Auden's particular school, Gresham's, made "boys feel profoundly uncomfortable about sex" (Carpenter 27). Through sermons in the school chapel and an honour code system that inculcated feelings of male loyalty but warned about the dangers of masturbation and demanded boys act as informers on each other, Gresham's embodied the main traits of the public-school ethos—an ethos that Auden remembers as damaging. "I believe no more potent engine for turning [boys] into neurotic innocents, for perpetuating those very faults of character which it was intended to cure, was ever devised," Auden writes in "The Liberal Fascist," his contribution to Graham Greene's 1934 collection *The Old School* (qtd. in Carpenter 24). Indeed, one of the significant aspects of public-school life was the exaltation of what Peter Parker calls "the Romantic friendship": the "passionate but sexless liaisons between boys," which often led to "sexual confusion … compounded of suspicion, ignorance and repression" (105–06). In the same 1934 essay, Auden compares his public-school education to living in a fascist state: "The whole of our moral life was based on fear, on fear of the community, not to mention the temptation it offered to the natural informer, and fear is not a healthy basis. It makes one furtive and dishonest and unadventurous. The best reason I have for opposing Fascism is that at school I lived in a Fascist state" (qtd. in Carpenter 25). Like many other former public-school boys, Auden drifted into manhood with a strong resentment at the erosion of individuality and subjection to the institution involved in his public-school upbringing.

Trauma made itself felt in Auden's everyday life and nowhere more insidiously than in converting sexual pleasure into guilt and in preventing him from acknowledging such pleasure. Some of the poems he wrote in 1922 while at Gresham's, for instance "To a Toadstool," betray an atmosphere of homoerotic desire and associated fear, with an overall effect of paralysis and painful silencing. Using the language of fairy tales and fables, which reveals, according to Bucknell, the influence of de la Mare and Keats (*JV* 14), the poem takes the reader into a world of sensual feelings: "O Scarlet Beauty with thy milk-white eyes / See, I have plucked thee up thou lovely thing." The toadstool will give the speaker the visionary powers or the power of love he longs to have: "For he, I know, who eats thee shall be wise / And see the fairies dancing in a ring" (*JV* 14). Yet these feelings are disregarded because of the fear of how people might react to them: "But I have heard too oft men's tales and lies / So now with hand pressed close to lip I quail" (*JV* 14). Based on this last line, Bucknell suggests that Auden's love for Medley was a secret too sacred to be disclosed even to the nearest and the dearest. But if sacred, it was also frightening. He did not dare declare it to Medley himself, not even when he visited the Audens in Harborne over New Year's (1923–24). Nevertheless, the poem does communicate, in ways that reflect the traumatic anxiety of Auden's coming-out

experience as well as the strategies he was discovering to deal not only with certain feelings and desires that take on a queer resonance but also with the necessity to keep them secret—"hand pressed close to lip." Auden accepts this secrecy less out of sympathy for Medley than out of a desire to avoid the crisis of exposure. As a young boy who was just beginning to lay claim to his gay identity, he was also beginning to learn how to rely on coded poetry as the format for acting on that claim and for communicating his newly discovered identity to other individuals who shared (or at least did not disregard) it.

The fact that many of Auden's early poems are arranged without the introduction of a title, almost in a secretive manner, suggests that his writing involved both disclosure and silence and was, as William Leap argues when discussing the convergence of language, identity construction, and gay socialisation, "highly dependent on situated (rather than pre-discursive meanings), on negotiation and inference" ("Language" 259) and "in some instances on conditions of risk" (*Words Out* 72–73). The necessity to disguise and, at the same time, personalise the content of his poems became a habit that persisted into his young adulthood and beyond. In the late 1920s, Auden scribbled the initials of the young men he fell in love with and to whom his verses were addressed in the copies he handed to his Oxford gay friends (among them, Christopher Isherwood and Stephen Spender).[14] Later, the poet would adopt other ways of challenging social censorship. Probably as a result of the year he spent in Germany after graduation from Oxford in 1928, and of his admiration for Germany as "a forward-looking sexual utopia," Auden used the German language to write "his most sexually explicit poems." These poems "were shown only to a few friends" and were not published until the 1990s (Bozorth 22–23).

The juvenilia, however, were not always this cryptic. For instance, Bucknell considers it likely that Mrs Auden found a "revealing" poem "about the swimming pool at Gresham's" while Robert Medley was visiting the family over New Year's 1923–24. It seems she detected the homoerotic subtext in it, and the boys were summoned to Dr Auden's study to confirm that their friendship was purely "platonic." (In fact it was; they did not have sex until they met again in Oxford.)[15] In these earlier poems, language is often placed in the intersection between the heteronormative and the marginal. Consider, for instance, the poem beginning "Whenever I see for the first time" that Auden wrote the week he spent with Medley and his family in August 1923 in Appletreewick, in the Yorkshire dales:

> That summer flies back to me at once
> A week of it
> At least, we two spent up on the moors,
> Happiness-lit. (*JV* 75)

Although, as Bozorth notes, it was not until the late 1920s that Auden fully assimilated "Mortmere, the coterie mythology invented by Christopher Isherwood and Edward

Upward as Cambridge undergraduates," and "adapted its discursive obliquities for a coded poetic about homosexual desire and identity" (11–12), here the poet attempts to find the language to describe the agonies of unfulfilled love and of his male-centred sexual identity through "poetic self-conscious coding" (19). His repressed sexuality and emotional isolation are projected onto the creation of a private, secret world, "up on the moors."

These agonies, and their rupturing effect on the poet's identity, reveal Auden's gradual breaking away from the influence of Wordsworth's tone and style. As in many other early landscape poems, in "Whenever I see for the first time," Auden explores the conventions of the sincere and self-revelatory greater Romantic lyric, yet there are hints of the duplicity of Mortmere that make the Romantic fusion of self with Nature impossible. Instead, the speaker is introduced as a spy, a wanderer, an exile who looks "from road or train" at the northern limestone landscape of his childhood—"the sundown on the cliff, /… the wheel [tossing] at the mill" (JV 76)—and dreams of a world of happiness and joy that is, for him, unattainable.[16] Although the benign nature of the landscape is not yet challenged by any palpable obstacle—there are "No hedges along the field"—there seems to be a frontier, a spatial (or maybe psychological?) barrier between the land and the stranger—the "grey / Stone walls again"(*JV* 75). In language of physical crippling of the senses, he asks:

> Who deafened our ears during those days,
> Who dulled our eyes,
> That life's great doxology we failed
> To recognize?" (JV 76)

The failure of "ears" and "eyes," rendered incapable of functioning, might represent the painful sense of sexual failure that separates the poet from any possibility of satisfaction and from developing an institutionalised or stable form of sexual identity.

Auden's sexual frustration is revealed in his juvenilia through a complex interplay between expression and withdrawal, the language of repression and impossibility being used to vividly render the pain of unexpressed feeling. The young poet's love for Robert Medley (and later for another classmate, John Pudney) remained celibate during his school days, though, in Medley's case, not unrequited. The stern implementation of anti-homosexual attitudes at Gresham's School (homophobia, heterosexism, and moral condemnations of homosexuality) contributed directly to Auden's self-protective reticence to reveal a homosexual identity. Auden's platonic infatuations would radically turn into sexual promiscuity in 1925 when he went up to Christ Church, Oxford. Auden seemed then determined to liberate himself from "shame," as Silvan Tomkins understands it, that is to say, as "inevitable for any human being insofar as desire outruns fulfilment sufficiently to attenuate interest without destroying it" (406). In Tomkins's view, "the most general sources of shame are the varieties of barriers to the varieties of objects of excitement and enjoyment, which

reduce positive affect sufficiently to activate shame, but not so completely that the original object is renounced: "I want, but—" (406). That is how Auden appears to have experienced homosexuality, which at this time was implicitly accepted—if not fashionable—in Oxford. His repressed sexual energy was channelled through clandestine encounters that gave him sexual gratification but did not grant him much hope of living his sexuality more freely and openly. Although the poet would never become an "aesthete," like some of his Oxonian predecessors, he did become sexually active and was relatively open about it. His sense of urgency to experience sex at the expense of self-preservation was clear; however, as Bucknell points out, "he [also] associated reciprocal love with despair," and "guilt about his homosexuality drove him continually in search of new partners" (Introduction xli). Promiscuity would not eradicate the lingering effects of sexual repression and heteronormativity in the poet's early years. On the contrary, it would lead to a continuous struggle to articulate a fully recognised subjectivity and public agency in his later works.

However, awareness of his emotional vulnerability was Auden's most powerful tool as a young poet. Spender, in his autobiography, *World within World*, claims that "self-knowledge, complete lack of inhibition and sense of guilt, were essential to the fulfilment of his [Auden's] aims" (53). But in fact, "inhibition and sense of guilt" were also essential to his writing. There is an effort of containment underpinning his poems—a hesitancy, procrastination, and delay—that marks not only the frustration of sexual desire bent away from expression but also the anonymity, promiscuity, and clandestinity of his sexual encounters. The poems Auden writes while at Oxford describe, in the words of his literary executor, Edward Mendelson, "variations on a single theme: life is a constant state of isolation and stagnated desire—interrupted by moments of sexual satisfaction or disappointment—which the young poet unprotestingly accepts" (*Early* 139). In "This peace can last no longer than the storm / Which started it" (1925), Auden recollects not only the abandonment of any restraint on his sexuality but the peace—or is it the sadness?— that follows after fleeting lust is satisfied:

> As surely as the wind
> Will bring a lark song from the cloud, not rain,
> Shall I know the meaning of lust again;
> Nor sunshine on the weir's unconscious roar
> can change whatever I might be before.
> I know it, yet for this brief hour or so
> I am content, unthinking and aglow …. (*JV* 206)

The speaker gives the impression of being emotionally prone, "content, unthinking"; he also relishes the intensity of the lustful feelings he is still "aglow" with, the joy and pleasure of the passing encounter, and the liberating feeling that there is no commitment attached, that strangers can be lovers and yet remain strangers. He is

filled with forward-looking assertiveness, predicting what he will "know" and what he will "be." He alternates rapidly between present satisfaction and future "lust" because he knows that these emotions will recur endlessly in the future.[17]And so will this state of doubleness, which involves both the need to escape the normalizing and criminalizing logic of heteronormativity and at the same time the attraction to that which is unnameable and clandestine.

The poetic expression of doubleness, though, requires the subversion of language and a subtle dialectical dexterity, dexterity with which Auden was fortunately endowed. This quest for subversion led to the poet's gradual abandonment of Romantic subjectivity and to his engagement with T. S. Eliot's alienation and fragmentary modernism. Although it would not be fair to reduce Auden's early concerns solely to resistance to social censorship and to the closet (he was also absorbed in his reading of Marxism, modern psychology, sciences, and a host of other interests), his embrace of high modernist techniques while he was in Oxford in 1926 might be understood not just as an aesthetic choice but, as Bozorth suggests, as his "intricate response" to the painful difficulty of writing "public poetry out of the closet" (19). "The Letter," which Auden writes from his parents' home during the Easter vacation of 1926, and which begins "He reads and finds the meaning plain," revolves around an actual letter the speaker has received from a university friend/sexual partner breaking off an affair. Much as we saw in "This peace can last no longer than the storm," the speaker moves between ironic resignation and promiscuous uncertainty: "It leaves no problem for the mind, / Though love he is surprised to find / So economically slain" (*JV* 132). The end of this relationship proves to be traumatic, but it also teaches him that life goes on, and that one can still live with the nonsense of its trauma. For a moment, the world seems to collapse. Yet life and nature continue, unmoved by the speaker's sorrows:

> At first he looks around and hears
> Huge castles toppling to the ground
> As if the earth ceased spinning round,
> The sudden panic of the years.
> But trees and singing birds renew
> The stablished sequence of the laws;
> Creation shows no vital flaws
> For God to pay attention to. (JV 132–33)

The poet's "compulsive allegorising of the pervading theme of love," as Fuller calls it (253), and its connection to nature, is evident in the lines, "But trees and singing birds renew / The stablished sequence of the laws." This allegorising, combined with the poet's secrecy, might serve not only to reinforce the coterie's privileged knowledge and to avoid censorship but also to start questioning the benign nature of the landscape and of its endless cycles: "Creation shows no vital flaws / For God to

pay attention to." Thus Auden constructs nature as an image of frustrated desire and divided self.

A year later, and probably as a result of having another love interest in mind, Auden discarded "The Letter" and re-wrote it to begin, "From the very first coming down," which is how the poem is known today. The speaker's coming "into a new valley" might allude to T. S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" and "The Hollow Men," both in its sense of dislocation between appearance and reality, intent and outcome, and in its sense of liberation from social constraints (the opposite to the idea of the entrapping closet), probably through the beginning of a new relationship, a sunny day, or the arrival of spring. The speaker's "frown" may be due to "the sun and a lost way" (*JV* 231); or perhaps, as Bozorth suggests, it is "the addressee" who "may be finding himself 'lost' in more than a spatial sense" (40). Here it seems that "the healing power of Nature is deconstructed, rather than sentimentally played out" (Bozorth 39). The epistolary poem addresses a "you" that seems to be the speaker's lover (or is it the unknowing reader?)—"you certainly remain: to-day" (*JV* 231).[18]Yet there is a physical and spatial distance between the two, precisely because of the passage of time and of natural cycles and the accumulation of love's disappointments: "The year's arc a completed round / And love's worn circuit re-begun" (*JV* 231). The content of the letter and the promises made are veiled: "Your letter comes, speaking as you, / Speaking of much but not to come" (*JV* 231). The syntax is condensed and twisted and requires putting the words together as in a puzzle to find the missing parts: "Nor speech is close nor fingers numb, / If love not seldom has received / An unjust answer, was deceived" (*JV* 321). Nonetheless, there is a sense of intimacy that the speaker establishes with his addressee through language that suggests some shared knowledge that the poem nonetheless does not openly declare. The image of "the stone smile of this country god / That never was more reticent" allows different interpretations: Bozorth suggests an "analogy between Nature and the beloved," although "nature is very much in the closet, and its sinister 'stone smile' recalls Mortmerean duplicity" (40–41). However, I would argue that the reticence of this country god also signifies the poet's wish to master his intentions as a speaker, as well as his self-restraint, his effort to say no more than what he means. In fact, the decision to rewrite the original poem might have rested on Auden's efforts to go beyond his coterie readership and to reach the uninitiated general reader. Yet the reader's uncertainty is undoubtedly Mortmerean, not only because meaning is being intentionally withheld but also because the reader's lack of knowledge comes from their condition of outsiders.

Auden's deliberate intention to both test and gratify his coterie readership through the veiled treatment of homosexual guilt and shame is evident in "Suppose they met, the inevitable procedure" (1927). Probably one of the most cryptic poems in what Roger Kimball calls "the mature period of Auden's poetical immaturity," the poet unveils another source of insidious friction in his life: his moral struggle as a product of his religious upbringing. As two would-be lovers are compelled to sleep

apart, "though doors are never locked" (JV 220), homosexual love is seen as "this new heroism" against the Christian notion of sexual sin based on the norm of (moral and legitimate) heterosexuality. Religious dogma is described as so outdated as to be nearly dead—"That doddering Jehovah whom they mocked" (*JV* 220). Rich in meaning and allusion, the poem also relies on secret—protective—codes to discuss the feelings of guilt that emerge from the tension between sexual fantasies and the claims and obligations imposed by the Christian law: "Of Hand to nape would drown the staling cry / Of cuckoos, filter off the day's detritus, / And breach in their continual history" (*JV* 220). The speaker acknowledges that disobedience of the norm leads to regret and punishment: "Of those shut altogether from salvation / Down they fell. Sorrow they had after that" (*JV* 220). Raised in a Christian household, Auden was taught to believe that homosexuality was a sin and subject to divine punishment, but here he seems to be ironic about his religious beliefs, mocking the patriarchal sexual ethics as preached and practised in Christian churches, even at his own expense.[19] However, irony unveils the hidden contradictions between Auden's aesthetic and ethical experience. After being deceived throughout his Christian upbringing, he seems to be going through a traumatic transition in which the flesh and the spirit are in perpetual tension.

Auden's recurring and tortured unhappiness in love made him return to this idea of moral duplicity in later poems. This sense of conflict would mark his work throughout his life as he kept searching for a balance between his personal wishes and his religious duties, particularly after he moved to the US and returned to the Anglican faith he had abandoned as an adolescent.[20] The poet's struggle with leaving religion reveals the identity trauma of breaking away from a controlling environment, from a normative lifestyle. Discussing identity and its subversion in Auden's poems, Emig claims the following:

> When identity is present in speakers and others, loved ones or enemies, it is undermined by a setting that is constantly on the verge of collapse into surrealism. When it is absent, the ordered and realistic imagery not only demands it, but virtually creates it in implicit representations. In both cases, the poems suffer from their contradictions: either their logic and coherence is distorted or their intelligibility threatened. The real absence of identity would indeed be the collapse of poetic discourse, its sliding into a discourse of madness. (117)

Auden's poems provide their own answer to this dilemma: the poet's continuous attempt to come to terms with his homosexuality is abandoned in a quest for a new poetic reality that always threatens to collapse, to slide into madness. The power of the heterosexual majority is at best intimidating, if not discouraging, when it comes to discussing alternative gender identities, yet what Auden struggles to achieve in his

verses is escaping from this "pervasive cluster of forces" (Rich 640), without being affiliated or alienated, complicit or subverted by them.

It seems that much of the suffering Auden had to endure as a closeted young boy was the inward pain he bore—out of love for his mother—in having to conceal who he really was. The imprint on the poet's identity left by the strict discipline at Gresham's, by his religious upbringing, and by the period of sexual promiscuity at Oxford, was further reinforced by the anti-homosexual attitudes of his own family. Auden's sexual orientation was a matter of concern to them, particularly to Constance Auden, who is usually described not only as religious but as over-controlling. If ever a mother embodied what Sedgwick has cleverly acknowledged as the "topos of the omnipotent, unknowing mother … in twentieth-century gay male high culture" (248–49), then that was Auden's mother. Bucknell claims that Constance distrusted Auden's gay friends and refused to accept his son's growing independence; in fact, she was so concerned about her son's sexuality, that she personally wrote to one of his unrequited suitors, Michael Davidson, an older journalist, to forbid him to see her son (Introduction xxx).

Both what was experienced as maternal possessiveness and his own sense of emotional splitting are amusingly voiced in the following unpublished lines:

> Tommy did as mother told him
> Till his soul had split;
> One half thought of angels
> And the other half of shit. (qtd. in Fuller 29)

The poet blames the troubled relationship with the mother for the insecurities he experienced as an adolescent, believing "what mother told him" to be responsible for his psychological make-up, including his feminine interests and intellectual precocity. The emotional complexity of Auden's feelings is matched by the passionate ambivalence he feels for his mother, the expression of which reflects the cultural and historical convenience of blaming the mother instead of focusing on other forms of attribution and responsibility.

Insofar as he blames his mother, then, Auden's representation of the mother-son relationship as a trauma bond should be read as serving homophobic rather than queer affirmative ends. Sedgwick reminds us of "the homophobic insistence, popularised from Freudian sources with astonishing effect by Irving Bieber and others in the fifties and sixties, that mothers are to be 'blamed' for-always unknowingly-causing their sons' homosexuality" (249). While it is true that mothers have been historically questioned and subjected to a level of scrutiny concerning their children's—especially boys'—sexuality (Du Plessis 146), it is also true that in the 1920s, homosexuality, and broader expressions of non-heteronormativity, were arguably an impossibility everywhere except in the aesthete-homosexual circle at Oxford, and mothers like Constance Auden had no choice but to reproduce

heterosexuality, mainly because, as transmitters of dominant cultural norms, they were constituted by the very heteronormative context that they reconstructed for their children.

By age thirty, Auden is evidently finding ways to resolve the traumas of his childhood, but he never does stop writing about them. In 1937, in a review of a translation of Margery Kempe, Auden writes: "I think that we shall find that all intelligent people … are the products of psychological conflict in childhood, and generally share some neurotic traits" (qtd. in Mendelson 163). He adds, in another essay, that intellectual accomplishments—especially artistic and scientific achievements—can only be possible for those children who manage to "understand the mechanism of the trap" in which they find themselves (qtd. in Mendelson 103). Yet although he seems to have drawn from his childhood experiences to reflect on their contribution to his mature understanding, some of the child's vulnerability emerges behind a mask of irony in Auden's 1936 "Letter to Lord Byron": "let each child have that's in our care/as much neurosis as the child can bear" (Auden, "Letter" 206). The fact that, as an adult, he kept nurturing some kind of enduring, partly contradictory, affection for any kind of social alienation or neurosis that his upbringing might have caused him gives an insight into the traumatic origins of Auden's ideologically complex beliefs and his lifelong preoccupation with some of them. What we see in the aesthetic of doubleness or duplicity that characterizes his mature poetry, in other words, are the effects of lifelong self-repression that both expresses and reinforces a self-divided subjectivity, rooted in the trauma of such unreconcilable feelings as guilt, resentment, and longing.

It is not surprising, then, that in many of Auden's early landscape poems duplicity is linked with guilt. Guilt in fact appears as a central theme, pointing at the poet's attempts to find a place in an unfriendly and even hostile world. In the introduction to her edition of Auden's juvenilia, Bucknell comments upon the poet's repeated sense of exclusion from the natural landscapes he describes. While the idea of emotional isolation has been discussed earlier in connection to sexual frustration through the trope of the border/barrier,[21] Bucknell refers to several early poems—"To a Field-Mouse" (1922–23); "The Old Lead-Mine"(1924); "The Road's Your Place" (1925), and "Who stands, the crux left of the watershed"(1927)—to argue that, in the juvenilia, "Auden's repeated failure to gain access to the natural world is self-imposed" and that "his curiosity or desire regarding nature is frustrated by his own guilty fear that he is unworthy of it or that he might harm it" (xxvi–xxvii). Discussing "The Road's Your Place," Michael O'Neil similarly acknowledges young Auden's recreation of the emotions of guilt and fear:

> all at once
> Three crags rose up and overshadowed me
> "What are you doing here, the road's your place"
> —Between their bodies I could see my tarn— (*JV* 95)

In O'Neal's view, "the script is one of frustrated 'seeing,' and a post-Freudian feeling of being 'overshadowed' by the rebuking parent" (84). In effect, as Bucknell suggests, "there are clear parallels between the attitude towards Mother Nature expressed in the poems and Auden's attitude towards his own mother" (xxvii), parallels that may remind us of Freud's forewarning about the unresolved Oedipal complex of the "mother's boy" who could not free himself from her clutches.[22] Moreover, Auden's body of works suggests that he never truly managed (or wanted) to escape from his mother's influence: "As an adult he loved to invoke her imaginary judgement on his own or other people's behaviour: his usual phrase of criticism of any conduct that earned his disapproval was 'mother wouldn't like it'" (Carpenter 11). It is precisely by placing trauma alongside moments of everyday emotional distress, usually confined to the domestic or private sphere, that Auden's poems demand an understanding that moves beyond the medicalized constructions of trauma into its more insidious forms.

Although Dr George Auden, the poet's father, might have been expected to provide the security, both physical and emotional, and the self-confidence that Auden felt his mother had never given him, his long absence from the household during the Great War and what his son perceived as a weak temperament—Auden would claim that "as a husband he [his father] was often henpecked" ("As It Seemed" 501)[23]—led to his developing a confident persona at an early age but at the same time strongly reinforced the poet's feelings of misunderstanding and loss. As the poet later confesses, during his father's absence he exercised more independence than he was willing at the time to admit, when he taught himself about sex from the anatomy manuals in his father's library but kept this fact secret from his mother:

> Father at the wars,
> Mother, tongue-tied with shyness,
> struggling to tell him the Facts of Life he dared not
> tell her he knew already. (1969: 66–67)

At other points as well, as an adult looking back on his childhood, Auden suggests that he became self-assured and self-sufficient at an early age, sometimes to the extent of appearing abrasive to his classmates (Carpenter 21). What is more, in "Letter to Lord Byron," he ironically plays down his father's return from war five years later, treating it as an unimportant occurrence: "Men had stopped throwing stones at one another / Butter and Father had come back again" (207). Yet he also represents the father's long absence, and the poet's subsequent exposure to the authority of the mother, as decisive factors in his development: "I did not lose … my father physically by death, but to some degree I lost him psychologically. I was seven—the age at which … a son begins to take serious notice of his father and needs him most" ("As It Seemed" 500).[24]

A frightening and deeply disturbing experience that Auden describes having when he was about twelve years old, immediately after his father's return from war in 1919, suggests that the goal of constructing himself as a knowing, rational child was not completely successful.[25] In a visit to the northwestern part of the Pennine range, which had once been a major centre for the lead-mining industry, he climbed the hill near the village of Rookhope and dropped a stone into an empty mineshaft. The feeling of awe he experienced when he heard it splash in the distant bottom of the shaft was a ground-breaking moment that marked him throughout his life, as he writes in "New Year Letter" (1941):[26]

> In Rookhope I was first aware
> Of Self and Not-self, Death and Dread:
> Down to the Outlawed, to the Others,
> The Terrible, the Merciful, the Mothers;
> Alone in the hot day I knelt
> Upon the edge of shafts and felt
> The deep *Urmutterfurcht* that drives
> Us into knowledge all our lives,[27]
> The Far interior of our fate
> To civilise and to create. (*JV* 30)

This rather impersonal event is set into a deeply referential context as the quintessential traumatic experience in Freudian terms. Auden wrote about it in 1924, 1925, and 1930. Both "The Old Lead-mine" (1924) (re-written a year or two later as "The Old Mine") and "Like other men when I go past" (1925) describe the same experience, which the poet used again in "Get there if you can see the land you were once proud to own" (1930). Although in the early poems the abandoned mines, the rusting machinery suggest the decline of the lead-mining industry resulting from what Auden perceived as an imperialist war, here the mine alludes to a childhood psychological experience (probably, in Freudian terms, to the surfacing of the "superego" as the guide to conduct). In all three poems, Auden suggests that the psychological wound that results from this childhood event allegorically stands for all the traumatic experiences in his life.

The validity of this interpretation is confirmed by the very frequency with which Auden retold the story, as does the fact that the story was shortened and simplified as the poet grew older. As Cathy Caruth explains, the traumatic experience is typically displaced and compulsively repeated because it cannot be fully mastered or located in time. For this reason, trauma cannot be fully determined by a given traumatic event:

> The pathology cannot be defined either by the event itself—which may or may not be catastrophic, and may not traumatize everyone equally—nor can it be defined in terms of a distortion of the event,

> achieving its haunting power as a result of distorting personal significances attached to it. The pathology consists, rather, solely in the structure of experience or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event. (4-5)

According to Caruth's formulation, in other words, it is because of the *belatedness*, or *latency*, of the traumatic event that trauma holds the present captive to an unrepresentable past, as the one traumatised moves from the trauma itself to survival and then to the an endless procession of different forms of imperfect representation. In a review of three translations by Kafka, Auden similarly suggests that trauma, with its haunting power, might be a source of artistic achievement, and not its effect, as Freud implies: "The so-called traumatic experience," he writes, "is not an accident but the opportunity for which the child has been patiently waiting—had it not occurred, it would have found another, equally trivial in order to find a necessity and direction for its existence, in order that its life may become a serious matter" (186). As Kelly McKinney states, trauma creates "A memory that by definition disrupts the continuity of identity or self (the trauma as discontinuity) but can also ground the survivor's identity or self (part of who I am is the trauma I remember and the trauma story I may tell) (270). Traumatic events cannot be dispelled by being once spoken aloud; this is why trauma became a primary formative and motive force in Auden's ongoing existence as a poet.

The symbolic elements around the mineshaft poem, particularly the drives on which they certainly draw, reveal Sigmund Freud's influence on Auden's poetic output but also Auden's objections to many of Freud's theories later in life. Auden first discovered Freud in his father's library and got well versed in his theories, which he read to understand his own psychological make-up. Yet Auden remained conflicted regarding his sexuality and continued to be so throughout his life. The often pathologising language of Freudian psychoanalysis, like that of his religious upbringing and of his public-school education, told Auden his homosexuality was an abnormality but failed to provide him with an understanding of the oppression of growing up in a heteronormative culture. This led to contradictions, in life and at a theoretical level, that Auden never managed to resolve: both the Freudian ideas of homosexuality as a disease and of the self-conscious mind as an evolutionary development are ambiguously and conflictingly reflected in his poems.[28]

One particular aspect of Freud's theory of homosexuality that was very popular in Auden's youth and had an insidiously traumatic effect on Auden's life and work is his identification of homosexuality with narcissism. Consider, for instance, the poem "Narcissus" (1927), which Auden wrote in Oxford to purge his love for William McElwee. This work anticipates some of the reflections on desire and identity, and on the relation between mind and body, that the poet would record in his journal

during his stay in Berlin from October 1928 to July 1929, among them the idea that "the theoretical gaze is only a step away from the erotic gaze" (Bozorth 55). The pool itself emerges as a barrier, a limit; "We meet at last, this film between us." Yet for Narcissus it is difficult to choose "Between the perception and the noun, / The desire, and the assurance, I and AM"(*JV* 187), and this seems to imply, as Bucknell suggests, that "romance, for him [Auden], was more exciting before it was consummated than afterwards" (Introduction xl). More fundamentally, perhaps, the speaker in "Narcissus" also identifies his love object with his own image in the pool: "It was you or I, Narcissus / … Leave me alone / with you, my sterilised left-handed lover" (*JV* 186). As Tim Dean observes in *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis* (2001), the fact that "Freud conceives" of homosexualty "as self-love rather than love of another … explains why homosexuality can be so readily pathologized" (122). We may see evidence of this theory's traumatic effect on Auden in "Narcissus," where the speaker struggles to remain celibate and achieve spiritual regeneration through physical purity:

> Distant sawing
> Rumours an old touch. I touch the pool,
> Engine of your becoming—Distortion? Grief? Disgust?
> The stone gleams white again behind the eyes. (*JV* 187)

He struggles because the "touch" elicits "Disgust."

Traumatizing as they were, however, Freud's theories, which purported to treat homosexuality scientifically, did represent a key break from earlier models of homoerotic desire and therefore allowed the poet to engage in a complex dialogue with modern theories of sexuality, self-consciousness, and identity. As Bozorth argues, the poet's "very effort to use poetry as a deliberate mode of both cultural diagnosis and self-diagnosis testifies to the historical importance of the aesthetic as a mode of homosexual self-contemplation" (56). What is more, in Auden's constant search for father figures he turned Freud into one of his poetic fathers. In fact, "the search" for a father figure "became part of the pattern of his [Auden's] general intellectual development and a theme of many of his poems" (Bucknell, Introduction xxxiv). Even though Freud was not a poet, he remained a source of literary inspiration to Auden. Even as his work caused Auden insidious trauma, it provided him with tools to reflect on personal experience that enormously influenced his work and that helped him to find his own poetic voice.

One might say almost the same of Auden's biological father. A few days after his return from a father-son trip to Yugoslavia in 1927, Auden wrote "Who stands, the crux left of the watershed," later titled "The Watershed." Although the poem apparently resembles his earlier recollections of lead mines, the earlier symbols of dilapidated mines and machinery here depict something much more complex and poignant:

> On the wet road between the chafing grass
> Below him sees dismantled washing-floors,
> Snatches of tramline running to the wood,
> An industry already comatose,
> Yet sparsely living. A ramshackle engine
> At Cashwell raises water; for ten years
> It lay in flooded workings until this. (*JV* 218)

Mendelson regards the poem as "a divide between his [Auden's] juvenilia and the work of his maturity" (*Early* 40) and Bucknell claims that, either because the trip satisfied "Auden's need for contact with this father or renewed his sense of their shared inadequacies, it certainly made him all the more determined to reinvent himself as a poet" (Introduction i). Probably both assertions are true; likely it is also true that the ambiguity of the opening line—Is "Who stands, the crux left of the watershed" a question or a statement?—is deliberate and constitutes a great part of the poem's disturbing appeal, with its close associations to "borders, separations, finality, cruxes" (Mendelson, *Early* 40). The poem relies on a suffocating combination of complicated syntax and symbols which tend to mirror the dense, gloomy atmosphere of the mine. Words have double meanings and acquire a Mortmerian duplicity that reinforces the sense of (self-) deception that predominates in Auden's early poems: "the crux" might stand as a symbol of a crossroads or of a dilemma; the "watershed" might refer to the high ground from which water flows down to a river or the lower ground where rain collects; the "who" is a ghostly character who might or might not be the speaker, and the word "left" might refer to something that remains or that is located to the left side.

Here, as well, Auden goes back to Thomas Hardy's hawk's vision from a distance, relying on the trope of the spy, the stranger, the foreigner that we saw in the earlier "Whenever I see for the first time," discussed above.[29] However, unlike the feelings of exclusion arising from nature in such earlier poems,[30]the watershed here marks a tangible and unquestionable frontier as the speaker, who is alien to the scene, finally has to turn away. Puzzled and frustrated, he feels that his country is hostile to him: "Go home, now, stranger, proud of your young stock, / Stranger, turn back again, frustrate and vexed: / This land, cut off, will not communicate" (*JV* 218). In Mendelson's words, it is the speaker's "estranged condition, not the landscape of mines," that "is the true Auden country" (*Early* 42). By the end of the poem, the "Stranger"—"taller than grass, / Ears poise[d] before decision"—must "turn back" from the watershed, as if "scenting danger"(*JV* 218). By this time the watershed has also turned into a temporal barrier, and the speaker is not even allowed to indulge in nostalgia or decide on a likely future. He stands, but he is utterly lost and unable to move in any direction.

This inability to connect with the landscape on a spiritual and physical level may reflect more than one kind of trauma. Throughout this essay I have argued that such

moments convey Auden's pervasive sense of guilt for his homosexual identity, a sense of guilt that, as said above, would trouble him all throughout his life. However, his trauma might also stem from pain he suffered because of the Great War coupled with the guilt experienced by not being directly involved in the actual fighting. Janis Stout's *Coming out of War* (2016) challenges the pervasive idea that only soldiers can understand the realities of warfare to argue that "anyone who has lived through any of its effects—loss of loved ones, a feeling for others' losses, economic disruption, political repression, horror and moral revulsion at the spectacle of cruelty—has experienced some aspect of the total experience of war" (64). In that sense, being a child during the conflict and, therefore, rendered non-participant in its actuality—but culturally seen as part of the cause for which the soldiers were fighting—young Auden might have been just as affected by the war as those at the front, and his voice might deserve to be heard as a response to the pervasive spectre of the war in British consciousness.

Through my exploration of Auden's early poetic output arising from the traumatic circumstances surrounding his coming-out experience, I have attempted to make evident how trauma made itself felt into the poet's everyday life, and nowhere more insidiously or insistently than into his grappling with sexual identity as he was leaving childhood, affecting it through forms of heteronormative oppression and homophobia. Through the use of gay subtext, which progressively evolved into the coterie discourse of Mortmere, Auden's early poems set out to trace, as Colm Tóibín suggests in *Love in a Dark Time*, the "tension between the fearless imagination and the fearful self" (8), a tension that denotes "the explicit drama of being" oneself (6) and the necessity to both question heteronormative dominance and expiate the feelings of guilt emerging from the duality involved in being in and coming out. In drawing attention to the insidious forms of trauma permeating Auden's self-contained and secretive approach to sexuality in his juvenilia I hope to have thrown some light into the reading of Auden's later texts and allowed a wider conceptualisation of homosexuality in his works.

Notes

[1] The idea of "duplicity" or "doubleness" has been frequently discussed in the study of Victorian masculinities and refers to the belief that "individuals can have an inner and private existence that conceals the subject's desires from public scrutiny" (Danahay 136). Auden came across the word "double" in Charles Williams's *The Descent of the Dove*, in a passage that quoted Montaigne's "De la Gloire": "We are, I know not how, double in ourselves, so that what we believe we disbelieve, and cannot rid ourselves of what we condemn" (Auden, qtd in Mendelson 450). This sentence became the epigraph to *The Double Man*. The title of the UK edition, also published in 1941, was *New Year Letter* (the poem "New Year Letter," published within this book, is mentioned elsewhere in this paper).

[2] Although Auden's poetry rejects being pigeonholed as either modern or postmodern, his exploration and problematisation of the self anticipates a postmodern conundrum, that which denies the existence of a unified self and reveals marked feelings of dislocation, alienation, cultural displacement, and a fragmented sense of identity. For more on Auden's shift from modernism to postmodernism see Rainer Emig's *W. H. Auden: Towards a Postmodern Poetics*, especially the first chapter, "Taming the Monster."

[3] Edward Mendelson, Auden's literary executer and editor, does not hesitate to claim that "Auden was the first poet writing in English who felt at home in the twentieth century. He welcomed into his poetry all the disordered conditions of his time, all its variety of language and event" (Preface ix).

[4] Driven by personal and professional reasons, Auden's immigration to the US, and the public significance his decision had at the time, led to a tendency to study his literary career and reception as divided into two phases: the early British and the late American Auden.

[5] Although female homosexuality was never explicitly targeted by any legislation, male homosexuality had been illegal for centuries in Britain. With the passing of the Offences Against the Person Act in 1861, the death penalty was abolished for acts of sodomy—instead, they were made punishable by a minimum of ten years imprisonment. Until the Sexual Offences Act of 1967—which legalised homosexuality on the condition that it was consensual, in private, and between two men over the age of twenty-one—male homosexual acts were regarded as "gross indecency," and the penalty was to be imprisonment for up to two years, "with or without hard labour." The situation in the US, where Auden lived from 1939 onwards, was somewhat different because of the judicial variation between the states. Sexual acts between persons of the same sex have been legal nationwide in the US since 2003, pursuant to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Lawrence v. Texas. For more on homosexuality in Auden's times, see Gregory Woods and Bozorth ("American").

[6] In her introduction to Auden's 1971 lecture, "Phantasy and Reality in Poetry," Katherine Bucknell refers to Auden's plans to visit the psychoanalyst in a letter the poet wrote to his brother John in July 1927: "I am probably going to be psycho-analysed next vac; by a lady (the lady may have been Margaret Marshall, who had previously analysed Cecil Day Lewis) who analysed a friend of mine with the most astonishingly good results" (qtd. in Bucknell, "Freud's" 140).

[7] While some of the poet's biographers (Charles Osborne, 1980; George Bahlke, 1970) tend to omit references to his homosexuality, others—Stephen Spender (1975); Richard Davenport-Hines (1995); Humphrey Carpenter (1981); Dorothy Farnan (1985)—primarily focus on the impact of Auden's sexuality on his personal and professional decisions and on his understanding of the human condition.

[8] Adrienne Rich's essay, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," was published in 1980 and later in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985* (1986). Rich argues that heterosexuality is not natural, but an institution imposed on women to keep them subordinate: "The institutions by which women have traditionally been controlled—patriarchal motherhood, economic exploitation, the nuclear family, compulsory heterosexuality—are being strengthened by legislation, religious fiat, media imagery, and efforts at censorship" (41). Though Rich's concept applies to female (not male) sexuality, the dominant discourse condemning lesbian sex to silence is applicable to sexual contact between men as well.

[9] In Berlant and Warner's view, "heteronormativity" refers to "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged" (548).

[10] A study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) and Boston Children's Hospital researchers has found that there is a higher prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in young adult gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and "mostly heterosexuals" compared with completely heterosexuals at considerably younger ages than previously identified. The researchers found higher symptoms of PTSD in sexual minorities compared with heterosexuals in individuals in their early twenties (Roberts *et al.*, 2012).

[11] When Auden entered Oxford, a homosexual subculture was emerging among politicised students: "it was the Auden group [a group of British and Irish writers that included W. H. Auden, Louis MacNeice, Cecil Day-Lewis, Stephen Spender, Christopher Isherwood, and sometimes Edward Upward and Rex Warner] that most visibly exemplified this cultural tendency; and as the supposed leader of the group, and its most authoritatively vocal member, he was himself his embodiment" (Woods 94). The group was deeply concerned with the worldwide economic depression, the rise of Fascisms, the Spanish Civil War, and the beginning of WWII. Many of them wrote of love and homosexual desire and did it through coded language.

[12] By 1930, when he was only twenty-three years of age, Auden had already had a book of poetry published by Faber and Faber. This was part of T. S. Eliot's endeavour to bring younger poets onto the Faber list. Yet, technically, Auden's first book of poems was published in 1928; it was hand-printed by Stephen Spender (in collaboration with an Oxford printer) in an edition of about thirty copies which were distributed to friends.

[13] Until 1922 Auden had expected to pursue a career as a mining engineer: the derelict lead mines of northern England were a "sacred landscape" for him and a source of poetic inspiration. As the son of a doctor, he always remained interested in scientific ways of thinking and knowing. Science was always a tool and a point of view to Auden, exemplified importantly in the works of Sigmund Freud, which he found in his father's library and read copiously. One of his friends at Gresham's, John Pudney, recalls that once Auden threw his poems into the school pond, declaring that he was done with poetry and that "the human race would be saved by science" (Bucknell, Introduction xliv).

[14] One of the unrequited love poems Auden wrote in November 1927 while in Oxford, "Because sap fell away," bears the note "For G.C." and refers to Gabriel Carritt, a "strikingly attractive" boy who rejected Auden's sexual advances (Carpenter 75–76).

[15] Another poem of about the same time and laden with homoerotic associations and sexual frustration has survived, "Early Morning Bathing," and was published in Bucknell's anthology: "This world is far too good sometimes / For foolish folk like you and me" (*JV* 19).

[16] This is characteristic of later poems. See, for instance, Auden's version of the Old English poem "The Wanderer," written in 1930, after his own wanderings in pre-Hitler Germany, where homosexuality was still tolerated.

[17] "Taller to-day, we remember similar evenings," written two years later, also explores the sense of calm after a passionate sexual encounter: "Again in the room with the sofa hiding the grate, /Look down to the river when the rain is over …." The speaker seems to have found tranquillity, yet he still feels emotionally distant—"happy now, though no nearer each other" (Auden, qtd. in Mendelson 91).

[18] In Chester Kallman's copy of the 1934 Random House Poems, Auden wrote the initials "W.M." indicating it referred to William McElwee, a fellow undergraduate with whom Auden was apparently in love.

[19] About Auden's religious upbringing, Carpenter writes: "Both his parents were the children of Church of England vicars, but while his father had a rather detached and intellectual attitude towards religion, his mother was a deeply believing Christian. She saw to it that family prayers were held daily, and she took the children to morning and evening services at Solihull parish church every Sunday …. At the age of six, Wystan acted as a 'boat boy' at these services" (6) But when he was about fifteen years old, he put his religious beliefs aside for his enthusiasm for poetry, which came simultaneously with family turbulence after their acknowledgement of his homosexuality. Nevertheless, the poet's attachment to the Christian faith remained strong even during his years of acknowledged atheism and became unequivocal after his official return to the church in 1940.

[20] While acknowledging social institutions and limits, the poet's struggle with indeterminacy and uncertainty denotes a desire to both question the purpose of religion and expiate the feelings of guilt attested precisely by the irremediable split in his character. For more on the poet's sense of duplicity, see note 1.

[21] See the discussion around "Whenever I see for the first time" (1923), above.

[22] Auden himself recognised the parallel between Mother Nature and his own mother in the prologue to *The Orators*: "By landscape reminded once of his mother's figure" (which he later included under the title "Adolescence" (qtd. in Bucknell, Introduction xxvii).

[23] The essay "As It Seemed to Us" (*Forewords and Afterwords*, 1974) is crowded with interesting recollections of Auden's childhood.

[24] In her introduction to the juvenilia, Bucknell acknowledges two early poems written almost at the end of a father-son trip to Yugoslavia, in which Auden sees the father as "the source of what he regarded as inherited weakness in himself" (xlix): "Truly our fathers had the gout" (1927) and "We, knowing the family history" (1927).

[25] Bucknell claims that although "Rookhope (Weardale, Summer 1922)" dates the poet's traumatic experience in the summer of 1922, in Auden's lecture on Freud, "Phantasy and Reality in Poetry" (1971), he states that the Rookhope passage in "New Year Letter" refers to himself as a twelve-year-old.

[26] See note 1.

[27] The notion of "Urmutterfurcht" (primitive mother fear) was borrowed from Wagner's *Siegfried* and can be connected, in Bucknell's words, to "a conflict he felt between desire for independence and fear of losing his mother's love; it can also be understood on a more primal (or until he had read Freud, unconscious) level as the representation of a conflict between incestuous sexual desire for his mother and fear of gratifying that desire" (Introduction xxvii).

[28] For more on Auden's conflicted relationship with Freud's theories, see Bozorth's "The Question Is What Do We Mean by Sex": Diagnosis and Disorder" in *Auden's Games of Knowledge*, pp. 53–89.

[29] See the discussion of "Whenever I see for the first time" (1923), above.

[30] See the discussion of "The Road's Your Place" (1925), above.

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"THE PERIPATETIC PHILOSOPHER": UNLOCKING THE CHILDHOOD TRAUMA OF RICHARD JEFFERIES

Rebecca Welshman
Independent Scholar

RICHARD Jefferies (1848–1887) was one of England's foremost writers on nature and the countryside. After his death, aged thirty-eight, his works found greater popularity, and he was often included with high-profile contemporaries in assessments of Victorian and Romantic literature. The Manchester Literary Club, for example, ranked Jefferies alongside Thomas Hardy, Wordsworth, Gilbert White, Tennyson, and Thoreau (197). It was his stated goal as an adult writer to express the "magic of sunshine and green things" (qtd. in Matthews and Trietel 81), and we see the early germination of this ambition in the series "Chapters on Churches," written about his home locality and published in the local paper in 1866 under the pseudonym "The Peripatetic Philosopher." The opening paragraph of "Chapters on Churches I" is mystical and serene: "Nature is the church of the philosopher; to him the dim vistas of the forest are as the gloom of a cathedral, the roll of the thunder as the organ's diapason, and every light in heaven a lamp of God. … I listen with a holy calm, approaching delight to the sacred chant" (6). Works such as this can readily be read and enjoyed for their observations of the countryside; the "dim vistas" and "gloom" can thus be easily overlooked.

However, there is also an underlying sense of personal tragedy and unhappiness in Jefferies's writing, which may have its roots in childhood trauma, exacerbated by an innate sensitivity. In 1851, when Jefferies was two years old, his sister Ellen, then aged five, was killed in an accident involving a runaway horse on the road outside the family home. Just over a year later Jefferies's younger brother Harry was born, after which time—when Jefferies was approximately four years old—he was sent away from the rural environment of his boyhood to live in Sydenham with his aunt and uncle.[1] He returned to the family farmhouse at Coate, Swindon, every summer for a month, and at age nine went back there to live. "In effect," as Hugoe Matthews and Phyllis Trietel note, he "was fostered during these

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years …. Difficulties at Coate, with the death of one child and the recent arrival of another, probably precipitated the move, but the inevitable result was that he was separated from his parents at a critical stage in his emotional development" (9). His aunt, having no children of her own, was fortunately able to give him focused attention while he lived with her, and the two remained close well into Jefferies's twenties; his return home at the age of nine may therefore be seen as yet another separation, this time from a surrogate parent. Moreover, Jefferies seems to have been a sensitive and gifted child who was little understood—and much mocked—by the local Swindon community. At the boys-only school he attended, Jefferies never "greatly distinguished himself as a pupil" and did not find popularity with his fellow students, while at home he was "somewhat supercilious, not caring much, if at all, for outdoor games" (Hall 103). This child, sensitive but socially isolated, grew into a rebellious and solitary adolescent.

Although we must be cautious in drawing conclusions based on biographical readings, there is strong evidence in Jefferies's surviving teenage writings that his early life experiences, coupled with the scorn and prejudice he experienced in adolescence, significantly contributed to his feeling of being an outsider and that this feeling spurred him to hone his skill as an observational writer. In this essay, I draw on traumatic stress studies to take a psychobiographical approach to Jefferies's juvenilia, with the aim of identifying the impact of his early experiences on his character and on the writing he produced both as a youth and an adult. Early trauma may account for the persistent, vivid recollections of Coate that Jefferies never stopped writing about and for the antisocial behaviour he describes in his autobiographical work, especially the juvenile novel *Ben Tubbs Adventures*. Placing his juvenilia alongside his mature writing, and reading both through the lens of trauma theory, allows us to trace the impact of early experiences in Jefferies's writing, for whom nature—especially the nature of his childhood—remained perpetually a healing source of solace and a place of escape. The natural world was also for him, from childhood, a place to go and think; hence, the wandering philosopher element of "Chapters on Churches" soon became the driving idea of his works, the element that gave his nature writing its distinct feel, as he observed directly and recorded what he saw.

JEFFERIES did not conform to what was expected of a landowner's son. He knew he was different in some way from everyone else and yet was painfully unable to understand why.[2] Biographers agree that he was unhappy at home, "out of sympathy with his parents, with his brothers and sisters," and had no close friends in the neighbourhood (Foerster 531). His nurse, Matilda Boulter, recalled him as a "delicate young man … of solitary habits" ("Richard Jefferies' Nurse" 66). His biographer Walter Besant, writing in 1888, similarly described him as a "reserved" boy with "a highly nervous and sensitive temperament, … hasty and quick-tempered, impulsive," and "strong in his likes and dislikes." Moreover, "all these

qualities remained … to the end; he was always reserved, always sensitive, always nervous, always quick-tempered … the child was truly father to the man" (Besant 13). His family considered his literary interests an anomaly; until the age of fifteen Jefferies irregularly attended the schools of "the poorer middle class," but after that received no further education (Foerster 531). However, according to his cousin he preferred spending his time in the attic writing "blood-curdling romances" to working on the farm (Matthews and Trietel 14). By 1866, aged seventeen, he began work as a local reporter on the news.

His unhappiness, characterised by Andrew Rossabi as "alienation, spiced by teenage rebelliousness" (434), was the likely incentive behind an attempt to run away in 1864, when he was sixteen years old, with a cousin, with the aim of reaching Moscow: an episode that is recreated in his earliest known novel *Ben Tubbs Adventures* (written in his teens but unpublished in his lifetime). The boys got as far as France before turning back and deciding to go to America instead. After buying tickets for a sailing from Liverpool they had no further funds, and so they were again forced to abandon their trip and return home. Escape out of the question, Jefferies "began to resort to the hills"; he "had little human companionship; he was, in fact, for the most part disliked or merely pitied" (Foerster 531). In "My Old Village," an essay Jefferies wrote towards the end of his life, he recalls the attitudes of his local community: "Was every one, then, so pleasant to me in those days? Were the people all so beneficent and kindly ... no, the reverse; there was not a single one friendly to me" (327).

Jefferies is noted for recalling the house, gardens, and wider rural setting of his childhood in his works—most of all his children's books *Bevis* (1882) and *Wood Magic* (1881), both written in his early thirties and both set in Coate. Many of these descriptions are in the form of prose poetry: meticulously crafted through a process of imaginative recall of his environment exacting in colour and detail. To many readers this has been taken as evidence of nostalgia, as the memorialising of a happier time. However, trauma theory suggests a different interpretation: that Jefferies's consistent recalling and eulogising of his childhood environment and boyhood experiences in his adult works points to a source of unresolved trauma. According to Lenore Terr, children who have experienced trauma—defined as "the mental result of one sudden, external blow, or a series of blows, rendering the young person temporarily helpless and breaking past ordinary coping and defensive operations"—are often characterised by "strongly visualized or otherwise repeatedly perceived memories" (qtd. in Baker 53). Compare Besant's observation:

> Many of us who go away from our native place forget it, or we can only remember it from time to time; the memory grows dim; when we go back we are astonished to find how much we have forgotten, and how distorted are the memories which remain. Richard Jefferies, however, who presently left Coate, never forgot the old place. It

> remained with him—every tree, every field, every hill, every patch of wild thyme—all through his life, clear and distinct, as if he had left it but an hour before. In almost everything he wrote Coate is in his mind. (17–18)

But what gave Jefferies such constant, "clear and distinct" memories of Coate as Besant describes? In a letter to his Aunt Ellen in 1864, the year in which he ran away to the continent, Jefferies writes, "I still walk about with my gun stalking like a chained ghost continually over the same ground" (Matthews and Trietel 13). This may recall Judith Greenberg's analysis of the "echo" of trauma, where she suggests that the "disembodied" nature of the echo resounds "phantom-like" in texts, as it does in life (343). It is this echo that gives post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) its "haunting power" (Caruth 4)—so that "the memory" never "grows dim."

It is now widely recognised that trauma can result from the forced displacement of evacuee children during wars. For instance, Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen found that forced displacement can create "drastic, bodily experienced and memorized, psychophysical experiences that continue to affect people's ties, sights, and practices of belonging later in their life," along with an enhanced sense of place through smells, sounds, and kinaesthetic information (307). A study of Swiss children similarly found that parental separation affected both aggressive and internalising behaviour and that separation had a "direct effect" on child problem behaviour (Averdijk et al 184). Thompson et al. even argue that youth "who have separated from parents at an early age due to running away or being forced out of parental homes" could be at risk for PTSD (553). Unfortunately, "the process of running away, being kicked-out [*sic*] or even abandoned by families induces complex emotional and behavioural responses," and trauma symptoms among runaway youth may be easily missed (Thompson et al 563). Diagnosis is further complicated by the fact that, as Cathy Caruth explains, PTSD is a delayed form of reaction: "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it" (4). In light of such research, it seems reasonable to postulate that the sudden loss of Jefferies's sister, followed by the forced separation from his parents when aged four, caused Jefferies to experience some form of PTSD, which may have contributed to his later persistent, vivid recollections, and to look for evidence of this trauma appearing "belatedly" in his later writings.[3]

Jefferies's juvenile novel *Ben Tubbs Adventures*, a highly autobiographical novel that is Jefferies's earliest book-length work to have survived, offers compelling evidence that childhood trauma contributed to his problem behaviour as a youth.[4] The exact date of composition is not known, but Andrew Rossabi believes it was most likely written between 1865 and 1866, when Jefferies was seventeen, and just before he began working for the *North Wilts Herald* (Introduction ix). The importance of *Ben Tubbs* to Jefferies's later work should not be underestimated. This

early foray in the boys' adventure novel genre is the protype for *Bevis* (1882), which the *North Wilts Herald* described as "the best boy's book in England," on the grounds that Jefferies brought to life the boyhood experience set deep in the heart of his beloved countryside (9). As Rossabi notes, "there is already something of Bevis in Ben … a mischievous prankster: willful, spoiled, defiant, destructive, impulsive, reckless, easily bored, but also plucky, proud, and imaginative" (Introduction xxvii). But there is also something of the young Richard Jefferies in fifteen-year-old Ben, whom Rossabi considers "autobiographical" (Introduction xxviii). Ben lives in an "obscure village" in southwestern England (Jefferies, *Ben Tubbs* 1).[5] After the death of his father and without discipline, he becomes rebellious and difficult to manage. At boarding school he is bullied and publicly flogged by the headmaster, which precipitates his escape to America with his friend Ned Snicks. We may easily recognise the absent parent and the hostility of others as features of Jefferies's own youth.

Moreover, some of the particular problem behaviours that Ben exhibits suggest trauma, and for this reason offer insight into the complex emotional consequences of Jefferies's move to Sydenham at four years of age. Consider, for instance, Ben's parody of emotion in a scene depicting his separation from his mother. When his mother tearfully leaves him at the new school, we are told that "Ben certainly had a genius for two things, mischief and imitation … nobody could have guessed as he stood there with red eyes, waving handkerchief and deep-fetched sighs that he was laughing and yawning" (23). His mother's emotion is real, but his is feigned. Ben's lack of attachment to his mother recalls Jefferies's biography, since, as we have seen, after he was sent to Sydenham he transferred his affections from his mother to his aunt. It is reasonable to assume that the disruption Jefferies experienced at age four involved a considerable degree of sadness and separation anxiety, yet as it occurred at an early time in his life he may not have been able to recall or indeed recognise these feelings in detail when older, let alone understand them as a cause of problem behaviour. The tough exterior that Ben Tubbs (and, later, Bevis) exhibits is consistent with the kind of coping strategies observed in youth who have experienced forced displacement and parental separation.[6] It is also consistent with the "depression and aggressive problem behavior in children, as well as later delinquency," that Averdijk et al. see as resulting in whole or in part from parental separation (184).

Another episode in *Ben Tubbs* that dramatises Ben's rebellion against authority is the scene in which Ben dresses up as a ghost in order to scare the parson. This is comically stylised, in a manner that gives the upper hand to the child who manages to frighten Parson Snobbs convincingly enough for him to turn and run in the other direction. The scene also reproduces a piece of local knowledge that Jefferies reports to his aunt in a letter written in 1864 (the year he ran away to the continent): "Our curate Mr. Salisbury is a most singular individual and though a clergyman is, verily I believe, afraid of meeting ghosts in his walk home from Coate" (Matthews

and Trietel 13). We may compare the tone of mockery here with his description of Ben's response to being reprimanded by his mother for scaring the parson: he "burst into a loud laugh" at her "grimly comical expression of face" (*Ben Tubbs* 11–12). Given that the parson was a respected figure, central to the healthy functioning of the community, Ben's ridicule of him therefore conveys a youthful rebellion against authority that Jefferies at least in part, if not wholly, identified with himself. That Ben's fictional capers had a basis in real experience can also be confirmed in recollections by Audrey Horsell who records the young Jefferies persuading other boys to help him scare the village women at night (49).

Although the character of Ben may suggest that Jefferies saw himself as having been an aggressive child, what we read into the text has to be weighed against what might be considered normal for a young boy of that time. One scene that deserves particular attention in this regard is the one in which Ben and Ned encounter American Indians during their expedition: "A thought struck Ben. Should he shoot him? Ben had not the slightest twinge of conscience as this thought passed quicker than lightning through his mind …. As for Ned, he also had observed the Indians … but he had not entertained the murderous intentions Ben had" (103). Whereas Ben's impulse is to shoot, Ned is more reserved. That Jefferies makes this comparison between Ben and Ned suggests that he did perceive himself to be more aggressive than his friends. Moreover, Jefferies describes Ben with similar phrasing when deer walk away from him because they have "smelled his murderous intentions" (142). Jefferies also makes a point of mentioning that when in England "Ben and Ned had been much addicted to the exhilarating practice of riding refractory donkeys and were therefore in capital training. For he who can ride a gypsy's donkey—which they could—can ride anything" (*Ben Tubbs* 98). This taste Jefferies had for cowing stubborn donkeys to his will is expanded upon in *Bevis* when Bevis and his friend Mark have "a wicked thought in their hearts" concerning their donkey, and seek to subdue it through force:

> All the times they had run in vain to catch him; all the times they had had to walk when they might have ridden one behind the other on his back; all his refusals to be tempted; all the wrongs they had endured at his heels boiled in their breasts. They broke their sticks upon his back, they cut new ones, and smashed them too, they hurled the fragments at him, and then got some more. They thrashed, thwacked, banged, thumped, poked, prodded, kicked, belaboured, bumped, and hit him, working themselves into a frenzy of rage. (99–100)

Bevis even finds a log to throw at the donkey: "the same Bevis who put an aspen leaf carefully under the fly to save it from drowning" (100). The steady

accumulation of the wrongs the boys feel that the donkey has done them can be read as an allegorical representation of Jefferies's own trauma response.

Through this lens, we gain a greater sense of how rebelliousness against the mistreatment of his youth partly drove Jefferies's fervent desire to become a successful writer. His notebooks for the period just after leaving his hometown, for example, chronicle an almost obsessive preoccupation with getting as many articles into print as possible, and he was constantly revising his novels at this time too, and spurring himself on in his notebooks not to give up. In letters to editors concerning the rejection of his works he was persistent, questioning, and on occasion, demanding.[7]

Even if we consider that aggression towards animals tended to be a fairly ordinary part of Victorian farming life, it is important to note the length of this scene and the detail that Jefferies goes into concerning the "scourg[ing] of this miserable citizen" (100). The fact that Jefferies characterises Bevis as more aggressive than Mark and also characterises Ben Tubbs as more aggressive than Ned suggests that Jefferies himself saw the kind of unprovoked aggression that both Bevis and Ben demonstrate as unusual. His repeated depiction of aggression in largely autobiographical characters is consistent with the biographical evidence that he himself was subject to sudden bouts of unprovoked aggression, a trait that could have had its origins in the traumatic earlier years.

Experiences of his teen years could well also have contributed to such behaviour. According to those who knew him, as a teenager Jefferies was "careless as to his dress and appearance," wearing his hair much longer than was customary at the time. This hairstyle, along "with his bent form and long, rapid stride, made him an object of wonder in the town of Swindon," reports Besant (57). However, I question Besant's assertion that Jefferies "was perfectly unconscious of this [reaction], or indifferent to it" (57). It is not often that we are simply "indifferent" or "perfectly unconscious" of ridicule based on our appearance, manner, or occupation. Coate was a tight-knit rural community, populated by families who had lived there for generations. Coate Farm, with its large rambling house, and its farm buildings set by the main road, was a focal point of the hamlet; a place where villagers would come to collect water and an employment centre for labourers.[8] It is highly unlikely that Jefferies could have gone about his daily life oblivious to the undercurrent of feeling towards him from the local community. And this undercurrent was strong. As Thomas notes in his biography, the gun that Jefferies carried caused suspicion among local landowners, one of whom reportedly said, "That young Jefferies is not the sort of fellow you want hanging about in your covers" (47–49). Besides ridicule Jefferies also faced hostility and distrust.

Local attitudes towards young Jefferies, as well as the general surprise when in later years the awkward, lanky, and mysterious lad from Coate fledged into one of the world's most respected nature writers, is recorded by an article published in the *North Wilts Herald* in 1937. Marking fifty years since Jefferies's death, the article

reports that "*The Story of My Heart* [1883], his spiritual autobiography, shows us the abnormal and contemplative young man in those solitary walks that earned for him amongst the rustics the nickname of 'Loony Dick' or 'Moony Dick,' and the reputation of being a lazy loafer" (9). The fact that this piece of information concerning the prejudice against Jefferies and the judgement of him as "abnormal" survived in the form of a local tradition until the late 1930s is testament to its enduring nature.[9] Jefferies's awareness of this prejudice at the time is strongly suggested by "Chapters on Churches III" (published in January 1867), where Jefferies reflects on a set of stocks outside the church in Chiseldon. The original "instrument of punishment" is still in a condition to be put to use, he notes: "There it stands, a memento of the past, a warning to the urchins who play around its gaping but now harmless and powerless jaws, and it does not require any very great stretch of imagination to see an incarcerated offender suffering from the gibes and finger pointings of the church-goers" (3). That he so readily empathises with the "suffering" of the imagined "offender" may suggest sensitivity to local ridicule. A similarly cynical vein is present in the opening pages of his "Essay on Instinct," written in 1868 when he was nineteen, in which he refers to "a very deep gulley called the Pit of Prejudice, by which there is a great stumbling block called Vanity, in which pit numbers have lost their lives … enshrined as the martyrs of science" (6). This "Pit of Prejudice" refers explicitly to the academic community, where he was also fighting prejudice at the time; nevertheless, it vividly conveys Jefferies's sense of prejudice as a threat to his every step.[10]

Moreover, Jefferies describes just such derision and lack of acceptance in his adult fiction. Consider, for instance, his description in *The Rise of Maximin* (1876–77) of the twenty-five-year-old Maximin. As he leaves his homeland he recalls his younger days: "As he walked and the cool night breeze refreshed him his spirits rose. He looked back upon Sandover with contempt—that cruel, heartless place which had treated him so roughly, and despised him as a presumptuous fool. He had sailed from island to island until he discovered those beautiful Pineries in mid-ocean, the very existence of which was denied and scoffed at by the town near which he was born" (41). Jefferies too had lived among people who "despised him as a presumptuous fool," and *Maximin* makes it clear that he was far from oblivious. He knew exactly what they thought, and years later he described the pain of it.

AFTER HIS marriage in 1874, Jefferies left Swindon to live in Surbiton in order to be closer to London publishers and never returned. And yet his later work echoes the tone and content of the first paragraph of his 1866 "Chapters on Churches I":

> It was a beautiful evening. The moon, when not concealed, rather I should say dimmed by the passing of fleecy clouds–those barks of the sky, those heavenly messengers, cast a brilliant, a pleasant, though a cold and somewhat melancholy light upon the earth. My

> way lay between hawthorn hedges, and high trees, despoiled by the combined agency of frost and wind on their leaves, which lay—making the road appear in a very dark shadow—spread beneath their bare, gaunt, skeleton-like branches. (6)

Even specific images from this early passage recur in his later work. For instance, Jefferies's description of clouds as "heavenly messengers" in this early work is repeated in *Greene Ferne Farm* (1880), when the character Geoffrey notices "messengers" heralding darker cloud and weather while out riding on the Marlborough Downs with Margaret (65). These "messengers," Jefferies explains here, are "small detached clouds, that precede the rest" (65).[11] The metaphor appears again in the essay "Hours of Spring," written in 1886 when Jefferies knew he was dying: "Dark patches of cloud—spots of ink on the sky, the 'messengers'—go drifting by; and after them will follow the water-carriers, harnessed to the south and west winds, drilling the long rows of rain like seed into the earth. After a time there will be a rainbow" (16). The essay recalls other experiences of walking out of doors as well. For instance, Jefferies describes how, "In time past, strong of foot, I walked gaily up the noble hill that leads to Beachy Head from Eastbourne" in East Sussex (4), and how he saw larks in Wiltshire: "It is years since I went out amongst them in the old fields, and saw them in the green corn" (3). In this context, we may read Jefferies's repetition of the term "messengers" in this late essay as evidence that, as he wrote, he recalled the late November walk of 1866 with sad poignancy: whereas the nature of cloud formations does not age or falter, the ageing human, susceptible to changes in health and circumstance, inevitably does.

The freedom to wander off into the night that he once rejoiced in contrasts poignantly with his situation twenty years later where he is confined to his room:

> Through the bars of my prison I can see the catkins thick and sallow-grey on the willows across the field, visible even at that distance; so great the change in a few days, the hand of spring grows firm and takes a strong grasp of the hedges. My prison bars are but a sixteenth of an inch thick; I could snap them with a fillip—only the window-pane, to me as impenetrable as the twenty-foot wall of the Tower of London. … it is the tyranny of circumstance, the lot of man. ("Hours of Spring" 16)

Whereas in his juvenile essay Jefferies comes across as an ambitious, confident, young man celebrating his solitude, the older man speaking in "Hours of Spring" can only view the unfolding spring "through the bars" of his "prison." The themes of imprisonment and freedom so evident in this essay, and also so pertinent to the adolescent imagination, are also noted by John Fowles in his introduction to *After London* (1885), where he refers to Jefferies's "passionate, if distinctly adolescent,

attempt" to imagine his way out of "the prison of the world" (xii). Fowles observes that "this particular polarity, between the sense of imprisonment and the determination to escape it, remained intensely strong in Jefferies all his life, for both biographical and innate reasons" (xii). To this I would add that placing "Hours of Spring"—already recognised as one of Jefferies's most poignant essays[12]—alongside the youthful "Chapters on Churches" sheds a "melancholy light" on both juvenilia and mature work.

Of course, there are other reasons besides trauma for an image or theme to recur. Jefferies's juvenilia is also valuable for offering insight into his perseverance and self-belief; his nature perhaps contained something of the spirited stubbornness of the donkey in *Bevis*, who after the boys' attempts to scare and starve him "beat them" after all (Jefferies, *Bevis* 100). Several ideas that he put forward in the local papers during his late teens re-emerged in later work, either because they did not receive the attention he was looking for or because they persisted in his mind and required further working out. One instance of the latter that Matthews and Trietel note is Jefferies's revisiting the "lampooning style" (18) of his early work "The Battle of 1866," a satirical poem about the Reform Bill, in his later satires *Jack Brass* and *Suez-Cide!!*.

Jefferies's stubborn perseverance is perhaps also evident in his recurring use of a particular paraphrase of Homer, learned from his father but used to critique his father's values. In "Traits of the Olden Time," his first essay concerning social conditions and labourers, written when he was eighteen, Jefferies openly challenges the moral worth of institutions and traditions:

> Manners and men flourish and fall as the leaves, each succeeding generation bringing with it fresh men and fresh manners as each spring fresh leaves, preserving a general likeness to the preceding …. In the olden time, before the "style and calendar" was altered, since which, according to the generation fast disappearing, there has never been, nor will be good days in old England again … though these times have frequently been styled "good," there were many practices scarce likely in modern estimation to sustain the title. (2)

Jefferies's assertion at the start of the essay, that "Manners and men flourish and fall as the leaves," invokes a passage from *The Iliad*, which Pope translates as "Like leaves on trees the race of man is found, / Now green in youth, now withering on the ground" (6.181–83). Eleven years later, Jefferies uses draws upon the same Homeric metaphor to express the same sentiment in *Wild Life in a Southern County*, in a reflective scene concerning a hare's skull and the short lives of animals: "This skull here, lying so light in the palm of the hand, with the bright sunshine falling on it, and a shadowy darkness in the vacant orbits of the eyes, fills us with sadness. 'As

leaves on leaves, so men on men decay' how much more so with these creatures whose generations are so short" (12).[13]

Notably, the teenage essay invokes that most canonical author Homer to critique parochial attitudes by suggesting that the prejudices and attitudes of olden times were restrictive to modern progress. Around the same time that Jefferies was writing "Traits of the Olden Time," his father was known to "point with disgust to 'our Dick poking about in them hedges'" (Thomas 47). The father is present elsewhere in the article as well, as Matthews and Trietel observe; he is suggested by Jefferies's ambiguous reference to the "educated farmer" and to the stamping iron bearing the initials J.J. (23). Jefferies's allusion to Homer further invokes his father, who introduced him to Homer, and it is likely that the Pope translation of *The Iliad* that he references did belong to his father.[14] Jefferies's reference to his father in this context hints, therefore, at a degree of conflict between the young, progressive thinker and the older, traditional father. The reference to the stamping iron can be read as symbolising the imprint of traditional values on the young psyche and Jefferies's resistance to them. The edition of Homer thus both connects and distinguishes the father and son: they both admire the work and yet perceive it in different ways, each shaped by the conditions of their generation and the nuances of their individual perspectives. It is reasonable to surmise that his father's inability to accept Jefferies's self-directed vocation in life—a vocation that by its very nature challenged conventional ideas—was a source of conflict and trauma for the young, developing writer.

In tracing the associations of one reference to Homer from its appearance in Jefferies's juvenilia to its reappearance in his mature work, I have hoped to show the usefulness of such a methodology for tracing the impact of early experiences in Jefferies's writing. Although material that documents the emotional impact of Jefferies's traumatic experiences is scarce, some interpretative insight may be gained through such comparisons. Of particular interest therefore is the fact that a piece of wasteland in the vicinity of his birthplace appears four times in his writing, in four guises, between 1864 and 1882. The first reference occurs in *Ben Tubbs*, where the explorers reach a deserted piece of "ground … broken up by numerous small conical mounts, some covered with vegetation, the greater number of sand. The herbage here was very scanty and large boulders of a grey stone began to strew the ground" (114). This "broken" terrain anticipates an area of uncultivated land peppered by ant-hills that Jefferies describes just a few years later in the fifth instalment of "History of Swindon" (1867):

> Liddington Wick is a place of great antiquity, and has been inhabited from time immemorial. A field near here affords a curious fact to the lovers of natural history. It is covered with what appears at first sight simply small turfy and thymy hillocks of earth, but which turn out upon investigation to be ant hills placed so close together that it

> is possible by springing from one to the other to pass from one side of the ground to the other without setting foot on the level earth. These hillocks represent the industry of millions—countless myriad—of ants, continued no doubt for years, since the field appears to have had the present appearance from time immemorial. (5)

Jefferies associates the ancient days of Liddington Wick with the field of ant-hills, both of them "inhabited from time immemorial," even though the field is located some distance away, only "near" the hamlet. As an instance of natural history this passage hints at the direction in which he would have liked to take the writing, even as its clipped appearance in the instalment conveys the compromise he had to make in order to suit the interests of his local readership. With the image he conjures of "springing" from one ant hill to the next, Jefferies also establishes this wild place as a symbol of the wild type of freedom that he associated both with childhood and with ancient tribal days.[15]

Eleven years later, in *Wild Life in a Southern County* (published in serial form in 1878), Jefferies revisits the scene of the ant hills and treats it—and his memory of "springing" across it—in more detail:

> There must have been eight or ten acres of these hills. They rose about eighteen inches or two feet, of a conical shape, and overgrown by turf, like thousands of miniature extinct volcanoes. They were so near together that it was easy to pass twenty or thirty yards without once touching the proper surface of the ground, by springing from one ant-hill to the other. Thick bunches of rushes grew between, and innumerable thistles flourished, and here and there scattered hawthorn bushes stood. … How many millions of ants must have been needed to raise these hillocks! and what still more incalculable numbers must have lived in them! A wilder spot could scarcely have been imagined, though situate between rich meadow and ploughed lands. (*Wild Life in a Southern County* 307–08)

Some of these details reveal that the landscape of the ant hills also influenced *Ben Tubbs Adventures*. Most notably, the "thousands of miniature extinct volcanoes" that the ant hills call to mind echoes a scene in when Ben and Ned encounter a landscape of "extinct" volcanoes: "a long low range of what appeared mole hills and one a little higher than the rest rising in the form of a cone" (148). The "innumerable thistles" in this passage also recall the "scanty" "herbage" of *Ben Tubbs*.

Furthermore, *Wild Life* recalls Jefferies's association of this well-remembered place with "great antiquity" in the much earlier "History of Swindon." Here

Jefferies notes that the wasteland—a last bastion of the pre-modern world—eventually becomes lost to modern agriculture: "The land for agricultural purposes was almost valueless, there being so little herbage upon which cattle could graze, and no possibility of mowing any; so in the end gangs of labourers were set to work and the ant-hills levelled, and, indeed, bodily-removed. Thus this last piece of waste land was brought into use" (308).

The same field of ant hills, and the same use of the term "waste" to describe it, is once again returned to in detail in *Bevis* when the boys go to the mainland to an area they call "The Waste." Unlike a meadow or cornfield, where the "glance [can] travel at once" and discern the boundaries, the Waste has an "uneven surface," so that Bevis finds himself disoriented:

> Incessantly winding round and round the ant-hills, he did not know which way he was going … he reached a boulder, another one not so large as that they had examined together; this was about as high as his chest.
> … he felt utterly alone. It was wilder than the island—the desolate thistles, the waste of rushes, the thorns, the untouched land which the ants possessed and not man, the cold grey boulder, the dots of mist here and there, and the pale light of the moon. Something of the mystery of the ancient days hovers at night over these untilled places. He leaned against the stone and looked for the flicker of light which he had seen, and supposed must be a will-o'-the-wisp, but he did not see it again. (350–51)

Nature is a trickster here. The ant-hills occupy a "dim uncertain expanse" concealed by grey mist; a "silent" owl startles Bevis; a "will-o'-the-whisp" "flicker[s]" and disappears, and he hears vague unidentifiable "rustlings" and "wings." The activity of "springing"—now termed "leaping"—–from one ant hill to another, which Jefferies mentions in both "History of Swindon" and *Wild Life in a Southern Country*, is also recalled here: "Then Mark came leaping from ant-hill to ant-hill, and crushing through the thistles in his haste" (351). Even though the significance of the ant hills only finds its full expression in *Bevis*, published relatively late in Jefferies's life, it is worth noting that this is a children's novel, indicative of just how important and vivid Jefferies's boyhood experience remained in his mind, twenty-five years later.

Taken together, these passages, written over a sixteen-year period, suggest the importance of the sense of timeless wilderness and of childish freedom that Jefferies had experienced in that "waste place" as a boy. Moreover, these four passages not only provide insight into Jefferies's development as an observational writer but also illustrate the psychic significance of that last piece of "untilled" land that had remained "untouched" for centuries. In light of the prejudice Jefferies experienced as a teenager, it is appropriate that he should be drawn to a piece of land where no one goes; a liminal space that is perceived by others as worthless and unfit for the modern world yet holds mysterious potential and abundance. Jefferies's repeated

references to this area of land can thus be better understood in the context of the scorn directed at him during his teenage years as well as his own ambition.

This theme of nature as a place of solace and escape from the judgement of others for the young self also appears in *The Story of My Heart*, where Jefferies explains, "I was not more than eighteen when an inner and esoteric meaning began to come to me from all the visible universe, and indefinable aspirations filled me. I found them in the grass fields, under the trees, on the hill-tops, at sunrise, and in the night. There was a deeper meaning everywhere" (199). However, as he also makes clear, his wish to have time to reflect on these musings and formulate them was not considered acceptable. Seeking a quiet place away from the eyes of the hamlet or the workers at Coate, he would go out "on rising" to stand beneath "some elms" at the edge of the farmhouse garden where, for a few moments, he could "think unchecked":

> … thence I could see across the dewy fields to the distant hills over or near which the sun rose. These elms partially hid me, for at that time I had a dislike to being seen, feeling that I should be despised if I was noticed. This happened once or twice, and I knew I was watched contemptuously …. But I went every morning …. (75–76)

Although he wrote several drafts of the book, Jefferies still considered his being "watched contemptuously" a significant enough detail to include in the final version. We may also note in this context the "laughter and contempt" the autobiographical Maximin received from the local community upon his first publication (*The Rise of Maximin* 42). It is significant that Jefferies's memories of watching the sunrise—in what should have been the privacy and protection of his family garden—were marred by his memories of feeling "despised" by onlookers. The concealing, sheltering qualities of the wasteland in *Bevis*, which are also detectable in *Ben Tubbs* in the boulders that conceal the watcher, clearly correlate with this adolescent desire to hide oneself from view in fear of ridicule or scorn. It can thus be reasonably conjectured that the field of ant hills was for Jefferies a place of retreat; somewhere he went to be alone and think.

I would further argue that the field of anthills was significant to Jefferies as a symbol not only of safety from scorn and of freedom but also of his own scorned self. In the absence of any direct references to adolescent mistreatment in his diaries and letter, we may turn to his treatment of scorned plants and animals as his career as a naturalist developed. Describing a visit to Kew Gardens, for example, Jefferies notes that "despised groundsel—the weed which cumbers the garden patch, and is hastily destroyed, is here fully recognized" ("Herbs" 188). Writing of Darwin's book on earthworms he similarly notes: "At first it has a repellent sound, but we quickly learn how clumsy and prejudiced have been our views of the despised worm thrown up by every ploughshare" ("Walks in the Wheatfields" 150). In *The Open Air* he

again observes that, although in early aquariums snails and weeds were "excluded as eyesores and injurious," it was soon realised that "the despised snails and weeds were absolutely necessary" for maintaining the health of an aquarium (102). He regretted the disregard and poor treatment of waste spaces, with a seemingly acute awareness of neglect: "when fields became more generally enclosed it was still only in patches, and these strips and spaces of green sward were left utterly uncared for and unnoticed" ("The Labourer's Daily Life" 67). When he gives attention to plants traditionally dismissed as common or useless and recognises their values, he teaches us not just about nature but about human nature too.

THIS EMPATHETIC form of observation lay at the heart of Jefferies's generous, all-encompassing vision: the antithesis to the parochial scorn he experienced when young. Trauma, as Greenberg notes, "defies a linear conception of one's relation to experience or memory; it hovers outside of one particular moment, reassembling or confusing the boundaries of time" (321). As a haunted survivor of traumatic experience, Jefferies was compelled to imaginatively return to places of childhood refuge, and sought in his mature work to nourish respect for aspects of the natural world that he felt deserved more attention. The therapeutic process of writing out the experience many years later, even in guarded form, may have allowed Jefferies to reframe the prejudice and disparagement he had been subjected to when young.[16] Indeed, an overall trajectory towards healing has been previously noted in Jefferies's work; a form, as I argue elsewhere, of "personal archaeology" that was "facilitated by the imaginative return to landscapes which had emotional significance."[17] This is a trajectory that can be seen most clearly when Jefferies's juvenilia are considered alongside his mature work (both essays and autobiographical fiction) and viewed through the lens of contemporary research concerning traumatic stress. Such an approach points to some form of unrecognised boyhood trauma that, though unrecognised by scholars and largely unrecognised by biographers, nevertheless leaves its traces throughout his writing.

Jefferies was, by all accounts, a sensitive and gifted child, whose ideas went largely unrecognised within his family and community. The refuge he evidently found in the waste spaces around Coate indicates how important his home landscape was to his emotional wellbeing and to his maturation as an author and thinker. From his reuse and development in his mature work of ideas that first appear in his juvenilia, we can see that Jefferies arrived at some important ideas early on, and spent the rest of his life developing them and finding acceptable ways to present them in print. From being "despised and unnoticed,"[18] his abilities uncelebrated, he went on to carve out a successful literary career devoted to noticing and cherishing the small, often overlooked lives of flora and fauna—creatures like himself—and advocating the vast wonder of discovery in the most ordinary things.

NOTES

[1] The exact year and date are unknown (Matthews and Trietel 9).

[2] Emergent therapeutic perspectives now recognise that emotionally intense, sensitive, and gifted people are often misunderstood and mislabelled (Lo). Jefferies's feeling of being an outsider and misunderstood is clearly demonstrated in "Alone in London," a fragment of early prose describing a walk through busy London streets: "I look in the faces and can get no consolation, for they are all so thoroughly convinced; without a doubt. … As I walk the pressure of this silent but immense energy around begins to fill me with all manner of difficulties" (2). He becomes anxious, self-conscious, and uncertain of his purpose there. People in the crowd wear an expression that "is identical as if they were replicas of the same plaster cast …. They have all got boots that fit them and they have all got fitted into this society. I cannot understand it. I begin to feel creepy and queer. Something odd about me" (3). Though beyond the scope of this essay, one avenue for further research would be to consider the evidence that Jefferies had Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In addition to his sensitivity and difficulty with socialisation, his intense identification with the natural world and the ease he felt in company with natural things (more than in human company) point to ASD as a possible diagnosis. In these qualities as well as in his intense interest in natural history, teenage Jefferies resembles the teenage author Dara MacAnulty (*Diary of a Young Naturalist*, 2020), who has ASD.

[3] Research has also found an association between ASD and PTSD. See, for example, Nirit Haruvi-Lamdan, Shiri Lebendiger, Ofer Golan, and Danny Horesh, "Are PTSD and Autistic Traits Related? An Examination among Typically Developing Israeli Adults," *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, vol. 89, February 2019, pp. 22–27, doi: 10.1016/j.comppsych.2018.11.004.

[4] As an alternative we might also consider Reactive Attachment Disorder, which is a more uncommon and understudied form of psychopathology, wherein children "may exhibit behaviours that do not seem to make sense to the rest of us" (Herr 1). For a discussion of the characteristics of RAD see Colby Pearce, who notes that RAD often relates to "traumatic care in the first four years of life" (50) and that sudden changes in parenting or the loss of a parent can contribute to this effect (99–100).

[5] *Ben Tubbs Adventures* remained in manuscript form until 2016 when it was published by the Richard Jefferies Society.

[6] See, for example, in Hill et al., their analysis of the general coping skills and mechanisms that help with the common challenges of everyday life, in which the authors argue that a key feature of resilience is "a capacity to deal with severe adversity, so that two crucial conditions need to be present (Luthar et al., 2000; Gilligan, 2001): a significant threat or difficult circumstances" and "positive adaptation" (2).

[7] See, for example, a letter to the publisher George Bentley (22 April 1876) concerning the novel *In Summer Time*, in which Jefferies asserts, "I forwarded to you the MS of my novel …. That date being over two months ago I would like to hear from you respecting it. I think you will have found it original and perhaps not unamusing in the delineation of country scenes" (qtd. in Matthews and Trietel 73). Jefferies wrote again to Bentley on 25 May that year, requesting specialist advice on how to improve his novel-writing: "I am just entering upon the prime of life being in my 28th year and very likely a little advice from you may save me years of disappointment by putting me into the right path" (qtd. in Matthews and Trietel 75).

[8] In *The Old House at Coate*, a collection of essays written in his thirties, Jefferies recalls the farm's two blue doors, set within the stone wall perimeter, "banging ceaselessly, from dawn to midnight" with the comings and goings of the mowers, milkers, and haymakers. He also mentions "folk" coming to use the farm pump for water, as the pump was "thrown open to all who liked to use it" (42–43).

[9] It is important to note that at this time Jefferies began to experience episodic illness, which was most probably the beginning of the tuberculosis that eventually took his life two decades later. Although it was perceived at the time as a mysterious illness, and not tuberculosis, we should not underestimate the traumatic impact that knowledge of his declining health may have had on his adolescent psyche. In 1867 Jefferies wrote letters describing a bout of illness that lasted several months. Besant states that this episode represented the "start of chronic tuberculosis" (70–71). Matthews and Trietel note that Besant's account would have relied upon letters that are no longer extant (25). The episode was followed by recurrent bouts of illness, worsening in severity, for the rest of Jefferies's life.

[10] He felt he was fighting prejudice at every step—from the local, immediate neighbourhood, to the wider world of authorship and research. In his first signed letter to *The Times*, in 1872, which acted as a springboard for his reputation as an authority on agricultural subjects, and thus kick-started his career, Jefferies gave his address as "Coate Farm" in order to lend the letter greater authority and weight (Matthews and Trietel 54). The letter concerned the plight of the agricultural labourer—a topic of much interest at the time. By this point his observations of people were becoming increasingly accurate and objective, marking a development from the juvenile observations in his "Chapters on Churches" that were clearly hampered by his own prejudice. See, for example, his disdainful dismissal of a homeless person in "Chapters on Churches II": "These are the class of men who hang like a dead weight upon the community … for they do not even perform the office of the carrion-crow—as do the Pariahs in India; they are the carrion themselves" (2).

[11] "Messengers" was a term coined by John Constable to describe what today are known as *stratus fractus* clouds. The term appears in the 1834 edition of his *English Landscape Scenery*, in the text accompanying *Spring. East Bergholt Common, Hail Squalls – Noon* (qtd. in Thorne 43).

[12] Matthews and Trietel describe it as "one of his best pieces of work" (203).

[13] I have not been able to trace the exact wording Jefferies uses. Pope's translation comes closest: "Like leaves on trees the race of man is found, / Now green in youth, now withering on the ground; / Another race the following spring supplies, / They fall successive, and successive rise: / So generations in their course decay" (6.181–85). Most likely Jefferies is either paraphrasing or misquoting from memory.

[14] Keith cites a letter from Jefferies in which he writes: "it was my father and not the schoolmaster who introduced me to Homer" (18).

[15] He makes this connection more obviously in "After London" and "The Story of my Heart." From his youth, the waste offered a space where he could be himself, unfettered by the expectations and pressures of his family and school life; suggested by the enjoyment of leaping between the anthills. In 1867 he writes to his aunt concerning waste: "This neighbourhood is a mine for an antiquary. I was given to understand at school that in ancient days Britain was a waste—uninhabited, rude and savage. I find this a mistake" (Besant 69). He describes seeing Roman coins, arrowheads, tumuli, and camps, and concludes that the archaeological landscape in the vicinity of his home was "alive with the dead." Again, this was at a point in time when archaeology was still

emerging as a science. Previously, prehistoric life had been largely dismissed as merely savage, and the significance of archaeological settings had been overlooked. Jefferies was the first to notice the Bronze Age stone circle within half a mile of his house. (See Welshman, *Imagining Archaeology*.) The smallest finds often had dramatic implications: something that attracted Jefferies to archaeology and inspired his writing on the subject. See, for example, "The Commonest Thing in the World," an 1875 essay about the prehistoric significance of a flint he picked up on the Wiltshire Downs, as well as "The History of Swindon," in which Jefferies details the archaeology of his home landscape.

[16] See therapeutic approaches which recommend the writing out of trauma as a path to healing PTSD. For example, Davis notes, "Clinically we have observed that the process of writing out the nightmare seems to take the power out of the nightmare. ... Somehow, the nightmares are not as frightening for some people when they get them out of that dark place in their minds and look at them on paper" (195).

[17] See Welshman 367.

[18] See his description of the milestone in "Meadow Thoughts" as "half hidden by docks and nettles, despised and unnoticed" (65).

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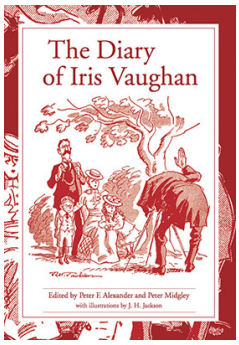

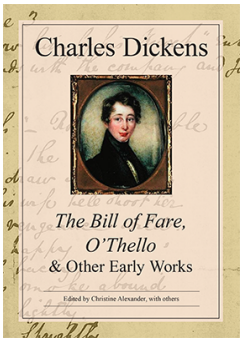

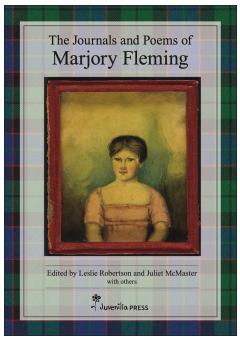

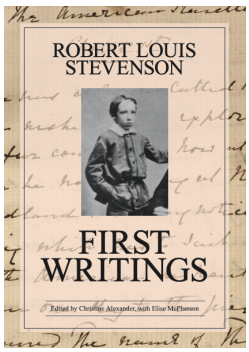

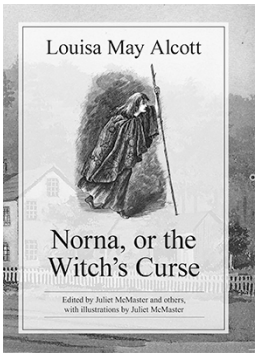

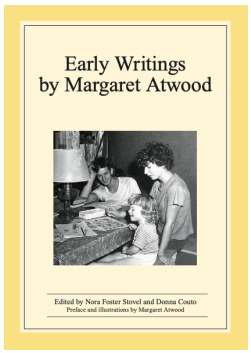

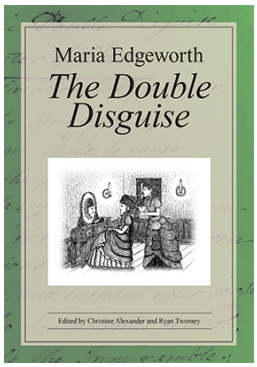

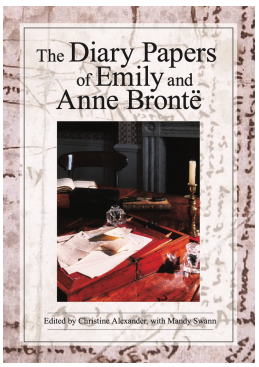

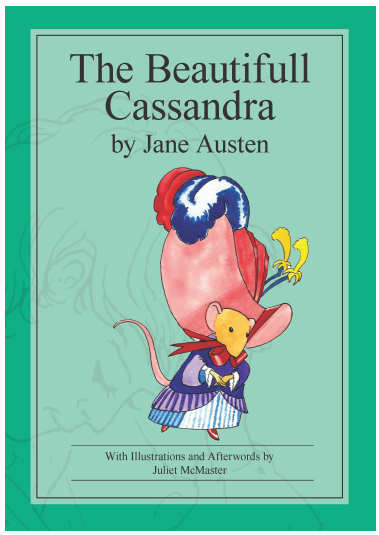

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