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## Temporal Dislocation in Victorian Illustrations of Romantic Poetry

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For a while, it seemed that the Romantics would not be remembered at all. Many early-Victorian commentators worried that the writing of the recent past no longer compelled readers' interest, and that it would soon be forgotten. The *Quarterly Review* asserted that Scott was "in danger of passing – we cannot conceive why – out of the knowledge of the rising generation" (Anon, review of Lockhart, 1), and Thomas Carlyle cautioned in 1829 that "Byron [...] with all his wild siren charming, already begins to be disregarded and forgotten" (78). Orestes Brownson asserted in 1841 that Shelley was "seldom spoken of and much more seldom read" (Barcus, 380). *The Graphic* cattily remarked in 1873 that Hemans was "almost as much neglected now, as she was overrated formerly" (Anon, review of Hemans, 16). Stopford Brooke declared simply in 1893 that Byron was "not much read now" (36). If no one made an effort to renovate Romantic writing for new generations of book buyers, it might be forgotten altogether.

This concern produced a corresponding need for the images, lives and works of Romantic authors to be mediated to nineteenth-century readers in new ways. Even as they insisted on their difference from the past, later nineteenth-century writers, artists and commentators were also fascinated by the possibility of reviving it. In this paper, I want to suggest that illustrated books offered a powerful tool for undertaking this renovation project. I focus on what I will call retrofitted illustrations: that is, new illustrations produced for works that initially appeared without illustrations.

New books that appeared with illustrations from their first publication became more common in the Victorian period, produced either by a single artist working in two media, such as William Thackeray, Edward Lear, or Beatrix Potter, or by collaborators such as Charles Dickens and Hablot K. Browne (Phiz), or Lewis Carroll and John Tenniel. Serial publication (as in the case of Dickens) also lent itself to illustration, with one or two images appearing with each number, which were then reprinted when the numbers were reissued as a volume. Of course, the Romantic period had illustrated books too. William Blake, Henry Fuseli, J.M.W. Turner and other artists produced many illustrations for others' works, while projects like Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and Fuseli's Milton Gallery combined gallery exhibitions of paintings with the sale of engraved prints and the subscription publication of illustrated editions (Friedman, Burwick, Rovee, Calè). However, very few canonical Romantic works appeared with illustrations when first published, with the obvious exception of Blake's illuminated books. Even the *Waverley* novels, which were illustrated in reprint editions, including the *Magnum Opus* edition, all appeared without illustrations on their first publication.

In the Victorian period, there were not only more illustrated books in circulation than ever before, but they were also more profusely illustrated and more extensively ornamented. Publishers multiplied the numbers of head- and tailpieces, decorative dividers and printers' ornaments they used, so that in some Victorian books almost every page is embellished with some kind of visual ornament. Coloured ink was also more commonly used for initials and borders. This level of ornamentation extended to the trade bindings that were growing in popularity in this period, so that books were increasingly offered for sale in bindings decorated with blind or gilt tooling rather than in the plain paper

wrappers common in the early decades of the century. All these features made books from the middle of the nineteenth century look noticeably different from those of the 1810s and 20s.

The use of the word “illustration” itself shifted to reflect the growing popularity of illustrated books. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was used primarily to mean an example or instance that served to elucidate something. Samuel Johnson had defined “illustration” as “explanation, elucidation, exposition”, without mentioning pictorial embellishments. An abstract argument could be “illustrated” with specific cases. When Walter Scott published his edition of John Dryden’s works in 1808, the publisher described it as “illustrated with notes, historical, critical, and explanatory”. The book was “illustrated” with notes, not with pictures (its eighteen volumes contained only one image: a frontispiece portrait of Dryden). Although “illustrations” in this sense could be pictures, the word did not imply a visual supplement to the verbal. John Cam Hobhouse’s *Historical Illustrations to the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1818) similarly offers notes rather than pictures to “illustrate” Byron’s poem.

In 1822, William Wordsworth used “illustration” in a sense that illuminates the transition to a more specifically pictorial meaning. When he reprinted his sonnet on the Rhinefall in *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (it had first appeared in *Memorials of a Tour of the Continent* earlier that year), he retitled it “Illustration: The Jungfrau and the Fall of the Rhine near Schaffhausen”. The new title indicated that the word-picture of the turbulent river provided an elucidation for the volume’s other poems about civil and ecclesiastical discord. The imagery in this case was poetic rather than pictorial. As books embellished with prints became more common, however, the word “illustration” was increasingly used

in the limited sense to refer to pictures accompanying a text. It is only from 1813 that OED records a new sense of the word that limits it to pictorial embellishments. One of the earliest citations it gives concerns Richard Westall's illustrations to Scott's poems. By the middle of the century, when Wordsworth was writing "Illustrated Books and Newspapers" (1846), this would become the word's primary meaning, reflecting and reinforcing the prevalence of illustrated publications in the period.

Victorian commentators often identified illustrated books as a characteristically modern phenomenon. When the publisher Robert Cadell claimed in 1844 that his was "the age of graphically illustrated Books" (n.p.), he reflected a widespread understanding among publishers and booksellers that the new popularity of book illustration had recently made illustrations a virtual necessity for commercial success. (The fact that "graphically illustrated" was not a tautology in 1844 also reflects the fact that "illustration" was still not confined to its pictorial meaning.) The sense that the Victorian period was an age of illustrated books extended beyond the book trade. The *London Review*, in 1859, called illustrated books "a distinctive feature of the age" (Anon. "Illustrated Works", 475), and *The Times* in 1868 averred that "[t]he age in which we live is as much distinguished by its illustrated books as the Middle Ages were by their illuminated manuscripts" (Anon. "Tennyson", 10). To the Victorians, illustrated books appeared distinctively modern.

Many Victorians thought that the progress of book illustration was another manifestation of the generational shift that separated them from the Romantic period. They insisted not only that illustrated books were characteristic of the current moment, but also that their quality was one of the things that set that moment apart from the preceding age. To be illustrated was to be up to date. The *Journal of the Society of Arts*

declared, in 1864, that “[t]he art of illustration, as applied to poetical and other works, shows marked progress” (Anon. “Illustrated Books”, 159). Describing the recent history of book illustration often involved describing how a new generation of illustrators had surpassed an old one. *The Graphic* claimed that “there has been an advance in Art-taste during the last few years which makes it impossible for us to tolerate the illustrations which satisfied our fathers” (Anon. “The Reader”, 23), and the *Daily News* asserted “the superiority [...] of the present generation of book illustrators over that which immediately preceded it” (Anon. “Christmas Books”, 2). Invoking a generation shift allowed commentators to minimize the vitality of Romantic-era illustration and depict illustrations as a mark of modernity in book production.

Illustrations were not confined to new works. Older works that had initially appeared without images were republished in new editions that had been retrofitted with illustrations. Newly illustrated editions of Romantic poetry, from artistic landmarks like Gustave Doré’s *Ancient Mariner* (1876) to cheap, mass-market part-works like Henry Vizetelly’s *Illustrated Byron* (1854-55) began to appear frequently in Victorian Britain, especially after Romantic works started to come out of copyright. By the middle of the century, when the *Illustrated London News* noted that “the public taste and fashion of the day are running strongly in favour of illustrated books of poetry”, canny publishers understood that reprint editions needed to be embellished in order to compete in the marketplace (Anon. “Illustrated Selections”, 11). In 1860, the *Morning Post* traced this genealogy of illustration:

The old annuals, with their watered silk covers, *olla-podrida* contents, and the steel engravings that never had anything to do with the matter they were supposed to

illustrate [...] have been deposed by illustrated works, in which some favourite poet or prose author is bravely decked out with the fancies and conceits of the artist of the brush[.] (Anon. "New Illustrated Books", 2)

The highest point in the evolution of illustrated books, on this account, was the retro-illustrated volume, where "some favourite poet or prose author", who was already known from his or her un-illustrated publications, was "bravely decked out" with new illustrations. By 1866, the *Pall Mall Gazette* could complain about the "Illustration Nuisance": "there seems to us just now to exist a sort of stupid rage of illustration – a passion for getting up woodcuts to everything readable – which in its results is a source of very imperfect pleasure to cultivated book-buyers" (12). Whether they endorsed or disdained illustrated volumes, these commentators focussed on new illustrations produced for previously published poems, either issued in new illustrated editions of poetry, or as stand-alone volumes of illustrations designed to be viewed alongside poetry volumes or bound into collected editions as extra-illustrations. These, then, are the "retrofitted illustrations" I examine in this paper.

Without this kind of embellishment, some commentators suggested, works from the past would not be bought and read at all. The *Morning Chronicle* claimed in 1853 that "[t]he public taste, palled by novelties" would neglect the works of the past without new illustrations. The public needed "to be aroused to interest in old themes" by "superadding to all that is classical and beautiful in literature all that is gorgeous, graceful, and captivating in the arts of the painter and engraver" (Anon, review of Christopher Wordsworth, 7). In comments like this one, the sister arts were united to compel the attention of cultural consumers by making them both readers and viewers at once. But

visual art was imagined as the younger, more “gorgeous” and vibrant sibling who came to the aid of her “classical” older sister. Illustrations could not only promote the sale of a new book, they could also renew interest in a work that was going out of fashion, by “superadding” their attractions to its inherent qualities. In this way, illustrated editions promised to renovate writing from the past, making it fit for consumption in the present. Retrofitted illustrated editions turned old texts into new books and therefore helped to bridge the generation gap emerging between Romantics and Victorians.

In some cases, the process of renovation was thematised by the books in which it was accomplished. I’m now going to turn to some examples, in which the interplay of existing texts and new images allowed cultural consumers to imagine the work floating free of its original context of production, or, alternatively, to imagine themselves floating free of their own context of reception. My argument has both specific and general forms. Specifically, I contend that some books offered implicit ways to address the sense of a generational shift between Romantic texts and Victorian audiences. More generally, I suggest that – even when the process is not thematised – newly illustrated editions of dead authors can productively be understood as both registering the passing of time and seeking to efface it, in order to renovate earlier texts for later readers.

Charles Daly’s 1852 edition of *Don Juan* included fifteen illustrations, by an unknown artist, in which Don Juan’s appearance is extraordinarily mutable. In a visual correlative to Byronic mobility, his age, dress, hairstyle, facial hair and even his facial features shift between illustrations. As the narrative requires, Juan is unmoored from any particular location, appearing in different surroundings as his picaresque story unfolds. But he is also unmoored from culture; he appears in these illustrations not as a Spaniard



abroad, but as a cipher who adopts the customs and the costume of the country in which he finds himself. On Haidee's island in Canto Four he adopts a version of traditional Greek dress, which he is still wearing in the slave market in Canto Five. When Juan reaches Russia and meets Catherine the Great, he is depicted as a civilian, in historically specific dress. He wears a full-skirted coat, with large cuffs and pocket flaps, knee breeches and dark stockings. In two illustrations to the English cantos, Juan wears a dark tailcoat, a waistcoat with scooped neck and shawl collar, and dark trousers with narrow legs. He has short hair and, for the first time in the poem, a moustache and sideburns [fig. 1]. These details date his appearance to the mid nineteenth century. The ladies pictured with Juan confirm this dating. This image therefore shows a scene that is more or less contemporaneous with the book's publication date. In these images, Juan has migrated not just to England, but to *Victorian* England. These illustrations allow him to drift not only across cultures and continents, but all the way into the mid nineteenth century.

Bringing Juan up to date invites readers to consider the English cantos not as a topical satire from thirty years ago, aimed at the vices of the 1820s or even the 1790s, but as a poem of continuing relevance for England in the 1850s. The book therefore invited readers mentally to shift *Don Juan* onto their side of the generational gap that was increasingly perceived between Romantic and Victorian writers. Just at the moment when Byron's works were starting to seem historically distant, these illustrations inserted them into the modern age.

Landscapes, as well as fashions, could be brought up to date in this way. My second example is drawn from Thomas Ogle's photographically illustrated book *Our*

*English Lakes, Mountains and Waterfalls, as Seen by William Wordsworth* (1864, 1866).<sup>i</sup>

Thomas Ogle provided A.W. Bennett, the publisher of *Our English Lakes, Mountains and Waterfalls*, with thirteen photographs of locations associated with Wordsworth and his poems, probably drawn from Ogle's existing collection of stereoscope photographs, since stereoscopy was his primary medium and source of income (Darrah). Ogle's photograph of Brougham Castle illustrates Wordsworth's "Song, at the Feast of Brougham Castle" (1807), which tells the story of how Lord Clifford spent his youth incognito as a shepherd in order to avoid the Wars of the Roses, and how he declined to take revenge on his persecutors when restored to his estates. Presented as a framed minstrel's song, it draws its structure and some of its themes from Scott, who admired the poem.<sup>ii</sup> Wordsworth represented a feudal past, but one in which the "savage virtue" (165) of the aristocracy had been "softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed" (160) by communion with nature and life among the peasantry. Through adversity, Clifford had learnt to prefer stability, humility and forbearance to the aristocratic virtues of martial valour, strong leadership and dynastic succession. In his life as a shepherd, he had become a steward of the land and its people rather than a conqueror of them, earning the sobriquet "The Good Lord Clifford" from his vassals.

Ogle's photograph provided a self-consciously updated vision of the poem's self-consciously outdated setting [fig. 2]. The poem operates on three distinct temporal layers: the time of its composition and publication, the time when its minstrel tells his story, and the time when the events of that story take place. Wordsworth draws attention to this temporal displacement in the first lines of the poem: "The words of ancient time I thus translate, / A festal strain that hath been silent long" (3-4). By illustrating it using the new

technology of photography, Ogle superimposed a fourth temporal layer on the poem: the time when his photograph was taken. The image used a thirty-year-old medium to illustrate a sixty-year-old poem about a six-hundred-year-old castle.

Photographs can only capture their subjects at the instant the shutter opens and so they always present a scene exactly contemporaneous with the moment of exposure. In some cases, such as Julia Margaret Cameron's photographic illustrations to Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1875), early photographers resisted this feature of their new medium, using costume and setting to present an image of the distant or mythical past. But a connection to the present moment was hard-wired into the medium of photography. And, as Susan Sontag points out, photography's inescapable contemporaneity is always also an index of temporality. "Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt" (15). The *Edinburgh Review* had already noticed this quality of photography in 1843, when it described how the landscape that "self-delineated" in a photograph was "seized at one epoch of time" (Anon. "Some Account", 309). By illustrating this poem in a medium that was unknown at the time of its composition, then, Ogle's image drew attention to the time that had elapsed since the poem was written and first published. The sense that the poem was a survivor of a past age was reinforced by the volume's typography, which used the long "s" that had been almost abandoned in book design since the beginning of the century. If the photograph could speak its own caption, then, it might say of the poem what the poem's speaker says of the minstrel's song: "The words of ancient time I thus translate, / A festal strain that hath been silent long" (3-4).

While the medium of photography connoted modernity, the composition of this photograph pressed the point home by including modern figures engaged in a modern practice. Ogle included two spectators in the foreground, likely a tourist and a guide, with their backs to the camera; one of them wears a top hat and tailcoat that mark him as modern and middle-class. The inclusion of figures in the foreground, as Bruce Graver has shown, was a convention that stereoscope photographers such as Ogle inherited from the picturesque tradition and used to emphasise the three-dimensional illusions and virtual-reality effects made possible by stereoscopy. But these modern, touristic foreground figures, standing in a location that had only recently become accessible to large numbers of middle-class tourists, were not simply conventional. The fashionable top hat worn by one of them – a Barthesian *punctum* – pricks the viewer’s attention because it is contemporary, modish, and connected to a temporal horizon far shorter than the *longue durée* of the castle’s feudal past and slow deterioration. The past invoked in the poem is represented here for the appreciation of modern tourists and the consumption of modern book-purchasers. The middle classes, who were necessarily absent from the poem’s feudal setting, are prominent in the photograph. One of the “numerous and noble feudal Edifices,” which Wordsworth described as “so great an ornament to that interesting country” (*Poems*, 425) was thus repackaged in Ogle’s photograph as a contemporary tourist destination – one of those that sustained Ogle’s livelihood as a stereoscopic photographer. The book’s introduction noted that it offered “the Tourist the additional pleasure of identifying with his own favourite spot any of the poet’s verses which refer especially to it” (vi).

In both its medium and its composition, then, this image at once asserted its distance in time from the poem's first appearance and affirmed the poem's continued vitality. Looking at this photograph, we might see only the nostalgia that Helen Groth identifies in Victorian photographic illustrations to literary texts. Ogle's image might seem to be wistfully mourning the loss of Wordsworthian nature, of Wordsworth himself, and of the consolations his poetry once offered, which no longer seem to help the modern, alienated generation. Wordsworth's poetry would then seem like Brougham castle: a once glorious edifice now fallen into disuse. But I want to resist this nostalgic reading, and see in this image a testament to the poetry's potential, not for endurance, but for renovation in the present. If Brougham castle no longer signified as it once did, it nonetheless continued to dominate the landscape around it, and was now being reimagined as a heritage monument and repurposed as a tourist destination. Wordsworth's poetry remained an intellectual landmark, and with the right embellishments it could still draw new readers and prompt reflection. In Ogle's photographic illustration of "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle", a poem from almost sixty years before was shown to be still capable not only of kindling a reader's imagination, but also of shaping a tourist's itinerary in the new pastime of middle-class sightseeing, influencing an artist's practice in the new medium of photography, and structuring a publisher's output in the new mass market for illustrated books.

Next, consider Ogle's photograph of the Bowder Stone, a massive boulder, probably a glacial erratic, 30 feet high and 50 feet wide, in Borrowdale [fig. 3]. Ogle represented the stone as a modern attraction, modified and managed for the convenience of tourists. His photograph's foreground is dominated by the set of stairs that allowed

tourists to ascend the stone from the east side and survey the views from the top. The stairs had been installed earlier in the century, when Joseph Pocklington bought the land around the stone and began exploiting it as a tourist sight. Like the top hat in his photograph of Brougham Castle, the stairs in Ogle's photograph of the Bowder Stone prick the viewer into consciousness of the photograph's modernity.

The Bowder Stone made two brief appearances in Wordsworth's poetry, although he never mentioned it by name. He might have been thinking of it when he compared the leech gatherer in "Resolution and Independence" to "a huge stone [...] Couch'd on the bald top of an eminence" (64-65). It features briefly in *The Excursion* as "A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay / Right at the foot of that moist precipice, / A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests / Fearless of winds and waves" (3. 52-55). But the only time he mentions the stone explicitly is in his *Guide to the Lakes* (35). Wordsworth split the body of the *Guide* into three parts: "View of the Country as Formed by Nature", "Aspect of the Country, as Affected by its Inhabitants" and "Changes, and Rules of Taste for Preventing their Bad Effects". These parts were loosely connected to three historical epochs. Beginning by describing the landscape in an original epoch untouched by human interference, Wordsworth went on to detail the effects of farming and husbandry on the country, before deploring the modern epoch's "introduction of discordant objects, disturbing that peaceful harmony of form and colour, which had been through a long lapse of ages most happily preserved" (79). Aiming to educate cultivated observers into a proper appreciation of the scenes before them, the *Guide* fought a rearguard action against the influx of tourists it ostensibly helped to facilitate.

Ogle didn't share Wordsworth's distaste for the "introduction of discordant objects", whether convenient stairs or modern visitors, but made those objects prominent; his photographs show a landscape that was not only stewarded for agriculture and husbandry, but also administered for middle-class tourism. "To possess such a volume is the next good thing to going for an autumn's tour in Cumberland and Westmoreland themselves" the *Daily News* noted in its review (Anon. "Christmas Books", 2). Romantic Nature – itself arguably a defensive construction conceived in response to the threats of industrialisation and urbanisation rather than an historical reality – was here shown not as something enduring from time immemorial, but as something to be staged or packaged by entrepreneurs for new generations of visitors. Wordsworth wanted to stop the clock before the Lakes were overrun by tourists (in the *Guide*) or to turn it back to a stable and idealised past (in "Song"). But this tendency threatened to confirm his poetry's affiliation with a previous generation's concerns. Ogle's photographs bridged the generation gap, and connected the poems to a modern, administered landscape.<sup>iii</sup>

The landscape in these images has been curated, conserved, brought up to date. By implication, Romantic poetry itself needed conserving or updating, fitting out with new embellishments to make it more readily accessible, or re-clothing to make it fashionable once again. The illustrated book offered a modern medium in which this renovation could take place. Rather than introducing new readers to the pleasures that these poems had always offered, illustrated editions supplemented them in order to produce what one of the books called an "additional pleasure". Adding illustrations to previously published poems, like adding a set of steps to the Bowder Stone, made a new approach to them possible, rendering them accessible to new people in new ways. But, once the steps had

been installed on the Bowder Stone, it could no longer be experienced as it had been before their installation. Illustrated poems could not easily be experienced as though they were un-illustrated. The pleasures and satisfactions they offered to earlier readers were not just added to by their new embellishments, but supplemented and even supplanted by them. Illustrated editions thus helped to create the sense that Romantic poems could not speak to new readers without embellishment, even as they renovated them for new readers by offering such embellishment.

Similar dynamics of temporal dislocation and renovation played out in illustrated frontmatter. In William Michael Rossetti's 1870 edition of Wordsworth for the "Moxon's Popular Poets" series, with illustrations by Edwin Edwards, the frontispiece shows Wordsworth almost in full profile, facing left, with a high forehead and aquiline nose. His neck is bare, with no visible collar or clothing of any kind. His hair is short and combed forward in a classical style, unlike any depiction of Wordsworth from life. This vignette presents a mature, classicized and idealised Wordsworth, divested of such historically specific markers as clothes or a hairstyle [fig. 4]. In his preface, Rossetti archly described Wordsworth as having "a face in which one could discern intellect if one attended to it, but which one was not much tempted towards attending to. Casual inspection would have set him down as an ordinary prosaic-looking person enough" (xxi). The frontispiece begs to differ: it gives Wordsworth the appearance of a man of high achievement, depicted in a highly finished style of engraving.<sup>iv</sup>

Depicting Wordsworth in middle age, rather than as the aged Poet Laureate, also contributed to the sense that he was a poet of the past. This was an early endorsement of the view that, by the time he reached his forties or fifties, Wordsworth's best work was



already behind him. Rossetti regretted in his preface that “a certain crust of ‘Respectability,’ perceptible even in the youthful Wordsworth, continued to increase upon him unpleasantly, and to clog and warp the clear and pure contours of his mind” (xxii). Matthew Arnold would give this view its lasting formulation in 1879 when he claimed that Wordsworth’s poetic powers were concentrated into “one single decade [...] between 1798 and 1808, [when] almost all his really first-rate work was produced”. Arnold’s own edition of Wordsworth sought to clear away “[a] mass of inferior work [...] done before and after this golden prime, imbedding the first-rate work and clogging it, obstructing our approach to it, chilling, not unfrequently, the high-wrought mood with which we leave it” (42). This frontispiece probably doesn’t show Wordsworth as early as the end of Arnold’s great decade. But it nonetheless anticipates his point by a decade, freezing Wordsworth before the supposedly long decline that “clogged” his oeuvre (the word Arnold and Rossetti both use). The image pushes him back in time, away from his Victorian readers and into the historical distance. Showing him not twenty years previously, at the time of his death, but perhaps fifty years previously, at the time of his greatest poetry, makes Wordsworth appear as a poet of the previous generation.

By turning over the tissue guard that separated the frontispiece from the illustrated title page, readers were invited to veil an image of the mature poet and turn to an image of his early life. For the title page, Edwards supplied a vignette entitled “The Poet’s Birthplace”, which shows two figures on the banks of the River Derwent, one of whom is fishing. The village of Cockermouth is visible behind the figures, with Cockermouth Castle in the background. This image draws on the celebration of childhood in Wordsworth’s poems, and his conviction that he was “Much favoured in my birth-place” (*Prelude* (1850)

1.303), because the landscapes amongst which he grew up endowed and sustained his creative powers. It also promotes the increasing nineteenth-century interest in visiting writers' birthplaces, as discussed by Nicola Watson (56-89). The frontmatter of this volume, then, invites readers to turn away from the later Wordsworth and to experience the earlier Wordsworth afresh.

The caption beneath the image on the title page points not, as one might expect, to the first book of *The Prelude*, where Wordsworth mentions his birthplace, including specific references to Cockermouth Castle ("a shattered monument / Of feudal sway" (1. 284-85)) and the River Derwent ("A tempting playmate whom we dearly loved" (1. 287)), but to "*Prelude* VI.I". This passage speaks fondly of these scenes, but is primarily concerned with narrating Wordsworth's departure from them to return to his studies in Cambridge. Wordsworth repeatedly says that he didn't regret leaving: he went "gay and undepressed" (6. 7), "Without repining" (10), "not loth" (12) and "in lightsome mood" (18). Like *The Prelude* in general, or "Tintern Abbey" in particular, then, this passage is concerned with a process of maturation (not without frequent backward glances) in which the loss of early, emotionally direct experiences of nature brings with it "abundant recompense" ("Tintern Abbey", 89) in the form of growing imaginative power. By returning to Cambridge, Wordsworth lost his daily commerce with nature for a time, but gained the chance to lay up stores of inspiration from his wide reading: "many books / Were skimmed, devoured, or studiously perused, / But with no settled plan" (6. 23-25). As a result, he felt his poetical ambitions stirring and was "first emboldened [...] to trust" that he might "leave / Some monument behind me which pure hearts / Should reverence" (6. 52-57). Taken together, then, the title-page image and its caption direct the book's readers to

Wordsworth's early life, but also situate the early Wordsworth within a narrative of maturation towards the fully-developed poet depicted in the frontispiece. This narrative of maturation is mirrored in the organisation of the volume's contents, which follows Wordsworth's arrangement of his poems, beginning with "Poems Written in Youth" and "Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood", progressing through a number of thematic or biographical categories, and ending with "Poems Referring to the Period of Old Age", "Epitaphs and Elegaic Pieces" and the capstone achievements of *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*.

Other books in the same series followed a similar pattern in their frontmatter. These books arranged their frontmatter to invite readers to turn from one depiction to the other, veiling the frontispiece with the tissue guard and turning their attention to the title-page vignette. In doing so, readers symbolically turned back across the generation gap, away from a memorial of the poet and towards a fresh experience of his or her poetry, away from the stasis of the frontispiece and towards the dynamism of the title page illustrations, away from a dead icon and towards a living presence. The generation gap was not elided in these editions: the format actually insisted on it by presenting two different versions of each poet. Instead, it was bridged: turning the pages of the illustrated book became a way of turning back the clock.

In opposition to the rhetoric of endurance that nineteenth-century critics often applied to Romantic poets, then, illustrated editions embedded an alternative model of cultural transmission in their bibliographic codes. In that model, the transmission of literary texts to later audiences relied on the creation of new material artefacts, rather than the persistence of cultural memory, the durability of poetic language, or the stability of

aesthetic categories. Those artefacts offered a way of negotiating the generational shift between Romantic writers and Victorian audiences. The retrofitted illustrated editions of dead poets so popular in the nineteenth century implied that the work of those poets would reach a new audience not so much because its inherent merit allowed it to offer the same satisfactions to successive generations of readers (despite what the prefaces to these editions often said), but rather because it could be embellished in a way that allowed it to offer new satisfactions, including some which were previously unforeseen and unintended.

The examples I discuss here point to a logic of embellishment that was at work in all retrofitted illustrated editions of Romantic poetry. Adding illustrations to the work of a dead author, like supplying it with a preface or editorial notes, simultaneously suggested that the poetry still deserved to be read and that it might not in fact be read if it were not for the careful stewardship of publishers, editors and illustrators. Illustrations performed a work of renovation that supplemented and repackaged the poetry of the previous generation, giving it a bibliographic format consistent with that of new books, which were often published with illustrations from their first editions. At the moment when the Romantic generation seemed about to slip into the twilight of history, the illustrated edition offered new ways to connect it to the current generation of Victorian readers.

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<sup>i</sup> This book provoked a dispute between the publisher and Wordsworth's heirs over copyright, which led to changes between the first two editions. The images examined here are from the second edition. See Gill, 87-89.

<sup>ii</sup> "I made [Jeffrey] admire the song of Lord Clifford's minstrel, which I like exceedingly myself". Walter Scott to Robert Southey, "November 1807". Cited in Woof, I, 235.

<sup>iii</sup> Although she does not discuss the images that I examine here, Helen Groth makes a similar argument when she represents books such as Ogle's as "an effort to modernise Wordsworth's vision" (60).

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<sup>iv</sup> The point had been made even more clearly by the frontispiece to 1845 Moxon edition of Wordsworth's poems, which is an engraving by William Finden of Francis Chantrey's 1820 bust of the poet, produced with his approval. For a discussion of this frontispiece and its construction of Wordsworth's late poetic identity, see Simonsen, 159-84. This image was re-used for the Wordsworth volume in Moxon's series of *Miniature Poets* (1865), edited by Francis Turner Palgrave.

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