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EDITORIAL

IN MANY ways, the publication of this issue of *JJS* marks the ongoing evolution of the journal, which continues to grow from strength to strength—thanks to the dedication of my fellow editors, to the support and guidance of our Editorial Advisory Board, and to the leadership of the Board and Executive of our publisher, ISLJ (the International Society of Literary Juvenilia). Thanks above all to the ever-growing community of scholars in the field of literary juvenilia studies—and I mean you.

The pandemic was hard on academic journals, including *JJS*. The 2020 conference was postponed twice before finally moving online; many scholars faced other pandemic-related challenges during this time as well. But although the supply of contributions shrank, it did not dry up. You—all of you—refused to let that happen. This issue contains essays given at the 2022 virtual conference held at UNSW in Sydney, Australia, chaired by Christine Alexander; vol. 6, already well underway, will contain essays first presented at our most recent conference, held at UNC Chapel Hill this past June and chaired by Laurie Langbauer and Beverley Taylor. You will also find, in both issues, essays that have found their way to us by other means. Welcome all.

Although full-length scholarly essays and book reviews will always form the core of each issue, some issues will continue to feature special sections. In vol. 6, no. 1, you will find a new special section, called "Spotlight on Juvenilia," that will contain shorter essays designed to introduce to readers a child writer (or artist) whose work deserves to be better known. I look forward to what I will learn from these.

This and other changes reflect the ongoing commitment of *JJS* and ISLJ to serve all who engage in juvenilia studies. As part of that commitment, the ISLJ Board has discontinued publishing print copies of *JJS*; we now publish exclusively online. Though hastened by the recent sharp increase of publishing costs, this decision was made also with consideration for ISLJ's larger mandate. With your membership fees, ISLJ can now do more to support future conferences and symposia and emerging scholars. Expect more announcements to come, as we continue to grow.

Lesley Peterson

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WISHING THE JUVENILIA AWAY: JANE AUSTEN'S ADVICE TO CAROLINE

Gillian Dooley
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HAVING delighted in revisiting Jane Austen's teenage writings for a recent presentation, I was taken aback when I came across Caroline Austen's memory of receiving a message from her aunt, Jane Austen, in her last weeks, "to this effect—That if I would take her advice, I should cease writing till I was 16, and that she had herself often wished she had *read* more, and written *less*, in the corresponding years of her own life" (*My Aunt* 174). It is hard for us to share her regret, for most of her juvenilia were written before 1793, the year when Austen turned fifteen. The stories themselves are for later scholars precious evidence of Austen's early development as a writer—Virginia Woolf wrote that they were "Jane Austen practising" (qtd. in Sutherland and Johnston xv). If the stories of "The Beautifull Cassandra" and "Jack and Alice" had not been written, would Austen have developed into the writer that she became? Moreover, the stories are a source of delight in their own right. Austen's family letters show that she shared with her young relatives, as well as her sister, a vivid sense of the ridiculous. As her niece Anna Lefroy wrote in 1864, "Aunt Jane was the general favorite with children; her ways with them being so playful, & her long circumstantial stories so delightful!" ("Recollections" 157). This playfulness, throughout her life, could be seen as a continuation of the joyful absurdities in the teenage writings, which surfaced often enough in writing in various manuscript sources from her adult years.

The advice Caroline remembered receiving in 1817 seems inconsistent with what we know of Austen's relations with her and others of her generation who shared her artistic interests, both literary and musical. My aim in this essay is to try to understand the context for Austen's advice to Caroline: its timing in relation to Austen's illness; who might have passed the message on to her; and the circumstances of its publication decades later.

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Fanny

AUSTEN was very close to several of her nieces and nephews. Her correspondence with Fanny Knight, Edward and Elizabeth's oldest child, shows how intimate they were, how delighted she was that they were on such confidential terms, and how much she loved Fanny in all her idiosyncratic charm. Fanny's mother, Elizabeth, had died in 1808, which perhaps increased the intimacy between them. She and Fanny had their own private language that appears in the letters occasionally—starting every word with a "p." In a letter to her sister Cassandra of 30 April 1811, Austen wrote, "I was never much more put to it, than contriving an answer to Fanny's former message. What is there to be said on the subject? Pery pell?—or pare pey? Or po.—or at the most Pi pope pey pike pit" (186). We do not know what Fanny said, presumably passed on in a letter from Cassandra who was staying at their brother's home in Godmersham, to elicit this comical response from her aunt. Two years earlier, on the day after Fanny's sixteenth birthday, Austen had written to Cassandra at Godmersham about Fanny:

> You rejoice me by what you say of Fanny. … We thought of & talked of her yesterday with sincere affection. … I am gratified by her having pleasure in what I write—but I wish the knowledge of my being exposed to her discerning Criticism, may not hurt my stile, by inducing too great a solicitude. I begin already to weigh my words & sentences more than I did, & am looking about for a sentiment, an illustration or a metaphor in every corner of the room. (169)

I am not sure whether Fanny was yet in the secret of Austen's authorship when this letter was written, and her praise might simply have been for Austen's letters, which Cassandra would have shared with her when they were together. Austen was a very self-aware letter-writer, often comparing her own letters with Cassandra's as to penmanship, content, and style. In any case, Fanny certainly was in the know in 1813, when she read *Pride and Prejudice*—Austen wrote to Cassandra that "Fanny's praise is very gratifying" (205). She and Fanny discussed music and literature, as well as Fanny's love life. However, Fanny does not appear to have been a creative writer.

Anna

AUSTEN'S niece Anna, on the other hand, was. Anna was the daughter of Austen's eldest brother James and his first wife Anne, who died when she was only two. Like Fanny, Anna was born in 1793, but lived much closer to Austen's Hampshire homes than Fanny, who was in Kent with her parents. Austen occasionally writes of Anna in a slightly different, and perhaps more critical, way than she does of her cousin: "She I doubt not has had plenty of the miscellaneous, unsettled sort of happiness

which seems to suit her best", she wrote in June 1811 (193). A few weeks earlier, she had written, "My Mother & Martha both write with great satisfaction of Anna's behaviour. She is quite an Anna with variations—but she cannot have reached her last, for that is always the most flourishing and shewy—she is at about her 3d or 4th which are generally simple and pretty" (184). The musical joke bears some examination, and I have discussed it at length elsewhere.[1] However, suffice it to say that Anna herself does not seem to have shared Austen's musical aptitude. When Anna married, Austen wrote to Fanny that she thought buying a piano was a needless extravagance for the newlyweds, "and as to her playing, it never can be anything" (295).

Austen's attitude towards Anna's knowledge of writing was not so dismissive. Anna recalled, in her memoir of 1864, how they discussed, and sometimes made elaborate fun of, published novels of the day:

> It was my great amusement during one summer visit at Chawton to procure Novels from a circulating Library at Alton, & after running over to relate the stories to Aunt Jane. I may say it was her amusement also …. Greatly we both enjoyed it, one piece of absurdity leading to another, till Aunt Cassandra fatigued with her own share of the laughter would exclaim "How *can* you both be so foolish?" & beg us to leave off. One of these novels, written by a Mrs Hunter of Norwich, was an exceedingly lengthy affair. (Lefroy 159)

The novel in question was *Lady Maclairn, the Victim of Villainy* by Rachel Hunter (1806). In 1812 Anna wrote a letter to her aunt, which does not survive, in imitation of Hunter's style, signing it "Mrs Hunter." Austen responded with exquisite satire:

> If Mrs Hunter could understand all Miss Jane Austen's interest in the subject she would certainly have the kindness to publish at least 4 vols more about the Flint family. … Miss Jane Austen cannot close this small epitome of the miniature abridgement of her thanks and admiration without expressing her sincere hope …. (195)

Despite their shared merriment at such absurdities, it seems that Anna was not yet in on the secret of her aunt's authorship, although *Sense and Sensibility* had been published the previous year. Austen read her own novels aloud to the family well before they were published, and her siblings knew they were hers. Anna recounts being told in later years

> that one of her earliest novels (Pride & Prejudice) was read aloud (in M.S. of course) in the Parsonage at Dean, whilst I was in the room, & not expected to listen.—Listen however I did, with so much interest,

> & and with so much talk afterwards about "Jane & Elizabeth" that it was resolved, for prudence sake, to read no more of the story aloud in my hearing. (Lefroy 158)

It is not certain from whom the secret was to be kept. Annette Upfal and Christine Alexander believe that it was the Austen parents who were not to know,[2] but it seems unlikely, as George Austen wrote to the publisher Thomas Cadell in November 1797 offering to send him a "manuscript novel" which is thought to be *First Impressions*, the early version of *Pride and Prejudice*. In the *Family Record*, the explanation offered is that "As Jane used family Christian names for several of her characters, it could well have puzzled and shocked the Austens' neighbours if Anna had babbled out that Jane loved Mr Bingley but Elizabeth had been snubbed at a dance by Mr Darcy" (W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh 93).

Anna was four years old in 1797, and she had been the dedicatee of one of Austen's early offerings, three short pieces collectively titled "Detached Pieces," a few weeks after she was born. But in the letter to Cassandra of February 1813 when Austen was responding to Fanny's praise of *Pride and Prejudice*, she wrote, "Yes, I believe I *shall* tell Anna"—and in context, it does seem to be *this* secret that she was finally ready to share with her niece. Whether this revelation was an impetus for Anna to start writing we do not know, but Austen's surviving letters to Anna regarding her own novel begin the following year, in July 1814, when Anna was twenty-one.[3] The letters show Austen's delight and encouragement: she offers some corrections to "probability" and etiquette, and praises the character delineation (267). The correspondence continues, with useful and expert advice:

> The description of Dr Griffin & Lady Helena's unhappiness is very good, just what was likely to be.—I am curious to know what the end of *them* will be. The name of Newton-Priors is really invaluable! I never met with anything superior to it. One could live on the name of Newton-Priors for a twelvemonth.—Indeed, I *do* think you get on very fast. I wish other people of my acquaintance could compose as rapidly. (284)

This sly hint about her own slow writing progress, along with the level of detailed and serious advice she gives, shows that Austen was engaged in providing Anna with genuinely collegial mentoring.

Later that year, Anna married Ben Lefroy, and once her children began arriving we hear no more of her novel in the letters. According to her daughter, she had no time to write and then, after Austen's death, lost heart and destroyed her manuscript—although there is a record of her continuing for a while during 1818 (Le Faye 433–34n).

James Edward

ANNA'S younger half-brother, James Edward (known in the family, confusingly, as Edward, like his uncle and his cousin, Fanny's brother) was nearly eighteen when he first read his novel to Austen in September 1816. She recounts, "Edward is writing a novel—we have all heard what he has written—it is extremely clever, written with great ease and spirit—if he can carry it on in the same way it will be a firstrate work & in a style, I think, to be popular" (319). However, James Edward seems not to have sought much more than his aunt's approval and encouragement in a general way for his writing, and the tone she takes with him is of a jokey camaraderie rather than the mentorship she provided to Anna. In December that year she wrote to James Edward: "Uncle Henry writes very superior Sermons. You and I must try to get hold of one or two, & put them in our novels;—it would be a fine help to a volume; & we could make our Heroine read it aloud of a Sunday evening" (323).

She then makes a joke about a couple of chapters of his novel which have gone missing: "it is well that *I* have not been at Steventon lately, & therefore cannot be suspected of purloining them—two strong twigs and a half towards a Nest of my own, would have been something." But then follows one of the most famous passages from her letters: "What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited Sketches, full of Variety & Glow?—How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, as produces little effect after much labour?" (323). James Edward's manuscript novel does not survive, although enough of his poetry survives to have been published by the Jane Austen Society in 2006 in a volume titled *Fugitive Pieces: Trifles Light as Air*, edited by David Selwyn. During his lifetime, his only literary publications appear to have been the *Memoir of Jane Austen*, published in 1870, and *Recollections of the Early Days of the Vine Hunt and of its Founder William John Chute*, published under a pseudonym in 1865. He followed his father into the Anglican ministry, being ordained in 1824, and for the last 22 years of his life was the Vicar of Bray, near Windsor (Joan Austen-Leigh, 149–50).

Caroline

WRITING fiction seem to have run in the James and Mary Austen household. In the letter of September 1816 to Cassandra in which she first mentioned Edward's novel, Austen wrote, "tell Caroline that it is hardly fair on her and myself, to have him take up the novel line" (319). She had been corresponding with Caroline about her stories for nearly two years by this time—since Caroline was nine years old.

Caroline, James's third and youngest child, seven years younger than James Edward and twelve years younger than Anna, seems uniquely to have shared both Austen's musical and literary interests. Most of the letters Austen wrote to her include an affectionately jocular greeting from the Pianoforte, or some remark about how much practice she should be doing. The two also compared notes on their reading:

"You seem to be quite my own niece in your feelings towards Mde de Genlis. I do not think I could even now, at my sedate time of Life, read *Olimpe et Theophile* without being in a rage," she wrote in March 1816. This story is included in a volume titled *Les Veillees du Chateau*, which Austen nevertheless tells Caroline she has lent to "Aunt Frank" (her brother Frank's wife, Mary) for Mary Jane (aged nearly nine) to read (310).

The correspondence shows that Caroline, who was only twelve when Austen died, sent her stories in progress to her beloved aunt, and Austen gave her generous and helpful feedback, encouraging her to keep writing and to share more. When she wrote in March 1816, Caroline was not yet eleven: "I have been much entertained by your story of Carolina & her aged Father, it made me laugh heartily, & I am particularly glad to find you so much alive upon any topic of such absurdity, as the usual description of a Heroine's father" (317). Austen's last letter to Caroline is dated 26 March 1817, less than four months before she died at Winchester, and two months before she travelled there to stay and seek medical treatment. Along with advice on piano practice, she provides commentary on some characters from Caroline's latest story: "I like Frederick & Caroline better than I did, but must still prefer Edgar & Julia" (338).

It is in her 1867 memoir, *My Aunt Jane Austen*, that Caroline relates Austen's advice, mentioned in my introduction:

> I had taken early to writing verses and stories, and I am sorry to think *how* I troubled her with reading them. She was very kind about it, and always had some praise to bestow, but at last she warned me against spending too much time upon them—She said—how well I recollect it! That she *knew* writing stories was a great amusement, and *she* thought a harmless one—tho' many people, she was aware, thought otherwise—but that at *my* Age it would be bad for me to be much taken up with my own compositions—Later still—it was after she got to Winchester, she sent me a message to this effect—That if I would take her advice, I should cease writing till I was 16, and that she had herself often wished she had *read* more, and written *less*, in the corresponding years of her own life. (174)

Given that Austen left Chawton for Winchester in late May 2017, and in her letter of late March was still making encouraging comments on Caroline's fictional characters, it is a little difficult to understand the chronology of the increasingly discouraging remarks that Caroline recalls in this passage. Perhaps, as I speculate below, they were not Austen's own opinion but prompted by Caroline's parents.

The Younger Generation and Austen as Author

FANNY, as we have seen, was in the secret of Austen's authorship fairly early on, and Anna was told probably when *Pride & Prejudice* was published in 1813. Austen's complaint in 1816 about Edward's authorship being "hardly fair" to Caroline and herself implies strongly that Caroline and Edward were both aware by then that Austen was a published author. And her letter to Caroline of 14 March 1817 boasting of receiving "nearly twenty pounds … on the 2nd edit: of S&S" (334) leaves no doubt.

The three siblings (Anna, James Edward, and Caroline) probably grew up hearing and reading the juvenilia, in any case: Sutherland and Johnston write, "All three notebooks show signs of heavy wear, which suggests that they were passed around and frequently read" (xiii). Sutherland and Johnston also note that *Volume the Third* of the juvenilia, "became, in time … a shared space … for family writing as well as reading" (xxi), with continuations by both Anna and Edward during their own teenage years and perhaps later. That the stories remained part of the family consciousness is shown by Austen's reference to "Love and Freindship" in a letter to Cassandra from August 1814: she describes a coach trip to London that "put me in mind of my own Coach between Edinburgh and Sterling" (270). So why would Austen repudiate this early writing?

The Memoirs

AS CHRISTINE Alexander writes, "When her juvenilia eventually appeared in print …, it became evident that the family's objection to the content of the writing rather than to its style had been the main stumbling block to early publication" (79). To the mid-Victorian audience, the drunkenness in "Jack and Alice," and the stories about "illegitimacy, deformity and death" and outrageously transgressive behaviour, were not considered amusing, and especially unsuitable in a young writer (Alexander 80).

In his memoir, James Edward spends several pages discussing the juvenilia, which he describes positively as evidence of "the first stirrings of talent within her, and the absorbing interest of original composition" (39). In the second edition of 1871, he includes the text of "The Mystery," but follows it immediately with the passage from Caroline's memoir that I have quoted above, introducing it as "her own mature opinion of the desirableness" of early writing. His tone is more deprecating than in the first edition, as he explains the juvenilia in various ways:

> It would seem as if she were first taking note of all the faults to be avoided, and curiously considering how she ought *not* to write before she attempted to put forth her strength in the right direction. … it would be unfair to expose this preliminary process to the world, as it would be to display all that goes on behind the curtain of the theatre before it is drawn up. (*Memoir* 43)

Caroline had expressed a similar view of the juvenilia when she wrote to him in 1869: "I have always thought it remarkable that the early workings of her mind should have been in burlesque, and comic exaggeration, setting at nought all rules of probable or possible—when of all her finished and later writings, the exact contrary is the characteristic" (Letter 3 p. 186). However, Caroline was also opposed to publishing Austen's very last composition, a comic poem about the Winchester races written three days before her death:

> Tho' there are no reasons *ethical* or orthodox against the publication of these stanzas, there are reasons of taste … if she had lived she would probably soon have torn them up. … The joke about the dead Saint, & Winchester races, all jumbled up together, would read badly as amongst the few details given, of the closing scene—If I were to meet with it in any other biography, it would jar at once on my feelings. (Letter 6 p. 190)

As Sutherland writes in her introduction to James Edward's *Memoir*, more controversial facts than the existence and nature of the juvenilia, such as the existence of the handicapped brother George and Aunt Leigh Perrot's trial for shoplifting, were entirely elided from his text (Sutherland xxxiii). However, taste was also an important matter for biographers of the Victorian era to consider, along with the family's honour. Sutherland includes in her edition an extract from a letter written by Fanny—by that time Lady Knatchbull—to her younger sister in 1869: "Yes my love it is very true that Aunt Jane from various circumstances was not so *refined* as she ought to have been from her *talent* & if she had lived 50 years later she would have been in many respects more suitable to *our* more refined tastes" (qtd. in Sutherland xxiv). Similarly, James Edward was careful in his *Memoir* to explain that times had changed in the fifty years since his aunt's death: he describes "how much gentlemen … did for themselves in those times": looking after their own horses, brushing their own clothes, and even cleaning their own guns (35). He reassures us, however, that the ladies at Steventon in Austen's youth "had nothing to do with the mysteries of the stew-pot or the preserving pan; but it is probable that their way of life differed a little from ours" (35–36). He also congratulates his country, and by implication, himself, for the striking improvement in the morality and standards of the clergy: "no one in these days can think that either Edmund Bertram or Henry Tilney had adequate ideas of the duties of a parish minister" (116).

Having provided this background, he portrays his aunt as "successful in everything that she attempted with her fingers," her character possessing "strong foundations of sound sense and judgment, rectitude of principle, and delicacy of feeling" (*Memoir* 77, 79); her "writings are like photographs … all is the unadorned reflection of the natural object" (*Memoir* 116). As Sutherland points out, however,

> the unpublished manuscripts speak … of long apprenticeship, experiment and abandonment, rewriting and cancellation, and even of a restless and sardonic spirit. They provide unassailable evidence to upset some of Austen-Leigh's chief statements about Jane Austen the author; considered by the light of these irreverent works her steady moral sense looks more ambiguous, her photographic naturalism … less trustworthy. … The manuscript pieces, both early and late, show a rawer, edgier, social talent (of the major Romantic-period writers she is the least "natural"), and reveal that the artlessness of the finished works is the result of laboured revision, of painful inner struggle, rather than unconscious perfection. (xvi)

Given her brother's idealised version of her life and work, one could dismiss Caroline's account of the advice she received from Austen as a retrospective repudiation of the juvenilia in a similar vein.

Nevertheless, it is hard to discount the authenticity of Caroline's memory—"how well I recollect it!"—of receiving the advice directly from her aunt not "to be much taken up with my own compositions," and then of receiving, later in 1817, a message from Winchester positively advising her to cease writing until she was sixteen (*My Aunt* 174). She does not say who conveyed the message—one of her parents, perhaps. At that stage, of course, Austen was approaching her early death, and Caroline was twelve years old.

Conclusion

How MIGHT we then explain the disconcerting fact that Austen disowned her youthful writings at this late stage of her life? As is natural in times of serious illness, her mood was not uniformly accepting and cheerful. In a letter to Fanny of April 1817 she wrote, "I was languid & dull & very bad company when I wrote the above," going on to say she was now feeling better and more herself (*Letters* 336). Was it a low moment when she gave Caroline that advice? Anna recalled that "Her unusually quick sense of the ridiculous inclined her to play with the trifling commonplaces of every day life, whether as regarded people or things; but she never played with it's serious duties or responsibilities—when grave she was *very* grave" ("Recollections" 160). We can witness this sudden and complete gravity in the letters she wrote on hearing of the death of her sister-in-law Elizabeth at Godmersham in October 1808, following the birth of her eleventh child.

Austen continued to show a mixture of seriousness and irreverence even as the end of her own life approached. The poem she wrote three days before her death about the Winchester races shows that her sense of humour had not failed her. On 27 May 1817, three days after she travelled to Winchester, she wrote to James Edward:

"Mr Lyford says he will cure me, & if he fails I shall draw up a Memorial & lay it before the Dean & Chapter, & have no doubt of redress from that Pious, Learned & disinterested Body." But in the same letter, she laments that she could not feel worthy of the love and care of her family (342). James Edward's characterisation of the advice to Caroline as Austen's "mature opinion" of her own teenage writing (*Memoir* 42) is not borne out by the fact that she shared the volumes with him and his sister Anna during their own teenage years, and that as late as August 1814, in her late 30s and a published author, she referred to "Love and Freindship" in a letter to Cassandra (270). It is also inconsistent with the fact that the volumes themselves were preserved first by herself and then by Cassandra, and passed on to the next generation on her death.

In light of such conflicting evidence, it is tempting to speculate about the sincerity of this advice, which, after all, Caroline received at second hand. Was Austen prompted by Caroline's parents to say something to discourage her from spending so much time writing, perhaps neglecting her lessons or other duties? They might have been among the "many people" whom, Caroline said, "she was aware, thought" that writing stories was *not* a harmless amusement (*My Aunt* 174). Did Austen add that she regretted that she had done the same in her childhood in order to reinforce the message, or might that have been an embellishment on the part of James or Mary? I do not believe we can ever know. But we can be relieved that the three precious volumes written before Austen's sixteenth birthday survive, and in an age less inhibited by notions of good taste and decorum we are able to read and assess them for ourselves. And we can allow ourselves to believe that Austen did not absolutely reject her juvenilia in her later years; nor did she waste much time in idle regret at having created them.

NOTES

[1] See Gillian Dooley, "Anna with Variations," *Jane Austen's Regency World*, no. 110, Mar/April 2021, pp. 44–47.

[2] Upfal and Alexander base this opinion on the memories of Anna Lefroy's daughter, Fanny-Caroline: "A niece, Anna Lefroy, who lived as a small child at the rectory, 'could remember … hearing Pride and Prejudice [First Impressions] read aloud by Jane to her sister' (F. C. Lefroy). Anna's chatter in the family rooms downstairs about Jane and Elizabeth began to 'provoke enquiry, for the story was still a secret from the elders.'" It seems safer to rely on Anna's own memoir, published in Sutherland's edition, than the memory, now at third-hand, from her daughter.

[3] All of the extant letters from Jane Austen to Anna may be found Deirdre Le Faye's edition of Jane Austen's letters, cited below.

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Present and Yet Absent, Bodied and Yet Bodiless: The Paradoxical Dyads of *Bramshill, Being the Memoirs of Joan Penelope Cope*

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In 1937, triggered by the imminent sale of her ancestral home Bramshill, Joan Penelope Cope began writing and illustrating her memoirs. She was twelve years old at the time, thirteen upon publication, and *Bramshill, Being the Memoirs of Joan Penelope Cope* (1938), was "never intended for publication otherwise I would have been more discreet" (introduction). Nevertheless, it was published by Constable and Company in 1938 and reviewed with some acclaim in the national and international press. A. G. Macdonell, writing in *The Observer,* described *Bramshill* as one of the "most extraordinary books I have ever seen" (7), whilst Edith Olivier, in a review for *Country Life*, wrote that Cope's memoirs had a "unique quality" (614). Hilary Carpenter's review for the theological journal *Blackfriars* was of a similar nature: after recognizing Cope's membership in an "ancient catholic family," he wrote that Cope had used "her many remarkable nascent gifts" to produce a "unique record of child memories" (62). The *Victoria Daily Times* of British Columbia, Canada, wrote admiringly of her illustrations: "Joan has illustrated the book her self [*sic*] and although she has never had a drawing lesson, Mr Philip de Laszo said, 'I can teach her nothing'" ("Child"). Cope was also featured in *The Washington Post* who, as part of a "celebration of youth," writes exuberantly: "At 12, Joan Cope has written her memoirs and gotten them published!" ("British").

As much as these critics praised Cope's lively authorial style and recognised her juvenile precocity along with the skill of her delicate and characterful illustrations, they also paid attention to the impact of Bramshill itself. *Bramshill, Being the Memoirs of Joan Penelope Cope* documents the final few days of the Bramshill estate under Cope ownership and so allows the readers to witness the fall of a country house from the intimate perspective of a family who had been long associated with it. The cumulative result of this attention, not only in the critical reception afforded to *Bramshill* but also

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within the aesthetics of the text itself, is a privileging of place over writer and of legacy over lived experience.

In what follows, I argue that *Bramshill* is a memoir written with an anticipatory sense of its reception within the world. This anticipatory aesthetic comes from Cope's knowledge of her own familial and social capital alongside the wider cultural readings afforded to young authors in the mid-twentieth century. Cope's understanding of her place in the world as a woman is explored through her representation of ghosts and ghostliness within *Bramshill*, which ends with Cope asking us to imagine an alternative ending to her story, in which, at the very moment of leaving her ancestral home, she is, paradoxically, entombed within the estate forever.

One of the noteworthy features of Cope's writing, which her publishers preserved, is the liberal usage of ellipses and em-dashes. I reproduce them here as they appear in *Bramshill*; they do not indicate any omission or selective quotations on my part.

"[T]he most perfect and beautiful Elizabethan house"[1]

A HANDSOME English prodigy mansion with history dating back to the fourteenth century, Bramshill first entered the ownership of the Cope family in 1699 when it was purchased by Sir John Cope for £21,500. The new owner benefitted from the substantial work and development carried out by a previous owner, Edward de la Zouche, the 11th Baron Zouche, who had owned Bramshill between 1605 and 1625. During this period, de la Zouche had begun work on the mansion itself. His renovations incorporated elements of the earlier building on the site, which had been present in some form since 1351, whilst also introducing the structural and aesthetic carcass which is still recognizable today ("Bramshill Park"; "Listed Building"). Upon Cope's purchase, further refurbishment followed with notable interest being paid to the interior of the property. Despite being considered for purchase by the Duke of Wellington following his success in the Napoleonic Wars (Ellesmere 113), the property remained with the Cope family until 1936 when it was sold to private owners. Joan Cope, born on 1 January 1926, was ten years old at this point.

The subsequent impact of the Second World War, and the associated decline of the country estate within Britain, saw Bramshill enter into a different type of service. The Red Cross used it as a maternity home for evacuee mothers during the war, before it then provided refuge for the exiled Romanian royals, King Michael and Queen Anne. Bramshill was subsequently acquired in 1960 by the Home Office to become the home of the Police Staff College. This move was seen as beneficial by the press, particularly in light of the increased difficulties faced by private owners of country estates with publications such as *Country Life* writing that it "brought encouragement to those with the preservation of Britain's architectural heritage at heart" (Hussey 1426). Despite these efforts towards preservation and a concern for

the future, however, it was recognized in 1989 that the house was "in a poor state of repair" and would require "urgent expenditure if it is to be preserved" (Wheeler 485). Governmental activities were slowly relocated over the following years until Bramshill was ultimately acquired by developers. It was most recently offered for sale with the chance to "restore it to its former glory" in 2021 (Evans).

Presently Bramshill is a Grade I Listed property and so possesses "special architectural or historic interest considered to be of national importance and therefore worth protecting" ("Listed Building"). The detailed listing recognises the "rich period decoration" within the house whilst also noting the importance of copious external detail ("Bramshill Park"). Much of the latter has its own separate and individual entry on the register; the arched doorway which Cope clings to at the end of *Bramshill* is, for example, listed independently along with several other architectural features mentioned in Cope's memoirs. This is no coincidence but rather an indication of Cope's anticipatory aesthetic. She is an author who is aware of the legacy of Bramshill and sets about documenting its features as much as, and if not more than, she documents her own childhood. This begins immediately with the title of the text itself: *Bramshill, Being the Memoirs of Joan Penelope Cope*. Here Cope creates a hierarchy of interest which understands Bramshill as primary and herself as secondary, lesser. She also hints at how the building constitutes a three-dimensional embodiment of the text: her memoirs have already been written in stone and in wall, across the Bramshill estate and embedded into its cultural resonance.

Cope's anticipatory and occasionally self-effacing style is grounded in an acute understanding of how her work will be read and received by a wider audience. This stems from her family's social status along with Cope's personal experience of such cultural capital in circulation. For the publishers of *Bramshill*, Cope is of interest not only due to her precocity as a child-author but also due to her family lineage. As they write on the interior dust wrapper:

> Joan Cope, a member of an ancient Roman Catholic family, and daughter of Sir Denzil Cope, was born and lived to the age of eleven in Bramshill—perhaps the loveliest Jacobean house in the south of England. The influence of this house and of the long family tradition behind her, working on a mind of ancient receptivity, has produced a book ….

Here, Bramshill's "influence" is credited with "producing" the book: its creative force is either stronger than, or even responsible for, the creative abilities of Cope herself. This description, then, does more than focus attention upon the practical fabric of the estate instead of on Cope's own childhood; it establishes a hierarchy whereby the building is more important than the child.

The publishers' representation of Cope's subordinate relationship to Bramshill accurately reflects her own stance within the memoir, which is replete with hints of

erasure and diminishment. In other words, the hierarchy is one that Cope often tacitly accepts and even comes to perpetuate. For example, she writes about her first arrival at Bramshill as a baby, around a "month or two" in age (11), who is about to be baptised in the family's chapel. Her description of the room follows: "the room was originally intended as the bedroom of Henry Prince of Wales. It used to be hung with the most priceless Gothic tapesteries [*sic*] but they were sold when I was about three or four" (11). This passage illustrates something of Cope's acute eye for detail: she notes the material reality of the chapel along with its historical legacy and then ties these events to her own life story. This focus on herself is brief, however: Cope presumes a high level of interest in the fabric of the estate that, ultimately, supersedes any interest in herself. This presumption continues throughout the whole of *Bramshill* and is sustained with some expertise.

As a tour guide tells stories to visitors, so does Cope in her memoirs. Not only is this based upon her anticipatory aesthetic but also on her real-world practical experience of living in Bramshill. She recounts in one chapter how she would follow her mother around the house when visitors arrived (41) before then describing the constituent elements of this tour for the reader. She references various works of art such as the "Van Dyck pictures,—and the lage [*sic*] Rubens over the side board of the Holy Faimly [*sic*]" (41) before then taking the reader to "the Morning Room, (in which we usually lived,) with its black laquer [*sic*],- and exquisite cool-looking Mortlake tapestries" (41). Cope's focus here is on recounting the legacy of Bramshill and thus, reaffirming its importance within the reader's mind. The personal detail is relegated towards self-conscious brackets, afterthoughts.

The tour guide episode also introduces a new note into Cope's writing, namely one of worship and reverence. She describes both the immediate detail of an object whilst also taking time to bring forth its familial weight and resonance. Furthermore, she is aware of its wider importance in terms of cultural and popular history and is able to bring this out in her writing with some skill. This skill is only emphasised when Cope brings the reader to the Long Gallery, a feature still referenced in the current Grade 1 listing for the house. As she writes:

> —the Long Gallery in all its hundred and thirty feet of silver grey beauty. Its walls were panelled in deal, which in Jacobien [*sic*] times was highly valued as a rare wood, and had been painted streaky blue and pink and yellow, - which charicteristic [*sic*] crude coulouring [*sic*] had faded with the sun and light of years which poured in the five great curtainless [*sic*] windows,—to an exquisite mellow grey shade. (43)

Whilst this passage, and indeed other references to the house, might echo the information provided by Cope's mother on her own tours of Bramshill, they also demonstrate Cope's undoubted skills and ability as a writer. Not only does she capture

the faded grandeur of the estate along with its emotional impact upon the inhabitants but she also recognises its lengthy history. The "light of years" has faded the colours on the wall, and yet Bramshill endures, survives. It is a powerful moment and one that I suspect led critics such as Carpenter to describe *Bramshill…* as a "literary gem" (63).

The end of the tour sees Cope bring the reader to the banqueting hall. It is here that Cope shows that, as much as she foregrounds the legacy of Bramshill itself, she can bring forth the human aspects of that legacy at the same time. "[W]e would end our round in the Great Banquetting [*sic*] Hall," writes Cope, "here to gaze at the stone arches erected in 1666, with all the arms of the Copes, tracing their descent from Edward 1" (44). A banqueting hall is a lived and human space, and one that takes its name from the human events located within. In ending the tour here, Cope finds interest in the people at the heart of Bramshill. The reader is asked to study the stone arches and to stand witness to the stories which have gone before.

What is also interesting here is how Cope draws attention to a feature of the house erected thirty-three years prior to her family's ownership. According to one of Cope's ancestors, Sir William H. Cope, when the stone arches were built, the estate was in the ownership of the Henley family and about to experience something of a fall from grace. Following the death of Sir Robert Henley in 1681, the estate was £20,000 in debt (14); and Sir Robert's brother, Sir Andrew Henley, had married "a person apparently in humble life" (14) and then "killed a man and fled for it in 1695" (14). It is perhaps no surprise that Bramshill was then sold to Sir John Cope in 1699 for £21,500 by the "representatives and creditors of the Henleys" (15). In referencing the stone arches and then overlaying them with the story of her own ancestors, Cope reminds the reader of the intimate connections between people and place but also, paradoxically, of how quickly such stories can be forgotten.

Some of Cope's confidence here can be ascribed to her social class and cultural capital. She is the daughter of a notable family that possesses a notable cultural legacy for reasons beyond its association with Bramshill. Indeed, I suspect that her membership in an "ancient Catholic family" is one of the reasons that Carpenter of *Blackfriars,* a theologically orientated journal, reviewed her memoir in the first place (15). This journalistic preoccupation with family persists following the sale of the house and the publication of the memoir. In 1938, for example, Cope is featured alongside her mother in a glamorous photograph in *Sketch*. The caption is factual while also respectful in tone:

> Miss Joan Cope, only daughter of Sir Denzil Cope, BT., and Lady Cope has, at the age of twelve, written her memoirs and illustrated them. Her note to this book ... says that she started writing in her play-time—"so as to enable me to retain a vivid picture of my "young days"—spent in the glorious surroundings of Bramshill."'

This was not Cope's first appearance in *Sketch*. In 1930, eight years prior to the publication of *Bramshill*, she was also part of a photographic portrait with her brother and mother. "A Family Study" shows the two children posed in front of their mother, Edna, as she looks directly at the camera. The accompanying caption sees three sentences devoted to Edna, Mrs. Denzil Cope, her family, background, and marriage, with Joan and Anthony sharing a sentence. The conclusion to this caption is of particular interest as it illustrates the enduring potency of Bramshill: "Captain and Mrs. Denzil Cope live at Bramshill Park, Winchfield, Hants, the beautiful and historic seat of the Cope family, which was bought by the fifth Baronet in 1699 ("A Family Study," 359). In March 1943, Cope is featured in the pages of *Country Life* as a debutante. She is seventeen years old at this point, and whilst recognising her ingénue status, the caption also pays attention to her authorial achievements: "She wrote and illustrated *Bramshill*, which appeared in 1938, about her old home, and later, a short novel, *Bygone Flowers*" (563). It seems that all roads lead back to Bramshill. The estate and its legacy persist.

Upon the publication of Cope's second book, *Bygone Flowers*, in 1940*,* L. P Hartley[2] of the *Observer* wrote that this story of "three … frail flowers of Early Victorian times [who] strove with or against their parents' consent, to get themselves married … inevitably challenges comparison with [Daisy Ashford's] "The Young Visiters" and comes off badly." He concludes, however, that *Bygone Flowers* is "very readable, contains some charming phrases" and "reveals, what is rare to find in a child-writer, a genuine feeling for Nature and an extraordinary knowledge of 'period' in architecture and interior decoration" (3). For the publisher, however, interest was not to be found in what *Bygone Flowers* might deliver for the reader but rather in the author as commodity. Accordingly, the inside of its dust wrapper features a large photograph of Cope herself. The image is in black and white, shot from the waist up, and shows her wearing a simple polo neck with her hair loose. She is smiling off to the side, and the overall impression is one of friendliness and approachability. The caption reads: "This is JOAN PENELOPE COPE at the age of twelve, when she wrote this delightful Victorian Story: BYGONE FLOWERS [original capitals]." Despite being fourteen when *Bygone Flowers* is published, Cope is firmly aged down two years. The result of this is to position Cope in some kind of stasis: she is the innocent child, eternally twelve years old and forever the author of *Bramshill* ….

As if to underscore this connection, the dust wrapper to *Bygone Flowers* devotes substantial space towards reminding readers of the brilliance of *Bramshill* and its popular reception:

> The volume reproduces the exercise book in which the Memoirs were written, and all the author's illustrations and decorations are in coloured facsimile.
>
> "These delicious memoirs" (*London Mercury*) are "as near perfect as an autobiography can be. Furthermore, the publishers have

> produced them in an extremely intelligent way. The binding is brilliant" (SYLVIA LYND in *Harper's Bazaar)*. "If Joan Cope wrote and illustrated this book unaided (*as she did—Publisher*) she is half way to genius" (BRUCE LOCKHART in the *Evening Standard*).

Sylvia Lynd (1888–1952) was an author and literary critic with a particular interest in promoting the writing of women, whilst the Bruce Lockhart referenced here seems to be Sir Robert Hamilton Bruce Lockhart (1887–1970), a former spy and the author of the bestselling *Memoirs of a British Agent* (1932). Prior to the Second World War, Lockhart had worked for the *Evening Standard*; after the war, he returned to writing. In referencing these two well-known critics, the publishers invoke the authority of bestselling authors who are also notable members of the establishment. The message is clear: Joan Cope is an author of note, to be considered as part of the literary establishment, and *Bramshill* is a definitive work of literary excellence.

Lynd's comments are worth exploring further for what they say about the material qualities of *Bramshill*. She is right in noting that this is a text that has been produced with some attention; indeed, it was the result of this attention that caught my eye in the bookshop. The book's cover was plain and quiet and bore no identifying marks save a small label on the front with title and author detail. The dust wrapper itself had been long since lost, and the overall impression was of a school exercise book rather than a more typical literary memoir. I do not see this as an accident on the part of the publishers but rather as a calculated emphasis on Cope's age.

Such moments of calculation are also visible inside *Bramshill,* perhaps most notably in the foreword. Here the publishers write that "Not a thing has been altered" (n.p), repeating a phrase used by Cope herself in a later chapter when she writes about a Mummers play at Bramshill: "Not a thing has been altered,—and this is coppied [*sic*] from the original manuscript written by the Mummers themselves, and the spelling is the same" (33). The publishers explain that they decided to follow this "excellent precedent" in their treatment of *Bramshill* …; and yet there is a qualification: "The spelling (and, we would add, the punctuation) are the same" (n.p). At its most immediate level, this comment speaks to those readers who might think of *Bramshill* as some had thought of other juvenilia: that it is "too sophisticated, too knowledgeable, too *good* … to be the work of a child" (McMaster 47). It offers these readers proof that the text was not altered or improved by adults. Yet, as Anna Redcay argues, the preservation of misspellings and grammatical errors often ties into wider discussions about the "moral and literary truths" supposed to be present in juvenilia (22). Such errors are part of an "aesthetics of innocence" (iv) and thus to be protected throughout any editorial process. Christine Alexander recognises something similar in her discussion of Daisy Ashford, whose "initial editor had not actually invented new errors, but he had standardised existing ones" (88). This meant that any words which were spelt correctly elsewhere in the text were changed to conform to any misspellings Ashford had made. As Alexander points out, this was "textual fidelity"

giving "way to marketing strategy" (88), and Redcay recognises something similar: such editorial practices are, at their heart, acts of "strategic marketing" (111). I would suggest that the decisions about *Bramshill* are cut from a similar cloth.

The cumulative impact of these editorial and paratextual processes, particularly when read alongside the dominance of Bramshill in the memoir itself, is to position Cope within a series of paradoxical dyads. She is required to be both present within the text and yet absent, bodied and yet bodiless, of primary and yet secondary interest. Cope's familial capital allows her to anticipate many of these readings, as we have seen; nevertheless, it is worthwhile underscoring the impact of adults upon *Bramshill*. In writing about juvenilia from the 1920s, only a generation prior to the publication of Cope's memoirs, David Sadler recognises the adult influence on child-authored texts of his era. "There was," he writes, "a tendency to see the freshness and innocence of the child and their writings as a commodity demanded by their elders" (29), and although he cautions against readings of exploitation, he nevertheless recognises that there was an "appetite for childish ingenuousness which" these child-authors "helped to satisfy" (29). For the adult readers of her work, similarly, Cope needed to be the innocent child whose agency was present and foregrounded within the text whilst simultaneously acknowledging the impact and influence upon that creative agency of adult expectations and appetites. Such paradoxical dyads could often present themselves with brittle immediacy, as in the case we have already seen of Lockhart's comment, quoted by the publisher on the dust wrapper for *Bygone Flowers*, being immediately followed by the publisher's rejoinder in red italics: "If Joan Cope wrote and illustrated this book [*Bramshill*] unaided (*as she did—Publisher*)."

Hilary Carpenter's review of *Bramshill* proceeds among a similar path. "The whole volume makes a curious mélange," he asserts, "yet it achieves an undoubted balance" (63). He is concerned about Cope's focus on the paranormal, an inappropriate subject for the "daughter of an ancient Catholic family" (63), and yet is ultimately fulsome in his praise: "The youthful author" has used "her many remarkable nascent gifts in producing this unique record of child memories" (63), and her "artistic taste and her draughtsmanship are as remarkable as her literary excellence" (63). Nevertheless doubt persists, and nowhere more noticeably than in the final sentence of his review: "We wonder what this child will become?" (63). I find it interesting that Carpenter is concerned not with *who* Cope becomes, for she is most clearly somebody of note due to both her authorial prowess and social position, but rather *what*. What was Cope destined to become? And if her future self is so difficult to imagine, let alone identify, then perhaps Carpenter is also asking what the world was to do with her.

The answer was complicated. Cope provided the qualities sought for in child-authors of the early-twentieth century, namely a sense of ingenuity and innocence, whilst also possessing the sophistication to document the final days of a noted country estate. She was a visible marker of changing times and societal shift in the wider world whilst also being firmly removed from such situations due to her

socioeconomic status and age. She wrote her memoirs, the story of her childhood, whilst also anticipating interest in the history of the estate itself. She was present in her own story and yet absent; a ghost, forced to haunt one story whilst telling another.

The "most haunted house"

FOR JUDITH Armstrong, the ghost within children's literature symbolises "what-might-have-been as well as what has been" (66). Ghosts are "psychological possibilities" that are intended not to frighten but rather to provoke in readers a questioning of their own potentiality (59). Pointing to such examples as *Tom's Midnight Garden* (Pearce)*, The Ghost of Thomas Kempe* (Lively) and *The Children of Green Knowe* (Boston), Armstrong argues that the ghost story in children's literature is one that tries "to explore and enlighten, and the atmosphere is very rarely one of fear" (59). This is no text concerned with the "mechanics of fright" (59) but rather one of a subtler, more psychological exploration of the world.

Ghosts are also essential to *Bramshill*, but here they are not just symbols of "psychological possibilities": they are things that exist in a practical and immediate sense. According to Cope, she lives in the "most haunted house" (3), and she recounts many stories of these hauntings for the reader. In doing so, however, she also explores her own psychological death and afterlife. The first ghost that she describes is the Mistletoe Bride who, "according to several versions of the legend, … was actually an ancestress of ours" (3), although this history is at odds with Sir William Cope's understanding of the legend. As he writes in *Bramshill: Its History and Architecture*, "the event never took place at Bramshill. No lady of my family ever died on her bridal day nor for years after it" (51). Nevertheless, Cope confidently claims the ghost as one of her own, and this centring of the familial is a key characteristic of her writing. She is unafraid and, indeed, unashamed of prioritising her family and their interests: "I will not pretend not to be,—for I am, and always will be desperately proud of my liniage [*sic*]" (5).

Having established her personal claim on the Mistletoe Bride, and having done so with alacrity, Cope moves on to describe the legend in full. The Mistletoe Bride is a young bride who proposes a game of hide and seek at a party. She goes off to hide but then is not found by the party guests. Time passes and her widower grieves until one day, they discover an old oak chest in the castle:

> —A skeleton lay mouldering there,—
> In the bridal wreath of that lady fair;
> Oh sad was her fate,—in sportive jest,—
> She hid from her lord in the old oak chest,—

> It closed with a spring,—and dreadful doom!
> The bride lay clasped in her living tomb." (From the *Mistletoe Bough* by Thomas Haynes Bailey, qtd. in Cope, *Bramshill* 4)

The chest itself remained with the Cope family "until about a hundred and twenty years ago the tenth Baronet, Sir Denzil's widow took it away to her people" (3). According to Joan, her great-grandfather wrote to the then-owner in an attempt to claim it back: "If your heart is in the right place you will send me back my chest" (3). The reply came: "My heart is in the right place,—it is in my chest" (3).

The episode of the Mistletoe Bride is notable in how it entombs the feminine within Bramshill. It is an idea that Cope returns to throughout her memoirs and, indeed, something to which she herself contributes at its ending. In a chapter called "*Bramshill,—Adieu,"* written "more than a year and six months" after leaving the house (149), Cope describes her last day at Bramshill. She is somewhere around ten years old at the time, "desperately miserable" (149), and takes her time as she goes through the empty house to bid a "last little farewell,—to my beloved ancestors" (149). As she reaches the "front broard [*sic*] stone step," she sits "down in the archway under the mouldering Rennaisance [*sic*] carving,—crying as though my heart would break." (149). It is at this point that Cope directly addresses the reader and asks them to imagine a very particular scenario:

> … pretend I never did leave my home,—and leave me there,—more than a year and six months ago,—caressing the ancient cold stone of the walls that enclosed my ancestors for nearly two hundered [*sic*] & fifty years. . . . And now I float,—ever onwards into the blue grey mist of the dim unknown. . . . (149)

Rather than leaving Bramshill and the legacy of her ancestors behind, Cope instead writes her own death on its doorstep, entombing herself within the fabric of the building as much as the Mistletoe Bride was entombed within the oak chest. This is no house for the living but rather a mausoleum, and one in particular within which the voices of women are entrapped.

This entombment of the feminine persists and is emphasised when male ghosts are encountered. Cope reports coming across one such individual while she is in the pram and "could hardly talk" (15). Despite this limitation, she is still able to provide a description to her mother. The ghost is a "green man" who "Looks like Daddy … got no legs" (15). This turns out to be "an eccentric Cope,—a friend of George IV. Who had a kink about the colour of green" (17). Whilst alive, this lively individual "attracted double notice at Brighton [and] was an original … generally known by the appellation of the Green Man" (*The Globe*, 8 October 1806, qtd. in Cope 1938, p. 17). Despite returning to Bramshill in his afterlife, the ghost spent considerable amounts of his life beyond the estate. The explanation Cope offers for this is he had died by

suicide at cliffs at Brighton. This is "perhaps that is why I always saw him near water,—even a large puddle" (18). What is important to note here, I would argue, is that Cope witnesses the ghost outside of the house as, in comparison to the Mistletoe Bride, he is able to roam the estate freely and without limitation. The Mistletoe Bride, however, is entombed within the walls of the house itself.

These are not isolated incidents. Cope comes across other female ghosts, all of whom are entombed within the house. Some of them are restricted to certain rooms, such as the ghost Cope comes across in her mother's room. This is a woman who wears "a high-waisted dark green velvet bodice,—cut in the style of the period of Charles I. and a pale rose-coloured skirt" (19). The mention of the monarch here suggests that the ghost dates from the early seventeenth century and thus from a time prior to the Cope's ownership. Yet despite this distancing from the family legacy, the ghost remains tied to her mother's bedroom and thus locked within the fabric of the feminine estate.

Again, in a chapter called "Two Little Tots," Cope writes about a ghost who appears at her bedside:

> In reality I found myself gazing at a youngish woman,—who must have once been quite good-looking,—even a beauty,—but death had deprived her of any charms. Her face was plump, but ashen grey, and all a trifle shadowwy. [*sic*] (97).

Cope pursues this description at length:

> But the most important thing of all about the girl were her eyes … for they seemed to swallow up the rest of her entirely;—not that they were extra big,—but they were black with a kind of dead light in them. … Oh I shall never forget those eyes for they gazed not *at* me but right *into* and through me. … You felt that she saw ones soul;—and the worst part, they seemed so intensely sad,—and gave her whole face a drawn aspect. (97–98).

At their most immediate level, these passages show how confident and stylish a writer Cope could be. Her style is acute, precise, and she is able to conjure some dynamic moments of interest for the reader. It is clear to the reader that she is not interested in being scared by the ghost but rather in the "psychological possibilities" (Armstrong 59) that the encounter presents. Nevertheless, another reading demands our attention, and it is one which hinges on gender. In contrast to the lively and exterior movement of the Green Ghost, these female ghosts are uniformly held within the interior of the estate, trapped. They are not allowed to retain the qualities of their appearance into the afterlife but must rather fade and recede into the fabric of the house.

In the next chapter, "Sailing On," a title characteristic of Cope's breezy style, she returns to the "youngish woman" ghost. Cope sees this individual again, as does her brother, and the appearance of the ghost begins to subtly change in these encounters. Cope describes how the ghost's cheeks look "almost as though they had tears rolling down them, … her hair too was dishevelled and hung scarcely in ringlets by untidy locks" (101). The ghost no longer looks directly at Cope but rather "to the side with her eyes cast down" (101). She then finally appears to Cope's brother, Anthony, twice. The first is when she pointed towards a nearby window and the second sees her appear "so indistinctly that he is not quite sure of it himself" before finally disappearing forever.

These episodes are practical demonstrations of how the landscape and building of Bramshill and indeed, the perpetuation of its narrative, could dominate and often erase feminine voice. It is noticeable that the Green Man ghost, for example, can be recognised as a noticeable ancestor whilst the "youngish woman" and the other female ghosts must disappear with decorous humility, unnamed. This disappearance is only hastened by Cope's reaction to the "youngish woman" ghost for, upon her second visit, she gives herself "less time to take her in than before,—" and puts her "head quickly under the sheet,—like a tortoise with drawing into its shell" (101). Whilst this may be an understandable reaction for a young person presented with a ghost, it is at odds with Cope's earlier descriptions of ghostly interactions. Here, it symbolises a denial of the feminine within Bramshill: Cope, the ghost, their stories and indeed their selves are destined to be consumed by the house itself.

"Pretend I never did leave"

FOR EDITH Olivier, *Bramshill* is a text full of endings. As she writes in her review for *Country Life,* Cope's memoirs are the story of "two children who were the last of their race to inhabit Bramshill" (614) and thus depict a childhood that is "finished—irreplaceable and unforgettable." (614). Olivier was a writer deeply concerned with the relationship between land and people and often explored issues of the supernatural in her own work. Her admiration for *Bramshill…* has some basis in these interests but also reflects her personal circumstances. As a socialite and hostess, connected to a wide circle of notable individuals, Olivier would have been familiar with the issues facing countryside houses in the early twentieth century. This period, later dubbed the fall of the country house, saw the private ownership of stately homes and landed estates in the United Kingdom rapidly diminish as many estates were sold off, in response to societal shifts that were reflected in an increasingly hostile legislative and economic environment towards privately owned large houses. Olivier addresses this history in her review where she writes about how *Country Life* and others wanted to adopt "a scheme like that which is carried out in the French chateaux" in order to save Bramshill (614). These words hint at the possibility of the

estate being given to or purchased by the state, an idea that would eventually come to fruition but not immediately and perhaps even then only due to the impact of the Second World War. The rationale for state ownership was simple: Bramshill was "the crowning achievement of a romantic and adventurous age" (614) and thus required securing against an unknown future. Here Olivier manages to claim something of a metaphorical toehold for herself and the readers of *Country Life* within the estate. It is a sign of the collective feelings towards national heritage at the time but also another reminder of the pull of Bramshill.

To Olivier, then, Bramshill is the relic of a bygone age but also has some place in the nation's future. Her view of Cope is similarly paradoxical: she is a child and sibling, roles that imply continuity, but she is also the "the last of her race," a curious and loaded phrase at best. In this way Cope is rendered familiar but also strange, knowable and yet unknowable, the "last of her race" and yet part of the nation's collective heritage. As I have argued throughout this piece, such paradoxical dyads were no unfamiliar things for Cope. The cultural capital embedded within and about Bramshill that contributed so much to her family's legacy, coupled with the reality of their financial necessity, often gave her no other theoretical position to adopt. Yet I suspect that Cope would not have wished to adopt any other. She was a writer who was fully aware of her lineage as a Cope and exerted considerable effort to centre that legacy within her work. It is no coincidence, then, that the text finishes with her imagined death upon the steps of Bramshill; for there is nothing, neither text nor author, without it. Joan Cope wrote her death on the doorstep of Bramshill and yet endured, survived.[3]

NOTES

[1] Cope, *Bramshill* 1.

[2] Leslie Poles Hartley, the later author of the notable *The Go-Between* (1953).

[3] In 1953, when she was twenty-seven years old and the married mother of three (with two further children yet to come), Cope published a translation of Arabic poetry. *Arabic Andalusian Casidas* is her sole adult work. It is published by The Poetry Society, has a limited print run of four hundred and seventy five numbered copies and runs to just fifty eight pages. Roy Campbell's preface to the volume is quietly reverential: "The prose translation which can be read as pure poetry is a rare thing. I am honoured to introduce such a rare thing in Lady Grant's beautiful book."

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CHATTERTON'S PRECIOUS THINGS: TOKENS OF PROFESSIONAL SELF-PROMOTION

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IF THOMAS Chatterton had been born to Generation Alpha, my children's generation, he would have been one of those obnoxiously attention-hungry, fashionable, razor-sharp social-media influencers. Self-promotion drove Chatterton. Precocious and sensitive, he used whatever literary and visual tropes seemed most popular to his inexperienced but culturally acute eyes. His poetics was gorgeously fashionable and fraudulent, an inchoate grab at whatever professional relationships or commercial opportunities were likely to enhance his literary and pecuniary standing—in other words, to ensure his success. More than anything, he wished to demonstrate his skills as a professional gentleman of letters to those he perceived as his coterie circle of peers, patrons, and publishers.

The material experiment that Chatterton is best known for still is the Rowley manuscripts, with their often-repeated story of antiquarian fraudulence and forgery. But when I began researching Chatterton's poetry and other textual forms, I discovered that his interest in the material was not only some kind of ill-informed, adolescent, historical conmanship; it was all of that, to be sure, but it was also a broad-based, ambitious, and purposeful attempt to harness the power of material things for his own professional advantage. That said, in this paper I do use the Rowley manuscripts as a case study, because they are the most well-developed and frankly entertaining of Chatterton's precious things.

Circulating documents, gifts, and other tokens was Chatterton's preferred means of professional self-promotion. He was fascinated by the symbolic and manipulative possibilities of the material "thingness" of his literary works. Tokens, those physical objects that serve symbolically as a visible or tangible representation of something else (a special feeling or quality, an invitation, or a gift), abound in his works. Chatterton's tokens were sometimes words that represented the physical, sensual and kinaesthetic worlds, and sometimes they took the form of documents, such as letters

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and manuscripts, maps, wills and testaments. Sometimes they were gifts, both symbolic and real.

In the eighteenth century, physical texts such as the love letter, the testamentary will, or the apparently medieval manuscript embodied cultural codes that were both subjectively compelling and systemically authoritative, to Chatterton and his readers alike. These objects had specific physical attributes related to their three-dimensional shapes and their substance, as with folded onion paper tucked inside an envelope, or a rippled and follicled vellum parchment; other meaningful physical elements included visual layouts or formats, as with epistolary or poetic forms, antiquarian tabulations, or cartographic contouring and cartouche. Taken together, these attributes were recognised and understood in ways related to culturally determined beliefs about interiority and truth, authority and authenticity. Sometimes even the words contained by these physical tokens behaved themselves as metaphorical tokens. For example, in his love poem "To Miss Hoyland with a Present," fraudulently penned on behalf of a besotted but less articulate or imaginative friend Mr. John Baker, Chatterton figuratively expressed Baker's devotion and constancy as a physical chain binding him to the young woman. Perhaps, as the title of the poem suggests, the conspirators planned to reinforce this bond in tangible token form, with the gift of a necklace or bracelet. "Accept fair Nymph this token of my Love," Chatterton wrote (line 1), proceeding to unpack all the expected wealth of symbolic meaning relating to the proffered object, the material symbol of love that acts as offering, promise, trophy, and entrapment, all wrapped up in one miniature but metaphorically burdened package. As a chain on her wrist, the poem's speaker muses, the material form becomes a symbol of his trustworthiness, such that the sun itself should not "on his course more constant run, / And cheer the Universe with coming Day, / Than I in pleasing Chains of conquest bound / Adore" (lines 7–10). Despite the syntactical hash, by the end of these lines, the gift of a bracelet has transformed into the heavy but welcome bindings upon a captured heart. Chatterton and Baker together relied upon the woman's trust and belief in the revelatory honesty and promise of hand-written letters and love tokens for success in their endeavour. In complementary fashion, Chatterton's words gained some of their effect through the evocative description of the physical object a reader would recognise as a love token. It was this possibility of individual reader manipulation or compulsion, in response to the physical attributes of his works, that excited Chatterton.

Similarly, Chatterton's Rowley manuscripts depend on the physical attributes and layouts that encode antiquarian authenticity and scholarly authority into these delightfully detailed but fraudulent medieval documents. For example, in the spurious transcription of Rowley's heraldic account of artists and writers in medieval Bristol, shown in Figure 1, everything from the roughly sketched shield and curling, hard-to-decipher script, to the dirtied parchment, to Chatterton's copperplate "transcriptions" down the right margin, speak to the possibility of antiquarian discovery and

professional distinction. Indeed, Chatterton relied upon these kinds of symbolism built into the material forms of his tokens to impel his larger creative narratives.

Fig. 1. Thomas Chatterton, John Chaloner a Monk… and a Native of Brystowe, was a skilled Carveller yn Stones*, [Dec 1768–Feb 1769], ink on paper, British Library Add MS 5766A–008 (folio detail) (by permission of the British Library).*

I am arguing, then, that in contrast to the prevailing and long-standing critical view of Chatterton as a literary conman, his intention was not primarily to defraud, nor to take part in an intellectually ironic or conniving culture of forgery. Instead, I propose that he saw the exchange of tokens in symbolic and persuasive terms, embodying the power to influence the relationship between poet and reader, and to build consensus with his readers in the pursuit of his own ambitious literary purposes. So, although he constructed fake medieval manuscripts and tried to pass them off amongst first the antiquarian literati of Bristol and then Walpole and others in London, he did so in the spirit of an inexperienced and adolescent publishing opportunist. In Chatterton's fanciful ancestral self-portrait, shown in Figure 2, he depicts himself as a medieval knight called Syr Guallevoyn Chatterton, defender and

builder of cultural relationships, giving his patrons the gift of a gothic church. This drawing beautifully captures in visual symbolic form the larger creative function of the

Fig. 2. Thomas Chatterton, Syr Gualevoyne Chatterton*, [1769], ink and water colour on paper, British Library Add MS 5766B–280 (by permission of the British Library).*

Rowleyan works and the way Chatterton's imagination worked hard to resolve the uncertain contingencies of his less-than-ideal professional circumstances. His manuscripts and other tangible works were, in this sense, curated from worldly

craving, and shaped by his avid notions of what constituted desirable consumer objects—those shiny baubles of mid-century antiquarian and Georgian literary culture that were his key to professional standing, fame, and monetary security. In this light, Chatterton was not a conman peddling fraudulent antiquarian materials; instead, his material poetics was performative in its construction of valuable cultural things, through which he could enact his own literary, professional or other agendas.

What did Chatterton do with his precious things? His fascination with tokens resided in the ways he could use them to stage encounters, in person or through letters, with the human objects of his admiration, to manipulate, to entertain, and to please them. He saw this exchange of tokens in obligatory terms. My argument is informed by Bill Brown's "thing theory" (see especially pp. 4, 5–8) and Arjun Appadurai's notion of the social obligation that comes with faux gifting (3–4), which means that Chatterton's poetics had features of an economic transaction. Examples of his experimentation with material style as this kind of transactional tool crop up consistently in his oeuvre, and not only in his notorious manuscripts. As we have seen, Chatterton sought to manipulate Eleanor Hoyland's affections, presumably in exchange for the usual matrimonial promise, through a series of imposturous love letters written not for himself, but on behalf of his friend Baker. Similarly manipulative and full of irony, Chatterton wrote and delivered his own mock testamentary will to his employer, solicitor Mr John Lambert—an extract from which is shown here:

> Item I give and bequeath all my Vigor and Fire of Youth to Mr. George Catcott, being sensible he is in most want of it—
> Item From the same charitable motive I give and bequeath unto the Revd. Mr. Camplin Senr. all my Humility.
>
> To Mr. Burgum all my Prosody and Grammar likewise one Moiety of my Modesty, the other moiety to any young Lady who can prove without blushing that she wants that valuable Commodity.
>
> To Bristol all my Spirit and Disinterestedness parcells of Goods unknown on her Key since the days of Canynge and Rowley.
>
> . . . .
>
> My Powers of Utterance I give to the Reverend Mr. Broughton hoping he will employ them to a better Purpose than reading Lectures on the immortality of the Soul.
>
> . . . .
>
> Item I leave the young Ladys all the Letters they have had from me assuring them that they need be under no Apprehensions from the Appearance of my Ghost for I dye for none of them…
> Item I leave my Mother and Sister to the protection of my Friends if I have any

Executed in the presence of Omniscience
this 14th of April 1770
T: Chatterton

Codicil
It is my Pleasure that Mr. Cocking and Miss Farley print this my Will
the first Saturday after my Death
T. C. ("[Will]")

Chatterton's biographer E. H. W. Meyerstein noted that he would have encountered mock wills in local periodical publications of the time and that he certainly imitated the form (334). Lambert would have been aware of the form too, and would have recognised his apprentice's mockery and all the documentary attributes of statutory truthfulness. Lambert's liability should he ignore a young employee's suicide threat must have weighed heavily upon the older man's mind. Chatterton's twentieth-century editor Donald Taylor argues that the "Will" was a manipulative attempt to alarm Lambert so much that he would "free C from his apprenticeship" (Commentary 1059). The manipulative trickery and fear tactics essential to this work therefore lay in Chatterton's assurance of his employer's responsive cultural susceptibility to the material testamentary form. Lambert did indeed release Chatterton from indenture, thereby likely facilitating his move to London's Grub Street for more glamorous work as a freelance journalist. As a token of exchange similar to the love letter, then, Chatterton's mock will staged an encounter through which he manipulated circumstances for his own ambitious professional purposes.

Chatterton's manufactured fourteenth-century Rowleyan maps, manuscripts, and illustrations were the most comprehensive example of tokens produced for this kind of exchange. The carefully constructed manuscripts communicated with the reader about artefactual antiquity, documentary history, scholarly authenticity, and professional possibility. They imitated the obscurity of antiquity, the mysterious allure of the found artefact, and the implied scholarly ordering and narrativity of historiographical page layouts. The hundreds of handmade folio pages that constitute the apparent antiquity of Rowley's history were designed to teach manuscript handlers how to feel, think, and behave in relation to these artefacts and the cultural goldmine they supposedly contained. For instance, the illustration of "The Owter Walle of the Castle" (Fig. 3) stages for its handlers the direct sensory experience of touching and viewing materials of great age and scholarly significance. Bringing the childhood excitement of treasure maps to mind, drawn in invisible lemon-juice ink, or dirtied and burned at the edges to simulate age and wear, Rowley's parchment and vellum manuscripts are blackened and roughened in what Chatterton himself described as his technique to "antiquate," or give the appearance of antiquity (Dix 48n31). Adhered together in this composite work, for example, are three pieces of paper—the one on the top left comprises the curly ink-strokes of what Chatterton said was

Rowley's Middle English script, with a copy of a Saxon wall painting collected by Rowley below. The larger piece on the right represents the ground plans for "Brystowe" castle, supposedly sketched by Rowley. Both are pasted onto a larger piece of paper which bears Chatterton's eighteenth-century copperplate script, transcribing his own made-up Rowleyan history.

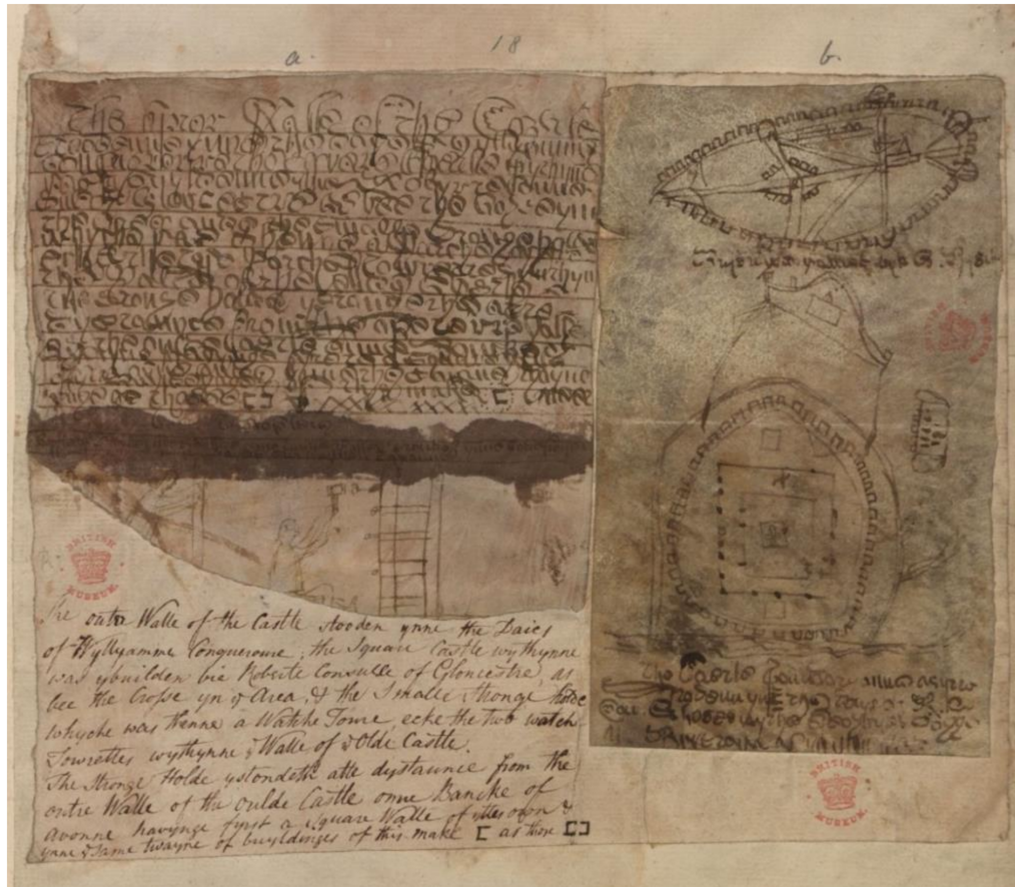


Fig. 3. Thomas Chatterton, The owter Walle of the Castle, *[Oct–Nov 1768], ink on paper, British Library Add MS 5766A–031 (by permission of the British Library).*

Without yet knowing much more about this folio, the handler senses the promise of touching something old and precious, something worth understanding; this feeling is emphasised by the illegibility of the antique script, the inscrutability of the blotched and cramped line-drawn figures, the medievalesque geometry and tracery of axes and ramparts, and the concentric circles and squares in the castle's architectural footprint. Remember that the whole thing was dreamed up and crafted by Chatterton in the middle of the eighteenth century. But Chatterton's material devices support this aura of time-worn venerability. At the same time, his modern annotations nourish the handler's sense of engaging in a scholarly antiquarian conversation. The folio is at once deeply satisfying, intellectually and kinaesthetically, and intriguingly incomplete.

And this was the point. Chatterton wanted to captivate and convince his erudite readers through this representation of historical research practices, applied to his precious fakes. The layered collection and juxtaposition of salvaged paper scraps, and the differences in paper colours that highlight their collection and preservation at different times and places as well as their location in a volume of other such apparently ancient and collectable folio pages, all suggest the cultural significance of the works. Even the contrast between the "original" Rowleyan and "modern" copperplate texts and the pencilled annotations of the fragments "a" and "b" speaks of the need for scholarly transcription and categorisation, as well as other curatorial and critical practices. And then, perhaps, publication to a fanfare of public acclaim. Imagined writers', scholars', and booksellers' hands jostle for primacy in these forms, in the intimate historiographical markings and other critical interactions imposed upon the imaginary text. It is all evidence of a brilliant if callow plan for literary success.

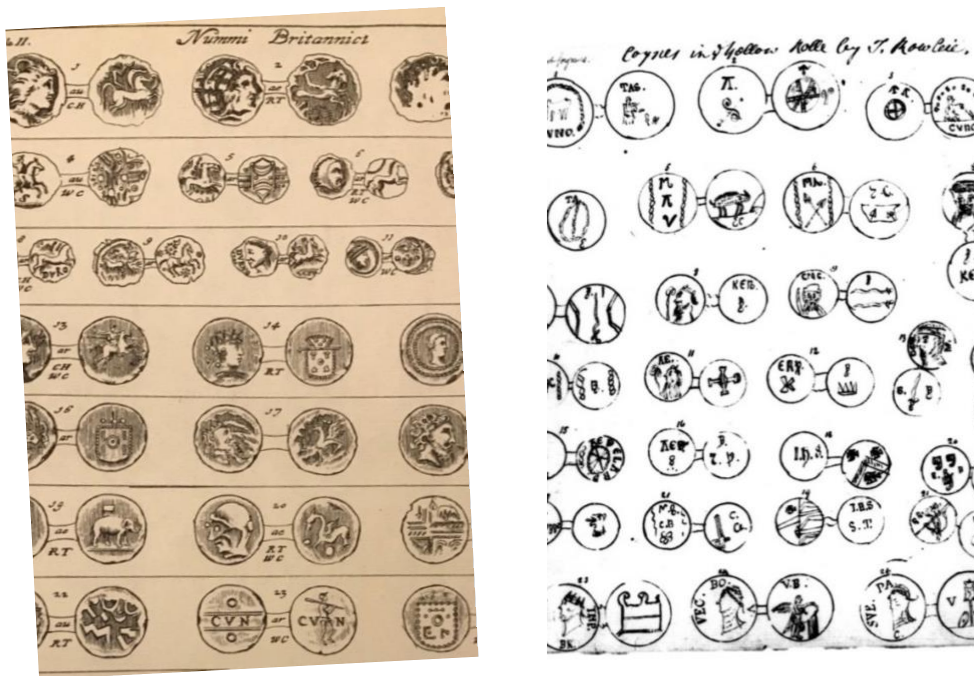


Fig. 4 and Fig. 5. William Camden, "Nummi Britannici" *(left), from* Camden's Britannia, 1695:A Facsimile of the 1695 Edition Published by Edmund Gibson, *Newton Abbott: David and Charles Reprints, [1971], Tabula ii, p. 88 (by permission of the British Library, photo Kate Sumner); Thomas Chatterton,* Coynes in Yellow Rolle by T. Rowleie *(right), [Oct-Nov 1768], British Library Add MS 5766B-058 (folio detail), (by permission of the British Library).*

Chatterton's Rowley manuscripts speak to the eighteenth-century empirical culture that valued handwritten manuscripts over printed materials as more authoritative (Groom). Chatterton drew on historical and geographical texts, as well as contemporary antiquarian and historical sources, to add historiographical texture

to his fabricated material remains. Through the pen of his imaginary avatar, Thomas Rowley, Chatterton imitated the visual techniques of early modern antiquarian book illustrations, annotations, and layouts. In other words, he imagined Rowley playing at transcribing and documenting the antique past, despite the anachronism of a fifteenth-century priest using Early Modern curatorial techniques to document Bristol's Saxon and Roman treasures. For instance, in the case of Rowley's illustrations of the ancient coins in the "Cabynet" of his imaginary patron, Bristol merchant William Canynge ("Yellow Rolle" 64, line 32), Chatterton cribbed ideas from Camden's *Britannia*[1] (Fig. 4). Just like in Camden, Rowley's numismatic sketches of Saxon and Roman coins are shown in connected pairs with obverse and reverse views (Fig. 5), complete with a numbering system. The little Saxon English and Latin legends and quirky mint characters were Chatterton's own, but his page layouts were a fraudulent performance of the page proofs of an authoritative antiquarian textbook.

As another example, Figure 6 shows Chatterton's spurious "original" and "transcript" versions of the same imaginary medieval Bristol Castle façade, the "Backe of yGuarders Hall with its Towers." This is one of scores of historiographical illustrations that visually juxtapose Rowley's stained old sketches with new pictorial transcriptions, both with copperplate annotations. His imitation of these layouts demonstrates his understanding of the importance of illustrations in Early Modern chorographic works, not only because of their importance for mapping the known and newly discovered world, but also because collecting them on the page gave them meaning and made them more authentic. In producing such imitations, Chatterton learned that he could work upon the core beliefs held by his educated readers, through the authenticating notations and page layouts of historiographic convention. Chatterton's historiography was a means of inviting his readers into a subjective awareness of his work—his precious historical objects—and of inviting exactly the kind of scholarly interest and engagement that his annotations themselves demonstrated.

I am suggesting, then, that Chatterton's work highlights over and over again the fact of materiality, antiquity, and indecipherability, and that in doing so this work encouraged his readers to physically touch the works, to be touched affectively by them, and to respond in a predetermined way. Luisa Calè argues that in "composite" pages of mid-eighteenth-century bibliographic experiments like Chatterton's manuscripts, visual devices such as annotations and footnotes disrupted the reader's experience of reading, reducing the text to "a series of aphorisms or captions" ("Blake" 456). However, in the disruption that they cause, they also highlight the reading experience itself, as well as the antiquarian's attempt to infuse narrative meaning into otherwise meaningless objects, thereby creating "an imagined past which is available for consumption" (Stewart 143). His tales, poems, and letters concerning priest, poet, and historian Thomas Rowley's relationship with his patron William Canynge, and concerning their joint antiquarian and scholarly projects, constructed a narrative parable of the ways Chatterton hoped his own prospective patrons would value and respond to the Rowley manuscripts.

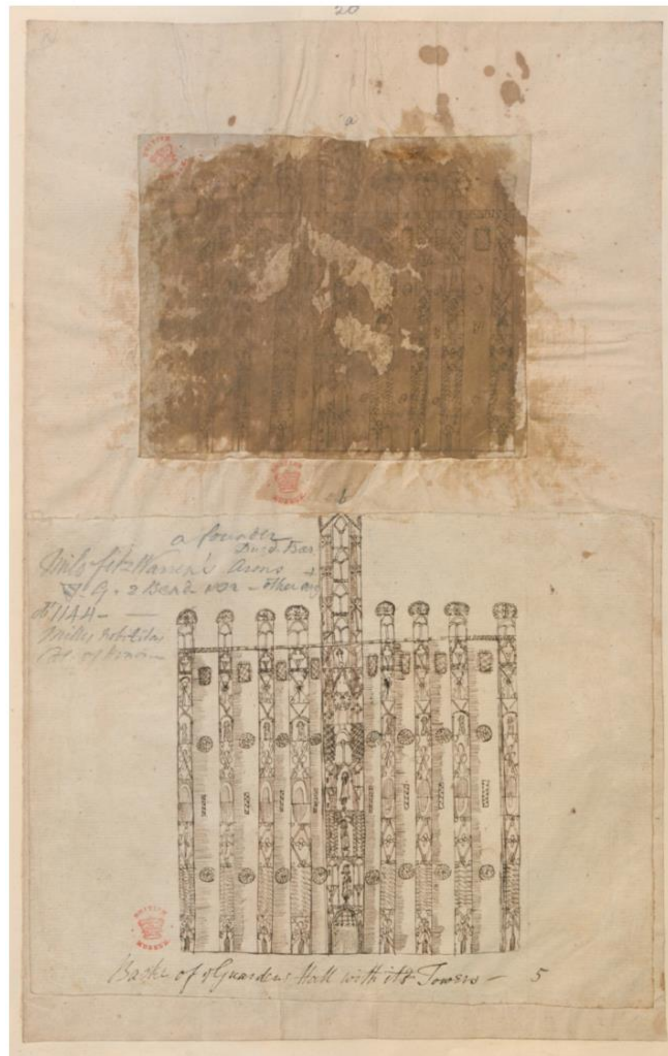


Fig. 6. Thomas Chatterton, Backe of yGuarders Hall with its Towers*, [Oct–Nov 1768], ink on paper, British Library Add MS 5766A–035 (by permission of the British Library).*

So, specifically, how did Chatterton want his readers to respond? Simply speaking, he would do anything to get himself into print. His creative *modus operandum* involved a campaign to attract the attention of individual men such as Bristol historian William Barrett, cultural critic and antiquarian Horace Walpole, and London publisher James Dodsley, to whom he would send his manuscripts for incorporation into their magazine or journal, or indeed for literal inscription into their works. Particular fragments or pieces of the Rowley works, according to Chatterton's twentieth-century editor Donald Taylor, had "quite specific jobs to do: they are clearly designed to exploit the particular needs and interests of actual or potential patrons"

(*Thomas* 52). In this way, Chatterton would offer up to each man specially crafted, pseudo-documentary fragments of such apparent personal interest and significance, and so seductively incomplete in academic terms, that he hoped they would be enraptured, unable to act in any way other than to incorporate them into their own historical research and publications. As if he were creating a museum gallery, or an antiquarian cabinet of curiosities, open to the historical narrativity and extra-illustration of his visitors, Chatterton created a display of cultural and historical antiquities. Their ultimate form and meaning were left wide open to Barrett and Walpole, and others like them, who Chatterton hoped would take his works and alter them from the state of antiquarian ephemera to bound and published books.

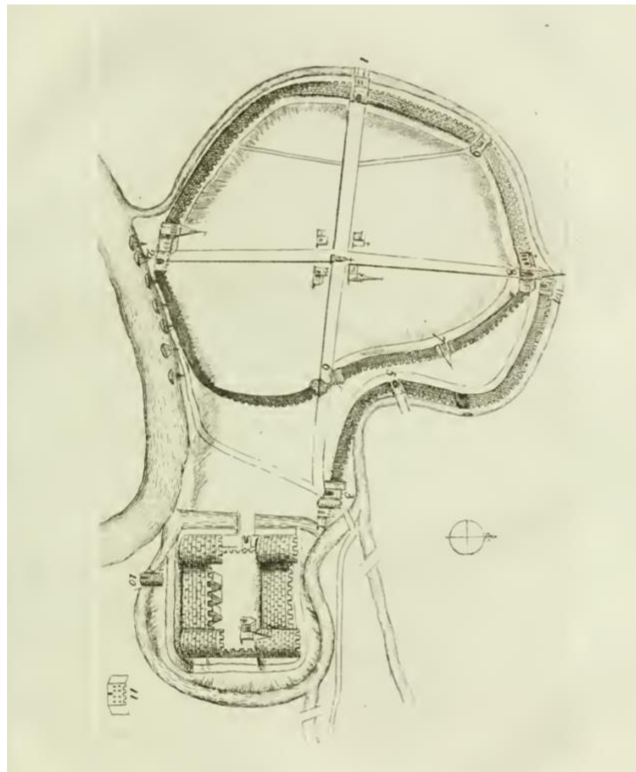


Fig. 7. William Barrett, The old Plan of the City*, from* History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol*, Bristol, W. Pine, [1789], facing p. 51, copperplate print (by permission of the British Library, photo Kate Sumner).*

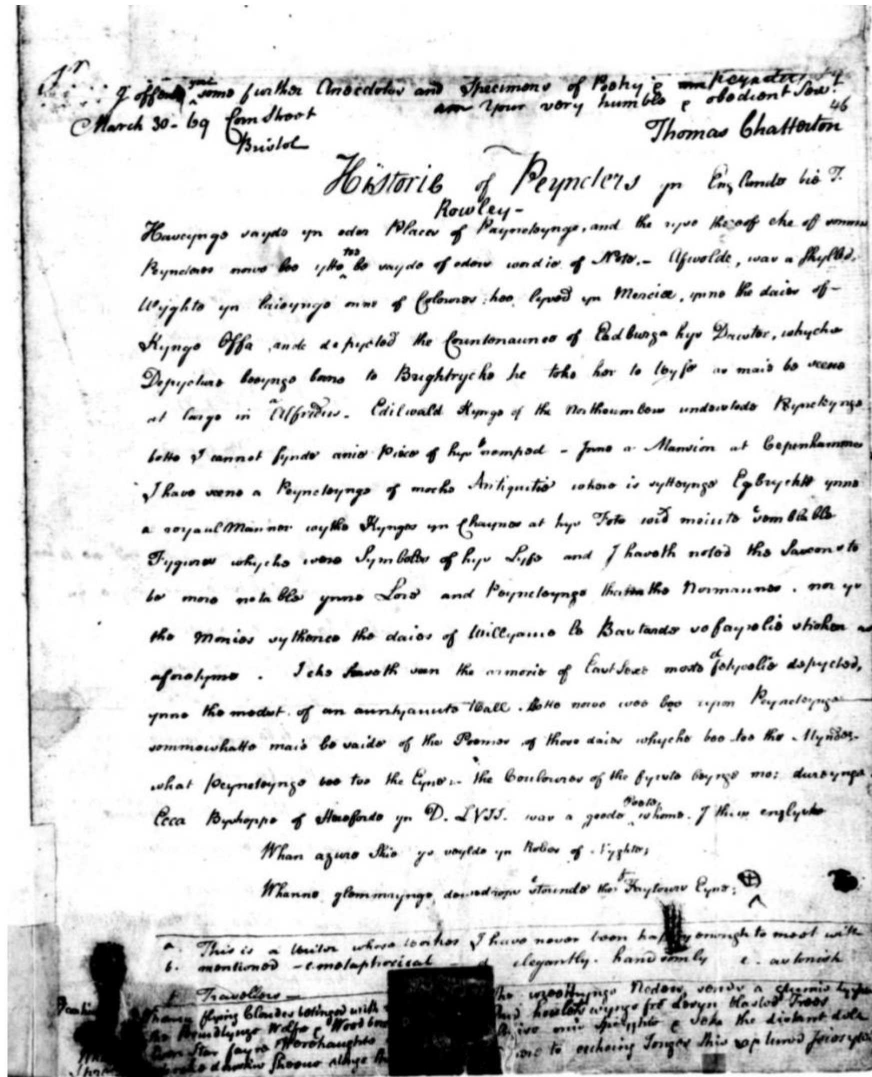
Most of Chatterton's Rowley fragments constituted an invitation to dislocate and reinscribe his work into new material forms authored by others. He hoped these new forms would give him a chance at immortality through publication, despite the fact that he had to give up on his claim to sole authorship in the process. To this end, for example, Chatterton shared many scores of his medieval histories, poetry, and drawings with his antiquarian mentor William Barrett, as documentary "evidence"

ideally suited to fill the gaps in the gullible man's *History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol*.[2] Figure 7, for example, shows Barrett's map of Bristol castle in its medieval heyday, published as factual in his *History and Antiquities*. Barrett's map almost exactly replicates the castle footprint imaginatively reconstructed in a sketch by Chatterton (see Fig. 3). It was just what Chatterton hoped for. Barrett's *History* is a bizarre fusion of fact and fantasy, conceived as a history of Bristol, but constructed from a composite of real historical and Chatterton's Rowleyan materials—constructed in much the same fashion as Chatterton's own historiography, except that its nominated author presents it as fact, and its form expresses all the qualities of a traditional published history book. Despite such a presentation, however, the names of Rowley and Chatterton both appear repeatedly in the book's contents pages. Rowley is cited as an historical source throughout the history, and Chatterton's scholarly relationship to the Rowley materials is mentioned too, such that, for example, "the following curious account of this church was given by Chatterton, as transcribed by him from Rowley, which is submitted to the judgement of the reader" (524). Furthermore, Chatterton's Rowleyan poetry, history, maps and architectural illustrations are printed, *verbatim*, in the pages of this so-called history book.

Barrett acknowledged the fact that there would be various "opinions held of these manuscripts … respecting their authenticity; they may probably be called in question as much as the poems have been, published under the name of Rowley" (524). However, he refused to determine his own position on the controversy, deemed it "unfair in an Historian to have concealed what the public have a right to canvas," and instead chose to call his book a history and leave "every reader of abilities and candour … to form an opinion of it." He added, knowing at this point in time that the readers were unlikely to be able to see and touch the obvious material fakery of Chatterton's scraps, that the "external evidence of the genuineness of these manuscripts was such, as fully to authorize him to give them to the public, whatever shall be infer'd from the internal evidence" (45–46). Barrett's *History* is thus an odd fusion, or confusion, in which the controversy of the Rowley "forgery" and even the adolescent "forger" himself have been incorporated into Bristol's history—acknowledged as problematic yet still dressed in the pretence of historical truthfulness and scholarly authenticity.

In the context of success with Barrett and increasing ambition for professional success, Chatterton hoped similarly to entice the London-based cultural powerhouse and art historian Horace Walpole to incorporate certain Rowley fragments into his new edition of *Anecdotes of Painting*. Chatterton therefore sent two manuscripts to Walpole—one called "The Ryse of Peyncteynge, yn Englande, wroten bie T. Rowlie. 1469 for Mastre Canynge," and the other (shown in Fig. 8) called "Historie of Peyncters yn Englande bie T. Rowley." Chatterton's manipulative and obliquely patronising footnote to the "pieces" read that "the Person under whose Patronage they may appear to the World, will lay the Englishman, the Antiquary, and the Poet, under an eternal Obligation" (Footnote).[3] And this person was of course Walpole,

one of Chatterton's readers. Clearly, he believed that appealing to his targets' egotism was the best way to ensure their commitment to his project. But while Barrett was a willing dupe, Walpole had more discernment. Soon enough, he saw through Chatterton's fakes, despite the disappointment of giving up possibilities any historian would long for, of creating historical narrative from a cabinet of catalogued and described, but as yet undeciphered and unpublished historic artefacts.


I offer you some further Anecdotes and Specimens of Poetry & am Your very humble & obedient Servt.
March 30-69 Corn Street
Bristol
Thomas Chatterton

Historie of Peyncters yn Englande bie T. Rowley-

Fig. 8. Thomas Chatterton, Historie of Peyncters yn Englande bie T. Rowley, *[30 March 1769], ink on paper, British Library Add MS 5766B–108 (by permission of the British Library)*.

Walpole's rejection of Chatterton's project essentially put an end to Rowley. Walpole clearly believed gothic imitation was his own special province of expertise, and he took a dim view of several other revivalists, such as Langley and his garden

designs. Chatterton was mistaken in believing that Walpole would recognise him as a colleague. The older man was a representative of the elite class of grammar-school–educated gentleman writers, but he had a foot in the fashionable literary camp too, working with the new gothic aesthetic. Consequently, he held all the cultural capital in his hands, and Chatterton held almost none. Walpole's problem with Chatterton was very likely related to the young poet's middle-class background and his social pretensions. While it lasted, however, Chatterton's flagrant audacity was reflected in his practice of physically transforming the ideal of the whole, bound book, "unbinding" it as Calè would argue ("Book"), into antiquarian fragments for use by other gentlemen of letters with greater socioeconomic clout and access to publishing technologies. His plan was daring and profoundly experimental, and perhaps even desperate—but it was his own unique, creative response to his powerful need for recognition. He knew that on his own he could not achieve social sanction and patronage as a man of letters, because of remaining mid-century prejudices regarding his paltry commercial education and socioeconomic background. He therefore needed help. Accordingly, he created personalised gifts that acted as conduits of communication and complicity between himself and his literary coterie, establishing the cultural value of his works and advancing his professional ambitions.

Experimental and blatantly opportunistic, Chatterton gave his composite literary fragments to specific individual gentlemen, in the spirit of faux gifts that come with a social obligation. The obligation Chatterton sought was these gentlemen's investment of time and professional interest. The corporeal quality of the annotated documents he produced demanded the reader's touch, and as works they touched the reader affectively in return, inciting a predetermined response from them. In this way, Chatterton leveraged his small literary curiosities into larger exchanges, in which he willingly gave up his claim to sole authorship in return for access to publishing possibilities he was unlikely to gain on his own.

The relevance of this portrait of Chatterton's professional self-promotion through material poetics lies most simply in contributing to a more robust appreciation of Chatterton's actual creative work, as opposed to participating in the usual critical back-and-forth about his fraudulence and his biography. Importantly, my research also contributes to our understanding of the creative underclasses and literary "failures" of this complex transitional period in British cultural history. The significance of Chatterton's material style lies, I believe, in its expression of his ambition for literary success and, more generally, of the anxious shortcomings of the creative underclasses of the mid-eighteenth century Georgian literary economy. Chatterton was determinedly, desperately trying to write his own literary distinction and success into existence, and he was not alone in this effort. The failure of *his* works, in terms of immediate distinguished celebrity, and also in terms of belonging to what was to become the English literary canon, survives as a record of the more common, unremembered failures of Grub Street journalism and the tragic poets in the period.

When I'm teaching English to young people, or parenting my own two, or thinking about Thomas Chatterton's crazy-brilliant project of literary self-promotion,

I am struck by what persists. Today, young people are still obsessed with fame and fortune over experience and wisdom. They still value looks and power over kindness and truth. They still expose their vulnerabilities stupidly, without realising the longer-term consequences to themselves and others. They still make dreadful mistakes, because we all do when we're young, and the starlight in our eyes blinds us. Mediocrity, cruelty, and crudity tumble together in the tsunami of digital words and images that today's young folk absorb and reproduce. Just as in Chatterton's time, however, gifted philosophers, artists, writers, inventors, and scientists keep surfacing in the flotsam. These survivors are the ones who will create great art that reflects on, or finds, the solutions to today's problems. But not everyone gets to be Greta Thunberg or Grace Tame! Thomas Chatterton reminds us how many individual attempts it takes for society to achieve something worthwhile, and how we must treat with intelligent attention, respect, and sometimes forbearance, the necessary host of so-called failures that pave the way to brilliance.

NOTES

[1] Camden's *Britannia* was first published in Latin in 1586. For the Rowley works, Chatterton mined both Camden's 1695 and 1722 English translations for raw historical data, antiquarian imagery, and historiographic formats.

[2] See Meyerstein 129–249; Taylor, *Thomas* 63–72.

[3] Another instance of Chatterton's self-footnoting is visible at the bottom of Fig. 8.

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THE "UNSEEN LAND OF THOUGHT": MATERIALISING IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY IN THE BRONTËS' MINIATURE BOOKS

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THROUGH the construction of their miniature books, the Brontës' demonstrate the critical, dynamic relationship between inert matter and imagination, as theorised by French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. To make the books, the children drew on the resourceful things around their home: a range of literary matter that stimulated their imaginations and of paper scraps that they used to materialise it. Constituting a significant part of their prolific anthology of juvenilia, the books were intended to be little magazines, scaled down for the set of toy soldiers that first inspired their tales of "Glass Town" society. Whereas much scholarship has focused on youthful writing as the apprenticeship of the adult author and the development of the author's literary voice, in this essay I explain how Bachelard's model of the "material imagination" (*Repose* 1) offers insights into the Brontës' negotiation of the interior and exterior worlds. I discuss the form of miniaturisation, with scaling, as crucial to their cognitive understanding, imaginative creativity, and writing practices; I then describe how the books' production fostered agency and revealed the energy or "*imago*" inherent in the creative process, to argue ultimately that the Brontës' miniature books offer strong support for Bachelard's views on the centrality of the material imagination in childhood.[1]

The imagination might be considered by some to be a subsidiary human characteristic, only important in childhood and for adults practising the arts, yet Bachelard posits the material imagination as the "most primary of all human functions" (*Repose* vii).[2] Moreover, the *material imagination*, as he terms it, is a critical aspect of human consciousness that galvanises and sustains our engagement with the external world. In Bachelard's view, the imagination engages with matter at a profound level: "the material imagination engages us dynamically. In the realm of the imagination, everything comes to life: matter is not inert" (*Will* 41). Imagination

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actually requires sensory responses to matter: "The resistant world lifts us out of our static reality, beyond ourselves, initiating us into the mysteries of energy. Henceforth we are awakened beings" (*Will* 14). The generation of energy is thus critical to Bachelard's concept, with channelled energy fostering agency; for in acts of imagination, an essential tactile process occurs: "Hand and matter must become one in order to form the point of intersection for this *energetic dualism*" (*Will* 19, original italics). By harnessing inert things or materials, the imagination inspires the individual to action, thereby fostering potential, and all human development requires this dynamic transaction between the interior and exterior worlds. In Bachelard's view, moreover, the process of imaginative miniaturization develops agency in especially powerful ways. Furthermore, intangible aspects of the individual creators are revealed through their construction of material things. As Bachelard asserts, "In studying material images we discover … the *imago* of our energy. In other words, matter is the mirror of our energies" (*Will* 17). Bachelard's theory of the material imagination thus invites us to view the Brontës' miniature books as material objects that reflect not only their creators' agency but also their lived experiences and inner lives.

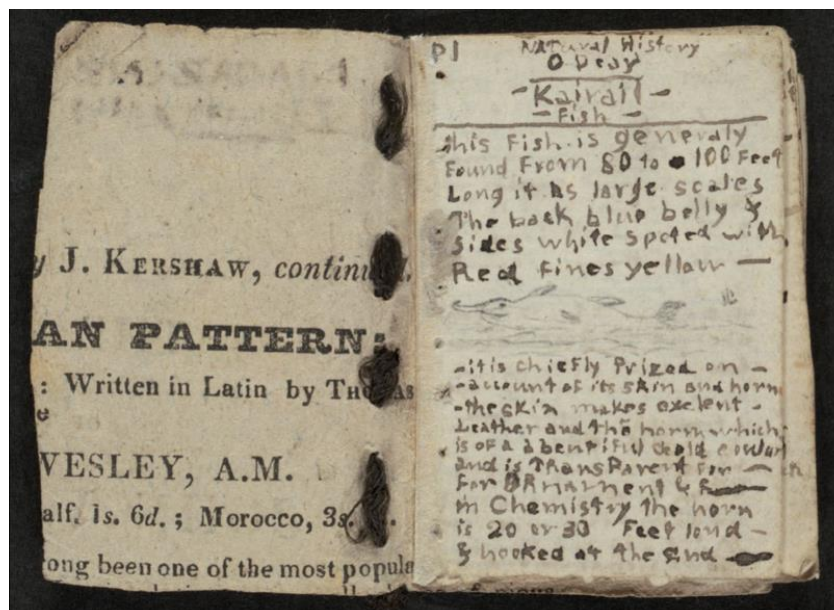

Fig. 1: P. Branwell Brontë, "Magazine," January 1829, p. 1. Houghton Library MS Lowell 1 (8) (courtesy Houghton Library).

All four surviving Brontë children wrote creatively, cultivating their literary skills in various forms that included poems, manuscripts, diary papers, and little books; a significant amount of their content involved fantasy worlds. Initially inspired by the set of twelve toy soldiers (The Twelves) that their father gave to Branwell, each child allocated their soldier an identity that corresponded to a prominent real-life figure; Charlotte chose the Duke of Wellington, while Branwell favoured Bonaparte (Barker

179). Their tales were initially created as the "Young Men's Plays" (inspired by the soldiers), "Our fellows' Plays" (derived from *Aesop's Fables*), and "The Islanders' Plays" (drawn from real-life politics) (Alexander, Introduction xiv). Elements of these plays were combined to form the foundation of Charlotte and Branwell's complex saga of Glass Town and Angria; a fantasy world that centred around the Great Glass Town, later called Verdopolis, and later incorporated the dominion of Angria (Alexander and Smith 209). From 1831, Emily and Anne created the now largely lost world of Gondal (Bock 35–36).

While it is possible that Emily and Anne created miniature books, only Charlotte and Branwell's are extant. Charlotte's twelve surviving books each measure about 3.5 cm x 5.3 cm, while Branwell's eight surviving books range from 3.5 cm x 5.3 cm to 15.8 cm x 19 cm (Alexander, "In Search" 18). As paper was expensive and scarce, they repurposed paper scraps from salt and sugar packets, potato sacking, newspaper, wallpaper, and old music sheets,[3] in their attempts to emulate *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* their primary source of inspiration. The children were fascinated by their reading of current affairs, public figures and events, global explorations, history, geography, and supernatural tales in *Blackwood's* and also in *Fraser's Magazine*, *The Methodist Magazine*, and influential texts by Scott, Byron, Bunyan, and Milton, *Arabian Nights*, *Tales of the Genii* and Goldsmith's geography book (Alexander and Smith 52–56). They selected and creatively refashioned this material into their writing, crafting their own worlds with material and immaterial fragments, thus reflecting Bachelard's notion of imagination and matter awakening individuals to energy and agency.[4]

Miniaturisation: Scale, Space, and Process

THE SCALE of the little books is fundamental to the children's handling of ideas, for as Bachelard argues, "the function of miniaturisation" intrinsically fosters agency (*Repose* 9); in this case, the immaterial, imaginative capacity for ideas was invigorated by the material, quantifiable, documentation of them in little book form. Bachelard's term for acts of imaginative miniaturisation is "Lilliputian reveries," a nod to Jonathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) that incorporates worlds on both miniature and gigantic scales. Not only was the novel familiar to the Brontë children but Charlotte also portrays her character Jane Eyre envisioning a voyage to the "little fields, houses and trees, [and] the diminutive people" of Lilliput" (*Jane Eyre* 20). Here, writing in adulthood, Charlotte depicts her character Jane escaping by entering a storybook dream world that "Lilliputian reveries" make possible. In the case of the Glass Town stories, while the books are miniature, the magnitude of the fantasy world that Charlotte and Branwell design them for and depict within them is boundless. Bachelard explains this paradox with a quotation from Max Jacobs: "'The miniscule [*sic*] is the enormous!' To be sure of this, all we need do is go and dwell there in our imagination" (9–10). The Glass Town chronicles were a never-ending game. Events

were frequently told, reversed, and reinvented, and characters could be unearthly, or metamorphosed, renamed, or resurrected from the dead in a way that can only transpire in make-believe. Although the books were miniature in size, the magnitude for creativity was enormous; nothing was out of bounds, the imagination was completely unregulated and unlimited.

Such a miniature space, then, magnifies the possibilities inherent in creativity, precipitating an expansion of visions, ideas, and conceptualisations; in Bachelard's view, the more adept a person is at miniaturising the world, the more that person can possess it (Rabb 21). Moreover, as Susan Stewart argues in *On Longing* (1993), the space of the miniature book is an intimate one: in contrast with the large, abstract, area of the playground, the small space occupied by a toy allows a child to indulge in fantasy and secrecy (56). When Elizabeth Gaskell first encountered Charlotte's juvenilia, she remarked on the "immense amount of manuscript, in an inconceivably small space" (64). Of course, little books necessitate minuscule script, and given the short supply of paper, tiny script was economically advantageous. But it also prohibited adults from reading the contents.[5] The small size of the books allowed them to be tucked away in the children's portable desk boxes (Alexander, "Juvenilia" 98). In both immaterial and material terms then, the creation of the complex saga of Glass Town, and potentially in the lost Angria and Gondal sagas as well, depended on the small, intimate space of the little handmade books, which permitted an infinite number of secret reveries that are materially unknown or inaccessible to adults.

Fig. 2. P. Branwell Brontë, Pages from "Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine," July 1829. Houghton Library MS Lowell 1 (9) (courtesy Houghton Library).

While there is an obvious practical component to children creating small-scale objects, and an unbounded imaginary one, the creative *process* of miniaturisation also engenders agency, and this too is evident in the Brontës' miniature books, especially in Branwell and Charlotte's miniature versions of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Jack Davy and Charlotte Dixon, in *Worlds in Miniature* (2019), posit three components of the creative process by which such miniatures are produced: mimesis, scaling, and simplification (5). Mimesis is intellectual and imaginative, and entails a replication of the original or prototype; scaling results in a small variation of the original but does not require the same functionality; and simplification allows for the selection and omission of details, that can also reveal insights about the maker (6, 8–9). Because of scaling and simplification, a miniature is rarely identical to the original. Such differences, argue Davy and Dixon, allow the maker to simplify large and gigantic entities by reducing their qualities, including "ideological qualities," to the microcosmic or domestic level (3). This is evident in the way the Brontës portray phenomena such as political ideologies, military agendas, and geographical regions, reducing them from the macrocosmic real world to the microcosmic within the pages of their magazines.

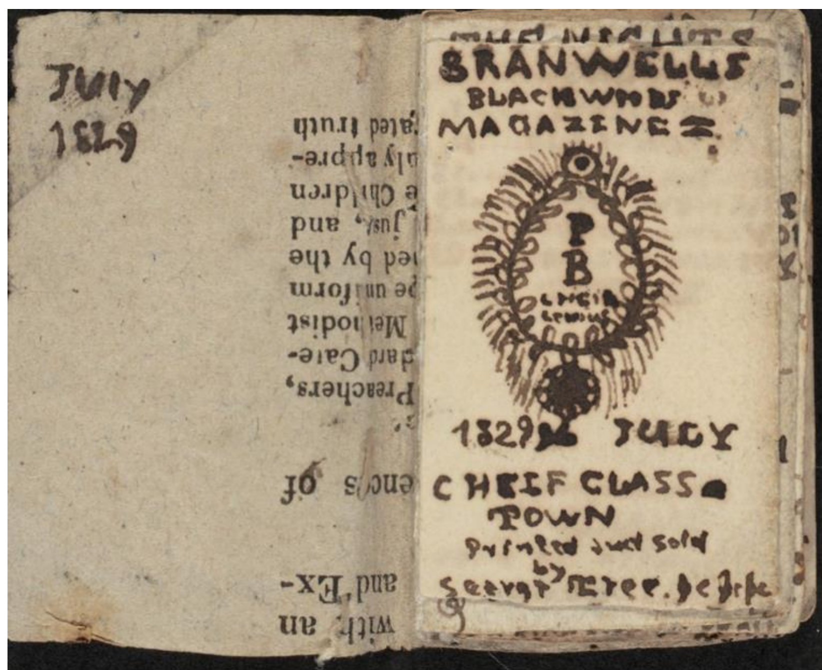

Fig. 3. P. Branwell Brontë, title page of "Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine," July 1829. Houghton Library MS Lowell 1 (9), (courtesy Houghton Library).

Consider, for instance, "The Nights," in Branwell's magazine of July 1829 (Fig. 2), which parodies the long-running (1822–35) "Noctes Ambrosianae" feature in *Blackwood's*, in which influential individuals engaged in lively debate. The actual debates took place at Ambrose's Tavern, Edinburgh, and were reported in *Blackwood's*;

Branwell's condensed version is set at Bravey's Inn, Glass Town, and mimics the swaggering tone of the original.[6] The contents list (Fig. 2) is entirely Branwell's invention and features a mishmash of real-life characters, such as Napoleon and Wellington, who regularly featured in his reading, along with such fictitious others as Bravey, Gravey, and Genius. This simplified edition mimics cultural rituals and attitudes; furthermore, the emblematic image on the cover page (Fig. 3) mimics the format of the magazine's prototype, but features Branwell's initials in place of the original lithographic portrait. It also selects and embellishes factual content and omits some features. This enmeshment of actuality with make-believe is a trait that the siblings continued throughout their lives.

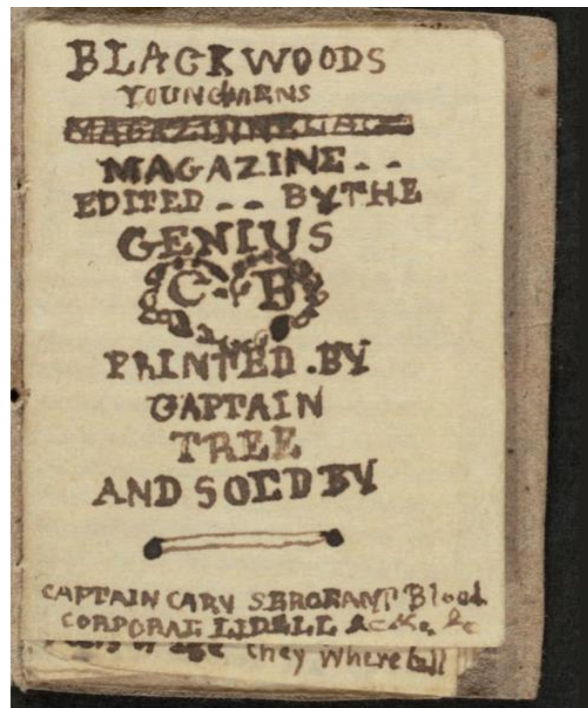
BLACKWOODS
YOUNG MENS
MAGAZINE --
EDITED -- BY THE
GENIUS
C B
PRINTED BY
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Fig. 4. Charlotte Brontë, title page of "Blackwood's Young Mens Magazine," August 1829. Houghton Library MS Lowell 1 (6), (courtesy Houghton Library).

Another instance where simplification of the original reveals personal insights about the maker may be found in Charlotte's August 1829 edition of the siblings' magazine (Fig. 4), which features "a true story by CB" that mimics the prototype magazine yet represents her reworked interpretations of historical events blended with fantasy stories and invented places. Here Charlotte incorporates Genii characters from her childhood reading and sets her story in the Duke of Wellington's Palace of Waterloo, in Glass Town, named after the famous historic battle.[7] The edition includes Charlotte's narratorial voice emulating the Duke, reporting on the causes of war, and mimics advertisements, including one for Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, costing 10

shillings. Furthermore, Charlotte also replicates the "Noctes Ambrosianae," in spirited response to Branwell's previous two monthly editions. Her edition also demonstrates gendered differences in her imitation of the original format, as she feminises the publication by featuring her initials in a decorative heart emblem to replace the lithograph figure on the prototype. In contrast to Branwell, her narrative content tends towards feminine interests including romantic storylines. Both techniques proffer agency and the chance to express ideological qualities, also allowing Charlotte to metaphorically indulge in the masculine drinking and publishing worlds that her gender, age, and class, restrict her from.

The process of miniaturisation requires selecting and comprehending aspects of the prototype for replication, which consequently fosters a greater understanding of it (Davy and Dixon 3). Moreover, the functionality and details are chosen entirely without the need for meeting any required standard. In creating their miniature books, the Brontës adeptly selected threads of real-life sociopolitics from *Blackwood's* in a manner that indicates a sophisticated comprehension of contemporaneous society, including the macrocosmic concept of world exploration and imperialism. They even became colonisers, as their fictional society of Glass Town was set on a seized African island; thus their story was shaped by the imperialist reports often featured in *Blackwood's*. Christine Alexander traces the specific catalyst to a June 1826 article and map in *Blackwood's* on Denham and Clapperton's explorations in Africa, explaining the siblings metaphorically followed through on the author's advice regarding the most favourable site to claim (Introduction xvii). Also replicating imperial attitudes, Charlotte's "Two Romantic Tales" book (28 April 1829) narrates the "Voyage of Discovery" in which The Twelves (the toy soldiers) journey from England to the South Atlantic to seize control of the country Ashantee, present day Ghana, and "set about building a city" (Brontës 6, 8, 501). In 1831, Branwell produced a map that replicated the *Blackwood's* map of the June 1826 article, but he augmented the original map to include Glass Town and other fictional lands and islands, including Ross's and Parry's.

Agency and the *Imago* of Energy

BEYOND the value of its sociocultural, political, and geographical content, *Blackwood's Magazine* acted as a template for Charlotte and Branwell's writing practices, one that afforded them discernible narrative agency. They mimicked its satirical techniques and imitated much of its content, style, methods, formatting, typeface lettering, contents page, and advertisements, as well as feature matter. In so doing, moreover, the miniature books materialise the *imago*, the unseen energies, of Charlotte and Branwell. They disclose the development of individuality and independence, youthful aptitude and malleability, their capacity to absorb, assimilate, express ideas, and negotiate the adult world, often through appropriation and imitation.[8] They also

manifest the competitive rivalry and collaborative nature of their writing, for example, through their own versions of *Blackwood's*, and in the way they responded to one another's content with verve and ingenuity.

Just as *Blackwood's* presented pieces by various regular authors and editors, so the young editors adopted pseudonymised voices and identities. In "The History of the Young Men" (1831), for example, Branwell adopts the pseudonymised voice of Captain John Bud, and he also copies the magazine's print and editing format. Moreover, Charlotte had the freedom to assume a male authorial voice as Captain Tree, followed by that of his rival Lord Charles Wellesley, and she also wrote poetically as the Marquis of Douro; after writing as Captain John Bud, Branwell penned as Young Soult "the rhymer" (Alexander, Introduction xv). In these ways, Charlotte and Branwell imitated many of the authorial qualities of *Blackwood's* and became editorial agents. This template also afforded them creative license and the freedom to metaphorically act out in ways that were impossible in real life. For example, in "Second Vol of Tales of the Islanders," Chapter II (6 October 1829), a Glass Town school rebellion is reported in detail, outlining the four armed, fighting parties encamped in grounds nearby among the trees, in a ravine, and the summit of a rock (Brontës 20–21). The rebels eventually surrender, after the Duke of Wellington threatens to set his several thousand blood hounds on them (Brontës 22).

The little Brontë books also reveal vibrant portraits of their authors' lives, perceptions, and activities because they are handmade, not manufactured possessions. As such they engender an intimacy between observer and creator; or, to put it another way, they serve as a portal, providing insights on Parsonage life that reveal the material and immaterial elements of the Brontës' lived experience. Similarly, Emily and Anne's diary papers provide glimpses of domesticity, merging commentary about their inhabited space with their imagined space. The diary papers evoke an image of the children crafting the ephemeral scraps and threads of their lives—forming permanent testimony of their childhood play. As Bachelard states, "In studying material images we discover … the *imago* of our energy. In other words, matter is the mirror of our energies" (*Will* 17). This is perhaps especially true in the case of handmade books; Kathryn Sutherland perceives manuscripts of youthful writing as being "sticky with their writers' presence" (qtd. in Higgins),[9] and I would suggest that this presence can be considered the *imago*: the normally imperceptible elements of a person made manifest. In juvenilia, the minutiae of the creative processes linger on the page as a haunting residue of childhood play. Such residue in the Brontë books includes errors, blots, doodles, misspellings, and clumsily scrubbed out writing. These handmade markings are not inert; they are traces of lived experience, moments of being that are frozen in time—the Brontës' childhood materialised.

Story content aside, human activity and transactions bring a vitality of their own to the script. Bachelard states that "the hand at work elevates the subject to a higher plane, to an enhanced or *dynamized* level of existence" (*Will* 19). In Bachelard's terms, then, the dynamic hand brings forth the imaginative force; it is the hand that engages

with matter and produces sensations and reveries, the hand that materialises the imagination. The hand also labours to produce the content, and in the Brontës' case, it labours to cut and stitch the tiny pages too. As Stewart notes, the phenomenon of micrographia indicates craft and discipline; when the size of the product is diminished, the labour (of the hand) invested is multiplied, and so is its significance (38–39). This investment is evident in Branwell's rapid composition of minuscule script; its indecipherable letters, deficient punctuation, and ink blots (Alexander, "Introduction" xlvii) reveal the intense labour of production as well as the energetic compulsion to write. Stewart's remarks on the nostalgic and authentic significance of manuscript handwriting in eras when print has diminished the practice are also relevant here (39). This appears to have been Emily's understanding; in *Wuthering Heights*, Lockwood's "immediate interest kindled … for the unknown Catherine," an interest prompted by her "pen-and-ink commentary" and "excellent caricature" (24). These notes "scrawled in an unformed, childish hand" render Lockwood intrigued by the *imago* of the invisible person behind them (24). We may, similarly, read such inscription as Branwell's as authentic matter that mirrors and immortalises its author's energies and thereby leaves a residual aura.

Creative Energy: A Lifelong Experience and Practice

WHILE writing her biography, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), Elizabeth Gaskell received a large package from Charlotte's widower, Arthur Bell Nicholls, containing much of the Brontë juvenilia; she was the first person to encounter it outside the family (Alexander, Introduction xiii). Her account remarked on Charlotte's "wild weird writing," asserting that "when she [Charlotte] gives way to her powers of creation, her fancy and her language alike run riot, sometimes to the very borders of apparent delirium" (71); similarly, she deems Charlotte's 1830 list of books to be "curious proof how early the rage for literary composition had seized upon her" (66). As Charlotte's creative escapism did not conform to the disciplined behaviour expected of a young lady, Gaskell excused it as the "curious" outcome of an isolated childhood, fortunately tempered by Charlotte's common sense and duty: "while her imagination received vivid impressions, her excellent understanding had full power to rectify them before her fancies became realities" (Gaskell 73). Yet in a letter, Gaskell privately opined that the miniature books "give one the idea of creative power carried to the verge of insanity"; likewise, Branwell's rapid scrawl implies the same lack of control (Alexander, Introduction xiii). Gaskell's comments reflect an important dimension of the Brontës' lived experience at the parsonage: the ways in which their imaginative childhood activity channelled energy. However, Bachelard's ideas on the centrality of imagination offer an important alternative to Gaskell's criticism of Charlotte's sometimes riotous writings.

In terms of material culture, the Brontë books are child-formed rather than child-used objects; they embody the mind and actions of the child, including their collaborative play and intense mania to write. The Brontë girls were taught rudimentary domestic skills such as plain sewing, religious instruction, standard reading, writing, drawing, and music, in preparation for predetermined roles,[10] while Branwell received the classical education given to boys. Yet all four were channelling their intellectual and physical energy away from these orthodox learning practices, into their secret "bed plays," as Charlotte referred to them, and the creative compulsion for "scriblomania," as she described the juvenilia (qtd. in Alexander and Smith 277). Their alternative occupations resulted in these cut, stitched, and inscribed miniature books.

For the Brontë sisters, the imagination that was cultivated in childhood became a vital lifelong aspect of their identities that was always entangled with real life, that validate Bachelard's claim of the imagination being the most primary human function. For instance, Emily's 1845 diary paper reveals how accessing the imaginative creativity of the childhood interior world distracts from the mundaneness of the exterior world and has the power to take the individual beyond themselves to a new place, rank, and even gender:

> … returning to Keighley Tuesday evening sleeping there and walking home on Wednesday morning— … during our excursion we were Ronald Macelgin, Henry Angora, Juliet Angusteena, Rosabelle, Ella and Julian Egramon, Catharine Navarre and Cordelia Fitzaphnold escaping from the palaces of Instruction to join the Royalists who are hard driven at present by the victorious Republicans—The Gondals still florish bright as ever (Diary Paper 30 [31] July 1845, in Brontës, *Tales of Glass Town* 490)

Both Emily and Anne's diary papers, written jointly in 1834 and 1837, then separately in 1841 and 1845, merged fiction with reality in all but the first paper. Emily's diary anecdote from July 1845, above, reveals how their childhood creativity continued to vividly penetrate their everyday experience, and their deep investment in the affairs of these imaginary worlds many years after conceiving them. Emily wrote the above passage at the age of twenty-seven years; at the same time twenty-five-year-old Anne's paper recorded the Gondals being "in a sad state the Republicans are uppermost but the Royalists are not quite overcome" (Brontës 492). Branwell also valued these years of reveries. In a later letter to *Blackwood's* editors, Branwell said the magazine produced "divine flights into that visionary region of imagination" (Alexander, "Readers and Writers" 57), proof that their childhood reveries stimulated a creative energy that endured.

Charlotte's Roe Head Journal (1836), written aged twenty and teaching away from home, similarly conveys her drive for imaginative "scriblomania." On a page beginning "I'm just going to write because I cannot help it," Charlotte records:

> Wiggins might indeed talk of scriblomania if he were to see me just now, encompassed by the bulls … Stupidity the atmosphere, school-books the employment, asses the society. What in all this is there to remind me of the divine, silent, unseen land of thought, dim now, & indefinite … There is a voice, there is an impulse that wakens up that dormant power, … an impetuous current through the air is heard at this moment far away on the moors at Haworth. Branwell and Emily hear it ("Roe Head" 165–66)

Charlotte conceives her imagination as a "land" or realm and finds emotional security and agency in accessing this inner world that compels her. Like Emily, Charlotte also reveals how she negotiates the mundane exterior world by dwelling in a dream world. This endeavour has the capacity to compress space and time: it diminishes the significant distance from Roe Head to Haworth and even shrinks the span of years passed, taking Charlotte back to the intimacy of her childhood world as well as to her current family and home. Charlotte later struggled to abandon this "unseen land"; in her "Farewell to Angria" she admits, "[I]t is no easy thing to dismiss from my imagination the images which have filled it so long. They were my friends & my intimate acquaintance" (Brontës 314). As Bachelard posits, the imagination is the "most primary of all human functions"; no better evidence can be found than in the Brontës' very existence.

NOTES

[1] In general, see Alexander and McMaster, *The Child Writer*. On the Brontës, see Alexander's extensive scholarship.

[2] Bachelard distinguishes a material imagination and a formal imagination; according to his formulation, only the material imagination engages with matter. In contrast, the formal imagination is not engaged with matter and is not as deep.

[3] Sarah Laycock (Brontë curator), correspondence received, April 2022.

[4] On Charlotte Brontë's imagination, see especially Alexander, *Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë,* Blackwell 1983, and Heather Glen, *The Imagination in History*, Oxford UP, 2002.

[5] The Brontës are not the only authors who made pocket-sized publications in their youth. See Alexander and McMaster, Introduction, *The Child Writer* 1–7.

[6] See Maynes-Aminzade 30.

[7] The palace is a fictional construct; however, design plans were once mooted. See Derek Linstrum.

[8] On Charlotte's narratorial roles, see Alexander, "Play and Apprenticeship: The Culture of Family Magazines," *The Child Writer* 31–50.

[9] Kathryn Sutherland is referring to the Honresfield Collection, including the Brontes' work. See Higgins.

[10] The curriculum for the Clergy Daughters' school included needlework (Gardiner 34). Aunt Branwell insisted on the girls sewing charity clothing (Gaskell 95).

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Reviews

Felicia Hemans. *Selected Early Poems*. Edited by Christine Alexander and Pamela Nutt, with students from Year 11, Presbyterian Ladies' College, Sydney, Australia. Juvenilia Press, 2021.

xlviii + 85 pages. Paperback, AUD 15.00.
ISBN: 978-0-7334-3979-7.

THIS ELEGANT scholarly edition of Felicia Hemans's early poetry is a welcome sight for those interested in one of the most popular and best-selling poets of the nineteenth century. Christine Alexander and Pamela Nutt, in collaboration with student editors from Presbyterian Ladies' College in Sydney, Australia, have crafted a most helpful entry point into the life and writings of Felicia Dorothea Browne, who would later be well known as Mrs. Hemans. In a remarkable feat for a fourteen-year-old, Hemans published *Poems* (1808), a volume of ninety-seven poems, entirely financed by subscription and auspiciously dedicated with permission to the Prince of Wales, later George IV. Although Hemans's juvenile writings extend beyond *Poems* (1808), Alexander and Nutt have selected fifty-six poems from this initial publication—all of which were composed when the poet was between the ages of eight and thirteen—as the sole focus for their edition. In so doing, they make an invaluable contribution to the study of literary works composed by children.

For teachers and enthusiastic readers of Hemans's poetry, this visually appealing, reasonably priced edition allows for a fresh engagement with the literary culture and sensibilities of early nineteenth-century England. Accompanying the highly accessible introductory essay and fifty-six annotated poems are beautiful images that illuminate Hemans's life, particularly her childhood. Readers first encounter a portrait of the poet taken in 1836 by Edward Smith. There are also multiple sketches that Hemans herself drew of Gwrych and Bronwylfa, her childhood homes, along with some of

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her collages that had been preserved in her friend Anne Wagner's album. Other images include the original advertisement for *Poems* (1808) and an illustration of the young poet's patroness, Lady Kirkwall, also found in the Anne Wagner Album. Simply put, Alexander and Nutt, as well as their team of editors, have crafted a beautiful book that is highly gratifying to read.

Through the editors' archival research at the New York Public Library and the University of Liverpool Library, as well as their examination of biographical sources like the *Memoir* (1839) written by Hemans's sister, Harriett Browne, this scholarly edition aims "to demonstrate the range of topics and form that Felicia Browne's poems covered, and to show the growing maturity of the young poet" (xlvi). Placed in a roughly chronological sequence based on the best evidence available, the fifty-six poems showcase Hemans's interest in Welsh language and culture, her sense of patriotism from having brothers serving in the military, and her early training in and emulation of classical poetry that is most commonly seen in the juvenile male tradition. We learn, too, from the introductory essay that Hemans's mother introduced her daughter at a young age to the works of Hannah More, Sarah Trimmer, and Anna Laetitia Barbauld. Her personal favourite, Shakespeare, frequently receives high praise in her early poetry. For example, in a poem she entitles "Shakespeare," composed at age eleven, Hemans quotes Milton's "L'Allegro" in her encomium to Shakespeare: "How sweet the 'native wood-notes wild' / Of him, the Muse's favorite child" (ll. 15–16). The endnotes in this scholarly edition helpfully point out such allusions to classical texts in addition to defining archaic language sometimes employed by the well-read, highly educated poet.

The editors interestingly suggest that Hemans's knowledge of the poetic tradition and her highly imitative style from an early age indicate her intense desire to participate in that tradition. Alexander and Nutt discuss the timidity of some of Hemans's early use of verse form (e.g., "Sometimes fourth lines are truncated, as in 'The Farewell'"); however, the young poet also adeptly experiments with odes, employing the expected elevated subject matter to match the form (xxxv). As we learn in the introductory essay, even the two negative reviews that *Poems* (1808) received, one of which had been written by Anna Barbauld in *The Monthly Review*, would not stymie the young poet's zeal to become a poet (xxxvii). Thanks to the editors' efforts in the beginning of their edition to delineate the publication history of *Poems* (1808), its famous (and infamous) subscribers, and its reception, readers can better appreciate the exceptional nature of Hemans's juvenile writings.

Readers of this edition will, I believe, be convinced that, if but a few of the fifty-six poems display occasional timidity, the far greater portion "reveal a young person alert both to her own particular surroundings and to a wider world" (xxxvi). As a child, Hemans writes bold natural descriptions of her environment in poems such as "The Scenes of Conway" and "The Ruined Castle." Drawing on her interest in Welsh culture in these two poems, Hemans delights readers with picturesque scenes infused with other Romantic elements like patriotism. At the age of thirteen, the young poet

demonstrates how meditations on nature can enable Romantic perceptions into nature's invisible workings (xxxii). She pens these memorable lines in "The Scenes of Conway":

> 'Twas thus that I mus'd, while I wander'd away,
> Thro' the towers of the castle sublime;
> Where the boughs of the ivy conceal the decay,
> Which is made by the ravage of time …. (p. 51, ll. 9-12)

When readers pair "The Scenes of Conway" with, for example, "The Ruined Castle," there is a unique and exciting opportunity to consider Romantic elements (like the sublime and the picturesque) through the eyes of a child. As we read this selection of Hemans's juvenilia, it is easy to discern the poet's growing acuity to her surroundings, both the perceptible and the imperceptible, as she gains experience and, likely, confidence.

The precocious young poet depicted in this scholarly edition would continue to write poetry for the rest of her life and attain a celebrity that few other poets of the nineteenth century could rival. At the time of her death in 1835, her works had outsold the poetry of both William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (xxxviii). However, by the end of the nineteenth century, her ubiquity and lack of male-ordained fame conspired to cause her name to drift into obscurity, a trend which would continue well into the twentieth century. Only recently have scholars like Susan Wolfson, Laurie Langbauer, Kate Singer, and Nanora Sweet sought to recover the significance of Hemans's poetry. With their publication *Felicia Hemans: Selected Early Poems* (2021), Christine Alexander and Pamela Nutt have contributed to this vital research space by making Hemans's overlooked juvenile poetry newly available, accompanied by precise and helpful annotations.

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Rachel Conrad. *Time for Childhoods: Young Poets and Questions of Agency*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2019.

xviii + 209 pages. Paperback, USD 29.95.
ISBN: 9781625344496.

TIME FOR *Childhoods: Young Poets and Questions of Agency* by Rachel Conrad breaks new ground in juvenilia studies. Building on pioneering scholarship on children's agency and authorship by Karen Sánchez-Eppler, Laurie Langbauer, Juliet McMaster, and others, Conrad's examination of lyric poems by twentieth- and twenty-first-century youth expands the footprint of literary juvenilia analysis. Although the poems in this study neither originate from an historical distance nor anticipate authors who go on to become literary celebrities, they yield great insights into children's imaginative art as well as the malleability of poetry and time itself.

Everyday acts of children's authorship often "fly under the radar of adults" and vary in terms of literary merit (18)—facts Conrad readily acknowledges. Her book's remarkable case studies demonstrate, however, that "interesting and well-crafted poems by young poets should be brought to light, talked about, respected, savored, and added to our cultural life" (8). Tending to the sociopolitical contexts, aesthetic forms, and theoretical sophistication of child-authored poetry, Conrad successfully nudges readers away from developmental, time-bound assumptions about child writers as "not *yet*" authors (as thus "precocious" and/or "ignorant"). Instead, she argues that young poets "may have more at stake in reimagining temporal order in their artistic work than do adults" (17). Accordingly, Conrad traces temporal agency as a major preoccupation of youth-authored poetry, proving time and again that "young poets' writing of time [is] a form of agency hiding in plain sight" (37).

Children's lyric poetry as a vehicle for reimagining what Conrad terms "dynamic temporality" (163) is compellingly developed in the book's carefully scaffolded chapters. Following a salient introduction, the subsequent four chapters each elucidates a fascinating case study, including Gwendolyn Brooks' Chicago-based poetry-writing contest for youth; an anthology of child-authored poems, *Salting the Ocean* (2000), collected and edited by poet Naomi Shihab Nye; The Voice of the Children project, a Brooklyn-based youth poetry collective led by June Jordan and Terri Bush; and the first edition of the now annual *Rattle Young Poets Anthology* (2014–).

Conrad's interdisciplinary approach to reading lyric poetry by children, who range in age from four to eighteen, is as novel as the subject under discussion. As a

scholar of childhood studies trained in clinical psychology and a poet, Conrad brings a range of interdisciplinary strategies to her interpretations, combining rhetorical and literary analysis of poetry with cultural, psychological, and sociological understandings of young writers' engagements with "times of childhoods" and scenes of writing. To her credit, her analysis avoids pretense, jargon, and excessive reliance on abstract theorizations *about* the ways that children are culturally, temporally, and linguistically situated. Instead, through attentive close readings of children's own linguistic choices within their poetry, Conrad carefully holds up to the light the various temporal positionings, rhetorical choices, and poetic subjectivities illumined by children's writing. Through select transcriptions of child-authored poems, she wisely creates space for children's voices, agency, and subjectivities to emerge from their writings themselves. Take, for example, a poem by Cyndea L. Peacock, which was published in *Salting the Ocean* and appears in chapter three:

> I touched
> the roughness
> of my wrinkled paper
> as I rumpled it
> in my hands.
>
> And remembered
> as I rubbed the edges—
> how life expands. (86)

By reproducing child-authored verse, such as the example above, Conrad showcases "young people's complex imagined temporalities—their temporal standpoints—that can enrich our sense of the possibilities of lyric time in relation to human subjectivity" (40). As Conrad extrapolates from the shifting conceptions of time informing Peacock's poem, "past action and remembering opens up an expanding present ('And remembered /... how life expands'), with the present-tense final word 'expands' rhyming with the first stanza's last word 'hands'" (86). In this gesture of close reading, Conrad amplifies the embodied agency suggested by the poetic speaker, pointing to the ways by which Peacock's rendering of "the past into a present ... opens and extends possibilities" of how the poem imagines temporal agency (86). As evidenced by this commentary, Conrad's incisive close readings spotlight the voices and agency of children while also illuminating through critical literary analysis "how young poets are 'doing time' in their poems: how they use language, sound, space, and pattern to make their poetic time machines that call us to wind them through our reading. Young poets, through the variety and fluency of their temporal inventions, help establish plural lyric times" (39). From the range of poems transcribed and fleshed out through her readings, we witness the "varied reimagining of temporality or multiple lyric times that young poets write" (40).

While Conrad remains alert to thorny questions surrounding how adults repackage, appropriate, and manipulate children's language practices, she also sheds light on the potentially generative aspects of adult work to invite, curate, and value children's self-expressive acts, offering Brooks's and Nye's celebration of children's agency and voices as a particularly eloquent illustration of "adult facilitation" of children's creative expression and publication. All of the book's case studies spotlight adult-sponsorship of child authorship and publication, which function less as top-down, heavy-handed modes of instruction, and more as enabling "tool[s]that children can use in the service of their own purposes and projects. Adult mediation need not threaten youth agency but can help make visible the agency claimed by young artists in their thinking, planning, and making" (9).

Conrad's own receptive, attentive readings of children's voices fall in this camp—not only in terms of her methodology but also as the driving impetus for her project. As Conrad recounts in the preface, discovering Naomi Shihab Nye's "Salting the Ocean" while visiting the Eric Carle Museum in her hometown of Amherst, Massachusetts, led to her surprise encounter with child-authored poetry. As a childhood studies scholar, parent (at the time of a preschooler), and poet, Conrad recounts "the shock" she felt when first encountering the moving words written by child poets anthologized by Nye. The revelation was also "instructive: why had I never seen such a book before, in my decades of reading and studying poetry? Why weren't poems by young poets ever talked about in literature classes, in literary magazines, in scholarly criticism?" (ix).

More than a sidebar, which adds personal dimension to a sophisticated academic argument, anecdotes such as this also model the rich discoveries that can be made when adults take seriously children's linguistic practices. Such realizations require adults, as Conrad skilfully models, remaining open to "hearing" the agency and insights that children express through language.

In sum, *Times for Childhoods: Young Poets and Questions of Agency* is a sophisticated and often revelatory examination of the ways that young writers reimagine time and subjectivity through the malleable forms of lyric poetry. As such, this groundbreaking work has much to offer readers, including scholars, graduate students, and undergraduate students as well as educators, parents, and lay readers. All those interested in developing their understanding of children's authorship and young people's engagements with time, creative expression, and agency will find much to study and emulate. As Conrad states in her conclusion, "even the act of reading" her "book involves setting aside standard adult expectations and judgements about children and their artistic works, about which texts should qualify as literary and deserve study and critical attention" (160–61). For those willing to make this time, new and vital discoveries await. Reading *Time for Childhoods* enriches our understanding of the subjectivities and temporalities conceptualized by child writers. By engaging deeply with children's literary expressions of self and the world, as Conrad's study proves and Anna Mae Duane argues elsewhere, we "forge a more realistic vision of

the contingent and mediated nature of all literary voices and of the interdependence of all historical subjects" (Duane 484).[1]

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Sophia Spencer and Margaret McNamara. *The Bug Girl (a True Story)*. Penguin Random House, 2020.

20 pages. Hardback, CAD 21.99.
ISBN: 9780735267527.

THIS DEBUT autobiographical publication by Sophia Spencer, who was eleven at the time of publication, relays her experience of being a young child who loved insects. Written with the assistance of Margaret McNamara, the pen name of Brenda Bowen, an author of books for children, the book is pitched to readers aged four to eight. Sophia's passion for "bugs," as she calls them, began at an early age, and was encouraged by her mother. However, her niche interest caused her to be bullied at school by her peers for being different. This illustrated first-person narrative tells the story of how Sophia overcame these difficulties with the help of her mum and entomologists all over the world who reassured her that it is "not weird or strange to love bugs and insects."

The book offers an original viewpoint on a life-changing experience. Sophia's perspective, with its retrospective lens, might be considered unusually mature for an author so young. The book is derived from an interview given by Sophia to Bowen; a collaboration that enables the juvenile voice to be heard. Indeed, much of the narrative phrasing has an authentic child-like feel, and there is no reason to doubt that the majority of the wording came directly from the interview. The story covers the timeframe of five years from the time Sophia first became friends with a bug, through her time at kindergarten and school until she was seven. The opening pages, which describe Sophia's visit to a butterfly conservatory, effectively convey her young childhood passion for winged, colourful insects and the associated wonder and excitement generated by their encounter. The illustrations by Kerascoet are plentiful

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[1] Anna Mae Duane, "'Like a Motherless Child': Racial Education at the New York African Free School and in My Bondage and My Freedom," *American Literature*, vol. 82, no. 3, 2010, pp. 461–88.

and colourful throughout, with the use of simple cartoonish outlines and watercolour effect. The insects are larger than life throughout the book, which accentuates their presence and emphasises their importance to the protagonist.

As the story progresses, we become increasingly aware of the tension between Sophia's own passion for her subject and the cruel opinions of her peers who do not understand her interest. The school children's lack of empathy reaches a crisis point when Sophia is mocked for taking a grasshopper to school to show them because "I thought the kids would be so amazed by the grasshopper they'd want to know all about it." But the children do not respond as she had hoped, and instead call her "weird" and stamp on the grasshopper "till it was dead." This act of bullying is accompanied by a sombre-coloured image, devoid of foliage, which emphasises the crushing feeling of being ostracised from your peer group and teased for being yourself. The episode conveys some interesting points about childhood expectations and the need to be effectively prepared to handle rejection and unfair criticism when your own interests do not reflect those of people around you.

Throughout the book the home environment is depicted as being particularly encouraging to Sophia's passion, with the interior of her bedroom displaying a colourful array of bug pictures, posters, bug models and toys, and books of insects. When Sophia feels ostracized from her peers, these vibrant scenes are replaced by a depiction of her life at school in winter, with bare trees in the playground, and speech bubbles from the children, such as: "I don't want to be friends with a bug lover." A double-page illustration of Sophia's room, that shows her packing away all her bug paraphernalia into cardboard boxes, with walls undecorated, conveys her changing emotions during this difficult time from joy to sadness as she "took a break from bugs."

After seeing her daughter so sad, Sophia's mother wrote to the Entomological Society of Canada seeking a bug scientist to write a letter to her daughter. After hundreds of letters, photos, and videos came through in response, scientists tweeted the hashtag "BugsR4Girls" hundreds of times to encourage Sophia to stick with her passion for bugs. Morgan Jackson, a leading entomologist, enlisted Sophia's help in writing an article about how entomologists could foster more interest in young people about the subject.

The book will appeal to parents of children who are looking for an engaging story with emotional resonance to read out loud, with plenty of illustrations, as well as to younger readers. Included at the end are six pages of Bug Facts, which are sure to engage the interest of children, ranging from the prettiest bug, to the biggest bug, to the fastest bug. Sophia also identifies the "assassin bug," and her "top four" bugs, with accompanying explanations as to why. She includes a life cycle of the butterfly and a guide to studying bugs in the wild.

The book is well pitched to children who might be of a similar age to the main character, and who might have experienced the debilitating effects of being bullied for having interests different to their peers. I gave the book to my eight year old son

to read, and after reading it cover to cover in fifteen minutes, his only criticism was that he wished the story could have gone on longer. For scholars of juvenilia, the book offers a rare autobiographical window into the emotional territory of a primary-aged author who navigates a challenging episode in her life.

Rebecca Welshman
Independent Scholar

"Juvenilia Press provides a welcome and important look
at the origins of literary genius."
—Victorian Review

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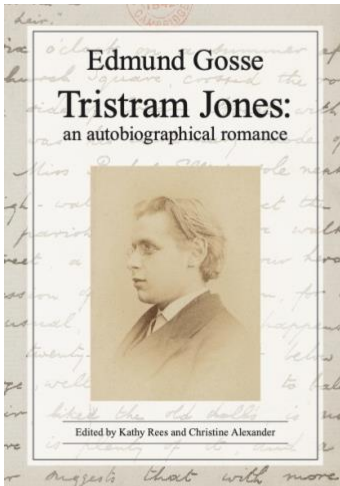

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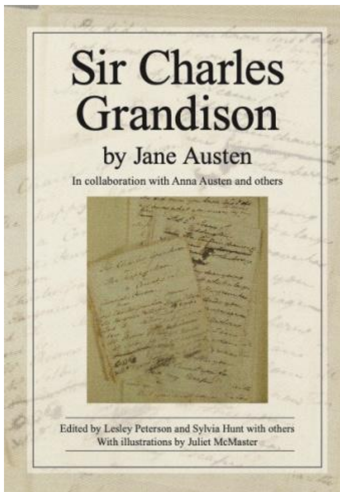
by Edmund Gosse

Edited by Kathy Rees and Christine Alexander

Written in c. 1872, the manuscript has been archived at the Cambridge University Library since 1941. Published here for the first time, this Victorian coming-of-age story is an intriguing forerunner of Gosse's classic memoir, *Father and Son* (1907). Based on his experiences of starting a new life in London after a cloistered religious upbringing, and including striking parallels with his memoir, this witty novella chronicles a young man's ambitions, illusions, and blunders.



Sir Charles Grandison

by Jane Austen

Edited by Lesley Peterson and Sylvia Hunt with others
With Illustrations by Juliet McMaster

Starting at sixteen and later collaborating with her little niece Anna, Jane Austen composed a dramatic version, playfully abbreviated of Richardson's long novel Sir Charles Grandison. Edited from the manuscript at Chawton House Library, this edition comes with full notes and suggestions on production.

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