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CHARACTER OF MEMORIZATION: QUOTATION AND IDENTITY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH FICTION

by

Joanne Nystrom Janssen

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in English
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Teresa Mangum

ABSTRACT

In nineteenth-century Britain, the average person's mind was an anthology containing snatches of poetry, Latin verb conjugations, Bible verses, folk songs, miscellaneous facts, and the catechism. Because secular and religious education emphasized learning by rote, students' minds were stocked with information and quotations that originated in other texts, which is reflected in characters who repeat those bits and pieces in the period's literature. My dissertation investigates concepts of personal and national identity in Victorian literature and culture, particularly through the understudied phenomenon of rote memory. George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, for example, quotes Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* to console herself in the face of tragedy, and Lewis Carroll's Alice attempts to recite didactic schoolroom poems in her efforts to distinguish herself from her less intelligent friends. These moments of memorization—although at first appearing merely to reflect what texts were consumed and recited in nineteenth-century England—in reality suggest much more. I argue that memorization remained centrally connected to nineteenth-century conceptions of identity: people *are* what they remember, even if those memories do not relate to their own lives, but instead to the information stocked in their minds. My readings of Mary Shelley's *Matilda* and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* demonstrate rote learning's potential to erode a young woman's personal and religious identity. Instead of committing an act of powerful "poaching," as Michel de Certeau proposes, a memorizer often submits to the text's "strange invasion," as George Poulet suggests. My chapters centered on Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and R.M. Ballantyne's *Jarwin and Cuffy*, however, locate possibilities for gaining critical thinking skills and forming cross-cultural relationships through a person's response to quoted texts. By examining the significance of memorization in nineteenth-century novels, we gain new understandings of the Victorian period, ranging from the minutiae of everyday routines to the complexity of

entire belief systems. A seemingly straightforward moment, such as a character reciting a line or two of poetry, can lead to interdisciplinary insights about forms of reading, functions of memory, ideas about gender, beliefs about religion, and methods of imperialism. As my dissertation demonstrates, nineteenth-century mental anthologies give twenty-first-century readers a veritable index to the cultural past.

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Joanne Nystrom Janssen

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
degree in English at the July 2010 graduation.

Thesis Committee: _____
Teresa Mangum, Thesis Supervisor

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Garrett Stewart

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Florence Boos

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Lori Branch

_____
Marian Wilson Kimber

To Arlyn and Kelyn, the two most memorable characters in my life's story

Ah, then you have good memory for facts, for details?
It is not always so with young ladies.

Bram Stoker
Dracula

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I feel honored to remember the many people who have played pivotal roles in shaping this dissertation. The topic was first sparked by a provocative class period in Judith Pascoe's Romantic Literature course. As a result, I wrote about *Matilda* and memorization in an independent study with Judith, and that article grew into chapter 1. I am grateful to Judith for believing in me and in my ideas when they were still forming. Early conversations about religion and literature with Lori Branch inspired me to consider religious quotation as part of this project. When I wrote an early version of chapter 3 for his class, Garrett Stewart provided encouraging and incisive feedback. Finally, Jeffrey Cox brainstormed with me about nineteenth-century missionaries, pushing along my ideas for chapter 4.

If the aforementioned people gave life to the dissertation, then others sustained the project as it grew. No graduate student could ask for a more supportive, insightful, pragmatic, or generous dissertation director than Teresa Mangum. She read multiple drafts of each part of the dissertation, and her feedback always challenged my thinking and sharpened my writing. At the same time as she nurtured my project, she also expressed care about me as a person. Likewise, Lindsey Row-Heyveld, my heroic dissertation writing partner, has simultaneously been one of my most perceptive readers and my most vociferous cheerleaders. Without a doubt, her consistent and openhanded partnership has made the process of writing a gratifying experience. Florence Boos was also an encouraging presence all along, sharing her books and her knowledge with equal generosity.

A rare opportunity that I received in spring 2009 allowed me to see my project from new angles. With my co-organizer Laura Capp, I was able to bring my research to life in a public event called "Celebrating Victorian Women's Lives: An Evening of Recitations and Music." The performance, which was the culminating event of the 2009

British Women Writers Conference, echoed nineteenth-century parlor recitations as actors and musicians presented poetry and music written by Victorian women writers and composers. Each member of our planning committee made notable contributions to the event, but Marian Wilson Kimber particularly clarified my own understanding of the historical practice of recitation by sharing her expertise on the subject.

The support and assistance of a final group of people helped me bring the project to completion. I want to express thanks to the University of Iowa Graduate College; the Seashore Dissertation Year Fellowship granted me a year of funding within which to write and revise the bulk of this dissertation. I also am grateful to the participants of the Mellon Dissertation Seminar, "Story in Theory," for their helpful feedback on a revised version of chapter 1. Garrett, the seminar leader, and Li Guo, my personal respondent, deserve special thanks. Finally, several dear friends—Laura Capp, Stacy Erickson, Victoria Peterson-Hilleque, Tricia Leaf-Prince, and John Prince—proofread chapters at the final hour.

There are many others whose support contributed to this project in less tangible or visible—but no less crucial—ways. My husband Arlyn gifted me with his faith in me and space to write. My family and friends offered love, as well as food, babysitting, and running partners. And Kelyn gave me laughter. I am grateful for you all.

ABSTRACT

In nineteenth-century Britain, the average person's mind was an anthology containing snatches of poetry, Latin verb conjugations, Bible verses, folk songs, miscellaneous facts, and the catechism. Because secular and religious education emphasized learning by rote, students' minds were stocked with information and quotations that originated in other texts, which is reflected in characters who repeat those bits and pieces in the period's literature. My dissertation investigates concepts of personal and national identity in Victorian literature and culture, particularly through the understudied phenomenon of rote memory. George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, for example, quotes Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* to console herself in the face of tragedy, and Lewis Carroll's Alice attempts to recite didactic schoolroom poems in her efforts to distinguish herself from her less intelligent friends. These moments of memorization—although at first appearing merely to reflect what texts were consumed and recited in nineteenth-century England—in reality suggest much more. I argue that memorization remained centrally connected to nineteenth-century conceptions of identity: people *are* what they remember, even if those memories do not relate to their own lives, but instead to the information stocked in their minds. My readings of Mary Shelley's *Matilda* and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* demonstrate rote learning's potential to erode a young woman's personal and religious identity. Instead of committing an act of powerful "poaching," as Michel de Certeau proposes, a memorizer often submits to the text's "strange invasion," as George Poulet suggests. My chapters centered on Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and R.M. Ballantyne's *Jarwin and Cuffy*, however, locate possibilities for gaining critical thinking skills and forming cross-cultural relationships through a person's response to quoted texts. By examining the significance of memorization in nineteenth-century novels, we gain new understandings of the Victorian period, ranging from the minutiae of everyday routines to the complexity of

entire belief systems. A seemingly straightforward moment, such as a character reciting a line or two of poetry, can lead to interdisciplinary insights about forms of reading, functions of memory, ideas about gender, beliefs about religion, and methods of imperialism. As my dissertation demonstrates, nineteenth-century mental anthologies give twenty-first-century readers a veritable index to the cultural past.

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INTRODUCTION

As the second act opens of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest,* the young woman Cecily disregards her governess's suggestion that she repeat her lessons, instead preferring to write in her diary. When Miss Prism asks her to put the journal away, Cecily replies, "I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down, I should probably forget all about them." Miss Prism corrects her, stating, "Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us" (57). "Yes," Cecily retorts, "but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that Memory [sic] is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie sends us" (57-58). While both Cecily and Miss Prism make these comments rather flippantly, and another character soon interrupts their discussion, their fleeting conversation foregrounds critical issues of memory, identity, and fiction—the same three topics that I weave together in this dissertation. In suggesting that a mental diary records and recalls a person's deepest self, Miss Prism assumes a link between memory and subjectivity; my project unearths the roots of that association and traces its growth in the nineteenth century. Cecily's response, though, declares memory to be unstable and associates it with fiction, two additional concerns that I take up within these pages, as I focus on portrayals of characters whose memories lead them astray in nineteenth-century fictional texts. Finally, the conversation's context also bears relevance to my study: the discussion of recollections occurs while a character is learning by rote, which are two forms of memory whose relationship my dissertation explores, and it transpires between two women, suggesting an association between memory and gender that I also examine. In fact, I argue that characters—particularly women—gain or lose their understandings of themselves not from their recollections of the past, but through the information stockpiled in their minds.

These mental stores, especially compared to contemporary ones, were impressive in their quantity and variety of materials. Because of the great value placed on memorization, the average nineteenth-century mind contained snatches of poetry, Latin verb conjugations, Bible verses, folk songs, miscellaneous facts, and the catechism. The practice often grew out of both secular and religious education, where learning by rote was the widespread pedagogical method for almost the entirety of the nineteenth century. Autobiographical accounts and literary representations—both of which I will explore further—describe students nervously performing selections for their classmates and teachers. Even those who lacked a formal education sometimes learned texts by heart in order to compensate for their limited access to expensive and scarce books. Scottish working-class poet Janet Hamilton, for example, memorized long passages of her own and others' poetry (Boos 151),[1] and the printer Charles Manby Smith, when asked to provide a handwriting sample, could transcribe pages of passages by Milton, Shakespeare, and Byron from memory (Smith 62). In fact, rote learning was so popular and its adherents so passionate that Richard Altick characterizes it as a "Victorian mania" (161). Nineteenth-century recitation was not simply confined to education, however; it crept out of the schoolroom and into society, becoming popular in a variety of venues. Friends gathered in home parlors for evenings of informal entertainment. Clubs or church groups presented programs organized around holidays, themes, or causes. And, professional reciters spoke and acted for auditoriums of listeners. In some cases, the prodigious amount of memorized material is awe-inspiring. In *The Reading Nation in the*

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[1]Hamilton's biography suggests several factors that influenced her proclivity for memorization. Because she was poor her whole life, her access to books was confined to those she could locate from fellow cottagers or from her village's library. And, when she started a circulating library at her own expense, her neighbors failed to return the books and the project failed (Boos 150). In addition, although she could read, Hamilton was unable to write for most of her adult life, so she composed and recorded poems in her mind that her husband and son later transcribed for her (Boos 150-51). When she became blind as an elderly woman, her ability to memorize allowed her to continue to enjoy writing poetry and experiencing literature.

Romantic Period, William St. Clair notes that John Ruskin could recite some of Walter Scott's long poems by heart, Fanny Kemble could perform Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon,* and Thomas Babington Macaulay could recite *Paradise Lost* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (the latter as a precocious eight-year-old child, and after only one reading, no less!) (395).

Because people's minds were stocked with information and quotations that originated in other texts, the period's literature reflects the practice through characters, usually female, who repeat those bits and pieces. George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, for example, quotes Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* to console herself in the face of tragedy, and Lewis Carroll's Alice attempts to recite didactic schoolroom poems in her efforts to distinguish herself from her less intelligent friends. Nineteenth-century British literature contains several further examples of female quotation beyond the ones on which I concentrate. Jane Austen's Anne Elliot "repeat[s] to herself some few of the thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn," but is jarred out of quotation when she overhears a conversation between the man she loves and the women she perceives as her rivals (*Persuasion* 114-15). Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre describes the Lowood schoolroom as marked by "the hum of many voices" made up of the young women's "whispered repetitions" (54). Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Lady Waldemar woos Romney by quoting "prettily enough" from texts she knows him to favor and "[learning] by heart / His speeches in the Commons and elsewhere" (3:589, 3:592-93). Indeed, young women seem to be so synonymous with quotation that George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke is described in terms of a literary extract. The opening of *Middlemarch* states that she had "that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress," adding that her plain garments "by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible—or from one of our elder poets, —in a

paragraph of to-day's newspaper" (1).[2] In the daily grind of crime stories and gossip columns, a biblical or poetic quotation provided the reader with elegance, delicacy, and virtue—the same qualities a proper young woman was expected to bring to nineteenth-century society.

In contrast with the connotations conjured by *Middlemarch,* the quoting characters I study do not merely sprinkle their texts with ornamental rhetorical flourishes. Instead they convey important information about their personal, spiritual, and cultural identities. To clarify the link between quotation and subjectivity, my dissertation examines the period's confluence of rote learning educational practices and prevailing philosophies of the mind and memory. I argue that memorization remained centrally connected to nineteenth-century conceptions of identity: people *are* what they remember, even if those memories do not relate to their own lives, but instead to the information stocked in their minds. The resulting project illuminates nineteenth-century texts—which include a little-known novella, missionary memoirs, and adventure fiction for youth,

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[2] Nineteenth-century texts also occasionally feature young men who quote religious and secular educational texts. As I explore more thoroughly in my fourth chapter, however, these moments tend to feminize the male characters, revealing them as weak and ineffectual. For example, in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure,* some young men in a Christminster pub challenge Jude Fawley to recite the Creed in Latin. Although he succeeds—reciting both the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed—the moment becomes one of disappointment rather than victory: Jude recognizes that his audience cannot tell whether he has recited the text accurately, only further revealing to him his own failure. He states, "See what I have brought myself to—the crew I have come among!" (124). Similarly, in George Eliot's *Romola,* the character Baldassarre has a reputation for being a scholar with a profound memory; he has, however, experienced an extreme amnesia that allows him to remember "all that part of his life which was closely inwrought with his emotions" but to forget his "rare knowledge" (267). Because his memory occasionally returns, Baldassarre considers himself a man with "a double identity," one of "dim-sighted sensibilities," and the other of "recovered power" (335). The connection between his memory and identity becomes even more tightly woven when he attempts to reveal the betrayal of his adopted son Tito to Tito's companions. When Tito declares that the man is not his father, but instead a former servant "labouring under a mania which causes him to mistake his identity," the men conceive a test to prove his identity (350). Since Baldassarre was a reputed scholar, they ask him to identify a passage from Homer that he should have known. When the old man fails, they determine he is not who he says he is. Throughout the novel, and due largely to his failures of memory, Baldassarre is portrayed and described as feeble and helpless.

along with more canonical novels—and reveals the roots of our current understanding of identity in a widespread, but often overlooked nineteenth-century activity. Moreover, because memorization and quotation pervaded homes, schoolrooms, churches, and colonialist locales, my findings also extend beyond perceptions of memory and selfhood to shed light on nineteenth-century daily life, education, religion, and imperialism.

In the same way that this project contributes to several sub-fields of literary studies, it also builds upon scholarly predecessors who have explored gendered reading practices, fictional representations of memory, and recitation in the nineteenth century. Kate Flint's book, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (1993), pioneered in investigating the gendered nature of Victorian and Edwardian reading, noticing that women readers were portrayed and discussed in paintings, newspaper articles, medical texts, advice manuals, educational works, and literary texts. In undertaking her project of discovering "why 'the woman reader' was an issue addressed with such frequency throughout the period," Flint provides a theoretical overview, reconstructs the period's debates about women readers, and examines literary sites of resistance to gendered assumptions (10). In the process, she not only fills in important cultural and historical gaps, but she provides a model of literary study that is grounded in the period's socio-historical context and inflected by feminist theory and the theory of reading. While Flint covers a great deal of ground in her volume, her work also opens the way for (and, in fact, even calls for) related studies that consider other aspects of gendered reading practices. Specifically, in a 2005 Afterword to *Reading Women: Literary Figures and Cultural Icons from the Victorian Age to the Present,* Flint notes that "much detailed work remains to be done to see how reading helps to develop and inflect identities." She adds, "But just as genres may be jumbled together in a bookshelf, on a bedside table, in a reading journal, so may one's identity—including one's sense of a gendered self—become, through reading, mutable, temporarily destabilized" (292). This dissertation on practices of memorization, particularly as they affect women's understandings of themselves, aims to address the

deficiency Flint articulates. Rather than demonstrating how reading "temporarily" undermines a female self, however, I reveal how reciting texts sustains or threatens identity in more permanent and ominous ways.

As Flint led the way in considering female readers, Nicholas Dames broke new ground in offering the first (and to date, only) full-length treatment of memory and the Victorian novel. In *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870* (2001), he argues that the nineteenth-century novel cancels or erases most forms of memory. He explains that the genre attempts to remember only pleasant, nostalgic memories that stand in a causal or symbolic relation to the moment of narrating. As evidence, he notes that the period's novels frequently lack explicit remembrances and demonstrate "a distinct unease" surrounding the memories that do appear, revealing the genre as "a narrative form struggling to transform the chaos of personal recollection into what is useful, meaningful, able to be applied to the future—into what *works*" (3-4, original emphasis). While Dames convincingly demonstrates that the period's literature shows little interest in the abstract workings of memory, my dissertation aims to complement (and complicate) his research by revealing one way in which a concern with memory makes its presence known in both the nineteenth-century novel and culture. Instead of focusing on one's recollection of the past (or reminiscence), my research focuses on the repetition of memorized information like poetry, quotations, and miscellaneous facts—what William James calls "desultory memory" in *The Principles of Psychology* (660).

Finally, my exploration of the literary portrayals of quotation has benefitted from the research of a trio of scholars who have unearthed archival information and gathered firsthand narratives about the historical phenomenon of reciting literature. Most notably, Catherine Robson examines the history and reception of Felicia Hemans's "Casabianca," the most recited poem of the nineteenth century, in her *PMLA* article, "Standing on the Burning Deck: Poetry, Performance, History." To explain the poem's dominance,

Robson explores the connection between the poem's thematic concerns and its function in Victorian pedagogy, the educational goals of memorization and recitation, and the relationship between textual performance and the body. Robson demonstrates the richness of examining the historical context of literature, when that context is defined broadly—"not the moment that Felicia Hemans sat down to write a poem but the subsequent experience of her work in the mouths and bodies of tens of thousands of children" (158). Similarly, Joan Shelley Rubin and Angela Sorby explore the historical practice of educational recitation in the American context: Rubin reveals how poetry choices shed light on American moral and social ideologies ("Listen"), and Sorby analyzes how the school functioned as one of many institutions that sustained popular American poets. All three scholars' work has provided me with an invaluable understanding of recitation historically, as well as helpful fodder for considering the practice's theoretical implications.

In sitting at the nexus of these three lines of scholarship—gendered reading practices, fictional portrayals of memory, and historical recitation—my project does not dispute or critique other scholars' work as much as it uncovers a topic that until now has received little to no attention. I suspect that critics have perceived literary depictions of quotation as too straightforward to merit analysis: a sign simply of which texts were consumed and circulated in nineteenth-century educational circles, details that could easily be confirmed by extant textbooks. However, in the same way that scholars have demonstrated that reading is a complex act that can be theorized in a number of ways,[3] I

[3] In the theory of reading, scholars have differed significantly in where they attribute the power of textual choice and interpretation. They can be understood along a continuum, ranging from theorists who emphasize the control of those who determine what can be read by whom, to those who grant the reader power in co-creating the text. Theorists existing at various intermediate points along the continuum account for the tensions among the reader, author, text, and society in other creative ways. New Critics, for example, have pointed to the text as governing the interpretations available to its readers. Reader-response theorists, in contrast, focus on each reader's unique experience of the text. Specific critics, too, have influenced understandings of reading: Michel Foucault articulates the disciplinary nature of the activity,

contend that memorization and quotation also deserve more attention. The unique qualities and uses of these practices require thinking beyond other examinations of reading or related studies of recitation, conversation, education, and performance. From a theoretical perspective, memorization inherently poses different questions about the relationships among the reader, author, and text than those prompted by reading. For example, in being quoted, does the selection belong to and speak for the author or the speaker? In acquiring the selection, does the memorizer submit to the text, or is memorization an act of powerful appropriation? Quotation also implies a new relationship between the text and society: is the quoted selection personal and individual or does it become a universal, public text? And if the quoted material and the context—either literary or material—are at odds, how do we interpret those contradictions? As no theorist has yet written a comprehensive work addressing quotation, I have been challenged to look to a variety of theoretical sources to begin to answer these questions.

William Flesch, in his analysis of poems that quote other poems, most directly speaks to my concerns. In his 1991 article "Quoting Poetry," he demonstrates the effect of placing others' words into a new context and rhyme scheme, asserting that intertextual poems create a tension between form and meaning that reveals complex power dynamics. Specifically, Flesch argues that any given quotation can have one of two relationships to authority: it either exists under the mastery of the poet (and therefore conforms to the surrounding material), or it overwhelms the newer poem's formal features (and the prosody conforms to it). He states, "The question will always be which is to be master, the quoted words or the quoting context?" (50). Although Flesch examines quotations

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Michel de Certeau celebrates the power and creativity of the "user" of the text, and Pierre Bourdieu articulates a relationship among works of art, their creators, and their social context. Marxist, feminist, and postcolonial scholars also have addressed reading as part of their larger projects, noticing in particular the way that those in authority use texts to convey certain ideologies, as well as how lower-class people, women, and colonial subjects resist and subvert those intentions.

only within the context of other rhymed poetry, his theory has provided a critical point of origin for my own work. Quotation and authority are indeed closely intertwined, even in fictional depictions of the activity. In my case, though, instead of asking whether the quoted words or quoting context dominates, I consider the power dynamics among all of the actors in the quotation circuit (to appropriate and alter Robert Darnton's "communications circuit"): the text, the speaker, the listeners, and the authority figures that prompt the memorization and select the excerpts. Because some of these individuals serve as representatives of institutions such as schools, churches, and missionary agencies, the entity that claims quoting supremacy has critical implications for other social, political, cultural and religious relationships and ideologies as well.

In most cases, I have discovered that using quotation causes a loss of agency and identity for those characters who undertake the practice. While I trace the primary reasons for that loss in chapter 1, as I relate quotation to philosophical theories of the mind, memory, and identity that were popular in the nineteenth century, the educational context of quotation also influenced characters' experiences of learning by heart. Michel Foucault's examination of the redistribution of punishment in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in *Discipline and Punish* elucidates the reason: he argues that the period's institutions, such as hospitals, the military, and schools, attempted to regulate and control activity with disciplinary techniques that he calls "projects of docility" (136). Because memorized texts were subject to both exercises and examinations—two of the pedagogical disciplinary techniques Foucault identifies that allowed instructors to characterize, classify, and punish individuals—it comes as no surprise that reading and reciting became activities around which textbook authors, school administrators, and instructors exhibited power and students experienced discipline. Because so many texts portray educational experiences negatively (including most of the ones that I examine in this dissertation), Foucault's theory provides a provocative lens for understanding nineteenth-century recitation. His approach, however, does not explain the

transformation that occurs when a memorizer "loses" his or her sense of self—which is precisely the mystery that I explore in my project.

In addition to examining the identity crises catalyzed by quotation, I also have located moments that reveal much more optimistic possibilities for memorization. Carroll's Alice bursts out of Wonderland after a series of failed recitations, sure of her hold on her identity, and R.M. Ballantyne's Jarwin from *Jarwin and Cuffy* rubs noses with Big Chief, recognizing his captor's fellow humanity after voicing the words of memorized religious texts. In *The Practice of Everyday Life,* Michel de Certeau uses two particularly vivid metaphors to illustrate the creative power that readers have available to them: he states that a text is "habitable, like a rented apartment" (xxi), and that readers are plundering travelers who "move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write" (174).[4] As de Certeau's metaphors suggest, Alice and Jarwin discover how to enter into texts and re-appropriate them, using their experiences with quoting to gain deeper understandings of themselves and other people. Unfortunately, the endings of both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Jarwin and Cuffy* thwart a fully renewed relationship between quotation and personal and cultural identity—suggesting that de Certeau's theory is overly optimistic, at least when extended from nineteenth-century reading to quotation—but it does nonetheless prompt scholars to recognize these more optimistic possibilities for quotation as completely revolutionary, even if fleeting.

Although I frequently use the term "memorization" to describe the activity that nineteenth-century people and characters perform, it is, to a great extent, an anachronism. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the verb "memorize" has been used since

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[4] Although this "poaching" metaphor may have negative colonial and class undertones to contemporary readers, de Certeau intends to celebrate the creativity of consumers, noticing the "ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong" (xvii).

the end of the sixteenth century, but it was employed primarily to refer to perpetuating or keeping alive the memory of a person, place, or idea, sometimes in writing. The more commonly used meaning of learning information word-for-word, the dictionary notes, has been mainly used in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century. In nineteenth-century Britain, the more commonly used phrases were "commit to memory" and "learn by heart." Even these phrases prove evocative. The word "commit" suggests that a person entrusts or consigns information or ideas, in this case, to his or her memory. In evoking an enduring contract or promise, "commit" reveals both the dedication of the person learning the information, and his or her belief in the mind's stability and trustworthiness to receive and properly store the memorized material. Although these nuances suggest that committing to memory is an innocuous or even a positive activity, "commit" also carries connotations of violence, mental instability, and conflict—which are concepts, I argue, that are associated with nineteenth-century memorization—since this term is often used in phrases like "commit a murder," "commit to a mental institution," and "commit troops to the front lines" ("Commit"). The other idiom, "learn by heart," is equally suggestive. "Learn," the more straightforward term, refers to becoming informed or acquiring knowledge. "By heart," as Catherine Robson points out, reminds scholars of the body's physical heart, which feels "the rhythms of poetry," when it is recited, "as echoes or variations of its own insistent beat" (150). In terms that speak even more directly to my project, the heart often refers metaphorically to the center or the core of a person—which is exactly what I am suggesting becomes destabilized through memorization. In short, the action of learning by heart can lead to a loss of heart, when that "heart" is a person's inner self.[5]

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[5] While I continue to use the term "memorization" throughout the dissertation (along with the other phrases), I do so simply for ease of reading and conciseness. I hope that drawing attention to the other terms' implications, though, will allow them to linger in the reader's imagination.

These complexities illustrate a point central to those scholars, like me, who undertake culturally or historically minded studies: language and literature grow out of and respond to a particular social and cultural context, and, likewise, a particular culture reacts to and is shaped by literary texts. Because I examine literary portrayals of a historical practice—which, although hidden to many contemporary scholars, was nevertheless documented by those in the nineteenth century—I am interested in the ways that a fuller understanding of educational quotation informs our readings of the period's literature, as well as the ways that examining literary texts can lead to a more nuanced sense of the historical realities of the past. Practically speaking, I consider a variety of non-literary texts as I attempt to reconstruct attitudes towards and effects of learning by heart, including philosophical treatises, female conduct manuals, recitation anthologies, educational textbooks, periodicals, and missionary memoirs. This inclusive approach extends even to my choices of fictional texts. In addition to examining canonical novels, such as George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* I examine lesser-known works of fiction, such as Mary Shelley's *Matilda* and R.M. Ballantyne's *Jarwin and Cuffy*. Although my critical lens frequently begins with the culture and society that produced these texts, I have aimed not to lose sight of the primary interpretive tools of my discipline, such as close reading and attention to the formal elements of texts. I understand these techniques as providing the primary means for understanding literature's interaction with a particular cultural milieu. This socio-cultural approach to literature corresponds to my dissertation's subject matter particularly well, as I share the new historicist perspective that the individual self is not autonomous, but is always formed in relationship—with one's culture, with other people, with social forces, and with literature.

While even this quick overview of terminology demonstrates the need for and benefit of historically based literary study, it also reveals one of its primary challenges: in the same way that texts and characters are shaped by a particular historical and social

context, so too are contemporary critics. In some cases, as when we encounter different terms used in the nineteenth century versus today, we are made aware of our own assumptions and cultural differences. In other cases, though, we are unconscious of our biases and blind spots, which in consequence creep into our work and compromise it. While I have unabashedly aimed in this project to gain a deeper understanding of nineteenth-century literature and culture—ranging from forms of reading to functions of memory, ideas about gender, beliefs about religion, and methods of imperialism—I have attempted to do so with a spirit of generosity towards the authors, characters, texts, and historical personages I have studied, as well as with a spirit of humility about my own ability to capture the entirety of a historical practice's meanings and uses. My project attempts to locate traces of history. I have come to see this endeavor as valuable and ambitious. If a study of quotation has taught me anything, it is that small fragments can contain vast meaning.

My dissertation includes four chapters—two focused on educational recitation and two centered on religious quotation—that interweave historical investigation with literary analysis. The first two chapters lay the groundwork. The initial chapter explores the significance of educational recitation in the early part of the century, and the second chapter examines the meaning of religious memorization in the middle part of the century. The last two chapters return to these forms of recitation, but track their evolution to new environments in the later parts of the century, both in terms of genre (moving from the nineteenth-century realist novel to Lewis Carroll's nonsense literature, R.M. Ballantyne's adventure fiction, and missionary memoirs) and in terms of location (from settings in England to colonialist locales and fantastic worlds).

The first chapter, "'The Language of Despair': Quotation and the Loss of Self in Mary Shelley's *Matilda*," focuses on memorization and quotation in nineteenth-century female education. Beginning in the early part of the century, I explore recommendations about learning and quotation in female conduct manuals and anthologies, and I connect

these to associationist philosophical theories to explain how the materials that stock a character's mental storehouse contribute to her identity. The literary analysis in this chapter centers on Mary Shelley's *Matilda,* a novella in which the female protagonist litters her first-person narration with over a dozen quotations from other sources. Interestingly, the quotations unsettle Matilda's sense of herself. The learned sentiments merge with her own thoughts, eventually overtaking her perspective on the world and her identity. Because a young woman's conflict with memory is a pattern in Romantic literature, this analysis offers insights about other works and suggests a more widespread belief that although the female mind may adeptly preserve sentiments, it fails to sustain the self. *Matilda* lays the groundwork for understanding how gender, memory, and the absorption of cultural authorities discipline the feminine self at the very moment the novel takes center stage as a genre.

Chapter two, "One with Christ, But Divided in Two: Memorization, Imitation Spirituality, and *The Mill on the Floss,*" considers the additional authority that religious memorized texts have over people. The chapter explores Victorian recommendations about how Christians should read and use religious texts—namely, to shape one's identity into being more like Christ's. For a character like Maggie from George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss,* however, memorized passages from the Bible and Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* instead call for a forsaking of the self and its desires. Maggie's memorization offers several paradoxes. Although promising to free the self, the quoted texts require submissive self-renunciation. While assuring the formation of a new identity, quotation questions the authenticity of that self. Finally, even though the process of memorizing pledges intimacy with Christ, the quotations that Maggie absorbs are distanced from Christ himself. The sharp contradictions surrounding religious quotation raise key theoretical questions for the study of reading and subjectivity during this period. My analysis incorporates Edward Said's insights about the way that prophetic quotations are particularly fraught with questions of originality, and I address

the especially challenging consequences of the call for religious quotation (and its related self-abnegation) for women.

In chapter three, "'Who in the World Am I?': Rote Learning and Identity in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,*" I explore the significance of educational memorization for Alice, who utterly fails several tests of memory based on her above-ground lessons. Since this portrayal of memorization occurs within nonsense literature, this chapter plumbs the philosophy of the genre to consider how Lewis Carroll's subversion of grammatical rules and behavioral maxims complicates the portrayal of schoolroom recitation. Ultimately, this chapter argues that *Alice* offers more optimistic possibilities for memorization than *Matilda*. Although Alice experiences a similar loss of identity as Matilda, Alice's progression—from initially asking "Who am I?" to assertively answering "Here" when her name is called at the trial—reveals that Wonderland provides her with an alternative education. She not only can differentiate between sense and nonsense, but she can identify a self that is independent from her memorized recitations. In critiquing Victorian learning and imagining a new educational reality, this text, I argue, paves the way for new cultural attitudes about both education and identity.

In the final chapter, "Circulating the Gospel: Traveling Texts and Roving Cultural Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Missionary Context," I follow missionaries and religious texts overseas, tracking their appearances in the period's missionary memoirs, religious periodicals, and R.M. Ballantyne's adventure fiction. In the process, I reveal religious quotation as an overlooked yet powerful shaping force in the orchestration of empire. Historically, missionaries attempted to convert and train followers in places like India, Africa, and the Pacific Islands by having them learn Bible passages, hymns, and the catechism by heart. While missionaries believed that the memorized material would shape the identities of the "natives" into being more Christlike, they also believed the process of quotation would create Western, "civilized"

identities. Telling moments within the texts I examine, however, suggest the opposite. In a fascinating reversal of expectations, sometimes memorization compromised the identities of the Westerners. The disparity between the missionaries' intentions and the actual effects of memorization affirms Homi Bhabha's assertion that the colonial textual presence is ambivalent, "split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" ("Signs Taken" 153). These largely unexamined religious magazines, missionary memoirs, and children's fiction demonstrate that scholars should give far greater attention to the textual traces of religion and empire in noncanonical texts.

By mapping the shared borders between memory and identity—that is, between what people remember and who they understand themselves to be—this project charts new territory by tracing the unique implications of learning by heart, by discovering the relationship between unstable memory and women, and by locating religious quotation as an overlooked course of converting and civilizing native people. Oscar Wilde's Cecily had the right idea; nineteenth-century memory does operate like a book. The question is—what kind of a book? Instead of a personally inscribed diary or a three-volume novel, the memory proves to be an anthology filled with quotations that point to a person's understanding of the self.

CHAPTER ONE:
"THE LANGUAGE OF DESPAIR": QUOTATION AND THE LOSS OF SELF IN MARY SHELLEY'S *MATILDA*

Between February and September 1814, the *Monthly Museum* published several articles critiquing "the art of memory" and satirizing systems of mnemonics. In one clearly satiric letter to the editor in the March 1814 issue, "Sylvester Square" mockingly proposes a series of lectures explaining the benefits of mnemonics to Dublin inhabitants, who, he laments, still send their children to "academies, where *all* the faculties of the human mind are brought into action" (375). In his attached preliminary lecture, he offers the deep insight that "without memory every thing would be forgotten" (375), and he explains how a man following his system, after only an hour and three quarters, would be able to remember his wife's shopping list of half a dozen items (378). In August 1814, "Adderley Apposite" submits a similarly sarcastic letter to the editor called "Amnestics, or the Art of Forgetting," in which he shares with the public a skill contrary to mnemonics, but similar in results: the one "puzzles the understanding by nonsense," while the other "[stupefies] it by oblivion" (171). This "science of forgetting," as he calls it, has been widely practiced: kings and rulers happily forget previously established laws, and those who receive an unexpected increase in fortune also experience "a sudden and total oblivion" of former friends (172). Adderley Apposite explains his efforts to "methodize the art" of forgetting, complete with music-based nomenclature to identify the various means of cutting off past acquaintances (246). For example, the break in relationship can occur at different speeds, ranging from "Andante" to "Allegro," and it can be performed with different flourishes: a "staccato" occurs when a person states "plainly and unequivocally—'Sir, I have not the pleasure of knowing you,'" whereas a "Mancando or Lentando" involves "a gradual failure of recollection" (247).

In a far from comic register, Mary Shelley's novella *Matilda,* written only a few years later,[6] the eponymous protagonist yearns for expertise in both the "art of memory" and the "science of forgetting." In telling the intertwining story of herself and her father—which includes an account of her lonely childhood, her reunion with her father, his confession of love for her, his ensuing suicide, and her removal from society after his death—Matilda, the story's first-person narrator, returns again and again to her memories. Although she attempts to preserve recollections of her former happiness with her father, she would rather forget most of her painful memories of his admission and death: they make her shudder (164), cause her guilt (177), and "haunt [her] like a crime" (187). Matilda connects her process of remembering and forgetting to an intentional erosion and construction of the self; for example, after the traumatic event, she reads books in order to sympathize with others' thoughts and, as she says, "to lose my individuality among the crowd that had existed before me," which causes her to crave companionship and to "[become] more human" (190). Within the narrative in which she attempts both to preserve and forget, and to form and lose the self, Matilda turns to memory in yet another way: she incorporates memorized quotations into her text. These seemingly insignificant selections carry great importance—revealing insights about the role of memory in shaping identity, particularly for a young woman.

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[6] Although *Matilda* was written between 1819-20, it was not published until 1959, when Elizabeth Nitchie recovered the text. When the novella was first written, Mary Shelley sent a copy of it to her father, William Godwin, with the expectation that he would publish the text. Although he found some aspects of the novella admirable, he refused to publish it because he found its treatment of incest "disgusting and detestable" (qtd. in Nitchie xi). Shelley repeatedly asked that he return the manuscript, a request he did not ever grant. The publication history of *Matilda* has remained central to criticism of the novella, particularly to critics who see the circulation of the text as evidence of its autobiographical elements. Nitchie initiated such a reading in her introduction to the text, stating, "The biographical elements are clear: Mathilda is certainly Mary herself; Mathilda's father is Godwin; Woodville is an idealized [Percy] Shelley" (xii). As another example, see Terence Harpold's "'Did you get Mathilda from Papa?': Seduction Fantasy and the Circulation of Mary Shelley's *Mathilda.*"

Many scholars have noticed the novella's intertextuality, but they have discussed the text's allusions and quotations in order to comment on other aspects of the narrative. For example, highlighting the theatricality of the protagonist, Charlene E. Bunnell suggests that Matilda fails to distinguish between her fantasies, prompted by reading, and her life; her fate demonstrates the danger of confusing the two. Charles E. Robinson also explores literary allusions to make a similar claim that Matilda "conceives of herself as a tragic actress" (78), pointing to scenes where she calls herself an actor, dreams about dramatic encounters with her father, and stages her theatrical suicide. Other scholars explore the relationship between *Matilda* and specific texts more directly; Robert Ready examines the significance of Shelley's allusions to the Proserpine story, Alex MacMillan analyzes the passages from Dante, and Judith Barbour investigates references to Mirra in Ovid, Dante, and Alfieri. Still other scholars argue that the literary allusions lead to psychoanalytic conclusions. Tilottama Rajan, for example, sees the "traces of Dante and Wordsworth" as a sign of the narrative's status as a "textual abject": her Kristeva-influenced term for a generically confused text "in which the writer submerges in some trauma or affect" (47, 45). Mary Jacobus, who uses Rajan's work as her point of departure in *Psychoanalysis and the Scene of Reading,* instead suggests "that trauma in *Matilda* is not only manifested at the level of narrative but associated specifically with problems involving the transmission of prior texts" (166). In her analysis, the moments of misreading or unreadability in the text—which specifically occur in the moments of literary allusion—serve as an allegory for "a text or a life traumatically cut off from itself" (201). In focusing on trauma, these readings apply their insights to Shelley's biography and Matilda's experience of incest, respectively.[7] Even critics making claims

[7] Certainly there is good reason to associate the novella with trauma, both within and without the text. Besides dealing with incest, *Matilda* was written shortly after the death of Shelley's three-year-old son William in June 1819, which occurred about nine months after the death of her one-year-old daughter Clara in September 1818. These details, along with the text's

unrelated to literary allusions often note what Matilda was reading and how it was influencing her thoughts and actions.[8]

In spite of their focus on literary references in *Matilda,* scholars have paid surprisingly little attention to the importance of memorization in Matilda's narrative. My analysis complements these other treatments by considering the novella's quotations within the period's emphasis on memorization, especially for young women. In the context of educational expectations and philosophical theories popular at the time, Matilda's inclusion of over a dozen quotations within a novella of about sixty pages suggests her efforts to follow the period's expectations for young women, but it also reveals memorization's darker side: the learned sentiments can overtake a young woman's own thoughts. For Matilda, the practice that begins as a way of asserting her control over narrative—and therefore, her audience's understanding of her experiences and of her character—eventually engulfs her perspective on the world and her sense of identity.[9] Because a young woman's conflict with memory haunts Romantic literature, this reading of *Matilda* informs our interpretations of other texts: Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1818) and *Persuasion* (1817), Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* (1818), and William Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (1798). The

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unique publication history, have led to an emphasis on psycho-biographical readings in contemporary criticism of the work.

[8] For example, in comparing the novella to its rough draft called *Fields of Fancy,* Pamela Clemit explores the ways the two texts differ in their incorporation of literary allusions. Lauren Gillingham, in her challenge to traditional biographical readings of the novella, also draws attention to the allusions in Matilda's narration to demonstrate that the book "foregrounds the relation between author, text, and reference." And, in her discussion of *Matilda* and Freud's concept of the screen memory, Diane Long Hoeveler addresses Matilda's inability to "see herself except through the lenses of literary conventions" (371).

[9] In her exploration of the novella and the female gothic genre, Kathleen A. Miller similarly suggests that Matilda "constructs and performs her own narrative" (293). While I find her analysis insightful, I differ significantly from her in my reading of the novella's conclusion, which she cites as "the novella's most complete revelation regarding Mathilda's quest to fulfill the script she has imagined for her life" (302).

motif also suggests a more widespread belief: although the female mind may adeptly preserve sentiments, it fails to sustain the self.

The Repository of Morals: The Properly Educated Female Mind

Nineteenth-century attitudes about and practices of education and gender formation, where memorization and quotation play a role, shed light on Matilda's peculiar practice of interspersing her narrative with quotations. In the nineteenth century, the discipline of memorization was inherent to English education. Schools taught reading and literature through well-known and frequently republished anthologies like Vicesimus Knox's *Elegant Extracts: or Useful and Entertaining Pieces of Poetry, Selected for the Improvement of Young Persons* (1791), which states that it was created for use in schools, "either in recitation, transcription, the exercise of the memory, or in imitation" (Preface). While memorization was encouraged for all students, Richard Altick adds that it was emphasized even more strongly for females, because middle-class girls did not have a vocational future; as a result, their education was structured to train them "to relieve boredom and be ornamental" (177). Discussing or reciting literature could play a part in their decorative futures. Parents and other authorities gave women cheap and carefully selected anthologies to read, because the former resisted spending significant amounts of money on books and the latter feared texts' influence on female imagination (Altick 177). Anthologies of the period, therefore, did not only collect the "best" authors and works in one manual; they also provided "appropriate" selections for young women to read, memorize, and recite. Matilda's practice of quoting texts within her narrative, then, at first appears to be simply an outgrowth of a customary form of schooling.

The universality of educational reading and memorization, however, does not confine its influence to classroom knowledge. Methods of interacting with literature were part of more comprehensive recommendations about proper feminine thought life

and behavior, as revealed in the period's female conduct manuals. Although they existed before the eighteenth century, William St. Clair notes that a "huge flood of didactic books for ladies" proliferated between 1785 and 1820, offering guidance about how to dress, behave in social situations, and cultivate proper attitudes and disciplines ("Women" 504-05). These books—intended for upper- and middle-class young women at a point in their lives when "their opinions were still malleable" and typically distributed by parents, teachers, or other authority figures—usually upheld traditional feminine roles, asserted women's bodily and intellectual frailty, and taught virtues of "modesty, faithfulness, prudence, delicacy, and humility" (St. Clair, "Women" 505-06). In short, they advocated restraint in nearly every aspect of young women's lives.

The specific instructions and words of warning that the conduct books proffer about interacting with literature arise from the authors' belief that books influence both the mind and the spirit. Almost universally the writers suggest that as a text becomes impressed upon a young woman, it influences her thoughts and shapes her morality. Therefore, ethically superior texts lead to virtuous thoughts and actions. As J. Burton states, in *Lectures on Female Education and Manners* (1793), "The truths, with which we are furnished by Reading, contribute also to nourish and strengthen the mind." He adds, "By making ourselves acquainted with the sentiments and conduct of the good and wise, we are led to conform to them in our habits of thinking, and in our modes of practice" (177). As a result of this understood cause-and-effect relationship between reading and morality, some of the most conservative authors recommend reading only the Bible and religious texts. In the most reprinted conduct manual of the period, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1796), John Gregory suggests consulting Scripture for religious opinions and reading religious books to inspire good conduct, rather than those that "entangle you in the endless maze of opinions and systems" (23). Many more permissive authors advocate a literary diet of history, biography, and poetry in addition to religion, but warn against reading novels. For example, *The Female Aegis* (1798) recommends reading

"improving books" each day (75), but asserts that "a practice of reading novels is [...] liable to produce mischievous effects" as varied as a vitiated palate, corrupted mind, and rushed marriage (77). This author approves Milton, Thomson, Gray, and Cowper for young women—a list consistent with conduct manual advice about reading in general—but which varies considerably, as we will see, from the authors Matilda knows best.

Because the conduct book authors trust reading's power to influence character, they extend their advice to the practice of memorization in order to fill young women's minds permanently with edifying quotations. *The Female Aegis*, for instance, recommends "the custom of committing to the memory select and ample portions of poetic compositions" by writers of genius and imagination because then "the mind is thus stored with a lasting treasure of sentiments and ideas" (78). Similarly, in one of the most popular manuals, *Sermons to Young Women* (1775), James Fordyce advises reciting poetry of various styles, because a young woman "should store her memory with some of the most select sentiments, and striking descriptions, from the best writers both in verse and prose" (229). In their emphasis on storing quotations, the authors compare the mind to a storehouse with limited room; young women should take full advantage of their choices to fill it. Even Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, advocates a system of memorization in her anthology, *The Female Reader* (1789). She recommends that young women should copy selections to "exercise the memory and form the judgment at the same time: she would learn to write correctly, and retain the precepts which in some measure she has composed herself, and a kind of emulation would be excited" (xii-xiii). To Wollstonecraft, memorization has a practical, educational function, as well as a more significant ethical one: it can train a woman's memory, while also teaching her valuable moral principles. These approved ideas and emotions may not seem relevant to young women in the present, but they can trust that they will be of practical service in the future. In *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess* (1805), Hannah More states that as a young woman Queen Elizabeth had memorized many passages from the

Bible, Thucydides, and Xenophon. More states, "Thus were her early years sedulously employed in laying in a large stock of materials for governing well" (11). Memorized quotations can influence one's day-to-day behavior, and in this case, make the difference between a mediocre and unparalleled career as queen.

Because they saw literature as holding such potential to improve or corrupt young women's minds and behavior, many anthology compilers carefully considered their vulnerable female audience as they made selections. Wollstonecraft states in the preface to her collection, which is "principally intended for the improvement of females," that her anthology, like others, intends to combine "the most useful passages of many volumes, where various other subjects are mixed that were only written for minds matured by experience" (iii-iv). Similarly, in *Poems for Young Ladies* (1785), Dr. Goldsmith explains that he has chosen selections for their innocence, either excluding those that tended to "distort the judgment, or inflame the imagination," or "[lopping] off the defects" of selections that were otherwise acceptable (viii). In *Northanger Abbey,* Jane Austen satirizes this practice of abridging and expurgating texts in order to make them appropriate for young women. The narrator states tongue-in-cheek that Catherine Morland, the novel's protagonist, "read all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations which are so serviceable and so soothing in the vicissitudes of their eventful lives" (11). The popular quotations Catherine learns by Pope, Gray, Thompson, and Shakespeare have clearly been taken out of the contexts of the entire works, which are completely (and humorously) at odds with the memorized selections.[10] The quotations also fail to shape Catherine's behavior. Rather than developing insights about the quotations' content—nature, relationships, and life's

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[10]For example, Catherine cites Thompson as teaching her that "it is a delightful task / To teach the young idea how to shoot." While Catherine interprets this quotation as "serviceable" and "soothing," the original poem, "The Seasons," is, in the words of the text's editor Marilyn Gaull, "preoccupied with death, loss, misery, [and] deprivation" (11).

difficulties—she spends the rest of the book imagining a secret cabinet, hidden chamber, and imprisoned wife at Northanger Abbey because of the greater influence of gothic fiction. While Matilda's error bears similarities to Catherine's, in turning to unapproved sources to shape her view of herself and the world, her relationship with quotation differs: instead of disregarding approved selections, Matilda takes too seriously her unapproved quotations.

As both Matilda's and Catherine's experiences suggest, quotation-related errors are not confined to improper selection. The conduct manuals also warn against accumulating and performing quotations in unacceptable ways, inadvertently revealing that young women who make such mistakes pose a threat to conventional authorities. For example, in *The Governess or, Little Female Academy* (1749), Sarah Fielding notes that some children—like girls who throw their clothes in irregular piles instead of placing them in orderly drawers—"heap into their Heads a great deal," yet do not apply the information in order to improve their knowledge or behavior (95-96). Instead of having a well-ordered mental storehouse, these young women create what Fielding calls "a Heap of Rubbish," which they expose when they fail to extract from their minds something appropriate to say in company (96-97). Susan Stewart's scholarship on collecting helps explain the menacing nature of such hoarding. Stewart argues that collectors rely "upon principles of organization and categorization"; pack rats, in contrast, gather items "without relation to one another or to a context of acquisition" (*On Longing* 153). Because hoarders uncontrollably "take and keep," refusing to differentiate between items like the careful collector, their accumulation becomes politically charged: "it refuses the very *system* of objects and thus metonymically refuses the entire political economy that serves as the foundation for that system and the only domain in which the system acquires meaning" (154, original emphasis). With this understanding, a young woman's failure to discriminate between selections does not only suggest mere sloppiness, but also

a disregard for the structures of learning and authority that have mandated the memorization.

In addition to careless hoarding, authors also disapprove of showy performing; young women should not use memorized selections to draw attention to themselves and their learning. Fordyce, for example, advises young women not to recite verses "in any company, that is not very private and chosen indeed" (229). He fears a young woman might become a "Learned Lady," a woman who "makes opportunities of throwing out scraps of literature, or shreds of philosophy, in every company"—an action that demonstrates "a boundless intemperance of tongue" that company, especially men, find "insufferable" (231-32). Wollstonecraft also warns against cultivating theatricality in young women through their memorization practices. She acknowledges that parents often encourage the recitation of passages "by the selfish desire of having a wonderful child to exhibit" (xi). Instead, she encourages mothers not to flaunt their daughters' accomplishments in company, nor to teach them the expressions they should use when they recite, comparing such children to parrots and puppets (xi-xii). Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* portrays such self-aggrandizing female quotation. In the novel, dutiful young Mary joins a group a women gathering at the home of Mrs. Bluemits, "a professed critic, a well-informed woman, [and] a woman of great conversational powers" (414). In this "conversation," the women pretentiously incorporate selections into nearly every sentence, and at moments they perform a volley of quotation, lobbing back and forth selections by Johnson and Young on the art of conversation and Dryden and Byron on dogs, ending with selections by various authors to communicate their simple good-byes. The narrator depicts the more proper attitude through the juxtaposition of Mary, who applies what she reads in order to enlarge her mind, but does not "prate, or quote, or sit down for the express purpose of displaying her acquirements" (415). Through the contrast, the narrator suggests that memorizing and reciting selections—particularly when they are flaunted publicly—are at odds with virtue and reflection.

These authors' emphasis on the dangerous social consequences of misused quotation nearly obscures their deeper concern: that a young woman's relationship with texts may threaten her ability to become a modest, domestic woman. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction,* Nancy Armstrong confirms that advice manuals, although repelling many contemporary readers with what they perceive as the texts' "emptiness," actually had an intention to "recover and preserve a woman's true (sexual) identity." This agenda, according to Armstrong, is all the more insidious because of its invisibility: because they appeared to be apolitical and unbiased, the books presented readers "with ideology in its most powerful form" (60). Thus, much of the books' advice, which seems to focus on controlling and disciplining young women's behavior, also contributed to a system designed to articulate and define the feminine ideal. When we later turn to Matilda's manipulation of quoting conventions—drawing up "inappropriate" texts from her mind's storehouse and using them to draw attention to herself—Armstrong's insights, along with Susan Stewart's, remind us to recognize her actions as powerful moments of agency that resist both systems of learning and models of femininity. This recognition, however, only reinforces the final tragedy of Matilda's story, as she ultimately fails to maintain her control over quotation.

The Storehouse of Identity: Memory in the Philosophical Tradition

Although conduct manuals and anthologies warn against dangers of memorization, they fail to anticipate the threat of losing oneself among the quotations. Another body of knowledge, though, makes room for the possibility: popular philosophical theories of the period. Since at least the fourth century B.C.E., philosophers had compared the mind to a storehouse—language eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conduct manual authors still use—where thoughts, feelings, and experiences can accumulate. In his essay "On Memory and Reminiscence," Aristotle

(384-322 B.C.E.) asserts that the mind receives memories much like the effect of someone making "an impression with a seal," a process that explains the importance of having the mind's surface in a state that can receive the seal's stamp. Picking up on Aristotle's imagery, St. Augustine (354-430 C.E.), in his *Confessions,* marvels at his memory, which he describes as "a large and boundless chamber" where images "are with an admirable swiftness caught up, and stored as it were in wondrous cabinets, and thence wonderfully by the act of remembering, brought forth" (212-13). Augustine figures the memory as a series of chambers or rooms where impressions accumulate.

While this concept, which is called the representative theory of memory, has dominated Western thought until recently, significant seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English philosophers—who Mary and Percy Shelley were reading in the years leading up to *Matilda'*s authorship[11]—added to or modified the storehouse metaphor, especially in relating memory to identity. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), John Locke combines the imagery of Aristotle and Augustine, describing memorizing as "setting the stamp" (151) and calling the memory "the Store-house of our Ideas" and a "Repository, to lay up those Ideas, which at another time it might have use of" (150). In contrast with the earlier philosophers, Locke emphasizes the memory as amassing ideas, rather than images or impressions, and he stresses the person's power of being able to revive the stored ideas. Locke also forges a link between memory and identity. He asserts that each person differentiates him- or herself by consciousness of

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[11] The Shelleys' reading list, which Mary documented in her journal, demonstrates the couple's interest in Locke and Hume in the several years before Mary Shelley wrote *Matilda* in 1819. Percy read Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1815 and 1816 (93, 98), and Mary Shelley read the first book of Locke's *Essay* in 1816 (96). In the next couple of years, they turned their attention to Hume: in 1817, Mary read the first volume of his *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects* (1753-6) (101), and in 1818, she read his *Four Dissertations ... The Natural History of Religion ... Of the Passions ... Of Tragedy ... Of the Standard of Taste* (1757) (102, 265). In addition, from June 19 to August 15, 1818, Percy Shelley regularly read Hume's *History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688* (1763) aloud in the evenings (215-223).

thought: "For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes every one to be, what he calls *self*; and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking beings, in this alone consists *personal Identity*" (335, original emphasis). He adds that this concept relates to memory, because a person develops a consistent understanding of the self through remembering the past: "And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of that *Person;* it is the same *self* now it was then; and 'tis by the same *self* with this present one that now reflects on it, that that Action was done" (335). Locke acknowledges that memories are not entirely trustworthy—they are selective and sometimes inaccurate—but that nonetheless they contribute to a person's identity by uniting past and present actions in one single consciousness.

In the eighteenth century, David Hume continues the discussion in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), asserting, like Locke, that a person discovers his or her personal identity through the memory, but moving beyond him to argue that memories are unreliable, therefore creating an entirely fictive sense of self. Hume argues that we assign "identity" or "sameness" to objects that we perceive as constant, but that in reality are variable, simply "connected together by resemblance, contiguity, or causation" (166). He provides several examples: a ship that has been altered by frequent repairs, a river whose flowing water constantly moves, a church that has fallen into ruin and then been rebuilt, an oak tree that grows from a small plant to a large tree, and a noise that frequently stops and starts. In all cases, people erroneously consider these items the "same," but their form, size, and/or substance have completely changed. Hume believes we make the same mistake about people: "The identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one" (169). He argues that we base a person's identity on perceptions that we suppose to be united by resemblance or causation, but which in reality are distinct and unrelated. The memory initiates this inaccuracy, because it preserves and raises up past perceptions, drawing links between them and making them

appear continuous: "The memory not only discovers the identity, but also contributes to its production, by producing the relation of resemblance among the perceptions" (170). In addition to assigning unity, memory also contributes to our sense of causation. In fact, Hume cites memory as "the source of personal identity," stating, "Had we no memory, we never shoul'd have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person" (171). Therefore, according to Hume, people *are* what they can remember. Unfortunately, however, that identity is a tragic fiction: because people imagine unity among their perceptions, they also invent cohesive subjectivities. This conclusion—that the memory creates an illusory identity—also prompts Hume to recognize "the wretched condition, weakness, and disorder of the [mind's] faculties," the very faculties that he relies upon for his philosophical inquiries. These limitations lead Hume "almost to despair" (172), a phrase richly resonant with Matilda, whose memorized quotations lead her to utter "the language of despair" (201). Memory, it seems, regardless of whether in the form of recollecting the past or learning by heart, can contribute to a false sense of self and lead to misery.

It is not simply rhetoric that links Hume's philosophy to Matilda's behavior. Although "memory," as the action of remembering, clearly differs from "memorization," the action of perpetuating certain memories, there has been considerable overlap between the two terms and concepts, which extends back to antiquity.[12] In *The Art of Memory,*

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[12] In *Memory, History, Forgetting,* Paul Ricoeur helpfully notes that memorization "has to be rigorously distinguished from forgetting." He describes the difference as such: "With remembering, the emphasis is placed on the return to awakened consciousness of an event recognized as having occurred before the moment when consciousness declares having experienced, perceived, learned it. […] Memorization, on the other hand, consists in the ways of learning relating to forms of knowledge, know-how, capacities marked from a phenomenological point of view by a feeling of facility, ease, spontaneity, in such a way that these are fixed and remain available for activation" (58). In Bergsonian terms, he also identifies memorization as "acted" and remembering as "represented." While I am not attempting to conflate the two terms, I am suggesting that the two concepts did not remain entirely distinct historically, which led to abuses of memory, particularly for young women, beyond the ones that Ricoeur identifies in his book. Specifically, he notes that forms of learning have the capacity "to oscillate between manipulation, the mastery of the teacher, and the discipline expected of the disciple" (60). I am

for example, Frances Yates tracks the subject of her book's title from its invention by Simonideas (c. 556 BC-468 BC) through the seventeenth century. According to Yates, the classical art of memory, or mnemonics, grew out of the rhetorical tradition; orators developed techniques to improve their memories in order to deliver long speeches accurately (2). Their principles and methods often drew upon philosophies of memory. For example, one of the practice's general principles, regardless of the practitioner, was to imprint a series of places—usually buildings—upon the memory. Then, as memorizers attempt to remember a series of items, they place images representing the concepts in their imagined buildings. The architectural terms used by these rhetoricians and the philosophers of memory are not only similar, but exact; an important textbook from a rhetoric teacher in Rome, for example, calls the memory a "treasure-house of inventions" (qtd. in Yates 5).[13] Yates also reveals that the rhetorical tradition and the philosophical tradition informed each other, and, in fact, are difficult to extricate from each other. Aristotle, for example, wrote a book on mnemonics that is not extant in addition to "On Memory and Reminiscence" (31), and St. Augustine "almost unconsciously implied [references to the rhetorical art of memory] in his explorations" of the philosophical concept (46). The seeping of conceptions of memory into practices of memorization, along with the survival of the "art of memory" in later centuries, suggest that when Locke and Hume began to associate memory with identity, so too may memorization have become closely linked to one's sense of self.

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more concerned with the power that the quotations themselves assume when forms of memory become associated with identity.

[13] Yet another example of theories of memory overlapping with practices of memorization is the wax tablet. Much like the metaphor of the mind as receiving a stamp's seal, the writing tables that were ubiquitous from classical antiquity through the Renaissance contained leaves of paper or parchment coated with wax, which allowed them to receive impressions that could later be erased. Peter Stallybrass et al. demonstrate the way these tablets play a role not only in technologies of writing, but also in the period's understanding of memory and forgetfulness.

Memorizing quotations poses a unique challenge to an understanding of identity, though. If people are what they remember, and if young women fill their minds with quotations from other sources, those selections clearly threaten the ability to develop a cohesive identity. How can young women form a consistent sense of themselves if their own thoughts and impressions mingle with quotations that originate elsewhere? Although he addresses the process of reading rather than quoting, reader-response theorist Georges Poulet articulates the paradox:

> I am someone who happens to have as objects of his own thought, thoughts which are part of a book I am reading, and which are therefore the cogitations of another. […] Because of the strange invasion of my person by the thoughts of another, I am a self who is granted the experience of thinking thoughts foreign to him. I am the subject of thoughts other than my own. […] It all happens, then, as though reading were the act by which a thought managed to bestow itself within me with a subject not myself. Whenever I read, I mentally pronounce an *I,* and yet the *I* which I pronounce is not myself. (55-56, original emphasis)

Poulet's language is telling: the words and ideas of a "foreign" text "invade" the reader, which therefore unsettles his or her sense of self. Memorization and recitation, especially within the nineteenth-century philosophical framework, potentially pose an even greater threat. Instead of merely "thinking the thoughts of another," as Poulet characterizes the act of reading, speakers quoting material also *voice* alien sentiments as though they are their own. This experience prompts additional questions: Who do the quotations represent and to whom do they belong? Do they state the views of the person who originally coined the sentiments, or do they just provide words for the already existing thoughts and feelings of the person who stores and repeats them? And, if reading can unsettle a person's sense of self, in what way do stored quotations, which are presumably imprinted even more strongly than reading, shape the memorizer's conception of his or her identity?

Mary Shelley's *Matilda* offers one author's response to these questions, perceptible through Matilda's education, which both abides by and veers from conduct

book recommendations in significant ways, and her progression of quotation, which grows from initial deft management to increasing conflation between her self and the figures in or behind the memorized selections. As Matilda develops an ill-stocked and disordered mind, it damages her in ways beyond those that conduct manuals fear. Instead of simply hoarding selections without applying them, or flaunting the quotations without demonstrating modesty, Matilda suffers an even greater consequence: she succumbs to the quotations' messages, losing her sense of her self and her ability to view the world through her own eyes.

"Led […] to Deeper Studies": Matilda's Improper Lessons

At first glance, Matilda's childhood education seems to have followed the approach recommended by the educational system and conduct manuals. While her childhood guardian, her aunt, did not directly oversee her education, a nearby minister gave Matilda "lessons in reading, writing and french [sic]" (157). As a child she read books about ancient history and became familiar with authors such as Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and Cowper from her aunt's meager library—all authors usually accepted for women (158). Matilda also shares the conduct manuals' beliefs about the tremendous power of literature to shape a young woman's knowledge and feelings, especially as she describes the role of books in her parents' blossoming romance. At the time of their meeting and courtship, Matilda's father read novels, which Matilda calls one of the significant "methods by which youth in civilized life are led to a knowledge of the existence of passions before they really feel them"—a fact that influenced his love for his future wife, Diana (153). Her mother, having "read no novels," was protected from feeling and thinking about romance at too young of an age (154). Matilda notes that Diana's reading was of the appropriate kind: because "she had read few authors who had written during at least the last fifty years," Matilda says, "her knowledge was of a deeper kind and laid on firmer foundations" (154). Matilda's comments imply the necessity of

carefully selecting texts and authors in order to bring about the kind of understanding that model women like Diana had.

Matilda's learning, however, failed to correspond with the form of education she advocates in that it lacked certain notable restraints. She read books in their entirety, rather than in selections, and she read them while excluded from society, rather than under the instruction of a teacher or other authority figure. Evidence from Matilda's narrative, when patched together, further reveals that she was exposed to authors that were not deemed appropriate for young women. As she tells her story, she does not quote the approved writers in her aunt's library; instead she recites Dante, Wordsworth, Fletcher, Coleridge, and Spencer—authors her father presumably introduced to her. After he returns from sixteen years of international travel, he directs a second period of her education; Matilda states, "I was led by my father to attend to deeper studies than had before occupied me. [...] He was with me during all my studies and assisted or joined with me in every lesson" (163). Matilda does not reveal what this study included, but she admits that her father opposes conventional learning. While at college, "he discarded books," believing they could not teach him the lessons he yearned to learn (152). And, after his travels in Europe, Persia, Arabia, and India, he formed what Matilda calls "an independent [moral creed] for himself which had no relation to the peculiar notions of any one country" (161). In addition to her father's general nonconformity of thought, he has a particular fondness for Dante, the author that Matilda quotes most extensively. Besides quoting Dante himself, he asks Matilda one evening to read the author aloud to him, picking up in the place where his wife left off, an act that powerfully reveals his substitution of his daughter for his wife (167). Growing up surrounded by these reading threats, Matilda begins her narrative on what conduct manual authors, anthology editors, and educators would have considered dangerous ground. Although her mind is indeed stocked with quotations, as recommended for young women, they come from the wrong sources and illustrate inappropriate sentiments.

In spite of (or perhaps because of) her unconventional educational background, Matilda opens her tale by exerting her power over language, narrating her memoir at a moment near her death. After describing the setting's dark and desolate heath, as well as her own quickened pulse and burning cheek, which she sees as signs of her impending death, Matilda foregrounds herself as the author of her story and cues the reader that her tale will follow certain generic conventions: "I begin to write my tragic history." She further communicates her boldness by adding that she tells her story in spite of a former belief that "there was a sacred horror in [her] tale that rendered it unfit for utterance" (151). This narrative risk is under Matilda's control, since she also deftly arouses sympathy in a potentially unreceptive audience in a number of ways. In addition to mentioning her weakness and grief, she elicits compassion by asserting her own innocence, saying, "My faults may easily be pardoned; for they proceeded not from evil motive but from want of judgement [sic]" (152). She also conscripts a sympathetic audience through the way that she addresses her readers (G. Stewart 8). She writes her story for her "kind, affectionate friend" Woodville, but then expands that audience to include strangers, telling him, "It will give me pleasure to dwell upon our friendship in a way that would be needless if you alone read what I shall write" (151). From the start of her narrative, Matilda reveals her mastery over narrative conventions and audience responses.

The narrative's form and structure, however, also cues the reader to pay special attention to her quotations. Soon after stating that she is writing her "tragic history," Matilda recognizes that she has taken some digressions, so she asks herself, "What am I writing?" (151). The query conveys not only her absentmindedness in narrating her own life's story, but also the difficulty of classifying the text (151). Throughout the narrative, Matilda borrows from and alludes to a variety of traditions, making her story, in the words of Diana Edelman-Young, "a structure of fragmented ruins with no identifiable form" (117). Scholars have identified the novella as drawing upon romance structures,

incest narratives, gothic literature, and dramatic tragedy, and critics who favor biographical readings have characterized the novella as a veiled autobiography of the author or a hagiography of her husband.[14] On one hand, the patchwork nature of the text works to foreground Matilda's process of constructing it, thereby further granting her literary agency. On the other hand, her references to a variety of texts and traditions mark her text as a borrowed one, which works to further underscore and destabilize her quotations. By the time the first of Matilda's plentiful literary extracts appear, it strikes the reader as a quotation within one long quotation—as a fragment imbibed secondhand. Matilda's identification of Woodville as the original narratee only creates a further layer of quotation, as the reader imagines Woodville reading these already doubly decontextualized extracts.

Despite materializing in the narrative as a "strange, ghostly emblem," Matilda's first quotation reveals that, for the most part, her literary predecessors have fallen under her authorial spell (Flesch 62). Since she has framed her memoir as a conversation with Woodville, she appears to be merely peppering her tale with a pleasant, descriptive sentiment, a function that corresponds with the recommendations of conduct manual authors and anthology editors, who agree that contributing to conversation serves as a primary purpose for accumulating pleasant selections in a young woman's mental storehouse.[15] A closer examination reveals that Matilda also skillfully manages the quotation. As she describes her childhood loneliness, especially after the parting of her

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[14] In addition to Edelman-Young, critics such as Tilottama Rajan, Lauren Gillingham, Kathleen A. Miller, and Charlene A. Bunnell address the text's relationship to other genres. As mentioned earlier, several critics characterize the novella as autobiographical, and Diane Long Hoeveler makes the case that Shelley uses it to honor her husband.

[15] For example, in *The Polite Lady: or, a Course of Female Education,* Charles Allen notes that reading "good and sensible books" will "likewise give [a young woman] a natural, easy, and elegant manner of expressing [herself]" (119). In his anthology, Goldsmith adds that his book will be useful for young women, especially because of "the necessity of knowing enough of it [poetry] to mix in modern conversation" (ix).

nurse, Matilda states, quoting Wordsworth's "Song" ["She dwelt among th' untrodden ways…"], that she "lived in a desolate country where 'there were none to praise / And very few to love'" (157). Instead of conflating herself with Wordsworth's lonely "*Maid whom* there were none to praise / And very few to love" (147, my emphasis), Matilda expurgates part of the line and turns the quotation outward, saying instead that she lived in an environment without people for her to love. Matilda makes a significant revision as she inserts the selection: the quotation remains a subordinate, relative clause, but instead of modifying Wordsworth's "maid," it now modifies Matilda's "desolate country." It would have been simpler for Matilda to retain the entire line, and compare herself to the poetic, lonely maid. Her decision to change the direction of the phrase suggests her power to manipulate the line, and, in so doing, to control other peoples' perceptions of her.

Although Matilda's manner of incorporating her next quotation similarly reveals her agency, it also hints at quotation's power to elide the speaker's identity. Matilda describes herself spending hours gathering flowers in the surrounding country, "'*Ond' era pinta tutta la mia via*'" (158). The quotation from Dante's *Purgatorio* states, "from the abundance painted on her path" (353); significantly, Matilda changes "her path" (*sua via)* to "my path" (*mia via)* in order to place herself into the line. In addition, although Matilda does not say so, the line refers to a woman in the original text who shares Matilda's name with a different spelling: Matelda. As Dante the pilgrim travels through Purgatory, he sees this woman—who is only named once in the text in the closing canto—across a stream. This river is the Lethe, a mythological river in Hades that literally means "forgetfulness," where souls of the dead drink in order to forget their previous existence. In the story, Matelda helps Dante into the river to erase the memory of his sins before taking him to a corresponding river, the Eunie, in order to restore his memory of his previous good deeds. In quoting this line, Matilda reveals her desire to share Matelda's power to control memory, which she evokes, interestingly, through an

act of memorization. Because this particular scene explicitly addresses a young woman's management of forgetfulness and recollection, it unveils Matilda's similar desire to control memory—a power that the very act of quotation gives her. At the same time, the similarities between the characters' names and activities suggest quotation's more dangerous potential of overtaking a speaker's identity, which becomes more explicit as the narrative continues. In order to express her kinship with Matelda by speaking the quotation, Matilda also begins to conflate herself with Dante's fictional character. Instead of the quotations remaining as selections in her mind that originate in other sources, their sentiments begin to merge with Matilda's own history, so that the distinction between the flower gathering of Matelda and Matilda begins to blur.

Not surprisingly, the unsteady identity that this quotation suggests starts reappearing in other ways in Matilda's story. After this quote, Matilda explains that at this time in her life, characters and plots of books began to replace human interaction for her. Much like Emma Bovary, whom Rene Girard identifies as a character who exemplifies triangular desire—which is a desire for the other that is modeled and mediated, in this case, by literature (5)—she imagined characters such as Rosalind, Miranda, and the lady of Comus as her companions, and she reenacted their stories. She also took particular delight in imagining her reunion with her father before he returned from his travels. She explains, "My favourite vision was that when I grew up I would leave my aunt, whose coldness lulled my conscience, and disguised like a boy I would seek my father through the world." The location of their reunion varies, but in each case she states that "his first words constantly were, 'My daughter, I love thee'!" (159). Scholars have discussed the way Matilda's vision mirrors the fictional stories she uses as her models, emphasizing the way her reading has blurred the distinction between fiction

and reality. Diane Long Hoeveler notes, for example, that "Mathilda[16] cannot see herself except through the lenses of literary conventions" (371). A related point is worth making though: in the same way that Matilda uses quotations to understand herself in the past and the present, she also anticipates her future self within the plots of her readings. In contrast with the image of her past self, which portrays her as a virginal female who is modest, solitary, and geographically confined, she envisions herself in the future as a gender-bending traveler who is confident, companionable, and adventurous.

This vision empowers Matilda, revealing her role as author not only of her narrative, but also of her self, as she appropriates material from texts as she pleases in order to grant herself an unconventional future. Unfortunately, however, Matilda still must struggle to form a consistent view of herself, because the past and future images are at odds. Instead of developing a coherent identity based on patterns of causation revealed through past events, as Locke suggests, Matilda forms her identity through a hodge-podge of quotations and readings, which allows her to fluctuate between identities as the beautiful, alienated young woman and the confident, desired daughter. Since the distinctive personalities grow out of texts rather than past events, Matilda lacks the recollections that would connect the identities, informing her about the transformation from one to the other. Consequently, even at this early point in the narrative, Matilda's powerful use of language to construct and articulate her own identity also begins to erode it, contributing to a disjointed rather than consistent self and eventually leading to the "wretched condition" Hume describes.

Despite the intimations that other narratives can exert power over one's life and identity, at this stage of Matilda's story, life's experiences still have priority over

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[16] Scholars use different published versions of the *Matilda* text, some of which spell the title and/or the protagonist's name "Mathilda." When quoting, I have stayed faithful to the spelling that the critics have chosen to use.

memorized selections. After her initial use of quotations to define her character, Matilda surprisingly all but abandons the practice for several chapters—a change that coincides with her father rejoining her life. She describes his arrival as bringing about a re-birth or an awakening for her:

> And now I began to live. All around me was changed from a dull uniformity to the brightest scene of joy and delight. The happiness I enjoyed in the company of my father far exceeded my sanguine expectations. We were for ever together; and the subjects of our conversations were inexhaustible. (161)

Blissfully Matilda begins to spend all of her time with her father, which surpasses even her "sanguine expectations"—a choice of phrase that whispers the unsaid taboo on consanguine sex and foreshadows the novella's moment of crisis. As they catch up on the past, enjoy moments in the present, and plan for their future together, Matilda becomes completely absorbed by their experiences. In this new environment created by her father's presence, Matilda no longer seems to need or want to revert to memorized quotations in order to interpret herself or her world. Her situation mirrors that of Anne Elliot in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: while taking a walk one day, "repeating to herself some few of the thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn," Anne overhears a conversation between Captain Wentworth, the man she secretly loves, and Louisa and Henrietta Musgrove, two young women she perceives as her rivals (114). Because of her uneasiness, she finds that life's difficulties supersede her scripted thoughts, and she cannot continue reciting quotations. Significantly, the memorized texts are depicted as beyond the quoter's control: although Anne "occupied her mind as much as possible in such like musings and quotations," she "*could not* immediately fall into a quotation again" (114-15, my emphasis). Like Anne, who finds quotations unhelpful and difficult to conjure when the intensity of real life surpasses literature's hold on her mind, Matilda also falls out of quotation when she begins to experience life powerfully with her father. In Matilda's case, however, her father becomes the new model and mediator of her desires, eclipsing the textual predecessors she previously consulted.

Unsurprisingly, then, when Matilda's father suddenly changes his attitude towards her, she makes an exception to her abandonment of quotation. A young man expresses interest in Matilda, at which time she states, "He, my beloved father, shunned me, and either treated me with harshness or a more heart-breaking coldness" (164). This change devastates Matilda, who details her intense tears, prayers, and grief, and compares herself to a sparrow hurled from the sky by a hawk. Just as her feelings become most passionate, and when the situation has become too difficult and confusing to interpret on its own, Matilda resorts to quotation again. She explains her desire to die, supported by a quote:

> —for what should I do here,
> Like a decaying flower, still withering
> Under his bitter words, whose kindly heat
> Should give my poor heart life? (165)

This selection—poised between the initial quotations that reveal Matilda's power over language and the later ones that more ominously threaten Matilda's identity—perfectly demonstrates the problems with Matilda's practice of quotation. In this case, the source is all wrong, likely to prompt the "mischievous effects" that *The Female Aegis* warns against (77): it is from Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's comedy *The Captain,* in which a young woman, Lelia, attempts to seduce a man she does not realize is her father. In addition, Matilda has taken the quotation completely out of its context. While in her hands the quote seems to offer a grieving and bitter lament of her father's mistreatment, in the original comedy the protagonist states the words in order to manipulate a hesitant suitor to marry her. And, to further undermine the quotation's integrity, the passage comes soon after Lelia mocks her father for being "old and Beggarly" and abuses him for asking for help from her. In fact, at the end of the conversation she disowns her father, asking him to stop appealing to their family relationship, saying, "Of what you have been to me, or you are, / For as I hear them, so I lose them" (241). In contrast, Matilda turns to the quotation to provide words to explain her misery, validating her grief and her desire for death. While the selection allows her to find words for her own wretchedness, it also

shapes her understanding, both of her miserable self and of the events occurring around her, in ways that entirely contradict the meaning of the selection in its context. Contrary to the advice given in women's conduct manuals and anthologies, Matilda does not improve her morals through the memorized selections, but instead confirms her sadness and discovers a vocabulary that defines herself and her situation negatively. As the plot moves to its conclusion, this quotation demonstrates the danger of divorcing memorized selections from their contexts and putting them to other uses.

Even more significantly, the language of the selection itself reinforces the threat that quotations can pose to a young woman's stable identity. Although Matilda has chosen this excerpt to express her thoughts, it initially does more to obscure the situation than to clarify it. The third line, "Under his bitter words, whose kindly heat," seems paradoxical: how can "bitter words" provide a "kindly heat"? Once readers notice the run-on, in which the line continues, "Should give my poor heart life?," they realize that the quotation may be under-punctuated. Perhaps the first part of the quotation asks an initial question, "For what should I do here, / Like a decaying flower, still withering / Under his bitter words?," and the final clause asks a second, separate question: "Whose kindly heat should give my poor heart life?" The question of whether "whose" is a possessive modifying "words" or a pronoun referring to an unknown person alludes to the question Matilda must begin to ask herself: like the speaker in this selection, is she owned by the "bitter words" of her quotations, or is she an independent subject, in search of "kindly heat" to give her "poor heart life"? Either way, as "heat" slips into "heart," the quotation hints at the former being taken in by the latter—of energy and intensity being absorbed as Matilda searches for an existence and a meaning that is centered in her being's core. In addition, the quotation hints at her project's failure, for "heat" must first split and divide—much, as we will see, like her identity—before it can be internalized by "heart." As Matilda returns to quoting more extensively, these dangers bring about serious consequences for her.

"The Language of Despair": Quotation as Engulfing the Self

Matilda restores her practice of regularly interspersing her narrative with memorized quotations after the five whirlwind chapters that revolve around her father's return—which include the episode that serves as the focal point of what Matilda calls "my tragic history" (151). In response to his sudden, inexplicable coldness towards her, Matilda one day prods her father to reveal the secret cause of his grief. As their conversation escalates, he finally admits his incestuous feelings, crying, "My daughter, I love you!"—the exact phrase that Matilda dreamt her father saying to her in her childhood reunion fantasies, but uttered (and received) here not in elation, but in anguish (173). They separate, never to speak again. The next morning her father races to the sea, with Matilda reaching him only after his suicide. After these suspenseful and tragic events, Matilda's life and narrative return to their previous states; like her earlier description of her existence as dull and empty, she again describes her life as "a blank" since her father's death. Because Matilda is beginning to experience her self as mediated, short-circuited either by her father or her literary predecessors, in the physical and emotional vacancy provided by her father's death she once more turns to other sources to find words for her loneliness and desolation (184). In fact, from this point until the end of the novella, Matilda quotes other sources eight times, which constitutes the book's greatest bulk of quotations. As she incorporates these next several quotations, however, something new begins to happen that demonstrates Matilda's losing battle to maintain her own thoughts and feelings over those of the memorized selections. She alternates between on the one hand, distancing herself from the quotations, using source-identifying signal phrases, and on the other, using others' language without attribution. In other words, Matilda oscillates between insisting that the quotations mirror or represent the thoughts already existing in her mind, thereby asserting her control over them, and

incorporating the quotations as though they simply are her thoughts, demonstrating her submission to them.

The next four citations, in following this alternating pattern, depict Matilda's attempts to resist quotation, as well as her increasing capitulation to the stronger voices. In explaining her suffering, Matilda begins with a biblical quote, stating that she "might say with Job 'Where is now my hope? For my hope who shall see it? They shall go down together to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust'" (185). In this case, the introduction to the quote generates more interest than the quote itself: Matilda notes that her own feelings bear some resemblance to those explained by Job; therefore, she feels that she can join him in his sentiment of hopelessness. The distinction represented by the quote's introduction is small, but significant: by saying that she can say something *with* Job, Matilda still identifies herself, and her words, as distinct from him. Less than a page later, however, the next example includes no such introduction to the quotation; Matilda merely repeats the words of Coleridge's Famine from "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter" to explain the gossip that surrounds her life and contributes to her isolation. Although the text cites Coleridge as author in a footnote—written as though from Matilda's pen—and separates the quoted material from the other text on the page, Matilda cleanly switches from her own sentence to Coleridge's without syntactical interruption: "And all this, to be sure, was delicately put; not in broad words for my feelings might be hurt but 'Whispered so and so / In dark hint soft and low' with downcast eyes, and sympathizing smiles or whimpers" (186). In this instance, Matilda's thoughts have merged with Coleridge's, so that his poem and her thoughts are now indistinguishable. In fact, her own language also begins to echo Coleridge's, as "whisper" from the quote evolves and reappears as "whimper" in her own words, demonstrating further how Matilda is borrowing and internalizing the patriarchal voice. The next two examples demonstrate a similar phenomenon: in the subsequent example Matilda attempts to create distance between herself and the quoted words again, stating

that she has "repeated with the poet," referring to Wordsworth, "Before I see another day / Oh, let this body die away!" (189), but in the next quotation she collapses the space again as she incorporates the words of Dante's *Paradiso* into her own without providing an introduction. This alternating pattern suggests Matilda's resistance to poetic engulfment, but her increasing failure to disassociate her own ideas from those of the quotations reveals her losing battle to maintain her own sense of identity. Her stored quotations begin to shape her perceptions of the world more pervasively, influencing her interpretation of her own desolation and the community's response to the tragedy.

Matilda's internal struggle reaches its climax in the next scene as her self and her quotations clearly and decisively merge. After two lonely years of grieving her father's death, Matilda theatrically stages a suicide meal—a Last Supper, of sorts—for her friend Woodville and herself that serves as a test of both their mutual desolation and their friendship. To convince hesitant Woodville to join her in death, Matilda makes a case for their shared suicide: she declares her misery and her desire for death, yet she also expresses her fear—mixed emotions that explain her hope for suicide, but also her desire for a friend to accompany her. She suggests that she and Woodville will encounter their lost loved ones upon their deaths, which makes the occasion a hopeful journey rather than a dismal conclusion to their lives. As she speaks, she believes that language is failing her; she states, "Oh! that I had words to express the luxury of death that I might win you" (201). In addition to revealing her hopelessness, Matilda's statement of unsuccessful communication is heartrending because of the linguistic dexterity it actually reveals. Matilda's grammar allows her to convey two truths at once: she says both that she desires to explain "the luxury of death that I might win [for] you," and that she wishes to convey "the luxury of death that I might win you [over]." Blind to the success of her own words, she increases her intensity and attempts to speak once more, suggesting that she and Woodville are about to become happy spirits. She asks (in an allusion to her favorite Dante scene), "What fool on a bleak shore, seeing a flowery isle on the other side

with his lost love beckoning to him from it would pause because the wave is dark and turbid?" As these words fail to persuade, she slips into quotation, finding the words of Edmund Spenser:

> What if some little payne the passage have
> That makes frayle flesh to fear the bitter wave?
> Is not short payne well borne that brings long ease,
> And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave? (201)

Here Matilda repeats words that no anthology for young women would include, nor conduct book suggest learning.[17] In its original source, *The Faerie Queen,* this selection is voiced after the character Despair has convinced one knight, Terwin, to slay himself and another to flee in terror. The Redcrosse knight seeks to avenge Terwin's life, so he confronts the villain. As they converse, Despair rationalizes the death of the knight and attempts to cause Redcrosse's suicide with these persuasive words (159). In Spenser's epic poem, the beautiful Una saves Redcrosse from Despair's clutches, but here Matilda presents Despair's rhetoric on its own. The quotation she speaks is doubly unacceptable: it conveys deplorable sentiments, and it does so outside of the passage's larger, more redemptive context.

Matilda's manner of quoting also has taken a dangerous turn. Unlike earlier moments when the unspoken quotations were interspersed into the narrative, this time Matilda dramatically quotes out loud to an audience, demonstrating precisely the kind of ostentatious display that the conduct manual authors warn readers against. Several critics

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[17] Although it is somewhat anachronistic, a November 1836 article called "Hints on Reading" in *The Christian Lady's Magazine* offers some insights on nineteenth-century attitudes towards Spenser specifically. The author, M.A. Stodart, praises Spenser, who she calls "our exquisite old poet," as one of the few poets she can recommend for young women. She does suggest, though, that *The Faerie Queen* would be improved for young readers by explanatory notes and "by the omission of some passages." She states, "There is a high tone of morality in Spenser, and it would be easy to prune off excrescences" (434). Although she does not specify which parts should be omitted, I suspect she, and other nineteenth-century writers concerned about young people's reading, would categorize lines advocating suicide as among those to be excised.

have noted the theatricality of Matilda's character and of this scene in particular. Charlene E. Bunnell argues that the proposed joint suicide scene is one of the most memorable and dramatic scenes in the novel, made so by Matilda's "use of theatrical terms"—such as her description of planning "the whole scene" and decorating "the last scene of [her] tragedy"—and "her painstaking arrangement of props" (89). Charles E. Robinson adds that her language draws "attention to her self-conscious role-playing in her relationships with others" (79). Matilda's quotation is similarly dramatic: rather than learning texts in order to improve her morality, Matilda calls attention to herself by leading up to her memorized selection with intense and passionate rhetoric and performing it with passion and flourish. She also highlights her very act of quotation rather than passing over the words without comment. Immediately after reciting the passage, she says to Woodville, "Do you mark my words?," asking him to notice and consider not only the sentiments she has expressed, but also her manner of speaking them (201). While theatrical on its own, her quoting infraction is even more serious for contributing to and participating in a thoroughly dramatic scene, staged for Woodville and her reading audience. If this moment represents "the last scene of [her] tragedy," then Matilda uses the quotation to place herself in the center-stage spotlight.

By foregrounding herself, Matilda paradoxically obscures her identity. She explains, "I have learned the language of despair: I have it all by heart, for I am Despair; and a strange being am I, joyous, triumphant Despair" (201). In this explanation, Matilda recognizes that the thematic content of her quotations—despair—has overtaken her own thoughts; now she speaks an entirely new language because of its influence. She implies that she cannot view the world except through this lens; the words she has learned "by heart" prompt feelings of hopelessness and depression when she imagines the future. Matilda moves beyond the subject matter of her quotations, though, in her second mentioning of despair; she capitalizes the term to refer to the character from *The Faerie Queen*, saying, "I am Despair." In that brief statement, Matilda acknowledges that the

passage she has memorized and quoted has become not just a selection to incorporate occasionally into her narrative, but something that guides her entire understanding of herself. The origins of her words and her own identity are confused; now Matilda cannot differentiate between the content of her new language—lower-case despair—and the being who speaks such a language—upper-case Despair. Matilda no longer knows her own identity; instead, she interprets herself and her situation through the quoted words that are stored in her mind.

Although Woodville talks his friend out of choosing death this time, Matilda knows a line has been crossed. She no longer can resist the words of despair—and Despair—that exist in her mind; as she says, "I was in truth a marked creature, a pariah, only fit for death" (204). One day soon after the suicide meal, Matilda accompanies Woodville across the heath to his town, and as she returns to her cottage, she imagines herself and Woodville reunited with their loved ones in their afterlife. Her attention turns again to literature, and in her next quotation, she revisits Dante's image of Matelda—although now identified as "Matilda"—gathering flowers on "a lovely river," the Lethe, the river of forgetfulness. She describes the river as flowing, in Dante's words: "*bruna, bruna, / Sotto l'ombra perpetua, che mai / Raggiar non lascia sole ivi, nè Luna*," which, when translated, means, "dark, dark beneath the perpetual shade, which never lets sun or moon shine there" (217). This quotation prompts even more; Matilda states, "And then I repeated to myself all that lovely passage that relates the entrance of Dante into the terrestrial Paradise" (205). As she imagines the literary scene, she merges her own life with it, imagining meeting her father's eyes in a final moment of union and experiencing the joy of seeing him restored to her.[18] In her reverie of their reunion, Matilda loses

[18] When Matilda imagines herself and her father restored to each other, their relationship is presumably uncomplicated by incest. Matilda's feelings for her father, though, are certainly complex in the novella; some scholars suggest that she reciprocates her father's love, at least to some extent. See Terence Harpold's article about Matilda and seduction fantasy as an example.

track of her time and place, until she finally wakes from her daydream in her attempts to pick a fictional flower from the actual "bleak plain where no flower grew" (206). Here, fiction and reality have blurred: Matelda and Matilda have slid together into a single person, and the imagined river and the real bleak surroundings have transformed into one united setting. In this poignant moment, Matilda states, in a phrase with rich double meaning, "I had lost myself" (206). She speaks the literal truth: Matilda has gone astray; she does not know her geographical location. Yet, more significantly, she has "lost herself" in quotation too. As she continually "repeated to [herself] all that lovely passage," the selections overtook her own identity, so that she lost possession of her very being. Matilda can no longer find herself in the midst of her memorized selections.

The narrative's last three quotations, which occur in the final few pages of the text, further emphasize the change this moment represents. By this time, Matilda no longer provides introductions to any of the quotes; all of them are seamlessly and effortlessly incorporated into her narrative, demonstrating that the quotations and her own thoughts now have fused. More importantly, Matilda no longer indicates the sources of her final quotations, something she has meticulously done for all of the other memorized selections. Matilda's failure in attribution carries historical significance as well. In *Shakespeare Verbatim,* Margreta de Grazia argues that late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century variorum editions of Shakespeare's works demonstrate "a new preoccupation with identifying and acknowledging the words of others, with marking them off in quotations and properly subscribing them"—a contrast with earlier periods in which editors took greater freedom with Shakespeare's language and meaning (213). At this time, quotation marks begin to function like copyright, designating certain combinations of words as the property of those who originally wrote or spoke them, which requires special permission to reproduce (214). She notes that in the same period, grammar books consider quotation marks mandatory, and that novels consistently use them to mark off characters' words (215). Quoting without acknowledgement after the

eighteenth century, de Grazia adds, was considered a violation of the rights of another: "a form of theft, an encroachment on private property" (217). As she emphasizes, the change in practice was linked to a change in philosophy: Locke's defense of private property had changed society's notion of entitlement and proprietorship, extending it to mental or literary property. Matilda's newfound plagiarism, then, cannot be dismissed due to her ignorance or to its irrelevance in the period's historical context. Her decision *not* to cite her sources, especially when she had scrupulously done so for all of the earlier selections, suggests that she no longer views the quotations as belonging to someone else. Because she now speaks "the language of despair," the hopeless language of excerpts has become her own, so she no longer feels obligated to cite it. At this point in the story, the quotations stored in her mind's repository have engulfed her: she no longer sees the sentiments as belonging to someone else, so they no longer need to be attributed to another author.

The quotations themselves reinforce their possession of Matilda. After she becomes lost and the evening's darkness obscures her surroundings, she decides to spend the night alone on the plain's grass. She awakens later in the night, wet and weakened from the rain. As she describes the night sky, she quotes Coleridge's description of the moon in "Christabel" to convey its ominous effect: "The moon is behind, and at the full / And yet she looks both small and dull." The image is a constricted one, with the clouds concealing the size and brightness of the full moon. When the quotation is placed in its new context, the ambiguity of the pronoun "she," which appears "small and dull," almost seems to refer to Matilda, particularly because she describes herself in terms that echo the description of the moon: her heart is "shadowy" and she finds herself "surrounded by a darkness which not the slightest beam of light penetrated" (206). Because it lacks an attribution, the quotation becomes unmoored, allowing Matilda, and her restricted life and identity, to seep into its words.

As she recognizes how ill she has become, and that her death will likely occur soon, Matilda uses her penultimate quotation to characterize the death of her self. Leading up to it, she alludes to associationist theories of the mind, speaking of her thoughts, "which through long habit would for ever connect themselves into one train" (207). Strangely, however, Matilda's linked thoughts seem to be fastened together with figures of speech and quotation, which actually serve to disjoint her self. She first expresses her ideas in an apostrophe to Nature, in which she says good-bye to the world in which her imagination flourished. Clearly, the elevated and archaic words in Matilda's mind are no longer hers: from the start, when she addresses the scene by saying, "I salute thee, beautiful Sun, and thou, white Earth, fair and cold!," her soliloquy sounds stilted and forced. Next Matilda slips into quotation, describing the earth embracing her body in the unidentified words of Wordsworth's "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal": "rolled round in earth's diurnal course / With rocks, and stones, and trees" (207). The woman's body described in these lines—which the poem earlier characterizes as having "no motion" and "no force," suggesting its previous energy and vibrancy (Wordsworth 5)—is now trapped by the earth, forced to follow its repetitious cycles. Matilda's use of a quotation to describe her dead body implies that her decline, like the young woman's in the poem, is not simply physical. The narrative confirms this suggestion. After the quotation, Matilda tells the earth, "I have peopled your solitudes with wild fancies of my own creation," acknowledging her own power of imagination, but a few sentences later she speaks of the earth, after her death, as existing "to reflect other images in other minds." In moving from language of innovation to reflection, Matilda transitions from figuring the mind as having agency to portraying it as accepting reproduced images. This abstraction also becomes personal, as Matilda refers to herself as "one of these fragile mirrors, that ever doted on thine image" (207). Her mind, she admits, has become simply a reflecting surface. Matilda's rhetoric matches her recognition, as she incorporates two layers of quotes—which, given the form of the novella, adds to the already existing strata of

quotation—in this section. She quotes herself quoting Wordsworth, a choice that emphasizes that she also has become a citation, an extract to be copied.

Matilda's final quotation cements the way that the practice has obscured and concealed her selfhood. Just lines before the closing of the novella, and presumably, her death, Matilda marks the passing of time: the four years since she first saw her father, the three years since she saw him for the last time, the year since she and Woodville first met, and the three days since she became lost in the meadows. In light of these memories, Matilda wonders at her bitter weeping, incorporating a biblical phrase while asking, "Why does my heart heave with vain endeavour to cast aside the bitter anguish that covers it 'as the waters cover the sea'" (210). This phrase, when it appears in both Isaiah 11:9 and Habakuk 2:14, refers to the knowledge of the Lord, which will fill the earth "as the waters cover the sea." According to O. Palmer Robertson's biblical commentary, the author of the verse in Habakuk "cites more ancient sayings than his own, incorporating them into his utterance." In other words, Matilda quotes a phrase that is already a quotation. In conflating two older sources (the Isaiah passage and Numbers 14:21), this verse, according to Robertson, makes Habakuk's "judgmental utterance more memorable" (195). Like her biblical predecessor, Matilda attempts to use her final quotation for her own ends as well, demonstrating her control over language one final time. Although in its original context the phrase intends to communicate the abundance and omnipresence of God's glory, Matilda uses it to convey the immense bitterness that overwhelms her heart, which feels as deep and wide to her as overwhelming waters. Instead of celebration, the image evokes suffocation; much like her capitulation to despair in the suicide meal scene, she finds herself unable to "cast aside" the bitter anguish that engulfs her heart. In spite of altering the phrase's connotations, Matilda fails to displace quotation from her life—particularly because it shapes her final thoughts before the close of the novella and of her life. The very phrase she chooses demonstrates its pervasiveness and oppressiveness. Since "waters" serves as a metonym for "sea," the

phrase should more accurately say "as the waters fill up the sea." Instead, the phrase says the waters "cover over" the sea, indicating that they spread over and obscure—a task the waters accomplish because, once joined with the sea, they are impossible to distinguish. Correspondingly, the quotations' words have overtaken Matilda's own sentiments and identity, so that it is impossible to tell them apart, particularly so because she fails to attribute the quote. At the moment of her impending physical death, Matilda experiences a semantic drowning as well.

In this way, Mary Shelley's *Matilda* speaks to and elaborates upon the period's discussions about memorization, especially as they relate to young women. In agreement with Locke and Hume, Shelley's narrative affirms that memory and identity are linked, but it explores the consequences of training a young woman's memory to store material originating from others rather than to recollect actual experiences. Her text also interacts with conduct manual authors and anthology editors, supporting their claims that the literature young women are exposed to can powerfully shape their development. The narrative challenges, however, the shortsightedness of their fears about recitation's possible consequences of self-aggrandizement and theatricality, instead pointing to even more perilous results of filling young women's minds with quotations. Specifically, Shelley reveals memorization's greatest danger, and tragedy, of all: that in teaching young women to allow their own recollections to be supplanted with scripted sentiments, a culture of memorization also trains them to displace their perceptions of their selves and their world with someone else's thoughts. In a culture where popular texts suggest that the practice of memorizing has the potential to improve conversation, develop morality, and discover identity, *Matilda* suggests instead that the content of the decontextualized texts can give young women a "language of despair," whose words can have deep and dreadful consequences.

Because *Matilda*'s preoccupation with memory and the female mind is not an anomaly in Romantic literature, the text suggests broader implications. In addition to the

aforementioned texts—Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, where women theatrically display their accomplishments, take memorized texts out of their contexts, and find themselves under the mental control of quotation—other Romantic texts also portray the young woman's mind as serving a memorializing function that empties her being of other meaning and memories. William Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," for example, describes a poet's return to the Wye River valley, where his memory allows him to understand the world more deeply. The last section of the poem turns its attention to a woman's memory, namely, the poet's sister accompanying him. As he anticipates the future, he wishes that her mind "Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, / Thy memory be as a dwelling-place / For all sweet sounds and harmonies" (135). In particular, the poet calls on the woman to enshrine him and his words in her mind's mansion, a request that echoes the storehouse metaphor of the philosophers and conduct book authors. And, Wordsworth problematically depicts the woman's memory as a residence for another person's experiences rather than her own, requiring the male speaker's management of what should be remembered and forgotten. Together with *Matilda,* texts such as *Marriage, Northanger Abbey, Persuasion,* and "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" portray women's minds as specialized institutions—warehouses—that are particularly adept at preserving quotations. But, they all suggest that the mental dwellings are deteriorating—warped by self-aggrandizement, rotted by incongruous materials, overrun by their inhabitants, and under incompetent management—so that they no longer utilize or present their exhibits as recommended. *Matilda* reveals the contradiction underlying the crumbling mental structures: that cultural expectations have *constructed* women's minds to be unstable. Authority figures—both the conduct book authors and the people who distributed their books—have asked young women to use their minds to store other people's ideas, knowing all along that the weight of those quotations will destroy a woman's sense of self. The true tragedy of Matilda's narrative,

then, is not her father's confession; instead, it is the recognition that if young women follow recommendations about how to attain ideal womanhood, they participate in obliterating themselves.

CHAPTER TWO:
ONE WITH CHRIST, BUT DIVIDED IN TWO: MEMORIZATION, IMITATION SPIRITUALITY, AND *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS*

When Maggie Tulliver, the heroine of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss,* finds religion, she loses her self. She encounters God through Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*—a book that has been translated into more languages than any other except the Bible (Cervetti 148)—which advocates humility and self-renunciation as the path to peace. In spite of the book's promotion of self-denial, contemporary introductions to the *Imitation of Christ* suggest that it unconditionally benefits Maggie, who becomes attracted to its message of religious devotion. Hal M. Helms, the editor of Paraclete Press's 1982 edition (which was in its ninth printing in 1996), counts George Eliot as one of the book's "admirers," stating that she featured the book's "healing influence" in *The Mill on the Floss* (xi). In the more academic introduction accompanying his new translation of the devotional text, William C. Creasy also observes that the book "seldom went without praise" in England; as one notable example, he quotes a letter from Eliot in which she calls the book "delightful" and honors its piety (xiv). He adds that the *Imitation* "comforts" her character, Maggie Tulliver (xv). Even by the late nineteenth century, writers commented on Eliot's incorporation of the treatise in her novel. Leonard A. Wheatley's *The Story of the 'Imitatio Christi'* notes the book's power "of raising us above the world and its troubles, and of bringing us into communion with God"—an influence he believes that Eliot has expressed "in showing the soothing effect of this work on poor Maggie Tulliver" (4).

Twentieth-century literary criticism, in contrast, has been much less enthusiastic. In her 1975 feminist critique, Nina Auerbach bluntly condemns the book's influence with fiery rhetoric. She states, "Maggie's applications of Kempis's strictures are disastrous," adding that the doctrine "explodes communities and blights lives" ("Power" 166).

Although she admits that the book may have spiritual potential, she rejects it as "a source of evil in Maggie's hands because, once it finds its way into her life, it does evil things" ("Power" 167). In her analysis of *The Mill on the Floss*, Nancy Cervetti places her still-piercing denigration of the *Imitation* at a slightly further remove. She notes that the book is "alienating, narrow and absolutist" from a materialist point of view and "obsessive and masochistic" from a psychoanalytic point of view (40). Even Bernard J. Paris, who ultimately approves of Maggie's renunciation as allowing her to discover "the religion of humanity" (31), sees her reading of Kempis as problematic. He calls it "in one respect a destruction of self (not a glorification) and in another respect an attempt to escape from pain by a martyr-like transmutation of pain into pleasure" (27). Clearly, readers of both the religious text and the novel clash over what qualities characterize the *Imitation of Christ*, as well as how it affects Maggie Tulliver.

The interpretive discrepancy does not only exist between religious supporters and academic naysayers, though. Even in scholarly circles, readings of the novel have been polarized. In a highly influential 1972 *PMLA* article called "A Reinterpretation of *The Mill on the Floss*," John Hagan argues that most criticism of the novel falls into two camps. The first group of critics, exemplified by William R. Steinhoff and Jerome Thale, sees the novel as "a tragedy of repression and regression" (53). From their perspective, Maggie suffers disgrace and ruin for two reasons: her acceptance of Thomas à Kempis's philosophy of renunciation and her unnatural fixation upon her father and brother (53). The other group of critics, of which Bernard J. Paris, Reva Stump, and George Levine are representative, holds the opposite view: that Maggie's devotion to both Kempis's philosophy and the male figures in her life allow her to mature spiritually, a process that culminates in her "triumphant self-sacrifices" at the book's closing (55). Hagan argues that both views misunderstand or ignore key aspects of Eliot's text—in the case of the former, the narrator's sympathetic honoring of Kempis's work and of Maggie's attachment to her family, and in the case of the latter, the narrator's suggestion that

readers view Maggie's story as a tragedy. While he corrects each side's opposing perspectives, Hagan departs most significantly from both groups over an issue upon which they agree: that the central subject of the book is, in Hagan's words, "the degree to which Maggie can live, or struggle to live, by Kempis' philosophy" (56). Hagan concludes that the novel concentrates on something altogether different, revealed through the novel's ending events (the flood and its aftermath) and its final words (the epitaph that also serves as the novel's epigraph). In quoting the words engraved on Tom and Maggie's tomb—"In their death they were not divided," taken from 2 Samuel 1:23—the novel reveals its true focus. According to Hagan, that subject is Maggie's relationship to Tom and the effects of that relationship on her life.

Hagan's analysis, while insightful, overlooks a possibility for reconciliation between what critics have long seen as the central subject of the novel—Maggie's relationship with Kempis's philosophy—and its ending quotation. This chapter resolves that tension by considering the role and significance of quotation in a religious context, a project that benefits from paying greater attention to the Bible and the *Imitation of Christ* in *The Mill on the Floss.* With both texts, the quoted words do not merely linger in the narrative background as passing allusions; instead, they draw attention to themselves due to their prominent placement in the text (in the case of the former) and their jarring interruption of the novel's narrative (in the case of the latter). Syntactically, they underscore the invasive nature of quotations, and thematically, their words highlight disunity and the renunciation of the self—ideas that are profoundly important to an understanding of the novel. In addition to appearing in the novel's pages, these religious texts also embed themselves in Maggie's mind. She learns their words by heart, and in the process her sense of self erodes. In each of these ways—in overtaking the adjacent words on the page, in influencing an understanding of the novel's themes and significance, and in shaping a character's sense of herself—quoted texts demonstrate their saturating power. These forces culminate in the novel's closing scene, which

includes both Maggie's recollection of Kempis's text and the final biblical epigraph. I argue that rather than pointing away from Maggie and her wrestling with Kempis, the novel's ending—and its quotations—direct readers *to* her.

In the Beginning Was the Word[19]

Although John Hagan shrewdly draws attention to the ending of *The Mill on the Floss* in his challenge to earlier criticism, he ignores its beginning. Endings have long interested literary scholars, perhaps since Aristotle in his *Poetics* proclaimed that "the end is, of course, the most significant thing of all" (46-47). More recently, however, Edward Said, in *Beginnings: Intention and Method,* has theorized openings, noting that a beginning is crucial "not only because it determines much of what follows but also because a work's beginning is, practically speaking, the main entrance to what it offers" (3). Notably, in *The Mill on the Floss,* the biblical words from 2 Samuel 1:23 do not merely close the text; they open it too. From its first publishing in 1860, the novel's title page has included the words, "In their death they were not divided," listed below the book's title and author and above its publication information. Although critics generally interpret the initial words of a novel's first chapter as its "beginning," Said commences his book with an epigraph by Giambattista Vico, and then returns to that author's work in his closing chapter. He cites that decision as making his larger point: "that beginnings are first and important but not always evident, that beginning is basically an activity which ultimately implies return and repetition rather than simple linear accomplishment" (xiii). Since *The Mill on the Floss* opens and closes in a comparable way, I make a similar assertion—that the text begins not by locating the reader on "a wide plain" of the river Floss, as invoked by the first words of chapter 1, but with the words of the quotation

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[19] The New Testament book of John begins by describing Jesus in metaphorical terms: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

from 2 Samuel 1:23. The fact that the book opens and closes with the same words—and that those words are a quotation—makes them central to understanding the text as a whole.

The exact meaning of the quotation, however, eludes easy identification. In its biblical context, the words are part of a longer lament that the biblical patriarch David gives for Saul, the king of Israel, and his son Jonathan, David's intimate friend—both of whom recently died in a battle with the Philistines. That David finds comfort in the father and son's unity, even in death, is curious, particularly since their relationship, as narrated in the Bible, was not marked by harmony. Because the king was jealous of David's success and popularity, Saul fiercely disagreed with Jonathan about his friendship with David. During one particularly bitter quarrel, Saul attacked his son with both verbal and literal daggers, vowing that Jonathan's kingdom would not be established and attempting to kill him by throwing a spear at him. While the father and son may be united in death, they were hardly unified in life. And, David's grief over Saul's death is also peculiar. Although David and Saul eventually reconciled, the king pursued David around the Israelite countryside and attempted to kill him on multiple occasions. How, then, should we read this lament? Should we assume that David's reconciliation with Saul was sincere, and that he genuinely finds consolation in his dear friend's union with his father in death? Or, should we read the quotation as less straightforward?

While its words speak of unity, the verse's context invokes another reality: that of deep and dark chasms in and between individuals. In addition to the rifts between Saul and Jonathan and Saul and David, the moment of David's lament also marks his own heartache over the loss of his friend Jonathan—whose love he describes just verses later as "more wonderful than that of women" (2 Samuel 1:26). In expressing his optimism about the father-son connection in the afterlife, David may be projecting his hope that *he* will remain connected to Jonathan, his cherished friend, in spite of the profound separation he is experiencing due to the latter's death. The quotation also carries ironic

echoes of Saul's death. In his last battle with the Philistines, the king is wounded with an arrow. Not wanting to die at the hands of his enemies, Saul asks his armor-bearer to "thrust [him] through" with his sword (1 Samuel 31:4). When the armor-bearer refuses, Saul falls upon his own sword, committing suicide by literally dividing himself with a sharp blade. Therefore, in stating "In their death they were not divided," the quotation promises unity, but only barely obscures a series of splits—between father and son, between king and royal subject, between two intimate friends, and between a man and himself.

For this reason, the implied analogy between Maggie and Tom and the figures alluded to in the quotation remains murky. In an article about biblical allusions in *The Mill on the Floss,* Dwight H. Purdy explores some of the complications. He suggests that Maggie may correspond to Saul, and Tom may correspond to Jonathan, since Maggie's life parallels Saul's in her vacillating temperament, her suffering for small failures, and her familial conflicts, and Tom resembles Jonathan (although ironically) in his constancy (234). On the other hand, Maggie lacks the power and authority suggested by her association with Saul, as she remains subject to Tom's dominant legalism. To complicate things further, in some ways the relationship between Maggie and Tom carries stronger resonances with the relationship between Jonathan and David. The Bible portrays the men's friendship as deep and long-lasting, like the novel's depiction of Maggie's intense and devoted love for Tom. Additionally, David and Jonathan's relationship is figured as familial when David, later in the lament, speaks of his distress for "thee, my brother Jonathan" (2 Samuel 1:26). Maggie's correlation with both Saul and Jonathan leads Purdy to conclude, "Thus indeed the two are not divided: they are one" (234). I argue the opposite: that Maggie's identity, as suggested by the quotation's slippery associations, remains difficult to pin down. Her character, rather than holding solidly together, is fragmentary and elusive. Furthermore, the suicidal resonances of the biblical quotation also pertain to the novel's characters and events. Like the split made visible in

Saul's death-dealing blow, Maggie experiences a division of her self in the novel, as she is torn between her worldly desires and her religious sense of duty. Since, as Said has demonstrated, beginnings serve as an entrance to what follows, the novel's opening epigraph directs readers to notice schisms barely hidden beneath the surface of seemingly intact relationships and identities. Even the quotation's word choices—"*not divided"* instead of the more concise *"united"*—speak to the novel's greater thematic attention placed on disconnection rather than unity.

The opening and closing quotation has yet another effect, though, unrelated to its content. Regardless of its words, any quotation draws attention to the disquieting nature of language. As Said states later in his book, quotation illustrates "the literally unsettling effect" of other writing. He continues:

> Quotation is a constant reminder that writing is a form of displacement. For although quotation can take many forms, in every one the quoted passage symbolizes other writing as encroachment, as a disturbing force moving potentially to take over what is presently being written. As a rhetorical device, quotation can serve to accommodate, to incorporate, to falsify (when wrongly or even rightly paraphrased), to accumulate, to defend, or to conquer—but always, even when in the form of a passing allusion, it is a reminder that other writing serves to displace present writing, to a greater or lesser extent, from its absolute, central, proper place. (22)

As Said suggests, quotations, by their very nature, invade other contexts, insisting on their meaning. The presence of the Bible verse in *The Mill on the Floss*—propped up at each end of the novel like matching bookends—highlights the way that quotes, including this biblical one, can elbow their way into other narratives. In fact, a disquieting quotation frames, and therefore mediates, the entire novel. This detail becomes important not only for understanding the narrative, but also for the events contained within it—particularly since Maggie herself encounters long passages of quotations that carry explicit messages about her identity. Since quotations can intrude on a narrative, it reminds readers that they also may have the power to overwhelm a character's personhood. Rather than point away from a focus on Maggie's relationship with

Kempis's philosophy, as Hagan argues, the quotation foreshadows the struggle the protagonist will engage in with the encroaching text of the *Imitation of Christ.* And, the battle imagery—both that Said uses to describe the invasion of quotations, and that the context of the 2 Samuel passage conjures—implies that Maggie's encounter with Kempis will likely lead to injury. In fact, the language of encroachment carries evocative connotations, suggesting an uneasy relationship between Maggie's engulfment in quotation and her submersion in the flood.

The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God[20]

Even before Maggie stumbles upon the *Imitation of Christ* as a young woman, she is an avid reader of books. One of the earliest scenes in the novel depicts her dreaming by the fire with a book spread over her lap—a posture common for her, as her father says she is "allays at her book!" (17). Maggie also reads in a particularly skilled and imaginative way; her father brags that she understands what she reads better than many adults, and she expresses that she invents stories to accompany her books' pictures (19). When Maggie later visits Tom at school, she even finds his textbooks—which mystify and frustrate him—completely absorbing. In particular, she becomes fascinated with the examples in his Latin Grammar, focusing on them instead of the rules of syntax: "The mysterious sentences, snatched from an unknown context, —like strange horns of beasts, and leaves of unknown plants, brought from some far-off region—gave boundless scope to her imagination, and were all the more fascinating because they were in a peculiar tongue of their own, which she could learn to interpret" (147). Interestingly, especially in light of her later encounter with the *Imitatio Christi* (which also could be characterized as

[20] Ephesians 6:10-20 details the "whole armor of God" that Christians should wear in order to battle the devil and his dominion. This armor includes the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation. The list concludes with the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17)—a detail that has prompted Christians throughout history to memorize Scripture.

"mysterious sentences, snatched from an unknown context"), Maggie is empowered by these excerpts to construe their meaning. Like an explorer gaining understanding of and mastery over unknown animals and plants, she embraces these textual snippets with similar adroitness and adventurous spirit. As a young girl, Maggie clearly controls her reading, rather than her reading controlling her.

Maggie's life situation changes by the time she encounters Thomas à Kempis's book, which in turn alters how she reads the text. Her family suddenly loses the Dorlcote Mill—which is their home, their property, and their livelihood—due to an unsuccessful lawsuit. This calamity forces them to sell their belongings, and it embitters Maggie's father and Tom, the two most important people in her life. When her father's shock-induced illness exacerbates the tragedy, 13-year-old Maggie becomes despondent at life's difficulty. In her hopelessness and desire for something more, she turns to a stack of books that a childhood friend gave to her, passing over the *Portrait Gallery, Beauties of the Spectator, Rasselas, Economy of Human Life, Gregory's Letters,* and the *Christian Year.* She pauses once she reaches Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, feeling that its author's name sounds familiar. Directed by "some hand, now for ever quiet" that has marked certain passages in the margins, she begins to read:

> Know that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world. … If thou seekest this or that, and wouldst be here or there to enjoy thy own will and pleasure, thou shalt never be quiet nor free from care: for in everything somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee. …Both above and below, which way soever thou dost turn thee, everywhere thou shalt find the Cross: and everywhere of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and enjoy an everlasting crown. (289)

In reading these quotations, and in several more excerpts following them, Maggie believes she finds "a secret of life that would enable her to renounce all other secrets." The text offers a path to peace—through renunciation—that she experiences as "insight, and strength, and conquest" (290). In her hopelessness, however, Maggie does not absorb the text with her usual interpretive freedom. Instead she accepts it as "an

unquestioned message" and uses it, like an instruction manual, to form "plans of self-humiliation and entire devotedness" (290-91). Over the next several years, Maggie lives according to the new philosophy, engaging in plain sewing, dressing in drab colors, and perfecting a posture of submissiveness.

Maggie is not alone in being drawn to and influenced by the *Imitation of Christ.* Written in the Netherlands between 1420 and 1427, the text has been (and continues to be) one of the best-loved and widely read works of devotional literature. The book, whose title was taken from the heading of its first chapter, focuses on communion with God and the pursuit of holiness. It includes four treatises, each with a central theme: the importance of avoiding pride and the vanities of the world, the inner life of a Christian, the spiritual comfort offered to believers, and the benefits of Holy Communion.[21] Although it was intended for circulation in monasteries, the text has been enormously popular since its first printing. In his scholarly introduction to the book, William C. Creasy points out that by the end of the fifteenth century, the *Imitation* had made its way through Europe, being printed in over one hundred editions in five different languages (xiii). By the end of the nineteenth century, that number had exploded into four hundred identified editions (xxi).

Victorian literary luminaries confirm that the book's reach had extended well into England by the nineteenth century. According to Creasy:

> Thomas Carlyle sent a copy to his mother […] with a note saying that "no Book, I believe, except the Bible, has been so universally read and loved by Christians of all tongues and sects." […] Thomas De Quincey praises the *Imitation*'s "slender rivulets of truth silently stealing away into light," and Matthew Arnold

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[21]While the *Imitation of Christ's* title and contents are now standardized, that was not always the case. The most common title in the sixteenth century was *Musica Ecclesiastica*, or *Church Music* (Creasy xxi), and John Wesley's notable eighteenth-century edition (and George Stanhope's before him) was called *The Christian's Pattern*. In addition, not all of the books appear in early versions of the text, and some editions print the treatises in different sequences (Creasy xxi).

> calls it "the most exquisite document, after those of the New Testament, of all the documents the Christian spirit has ever inspired." (xiv-xv)[22]

George Eliot herself, according to her letters and journals, valued the *Imitation of Christ*, reading it three times. She first read the book in 1849 when her father was ill, wavering for months between life and death. Her biographer, George Haight, states that it granted her "spiritual resources" while she watched over her father (66). Around that time, she wrote to her longtime correspondent and friend Sara Hennell about the book: "I have at last the most delightful 'de imitation Christi' with quaint woodcuts. One breathes a cool air as of cloisters in the book—it makes one long to be a saint for a few months" (*Letters* 278). Interestingly, Eliot honors the text as inspiring pious behavior, but she also places boundaries around its influence—noting that she longs to be a saint only "for a few months." Two years later, she read the book again as she was attempting to extricate herself from an illicit romantic relationship with John Chapman—an affair that was complicated by the jealousy and anger of his wife Susanna and his mistress Elisabeth. Eliot even loaned the book to Chapman, who copied a sentence from it into his diary (Haight 91). She returned to the treatise a third time while writing *The Mill on the Floss* in 1859. As Nancy Cervetti has noted, Eliot "closes a journal entry with 'I am reading Thomas à Kempis' on November 18, 1859—she completed the novel the following March" (148-49).

Like Eliot, Maggie also revisits the *Imitation of Christ*. She devours the text on the day she first discovers it, "returning to it after she had been called away, and reading till the sun went down behind the willows" (290). With her characteristic passion, she flings aside her other books and devotes herself entirely to her religious reading,

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[22]William Thackeray, Creasy notes, did not share the other authors' admiration. He stated, "The scheme of that book carried out would make the world the most wretched useless dreary doting place of sojourn . . . a set of selfish beings crawling about avoiding one another, and howling a perpetual miserere" (qtd. in Creasy xvi).

comprised of only three texts: the *Imitation,* the Bible, and John Keble's *The Christian Year,* a collection of poems and hymns (293). These books, which she reads "so eagerly and constantly," fill her mind "with a continual stream of rhythmic memories" (293). Readers later discover that the phrase means both that the texts' ideas course through her thinking and that she literally memorizes their words. While the books' general influence over Maggie suffuses much of the rest of the narrative, the fact that she has memorized her religious texts only becomes apparent in passing moments of temptation. When she feels the pull to scrutinize her face in the looking-glass, remembering how Philip used to appreciate her eyes, she represses the vain desire by "forcing her memory to recall snatches of hymns" (298). When she argues with Stephen about their need to part, she partially quotes a passage from the Apocrypha to explain her desire not to sin, stating, "I couldn't live in peace if I put the shadow of a willful sin between myself and God" (Sirach 20:3).[23] And, at the end of the novel, when Maggie yearns to grant permission to Stephen to rejoin her, she remembers "the words that were marked by the quiet hand in the little old book that she had long ago learned by heart"—a clear reference to her memorization of the *Imitation of Christ* (515).

Although *The Mill on the Floss* does not explain Maggie's philosophy about or approach to memorizing Kempis's work, she may have gleaned that information from her edition of the text itself. In a preface that was printed with John Wesley's eighteenth-century edition of the book called *The Christian's Pattern*—the version that Maggie reads in *The Mill on the Floss*[24]—the author offers advice "concerning the manner of

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[23] I am grateful to Dwight H. Purdy for identifying the source of this quotation (235). He points out that Maggie also quotes from Sirach when trying to prevent her father and Tom from writing a curse in their family Bible.

24 In the Penguin Classics edition of *The Mill on the Floss*, A.S. Byatt states that George Haight included a footnote in Eliot's letters that states, "George Eliot used the Challoner translation but adapted her quotation freely. Her own copy is now in the Coventry and Warwickshire Public Libraries" (574). When I followed her citation to Haight's edition of Eliot's letters, however, I did not find such a claim. (Haight simply cited Eliot's copy as existing "in the

reading this (or any other religious) treatise" (xxii).[25] In order that the text may benefit the soul, the author recommends sitting down to read each day at the same time, approaching the book with pure intentions, and reading "leisurely, seriously and with great attention" (xxii). Beyond reading the text, he also offers advice about learning it by heart, seeing memorization as helping the reader foster a state of mind that corresponds with the text. He states, "Select […] any remarkable sayings or advices, and treasure them up in your memory; and there you may either draw forth in time of need, as arrows from a quiver, against temptation (more especially, against the solicitations to that sin, which most easily besets you) or make use of as incitements to any virtue, to humility, patience or the love of God" (xxiv). The author recommends memorizing not primarily to learn the sentiments expressed in the quotations, but to arm the memorizer for spiritual battle. In imagery that echoes the Ephesians 6 description of the Full Armor of God—in which the Bible is figured as the "sword of the spirit," the only offensive weapon in the list that includes the "belt of truth," the "breastplate of righteousness," and the "shield of faith"—the author of the Preface describes memorizing as providing artillery in a spiritual battle against sin. In this case, memorizing paradoxically serves both a

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Coventry and Warwickshire Collection of the Coventry Public Libraries" [*Letters* 278].) Regardless of its source, I disagree that Eliot used the Challoner translation in *The Mill on the Floss*, instead arguing that she used Wesley's edition. The quotations themselves would be loose indeed if modeled after Challoner's text, but they are nearly perfect replicas of Wesley's translation. The second quotation in the text serves as an example. Eliot's novel states, "If thou seekest this or that and wouldst be here or there to enjoy thy own will and pleasure, thou shalt never be quiet nor free from care: for in everything somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee" (289). Challoner's edition states, with phrases that differ significantly in italics, "If thou seekest this or that, or wouldst be here or there, for the sake of thy own *interest, or the pleasing of thy own will*, thou shalt never be at *rest, nor free from solicitude*: for in every thing *thou wilt find some defect*; and in every place there will be some one that will cross thee" (Kempis, *Imitation* 225). Wesley's edition called *The Christian's Pattern*, on the other hand, corresponds with Eliot's almost word for word.

[25] Wesley's edition indicates that the information in the Preface was drawn from several other sources. It states that the material related to how to read the treatise was taken from "*Praemonitio ad Lectorem,* prefix to that printed at Cologn in the year 1682" (A2). For that reason, I do not refer to the author of that material as Wesley.

defensive and an offensive role: it defends against sin "that besets you" by assaulting it with arrows of quotation. When Shakespeare's Hamlet famously says he will "speak daggers […], but use none" (3.2.342), referring to his plan to impart the painful truth rather than employ a deadly weapon, he fails to see that quotation can execute (pun intended!) both functions.

By the nineteenth century, these eighteenth-century recommendations had become part of a pervasive and passionate discourse about reading and education—in which the Bible and religious texts often played central roles. In his now-classic *The English Common Reader,* Richard Altick tracks the period's changing literacy rates and reading practices. He notes that as the population grew, doubling in the first half of the nineteenth century (81), and as primary education became more widespread, finally becoming available to the working classes in the early part of the century (141), the reading public multiplied in the nineteenth century. This transformation in reading audiences was accompanied by a shift in cultural attitudes, influenced, in large part, by evangelical Christians.[26] Because they believed in "the supreme importance of Scripture," evangelicals emphasized reading as a spiritual necessity (Altick 99). Their reading advocacy was conflicted, though: although they published an astounding number of tracts and other religious texts to encourage reading, they also distrusted imaginative literature—a genre they believed, according to Altick, "could prove a snare of the devil" (109). As evidence, evangelicals pointed out that imaginative literature obscured the realities of life, celebrated moral degradation, overexcited the sensibilities, and appealed to vulnerable youth (111-12). Consequently, they recommended avoiding the genre, instead making Scripture and religious texts the staples of a daily reading diet.

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[26] The other group, according to Altick, that influenced reading attitudes and practices was utilitarians. Although secular, they valued the spread of "useful knowledge," which often had them working towards the same ends as evangelicals (130-31).

Evangelicals valued the Bible so highly, in fact, that they did not simply read it; they also committed its words to memory. Maurice J. Quinlan states:

> At no time, either before or since, has the Bible been so familiar to English-speaking people as it was during the nineteenth century. Hardly a dwelling in England or the United States was without a copy. Read and reread, it influenced the speech of two nations and the style of scores of writers. No matter what their estate, people could quote long passages from Scripture and identify references by chapter and verse. (183)

The practice of memorization was so common that some evangelicals edited entire anthologies of selections to learn by heart. William Freeman Lloyd, for example, who taught at Oxford and London before joining the Committee of the Religious Tract Society—a major British publisher of Christian (and primarily evangelical) material—was "zealously devoted to the Sunday-School cause," according to the *Jubilee Memorial of the Religious Tract Society*. Motivated by his desire to secure "a suitable supply of religious books for the vast multitude who were taught to read" (92), Lloyd wrote and edited many tracts and conducted one of the Society's periodicals. In addition, he edited two volumes of religious texts for young people to memorize: *A Catechism on the Evidences of the Bible: In Easy Rhyme: Intended for the Young to Commit to Memory* (1829) and *Scripture Selections for the Young to Commit to Memory: With Brief Explanatory Notes* (n.d.).

The evangelical focus on reading and memorization extended even to authors and texts that did not fit squarely in that tradition. The Rev. James Pycroft, for example, who has a *Dictionary of National Biography* entry for his books on cricket, which include *Principles of Scientific Batting* (1835)[27], also wrote *A Course of English Reading: Adapted to Every Taste and Capacity* (1845). The book offers reading instructions intended to increase the knowledge, entertainment, and reflection in "literary young

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[27] The DNB entry by Howat adds, "This contained a formal set of rules on how to bat, together with some dietary advice for cricketers: 'Ale and porter render the eye dull.'"

ladies and literary young gentlemen" (3). Pycroft's plan details how to study history, philosophy, the fine arts, poetry, and natural philosophy—as well as the Bible. Under the heading "The Way to Study the Scriptures," he offers a range of detailed advice, including what texts to consult (the Bible, then commentaries and other texts), what kind of Bible to read (a small one), and how exactly to approach the text ("with pen in hand" in order to mark verses that fall into certain categories). Most notably, Pycroft recommends memorizing the Bible, issuing the directive, "Learn by heart one verse of the Bible every day"—a suggestion he does not offer for any other text in his manual (52). From his perspective, the memorization should be a structured activity: at the start of each month, a reader should select thirty or thirty-one verses to memorize. A delinquent memorizer cannot make up a missed day, but should experience the disparity between the days of the year and the numbers of verses memorized as a "punishment" (52). Although Pycroft proposes this method to cultivate literary taste[28] and prompt knowledge of Scripture, he implicitly suggests that his method will train the reader into a disciplined person. He emphasizes the qualities that such a task requires and fosters: "self-command," "constancy," "perseverance," "regularity," and "uninterrupted habit" (52). In fact, he says nothing about what qualities the textual content will promote, but much about what the act of memorization will cultivate, suggesting that the action is more important than its substance.

Further insights about the motivations for memorizing Scripture can be found in T.S. Arthur's *The Young Governess,* a work of fiction serialized in the *Lady's Home Magazine of Literature, Art, and Fashion* (of which Arthur was the editor). In the March 1858 installment, the eponymous governess, Florence Harper, offers to tell her young pupil, Maddy, a story from the Bible. The child, although desiring to hear a story, turns

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[28] Pycroft cites Wordsworth, Mrs. Hemans, and Coleridge as examples of authors who value the words of Scripture for their literary qualities (52).

her head and covers her ears rather than listen to one from the Bible, an action that distresses Florence. The governess instead tells the child a parable about a young girl named Amy, who, from the time she was born, was watched over by both an angel and a fiend. The two vie for power over the young child, with the good or bad spirit drawing closest to Amy as she displays corresponding thoughts and affections. When the young girl's mother reads to her from the Bible, both the angel and the evil spirit approach, but with entirely different postures—the former with "tender interest, and holy love" and the latter with "anger, hate, and fierce determination." Florence explains that both spirits know that a great deal depends upon the stories and precepts that Amy may learn: "Every sentence from the holy Book that enter[s] the child's mind, and fixe[s] itself in her memory" would join her to heaven and give her power over darkness (149). In this moment, good triumphs, since Amy listens carefully to the story. As she continues to grow, the evil spirit occasionally gains the greater influence, but each time the angel eventually subdues the fiend because she has "a dwelling place in the child's mind" (150). That dwelling place, Florence dramatically concludes, is constructed by the "words of truth [Amy] had learned from the Bible." She further explains:

> Angels were […] present with her, and present in power, for in her memory they found passages from the word of God, and they abode in them with all their protecting influence, and helped her to fight the enemies of her soul, even to their final overthrow. I very much fear, that if her mother had not filled her memory with stories and precepts from the Book of Books, these evil assailants from hell would have overcome in her great life-battle. (150).

Like the preface published with Wesley's edition of the *Imitation,* this story also figures memorized verses as spiritual artillery. And, at first, the verses seem to be aimed at similar contacts: "temptation" and "that sin, which so easily besets you" in the former case, and "enemies of the soul" in this example. While these opponents are exterior to the person they harass, this story portrays "the enemies of the soul" as internal influences too, both by figuring the spirit as potentially dwelling inside Amy and forming her character, and in conjuring the traditional shoulder angel/demon plot device to represent

an inner conflict. Memorized selections, therefore, can be understood as battling with—and for—the self. As a person grows into adulthood and into his or her own identity, quotations have the power to oust immoral inclinations while creating space in the mind for more positive character influences. In this story, Amy becomes a woman who meets the world's "cares, trials, crosses and temptations"—a person who properly reflects the kind of information she stores in her mind (150).

These features of religious memorization—both its representation as a spiritual weapon and its power to influence identity—find parallels in *The Mill on the Floss,* illuminating an understanding of Maggie's memorization. Even the warring angel and demon imagery reemerge in Eliot's novel: when Maggie memorizes the *Imitation of Christ,* she too becomes the site of dueling spirits. Their first appearance occurs after Maggie has learned and practiced Kempis's path of renunciation for several years. She reencounters Philip Wakem, a childhood friend and son of the lawyer who had opposed her family in the devastating lawsuit. Philip desires to form a secret relationship with Maggie—an action that her begrudged father and brother would consider a grave betrayal. As Philip proposes meeting in the secluded Red Deeps, Maggie experiences the struggle as battling voices, but their identities are much hazier than *The Young Governess*'s "angel" and "evil spirit." The first voice who speaks "[makes] sweet music" by suggesting that meeting with Philip might help him find contentment. The other voice, "which she had been learning to obey," immediately responds, offering "an urgent monotonous warning" that meeting would involve keeping painful and regrettable secrets. The sweet voice counters again, this time "like chimes borne onward by a recurrent breeze, persuading her that the wrong lay all in the faults and weaknesses of others, and that there was such a thing as futile sacrifice for one to the injury of others" (304). Feeling paralyzed by the arguments—both of which identify the "good" in each option—Maggie delays making a verdict until her decision becomes clearer. As the novel continues, this one specific conflict multiplies, so that she begins to constantly

experience inner warring. The narrator states that Maggie's life struggles are primarily ones of her inner soul, with "one shadowy army fighting another, and the slain shadows for ever rising again" (308). And, in the book's final scene, Maggie—now ostracized from her community—battles "with the old shadowy enemies that were for ever slain and rising again" (511). The fact that the text associates one of the clashing voices with Kempis, identifying it as one "she had been learning to obey," clarifies that Maggie's quotations contribute to her inner conflict.

The disputing forces do not only materialize in moments of difficult decisions. They begin to have a larger influence over Maggie's subjectivity, as she and those who know her best begin to notice her stifled self. Philip first sees the transformation. Because of her renunciation, he believes Maggie "benumb[s] and cramp[s]" her nature. He warns her that such activity weakens her character, and that her repressed nature will someday "assault [her] like a savage appetite." In pursuing one kind of self, Philip believes Maggie suppresses another, calling it a "long suicide" (329). Later he describes her renunciation in even more vivid terms, telling her that attempting to escape from pain leads inexorably to "perverting or mutilating one's nature" (413). Philip's language of violence and distortion suggests a drastically different process of religious identity formation than the one suggested in the *Young Governess.* Instead of a good angel moving into an empty mental space created by biblical quotations, he describes a brutal presence who attempts to overthrow the existing self by attacking and disfiguring it with quotations. The split that Philip identifies in Maggie takes on ironic undertones, as the more spiritual voice she hears—the one who resembles Kempis's teachings—cautions Maggie against "doubleness," seeing it as a "spiritual blight" (304). While in its context "doubleness" refers to dishonesty and hypocrisy, the warning points to the paradoxical nature of Maggie's project. Avoiding doubleness, when basing one's identity on the recommendations of another voice, is impossible.

This contradiction is one of many that distinguishes Maggie's memorization from Matilda's. In the previous chapter, I argued that memorized texts have the dangerous potential to overtake a young woman's identity, due to forms of rote learning and existing theories of the mind in the nineteenth century that correlated identity with memory. While those factors may contribute to Maggie's transformation, they do not fully explain her textual choices or their effect on her embattled self. The Christian texts and contexts, I argue, remain central to Maggie's experience of learning by heart—which both clarifies and complicates an understanding of her memorization. While Christian recommendations more overtly declare quotation's character-forming potential than secular ones, religious memorization also offers several paradoxes: although promising to free the self, it requires submissive self-renunciation; while assuring the formation of a new identity, it questions the authenticity of that self, and even though memorizing pledges intimacy with Christ, it does so through quotations that are distanced from Christ himself. In fact, Maggie's decision to memorize *Imitation of Christ* is particularly interesting because of that text's multiple layers of citation: the very title calls for replication; the book is actually a collection of quotations; and debates about the true authorship of the text had been raging for many years. Thus, in battling with the words of the *Imitation of Christ,* Maggie reveals the challenge anyone faces in drawing close to a God who reveals himself through always-mediated words. The layers that result create collapsible scaffolding upon which to build a sense of self.

Be Imitators of Me, as I Am of Christ[29]

In the context of advice about learning religious texts by heart, Maggie's decision to memorize the *Imitation of Christ* at first seems off the mark. With so much emphasis

[29] In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul writes to the church in Corinth—a group that was notorious for its divisions, erroneous views, and sexual immorality—"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

placed on memorizing the Bible, Maggie appears to have chosen the *wrong* text, much like Matilda does in memorizing Dante instead of Milton. The *Imitation of Christ,* however, is not as different from the Bible as it first seems. In fact, several authors note, with awe, the number of biblical allusions and quotations it contains.[30] L.A. Wheatley, for example, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, cites scriptural quotation as "another attraction" of the book (3). He explains, "From having written out the Bible, and carefully studied it in his cell, the mind of the author was so pervaded with Scripture, that passages from the Old and New Testaments constantly occur to him as suitable to his purpose, and their appropriateness gives a charm to the work" (3-4). Creasy, in the introduction to his contemporary edition, agrees and elaborates. He notes that the text's preponderance of quotation originates in the monks' lifetime observance of *lectio divina*, a practice of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. Because Kempis, like all monks, was "steeped in Scripture," Creasy asserts, "It is difficult to tell where Thomas starts and Scripture stops: God's Word became his word" (159).

In spite of the Bible's frequent appearance in the *Imitation,* Kempis's treatise varies considerably from Christianity's most holy text in other significant ways, and Maggie's decision to memorize it foregrounds problems intrinsic to religious quotation. Initially Maggie's choice to learn Kempis's book by heart—although her practice of memorization is never overtly described—appears to emphasize the formation of a desirable Christian identity, since its title asks readers to model their behavior after Christ's. In fact, the *Imitation of Christ* has become representative of "imitation spirituality," an approach to Christian faith in which believers attempt to unify their Christian identities with their notions of Christ's identity (Callahan 266).[31] Imitation

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[30] Creasy's edition of the book concludes with an eight-page appendix of "Scriptural References and Allusions," with many (if not most) chapters having a dozen or more references.

[31] Although Thomas à Kempis has been most closely associated with the idea of imitating Christ, theologians point out that imitation spirituality has been a pattern in Christian

spirituality is based on Bible verses that command likeness to God on the behalf of the believers. Matthew 5:48, for example, states, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," and Philippians 2:5 declares, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Advocates of imitation spirituality also point out that the Bible encourages God's followers, in both the Old and New Testaments, to be holy and pure like God (Lev. 19:2, 1 John 3:3), and to take on both "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16) and "the spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9).[32] The idea of imitating Christ has become so commonplace that WWJD—a motto that stands for "What Would Jesus Do?"—became popular in the 1890s as well as the 1990s. James Callahan exhorts fellow believers to recognize its significance: "We should not neglect the power of this sentiment, this vision. Imitation and flattery are wedded, and the imitation of Jesus the Savior embodies our highest aspirations to be like him in glory and our deepest emotions to be unlike ourselves in sin" (269). While Callahan presents imitation spirituality as a noble endeavor, his language hints at the challenges it poses. To think and behave like Jesus requires becoming "unlike ourselves"—suggesting that it is impossible to form one self without first abandoning another. And, if the self that is taking shape is an "imitation"—with all of that word's connotations of counterfeiting—it challenges the

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ethics for much longer. R.E.O. White, for example, in *Christian Ethics: The Historical Development* sees "the profound and complex notion of the imitation of Christ" as central to Christian ethics—the study of how to act according to Christian principles—throughout the centuries (11). This concept was present in the New Testament, he argues, and became a pattern in Christian thinkers such as Erasmus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, among others. In fact, he argues that the imitation of Christ has remained the one constant in Christian morality in twenty centuries (369). In her article, Nandry Perry also traces ideas of imitation to theories of rhetoric by Aristotle, Horatio, and Erasmus.

32 Additional verses that are frequently cited include the following. Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Ephesians 4:24: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." 2 Cor. 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

authenticity of that new identity. How can an identity be personal and unique if it is founded upon another person's beliefs and behaviors?

These complications are only intensified by Maggie's decision to memorize—a literal form of replication—the *Imitation of Christ*. Although the book's title calls for "imitation," interpretations of that practice vary considerably, posing problems for Christian theologians and practitioners alike. As theologians have noted, because "imitation" is an ambiguous term, it is not always clear which qualities of Christ to imitate. Interpretations have ranged from Christians who have attempted to duplicate Jesus's outward sayings and behaviors literally to others who have endeavored to emulate Christ's inner sacred mindset more abstractly. Although Kempis remains chiefly concerned with having an inner experience of Christ, which he suggests will help Christians foster a disposition marked by Christ's joy and peace, critics of imitation spirituality frequently emphasize the first proclivity. They suggest that the philosophy can easily cause Christians to make Christ too familiar, focus on superficial similarities, and ignore historical and cultural contexts. R.E.O. White emphatically points out that the "citation of words and deeds of Jesus, as a preformulated prescription for all situations and problems—quite simply—*has not been the classic understanding of imitation Christi"* (374, original emphasis). Maggie, in memorizing the *Imitation,* draws attention to the title's interpretive complexity between inward emulation and outward repetition, and then takes it one step further. She not only reforms her behavior to line up with the text, but she literally copies its words. She takes the duplication approach—the "citation of words and deeds of Jesus"—to its most logical and literal end. Maggie copies Christ verbatim.

Yet she also unintentionally imitates Christ at a remove. While the *Imitation of Christ* promises nearness to God, Maggie's quoting of the text actually distances her from him, since she quotes another book rather than the Bible—God's Word—itself. Although Kempis's text contains a staggering number of scriptural quotations, those passages are

not always identified as such. Unless readers know the Bible well enough to spot the allusions, or have a copy of the *Imitation* with footnotes or appendices that identify the references, they do not always know whether the words of the text are Kempis's or Christ's.[33] To add to the confusion, Kempis does not just incorporate the Bible in his text; according to Hal M. Helms, he also includes allusions or quotations from "St. Augustine, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, St. Gregory the Great, and even from such classical authors as Aristotle, Ovid, and Seneca" (xvii). As Creasy states, "Thomas à Kempis writes as though he had […] an index to the Church Fathers at his elbow" (xxxix). Therefore, in imitating Christ, Maggie also replicates the words of half a dozen saints and a trio of philosophers. These details point to a dilemma in scriptural memorization more broadly. Even if Maggie had been repeating the Bible's text, she may not have gotten any closer to God's actual words. As Walter J. Ong reveals:

> The history of the biblical text is intricate beyond belief, since the Bible often incorporates into itself lengthy passages that were previously pretty well shaped up elsewhere either by formalized oral tradition or in writing. At what point such preexisting portions become the word of God is not easy for the most adept theologians to say. […] Modern scholarship has uncovered not only the complications of the textual history of the Bible but also the intricate and frequently very sophisticated oral substratum, often a formal catechesis, passed on from generation to generation. ("The Word" 20)

In choosing to emulate Christ by memorizing the *Imitation of Christ*—with its layers of citation that resist pinpointing any words as originating from God himself—Maggie's experience highlights a difficulty with religious quotation in general. Even if believers

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[33] *The Mill on the* Floss suggests that Maggie would have been an undiscerning reader of Christian texts at the time she encountered the *Imitation of Christ*. Although as a child she knows the Old Testament story of Jael destroying Sisera, she uses it as a model for her own practice of driving nails into the head of her Fetish (28)—an unconventional application at best. And, her family environment was one marked by "a belief in the Unseen […] rather of a pagan kind" rather than "a distinctively Christian creed" (272).

quote words from the Bible, they can never ultimately trace those words, with certainty, to God himself. While Ong uses the idiom "beyond belief" to emphasize the extremely intricate history of the Bible's words, the phrase's more literal meaning applies here as well. Not being able to trace texts to their source challenges belief in the sacredness of the Bible and of the God it describes. While imitation promises closeness to God, that intimacy may be a façade.

The layers of mediation Maggie encounters in trying to locate God through memorizing the devotional text—she quotes Kempis, who quotes church Fathers, who quote the Bible, which quotes oral tradition—are extended even further by debates about the *Imitation of Christ*'s author. For even the identity of Kempis, the one identified figure in the string of unnamed sources, is uncertain. By the nineteenth century, people had been disputing whether he was the true author of the *Imitation of Christ* for centuries. The primary question was whether Kempis wrote the book or served as its copyist. People on all sides of the issue agreed that Kempis, who had been a monk in the Brothers of Common Life since he was around twenty years old, was a prolific writer and copyist. In his 92 years of life, Kempis wrote many treatises, hymns, sermons, and historical works, and he copied two Bibles (each in ten volumes) and several missals and choir books (Creasy xx). The four *Imitation* treatises, which were bound with nine other works in a handwritten manuscript, ends by stating it was finished "*per manus fratris thome kempis*"—"by the hand of Brother Thomas of Kampen" (xx). This statement, according to Creasy, "causes all the problems: did Thomas write the *Imitation* or did he simply copy it?" (xx).[34] Although a dozen men have been historically linked to the *Imitation,* four have attracted the most attention: Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris; Giovanni Gersen, a man thought to be a thirteenth-century abbot of the Santo Stefano

[34] It should be noted, though, that "Thomas never claimed authorship for any of his works, including the *Imitation*" (Creasy xx).

monastery in northern Italy; Gerard Groote, the founder of the Brothers of the Common Life; and Thomas à Kempis.[35]

In the decade preceding *The Mill on the Floss*'s publication, the debate was still raging. Several nineteenth-century periodicals included articles about the dispute, writing about it as though it was common knowledge. The September 1852 issue of the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, for example, includes an article called "Thomas à Kempis" that states, "As many of our readers well know, the authorship of the famous work commonly ascribed to Thomas à Kempis, *De Imitatione Christi*, has been disputed for nearly four centuries," adding that "a small library has been written on the theme." Because "the controversy was one of dates and names" (879), the article announces that an earlier manuscript attributed to Kempis has been discovered, which it claims will "set a long-agitated literary question at rest" (878).[36] That, however, was not the case. Less than three years later, the *Literary Gazette* published a brief notice in the May 12, 1855 issue about the controversy, positioned as a response to Mr. Disraeli, who had recently

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[35] According to Creasy, the arguments historically often had nationalistic undertones, with "the French backing Frenchmen, the Italians backing Italians, and so on" (xvi-xvii). In brief, the argument for Jean Gerson centers on his name appearing in a 1483 Venetian edition of the text. The problem, however, is that various people in the period (including Gerson himself) made a list of his works, and the *Imitation* was not on it. As Creasy states, "Surely, if Gerson had written the *Imitation,* he would have mentioned it to someone" (xviii). Proponents of Giovanni Gersen base their theory on a manuscript found in Italy inscribed with the name of Gersen, who they speculate was abbot of the Santo Stefano monastery during a period in which a gap exists in extant records. Critics remain unconvinced that such a man even existed (arguing that "Gersen" was simply a misspelling of "Gerson," the chancellor of Paris) and, if he did, that he wrote the text a century and a half before the earliest existing manuscripts (Post 530-31). The theory about Gerard Groote, the founder of the Brothers of the Common Life, is that he wrote the manuscript with Kempis giving the text "finishing touches," which is how he became known as the writer (Creasy xviii). This theory has holes, too, and according to Creasy, most scholars today consider Kempis the author (xix).

[36] This article was reprinted on both sides of the Atlantic. It seems to have appeared first in American magazines: *Littell's Living Age* and the *Methodist Quarterly Review* include it in their July 1852 issues. The American journals indicate that the information about the earlier manuscript was first made public in the *Journal des Débats* ("Journal of Debates"), a French newspaper.

asked in the House of Commons, "Who is Thomas à Kempis?" The article responds, "Thomas à Kempis, whoever he was, was *not* the author of the famous 'Imitation of Jesus Christ'" (original emphasis). Although the text had been ascribed to him, the article asserts that "it has now been ascertained, beyond all reasonable doubt, that he only put his name to it as copyist, not as author" ("Varieties," 302). The brief article does not explain exactly what evidence has removed the uncertainty about Kempis, but it does contend that the true author was [Jean] Gerson. Together, these periodical accounts suggest not only that debates about the *Imitation of Christ*'s author were public knowledge, but also that they were unresolved at the time that *The Mill on the Floss* was published. Therefore, while Maggie cannot track Christ's alleged words to their origin, neither can she trace the identity of the *Imitation*'s author—which casts further doubt on the words' reliability, and, consequently, on her mimicking of them.

In attempting to locate "the source of all strength" (290), everything Maggie finds is derivative. In her efforts to emulate Christ, she only succeeds in repeating the words of an unknown man from the fifteenth century. Instead of obscuring the slippage between imitation and duplication and between a source and an antecedent, the *Imitation of Christ* instead highlights its call for and participation in indefinite replication. Maggie's choice of that text, then, draws significant attention to quotation in ways that extend beyond her actual repetition of its words. According to Edward Said, this emphasis is significant, because "the more writing appears to be quotation, the more writing thinks of itself as, in some cases even proclaims itself, rewriting. The utterance sounds like—perhaps even is—borrowing from someone else" (22). Religious texts are particularly susceptible to this difficulty; Said notes that prophecy—referring to any divinely inspired utterance—"is a type of language around which this issue of originality perpetually lurks in many forms: Is the prophecy absolutely authentic and original? Does it speak *to* all men at a common level, or only *for* one, too original (i.e., alienated) man (the 'prophet')?" (22, original emphasis). In Maggie's case, the questions of authenticity probe even deeper.

As rewriting, Kempis's text reveals itself as secondhand and unoriginal—which has implications for an identity formed upon its words. Its layers of citation, and its consequent self-consciousness as a copied text, offer a constant reminder that Maggie's speech, and therefore her identity, are borrowed from someone else. But, since the origins of the *Imitation*'s words and author remain obscure, the text suspends true citation. It suggests that while Maggie can successfully imitate, she will not know *what* she is ultimately replicating, and therefore *who* she really is.

The Voice of the Lord Is Powerful[37]

When Maggie actually encounters Kempis's text, she does not initially experience the *Imitation*'s aforementioned threatening possibilities. In fact, she believes the book offers her a beautiful vision of her life and of the future, revealed through the narrator's free indirect discourse: "here was a sublime height to be reached without the help of outward things—here was insight, and strength, and conquest" (290). Upon reading the *Imitation*'s words, Maggie recognizes that her unhappiness thus far has sprung from her own selfishness, and that by instead viewing her life as "an insignificant part of a divinely-guided whole," she can locate peace and contentment (290). The narrator uses rapturous and even erotic terms to aid readers in understanding the significance of the revelation to Maggie: she is "panting for happiness" when she approaches the text, "in the ardour of first discovery" when she initially reads it, and "in ecstasy [afterwards] because she had found the key" (291). Although she does not understand that the path of renunciation still will require her to embrace sorrow—just "a sorrow borne willingly"—she still experiences the text as a miracle that turns "bitter waters into sweetness" (291).

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[37] Psalm 29:4 states, "The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty."

The *Mill*'s manner of incorporating the *Imitation,* however, mirrors and foreshadows the devotional text's later overwhelming effect on Maggie. The novel's narrator does not merely inform the reader that Maggie reads the devotional text. Instead, the narrator quotes Kempis at length, taking a back seat to the devotional treatise, so that the reader encounters the interpolated text along with Maggie. Practically speaking, this means that six quotations from the *Imitation of Christ,* amounting to almost a page of text, interrupt the novel. Then, after a return to narration for only two sentences, the text incorporates another series of four additional quotes from Kempis, this time amounting to about half a page. Therefore, the reader experiences the *Imitation of Christ,* almost without interruption, for a page and a half. Instead of simply allowing the reader to sample the text that influences Maggie so strongly, this unusual and lengthy interruption communicates the narrator's surrender to the other text, in renouncing, as Neil Hertz states, "his [or her] own primacy" (67). This moment of textual encounter, then, conveys important information about the power dynamics at play in the scene—revealed at the level of style and syntax rather than theme. By its appearance on the page, the text divulges the authority of the *Imitation,* of which even Maggie herself remains unconscious.

In his article "Quoting Poetry," William Flesch expands upon the conflicts that occur when one text is quoted within another, which further clarifies the significance of *The Mill*'s manner of incorporating the *Imitation.* He argues that when poetic quotations appear in new contexts and rhyme schemes—which create new enjambments, stresses, and rhyming patterns—they can take on different meanings. Although his analysis centers on poetry, Flesch's conclusions pertain to prose and fiction because of the way he ties this practice to power. He argues that a quotation has two possible relationships with authority: it either exists under the mastery of the author (and therefore conforms to the surrounding material), or it overwhelms the newer text's formal features (and the text conforms to it). Flesch states, "The question will always be which is to be master, the

quoted words or the quoting context?" (50). At the point when the *Imitation* meets *The Mill on the Floss*, the clash is an unambiguous one: in the conflict between the quoting words and the quoting context, the quoting words clearly dominate—so much so that the narrator can barely fit a word in edgewise. This narrative surrender points to the larger effect of Kempis's texts upon Maggie: as the *Imitation* begins to creep into the novel's narration, so too does its philosophy of renunciation and self-degradation begin to engulf Maggie's sense of herself.

The power of Kempis's text that *The Mill on the Floss* animates visibly on its own pages also emerges through the novel's account of Maggie's reading experience. As she encounters the *Imitation of Christ,* her way of perceiving the text changes from words she reads to a voice that speaks to her. Maggie begins by reading Kempis silently, taking up "the little, old, clumsy book" and "[turning] from leaf to leaf" (289). Specifically, she is directed to read certain passages by the previous owner's marginalia; she notices that "some hand" had marked specific passages with "strong pen-and-ink marks" that had darkened with the passage of time (289). The synecdoche that the narrator uses to describe the previous owner—"hand," emphasizing the visual—transitions to a "voice," stressing the aural, after the first long quoted passage from Kempis. The narrator describes the shift: "She went on from one brown mark to another, where the quiet hand seemed to point, hardly conscious that she was reading—seeming rather to listen while a low voice" spoke to her (289-90). This change persists after the second passage from the *Imitation*. The narrator continues to speak of Maggie as influenced by a voice rather than a text, but the voice of the marginalia writer has now become conflated with the voice of Kempis. The text states that "this voice out of the far-off middle ages […] came to Maggie as an unquestioned message," and it describes the book's universal appeal and influence as emanating from "the voice of a brother who, ages ago, felt and suffered and renounced" (291). In both references, the narrator associates the "voice" with its power

to transform the reader—providing another cue that the shift from hand to voice marks the text's increasing dominance over Maggie.

The context of this movement adds to its significance, as voices carry great authority within the *Imitation of Christ* and within Christianity more broadly. The third treatise of Kempis's text—the treatise from which Eliot quotes seven of ten times—is written as a series of dialogues between an idealized believer and Christ. As Nandra Perry has noted, Christ is imagined in the text "primarily as a voice whose call elicits a particular response from the true Christian" (382), leading her to assert that "the text of the *Imitatio Christi* is less about imitating the person of Christ than about internalizing a disembodied 'voice'" (381). When he "speaks" in the *Imitation of Christ*, Jesus frequently encourages the disciple to listen to him closely, and the disciple frequently expresses his desire to remain attuned to Christ's voice. For example, in the first chapter of Book 3, the disciple states (using words that Eliot quotes and Maggie reads in *The Mill*), "Blessed are those ears that receive the whispers of the divine voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world. Blessed are those ears which hearken not unto the voice which soundeth outwardly, but unto the Truth, which teacheth inwardly" (qtd. in Eliot 289). Therefore, as Maggie hears the voice of the monk Kempis, she also hears the words of Christ as Kempis imagines them, or quotes them, from the Bible. Consequently, as Maggie converts from the visual to the aural—from reading a text to listening to "a low voice"—the *Imitation of Christ* begins to take on scriptural significance. Moreover, when voices are considered in the biblical context, they carry even more weight. Walter J. Ong, for example, has examined the significance of the "word of God" in the Hebrew and Christian tradition, noting that Christians have "a special rapport with sound, for he who is manifest [Jesus] is the Word" ("The Word" 21). In addition to referring to Christ, Ong points out that the "word of God" carries many meanings, encompassing references to the exercise of divine power, God's communication to humans, God's utterances through prophets, the messages Christians

hear in sermons, and the original texts of the Bible (19-20). Regardless of its specific meaning, he notes that the presence of God's spoken word carries connotations of being "effective, real, powerful, eventful." He adds, "For truly conceived as sound, word, like all sound, signals the present use of power" (22). Maggie's experience of the text as a voice, therefore, serves as another clue that the textual "secret of life" that she believes she discovers will demand its supremacy over her. When it appears in the *Mill,* the *Imitation* twice overtakes the page—first by swallowing up the novel's narration, and then by erupting out of Maggie's "little, old, clumsy book" as a powerful voice (289).

In addition to conveying its influence, the "voice" of the *Imitation* serves as another link between the text and Maggie's identity. This connection, which will become clear shortly, happens by way of Christian typology. According to George Landow in *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows,* typology was a popular approach to reading the Bible in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century (although it originated much earlier). As a form of biblical interpretation, typology attempted to "discover divinely intended anticipations of Christ and His dispensation in the laws, events, and people of the Old Testament" (3). In paying attention to patterns or repetitions in Scripture, typology linked people, times, and events, considering the second as fulfilling or completing the first (5). For example, Samson is a type of Christ because of his sacrificial death for God's people, and the animals offered in the Temple also prefigure Christ because they atoned for human sins (22). According to Landow, one of the purposes of typology was "to demonstrate the way all sacred history centers upon Christ" (25).

This way of reading did not just influence an understanding of Scripture; it also shaped histories of people. Biblical typologists asserted that while types pointed to Christ as the main spiritual fulfillment (or "antitype"), types can have other fulfillments as well, particularly in individual believers. These Victorian preachers, according to Landow, "widen[ed] the application of the individual type" by uniting principles of typology with

"the notion that the believer must make himself into an imitation of Christ" (49). In other words, since believers were to shape themselves into models of Christ, these preachers argued that types pointing to Christ also point to his followers as well. In *The Victorian Self,* Heather Henderson explores the effect of that belief on nineteenth-century autobiographical writing (both non-fiction and fiction), which she argues was "particularly suited to explore and to exploit typological possibilities, for the story of the individual's life may be shaped to emphasize parallels with biblical events" (8). She points out that in the first (and prototypical) Christian autobiography, St. Augustine described his conversion experience in a way that evoked Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus—which became a standard trope for later autobiographers. And, Henderson identifies several other biblical motifs that predominate in these life writings, such as "Edenic childhoods and lost Edens, fall and exile, journey or pilgrimage, crisis, conversion, renewal and return" (9). Typology, therefore, came to provide structural patterns that guided other narratives as well, which then influenced understandings of individual lives and their broader historical contexts.

Like most Victorians, George Eliot was aware of and conversant in biblical typology. Landow admiringly acknowledges, for example, Eliot's sophisticated use of typology in *Scenes of Clerical Life* (99-103). Scholars, however, have not noted her employment of typology in *The Mill on the Floss*—despite critical consensus that it is her most autobiographical novel. Eliot nods to biblical typology in several ways. She divides the novel into seven books whose titles coincide with Henderson's list of biblical motifs, which progress from Edenic childhood, to fall, to journey, to renewal: "Boy and Girl," "School-Time," "The Downfall," "The Valley of Humiliation," "Wheat and Tares,"[38] "The Great Temptation," and "The Final Rescue." Maggie and her story are

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[38] "Wheat and Tares" refers to the parable told in Matthew 13: 24-30 (also sometimes called "The Parable of the Weeds"). The story describes a man who sows good seed in his field, which becomes infiltrated by weeds that his enemy planted. It concludes by stating that the

also aligned with several biblical narratives. In addition to the story of David, Saul, and Jonathan evoked by the epigraph, Dwight Purdy points out similarities between Maggie and the Prodigal Son, noting that she identifies with him when she sees a representation of him at Luke's house, and she returns home twice after shamefully running away—once to the gypsies and another time with Stephen (236-38). And then—to return to the significance of voices, which initiated this journey into typology—Maggie's experience hearing the *Imitation* aligns her with Saul and his conversion. In Acts 9, a bright and blinding light stops Saul, a man infamous for his persecution of Christians, on the road to Damascus. He then hears a voice asking, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Acts 9: 4). After moving to the city and remaining blind for three days, Saul receives a vision that a man named Ananias would visit him to restore his sight. When this occurs, "something like scales [falls] from Saul's eyes" (Acts 9:18), whereupon he is no longer physically or spiritually blind, later becoming one of Christ's most effective missionaries. Maggie's conversion moment carries echoes of this story: she too experiences God's words as a disembodied, powerful voice, and the description of her response to the text is infused with metaphors of light and sight. Immediately after finishing, for example, Maggie "[pushes] her heavy hair back, as if to see a sudden vision more clearly," and the insights she receives "[flash] through her" (290). Finally, and most obviously, several critics have noted the correspondences between Maggie and Christ, particularly in the novel's closing scene of her sacrificial death.

In each of these cases, though, Maggie evokes the earlier biblical types without fully corresponding to them. Akin to the uneasy parallel explored earlier between Maggie and the figures of David, Saul, and Jonathan, Purdy argues that the relationship between the Parable of the Prodigal Son and Maggie's story is both "fitting and

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farmer will allow the wheat and the weeds to grow together until harvest, when he will gather the wheat in his barn but burn the weeds.

misfitting" (238). Although Maggie leaves and returns home repentant, Purdy argues, "Unlike the world of the parable, with its clear distinction between sinner and saved, the world of St. Oggs makes salvation problematic at best, and forgiveness comes only with death" (238). And, while Maggie experiences a drastic and profound conversion similar to the one undergone by the persecutor Saul (who becomes the missionary Paul), Maggie has no such powerful trajectory available to her. As a reformed woman, she is not able to travel as Christ's ambassador, preaching in open squares and converting legions of followers; instead, she can merely dress plainly, sew quietly, and answer submissively. Lastly, the question of whether Maggie's death echoes Christ's as a moment of redemption or simply represents a dismal tragedy has led to some of the most heated and divergent scholarly debate about the novel. These dissimilarities—which are in many ways more interesting than the correspondences—reveal Maggie's inability to fit the narrative models that she has available to her. In addition to the myriad reasons that memorizing the *Imitation* frustrates the formation of her identity, the biblical types hinder her, too, both because they only grant her distinctiveness to the extent that she fits a previous model and because she fails to match up even to those patterns.

Maggie's response to *Corinne,* a book by Madame de Staël that Philip shares with her, reveals just how isolated this problem is to religious texts. In the secular novel, the dark-haired heroine, Corinne, is abandoned by her suitor, Lord Nevil, when he falls in love with and marries her blonde half-sister Lucy, breaking her heart. After reading part of this book, Maggie abruptly returns it to Philip, saying, "Take back your *Corinne*. […] You were wrong in thinking I should wish to be like her." She admits that she did not finish the book, closing it when she reached the part where she encountered "a blond-haired young lady reading in the park." She adds:

> I foresaw that that light-complexioned girl would win away all the love from Corinne and make her miserable. I'm determined to read no more books where the blond-haired women carry away all the happiness. I should begin to have a prejudice against them. If you could give me some story, now, where the dark woman

> triumphs, it would restore the balance. I want to avenge […] the dark unhappy ones. (332)

Maggie, who the novel describes as having "brown skin," "dark, heavy locks" and "gleaming black eyes" (13), cannot finish reading the tragic novel because of its implications for her: as a dark-haired young woman herself, also desperately searching for happiness, she rejects what the story implies about her own future misery. Although she sees herself in the novel's protagonist and feels the book's heavy influence, she refuses the story's predictive power in her life. As Deanna Kreisel notes, Maggie is able "to reread and to rewrite the ending of the tale," at least in this moment, based on her own agenda. And, her rewriting of *Corinne* extends to her own life's story, as she, the "dark unhappy one," secures (albeit unintentionally and regrettably) the love of her blonde-haired cousin Lucy. More significantly, Maggie also feels free to react powerfully and expansively to her reading. She expresses her intent to "avenge," or vindicate, not only herself, but all of "the dark unhappy ones." Reading *Corinne* allows Maggie to imagine a new identity: a brave rescuer of wronged women.

While she can revise and respond to secular narratives, Maggie submits to the greater authority of biblical ones. Unfortunately, her gender renders these models (and therefore, herself) inadequate. Within a framework where her life carries value to the extent that she can fulfill the biblical types, Maggie constantly comes up short as a woman. This problem afflicted nineteenth-century women more broadly; both Henderson, in *The Victorian Self,* and Linda Peterson, in *Victorian Autobiography,* note that few women wrote and published autobiographies in the period, particularly spiritual autobiographies.[39] The reasons for this absence are multiple: first, the traditionally cited

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[39] Peterson cites Harriet Martineau as "the one woman who succeeded in the genre" (27). Although Peterson acknowledges the existence of many works of life writing by women, several of which have been categorized by other critics as autobiographies (or even spiritual autobiographies), she notes that none of them actually fulfill the genre's narrative conventions in the same way that the male-authored autobiographies do (121, 124-30).

types are almost exclusively male, and second, the women cited as biblical predecessors are often, as in the examples of Delilah and Lot's wife, negative.[40] As Peterson states, these Old Testament "lovers, wives, and mothers" offer "limited autobiographical models" for nineteenth-century women (134). More importantly, Peterson asserts that spiritual autobiographers used a certain language marked by experience and authority—such as Newman, who had a formal theological education and ordination—that women lacked (130). Because they rarely had access to a formal education that would have given them knowledge of the biblical languages and hermeneutics, and they had been denied ordination and opportunities to expound upon Scripture (often by religious authorities who reminded them of Pauline injunctions against women's teaching and leadership), women found themselves unqualified to expound and interpret their lives in light of their faith. Henderson explains the problem through more of a sweeping historical trajectory. In a period when many authors lost faith in God the Father and in a more literal kind of resurrection, Henderson argues that people attempted to revive or create their own selves instead through writing. The idea of self-authorship, however, was often understood in metaphorical terms of "fathering the self." She states, "If autobiography meant fathering a self, women were inevitably excluded" (14). As Eliot responds to that challenge, she creates a character who also undertakes a project of self-creation and reformation. As a woman, though, Maggie finds herself removed from forming a coherent religious subjectivity in several ways: as a woman she cannot "father" the self or conjure the authority and experience required to interpret her life's spiritual significance, and, even if she manages to cross those barriers, she cannot locate

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[40] In the autobiographical examples Henderson provides in her Introduction, the referenced types include Adam (12), Moses (10), David (13), Job (12), and Paul (8). The types that Peterson explores include a list of about twenty-five biblical characters, only three of which are women.

female biblical characters upon which to pattern her identity.[41] It is no wonder that she instead submerges herself in religious commonplaces.

Beyond her gender, the narrative models offered through biblical typology do not allow Maggie to form an integrated self because of the philosophy's relationship with time. Contemporary narrative theorists, such as Paul Ricoeur, argue that forward-moving narrative is central to identity formation. In *Time and Narrative,* he points out that "to answer the question 'Who?' […] is to tell the story of a life" (246). Considering a person's identity within narrative allows a balance between two extremes: either defining someone by their sameness, "a subject identical with itself through the diversity of its different states," or by his or her difference, "a pure manifold of cognitions, emotions, and volitions." Time provides the critical factor in a more complex and nuanced sense of identity, according to Ricoeur, because a temporal structure allows the revelation of both change and cohesion over the course of a lifetime (246). He concludes that this understanding of narrative identity does not remain confined to texts. To have a sense of self-constancy, any self requires an examined life, one "instructed by the [historical or fictional] works of a culture that it has applied to itself." He continues, "Subjects recognize themselves in the stories they tell about themselves" (247). Because of typology's differing relationship with time, Maggie cannot identify herself in the biblical stories presented as models. Although the Bible, as the source text for other personal narratives, operates under two simultaneous time schemes—on the one hand chronicling "a forward-moving, chronological history," and on the other "a story of continual return"—biblical typology places its emphasis on the latter movement (Henderson 6). It

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[41] This is not to say that the Bible does not offer strong models for women—since it includes the narratives of many courageous women, such as Deborah, Esther, Hannah, Mary, and Phoebe, among others—but only that these were not the biblical narratives featured most prominently in biblical typology or in nineteenth-century cultural representations of biblical women.

attempts to locate and find significance in patterns of repetition, believing that recurring events reveal a providential plan in history (Henderson 7). When typology imposes its narrative models on individual lives like Maggie's, however, it creates a problem. It locks them in stories that repeat and return rather than progress towards an end—a narrative state that Ricoeur argues is impossible for creating a sense of self. Maggie's multiple forms of repetition—from the literal quotation of texts to the more abstract patterning of her life after biblical models—prevent her from forming a complex and coherent subjectivity.

Although biblical typology's concentration on recurrences illuminates the replications in Maggie's life, it also points to the narrative's closing. For, from a typological perspective, the full meaning of history only becomes apparent, as Henderson asserts, "in light of the end" (5). And, since typology sees secular events as reenacting biblical ones, the novel's ending with a cataclysmic flood becomes particularly significant as it carries several biblical echoes. It not only recalls the Old Testament story of Noah and the Ark, with its connotations of salvation and new beginnings, but it also evokes the Christian concept of baptism, which signifies resurrection and cleansing from sin. Although Maggie experiences a calamitous deluge and becomes immersed in the water too, her story deviates from the biblical predecessors in several ways—most notably as she experiences destruction rather than deliverance.[42] The coexistence of these parallels and divergences, then, leaves readers with one final question as they are

[42] Maggie's experience also has a spiritual predecessor in the legend of St. Ogg, which is narrated in chapter 12 of the novel's first book. When Ogg the son of Beorl was asked to ferry a young woman in rags and her baby across the tempestuous river Floss, he agreed, and when they reached the other side, she revealed herself to be the Virgin Mary. She blessed him and his boat, and when the floods came, many were saved by him. The legend says that after his death, both he and Mary could be seen navigating the waters on his boat, guiding other rowers (116-17). Like the biblical story of Noah and the flood, this one, too, tells of natural disasters and supernatural rescues.

borne along with Maggie by the waves: does her story ultimately end in redemption or ruin?

The Word of the Lord Endures Forever[43]

As the novel moves toward its conclusion, Maggie forsakes her earlier commitment to the *Imitation of Christ.* She continues to meet clandestinely with Philip—where she encounters "books, converse, [and] affection"—which has the effect of creating "an opening in the rocky wall which shut in the narrow valley of humiliation" (325). This fissure becomes an outright break after her forced separation from Philip, her father's death, and her removal from St. Ogg's to teach in a rural village. By the time she returns to her hometown several years later to visit her cousin Lucy, she has rejected her previous commitment to renunciation. Rather than a calculated decision, the text suggests that her departure has occurred inadvertently, as easily as someone might trip and fall: "after years of contented renunciation, she had slipped back into desire and longing" (374). In contrast to her almost accidental abandonment, Maggie believes she would not be able to return to her previous state, even with great effort. As she remembers her earlier privation, she perceives it as "irrecoverably gone": "No prayer, no striving now, would bring back that negative peace: the battle of her life, it seemed, was not to be decided in that short and easy way—by perfect renunciation at the very threshold of her youth" (385). Maggie clearly continues to struggle in "the battle of her life," but she recognizes that renunciation provides a too-simplistic solution.

Without Kempis's words to guide her, Maggie proves to be vulnerable to another voice: that of Stephen Guest, Lucy's charming suitor who unwittingly becomes attracted to Maggie. When the two initially meet, the narrator questions whether anything

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[43] 1 Peter 1:24-25: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

remarkable has occurred; Maggie has simply heard some "fine music sung by a fine bass voice" (384). The narrative juxtaposition of that voice's effect with her former commitment to self-abnegation, however, makes clear that the two influences are related, but incompatible. In a moment that echoes a scene in Jane Austen's *Persuasion,* when Anne Elliot "could not immediately fall into a quotation again" when she overhears the man she loves speaking with other women (115), Maggie "could not stay in the recollection of that bare, lonely past" when she hears the "wild passion and fancy" of Stephen's music, which "[vibrates] in her still" (385). Stephen's voice only increases in its hold over her as Philip joins the group and the four friends continue to spend time together. When Maggie hears Stephen sing again, she becomes overwhelmed by emotion, as "her soul [is] being played on in this way by the inexorable power of sound" (416). Philip, who also notices Stephen's "strong voice" (415) and believes he has "never before seen [Maggie] under so strong an influence" (417), counters with his own song. Maggie is merely "touched, not thrilled" (417), a reaction to her supposed suitor that contrasts even more sharply with her response to Stephen's next number. In spite of her attempted resistance to the singer and the song, she is "taken hold of and shaken by the invisible influence—[is] borne along by a wave too strong for her" (418). Maggie's encounters with Stephen bear some similarities to her experiences with Kempis, particularly in the stimulation both of their voices provide. When she hears Kempis's words, she experiences "a strange thrill of awe" (289), and when Stephen sings, she is "shaken by the invisible influence" (418). The text's word choices, though, point to the greater potential of danger in Stephen's tones. The *Imitation of Christ,* for Maggie, turned "bitter waters into sweetness" (291), but Stephen overwhelms her like a crushing wave.

Although Maggie believes she has forsaken Kempis's strictures, and she recognizes Stephen's attraction for her, she still experiences their voices as at battle—both over her and within her. When she hears Stephen's "deep gentle voice" at the

charity bazaar, for example, it continues to agitate and disquiet her: "the unexpected tones [shake] her like a sudden accidental vibration of a harp" (432). Instead of appreciating his attention, she leaves, troubled, because of the "passion, and affection, and long deep memories of early discipline and effort" that remind her of her feelings' illicit nature (436). Later, when Stephen visits Maggie at her aunt's house and declares his love for her, she is again "shaken" by his tones (447), but she resists him with "all the gathered spiritual force of painful years coming to her aid in this extremity" (448). These oscillating and embattled voices become so clamorous that Maggie experiences them as a "passionate tumult," where "the old voices [made] themselves heard with rising power, till, from time to time, the tumult seemed quelled" (458). Although the voices from the past subdue the temptation that Stephen poses on several occasions, they ultimately fail to protect Maggie from "the one voice that […] stirred the fibre of young passion" (469). One day she submits to joining him on an afternoon boat ride that eventually takes her far away from both St. Ogg's and cultural expectations for an unmarried young woman.

The fact that Stephen's voice serves as a synecdoche for something else—a self, but more importantly, an identity—becomes clear in the moment that he gains his power over Maggie. As he finally leads her to the boat,

> Maggie felt that she was being led […] by this stronger presence that seemed to bear her along without any act of her own will, like the added self which comes with the sudden exalting influence of a strong tonic—and she felt nothing else. Memory was excluded. (464)

In this instant, Maggie experiences mental and physical paralysis; she moves and thinks only as she is guided by Stephen. In fact, the text states that she lacks "her own will," making her susceptible to other voices and presences. Stephen fills this vacancy like an "added self," directing her thoughts and actions. Interestingly, the text connects Maggie's lack of direction to the absence of memory, stating that "memory was excluded." Without her memory, Maggie has no will, and in fact, no self. Later in the scene, the text explicitly declares as much: when they pass the village where they had

planned to stop and Maggie continues to acquiesce to Stephen, her yielding is described as "the submergence of [her] own personality by another" (467). The absence of one self, the addition of another, and the connection to memory links the description of this moment to the representative theory of memory, which figures the mind as a storehouse where memories are accumulated that then inform a person about his or her identity. In addition, this scene further confirms this dissertation's larger argument about the link between memory and identity in nineteenth-century literature and culture. Here, the exclusion of memory and the lack of Maggie's identity do not only coincide, but they depend upon each other for their existence (or, as the case may be, extinction). When Maggie finally wakes up the next morning, both literally and figuratively, after passing the night with Stephen on the deck of a Dutch steamer, she finds herself "alone with her own memory" (470). With her memory restored, she knows she must resist Stephen. Even then, however, she cannot revert to her own sense of self, since before listening to his voice she operated under the guidance of another presence. When she renounces Stephen, she tells him they must do so "for the sake of obeying the divine voice within us" (477).

In spite of Maggie's refusal of Stephen and return to St. Ogg's, the battle between Stephen's voice and Kempis's voice has not ended. In the novel's penultimate chapter, Maggie receives a letter from Stephen, which renews her struggle "with the old shadowy enemies that were for ever slain and rising again" (511). Her reading of this letter perfectly mirrors her experience with Kempis's text: "She did not *read* the letter: she heard him uttering it, and the voice shook her with its old strange power" (514, original emphasis). As she wrestles with whether to renounce him a final time or beckon him to return, she waits for inspiration:

> It came with the memories that no passion could long quench: the long past came back to her, and with it the fountains of self-renouncing pity and affection, of faithfulness and resolve. The words that were marked by the quiet hand in the little old book that she had long ago learned by heart, rushed even to her lips, and

> found a vent for themselves in a low murmur that was quite lost in the loud driving of the rain against the window and the loud moan and roar of the wind: "I have received the Cross, I have received it from Thy hand; I will bear it, and bear it till death, as Thou hast laid it upon me." (515)

In this crucial moment, in which Maggie hears Stephen's voice speaking to her with the same force that Kempis spoke to her long ago, she ultimately returns to the ideas and words of the devotional author. This moment demonstrates some of the aforementioned qualities of religious quotation. As Maggie quotes Kempis, she also takes part in a series of repetition: she quotes the words that were marked by "a quiet hand," penned by Kempis, positioned in the text as words of a disciple, who refers to Christ's words,[44] in a text whose title calls for replication. And, the words themselves display their power. They demonstrate more agency in this scene than Maggie does: they "[rush]" and "[find] a vent" as they burst out of her. Although Kempis's words give Maggie resolve to relinquish Stephen, she also questions them for the first time. She wonders how she can find patience and strength to bear not only this trial, but also life's future trials. With a "cry of self-despair," she calls out to God, "the Unseen Pity that would be with her to the end," with a prayer that her life might "bless and comfort" (515).

From this point, Maggie's end, and the novel's end, come quickly: the water starts rising, Maggie floats to the Mill to rescue her brother Tom, and then they drown together in the rushing torrents. The fact that Maggie quotes Kempis immediately before her watery death suggests a connection between the two events, but, as critics like John Hagan have articulated, it has prompted two different readings of the novel. Has she experienced a "tragedy of repression and regression" (53) or a "process of spiritual development" (55)? Proponents of the first reading suggest that Maggie's philosophy of renunciation is unnatural and repressive, leading to her tragic death. Advocates of the

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[44] Matthew 16:24 quotes Jesus as saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me."

second interpretation, on the other hand, see Maggie's renunciation of Stephen and her attempt to rescue Tom as triumphant moments of self-sacrifice. These two approaches remain firmly grounded in textual evidence, but they both fall short of fully illuminating the scene. In a text and passage where allusion and quotation play such a pivotal role, extra-textual sources, I argue, provide the necessary information to fill in interpretive gaps.

To begin: the *Imitation of Christ* itself is a text rife with water imagery. Almost all of the images—floods, storms, water, streams—refer to water's dual potential to destroy and to renew. For example, Kempis twice refers to a "flood," but to contrary ends. Once he points to the biblical flood as a reminder of the necessary destruction that follows believers drawing away from God. The disciple states (with the italicized portion quoting Genesis 6:12): "For *all flesh had corrupted its way,* and therefore the great flood ensued" (*Imitation* 239, original emphasis).[45] Another reference points to a different kind of flood as prompting renewal and intimacy with God. The writer states that the "devout soul" can find "floods of tears, with which she may wash and cleanse herself every night that she may become so much the more familiar with her Maker" (*Imitation* 56). Other parts of the text associate water with Jesus. Both the disciple and Christ refer to him (somewhat ironically in the context of this novel) as the source of "living" water. And, as part of a prayer, the disciple acknowledges Jesus as the one who can command the winds and the sea to be stilled and then states, "Pour forth thy grace from above, water my heart with the dew of heaven: send down the waters of devotion, to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit" (*Imitation* 215). Here water is

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[45] Because Wesley's edition of the text is an abridged one, in this paragraph I am using an edition translated by Challoner, a Roman Catholic bishop whose eighteen-century version of the *Imitation* became standard. In 1946, Denis Gwynn described Challoner as the person "who produced the translation of the *Imitation of Christ* which every Catholic has been taught to read" (243).

both turbulent and live-giving. Water ravages the earth, requiring Christ's intervention, and it replenishes the creation, serving as a sign of his grace and renewal. The *Imitation* acknowledges these two tensions, of water as both devastation and regeneration, in one poignant statement: "Thou must pass through fire and water, before thou comest to refreshment" (66). Considering the ending of the novel in light of *The Imitation of Christ,* then, suggests a mostly positive reading. Although Maggie experiences the flood's destruction, becoming victim to it herself, she ultimately passes through the flood waters in order to finally join with Christ in the afterlife.

Beyond Kempis's text specifically, imitation spirituality—the historical approach to Christian faith based on unifying a believer's identity with Christ's identity, as *The Imitation of Christ* advocates—also leads to a redemptive reading of Maggie's death, particularly as it draws attention to the final scene's correlations with baptism and community. For example, R.E.O. White, the contemporary theologian who emphasizes that the imitation of Christ has not historically meant "ceaselessly filling the mind with sayings and deeds of Jesus" (376), points instead to participation in the life of the church as bringing about an inner likeness with Christ. He argues that truly becoming like Christ occurs through "baptism once for all, and in the Lord's Supper again and again." Through these sacramental encounters with God, he continues, "the individual places himself within an inherited pattern of thought, action and emotion in which great moments of the life and death of Christ are re-enacted" (377). Maggie's shift from quoting to experiencing the flood at the close of the novel, then, can be understood as a transition from a superficial form of imitation to the more powerful symbolic baptism she experiences in the flood. And, since she revives as a "revisiting spirit" to comfort Philip in the Red Deeps, her death is not exempt from baptism's power of resurrection. In addition, Jeremy Moiser, another contemporary theological writer who also has critiqued imitation spirituality when it focuses on patterns of behavior, instead believes that true imitation of Christ occurs when believers participate in community. Because Jesus is a

member of the Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Moiser emphasizes that his character is marked by love, action, and dialogue. Moiser's description of genuine imitation even incorporates a water metaphor, of "allowing the divine activity in history to absorb or assimilate [Christians] into its *mainstream***,** of associating themselves with divine reality (at his invitation) and so drawing on the life of God" (208, my emphasis). Because Maggie moves from quotation to community—to joining with Tom "in an embrace never to be parted" (521)—she models Christ's relational, forgiving, and loving qualities, becoming more like him in her embrace of another than in her repetition of his words.

Despite these redemptive potentials, another critical extratextual source leads to an entirely contrary reading. At the time that Eliot wrote *The Mill on the Floss,* she also was translating Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity,* an atheistic text that encourages belief in human nature rather than the imaginary divine, of turning attention, as Karl Barth states, "from Christ to ourselves" (xii). This act of translation (which, in voicing the thoughts of another bears some relationship to quotation and recitation) had a profound impact on Eliot's faith and her writing,[46] and it also played a role in bringing German higher criticism to English-speaking cultures (Hill 636). Feuerbach's theories also pertain to *The Mill on the Floss,* especially because they center on water, so much so that he calls his doctrine a water treatment, a "pneumatic hydrotherapy" (Barth xii). In contrast to the Christian emphasis on baptismal water's regenerative power, Feuerbach finds it "sterile." He rejects water's supernatural and mystical qualities, instead

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[46]In his Foreword to *The Essence of Christianity,* H. Richard Niebuhr states that Eliot, like Feuerbach, "sought to retain the ethos of Christianity without its faith, its humanism without its theism, its hope for man without its hope for the sovereignty of God" (ix). In addition to Susan E. Hill's article about Eliot's translation of Feuerbach, U.C. Knoepflmacher and Bernard Paris have explored how Feuerbach influenced Eliot's theology and writing. And, in his *PMLA* article, George Levine addresses Feuerbach's influence on *The Mill on the Floss* specifically, but contrary to my view, he argues that dying in the flood purifies both Maggie and Tom (408).

emphasizing "the beneficent effect of real water" (xl). In his view, this approach does not rob water of its actual or symbolic power; he still finds it cleansing, curative, and emblematic. In noting its moral and intellectual effects on people, he states, "Water not only cleanses man from bodily impurities, but in water the scales fall from his eyes: he sees, he thinks more clearly; he feels himself freer; water extinguishes the fire of appetite" (275). Feuerbach's phraseology is significant: he asserts that water, in bringing about mental clarity and personal freedom, prompts "scales [to] fall from his [or her] eyes." His phrase alludes to Saul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus, a biblical story whose reverberations were seen in Maggie's response to Kempis's text. In using the phrase in this context, Feuerbach asserts that instead of being converted by a divine presence, a person experiences true insight and transformation when he or she encounters water's real, physical presence. In addition, water represents self-consciousness, serving as a natural mirror for humans. Immersion in water is, in George Levine's words, "an annihilation of consciousness, […] the first step towards regeneration" (403). As a result, Feuerbach describes bathing is a virtue, "a sort of chemical process, in which our individuality is resolved into the objective life of Nature. The man rising from the water is a new, a regenerate man" (276). Maggie's immersion in the flood, then, carries connotations of deliverance and it conveys the potential to restore her sense of self. Unfortunately, though, Maggie does not ever rise again.

Like a reading of *The Mill on the Floss* informed by Kempis and imitation spirituality, an interpretation informed by Feuerbach also suggests water's capacity to renew and repair. Unfortunately, however, that opportunity never comes for Maggie. Because of her religious devotion and its requirement of self-abnegation, she has abandoned herself, and in so doing, she has become vulnerable to others' voices. As a result, Maggie does not (and cannot) experience the real water that Feuerbach describes, nor can she rise from the water to experience a renewed self-awareness. Instead, as her final quotation of Kempis and her closing prayer suggests, she has become submerged in

religion and disunited from herself. As she dies in the flood, she experiences a physical as well as symbolic death. Instead of experiencing water's tangible, real force, and of accepting its symbolic power to enlighten the self, Maggie drifts obliviously, as unaware in this moment of the real world and its genuine dangers as she was earlier in the novel, when she floated down the river with Stephen.

The true revelation of Feuerbach's implications occurs through the novel's final words. The concluding chapter takes the reader to the Dorlcote churchyard, where Tom and Maggie's tomb lies. The final words of the chapter quote the tomb's inscription, which in turn quotes 2 Samuel 1:23: "In their death they were not divided." Because of these words, Maggie forever will be read in light of a biblical story. In suggesting parallels with David, Saul, and Jonathan, not only does the verse impose a reading of Maggie's life on her readers, it also denies her a coherent, independent identity. And, these final words, which mark the novel's conclusion, also transport readers to the novel's beginning, where the same words are inscribed on the title page. In so doing, they confirm Said's assertion about beginnings, that they imply "return and repetition rather than simple linear accomplishment" (xiii). Sadly, his phrase not only characterizes beginnings of texts, but it also perfectly captures the tragedy of Maggie's life. As her story moves forward, she remains caught in the literal repetition of quotation and the figurative duplication of imitating Christ. Consequently, Maggie's story remains fixed in layers of citation, where her story defers and repeats, locked in a cycle rather than reaching a satisfying narrative end.

An earlier narrative aside further illuminates the tragedy of this ending. After Maggie's final meeting with Dr. Kenn, her compassionate mentor who understands the complexity of her relationship with Stephen and her return to St. Ogg's, the narrator reflects that moral judgments are "false and hallow" unless they are considered in light of the specific circumstances of any individual's life. The narrator continues to say that "the mysterious complexity of our life is not to be embraced by maxims, and that to lace

ourselves up in formulas of that sort is to repress all the divine prompting and inspirations that spring from growing insight and sympathy." Those who are guided by general rules, the narrator adds, fail to exert "patience, discrimination, impartiality" (498). While this part of the text critiques the townspeople who neglect to fully consider Maggie's difficult situation, it also offers insight on Maggie's relationship with religious texts and a culture of religious quotation more broadly. It points to a tragedy even more significant than Maggie's death: that the "mysterious complexity" of her life has been disregarded. Maggie herself has participated in this misfortune, by simplifying her personality and her choices with the application of religious quotation. Even more significantly, the ending of the novel critiques a larger religious culture, represented by the tombstone epitaph that prefers to reduce a life to a simplistic proverb—to offer an upbeat truism rather than acknowledging the specificity of someone's life or of admitting one's own error in judging a person harshly. The novel's closing allusions to water's renewing and regenerative power—whether stemming from a Christian or an atheistic source—suggest that the ending did not have to be so. In a religious community and broader society that prefers "general rules" and "patent method[s]" to specific situations and complex explorations, the only possibility for a character like Maggie is to drown in "return and repetition" without ever finding release. Her tomb, then, forever cements Maggie, and an interpretation of her life, in quotation.

CHAPTER THREE:
"WHO IN THE WORLD AM I?": ROTE LEARNING AND IDENTITY IN *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*

In Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* Alice insists upon joining the March Hare, the Mad Hatter, and the Dormouse at the "Mad Tea Party," where the characters keep moving around the table as the tea and bread-and-butter get used up. After the Wonderland creatures offend Alice with reprimands about her personal hygiene, tire her with unsolvable riddles, and confuse her with discussions about the nature of time, they finally determine that the sleepy Dormouse should tell a story. Between nods, he tells of three sisters who live at the bottom of a well, survive on treacle, and learn to draw. He adds that the subject of their drawing is "everything […] that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness" (60).

While some critics, such as Jacqueline Flescher, suggest that the Dormouse's words appear to be a random collection (130), in reality they constitute, as Lionel Morton fleetingly says, "a suggestive combination" (291). The first two, "mouse-traps, and the moon," are similar in their concreteness and therefore, ease of depiction: *The American Heritage Dictionary* includes a sketch of the former, and the *Oxford Illustrated American Dictionary* has a diagram of the latter. They both also directly connect to the narrative's context. To a dormouse, a mouse-trap would stand out as a prominent and particularly feared *m*-word. And, at a gathering where time has halted at six o'clock, the moon, as a satellite that follows a cycle of phases and revolves monthly around the earth, contradicts the party's paralysis. Both mouse-traps and the moon threaten the very scene: the former haunts the dormouse's life and the latter endangers the suspended-in-time tea party.

The last two words, "memory, and muchness," shift to representing abstract ideas or qualities. As the Dormouse finishes the list, readers can imagine the challenge of literally drawing memory, the mental act of recalling past experiences and thoughts, as

well as muchness, the quality of being great in quantity or degree. However, both nouns resist depiction for reasons beyond their abstractness and intangibility: each grasps at a boundless concept that defies the confines of a page. "Memory" already suggests a representation (or *re*-presentation), which multiplies each time someone attempts to further characterize or embody it. "Muchness" also resists boundaries, spilling over even the usual categories of language. "Much" can have multiple meanings and uses—a plurality apparent in its flexibility as an adjective, adverb, pronoun, and noun—that the "-ness" suffix attempts to capture and intensify by turning the word into an abstract noun. The word exudes excessiveness, then, both in its meaning and in its attempt to pin down the word's bountiful uses.

Common critical approaches to the novel reveal that "memory" and "muchness" are significant in the text as well, connecting broadly and theoretically to Carroll's characters and story. In taking place in a child's dream, the *Alice* narrative inherently draws attention to memory, questioning the line between reality and delusion, as well as to muchness, as dreams double and repeat lived happenings. The focus on dreams and the unconscious has prompted psychoanalytic interpretations; as William Empson states, "The [Alice] books are so frankly about growing up that there is no great discovery in translating them into Freudian terms" (241). Alice also experiences Wonderland as a place of plentiful conversation, but where the residents' observations and advice spill beyond the bounds of logic and sense. As a result, scholars agree that the Alice books serve as quintessential examples of the nonsense literature genre. The novels are foregrounded in studies such as Susan Stewart's *Nonsense,* Jean-Jacques Lecercle's *Philosophy of Nonsense*, and Alison Rieke's *The Senses of Nonsense.*[47] "Memory" and "muchness" also carry significance outside the frame of the novel, as critics suggest that

[47] See also notable articles on the topic by Jacqueline Flescher, Linda M. Shires, and Donald Rackin.

Carroll's writing of the books reveals his excessive—and some would say obsessive—recollections about the child Alice Liddell who inspired the books. Consequently, scholars tend to examine the author as well as the novels, from in-depth treatments such as Phyllis Greenacre's 1955 study of Charles Dodgson to more cursory biographical references published in articles with broader focuses.[48]

Building on the analysis of *Matilda* in my first chapter, I center my exploration of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* on schoolroom recitation that appears later in the century, in a new genre of literature, and in the fantastic setting of Wonderland. As such, it focuses on yet another manifestation of "memory" and "muchness." Within the dream world, Alice faces several tests of memory based on her above-ground lessons, and she always fails them. Instead of repeating the memorized verses she attempts, or simply forgetting the learned poems, Alice experiences a strange form of "muchness": an overwhelming quantity of new rhymes that spill out of her mouth. To her, these verses lack an apparent origin or meaning, and they entirely resist accuracy and logic. These moments are significant within the text, since rather than viewing these mistakes as playful or humorous, Alice responds to them by seriously and fearfully questioning her identity. Therefore, similar to the way that the mouse-trap and the moon threaten the mad tea party scene, Alice's excessive failure of memory threatens her subjectivity throughout the narrative.

My examination of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* then, focuses on Alice's recitations, particularly attending to her development over the course of her attempts. Because these moments grow out of Alice's schooling, and because they occur in the

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[48] Other critical approaches to the Alice books that seem to have less of a focus on "memory" and "muchness" include readings that challenge Alice's status as a sympathetic character (see Kincaid and Auerbach), examine the novel's structuring frames (see Madden and Gilead), plumb the novel for its portrayal of the Victorian child (see Coveney and Empson), and explore Carroll's use of mathematics, logic, and philosophy (see Heath and Holmes).

nonsense literature genre, this chapter first explores historical changes that occurred in nineteenth-century education and the philosophy of the genre to consider how Lewis Carroll's subversion of grammatical rules and behavioral maxims complicates the portrayal of schoolroom recitation. Then, I turn my attention to Alice's failures of memory as they occur in three particular scenes of botched recitation. Although Alice begins by experiencing a similar loss of identity as Matilda, her progression—from asking "Who am I?" when she first arrives in Wonderland to assertively answering "Here" when her name is called at the text's concluding trial—reveals that Wonderland provides her with an alternative education. Ultimately, this chapter argues that this text offers more optimistic possibilities for memorization than were available to Matilda in chapter 1. By the end of the novel, Alice not only can differentiate between sense and nonsense, but she can identify a self that is independent from her memorized recitations. In critiquing Victorian learning and imagining a new educational reality, this text, I argue, paves the way for new cultural attitudes about both education and identity—even if, as the closing frame suggests, not everyone can accept Alice's subversive realizations.

"Reeling and Writhing": The Misery of Education and the Storehouse of Memory

Education and learning haunt *Alice in Wonderland,* in spite of the fact that Alice escapes their necessity when she enters the alternate world. The text is riddled with references to learning—almost always portraying the process as daunting, tedious, and trivial. When she believes she may never grow older, Alice equates youth with learning, regretting that she will "always have lessons to learn." She identifies this possibility as particularly unpleasant, saying, "Oh, I shouldn't like *that!*" (29). In addition, at the Mad Tea Party, the Hatter points out the advantages of being on good terms with Time (whom he obviously imagines as a person, rather than a concept): when it is time for lessons, Time can adjust the clock, leaping forward to dinner. Alice approves of this scenario,

affirming, "That would be grand, certainly" (57). Even when schooling is not portrayed as intolerable, the text depicts learned information as disconnected from the students' understanding. For example, when Alice descends into Wonderland, she wonders at what Latitude and Longitude she has arrived. The narrator reveals that "Alice had not the slightest idea what Latitude was, or Longitude either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say" (8). The text pokes fun at Alice, for pompously citing bits of learned information, as well as at a school system that teaches children to recite facts that bear little relevance to their lives and that they do not understand.

The most prolonged treatment of education occurs when the Mock Turtle tells Alice about going to school in the sea, where he says he received "the best of educations—in fact, we went to school every day" (76). Although the text does not explicitly say so, Alice—as a proper, middle-class child—was likely educated primarily at home with a governess. Not to be outdone by the Mock Turtle, Alice reminds him that she, too, has attended a day school, which, historically, was a small school run by women that provided supplementary education in less-standard subjects (Wardle 179). As they continue to compare notes on course offerings, the Mock Turtle explains that he took the regular course of "Reeling and Writhing, of course to begin with, […] and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision" (76). When Alice asks for more information, the Mock Turtle adds that they also had to learn "Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seography: then Drawling—the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel, that used to come once a week: he taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils" (76). In contrast, the Gryphon, who also participates in the discussion, went to a Classical master where he only learned "Laughing and Grief" (77).

The Mock Turtle's description of education—as well as the puns on the expected school subjects—portray learning as tedious for the students and corrupting of their personalities. Instead of studying the complex feat of comprehending and forming words

and sentences, the Mock Turtle studies reeling and writhing, unintentional actions of staggering and twisting. In addition to being spasmodic actions rather than controlled pursuits, the pun also implies that students experience the subjects as courses that make them stagger and fall. Other subjects continue to draw attention to the mind-numbing nature of education: drawling refers to the way that the course drags along, as well as to the drawn-out lecturing of the course master. Stretching and Fainting also suggest responses to courses rather than their content: the former to a class inducing sleep, and the latter to a subject prompting the loss of courage. Several of the Mock Turtle's arithmetic replacements also emphasize the way the educational system brings out the worst in its students' personalities and behavior. The first, ambition, highlights the ostentation promoted in learning, a quality visible even in Alice as she self-importantly repeats impressive terms while having no sense of the words' meanings. Uglification suggests that instead of giving students skills to improve the world around them, education teaches them how to worsen themselves and their communities. The Mock Turtle also cites Derision as another aspect of successful learning, which both he and the Gryphon demonstrate throughout the scene with Alice, calling her "very dull" and a "simpleton" (75-76). This scene presents a dreary reality: in addition to prompting boredom and fear, education teaches students to be pompous and offensive.

The multiple references to education in Alice's narrative correspond with French theorist Jean-Jacques Lecercle's argument about nonsense literature's origins. In *Philosophy of Nonsense*, he claims that the genre grew out of contradictions inherent to the development of educational institutions in the nineteenth century (which I will explore in more detail shortly). Consequently, nonsense texts usually have school as a theme. As Lecercle pithily states, "In Victorian Britain the school is steeped in nonsense, and nonsense inscribes the school within its text" (214). In spite of the genre's intrinsic connection to the absurd, Lecercle still insists that nonsense literature operates according to a somewhat counterintuitive necessity: "the deep-seated need for meaning" (3). To

explain its centrality, he points out that schools are institutions that develop the need for meaning and attitudes towards language, as well as expectations about how to behave in a socially acceptable way. As a result, the link between nonsense literature and education generates a tension within the genre between irrationality and significance. Lecercle's theory suggests that scholars should not read references to education in *Alice* as coincidental, or simply amusing, but instead as potential sources of significant illumination and critique.

History confirms Lecercle's theory about nonsense literature's intimate connection with educational changes, as many significant reforms occurred between the time that *Matilda* was written in 1819 and *Alice* was published in 1865. Before the nineteenth century, there were few schools; young middle- and upper-class children were educated at home with a teacher or governess, much like Matilda's initial education under the direction of her aunt. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, Christian philanthropists became concerned with the education of the working classes, offering limited schooling on Sundays (the only day that many children were not employed in factory labor). In the first half of the nineteenth century, debates turned to the role of the state in providing elementary education. Peter Gordon and Denis Lawton point out in *Curriculum Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* for example, that in 1816, just a few years before *Matilda'*s writing, British statesman Henry Brougham prompted a government inquiry into the educational state of the poor. This inquiry resulted in recommendations to broaden access to schooling (6-7). They add that the first government grant to support education of the poor occurred in 1833, when it set aside money to construct schools. Over the next several years, government committees passed legislation and made further recommendations that made federal grants contingent upon school inspections, recommended a pupil-teacher system rather than a monitorial system, and allowed for curriculum change that introduced subjects like mathematics, English

language and literature, and history, rather than simply the teaching of Latin and Greek (as was the custom in grammar schools) (9-10).

The most significant legislative action contributing to these changes occurred in 1862: the passing of the Revised Code. This code established for the first time the conditions of the grant money and the specific contents of the elementary school curriculum (Gordon and Lawton 12). These changes replaced the grant system, which gave financial support to teachers based on their qualifications, with a system that came to be called "payment by results," in which schools received a contribution for each child in attendance, along with additional funding for each child who passed an annual examination in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The Revised Code did not merely change funding policies, however; the legislation also affected classroom instruction. In changing the ways that schools received financial support, the Revised Code essentially set the elementary school curriculum on the subjects that would be examined: the three Rs. In its curriculum and classroom practice, middle-of-the-century pedagogy became focused on the exams' successful completion.

One of the specific outcomes of the Revised Code, which is particularly important for this examination of *Alice,* was the greater emphasis on poetry recitation. Matthew Arnold, who served as a school inspector from 1851-1886, acknowledges in his 1861 report on elementary schools that the Code had been much reviled. He "rejoice[s]," though, in the greater priority it places on "learning by heart extracts from good authors"—a directive that he believes "no one will be found to attack" (94-95). In fact, with the Revised Code, Arnold cites recitation as an educational practice that now transcends class, noting it "strange that a lesson of such old standing and such high credit in our schools for the rich, should not sooner have been introduced in our schools for the poor" (95). Arnold's comments serve as a reminder that although the legislative changes focused primarily on educating the working classes, they reflect, in many cases, the educational theories and practices of the middle and upper classes as well. While

recitation was likely at the forefront of the Victorian imagination at the time of *Alice's* publication because of debates about the Revised Code, Carroll depicts a pedagogical exercise that would have been, for the first time, nearly universal. Reactions to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* from contemporaneous middle- and upper-class readers confirm their familiarity with Alice's recitations. After Dante Rossetti read the text, for example, he wrote a letter to its author praising "Alice's perverted snatches of school poetry" as "among the funniest things I have seen for a long while" (Carroll, *Letters* 81).

Although recitation was humorous to Rossetti and praiseworthy for Arnold, less enthusiastic critics believed that the passing of the Revised Code led to an excessive focus on rote learning—yet another materialization of "memory" and "muchness." Practically speaking, Victorian classrooms emphasized drill and didactic teaching, suggesting that Carroll's nonsense literature had good reason to mock nineteenth-century educational practices. Historians and critics characterize Victorian education as tedious and monotonous, regardless of the educational environment, because it relied heavily upon the mechanical exercise of students' memories. As a case in point, in *The Victorian Governess,* Kathryn Hughes points out that an "unimaginative approach" of "careful reading, abstract-making and rote learning" characterized home education for most of the nineteenth century (75). Richard Altick notes the same phenomenon in elementary schools, adding that "a new premium was put upon rote memory, […] every effort was bent toward grinding into the child the sentences or the facts […] (157). Furthermore, he calls the focus on rote learning and examination a "Victorian mania" (161).

Predictably, this approach to education frustrated and bored young students. Authors who grew up in the period later described the challenge of memorizing material and of remaining interested in the disagreeable environment. The philanthropist Frances Power Cobbe remembers having to "commit to memory whole pages of prose" from morning to night, over the "hideous clatter" of girls reading and reciting lessons aloud to governesses in four different languages (200-01). Constance Maynard, a

characteristically studious girl in the 1870s, describes the schoolroom as a place that failed to ignite "a spark of real interest […]. The strain was on memory and perseverance only, and neither reason nor imagination was called to co-operate" (Firth 22). Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* portrays education's soporific effect when Jane as a young girl attends Lowood School. She describes the schoolroom there as marked by "the hum of many voices," made up of the young women's "whispered repetitions" (54). On Sundays, the girls recite the catechism and Bible verses and then listen to a sermon—a process that Jane says frequently leads to "the enactment of the part of Eutychus [a young man from Acts 20] by some half dozen of little girls; who, overpowered with sleep, would fall down, if not out of the third loft, yet off the fourth form, and be taken up half dead" (70). As these examples unsurprisingly suggest, the nineteenth-century schoolroom environment bred "lifelong antipathy to education" (Altick 157). As a young girl who fears changing places with her less intelligent friend Mabel, because then she will have "ever so many lessons to learn," Alice has found good company (16).

Like nearly every aspect of the text, which addresses practicalities and intangibilities at the same time, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*'s treatment of education is not confined to nineteenth-century forms of learning; it also reflects philosophical theories that influenced the period's education. David Wardle, in *English Popular Education 1780-1975,* reveals that the first half of the nineteenth century was marked by a philosophy of education that he describes as "ruled by a confused acceptance of two assumptions about child nature" (80). On the one hand, people believed in original sin and children's inclination towards evil; education, then, was seen as a process of redemption. At the same time, nineteenth-century thought had been influenced by John Locke's idea of the mind at birth as a *tabula rasa,* a blank slate. Because this philosophy suggests that children lack innate tendencies, people believed that education could provide the information and experiences needed to form children into ideal adults (81). As Wardle points out, conceptions of original sin and *tabula rasa*

are in conflict—since the former promotes a pessimistic outlook on human nature and the latter encourages an optimistic one, and since the former grants value to inborn predispositions and the latter denies their existence (82). The ideas coexisted, though, affirming Lecercle's argument that the Victorian school is "steeped in nonsense" (214). Inasmuch as the theology of original sin suggested children's inability to cooperate in their learning, and the idea of the *tabula rasa* promised that children could be molded through the material that became imprinted on their minds' slates, these two theories worked together to enforce the authority of teachers and the receptive nature of students. The two tenets of thought also granted education great moral influence in addition to instructional power, which is signaled in the didactic poems Alice attempts to recite, poems that advocate diligence, religious piety, and industriousness.

The influence of John Locke's theories on nineteenth-century education gains even more significance in light of my overarching argument about recitation and identity. Associationism encompasses many more ideas than the concept of the *tabula rasa* that Wardle emphasizes. As the name suggests, associationism postulates that ideas are associated, or connected, in humans' minds like railroad cars, so that if a person recalls one element, the other related elements follow. The representative theory of the mind that I discussed in chapter 1—the theory that figures the mind as a storehouse where thoughts, feelings, and experiences can accumulate, and that dominated Western thought in the nineteenth century—fits within the larger umbrella of associationist thinking. Originating with Aristotle's description of the mind as a surface receiving imprints and St. Augustine's comparison of the mind to "a large and boundless chamber" that stores images and details (212), the storehouse theory suggests that memories are arranged in the mind's rooms, and, when remembered, are removed according to a particular sequence. Since the *Alice* text is interspersed with doors and chambers, and, as I have suggested, concerns itself with "memory" and "muchness," the similar metaphors seem oddly analogous. In particular, one of Alice's first experiences in Wonderland is of being

caught in a corridor where "there were doors all round […], but they were all locked" (9). Perhaps Alice's efforts to reach the garden behind the locked door, and to remember her lessons, are not so different. Since John Locke had been the first to alter the earlier theories of the mind in connecting memory to identity, the correlations among associationism, memory, and education relate even further to the *Alice* text. When Locke asserted that a person develops a consistent understanding of the self through memory, he only grounded his ideas more firmly in associationism, the theory that played such a pivotal role in shaping nineteenth-century education. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* for example, he pointed out that the connections between memories allow people to consult them in order to differentiate themselves and discover their personal identities (335). As I argue in my analysis of *Matilda,* these theories of memory have especially poignant implications for education, because they suggest that people form their identities by referring to stored thoughts and impressions, which may include learned material. Because associationism had taken an even firmer hold by the middle of the century, and since it had been combined with the notion of original sin, these ideas materialize in different (and even more conflicted) ways for Alice: she indeed reveals herself to be a "blank slate," as she is unable to compute sums, recognize capitals, and most importantly, repeat memorized verses. At the same time, the new rhymes that she finds herself speaking have a violent and ominous subtext. When this subtext surfaces, Alice responds to Wonderland like any ordinary Victorian child who relates who she is to what she knows: she loses the "sense" of herself.

"Those Are Not the Right Words": Failed Repetition and Lost Identity

Alice's first moment of amnesia—and identity crisis—occurs shortly after her arrival in Wonderland. She tastes the cake marked "EAT ME" and grows in size to over nine feet tall, a physical change that prompts her to ask whether she has changed in other

ways as well. She asks, "I wonder if I've changed in the night? Let me think: *was* I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, *that's* the great puzzle" (15). Alice immediately dismisses the idea that she may have been changed into the ringlet-haired Ada because of their different appearances, but when she considers Mabel, she only knows to differentiate herself by her greater knowledge. She states, "I'm sure I ca'n't [sic] be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh, she knows such a very little!" (15). Interestingly, as Locke's and Hume's theories suggest, Alice relies upon her memory to tell herself who she is. She distinguishes herself from Mabel by identifying that her mental storehouse has more accumulated goods than her friend's.

To confirm her identity, Alice tries to recall her schoolroom knowledge (that she was able to remember even as she fell through the rabbit hole). Beginning with her multiplication tables, she states that "four times five is twelve, and four times six is thirteen," but she realizes she has made errors and decides to move on to geography (15-16). With this subject, she fares no better, citing London as the capital of Paris, and Paris as the capital of Rome (16). Each of these false memories disorients Alice because of its partial nature; she can identify that the answers are incorrect, but she cannot recall the accurate information. Her answers also resist traditional logic: instead of increasing exponentially (as the term "multiplication" suggests), her mathematical answers seem to increase by random and insignificant addition, and instead of suggesting places of eminence, her capitals diminish like nesting dolls, with each location serving as capital of another capital.

In her final attempt to remember her lessons (and herself), she decides to recite an Isaac Watts poem called "Against Idleness and Mischief," which was in every nineteenth-century reader and was universally well-known (Milner 245). Instead of Watts's verse, Alice recites the following poem:

"How doth the little crocodile
  Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
  On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
  How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in,
  With gently smiling jaws!" (16)[49]

As a parody of Watts's poem, much of Alice's poem makes sense—as it must, in order to humorously imitate the more serious poem.[50] In fact, the "nonsense" is purely contextual, as the language and syntax emulate the original. Linda M. Shires describes parody as "the placement of a distorted mirror image against an 'original' mirror image," a metaphor that demonstrates the similar relationship between the two items, but that also exposes the differences and uncertainties that the comparison creates (268). In this case, the similarities are easily apparent: each of the lines, minus one, starts with the exact wording of the Watts poem. It also follows the same rhyme scheme, except where Watts allows slant rhymes, the parody rhymes perfectly. Select words have changed, however, which entirely alters the poem in ways that I will address shortly: instead of a busy bee, the poem tells of a crocodile, and instead of gathering and storing honey, the reptile eats smaller fish.

More of a concern to Alice than her poem's transformation is her fear that *she* has changed; the misspoken poem causes a crisis in identity. Right away she recognizes that

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[49] For comparison, the original poem states: "How doth the little busy bee / Improve each shining hour, / And gather honey all the day / From every opening flower! / How skillfully she builds her cell! / How neat she spreads the wax! / And labours hard to store it well / With the sweet food she makes" (qtd. in Carroll 16).

[50] Several critics point out that "nonsense literature" is, in some ways, a misnomer, as it inaccurately suggests an absence of meaning. In *Nonsense*, Susan Stewart states a much-shared sentiment: "In every case, nonsense depends upon an assumption of sense. Without sense there is no nonsense" (4). Alison Rieke, in her discussion of the six categories of nonsense literature, points out that nonsense literature is usually only nonsensical in one way: in its manipulation of language or of context (7). The genre serves a contradictory and paradoxical function: to work, it builds and relies upon sense, yet it resists meaning through its subversion of traditional uses of language and forms of meaning making.

she has quoted the poem inaccurately, stating, "I'm sure those are not the right words." With tears in her eyes, she fears that she "must be Mabel after all" (16). Because she does not want to live in Mabel's cramped and toyless conditions, Alice declares that she will remain in Wonderland, but even this decision continues to reveal her anxiety about her selfhood. When she imagines responding to adult voices that might command her to ascend, she says she will respond, "Who am I, then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I'll come up: if not, I'll stay down here till I'm somebody else" (16). Because her memory has altered, meaning has not remained stable, and Alice believes her entire identity has changed as well. While Locke's theory suggests a rationale for Alice relying upon her memory to communicate a stable sense of self, the passage still leaves two questions unanswered: why does Alice's bodily change prompt her to probe her memory, and why does she turn to memorized information—what William James calls "desultory memory" (660)—rather than past personal experiences to confirm her identity?

While philosophers from Aristotle to Descartes and beyond have debated the relationship between the body and the mind, Catherine Robson's research into nineteenth-century recitation practices illuminates an under-acknowledged historical link between the body and recitation. Robson argues that nineteenth-century education's focus on performing memorized texts, with its accompanying beating hearts, shaking legs, and sweaty palms, "made a profound physical and emotional connection between the assigned literature and the bodies that read it" (150). She points out that contemporary readers often fail to fully grasp this relationship, because we no longer learn by heart. Robson argues:

> We contemporary readers no longer hold poems with regular iambic rhythms at our core; children no longer feel their pulse rates quicken as they approach the work in hand, aware that they must calm the thudding of their hearts to have any hope of reproducing the poem's rhythms effectively, or at least acceptably; adults no longer feel themselves glide into the mesmeric state of

> one who recites a memorized, internalized poem, when body and words beat together in measured familiarity. (150-51)

As Robson's findings suggest, Alice's leap from the corporeal to the cerebral—from the recognition that her body has changed sizes to her investigation of what she can remember—reveals that she is accustomed to associating her body's rhythms with her mind's machinations. When her body begins to operate outside her expectations, growing to nine feet tall and producing a large pool of tears, she immediately turns to the contents of her mind to reassure herself of her identity.

The resolution of the second mystery—Alice's turn to schoolroom knowledge rather than personal recollections—also relies upon the specific context of nineteenth-century education. Beyond the more abstract link between memory and identity that materialized as a result of philosophical theories of the mind, recitation and identity became specifically associated with each other in the Victorian period. This connection primarily came about by way of metaphor, as the learning mind came to be portrayed as a garden—an image rich with implications of personal growth and development. (Like the motif of chambers, garden images are important within *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, too, since Alice undertakes a physical quest to reach "the loveliest garden you ever saw" (10) in addition to her philosophical quest to discover, as she says, "Who in the world am I?" (15).) In her research on poetry reading and recitation in American schools, Joan Shelley Rubin has shown that the metaphor of the mind as a garden coexisted with the metaphor of the mind as a storehouse and became popular in poetry anthologies. R.L. Stevenson's popular poetry collection called *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), and John Ruskin's essay about female education entitled "Of Queens' Gardens" (1865) suggest that the metaphor had a strong hold in Britain as well.[51] Unlike

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[51] Ruskin's text further suggests that the garden metaphor may have been associated with women and the storehouse metaphor may have been connected to men, as the first two essays in *Sesame and Lilies* are gendered: "Of Queens' Gardens" follows "Of Kings' Treasuries."

the storehouse metaphor, which suggests that the mind accrues treasures that "remain stable in value," the garden image, according to Rubin, reflects the belief that poetry "promoted the creation of a 'higher' self" ("Listen" 265, 266). The garden image, therefore, placed great emphasis on education's potential to cultivate a child into a certain kind of adult.

In his reports on schools, Matthew Arnold illustrates the way that educators used the garden metaphor to describe the child's mind. In his report for 1861, he praises learning by heart as a pedagogical method that was becoming more widespread through the passing of the Revised Code. He states that he admires the practice for providing initial benefits of filling a person's mind with a "mass of treasures," echoing the storehouse metaphor, and providing an opportunity for "useful discipline." As he articulates what he sees as recitation's greater advantage, however, he transitions from the storehouse image to the garden metaphor:

> Out of the mass of treasures thus gained (and the mere process of gaining which will have afforded a useful discipline for all natures), a second and a more precious fruit will in time grow; they [pupils] will be insensibly nourished by that which is stored in them, and their taste will be formed by it, as the learning of thousands of lines of Homer and Virgil has insensibly created a good literary taste in so many persons, who would never have got this by studying the rules of taste. (95)

Arnold extols the benefits of memorization when he refers to the recited poems as accumulated riches, a "mass of treasures" that are "stored in them." The second, more important, benefit grows in the children as "precious fruit" that is "nourished" by the selections they have memorized, suggesting that a child who learns by heart can be cultivated into an adult with sophisticated artistic taste through his or her learning. In other reports published over the course of his career, Arnold even more explicitly states his belief that learning and reciting poetry can form a person's character. In 1872, for example, he identifies the biggest flaw in elementary education as its failure to "*form* [the student], to put him in a way of making the best possible use of [knowledge]." He

believes that "what practically will be found to contribute most towards *forming* a pupil is familiarity with masterpieces" (163, original emphasis). As indicated by Arnold's figurative language of the mind as a garden, as well as his more explicit belief that poetry carries formative power, he does not see the child's mind as simply an empty chamber that receives stored goods. Rather, it is more like a greenhouse where poetic seeds are planted, which then grow within the child, helping him or her to develop a certain character. The link between the garden image and identity, then, is clear: learning helps a child become a specific kind of individual.

The character-forming power that educators such as Arnold attributed to poetry recitation was not lost on students. In her investigation of the relationship between literature and cultural values, Joan Shelley Rubin has gathered the responses of nearly five hundred readers, who described the poems they recited in school as well as what the task meant to them.[52] These respondents cited several valuable functions of poetic memorization beyond those that educators advertised (such as cultivating moral values and discipline). One of these ends is "the formation and maintenance of identity," particularly through connections readers drew between themselves and particular authors or poems ("They Flash" 270).[53] These texts had long-lasting effects; former students appreciated recitation for revealing that their identities remained stable over time, as the poems revealed childhood concerns that were still present in later life or allowed people

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[52] Although these readers have responded to the American context of recitation in the early part of the twentieth century, Rubin's findings are unique and valuable for researchers in a couple of ways: they identify trends among a large number of historical readers, and they reveal how students have remembered and interpreted their own recitation experience from a later point in time. The accounts that I have identified from nineteenth-century British children, while interesting and relevant, lack the evidentiary force of a larger number of respondents, as well as reflective distance from the experience of recitation.

[53] First-person accounts demonstrate the relationship: one woman identified herself with Edna St. Vincent Millay's bohemian behavior, a second-generation immigrant discovered an American identity for herself in poems such as "Evangeline" and "Hiawatha," and a young man found courage to face his life's struggles through "Invictus" (270).

to recall their childhood and therefore "see themselves whole." They also cited the poems—which often conveyed values or concerns of a particular school, community, or era—as contributing to "identity formation by grounding the self in wider contexts," a concern I will address in more detail in the next chapter. According to Rubin, readers found the storehouse metaphor of the mind lacking. Instead of the poems becoming inert "treasures" or "possessions," they believed the verses "'had become a living part of' their being" ("They Flash" 271).

In Alice's case, the poem not only lives inside her, but it also animates another creature: an individualistic, selfish reptile rather than the original poem's social, altruistic insect. This difference, among others, remains key to understanding her poem's meaning, according to J. Hillis Miller's insights in *Fiction and Repetition.* He suggests that theorists have posed two alternate theories of repetition: "Platonic," emphasizing similarity, in which repetition is a copy of an archetypal model; and "Nietzschean," based on difference, in which each thing is intrinsically different (6). Miller finds the second form of repetition, in which "one thing is experienced as repeating something which is quite different from it and which it strangely resembles" (8), more compelling, arguing that meaning can be perceived by looking at the difference between the two "opaquely similar" things (9). When these insights are applied to the dissimilarities between Alice's poem and Watts's verse, several important contrasts emerge. In addition to the change in animals, Alice almost imperceptibly alters the gender of the creature, from the "she" bee to the "he" crocodile.[54] Third, she shifts the action, from a bee that "[gathers] honey" to a crocodile that "[pours] the water," an emptying out rather than a filling up, which, when understood in the context of both animals' genders, has obvious sexual connotations.

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[54] Watts's decision to make the bee female serves as further evidence that the poem seems intended to detail proper feminine behavior, since the poem's description of the bee's activities mark it as a worker bee—an always male position.

Fourth, Alice has changed the focus of the poem; where the Watts poem centers on the bee's materials and production—honey, flower, cell, wax, food—the parody turns its attention to the crocodile's manipulative and powerful body—tail, scale, grin, claws, jaws. He uses these body parts in purely predatory ways: to eat unsuspecting fish. Together, these changes dramatically alter the tone of the poem: a sexualized male crocodile, with his false grin and extended claws, suggests a potent danger to those around him. Understandably, a seven-year-old child would be disturbed at repeating such a verse.

Most significantly, Alice's poem entirely alters the meaning of Watts's poem: instead of advocating selfless and industrious behavior through the model of the bee, the poem instead suggests (and even advocates) manipulative slaughter. Watts's poem didactically encourages children to work hard in order to produce valuable materials and provide a good account of their lives. Entirely devoid of high-minded morals, Alice's repetition undermines the parodied poem, narrating, as John Ciardi states, "a happy hypocrite piously gobbling up the trusting fishes" (258). As Alice repeats the poem, she tells a story not of a task-oriented, material-focused, female gatherer, but instead of a sexually charged, manipulatively ravenous male hunter. Significantly, Alice does not just narrate a different story, but she advocates a different morality: one based upon self-serving violence. Because the poem diverges so drastically from the original, Alice becomes disoriented in two ways: she cannot identify the poem's source, and, because her mind's previous belongings are suddenly missing, she cannot determine her own identity.

Rather than focusing on the unmoored aspects of this moment, critics generally pin it down as exposing Alice's cruel unconscious. James Kincaid, for example, argues that Alice's recitation "reveals the darkest parts of Alice's mind" (96), and Donald Rackin contends that her performance shows that "Alice has yielded to that uncontrollable imp within her" (318). In addition, Nina Auerbach describes Alice's

verses as "savage songs" ("Alice" 35) that express a "semi-cannibalistic appetite" ("Alice" 37). In their attribution of the poem's words to Alice's authentic self, these critics suggest that the source of these rhymes is fully known: within the seemingly pure but actually tainted Victorian child. As Auerbach states, "The dainty child carries the threatening kingdom of Wonderland within her" ("Alice" 32). When the scene is examined within its historical, educational context, however, it suggests just the opposite. When she experiences herself reciting the incorrect poem, Alice does not react in horror to the violent self that she suddenly realizes resides within her. Instead she does not recognize herself at all. Rather than revealing Alice's sinister nature, the scene emphasizes the unsound relationship between educational recitation and identity. Memorized material does not always "remain stable in value" as the storehouse metaphor promises (Rubin, "Listen" 265), and therefore should not be depended upon to establish something as essential as a person's identity.

More to the point, the moment suggests that recited poems are not simply unreliable, but also predatory. Rather than cultivating or forming a self, these texts consume other beings while maintaining a "gently smiling" appearance. This distressing situation becomes clear as Alice figuratively experiences the violence that the poem describes: like the hungry crocodile consuming the naïve fishes, the poem itself devours Alice's sense of herself. The poem's details offer further significant parallels to Alice's experience: while the crocodile "pours" water on his scales, Alice experiences a poem "pouring" out of her mouth; and while the crocodile's threat is his cavernous jaw, so Alice's mouth, in reciting the distorted poem, leads to her own sense of extinction. The recited poem, then, threatens Alice's identity in two ways: it produces material that she cannot identify as originating from her own memory, and it predicts her loss of self in its metaphorical content. By losing her words, Alice has started to lose herself.

"I'm Not Myself, You See": Turning Language (and Meaning) Upside Down

The disorientation that Alice experiences at the loss of her memory—and therefore, identity—intensifies as the text continues and she faces her next test of memory.[55] When she encounters a Caterpillar smoking a hookah, the Caterpillar asks, "Who are *you*?," to which Alice replies, "I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then." The Caterpillar asks her to explain herself further, to which Alice replies, "I ca'n't explain *myself,* I'm afraid, Sir […] because I'm not myself, you see" (35, original emphasis). The content of Alice's sentiment as well as her slippage between the metaphorical and literal usage of the word "myself" demonstrates her understanding of her identity as split or oscillating. She adds that changing sizes so many times has confused her, suggesting that she has based her distinctiveness upon her physical appearance.

As she continues to converse with the Caterpillar, Alice reveals that the true source of her bewilderment is not only her bodily changes, but also her mind's failures. As the two continue their circular conversation, with each asking who the other is without

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[55] Another interaction that occurs between Alice's first recitation and the one I will explore in this section also deserves mention for its revelation of Alice's fluctuating sense of herself. She encounters the White Rabbit, who calls her Mary Ann and commands her to fetch his gloves and fan. Although Alice believes that the Rabbit has mistaken her for his housemaid, she neglects to correct him and undertakes the task as though she is the other personage. Then, when she hears him calling "Mary Ann! Mary Ann!" as she gathers the items in his house, Alice knows he is "coming to look for her" (29). Here Alice does not indicate that the Rabbit is looking for his housemaid, who he happens to think she is; instead she conflates the appellation with her sense of herself. Note that all of the names of individuals who may be confused with Alice in this text begin with *A* or *M*. Like Alice, Ada is a contraction of Adelheid, and Mabel is another contracted name originating from Amabel. Mary Ann, in contrast, is a compound name, and when Alice becomes mistaken for her, she grows too large for the Rabbit's home. The similarities in the young women's names further suggest the interchangeability of their identities, and the fluctuating lengths of the names seems to correspond with Alice's sense of her own self contracting and expanding.

receiving a satisfactory response, the Caterpillar finally says, "So you think you're changed, do you?" Their conversation proceeds thus:

> "I'm afraid I am, Sir," said Alice. "I ca'n't remember things as I used and I don't keep the same size for ten minutes together!"
> "Ca'n't remember what things?" said the Caterpillar.
> "Well, I've tried to say '*How doth the little busy bee*' [sic], but it all came different!" Alice replied in a very melancholy voice. (36)

Alice reveals that she remains haunted by her incorrect repetition of the Watts poem: because she has lost her memory, she is unable to state her identity. In response to her confession, the Caterpillar proposes an additional test of memory, commanding her to repeat "You are old, Father William," referring to Robert Southey's 1799 poem, "The Old Man's Comforts, and How He Gained Them"—another moralistic and didactic poem that children commonly learned in their lessons.[56] Alice attempts the memorized verse, but again, it comes out, as the Caterpillar later says, "wrong from beginning to end" (41).

Southey's poem presents a conversation between a young man and Father William, in which the former asks the latter how he has maintained his robustness, avoided mourning the past, and developed a healthy anticipation for death in spite of his

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[56] Although Robert Southey was one of the most prolific of the English Romanticists, as well as the poet laureate of England for thirty years, his work today is virtually unknown. (The one exception is the original story of Goldilocks and the three bears, which was published in 1837. The work is not representative; although he wrote in many genres, Southey was primarily known as a prose writer, poet, and biographer.) He has received some critical attention recently for the way that he negotiated his professional writing career. See, for example, the sixth chapter of Brian Goldberg's *The Lake Poets and Professional Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007). In terms of Southey's writing profession, the "Father William" poem is an interesting example. In order to cobble together an income between the years of 1797-1800, Southey began writing reviews and poetry for the *Monthly Magazine*, *Critical Review*, and *Morning Post*. He also published two volumes of poems, and two volumes of *The Annual Anthology*, in which most of the poems were his own (Bernhardt-Kabisch 282). "The Old Man's Comforts, and How He Gained Them" appeared in the first volume, suggesting that Southey wrote it with the conventions of commonly anthologized poetry in mind. It, and other Southey poems, continued to be popular in the nineteenth century. In his analysis of over one hundred anthologies published in Britain between 1802-1870, Ian Michael ranks the poets by frequency of representation. Southey appears in the tenth spot, only behind such authors as Cowper, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Milton, and Pope (236).

age. In each case, Father William responds that he made intentional decisions in his youth that positively affected his later years: he protected his health, thought of the future, and placed his attention upon God. Like Watts's poem, Southey's poem places emphasis on its moral: a young person should make careful decisions now in order to protect his or her body, mind, and faith in the future. As he states, "In the days of my youth […], I remember'd that youth could not last; / I thought of the future, whatever I did, / That I never might grieve for the past" (qtd. in Gardner 69**).** Lionel Morton has helpfully pointed out that in addition to communicating a moral, this poem addresses a theme particularly significant for this discussion: "establishing a coherent identity through time, indeed through a whole life" (295). The poem suggests, however, that such an identity is brought into being by living out of order: instead of considering the past to shape one's present and future behavior, Father William instead spends his youth considering the future, so that he never has cause to regret the past.

The poem that Alice repeats reverses the forward-moving acceleration of Southey's poem by literally turning Father William upside down, and figuratively flipping over the poem's meaning. Instead of asking Father William about his accrued health and wisdom, the young man in the poem asks why the elder man incessantly stands on his head, enters rooms with back-somersaults, eats the skeletons of fowl, and balances an eel on his nose. For example, the first two stanzas state:

> "You are old, Father William," the young man said,
> "And your hair has become very white;
> And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
> Do you think, at your age, it is right?"
>
> "In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
> "I feared it might injure the brain;
> But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
> Why, I do it again and again." (37)

All of Father William's actions are contrary to logic and social custom. Instead of standing on his feet, Father William stands on his head; instead of walking forward through the door, Father William rolls in backwards. He also eats a goose in the wrong

way, consuming "the bones and the beak," and he balances an eel—a wriggling marine animal—on his nose. In short, Father William positions himself upside down, moves backwards, eats food inside out, and performs meaningless actions. The poem further suggests the lunacy of these actions in the final slant rhyme between "brain" and "again"; as Father William indicates he has "none," the reader expects "brain" to rhyme with "sane." These reversals, along with the hovering suggestion of insanity, are significant not only in demonstrating the disordered nature of Wonderland, and Alice's mind within it, but also in upsetting (and upending) the poem's intended meaning.

Contrary to the Southey poem, in which each action had a clear cause-and-effect sequence and a concluding moral, Alice's poem resists logic and lacks any edifying lesson. For example, in providing reasons for his actions, Father William says that he stands on his head because he knows he lacks a brain, and that he somersaults backwards because he has kept his limbs supple with a quack ointment—responses that fail to offer helpful or reasonable insights for readers. The ending further thwarts meaning; Father William completely resists answering the young man's last question: "What made you so awfully clever?" He says, "I have answered three questions, and that is enough. […] Be off, or I'll kick you down-stairs" (40). Considering that the original poem addressed cultivating a coherent identity, the elder man's refusal to explain how he fostered certain attributes throughout his life further unravels the association between identity and educational memory. It is as though the new poem, in speaking *through* Alice, also speaks *to* her, denying for the poem's character the kind of identity formation that she hopes to locate and possess by repeating the original poem's words. As in her recitation of the Watts poem, Alice has not merely repeated different words than she intended, but she also has contradicted a system of pious and industrious morality and undermined a common approach to discovering one's identity.

Both the Caterpillar and Alice recognize that her recitation has failed. When the poem has concluded they discuss its problems:

> "That is not said right," said the Caterpillar.
> "Not *quite* right, I'm afraid," said Alice, timidly: "some of the words have got altered."
> "It is wrong from beginning to end," said the Caterpillar, decidedly; and there was silence for some minutes. (41, original emphasis)

Although he uses a passive verb, the Caterpillar's response draws attention to Alice's culpability in changing the verse; instead of saying that the words *are* not right, he says the poem is not *said* right, a choice that emphasizes Alice's responsibility in failing to recite the poem accurately. Alice softens the problem, indicating that the words are not "quite" right and that "some" have changed: using qualifiers to suggest that the words are incorrect only to a degree. She also uses the passive tense in her next comment, stating that the words "have got altered," avoiding stating who or what executed the action. Although these word choices may demonstrate her attempt to skirt her own responsibility, they also may describe truthfully the moment as Alice experiences it: because she does not know the origins of her words, she can only accurately say that they "got altered."

The text's use of passive voice also leaves ambiguous the identity of the speaker—to which this passage draws attention as well. According to Lecercle, the Father William moment represents a significant occasion when "the question of meaning and saying" occurs in the text. Only part of the horror is that Alice cannot remember the text she had stored in her mind, demonstrating the failure of her memory and, therefore, the loss of her identity. Lecercle notes that because Alice does not repeat the verse as Southey wrote it, the situation more significantly poses the question of meaning: who meant the new version, especially if Alice did not? He adds, "Poor Alice is reduced to the state of a tape recorder, a possessed mystic, or a raving lunatic. The words that come out of her mouth are not hers" (118). Lecercle's comparison of Alice to a tape recorder carries evocative resonances, since, as Steven Connor points out, tape recorders are distinctive among sound recording devices for the amount of manipulation they require—he describes the "ticklish ritual of threading the tape into the machine"—as well as for

their ability to be erased (as he says, "into the state of the tabula rasa") (3, 6). Alice, too, has been managed by educational authorities, and has found the content of her mind's tape rubbed out. As that phrase's associations with dubbing suggests, Alice has experienced another condition distinctive to tape recorders: the ability to re-record. Her mind has not simply been erased, but instead plays a new message. The implication of this scene, then, is that Alice not only loses her previous identity, but she also wrestles with a new one: who is the person who has communicated these ideas?

The ensuing silence seems a particularly appropriate, and meaningful, response. Up to that point, the scene overflows with language: Alice and the Caterpillar banter round and round in their dialogue of misunderstandings, and then Alice speaks an eight-stanza poem—two stanzas longer than the original. After speaking the wrong words, though, she falls quiet. Initially Alice may appear to choose silence as the only form of control available to her when she is faced with this excessive language, the "muchness" from this chapter's opening scene. However, the sentence itself—"there was silence for some minutes"—complicates a reading of this reaction. Alice does not actively choose silence; it simply "was," with the past tense of the state of being verb ("to be") rendering the scene inert. Her silence represents an absence, or act of forgetting, rather than a conscious stillness. Because she has spoken the wrong words, Alice realizes language cannot be trusted; with this realization, what other response is there but silence?

Although this scene clearly affects Alice personally, it also prompts broader and more disturbing insights about all people who quote as well as all cited texts. As a representative child reciting ubiquitous schoolroom poems, Alice's experience suggests wider application. As Lecercle notes, any time that people recite poems, they say words that are not their own, making Alice's disorienting experiences a fairly common occurrence. He adds that the scene "raises the awesome possibility that we are all, to some extent, mere mouthpieces, repeating words that are not ours" (118). While Lecercle continues by demonstrating the more extreme problem in Alice's case, his comment is

worth lingering over. It implies that the nineteenth-century process of education, with its emphasis on memorization and recitation, has made natural something that should remain unusual and disquieting: the process of communicating words that are not our own. Because people connect their identities to what they can remember, and even more significantly, to the meaning that exists behind those words, rote learning in effect has the power to turn its students into puppets. The changes in metaphor are illustrative here: instead of stocking quotations in the mind's storehouse, from which the sentiments can be securely retrieved, or of gathering selections into a mental garden, which will allow a young person to flourish, this form of education allows educators to load young people's minds with erasable tape, and to control their voices as if by puppet strings.

The fault does not entirely lie with the process of quoting, however. Part of the problem, the scene suggests, rests with quotations themselves. The backward, upside-down, and inside-out words that proceed from Alice's mouth draw attention to the way that quotations appear to present singular truths, but in reality contain shifting meanings. In an essay entitled "" (Quotation Marks), Marjorie Garber points out that quotations removed from their contexts seem wise, iconic, and monumental. She continues, "Once [a quotation] is reincarnated in a new speaker, it takes on a new set of meanings and often sheds or alters the 'original' meaning it may be thought to have possessed." She cites many examples, among them speakers' uses of "Iago's [utterances] on reputation, Polonius's 'this, above all: to thine own self be true,' and Pope's 'hope springs eternal in the human breast,'" which she says "appear regularly in political speeches without a trace of irony as the ringing 'philosophy' of the (often uncited) author" (666). Garber's findings offer a reminder that at its most basic level, Southey's original poem about maturing gracefully, even if Alice had been able to recite it correctly, would indeed take on new meanings in Wonderland, where time stands still. The exaggerated differences between the poem Alice recites and the poem she attempts to recite serve to emphasize a

reality that usually occurs more subtly: reciting a text in a new context always changes its meaning, even when the words remain the same.

"A Timid and Tremulous Sound": Recitation as Talking To and For Its Speaker

Although Alice does not reflect on these two insights—that quotations take on new meanings in new contexts, and that they prove a shaky ground upon which to discover one's identity—her responses to the events that occur between her second and third recitation reveal her growing awareness of them. She encounters a baby-shaking Duchess, a pepper-wielding Cook, and a howling baby-turned-pig when she stumbles upon their home, and she also attends the stagnant Mad Tea Party, where the attendees move aimlessly around the table, caught in the paradox of a revolving inertia. For the first time, and in both cases, Wonderland inhabitants recite poems or songs incorrectly, such as the Duchess's "Speak roughly to your little boy, / And beat him when he sneezes," rather than David Bates's "Speak gently to the little child! / Its love be sure to gain" (48-49), and The Hatter's "Twinkle, twinkle, little bat! / How I wonder what you're at!" rather than Jane Taylor's "Twinkle, twinkle little star! / How I wonder what you are" (57). In neither case do the inhabitants of Wonderland marvel at their strange words (the Hatter simply asks, "You know the song, perhaps?") or question their own identities. In fact, they consider their renditions accurate and find the unusual poems fitting for the unique Wonderland environment. Alice encounters additional quotations when she meets up with the Duchess again, when she is playing croquet with the Queen. The Duchess declares, "Everything's got a moral," an assertion she attempts to demonstrate by applying both altered and unaltered proverbs to situations in which they logically do not apply (70). (For example, she notes that "flamingoes and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is—'Birds of a feather flock together'" [71].) Alice recognizes that the morals, which are classified as such because they are believed generally to convey truth,

do not pertain to the given situation or coincide with the reality of Wonderland. Her response to the Duchess's chastisement for trying to thoughtfully consider the moralistic statements rather than simply accepting them reveals that her relationship to quoted texts is beginning to change. Asserting her own authority over the quotations, Alice replies, "I've a right to think" (72). If Alice is like a tape recorder, then in this moment she begins to understand the upside to tape's malleability: the ability for the user to intervene and modify the captured message (Connor 4-5).

In addition, Alice begins to articulate her own identity more strongly, in spite of the fact that her experiences continue to demonstrate how the concept of identity can oscillate—from the baby's transformation into the pig, where change occurs rapidly and drastically, to the paralysis of the Tea Party, where nothing changes at all. After her second failed recitation, and her taste of the mushroom that causes her to stretch above the trees, a Pigeon confronts Alice, calling her, "Serpent!" Admittedly, Alice does not feel completely sure of her identity, but she does believe she is not a serpent, refuting the Pigeon several times. She states, "But I'm *not* a serpent, I tell you! […] I'm a— I'm a--," finally finishing, "I—I'm a little girl" (43). Although Alice makes this assertion "rather doubtfully," and although the Pigeon remains unconvinced (and, in fact, draws similarities between little girls and serpents that critics like Auerbach have found provocative), it still marks the first occasion in which Alice declares something about her personal identity—a statement particularly notable considering it was made to a belligerent audience. These events prepare Alice to come to even greater realizations by the time she attempts her third recitation.

This next moment of quotation occurs after a long conversation among Alice, the Gryphon, and the Mock Turtle—who has agreed to tell Alice his history. He begins his account by suggesting his narrative will focus on his personal development, asserting, "Once […] I was a real Turtle" (74). Interestingly, from that point on his narrative centers on the school rather than his changed identity; he details his education, describes

his Turtle master (called Tortoise "because he taught us"), and explains the subjects he learned in school (75). At the Gryphon's command, the Mock Turtle then begins discussing the Lobster-Quadrille, a song and dance with elaborate actions. This abrupt change of topics, as well as the narrative interjections by curious Alice and the feisty Gryphon, almost obscures two significant points. First, when the Mock Turtle is called upon to tell his "history," a record of events that communicates his growth and individuality, he immediately turns to his schooling—yet another textual detail that affirms the link between nineteenth-century education and conceptions of identity. Second, while the Mock Turtle suggests that his history will chronicle his transformation from a "real Turtle" to his current status as a "Mock Turtle"—an important change of identity—he never completes the narrative (which, as we will soon see, bears an interesting similarity to Alice failing to finish her poem). The fact that the Turtle's "history" centers entirely on his educational background suggests a link between these two curiosities: something about formal learning transforms students from "real" to "mock," from authentic to artificial.

When the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon request that Alice tell about herself and her adventures, she experiences a similar inability to chronicle her own transformation and current identity. She states, "I could tell you about my adventures—beginning from this morning […], but it's no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then" (81). As she details her experiences thus far, the Mock Turtle and Gryphon listen quietly until she reaches her repetition of the Father William poem "in which the words all [came] different." The two seem flummoxed by this report: the Mock Turtle states that the situation is "very curious" and the Gryphon adds that it is "about as curious as it can be" (82). They agree they would like Alice to repeat another poem, asking her to recite "'Tis the voice of the sluggard," another didactic poem by Isaac Watts. Unsurprisingly, Alice repeats the poem inaccurately:

> "'Tis the voice of the Lobster: I heard him declare
> 'You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair.'
> As a duck with his eyelids, so he with his nose
> Trims his belt and his buttons, and turns out his toes.
> When the sands are all dry, he is gay as a lark,
> And will talk in contemptuous tones of the Shark:
> But, when the tide rises and sharks are around,
> His voice has a timid and tremulous sound."[57] (82)

Although Alice can identify that this poem's transformation of the Sluggard to the Lobster rests in her preoccupation with the Lobster-Quadrille, she still, as in the other recitations, experiences the memorized poem coming out of her mouth as drastically different from the poem she set out to recite. Instead of describing the Sluggard's complaints and inactivity, this poem tells of an over-baked Lobster who focuses on primping his external appearance: he "sugar[s] his hair," "trims his belt and buttons," and "turns out his toes." The contrast revealed in this first quatrain, between superficial appearances that obscure internal realities, becomes even more explicit as the poem continues. In the second quatrain, which, as Donald J. Gray notes in a footnote to the *Alice* text, "retains nothing of Watts's poem except its meter and rhyme," the Lobster appears content and fearless when upon the sand, but reveals his anxiety through his "timid and tremulous" voice when the tide rises and the sharks materialize (82).

Since the scene portrays a "nervous" child reciting a poem about a shaky-voiced character, it works to collapse the distinction between the voice in the poem and the voice speaking the poem (82). In fact, after the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon comment on Alice's poem as "uncommon nonsense," they ask her to continue, which she does in what the text calls a "trembling voice" (83)—a description much like the Lobster's "timid and tremulous" voice. In her analysis of Felicia Hemans's "Casabianca," Catherine Robson similarly locates correspondences between the content of memorized poems and the

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[57] Again, for comparison, the original poem states: "'Tis the voice of the Sluggard; I hear him complain, / 'You have waked me too soon, I must slumber again.' / As a Door on its Hinges, so he on his Bed, / Turns his Sides and his Shoulders, and his heavy Head" (qtd. in Carroll 82).

people who recite them. She eloquently notes a correlation between "the boy sailor […] waiting steadfastly for the paternal word of release that will never come, and the boy's unhappy descendant, the reciting child of a later age, doomed to stand on the schoolroom platform, his own version of the burning deck, until the task is done" (149). The comparable resemblance between Alice's voice and the Lobster's voice—along with the fact that this poem maintains its source in Alice's experiences and veers almost completely from the original text—suggests that this recitation, unlike the other ones, actually reveals something about Alice rather than concealing her perspective and identity. Like the Lobster, who feels himself hardening and drying out, yet continues polishing his exterior presentation, Alice, over the course of her stay in Wonderland, has started to experience and acknowledge her internal emptiness, while continuing, for the most part, to perform her role as model child. Instead of simply serving as the source of Alice's disorientation, like the other recitations, this poem begins to clarify her experience.

When Alice resumes her recitation, her poem continues with entirely different characters and actions that are even more threatening:

> "I passed by his garden, and marked, with one eye,
> How the Owl and the Panther were sharing a pie:
> The Panther took pie-crust, and gravy, and meat,
> While the Owl had the dish as its share of the treat.
> When the pie was all finished, the Owl, as a boon,
> Was kindly permitted to pocket the spoon:
> While the Panther received knife and fork with a growl,
> And concluded the banquet by-------" (83-84)

Instead of describing a Lobster's daily primping, this section, which the Mock Turtle interrupts before its conclusion, portrays an Owl and a Panther eating.[58] These stanzas also diverge significantly from the original poem. Although the third stanza of "'Tis the

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[58] Nina Auerbach has noted the emphasis on eating in *Alice*. She points out that "most of the Wonderland animals stand in some danger of being exploited or eaten" ("Alice" 37), and that "the core of Alice's nature, too, seems to lie in her mouth" ("Alice" 39).

Voice of the Sluggard" begins with the same initial five words, it tells of a viewer who observes the Sluggard's untended garden and clothing, and then visits him, whereupon he learns that the Sluggard has ignored cultivating his mind as well. This awareness prompts what the visitor calls "a lesson for me": "This man's but a picture of what I might be: / But thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding, / Who taught me betimes to love working and reading" (qtd. in Gardner 140). In Alice's case, the poem not only narrates a different scene, but replaces a didactic moral with bloodshed, as the panther apparently eats the owl. Furthermore, it remains incomplete in several senses: it breaks off in the middle of a line, it fails to offer a concluding stanza, and it falls enormously short of offering a lesson.

The idiosyncrasy and aggression of these lines, however, does not suggest that they remain disconnected from either the first two stanzas or the poem's larger project of revealing insights about Alice. Notably, this stanza begins in a garden—a place, as already noted, that was used metaphorically in the nineteenth century to describe young children's minds and to rationalize learning by heart. This particular garden belongs to the Lobster, a figure who, as previously established, bears similarities to Alice. These stanzas reveal that when an outsider peeks into the Lobster's garden—or Alice's mind—he or she discovers a scene that initially appears to be docile and harmonious: the Owl and the Panther share a pie. Upon looking more closely, though, an observer notices that the resources are not divided up equally. The Panther takes all of the food as well as the knife and the fork, leaving the Owl with empty, useless containers (which evoke the other nineteenth-century metaphor of the mind as a storehouse). Although the Mock Turtle interrupts Alice before she can finish the lines in which she presumably will state that the Panther finishes the banquet by "eating the Owl," the narrative violence still reverberates in the scene. The implications for a child's mind-garden should not be missed: instead of hosting a happy menagerie of quotations, it has been invaded (to echo the language of George Poulet) by predatory texts. Some, like the Owl, appear wise but are in fact

foolish,[59] and others, like the Panther, appear innocuous but are in fact fierce and powerful. And, when those quotations are put in conflict with each other, it can lead to brutal consequences. In snuffing out the existence of the Owl, the image suggests that an overrun mental garden actually promotes violence, having the power, through eliminating a quotation, to also eradicate a self. And, since the Owl is a predatory bird that is usually the eat*er* rather than the eat*en,* it also implies that the assumed consumer of texts may actually become consumed by them. Both Alice and her listeners remain deeply uncomfortable with this revealing poem. The Mock Turtle—who failed to finish his own educational story about changing from "real" to "mock"—disparagingly interrupts Alice's recitation, and the Gryphon suggests she discontinue it. As Alice agrees to leave her poem unfinished, she too reveals her preference to leave unacknowledged the poem's subtext about the power of quotation and the vulnerability of the reciter.

In spite of this elision—which she recognizes more openly later in the text—Alice does receive some constructive instruction related to her recitations for the first time since she has arrived in Wonderland. Instead of being met with her own fears or the Caterpillar's silence, this recitation receives a practical response. The Mock Turtle asks, "What *is* the use of repeating all that stuff […] if you don't explain it as you go on?" (84, original emphasis). His question reiterates his previous response to Alice's completion of the poem's first stanza; then he stated, "I should like to have it explained" (83). Recitations, according to the Mock Turtle, carry little significance unless they can be explicated and elucidated. Repeating poems merely to repeat them only confuses an audience and, as we have seen with Alice, endangers the speaker. In suggesting this

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[59] The proverbial expression "wise as an Owl" comes into play here. The fact that owls are often associated with underlying stupidity is revealed even in definitions of the word. In the OED, "owl" as a verb means "to be muddle-headed or blind, while appearing wise like an owl." Owls carry additional negative connotations in many cultures, where they are perceived as omens of evil associated with misfortune and death.

practical reaction, the Mock Turtle provides Alice with an antidote to empty recitation. When she can explain a text, which inherently requires engaging her own powers of analysis and judgment, she asserts her authority over the memorized texts. Rather than submitting to an erasure of the self, she participates in the construction of her own identity.

"The Words Don't Fit": Growing Up (and Out) in the Trial and Closing Frame

Although Alice does not reflect upon her third recitation or the Mock Turtle's critique, her behavior at the Trial—a scene she attends immediately after her conversation with the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon—reveals that she has gained significant insights since the start of her adventures in Wonderland. When she observes that the creatures of the jury transcribe one of her exclamations, regardless of their ability to spell the words or of their applicability to the trial at hand, she accurately perceives the confusion of the animals' repetition *du jour*. Her newfound attentiveness to inconsequential duplication also applies to the trial's "accusation," which is actually a nursery rhyme. The verses cause the court members to become sidetracked by dates and wrongly accuse the Hatter of stealing his own hats, suggesting the absurdity of instilling a rhyme with a responsibility as serious as determining a verdict. Alice's rejection of the rhyme's misuse is symbolized by her spontaneous growth, which occurs, for the first time since arriving in Wonderland, unassisted by any ingested substance. In this moment, Alice's body serves as a reflection of her maturing mind, which becomes even clearer as she responds assertively to the trial's irrationalities—speaking "boldly" to the Dormouse's censure (88), identifying the jury's scribbles as not "matter[ing] a bit," and refusing the King's command that she leave the trial (93). Most significantly, when she hears the name "Alice!" called out as a witness, she jumps up in a hurry crying, "Here!" (91-92). The story's earlier meek and confused young girl who thought she may have

been Mabel now has been transformed into an assured young woman who knows and can articulate her identity with confidence.

As the trial continues, Alice makes known that her newfound understanding of identity extends to its relationship with recited verse. After she is called to the stand, the King and the jury attempt to further condemn the prisoner by examining a folded piece of paper—later revealed to be a poem—as evidence. To the reader and to Alice, the verses appear to have no relation to the prisoner, as they are not in his handwriting, and they are unsigned. To the rest of the assembly, however, these facts only further demonstrate the Knave's guilt: the King asserts the prisoner must have "imitated" another person's hand and left the verses unsigned because he was up to mischief. Upon hearing this evidence, the Queen declares, "That *proves* his guilt, of course" (94, original emphasis). Like Alice at the start of the story, who determines who she is based on the memorized rhymes she knows, the court members believe that verses expose the identity and intent of the person associated with them, even when it cannot be established that the person wrote, or even copied, the lines. This scene takes the association between recitation and identity to its ridiculous extreme: because quotation is always a repetition, which, by extension, always includes at least one layer of imitation, it is never possible to pin down the exact relationship between the quoted text and quoting person. As a result, recitation carries with it connotations of fraud, seen earlier in the Turtle who changed from "real" to "Mock" and here in the association between imitation and criminality. Alice sees the logical blunder that has occurred in convicting a prisoner based on a random rhyme, so she refutes the Queen's declaration of guilt. She says, "It doesn't prove anything of the sort!," adding, "Why, you don't even know what they're about!" (94).

When the verses are read, they, and the court's response to them, only further reinforce Alice's point. Because it is so riddled with vague pronouns and intangible verbs, the poem used as evidence entirely mystifies readers, even though it makes grammatical sense. The first two stanzas of the six-stanza poem, for example, state:

> "They told me you had been to her,
> And mentioned me to him:
> She gave me a good character,
> But said I could not swim.
>
> He sent them word I had not gone
> (We know it to be true):
> If she should push the matter on,
> What would become of you?" (94)

After hearing the verses read, Alice, who has continued growing, continues to maintain her position. Putting the Mock Turtle's advice that recitations should be explained to good use, she states, "If any one of them can explain it, […] I'll give him sixpence." Then she adds, with a textually cued emphatic reference to herself (and her *self*), "*I* don't believe there's an atom of meaning in it" (95, original emphasis). Here Alice's mouth and Alice's body operate in concert to reveal the state of her mind: as she grows to her full size, and as she confidently speaks her beliefs, she reveals her conviction that memorized verses—contrary to cultural custom—are inconsequential. Because their origins cannot be established with certainty, and because their meaning relies upon a context that cannot be duplicated, they cannot be consulted to reveal anything about a person's behavior, intentions, or identity.

Soon after these realizations, Alice rouses from her dream. Critics debate the significance of this awakening, with several scholars interpreting it as revealing Alice's weakness, or slightly more generously, her preservation instinct. Nina Auerbach believes that the court's final verdict may finally "tell Alice who she is at last, but if it did, Wonderland would threaten to overwhelm her" ("Alice" 41). In her reading, Alice leaves Wonderland, exploding out of its world, "hungry and unregenerate" ("Alice" 46). Donald Rackin also believes that Alice denies Wonderland in order to protect her self, choosing "the destruction of her fearful vision for the sake of her identity and sanity" (323). In addition to sharing negative interpretations of Alice's departure, these scholars see her exit as having implications for her identity: that she fears its disclosure or that she can only locate it beyond the borders of Wonderland. Having traced Alice's

recitations, and her discoveries in response to them, I have a very different interpretation. Since she has come to understand herself and memorized texts within Wonderland, Alice now refuses to live according to the nonsense world's assumptions—which, as Lecercle has reminded us, are the assumptions of nineteenth-century education. Because she has gained the ability to speak her mind and discovered her identity, Alice can leave Wonderland behind.

If only that were the end of the story. Instead of closing with Alice waking up and telling her sister about her "curious" and "wonderful" dream, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* extends the concluding frame to include the reflections of Alice's sister—a nameless (and arguably, an identity-less) person. As the closing of a narrative that explores the effects of repetition on a young girl's life, the frame gains particular significance as it details three more reiterations of Alice's dream. In the first repetition, the sister simply sits and thinks "of little Alice and all her wonderful Adventures." This meditation prompts her to "begin dreaming after a fashion," where she has a dream that doubles her sister's dream: she first sees "little Alice," with her tiny hands, tossing head, and "bright eager eyes," and then the place around her becomes animated by Wonderland's creatures (98). In this second, dreamlike repetition, the sister re-imagines the Wonderland scenes, focusing on their perpetual sounds, such as the splashing Mouse, the tinkling teacups, the sneezing pig-baby, and the sobbing Mock Turtle. In her reverie, the sister knows that simply opening her eyes would reveal the actual sources of the Wonderland noises in the surrounding sounds of a busy farm-yard. Finally, the sister pictures Alice as a grown woman, but one who maintains the "simple and loving heart of her childhood." In this third reiteration, she imagines Alice gathering other little children around her, enlivening them with strange tales, "perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long ago." This retelling embeds repetition even further into the narrative, as the future Alice turns her listeners into reproductions of herself, "mak[ing] *their* eyes bright and eager" like her own (original emphasis). The frame, as well as the

novel, closes by further uniting Alice and the children, but as though by Alice's choice: in the sister's vision, Alice, inspired by her own happy childhood, would feel the "simple sorrows" and "simple joys" of the listening children (99).

While the closing frame's content is relatively straightforward, its function in the novel is more complex: it actually undermines what has occurred in Wonderland. In "Magic Abjured: Closure in Children's Fantasy Fiction," Sarah Gilead persuasively argues that *Alice*'s closing frame rejects or denies the fantasy comprising the majority of the book. She positions her argument against William A. Madden's earlier article, "Framing the Alices," in which he asserts that Alice's dream challenges her sister's "conventional view of the world" (364) and that her sister's reiterations of the dream restore and confirm Alice "in the wholeness and sanity that is her true identity" (368). Gilead disagrees that the ending has a therapeutic effect, pointing out that the sister does not achieve a greater understanding of reality, but that instead she tailors her retellings of Alice's dream to conform to her own worldview. She dismisses Alice by using diminutive language, calling her "little Alice" with "tiny hands," and she rationalizes each aspect of the dream, connecting the creatures' sounds to the farm yard's noises. Gilead argues, "Her conventional, sentimental outlook rewrites and softens the vivid reality of Wonderland, enabling her to escape the dream's frightening social and psychological truths" (282). As a result, Gilead asserts that the sister's repetitions of Alice's dream obscure and deny the critical consciousness that Alice has gained by the end of her stay in Wonderland (284). The dream that Alice shares has a subversive force, but the sister ignores and suppresses its power to critique and bring about change.

While Gilead makes a strong case, she does not address how the sister's three retellings of Alice's dream specifically accomplish that end. For, although her versions constitute little more than a page of text, repetition by three suggests series and process, according to Peter Brooks in *Reading for the Plot* (9). The sister's reiterations of Alice's dream, however, reveal a significantly different movement than her actual adventures.

While Alice's experiences occur in a dream-world that operates with a nebulous relationship to time, her sister's versions move chronologically. She begins by remembering Alice's adventures in the past, then she animates Alice and Wonderland in a present reverie, and then she envisions Alice retelling the story "in the after-time" (99). While the sister's placement of the dream in the past, present, and future seem to suggest growth and change over time, the actual narrative that she tells is one of stagnancy and retrogress. As Alice initially experiences them, her adventures—especially her recitations—build upon each other, leading her towards greater insight and maturity. Her sister's interpretation, though, transforms the events into a chorus of overlapping noises, including "the rattle of the teacups," "the shrill voice of the Queen," and "the squeaking of the Lizard's slate-pencil" (98). In addition to removing the story's forward-moving arc, the sister's version, in positioning Alice as an observer rather than as an agent, nearly eliminates Alice from the adventures, instead centering on the actions of Wonderland's creatures. The future vision of Alice only reinforces her passivity. Rather than moving forward, Alice has become arrested by her own past: she keeps "the simple and loving heart of her childhood," she remembers "her own child-life," and her storytelling only creates copies of herself: "other little children" with "eyes bright and eager" (99). In dramatizing a story's teller and listener, a frame tale, according to Brooks, both illustrates the problematic of narrative transmission and reveals "a deep anxiety about the possibility of transmission" (28). Tragically, this frame confirms the impossibility of continuing the story, as Alice's sister clearly does not hear or repeat the same dream that Alice first told. This frame assures that only a subdued version of Alice's adventures, as well as a domesticated version of Alice, lives on.

The result is a deep contradiction between the development that Alice experiences over the course of her stay in Wonderland, and the regress that Alice's sister imposes on her through the three repetitions. Instead of maturing into a young woman who disposes of her dependence on memorized verses and who challenges irrational authority, Alice

becomes the much-derided stereotype of a Victorian woman: a grown-up version of a child. Alice's sister cannot entertain the identity that Alice discovers outside her repeated texts. She elides Alice's newfound personality and places her back into a moralistic text, transforming her into the dutiful, innocent, and maternal person that the original recitation texts would want her to become. Instead of releasing her from her recitations, this vision of Alice confines her to continuous storytelling. The irony is palpable: in Wonderland, Alice learned to escape literary recitations, but now her sister's vision forces her to retell her tale in a form that entirely undercuts and contradicts what she actually has realized. The sister's response to Alice's dream suggests that while individuals may discover that the established relationship between memory and identity is an inadequate one, society at large will likely resist or re-read these insights as something else—say, a child's "curious dream" (98). As a result, those who discover themselves outside the cultural narratives find themselves plunged right back in: in Alice's case, as a childlike woman telling her simplified story for eternity.[60]

Fortunately, in spite of her attempts to control and subdue Alice's story, the sister's retellings of the dream are forgettable in comparison to the image of full-size Alice bursting out of Wonderland. Through this action, as well as her realization that quoted texts should be evaluated rather than merely accepted, Alice experiences greater depths of insight and empowerment related to quotation than Matilda or Maggie ever achieve. Moreover, Alice's new awareness has proven to be visionary, pointing the way forward to a new form of education and a new understanding of memory. At around the

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[60] Before Alice emerges from Wonderland, the text offers a clue that her insights might not be welcomed by society. In the final trial scene, the King initially cites the poem as "the most important piece of evidence we've heard yet" (95), which he attempts to prove by linking the obscure verses to the prisoner and other members of the court. When the King attributes the line "before she had this fit," to the Queen, though, she refutes him. The King then concludes, "Then the words don't *fit* you" (original emphasis). Rather than accepting the King's assertion that the verses do not correspond with reality, the audience responds unreceptively. The text states, "There was dead silence" (96).

turn of the twentieth century, new psychological and educational theories, which granted a more positive role to students, began to displace the associationist principles. John Dewey, for example, articulated a child-centered approach to education in *My Pedagogic Creed,* stating, "The child's own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting point for all education" (4). As students began to be perceived as active discoverers instead of passive receivers of information, attention shifted from the teacher to students, and pedagogical methods shifted away from factual knowledge to techniques of discovery. In line with the Mock Turtle's recommendation and Alice's realization, students were indeed encouraged to "explain" what they learned.

Around the same time, theories of memory also became more complex to acknowledge the various forms and uses of memory. In *Matter and Memory* (1908), Henri Bergson, for example, specifically speaks to the conflation of memory and memorization that the *Alice* text explores. He diverges from previous philosophers by arguing that two forms of memory exist, which he explains using the example of learning a lesson. In the first kind, the memory of the lesson, the body acquires information through repetition. In remembering a lesson, a person only recalls the memorized information, not the process of learning, which makes it similar to a habit (89-90). In contrast, Bergson describes the second form of memory as remembering a particular reading, as a moment that "stands out in [the] mind as a definite event in […] history." Unlike the memory of a lesson, the memory of a reading resists repetition: "its essence is to bear a date, and, consequently, to be unable to occur again" (90). In Bergson's schema, the "reading" memories refer to the events of our daily lives, while the "lesson" memories refer to learned information. He argues that these two forms of memory—the one that moves forward and repeats, and the other that looks back and recalls—lend support to each other but are also discrete forms of memory that are theoretically independent (92). He also contends that learned memory has been placed in the foreground as "the model memory," when in fact it is "impersonal" and "foreign to our

past life" (95). In making these distinctions, and in encouraging a revaluation of memories of daily life, Bergson articulates characteristics of memory that Alice's story portrays: that not all memories operate in the same way, and that learned memories, in fact, fail to reveal one's personhood. The workings of memory have continued to fascinate contemporary scholars. In recent years, memory studies has become a burgeoning field, benefitting from contributions that scholars have made in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, literature, medicine, philosophy, and physics (Flint, "Painting" 528). A recent issue of *Victorian Studies* reveals that this field has caught attention in nineteenth-century literary studies. The Winter 2007 issue, focused on "emergent possibilities in scholarship" that grew out of the 2006 NAVSA/NASSR conference, includes three papers organized under the theme of "Matters of Memory" (197).

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland's effectiveness in positing a new way of approaching texts, memory, and identity has become further apparent through the flexibility of the narrative itself. The *Alice* story has been re-told and re-imagined prolifically in contexts as varied as "hotels, fields, films, computer graphics, paintings, and theme park rides, as well as books and articles"; the years 1990-2003, for example, generated enough material for Will Brooker to write a 350-page book about Lewis Carroll and Alice in contemporary culture (xv). In one of *Alice*'s most recent adaptations, the 2010 film *Alice in Wonderland* directed by Tim Burton, the protagonist of the novel is allowed to grow up, returning to Wonderland as a young woman and re-encountering the creatures living there. This film, rather than repeating the novel's plot, diverges from it in nearly every way. In fact, the screenwriter Linda Wolverton, while acknowledging the influence of Carroll's texts on the film's narrative, calls it "the story I created"—a phrase that both asserts her own identity and her own agency in composing the narrative. Wolverton takes such liberties with the storyline that she anticipates that her narrative—like Alice's before her—will likely displease some portion of the audience. In an interview she states, "It's audacious, what we've done […] I was

thinking when I was writing this, 'Who do you think you are?'" ("Alice"). Readers familiar with the *Alice* narrative cannot help but notice similarities between Wolverton's question and Alice's question, "Who in the world am I?," when she arrives in Wonderland (15). While Alice's question is one of sincere perplexity about her own identity, Wolverton's inquiry is one, rather, of astonishment at her own boldness. She has dared to grant Alice a future rather than arrest her in the past, to re-write a literary classic rather than duplicating it, to grant her own voice as much power as an influential text. Alice, I venture to guess, would approve.

CHAPTER FOUR:
CIRCULATING THE GOSPEL: TRAVELING TEXTS AND ROVING CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY MISSIONARY CONTEXT

An August 1841 article in the *Missionary Gleaner,* a periodical of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), describes a missionary meeting in New Zealand where the participants desire to take up a collection. Mr. J. Matthews, one of the speakers at the meeting, admonishes the attendees about their need to send Testaments "to those who sit in darkness." He adds, "Now, Testaments do not grow on trees, neither can Missionaries swim across the deep: captains will not take them across in their ships without payment, and Testaments cannot be printed without expense" ("Missionary Meeting" 90). Although on the one hand he simply requests financial donations in order to further missionary work, on the other hand Matthews makes a peculiar appeal. He does not ask those at the missionary meeting to merely finance missionary workers. Even before he draws attention to the need for human labor, he focuses on the need for "Testaments"—the Bible—to bring those in darkness into the religious light. Even the "them" that the ship captains require payment to transport—an ambiguous pronoun that could refer either to the missionaries or to the books—suggests the interchangeable nature of the Bibles and the people bringing their Christian message to foreign peoples and places. Since Testaments do not generate naturally, Matthews declares that they must be manufactured and then take a journey overseas. "Circulating the Gospel," a phrase usually used to invoke the sharing of faith from person to person, suddenly takes a literal turn.

In *Strange Fits of Passion,* Adela Pinch draws attention to the way that other texts move from place to place (or, as she argues, from person to person). She contends that late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century authors sought after, yet struggled to find the origins of feelings. They concluded that emotions are impersonal and transsubjective,

"autonomous entities that […] wander extravagantly from one person to another" (3). As evidence, Pinch notes a pattern of quotation that occurs when writers and characters address feelings, which illustrates how sentiment can be derived from books and move between individuals (165). Thus, Pinch captures one of the most fascinating aspects of quotations: they represent feelings or ideas that come from one person or place, but as borrowed phrases, they have the ability to travel in order to represent another speaker or writer.

In describing a quotation as "a kind of visa that allows feeling to travel incognito" (171), Pinch uses a travel metaphor that prompts additional questions about the more literal journeys upon which quoted texts embarked in the nineteenth century. Specifically, when quotations were transplanted to another country and culture, how did they operate and what did they mean? While foreign memorization and recitation had an educative function much like the practice in nineteenth-century Britain, it poses new questions and concerns when it occurs in the colonial, missionary context. For example, in a cross-cultural framework, what did missionaries understand as the purpose or effect of reciting texts, and how did foreign people alter the meaning or experience of memorization? How might the power disparity between Western missionaries and colonial subjects influence the role of recitation in culture? And perhaps most provocatively, in this context how might the imitation inherent to memorization play a role in understandings of identity? The nineteenth-century missionary context serves as a test case for examining these questions, as missionaries carried biblical passages, the catechism, and hymns to their new foreign locales. These missionaries aimed to convert and train followers in places like India, Africa, and the Pacific Islands by having them learn religious passages by heart.

Although scholars have addressed the high estimation that missionaries placed on religious texts, and theorists have examined many forms of colonial imitation and mimicry, they have not addressed the uniqueness of religious memorization and quotation

when practiced by colonial subjects, nor the theoretical implications of this form of repetition. My analysis demonstrates that missionaries believed that the memorized material would shape the identities of the "natives" into more Christlike, as well as more civilized, selves. Moments within the period's missionary memoirs, religious periodicals, and R.M. Ballantyne's adventure fiction, however, suggest the opposite: missionaries frequently found their texts and beliefs translated into a language and culture that granted alternative meanings to their faith. As a consequence, instead of always shaping the potential converts, sometimes colonial memorization challenged the identities of the Westerners—replacing their rigid national identities with ones that were more inclusive of other people and cultures. Because this transformation is a possibility that current scholarship does not anticipate, my discoveries reveal the unique place and power of religious quotation in the nineteenth-century missionary context, reminding twenty-first century readers to give far greater attention to the textual traces of religion and empire in noncanonical texts. As this chapter follows texts overseas, it undertakes its own kind of journey, beginning with the significance of the Bible in the missionary context, then moving to an exploration of the more specific practices of memorization, and finally landing on a South Sea island with a reciting British sailor from R.M. Ballantyne's *Jarwin and Cuffy*.

Capsizing the Biblical Boat: Native People Inverting the Meanings and Uses of Scripture

Nineteenth-century texts are perfectly suited to explore questions about the resonances of religious quotations in new cultures and contexts, because the period marks the zenith of missionary activity. Although two missionary societies existed before the late 1700s, most of the major missions organizations were formed at the turn of the nineteenth century, including the Baptist Missionary Society (1792), London Missionary

Society (1795), and Church Missionary Society (1799).[61] In *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700*, historian Jeffrey Cox recounts the story of British missions in the nineteenth century. Early in the century, the missionary project suffered public relations setbacks, as their progress appeared to be slow and missionaries (sometimes legitimately) were seen as questionable characters. The missionary venture survived both general disapproval and specific disasters in order to build flourishing missionary institutions by the middle part of the century. At that time, itinerant explorers and preachers—of which David Livingstone is the most famous example—also popularized the image of the "missionary hero," which further generated public interest in missionary work.[62] By the latter part of the century, the expanding British Empire and the existing mission advancements contributed to "a very strong sense that the world lay open at the feet of Britain's churches" (Cox 171).

Although missionary activity flourished in the nineteenth century, surprisingly few literary texts are set in missionary locales. In Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre,* St. John Rivers desires that Jane join him in pursuing his vocation as a missionary. He envisions her as his fellow laborer, suggesting that she work as "a conductress of Indian schools, and a helper amongst Indian women" (394). The text details their preparations for missionary work in India, most notably in learning Hindustani. Jane finally realizes that such a calling would require her to "abandon half [her]self," particularly because she would have to submit to a marriage without love (395). *Jane Eyre* ultimately never

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[61] While they share their period of origin and goals of foreign conversions, these missions organizations differed in their denominational affiliations, theological underpinnings, and criteria for missionaries. For more information on these differences, please consult Jeffrey Cox's *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700,* which provides a thorough overview.

[62] According to Cox, David Livingstone was a "towering figure" who reached celebrity status through the publication of his books about mission work in South Africa. He sold 70,000 copies of *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, which made him "fortune as well as fame" (145).

leaves English soil, as Jane refuses St. John as her husband and India as her vocation. Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* also attends to missionary work through the character of Mrs. Jellyby, who occupies her time with her "African project": "cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger" (37). Her sole contribution to the people there, however, seems to be a never-ending letter-writing campaign, while she disregards her own children and her personal housekeeping. Clearly Dickens uses Mrs. Jellyby to critique the commercialization of colonial people and products under the name of mission work, as well as the Western tendency to devote indefatigable energy to overseas causes while ignoring needs at home.[63] Like *Jane Eyre, Bleak House* also centers on missions as it affects those in Britain.

Portrayals of missions work overseas do exist—just in different genres of writing. Jean and John Comaroff note that missionary memoirs, which shared features with travel writing, became an established literary genre by the end of the nineteenth century. They suggest that the works captured Western imaginations more for their "glimpses of radical otherness" than for their piety. Unlike travel writing, these missionary memoirs were notable for their epic form, which chronicled the quest of the noble missionaries and their struggles against evil forces (1: 172). These conquests of Christianity and civilization had many tropes in common, including a mythic crossing from civilization into heathen territory, where missionaries found coarse savages, infertile land, and a ferocious natural world (1: 172-73). The Comaroffs suggest that considering the missionary memoir as its own genre, propelled by specific tropes and conventions, opens the door for studying these texts not merely as "true" (although biased) accounts of missionary experiences and perspectives. Instead, they encourage readers to consider the symbolic meaning of people and events, to notice patterns and deviations amongst texts, and to consider

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[63] Anna Johnston sees Dickens's critique as "indicative of increasingly cynical views of missionaries later in the nineteenth century" (*Missionary Writing* 20).

missionaries' responsiveness to audience expectations. In addition, Anna Johnston, in *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860*, recommends reading stereotypical representations of native people attuned to figurative meanings as well as literal ones. Like other discourses about race and imperialism, trite and offensive characterization serves as a signal—in this case, for the need for Christian intervention—rather than a factual description of the "other" (34-35).

In addition to portraying overseas mission work broadly, these memoirs are particularly valuable for illuminating missionaries' beliefs about the Bible and other religious texts.[64] One notable memoir was written by David Livingstone's father-in-law, Robert Moffat (1795-1883). Born in Scotland, he became a missionary to South Africa with the London Missionary Society in 1816. Along with his wife Mary, Moffat settled his family in Kuruman, South Africa, in 1821 among the Bechuana (today spelled "Batswana") tribes, where he lived and worked for nearly fifty years. In establishing the mission, Moffat formed close relationships with Africans and considered his primary purpose the spread of the Gospel—even translating the entire Bible into Setswana. The conclusion to his memoir, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (1842), encapsulates Moffat's emphasis on Scripture. He admonishes the reader about the importance of the Bible: "It must be evident, that if the tribes which still survive the devastations of which they have been exposed, are to be saved from annihilation, it must be by the diffusion of the Gospel" (612-13). The Bible, he claims, would save African

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[64] Although the nineteenth-century archive teems with missionary memoirs and travel narratives, not all of them are equal in their treatment of the Bible and other religious texts. Missionaries varied in their preparation for the field, their understanding of the work, their goals for the native people, and the means of accomplishing their goals. For example, some missionaries, such as the aforementioned "missionary explorer" David Livingstone, were most interested in charting territory and providing ethnographic descriptions of people and their cultures (Cox 146-47). To discover how Christian texts were used in foreign locales, therefore, I have chosen to examine the memoirs of missionaries like Robert Moffat and John Williams, who were involved in the more traditional work of setting up mission stations.

people from "rapine, bondage, blood, and murder," and instead turn them to peace, "intelligence, holiness, and happiness." In fact, he says, without a hint of irony, that the Bible "is omnipotent" (613). More specifically, in using metaphors of light, medicinal healing, and purification to describe the Bible, Moffat clearly sees the dissemination of the Scriptures as having the power to illuminate, cure, and transform.

Although missions agencies and denominations varied in their theological perspectives and practices, most nineteenth-century missions workers shared Moffat's perspective on the Bible. The period's missionary expansion was largely Protestant, including the Anglican-based Church Missionary Society, the largely Congregationalist London Missionary Society, the Baptist Missionary Society, and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. As Maggie Tulliver's experience with *The Imitation of Christ* has already demonstrated, Protestant faith and practice instilled religious texts—particularly the Bible—with the capacity to bring about conversion and change. Because the Word provided the means of knowing God, it had transformative power: it could convict sinners, change minds, and alter behavior. As Paul Landau states, "It was inevitable that Christian missionaries would be interested in language and literacy. Most of them believed that reading was a direct route for grace" (194). Since missionaries aimed to introduce Christianity and bring about conversions, and since they believed the Bible was the means to accomplish those goals, logically they centered their efforts on the Bible. Protestants also emphasized fostering an individual's personal relationship with God, which was formed through Bible reading. Because they resisted human mediation of that relationship (through a priest or other pastoral figure), they believed it was important for potential converts to read the Bible in their own languages in order to have direct access to its words. Therefore, many missionaries, including Moffat, worked diligently to learn the language of the people they lived among in order to translate the Scriptures into their language, and many wrote about their excitement when printing presses became established in foreign locales.

If the Bible was the means for saving grace, it was also the source of social graces. Most missionaries in the nineteenth century were influenced by the philosophy that mission work had a dual purpose: imparting both Christianization and civilization, with the latter naturally flowing out of the adoption of the former. The meaning of "civilization" is more often implied than defined, with missionary memoirs frequently narrating—in glowing terms—the transformation of native people's attire and living conditions through imitation of Western models. For example, LMS missionary John Williams (whom we will meet again later in Ballantyne's fiction) concludes his *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (1839) by describing the benefits of imparting knowledge about topics "calculated to increase [the Polynesian people's] comforts, and elevate their character" (498). Practically speaking, this includes building white, plaster cottages; stocking them with beds, chairs, and other appropriate furniture; wearing European clothing (such as gowns, bonnets, and shawls, for the women); and manufacturing goods, such as sugar, for commerce (499-500). "Civilization," it seems, does not refer to refinement in a broad sense, but to adopting a British lifestyle (with its accoutrements) and Western economic model. Although none of these specific ways of life are promoted in the Bible itself, missionaries still saw their adoption as accompanying the native people's acceptance of the Christian religion, which was brought about by Bible reading.

To the colonial subjects, however, the Bible carried different resonances. As Anna Johnston has pointed out, the Bible was seen as a "colonial book," metaphorically standing in for the establishment of the colonial regime ("Book Eaters" 14). Part of the association between the Bible and imperialism was the synchronous expansion of both the text and British power: according to R.S. Sugirtharajah, the "defining moment" in scriptural imperialism was the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, an organization with the primary intention of disseminating the Bible "to all peoples" (46). He adds that the first part of the nineteenth century was marked by an

astonishing increase in Bible translation: it was published in 160 languages or dialects—more than a 500 percent increase from the 30 languages into which it had been translated in all of the years preceding that period (56). Because Bible distribution was occurring at the same time as Britain's military march into new territory, they became closely aligned in foreign people's consciousnesses.[65]

Other more loosely related correlations only reinforced the Bible's symbolic association with imperialism. Because it was a printed book—in many cultures, the first printed book the people had seen—the Bible stood for modernity and Western proficiency in establishing the printing press. And, since the Bible claimed to present universal truth, being the holy "word of God" rather than merely a human text, the certainty it (and Christianity more generally) communicated came to signify Western confidence in its ideological supremacy. Homi Bhabha addresses the symbolic nuances of colonial subjects discovering English books—of which the Bible is his first example—in "Signs Taken for Wonders," arguing that the English book functions as "an insignia of colonial authority and a signifier of colonial desire and discipline" (146). In conveying "truth," directing the available narratives, and compelling certain ways of life, books do more than share a specific belief system; they also execute a form of cultural authority. As Simon Gikandi states, "Texts were important and indispensable weapons in the

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[65] Although addressing the entire relationship between imperialism and missionary work is outside the scope of this chapter, it is worth addressing briefly. Jeffrey Cox points out that there have been three main interpretations of religion and empire: imperial, which views missionaries as marginal figures in imperialism; anti-imperial, which views missionaries as cultural imperialists; and ecclesiastical, which regards missionaries as heroes (3-4). He asserts that religion and imperial power must be seen in relationship, as "the expansion of British Christianity took place during an unprecedented expansion of British power worldwide, and simply cannot be understood […] as a triumphal success detached from the political and social realities within which it operated" (9). He does point out, however, that an anti-imperial framework ignores the fact that the spread of Christianity differed from the expansion of British power in lacking "direct military, police, or legal coercion" (11). This point is not intended to ameliorate the negative effects of missionary involvement, but simply to clarify its relationship to imperialism.

imposition of rule and governance" (xix). What guns were to colonial rule, he suggests, were texts to cultural control. The paradoxical fact that the Bible is, in essence, a collection of Middle Eastern texts did not change its role as a symbol of Western authority; it merely enhanced the irony.

As their proclivity for viewing the Bible as a symbol for imperial expansion suggests, colonized people did not grant the Bible the same, stable meaning that their emissaries intended. Missionaries frequently reveal their awareness that the meaning of their revered text—whether intentionally or not—had been altered. Native languages posed the first difficulties: sometimes they lacked equivalent words or phrases for key Christian concepts. R.S. Sugirtharajah states, "The Mosquito Indians in Nicaragua had no word for sin, Ibos had none for soul; and Nigerians had none for sacrifice, and so forth" (58). Missionary translators often had to use creative approximates—"be not angry" for "forgive"—that lost nuances of the Bible or suggested new, unintended resonances (59). In addition, because missionaries had to rely on native people to help them learn the language and translate passages, they were always aware that the texts might be lacking in accuracy. Besides miscommunication and mistranslation, missionaries began to worry that native people were intentionally trying to subvert the missionary project by laughing at them, misleading them, or outright lying to them (Johnston, "Book Eaters" 22). The missionaries needed the native informants in order to translate their texts, but the partnership was an uneasy one.

In *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa,* Moffat shares one instance where he was "completely duped" by a man in an isolated African village (125). Since the man "appeared somewhat more intelligent than the rest," Moffat tried to ascertain whether the area had a traditional narrative of a great flood, echoing the biblical one, which he believed could be found in most cultures of the world. When the man expressed some knowledge of a deluge, Moffat eagerly wrote down the story, "thinking [himself] a lucky discoverer" (126). He began to be suspicious of the man's narrative,

though, when some of the details sounded too similar to the biblical story. Upon being questioned, the African man insisted that he heard the account from his forefathers. Moffat, unable to make sense of the similarities, folded up his paper and resolved "to leave the statement to wiser heads than [his]" (126). A few days later, when Moffat was returning through the area, he sought out a guide to another mission station. One man who had been to the station before, but was unable to make this journey, pointed to the flood storyteller, saying, "*There* is a man that knows the road […], for I have seen him there" (126, original emphasis). The mystery was suddenly revealed: the man had heard the story from another missionary, but tricked Moffat by passing the story off as of native origin.

Sometimes the altered meanings of Scripture, however, had nothing to do with its language and stories. For example, the Bible could be used as a physical object rather than for its written content. Sujirtharajah provides several examples: a Brazilian woman who purchased the book for its beautiful binding rather than its message, a Chinese man who avoided being shot in the revolution by waving the book, Sri Lankan families who suspended portions from the roof to heal sick people, and a Japanese student who read it in order to understand other English texts' biblical allusions (158-60). As a beautiful artifact, protective sacred object, fetishized commodity, and educational tool, the Bible was put to many uses that entirely undermined the text as God-breathed Scripture with the power to convey truth and transform lives. As Johnston states, the missionaries were aware "that they were losing control of the message, the text, and the ways in which these might be used in a different cultural context" ("Book Eaters" 15). To the missionaries, what I call these "reverse translations" were deeply disturbing—both in disrespecting their holy text and in signaling their failure to convert native people. Some contemporary critics and theorists, in contrast, view these historical moments positively, in undeniably affirming the native people's agency.

Michel de Certeau, for example, would likely celebrate the creativity of the native people's uses of the Bible, seeing them as further examples of the "ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong" (xvii). In *The Practice of Everyday Life,* de Certeau provocatively theorizes consumption as a form of production, granting the user agency in determining how to apply a product or idea—frequently in a different way than the producer or creator intended it. De Certeau argues that everyday practices, such as reading, talking, walking, dwelling, and cooking, reveal that consumers are not passive or docile receivers of goods and ideas, but instead are active (although hidden) producers, because they determine their own way of using products and thereby reappropriate objects and representations. As he states, "Users make innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules" (xiii-xiv). Reading is a particularly significant everyday practice, according to de Certeau, in a world of print media that seems to emphasize the consumer's passivity (xxi). As I noted earlier, he argues that a text is "habitable, like a rented apartment," which means that readers enter into narratives and appropriate them, furnishing textual spaces with their own thoughts and memories (xxi). In his chapter called "Reading as Poaching," de Certeau uses metaphors of readers as plundering travelers to elaborate on readers' power as consumers: "They move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves" (174). Although de Certeau uses a metaphor that may have negative colonial and class undertones to contemporary readers, in the missionary context the application of the image is reversed, as the native inhabitants initiate the poaching of the colonial text.[66]

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[66] Because such interpretations ultimately rely upon colonial descriptions of native subjects, Anna Johnston warns against reading for "native agency or resistance or history through such highly mediated texts as those of colonial evangelization," finding the task both difficult and problematic (*Missionary Writing* 36).

One moment in Moffat's narrative captures a native preacher pilfering from Moffat's textual territory—but in a way that is more subtle and complex than the examples mentioned thus far. Moffat describes how, at one point in his travels through South Africa, he arrived at a distant village populated by natives who were eager to hear his message. Although he was exhausted, he preached from the back of a wagon to hundreds of expectant people, along with herds of cattle, spear-clad strangers, and barking dogs. After taking a short break to wash and eat breakfast, he was urged to preach again, this time by what he called "if possible, a still more attentive congregation" (597). When he finished, most of the listeners discussed the sermon with each other or asked the missionary questions, but one person, "a simple looking young man […] rather oddly attired," caught Moffat's attention:

> He wore what was once a pair of trowsers [sic], with part of one leg still remaining. For a hat he had part of the skin of a zebra's head, with the ears attached, and something not less fantastic about his neck. I had noticed this grotesque figure before, but such sights are by no means uncommon, as the natives will hang any thing about their bodies, either for dress or ornament, without the slightest regard to appearance. The person referred to was holding forth with great animation to a number of people, who were all attention. On approaching, I found, to my surprise, that he was preaching my sermon over again, with uncommon precision, and with great solemnity, imitating as nearly as he could the gestures of the original. A greater contrast could scarcely be conceived than the fantastic figure I have described, and the solemnity of his language, his subject being eternity, while he evidently felt what he spoke. Not wishing to disturb him, I allowed him to finish the recital, and seeing him soon after, told him that he could do what I was sure I could not, that was, preach again the same sermon verbatim. He did not appear vain of his superior memory. (597-98)

Initially, there appears to be no transgression. Moffat desires to share the Gospel with the native people, and their repetition of his words—particularly when communicated with sincerity and humility, as Moffat asserts this man does—would presumably flatter and please any missionary. In fact, Moffat seems to perceive this moment as a sign of the man's sincere acceptance of Christianity, and therefore, an indication of missionary triumph; just sentences later, Moffat states that the man "died *in the faith* shortly after"

(598, my emphasis). Moffat's description of the man, however, suggests his discomfort. He opens by describing the man's physical appearance: the tattered and uneven trousers, the zebra skin head covering, and the unidentifiable neck decoration. The man's appearance, though, does not merely seem unusual or foreign to Moffat, who emphasizes the importance of Western attire throughout his narrative (he earlier describes his delight at a group of Africans who, after converting to Christianity, "became clothed and in their right mind") (505). He characterizes the man and his attire as "grotesque" and "fantastic"—adjectives that emphasize the monstrous nature of the man and his presentation.

The man's appearance *matters* to Moffat, because in imitating him, the sermonizer reflects him. In watching the man preach his sermon, it is as though Moffat is looking into a mirror, an action that turns the viewer back on himself. Mirrors, interestingly, were ubiquitous opening gifts from missionaries to tribal chiefs in the nineteenth century. Jean and John Comaroff emphasize that the looking glass had a symbolic meaning, of serving as "the window into a new way of seeing and being" (1: 185). Specifically, in giving a mirror to a native person, missionaries were hoping cultivate a new self: a "contained, reflective" self that "embodied evangelical values and purposes" (1: 187). In this case the trope is reversed: instead of the native chief seeing himself anew (and, ultimately, refashioning himself after the missionary's image), the missionary comes face to face with himself, as reflected upon the body of his African mimic. The image clearly surprises Moffat: instead of viewing his likeness as he imagines it, he encounters an image that appears as distorted as a fun house mirror's reflection. The shock prompts certain questions. What truth does the reflection reveal about Moffat's appearance and presentation? Even more significantly, what does the man's resemblance imply about Moffat's identity? The passage's language reflects the missionary's discomfort and perplexity. Moffat fluctuates in his pronoun usage—not knowing how to speak of the sermon's content, which originated with him, but which

was repeated more exactly by the man than Moffat could have done himself. The first time he mentions the man repeating the homily, he refers to him preaching "*my* sermon," but then later he says the man spoke about "*his* subject," eternity. Moffat swaps pronouns, linguistically capturing the slippage of identity he experiences in the scene.

Although Moffat's description of this striking moment seems to embody Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry—colonial imitation that is "almost the same, *but not quite*"—it also departs from it in significant ways ("Of Mimicry" 123, original emphasis). In "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha argues that those in power want their colonial subjects to reproduce their values and way of life, but they also desire that the natives remain "a reformed, recognizable Other." Because of this contradiction, colonial discourse is always ambivalent—attempting to regulate and discipline, while also being marked by irony, slippage, and difference (122). In Moffat's anecdote, the "almost the same" aspects of the sermon are easily apparent: the young man delivers the homily with precision, even capturing the gestures of the original performance. At the same time, Moffat thoroughly identifies the "not quite" in his detailed description of the man's exoticized clothing. According to Bhabha, this repetition with a difference moves from "mimicry" to "menace," threatening colonial power by robbing the objects that hold meaning in Western culture of their representational authority. Provocatively, at the end of his essay Bhabha specifically suggests that the Bible, which bears "both the standard of the cross and the standard of empire," is particularly susceptible to this disempowering shift (131).

However, there are aspects of the scene Moffat describes—and other portrayals like it of missionaries and native people—that theory and criticism about mimicry do not fully explain. First, while they examine many forms of colonial imitation, scholars do not address the more literal kind of repetition desired by the missionaries and modeled by the African sermonizer: the memorization and recitation of religious passages. Does the man's quotation honor Christianity and speak to the success of missionaries, as Moffat

seems to think, or does it deprive the text, and its bearers, of influence? If the latter is the case—that his mimicry threatens colonial power by depriving valued objects of their significance—then theories of mimicry fail to explain the reasons for or the effects of the kind of theft exemplified in this scene: that of destabilizing the identity of Westerners. As this moment from Moffat's memoir suggests, the move from a consideration of reading religious texts to reciting them, although subtle, raises new and provocative questions about imitation and identity in the colonial context.

Trekking (and Talking) in Unison: Communal Identity through Religious Memorization

Nineteenth-century missionary periodicals, which are based on letters or reports to the home mission stations, offer a starting point for examining memorization and recitation on the mission field. They provide firsthand reports from missionaries about their intentions for religious texts—which is where we will begin—as well as how they were actually understood and used in foreign locales. Periodicals also serve as particularly valuable sources of information on recitation, because memorizing religious texts surprisingly receives almost no scholarly mention in contemporary academic sources, in spite of the fact that research on texts and language in the nineteenth-century mission field proliferates.[67] Perhaps one reason for its absence is that contemporary scholars, who are preoccupied with conventional understandings of reading and textuality, believe it rarely occurred. In *The Bible and the Third World,* for example, R.S. Sugirtharajah argues that missionaries clearly privileged the textual over the oral: "their mission was premised, after all, upon a book" (69). He suggests that the cultures they

[67] Just a few notable examples include *Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* by Leslie Howam, *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* by Leon de Kock, and *Mixed Messages: Materiality, Textuality, Missions*, edited by Jamie S. Scott and Gareth Griffiths.

traveled to in Asia, Africa, and Oceania were frequently oral ones, in which the people understood divine communication as manifesting itself through spoken recitation, memorization, and public performance (68). Missionaries frequently assumed that these "oral cultures were empty and were waiting to be filled with written texts," he argues, so they devoted themselves to literacy and to private Bible reading in vernacular languages (69). Sugirtharajah adds that missionaries did not just replace recitation with reading; they also exchanged interpretive approaches. Instead of valuing texts for their allegorical, symbolic, figurative, and metaphorical significances—which were emphasized through practices of recitation, repetition, and memorization—missionaries encouraged interpretations centered on historical-critical questions (71).

While Sugirtharajah's assertions may apply to some missionaries and potential converts, the period's missionary memoirs and periodical articles reveal much greater diversity in attitudes toward the transmission of biblical texts. In fact, many accounts indicate that missionaries commonly encouraged native people to memorize and recite religious passages in the nineteenth-century mission field. Although there was not a uniform canon of memorized texts, authors and missionaries frequently mention New Testament Gospel passages, the Psalms, and verses containing important teachings (such as the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer). In addition, missionaries regularly instructed native people in the principles of Christianity by having them memorize the catechism, along with prayers and hymns. In its most straightforward form, missionaries seemed to have been merely taking their attitude toward Scripture's power to its logical conclusion: if the Bible, as the source of truth, was the means to conversion and salvation, then what better way to bring that change about than to imprint biblical passages on the people's minds? Particularly when copies of the Bible in the vernacular were rare, and people lacked literacy, memorization was an efficient way to bestow the Scripture upon the "heathen" natives.

If missionaries valued efficacy, they also valued strategy. Another reason they encouraged people to memorize Scripture, as opposed to merely reading it or hearing it read, was because they perceived it as a form of textual transmission that was natural for people in oral cultures. For example, oral "rhyming verses," according to J.R. in a *Sunday at Home* article, "have a peculiar attraction for the native mind." The author describes visiting a mission site in India, where an American missionary taught classes about the Bible. He states, "Oftentimes while St. Paul's epistles were being expounded on one side of the grove, on the other might be heard the voice of the old fakir […] passionately reciting the story of Tusaf and Zuleikha (Joseph and Potiphar's wife) in Punjabi verse, before a small but appreciative audience" (647). He adds that both Hindus and Muslims use rhyming verses to impart religious instruction, so the same means is being used to share Christian truth. In fact, he notes that a poor blind man "is now composing a metrical version of the Psalms in Punjabi, which he intends to commit to memory and recite in bazaars and rest-houses, or wherever he may find listeners" (647). Memorizing religious texts, therefore, could have a dual purpose: it could deepen personal understanding, while also allowing native people to pass on biblical insights to their fellow citizens in a way that felt natural to them.

Perhaps because reciting Christian texts required a greater investment than reading, missionaries frequently narrate scenes of villagers who memorize and recite the Bible and the catechism as proof of the genuineness of their faith and, therefore, the success of the missionary venture. In "A Visit to New Zealand, in 1840," the Rev. J. Couch Grylls is quoted as describing a Sunday morning walk through a village and its beach, where he sees groups of people "reading portions of the Scriptures with great earnestness and seriousness, occasionally stopping and commenting, or committing to memory." He sees this behavior as "proof of their scrupulous attention to their Lord's-day duties" (13). "Notes of the Bishop of Calcutta's Visit to Krishnaghur" describes a similar phenomenon in India. When Catechists or Readers are unable to visit the

villages, Mr. Alexander reports that "the Christians and inquirers meet together in the mud Chapel […] and repeat what they remember of the Church Prayers: they have all learnt the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and therefore they never separate without having been able to edify each other by repeating these" (129). Clearly part of the stories' appeal is that they evince the initiative of the native people. The Westerners writing the articles are positioned as observers, walking along the beach or watching the mud chapel gatherings, while the native people are the primary actors, commencing gathering together and reciting Scripture. In addition to reflecting the missionaries' achievement, the visibility of the action helps missionaries classify the natives. Since Bible reading can be a silent activity and conversions are inward transformations, both actions easily can be feigned. The recitation of Scripture, on the other hand, can serve as an outward representation—as evidence, if you will—of an inner faith.

In addition to changes of heart, periodical accounts suggest that religious quotation came to function symbolically for other transformations as well. Specifically, missionaries frequently cite memorization—a practice requiring organization, logic, and discipline—as evidence of native people's docility and refinement. The Rev. G.A. Kissling, for example, who was stationed with the Church Missionary Society in Hicks' Bay, New Zealand, describes the following scene: "Powerful Chiefs, with hair as white as snow, who formerly wielded their deadly weapons to the terror of all around them, here sat at my feet repeating the Church Catechism, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed, or reading the New Testament, and answering my questions in the meek spirit of little children" ("Missionary Tour" 7-8). To Kissling, the recitation of the catechism and the Bible serves as a visible sign (or aural signal) that violent warriors have been successfully tamed. He also compares the reciting chiefs to children—a frequent motif—suggesting that memorization grants the missionaries a certain authority over the native people, who are infantilized in the process. In this way, missionary memorization serves

as a disciplinary technique, fitting within what Foucault calls the period's "projects of docility" (136).

Several periodical examples place great emphasis on the outward appearance and structure of reciting Scripture, which further accentuates the authority of the missionaries and the obedience of the native people. "New-Zealand Mission—Extracts from Two Letters of the Bishop of New Zealand," for example, describes a mission school as "conducted in the most orderly manner," with "grown-up men, in full English dress, standing round in classes, according to proficiency, and reading and taking places with all the docility and good humour of children" (93). After reading, they "marched"—a word with obvious connotations of the military, another institution that used disciplinary techniques—"in perfect order into the Chapel, where they repeated by heart a chapter of the New Testament with great accuracy" (93-94). The author does not seem to comment upon the biblical recitation of these full-sized "children" in order to reveal aspects of their relationship with Christ or with the texts themselves. Instead, this anecdote places great emphasis on the people's performance as indicative of their outward behavior, which is characterized as orderly, docile, and accommodating. Interestingly, the author also finds their English dress worth noting, presumably finding it yet another sign of their good conduct and cultivation. In the same way that native people used religious texts in ways that transcended their literal messages, the missionaries, too, seemed to value the native people's memorization of the Bible for more than its conversion potential. In a context where religious meaning was unstable, and native people sometimes used texts to mislead or deceive, having prospective converts memorize Scripture allowed missionaries a certain kind of control—over textual consumption and outward behavior, if not over interpretation.

That control, however, was illusory. While missionaries hoped that memorizing would prompt native dedication to Christianity, it had the unfortunate shortcoming of initiating questions of authenticity. In fact, some of the memorization that Britons

encountered in their mission work or travels struck them as ineffectual at best, and deception at worst. Anthony Trollope, for example, who travelled to the West Indies in 1858-59, includes a chapter of his *West Indies and the Spanish Main* called "Jamaica—Black Men." He concludes that education is unproductive for black people because they are "apparently capable of but little sustained effort." He concedes that they are ambitious, but that their learning lacks true substance; while they can often read, he claims they can rarely reason (56-57). In fact, to Trollope, any behavior that appears learned is empty imitation: he states, "[The black man] burns to be regarded as a scholar, puzzles himself with fine words, addicts himself to religion for the sake of appearance, and delights in aping the little graces of civilization" (56). In using a term like "aping," Trollope does not merely select a synonym for imitating; he uses animal imagery to dehumanize black people and to ridicule their educational efforts.[68] Providing yet another example of Bhabha's theory of mimicry, Trollope does not merely emphasize native imitation, but he expresses his hostility towards it—marking its difference from Western behavior.

While he criticizes replication in black people's learning as simply ineffectual, Trollope becomes outright suspicious when he encounters it in their faith. He claims that he "distrusts the negro's religion" as insincere, which their relationship with their "religious exercises" proves: they sing psalms without practicing virtues, they say prayers without forgiving offenses, and they listen to the commandments without following them. He adds, "They are wonderfully expert at Scripture texts; but—and I say it with grief of heart, and with much trembling also at the reproaches which I shall have

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[68] This intention becomes more overt when Trollope adds his instructions for bringing a black man into obedience: "tell him that he is a filthy nigger, [and] assure him that his father and mother had tails like monkeys" (56). Because Trollope's language is so vitriolic, I find Johnston's advice to read offensive characterization as a signal for the necessity of Western intervention particularly helpful here.

to endure—I doubt whether religion does often reach their minds" (58). Trollope portrays this "gift" of memorization as ultimately deceptive: it suggests a familiarity with the concepts being repeated, while covering over the disconnection between the Jamaican people's mouths and their minds. In fact, the ability to profess religion—through psalms, prayers, and memorized Scripture—is more than merely unreliable; it is manipulative. Trollope attributes the Jamaican people's memorized performances to little more than a smoke and mirrors display that has engulfed its observers, to the point that he fears revealing the secret to his readers, who he imagines will respond with indignation.

Later Trollope concedes that the black people "love the Bible," but his recognition only further supports his belief that their faith lacks substance. He states that they "love it as the Roman Catholic girl loves the doll of a Madonna which she dresses with muslin and ribbons. In a certain sense this is piety, and such piety they often possess" (60). Here religious faith is reduced to childhood play. In comparing reading Scripture to dressing a doll, Trollope implies that the black people value the Bible more for its amusement and superficial ornament than for its sacred content and meaning. In addition, he suggests that the Jamaican people's expertise in scriptural texts exhibits a fondness for the trappings of faith that should not be conflated with true devoutness. Trollope also portrays the black people with their Bibles as doubly feminized and diminutive: they are like young female children playing with their even smaller feminine toys. His comparison of native people to young girls is significant: as the previous three chapters suggest, memorization is almost always associated with young women in nineteenth-century literature. While those memorizing texts are more frequently men in missionary depictions, Trollope's comparison offers a reminder to notice the way that colonial subjects may be feminized through the act of memorizing.

More significantly, Trollope's portrayal of Jamaican people—among many of the other previously mentioned examples—evokes the unique questions of identity that

religion and replication raise in the missionary context. In addition to Trollope noting that the black man copies "certain virtues […] because they are the virtues of a white man" (57), many periodical articles place emphasis on the English dress and civilized behavior of the native memorizers. Over and over, authors are preoccupied with identifying the aspects of memorizing and reciting that mark a speaker as British, as well as the characteristics that inscribe an orator as foreign. Therefore, this dissertation chapter joins the previous ones in arguing that memorization has a distinct bearing on the speaker's identity. In this case, however, it operates in a different way. The missionary context—which allowed for, and even demanded, crossing borders and cultures—initiated questions of national and cultural belonging. Consequently, memorization acquires an even greater power to constitute identity on the mission field than when it is bound to the British homeland. In addition to contributing to personal identity, as evidenced in the example of Moffat and his mimic, memorization has an even greater potential to influence communal identity.

Contemporary theory and scholarship support the claim that shared texts can form national communities. Benedict Anderson, for example, argues in *Imagined Communities* that the idea of nations, as "imagined political communit[ies]," came into being toward the end of the eighteenth century in large part due to texts: "Print-capitalism […] made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (36). Specifically, the move to vernacular languages laid the foundation for people to form these imagined communities, because they could "come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves," who they otherwise would have no means of knowing (77). The nineteenth-century missionary field provides numerous examples of nation-building through language. Paul Landau, in an essay called "Language" in *Missions and Empire,* emphasizes how missionaries—in the histories, ethnographies, and dictionaries they wrote for Europeans to read—actually helped to

create national identities among the people they worked and lived among. He explains that by crafting alphabets for oral languages, and then giving the people common Christian texts in those languages, missionaries "helped produce national identifications from the inside, among readers." As an example, he cites the Yoruba people in West Africa, who, rather than seeing themselves as living in disconnected city-states, came to have a communal identity through their interactions with missionaries.[69] Conversely, missionaries also helped craft external identities, as outsiders were frequently more willing and able to recognize literate groups of people with more formal governing structures (195). Landau's analysis suggests that while missionaries may have been attempting to subsume any other identities under a native's new Christian one, in reality their work in translating and printing works in other languages helped native people form an independent cultural and national identity.

This conclusion presents thorny interpretive problems for scholars. Although moves like Landau's—of revealing how Bible-toting Westerners actually helped foreign groups to establish their own identities—appears empowering of colonial people, Gauri Viswanathan finds the argument problematic. In *Masks of Conquest,* she notes that some scholars see British education in India as leading to a beneficial Indian "renaissance of the arts and sciences" (15). The problem, as she points out, is that these tacit endorsements of Orientalist education suggest that Indians required British intervention and mediation in order to appreciate their own culture and establish their own national identity. They assume, she suggests, that Indians had "neither a sense of national history nor a historical consciousness from which a distinct identity could be shaped" (15). The

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[69] J.D.Y. Peel examines this issue in admirable detail in *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba.* A much more problematic example is the colonial influence on ethnic identities in Rwanda. In "When Identity Becomes a Knife," Helen M. Hintjens argues that colonial powers contributed to the formation of previously nonexistent racial and ethnic identities, which then led to the horrific 1994 genocide.

interpretation creates an intellectual quandary: although scholars want to celebrate native people's discovery of a distinct identity, they do so, in this instance, by acknowledging the necessity of Western intervention for that identity to be formed. Ultimately, the attempt to empower proves empty, as native people can only locate their own subjecthood with the imperialists' help.

Religious texts, however, are not always subject to the same difficulty. My research suggests that, unlike many secular texts, they allow for greater possibilities of identification—unifying people across countries and cultures rather than marking them as distinct from one another. Some periodical anecdotes, for example, suggest that missions supporters, instead of supposing that memorization distanced foreign people from themselves, believed a common canon of memorized religious material unified them with people on the other side of the world. The article, "Account of a Rural Missionary Meeting," includes a letter detailing a Church Missionary Society annual meeting in Yorkshire. The letter's opening paragraph acknowledges that the meeting allows a financial contributor to "[feel] his love to the scattered members of his Saviour's flock, and his bond of union with them, increased and strengthened" (118). After this expansive statement, the meeting's narration turns markedly local, focusing on the flower-decorated tables, the tea and plum-cake refreshments, and the "well-dressed and cheerful-looking" attendees. In fact, after the description of the nearby wooded park, landscaped cottages, and towering mansion—all of which are visible from the meeting on the village green—the writer acknowledges that the scene is "a truly English picture, such as no other country could afford" (118). When the two hundred attendees join together in singing a hymn, the narrator suddenly recognizes the connection between those assembled in the quintessential English village and Christians from other parts of the world. The writer states, "Probably few who were present will forget the effect of the sound of their voices, sweetly blending together under the open sky, over which the declining sun shed the soft radiance peculiar to the close of a September day. May we not hope that many, who then

joined in singing their Saviour's praise, will unite in a similar song of adoration when all His redeemed, from all the nations of the earth, shall be gathered around His throne" (119). Until this point, the event did little to draw the attendees' attention to details beyond their village green, in spite of the fact that the meeting was focused on international mission work. The song was the unifying feature, fusing Christians in Britain with Christians "from all the nations of the earth"—their voices rising together and meeting symbolically in the open sky.

Although singing songs and reciting poetry are not synonymous activities,[70] they do share many features that support considering them as working hand-in-hand in this context. Mark W. Booth, for example, in *The Experience of Songs,* notes that "song and poetry work much alike" in terms of their patterns of language and their effects on the mind (71). Johan Fornäs also argues that traditional definitions of song as being expressed in beautiful forms and conveying emotion "fall short of their task." He notes that music and some forms of speech, such as "public speaking, radio theatre, or recited poetry" share these characteristics (45). Nineteenth-century recitation practices blur the distinctions even further, as elocution manuals frequently include poetry that can be performed with musical accompaniment, indicating that there was a repertoire of poetry regularly performed that way. Both Booth and Walter J. Ong agree, though, that songs vary based on whether they operate in an oral or a literate culture—a distinction that is particularly significant for this discussion. In oral cultures, songs include certain patterns and themes, such as a hero's journey and battle, but do not have a fixed text. As Booth states, "It does not matter much what his [the singer's] actual words are—they will vary

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[70] Mark W. Booth, for example, states most succinctly, "The existence of songs in sound, in time, is the simplest distinction between them and written verse" (7). He also notes that song words differ from poetry in frequently not sustaining "the discriminative appreciation we have developed for poetry" and in having a "static quality" that allows for stanzas to be omitted or rearranged (24). An even more obvious distinction is that songs are set to music, which can have powerful effects on listeners that are separate from the song's words.

with his next singing of the song." Only when songs emanate from a literate culture do the words become important, "regarded as part of the fixity and to be stored away in […] memory" (Booth 72). Ong sums up the difference when he says that writing "changes the basic nature of repetition from the thematic to the verbatim" (*Presence* 27). Since the singing that the Western Christians undertake in both periodical accounts and, as we will see, in R.M. Ballantyne's adventure fiction is a text-based, rote memorized activity (even, in some cases, consisting of scriptural texts set to music), I argue that they function in this context much like recited poetry. Especially since the Westerners who sing the songs are portrayed in contrast with the native people from oral cultures, it seems appropriate to consider the songs as another form of textual recitation that also carries power to influence the speaker's identity.[71]

The periodical anecdote about British Christians singing a unifying hymn, as well as the broader missionary context to which it points, suggest religious texts' power to contribute to the formation of international communities. This potential is much more far-reaching than other scholars have imagined. Anderson, for example, grants special significance to the power of poetry and songs to form national communities, noting that national anthems, although sometimes having banal words and mediocre tunes, are powerful when sung together on holidays because they produce "an experience of simultaneity." As a parenthetical aside, Anderson suggests that even listening to or "silently chiming in with" ceremonial poetry, such as *The Book of Common Prayer*, can have a similar effect (145). In the experience of a group of strangers singing the same verses to the same melody, or reciting the same words from the same honored religious text, they produce an image of unity that contrasts with ordinary dialogue, which is

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[71] It makes further sense to treat these particular religious songs as written texts because Paul J. Korshin reveals that research has shown that a society's earliest written records "are not divine hymns, religious writings, or epic exploits," but instead lists, recipes, fables, or children's literature (236-37).

characterized by its transfer back and forth between individuals. In his discussion of songs and ceremonial poetry, however, Anderson makes one key assumption: that people would listen to or recite these common texts with their fellow countrymen and women. The missionary context contradicts this presupposition. As the Yorkshire missionary meeting attests, ceremonial texts, particularly when religious, have the potential to form communities of fellow Christians that transcend national boundaries. As a result, memorized texts can serve a pivotal role in creating global communities, as speakers, bound to one location, imagine the community of fellow reciters in locales around the world. To complicate things further, memorized and recited texts also have the potential to form co-existing (or perhaps even competing) communities. Rather than disregarding his national identity, the narrator of the Yorkshire meeting alternates between describing the event as "truly English" and as prompting unity with "the scattered members" of the worldwide church—suggesting his awareness of both his national identity and his broader religious one (118). Memorized religious texts, then, have the potential to create multiple associations—which, consequently, may lead to concurrent identities with the capability of being either synchronous or conflicting.

As we turn to R.M. Ballantyne's adventure fiction, these findings about texts in the nineteenth-century missionary context anticipate the shape memorization will take when it appears in a literary text. First, memorization remains part of a contested power relationship. Dominant cultures use this technique to control those under their sway, while people in weaker positions use it to resist colonial control. Second, as in the anecdotes emphasizing memorization as related to "civilized" behavior and Western attire, the recitation of religious texts is portrayed as distinctly connected to the physical body and its appearance. Finally, memorizing texts affects and reflects the identity of the speaker—including his or her gender, national citizenship, and religious association—in complicated ways. These attitudes toward and fears about memorizing religious texts materialize on a South Sea island in Ballantyne's *Jarwin and Cuffy*. Contrary to

expectations, however, the individual who becomes compelled to recite texts is a British sailor rather than a native islander. Consequently, the memorization undermines *his* identity rather than that of the native converts—which then presents a revolutionary, although fleeting, possibility of fusing a Western subjectivity with a native one.

Message in a Corporal Bottle: Identity and Inscription in South Sea Adventure Fiction

That we would find this radical potential—or even portrayals of missionaries at all—in popular nineteenth-century adventure fiction may seem unusual at first glance. Aimed particularly at boys and young men, adventure novels emphasize plot over character, as the hero participates in dangerous and thrilling exploits. In fact, the genre's typical plot formula includes "a tenderfoot hero, whose manly courage and good moral sense, coupled with much coincidence and occasional authorial intervention, [takes] him safely through a series of adventures" (Hannabus 55). Adventure fiction had a dual purpose historically: in addition to entertaining its audience with narratives of excitement and travel, it also served an instructive purpose by upholding ideals of heroism. Because David Livingstone had helped create an image of missionaries as heroic explorers, and since this genre of fiction "took great interest in exotic corners of the empire" (Johnston, *Missionary Writing* 19), missionaries served as stock characters in the mysterious and exciting parts of the world—such as Africa, South Pacific islands, South America, and the American frontier—that adventure novels took their readers. And, since these novels frequently pit the hero against "overtly characterized enemies," the similarly caricatured missionaries were ideal "good men" to help the hero (Hannabus 55). Therefore, the novels contain missionaries merely as aids to the novels' plots or didactic messages and are not intending to explore their lives, circumstances, or purposes. At the same time, some adventure fiction made claims of being anchored in reality. R.M. Ballantyne, for example, insisted that his narratives were based on fact (Dutheil 109), and he frequently

visited the foreign countries in which his novels were set and otherwise used imperial and missionary sources to lend his stories authenticity (Parker 54). Adventure fiction, then, provides glimpses of unexamined attitudes about faith and empire within conventional plot lines, in addition to revealing how popular authors chose to repackage nonfiction narratives, such as missionary memoirs, in fictional form.

Of the many adventure novels featuring missionaries,[72] R.M. Ballantyne's *Jarwin and Cuffy* (1878) best suits a discussion of memorizing religious texts, as much of the plot revolves around the voice and language of the novel's hero, John Jarwin. More specifically, of the adventure fiction heroes, Jarwin most explicitly employs texts that he has learned by heart among native people to achieve certain ends, which allows a depth of analysis that the other novels lack.[73] The story opens with Jarwin and his terrier Cuffy floating nearly lifeless on a raft, the sole survivors of a shipwreck. Upon landing on an island, much of the early narrative chronicles Jarwin's Crusoe-like efforts to find food, erect a shelter, and explore the island—all the while chatting with his companionable

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[72] Anna Johnston notes that missionaries feature prominently in many R.M. Ballantyne novels, including *Man on the Ocean* (1863), *Gascoyne, the Sandal-Wood Trader* (1873), *The Ocean and its Wonders* (1874), *Black Ivory* (1875), *The Fugitives, or, The Tyrant Queen of Madagascar* (1887), as well as Ballantyne's most famous novel, *The Coral Island* (1857), which inspired both Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1857) (*Missionary Writing* 19-20). Christopher Parker's examination of race and empire in Ballantyne's fiction adds *The Young Fur Traders* (1855) and *The Settler and the Savage* (1877) to the list. In *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination,* Ann C. Colley points out that several of Robert Louis Stevenson's South Seas tales criticize aspects of missionary culture, including *The Beach of Falesá* (1893), "The Isle of Voices" (1893), *The Ebb-Tide* (1894), and "Something In It" (1914) (38). Jules Verne's *Meridiana: The Adventures of Three Englishmen and Three Russians in South Africa* (1872) is another example. In telling its story of English and Russian astronomers collaborating to plot an arc on the earth's surface, the novel references missionaries (particularly Livingstone) several times.

[73] Most of the other novels, when they incorporate religious texts, do so in a more cursory fashion. In Ballantyne's *Coral Island,* for example, the first-person narrator, a sailor named Ralph, uses memorized verses to convert a dying pirate named Bill to Christianity. The text also portrays natives who have accepted Christianity learning prayers by heart—a sign of their sincerity and their docility. Because this novel lacks scenes in which British people and native people interact over their shared texts, I focus my literary analysis on *Jarwin and Cuffy.*

dog, because "it would appear to be almost an essential element in life that man should indulge in speech" (40). He also faces a series of misfortunes, including a life-threatening fever, the loss of his tobacco, and his dog's tumble into a pit. Finding the island barren of company, he ultimately decides to make a raft in order to leave it and is picked up by a crew of untrustworthy fellows. He escapes, finding himself on yet another island, where he becomes the prisoner of its "immensely large powerful" chief, called (appropriately enough) Big Chief (99). The tribe's people discuss Jarwin with animation, which he later discovers was an argument over whether he would be "killed, baked, and eaten" according to custom (102).[74] Because some neighboring islanders had become ill and died after eating shipwrecked sailors, Jarwin's captors decide to let him live.

Although he survives cannibalism due to others spreading inter-island rumors, Jarwin continues to prosper under the "wicked" chief through the use of his own voice—the same animating element that inspired him when he faced the lonely hopelessness of being lost at sea. In addition to bearing his ill treatment submissively, which begins to soften the chief towards him, Jarwin employs his "remarkably fine sonorous bass voice […] eminently suited for pathetic and sentimental songs," which corresponds perfectly with Big Chief's fondness for music (103-04). The text continues:

> [Big Chief] used to make him sit down beside him frequently and sing for hours at a time! Fortunately, Jarwin's lungs were powerful, and his voice being full-toned and loud, he was able to sing as much as his master desired without much exertion. He gave him his whole budget which was pretty extensive—including melodies of the "Black-eyed Susan" and "Ben Bolt" stamp. When these had been sung over and over again, he took to the Psalms and Paraphrases—many of which he knew by heart, and, finally, he had recourse to extempore composition, which he found much easier than he had expected—the tones

[74] This detail is relevant for our discussion since cannibalism, as a form of incorporation, can serve as a metaphor for the loss of identity. Maggie Kilgour makes this case in *From Communion to Cannibalism.*

> flowing naturally and the words being gibberish! Thus he became a sort of David to this remarkable Saul. (104-05)

Even more than the previous examples of recitation on the mission field, the power dynamics in this situation are explicit: Big Chief, as the one in control, forces Jarwin to sing to him. This moment reverses the missionary recitation tropes, however, in making the Westerner submissive to the native islander. Big Chief, as Jarwin's "master," desires and requires the amusement, and Jarwin, as the British traveler, recites the songs and Bible passages instead of the natives.

Because this scenario reverses the power dynamics, it means that the "Breetish tar,"[75] Jarwin, has the ability to use recited religious texts in creative ways that divest them of their sacred function and meaning. On the most superficial level, the songs lack religious significance because Jarwin knows that Big Chief does not understand English; the words of the songs are lost on him. Additionally, Jarwin fails to have a spiritual purpose for singing the religious texts; he resorts to the Bible in order to entertain the chief, moving from other genres purely for variety's sake, rather than to convert him or to improve himself. What's more, when Jarwin recites the Psalms and Paraphrases, they are curiously sandwiched between popular sentimental melodies and fabricated songs. By grouping the Psalms with "Ben Bolt" on the one hand, and "gibberish" on the other, the Bible is irreverently treated as just another text. Jarwin's unintelligible utterances—which he finds come to him quite effortlessly—serve the same purpose as his biblical recitations. Even though he repeats religious texts in his own language, he reduces the Bible to nonsense—a fact he is not reflective enough to notice, as he compares himself to David, the biblical patriarch who composed the majority of the original sacred psalms.

In addition to stripping the religious texts of their sacred meaning, Jarwin uses his religious songs to take advantage of the chief, embodying—and reversing yet again—

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[75] "Tar" is a slang term for a sailor.

nineteenth-century fears about native people using Scripture to deceive. At several points throughout the text, Jarwin gains access to information or receives special benefits from his recitations. These advantages are not unintentional; Jarwin clearly sings for the chief with the designs of manipulating him. For example, when he locates Cuffy on the island, Jarwin induces the chief to let him keep the dog through "much entreaty and a good deal of persuasive song" (107). When Big Chief becomes introspective and uncommunicative at one point, Jarwin tempts him to "become confidential" by singing "all his melodies and all his psalms several times over" (108-09). And, when he learns that Big Chief plans to visit a neighboring island where English missionaries are reported to live, Jarwin persuades his master to let him come along—in spite of the chief's fears that he will escape—when he begins "to sing in such a touching strain, that his master lay back on his couch and rolled his large eyes in rapture" (110). Clearly at this point Jarwin's songs are influencing the chief because of the emotional effects of the music, rather than the songs' words—making them distinct from the other forms of recitation I have examined thus far. (As Jarwin and Big Chief begin to understand each other's language, the words of the texts will come into play more evidently.) The religious texts of the songs, though, highlight a double standard. Because these techniques are used within the adventure fiction genre by the young hero against his depraved adversary, Jarwin's recitation is not portrayed as exploitation, as it is in the accounts of native people using the same tactics on Western missionaries, but instead as cunning stratagem.

Although the recited texts allow Jarwin to gain power over his master, he also experiences the slippage of identity—in this case, national and cultural identity—that frequently accompanies memorization. His transformation is more visibly perceptible in his body than previous examples: unlike the moment that Robert Moffat describes, where the Westerner sees himself merely mirrored in the tribesman's similar sermon delivery, Jarwin actually transforms physically, becoming indistinguishable from the natives. Soon after the description of Jarwin's recitations, the narrator reveals that a

quarrelsome neighboring tribe has instigated a war with Big Chief's tribe. As they prepare for battle, Big Chief informs Jarwin that he would like him to not only join them, but appear as one of them: "The Big Chief ordered him to throw away his now ragged garments, smear his whole body over with oil and red earth, paint black spots on his cheeks, and a white streak down his nose, and put on warrior's costume" (107-08). Jarwin resists, pleading and singing, but the chief prevails, so Jarwin goes to battle in "this remarkable costume" (108). The British sailor's uneasy relationship with his painted body and attire, and therefore, the tribe that it represents, becomes clear in the paragraphs surrounding the description of his costume change. In one paragraph the limited omniscient narrator describes Big Chief's people (through Jarwin's perspective) as "the tribe with whom Jarwin dwelt," and in the next paragraph the narrator describes the people as "the tribe to which [Jarwin] belonged" (107). In shifting from language of residence to belonging, the text reveals that Jarwin's identity—which later in the text both undergoes a more explicit change and becomes more plainly connected to his voice—has already started to destabilize.

When the missionaries enter the novel's plot,[76] Jarwin's wobbly national identity entirely dismantles—signaled by his painted tribal costume becoming permanently etched on his body. After the battle, some natives arrive at Big Chief's island wearing "civilized" clothing. These people, readers learn, are Christians converted by their white chief, the missionary John Williams[77]—a character based on the actual LMS missionary

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[76] A few articles address missionaries in Ballantyne's adventure fiction as part of their arguments, but none of them examine *Jarwin and Cuffy*: Christopher Parker's "Race and Empire in the Stories of R.M. Ballantyne," Martine Hennard Dutheil's "The Representation of the Cannibal in Ballantyne's *The Coral Island:* Colonial Anxieties in Victorian Popular Fiction," and Robert Irvine's "Separate Accounts: Class and Colonization in the Early Stories of R.M. Ballantyne."

[77] This section of *Jarwin and Cuffy* is explicitly based on missionary memoirs. When Williams is introduced, the text takes a several-page detour to describe the real-life missionary's success on Raratonga, even providing a footnote advising the reader to "See Williams' most interesting work, entitled 'A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South-Sea Islands'" (12).

of the same name, who worked in the Polynesian islands for about twenty years, finally being killed and eaten by cannibals in 1839 on the island of Erromango.[78] In the novel, the visiting tribespeople, as representatives of Williams, desire that Big Chief's tribe burn its idols and become Christians. Big Chief, intrigued, decides to travel to Raratonga in the Cook Islands to see Williams himself. Because Jarwin yearns for European contact, he sings to persuade the hesitant chief to allow him to travel with his men. Big Chief finally agrees, under the conditions that Jarwin dress like the native men and never speak. Therefore, Jarwin joins Big Chief and the other men, "painted and decorated like a native warrior, and wielding a paddle like the rest" (114). The text continues:

> Poor Jarwin had, during his captivity, undergone the process of being tattooed from head to foot. It had taken several months to accomplish and had cost him inexpressible torture, owing to the innumerable punctures made by the comb-like instrument with which it was done on the inflamed muscles of his body. By dint of earnest entreaty and much song, he had prevailed on Big Chief to leave his face and hands untouched. It is doubtful if he would have succeeded in this, despite the witching power of his melodious voice, had he not at the same time offered to paint his own face in imitation of tattooing, and accomplished the feat to such perfection that his delighted master insisted on having his own painted forthwith in the same style. (114-15)

In place of native people adopting European dress, which is what usually occurred in foreign contexts, in this case Jarwin takes on native attire. In being tattooed from head to foot, his transformation becomes much more permanent than the ones undertaken by native people who donned trousers and button-down shirts. In addition, the tattoos not only permanently tie Jarwin to the island community, but they also convey Jarwin's status within it. Because they are compulsory, and because he experiences them as "torture," part of the tattoos' purpose in this situation is to convey power relations. They

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[78]Although the fear and presence of cannibals was a popular literary convention, the actual presence of them was much rarer. In this case, though, the events surrounding John Williams's death have been confirmed. More recently, in December 2009 the inhabitants of the island hosted a reconciliation event, to which they invited Williams's descendents. During the ceremony, they offered a formal apology for their ancestors' actions.

communicate that Big Chief's authority over Jarwin is not light or superficial, but it extends even beyond the surface of his body. Because Jarwin protects his hands and face from being tattooed, however, his markings explicitly recall Western dress and allow him the possibility of covering his tattooed body with trousers and a long-sleeved shirt—recourse he takes advantage of later in the text.

The messages that the action of being tattooed communicates, however, is only the start; tattoos themselves are a form of inscription, which is particularly significant in a story that draws so much attention to the power of language. At the time when Ballantyne wrote *Jarwin and Cuffy,* tattoos had resurfaced in the Western consciousness after a long absence—largely due to Captain Cook bringing Omai, a tattooed "prince" from the Polynesian island Raiatea, with him when he returned to London from his second Pacific voyage in 1774 (Braunberger, par. 3).[79] As descriptions of tattoos began to materialize more often in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers' accounts, they were frequently believed to be a form of inscription. Although the designs were primarily made up of blackened areas, lines, and geometric shapes, Simon Schaffer provides several examples from the period's travel journals, including a sailor's account of the first Cook voyage to the Polynesian islands, in which Western observers considered tattoos a form of writing—"a kind of Polynesian hieroglyphics" (96)—rather than mere ornamentation. Schaffer concludes that "islanders often took European writing to be a form of tattoo; and the Europeans as often took tattooing to be a form of writing" (97). As writing that is communicated publicly, tattoos function like the recitations of an oral culture—inscribing "texts" upon the community's bodies in the absence of written languages or more traditional manuscripts. Within the novel, then, Jarwin voices his

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[79] As further evidence, Braunberger points out that there was no longer an English word for the practice. When Cook returned from his voyage, he presented the Polynesian word "tatau" to describe Omai's skin markings, which was revised to the contemporary "tattoo."

culture's and religion's texts for Big Chief, and Big Chief responds in kind, etching the symbols of his society on Jarwin's skin. This "exchange of words" between Jarwin and the Chief becomes even more evident since Jarwin must sacrifice his form of speech as he agrees to the chief's terms for visiting the Western missionaries. In submitting to silence, he only more clearly allows his tattooed body to speak. Just what is it saying?

In the same way that the more traditional recitations point to the speakers' subjectivities, Jarwin's tattooed skin conveys important information about his identity. Instead of simply illuminating his personal identity, Jarwin's tattoos also speak to his cultural or national affiliation with Big Chief as a member of the same tribe—a paradoxical message, considering that the etchings also mark the chief and Jarwin as different, with the latter under the control of the former. Not only that, but because it requires puncturing the skin, inserting a dye in the body, and leaving lasting markings behind, tattooing provides enduring evidence of belonging. As a kind of visible and lifelong census record, tattoos allow a community to chronicle itself in a living memorial made up of its members, which, for Jarwin, means he is permanently linked to the tribe, regardless of where he might reside in the future. However, tattoos are, as the cliché runs, more than skin deep. Although on the surface they may witness to a certain tribal alliance, they also may communicate a deeper reality: a person's social identity.[80] In *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia,* Alfred Gell points out that tattoos provide a visible way of "reconstructing personhood according to the requirements of the social milieu" (3). They convey the ideas and associations that are important to a group of

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[80] Tattoos can communicate personal identity as well, but the relationship between the skin and the self is complex and varies culturally. While Westerners tend to see the skin as a person's exterior, and therefore less real than the interior self, Gell points out that in non-hierarchical societies "body-markings reveal an immanent self which is inside the body and which can be made to appear on the skin" (26). Because personal identity is not the central issue in *Jarwin and Cuffy*, however, I do not explore it in more detail in this chapter. For more information, see Gell, Guest, and Pritchard.

people within a given setting, such as cultural values and relational hierarchies. More significantly, they also indicate and perpetuate ways of thinking: "a certain mind-set, a certain frame of social classification, [and] a certain notion of person" (8). In this way tattoos are not only like recitations in publicly delivering a community's most valued messages, but they also speak to memory and identity, the two concepts that I assert are intertwined with quotation. Tattoos' permanence allows an oral culture to see and recall its history on the bodies of those who wear their marks, and their association with a particular tribe and society affiliates specific people with that communal identity. In wearing the tattoos, therefore, Jarwin communicates more than his residence within a new culture; against his will, the markings also convey his agreement with the tribe's belief system and way of life.

Jarwin finds this alliance problematic, considering that the tribe wars against neighboring tribes, practices cannibalism, and worships idols—practices that concerned nineteenth-century missionaries as well. These Christian workers saw tattoos as inextricably connected to pagan religions (sometimes accurately so), and as "a major incitement to vice and lewdness" (Gell 35). As a result, they worked diligently to eliminate them. For example, William Ellis—a missionary who accompanied John Williams to the Society Islands in 1817, and who is known for his greater attention to ethnographic detail than most nineteenth-century missionaries[81]—discusses tattoos in *Polynesian Researches.* He explains that as the islanders in Huahine made a new code of laws, aided by the intricate involvement of other missionaries and himself, they included one that prohibited tattooing. He states, "The simple act of marking the skin was not a breach of the peace, but it was intimately connected with their former idolatry, always

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[81] For an intriguing discussion of Ellis as ethnographer, see Christopher Herbert's third chapter in *Culture and Anomie,* entitled "Savagery, Culture, and the Subjectivity of Fieldwork in Early Polynesian Ethnography."

attended with the practice of abominable vices, and was on this account prohibited" (217). Tattoos, then, as a sign of social identity, were understood to speak to a person's religious belief as well as to his or her morality, both of which, from a Western perspective, testified to the need for Christian salvation.

Unsurprisingly, Jarwin initially refuses to accept the native identity that his body conveys. Instead, when he arrives on the island with the Western missionaries, he clings to his status as a British citizen, seeing the audible voice as the link between nation and identity. In fact, when he first meets John Williams, he can barely contain himself upon hearing his "English tone of voice," and when he hears Mrs. Williams speak to her husband, Jarwin cries out with delight upon hearing "the old familiar tongue" (125, 126). Later, when he sees the missionary's cottage, Jarwin approaches the home, hanging about its entrance and looking in the windows because of "his intense desire to see and hear the long-lost forms and tones of his native land" (127). In addition to affiliating himself with Mr. and Mrs. Williams through their common speech, Jarwin characterizes himself as English at every turn, seeing his national identity as inextricably tied to the sounds of his voice. When Williams asks Jarwin whether he is one of the recently arrived members of the tribe, the tattooed sailor realizes that he must answer in the native tongue or his language will reveal his identity. More than that, he recognizes that "even the mere tone of his voice, would probably betray him." As a result, he wags his tongue, pretending to be dumb (129). Mrs. Williams interprets his action to mean his tongue has been tabooed, a notion that tickles Jarwin, who spontaneously erupts into a laughing fit. He suspects that even that articulation has the power to give him away; mid-laugh, Jarwin becomes horrified at the idea that "*that* of itself would be sufficient to betray him" (130, original emphasis). He disguises the noise and runs frantically away. As long as Jarwin remains sworn to silence, he feels unable to communicate his national identity—which is a vital concern for him.

In emphasizing his voice, Jarwin forgets about the way his tattooed body may be contradicting his speech, moving beyond granting him an alternative identity to erasing it altogether. Harriet Guest, in her study of British perceptions of tattooing in the South Pacific, points out that tattoos could serve conflicting functions. In creating distinctive designs, tattoos had the potential to mark a person's body as unique and therefore specific to a certain context (85). From a British perspective, in contrast, they marked a person's body as exotic and therefore illegible, "isolated from any coherence of origin" (84). In addition, Westerners perceived tattoos, as a form of physical adornment, as "a sign of feminization" (98). As Jarwin takes on his tribe's tattoos, the oral culture's substitute for recitation, he experiences these effects. On the island, Jarwin finds himself nearly invisible, a motif that recurs in the text several times. Upon first meeting the missionaries, "of course no one took particular notice of him," since he was tattooed and painted to look like his fellow tribespeople (125). When he peeps into the missionary's windows, his action was seen as yet another example of characteristic native curiosity, so "his doing so attracted no unusual attention" (127). Finally, when Mrs. Williams encounters Jarwin hovering near the door, she looks at him "with no greater interest than she would have bestowed on any other native, and then gazed towards the sea-shore, as if she expected some one" (128). Jarwin's invisibility is particularly poignant in this moment, as Mrs. Williams struggles to see an imaginary "some one" while being blind to the personhood of the individual standing before her. When she does notice him, she recognizes the sound of his laugh as "the cry of a South Sea maniac" (131). In addition to misidentifying his culture of origin, Mrs. Williams feminizes Jarwin by associating his behavior with lunacy. Claire Kahane has pointed out that madness and hysteria were associated primarily with women in the nineteenth century, with one of the major symptoms being a loss of voice; the hysteric was seen as acting out on the body what she could not speak (8). Therefore, Jarwin's wagging tongue and inscribed body work in concert to conceal and disguise his humanity, allowing him to be alternatively unnoticed

and dismissed as an exoticized, feminized lunatic. In this way, he undergoes an experience similar to Matilda, Maggie, and Alice, whose encounters with more literal texts also lead to a loss of the self.

In fact, after he leaves Raratonga and the British missionaries, Jarwin himself starts to experience the ambiguous identity that others have detected in him. When he fully realizes the opportunity of escape that had slipped through his grasp, the text says, "he became savage" (141). Although the noun usage of "savage" immediately comes to mind—especially in a story about a British sailor stranded on an island with cannibals—in its context, the word operates as an adjective referring to Jarwin's uncivilized and harsh feelings and behavior, as he goes on to speak unkindly to Cuffy and regret keeping his word to the chief. When he remembers his promise to keep silent, which the text implies should correct his thinking, "[Jarwin] was still savage, and therefore doggedly shut his eyes to it" (142). His unrestrained actions continue in this scene; when messengers come to Jarwin from Big Chief, the former speaks to them angrily and threatens to physically harm them multiple times. By the time he approaches Big Chief in his wrath, the two figures have swapped behavior: Jarwin clenches his fist and speaks menacingly to the chief, while Big Chief silently "open[s] his eyes with such an intense expression of unaffected amazement" (144). This trade does not go unnoticed by Jarwin: he notes that Big Chief, who previously took exception to insult, was calmly inquiring about the source of Jarwin's behavior. In a moment that echoes the visual exchange between Moffat and his mimic, the narrator states, "The two men therefore stood looking at each other in silent surprise for a few moments" (145). The repeated descriptions of Jarwin's behavior as "savage," then, are important, particularly since the novel is narrated by a limited omniscient narrator who takes on Jarwin's perspective. Throughout the narrative, Jarwin has used the noun form for the tribespeople; in fact, in this very scene Jarwin tells Big Chief, "You've been a kind feller to me, old chap—though you *are* a savage" (145, original emphasis). In describing Jarwin as "[becoming] savage," the text

suggests that an important exchange of identities has taken place between Jarwin and the native people. The noun hovers behind the adjective, suggesting the ease with which Jarwin can move from behaving like a savage to becoming one.

The change in national and cultural identity becomes fixed at the close of the scene, when Big Chief requests that Jarwin sing him a song—the novel's final scene of recitation. Jarwin, in asking Big Chief which song he would prefer, lists the available choices: "'Ben Bolt,' 'Black-eyed Susan,' 'The Jolly Waterman,' 'Jim Crow,' "There is a Happy Land,' or the 'Old Hundred'" (146-47)—the first four of which were popular ballads or songs, and the final two of which were hymns or psalms. Jarwin's repertoire perfectly illustrates the issues of national and cultural identity with which he was wrestling. "Ben Bolt," his first selection, was popular in the Victorian period and "became one of the most familiar songs in the English language" (Hunt 31). Although written by an American writer named Thomas Dunn English, it was believed to be "an old English song" and referenced as such—so-called because of confusion derived from the author's last name (Hunt 31). "Black-eyed Susan" was written by English author John Gay. Set to music in 1730, it was also "extremely popular" for over one hundred years, prompting additional songs and a wildly successful play that opened at London's Surrey theater in 1829. The song addresses fidelity to home in the face of foreign temptations, as the sailor William promises his love, Susan, that instead of finding mistresses in foreign ports, he will see her, his English sweetheart (who ironically is described as though she *is* the empire): "If to fair India's coast we sail, / Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright, / Thy breath is Africa's spicy gale, Thy skin is ivory so white." He concludes by promising her, "William shall to his dear return" (Yates 4). "Jim Crow" refers to "Jump Jim Crow," an early nineteenth-century song and dance about a black trickster performed in blackface. This song reinforces racial difference—thereby addressing cultural identity—by mocking African Americans through its use of dialect and irreverent lyrics, as well as its performance in blackface and accompanying gyrating

dance. In the context of nineteenth-century performances, however, "Jim Crow" sometimes represented integration rather than segregation, referring "to a very real cross-racial energy and recalcitrant alliance between blacks and lower-class whites" (Lhamon vii). Jarwin's popular songs reinforce the national and cultural identity that he is attempting to hold on to—by raising British connotations, conjuring English loyalties, and portraying black people derisively. Simultaneously, they expose the slipperiness and elusiveness of British identity through the mixing of nations and people in all three songs: the misunderstood identity of the composer of "Ben Bolt," the overseas travel of William in "Black-eyed Susan," and the cross-racial associations of "Jim Crow."

These tensions between one's nationality and other identifying features resolve in the two religious texts that conclude Jarwin's list of possible performance pieces. The first, a hymn called "There is a Happy Land," looks forward to heaven as a place of unity for Christian believers. Interestingly, the song calls this paradise a "land," a word frequently used to refer to a territory marked off by national or political boundaries. This "happy land"—a new, holy country—is positioned "far, far away," where sweetly singing together, "saints in glory stand, / Bright, bright as day" (Fitz 49). Here people are joined together—notably in song—by their common Christian status as saints, rather than any other identifying features. The song continues, "Come to that happy land, / Come, come away," promising that not only will people be happy and free from sin, but that they will have power to govern, furthering the heaven-as-nation metaphor: "Oh, then to glory run; / be a crown and kingdom won; / And, bright, above the sun, / we reign for aye" (Fitz 49-50). As the final line's inclusion of "we" reveals, this hymn operates from a first person plural point of view—which is characteristic of many hymns but unlike most other songs—further fostering a vision of a the speaker as actively participating in a unified group (Booth 128). The next offering, the "Old Hundred," even more explicitly calls for international and intercultural harmony. The title refers to a metrical psalm tune set to the words of the one hundredth psalm; the paraphrased version sung in the nineteenth

century was called "All People That on Earth Do Dwell" by W. Kethe ("Old Hundredth"). The first verse states:

> All people that on earth do dwell,
> Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
> Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell;
> Come ye before Him and rejoice. ("All People")

In calling for "all people" dwelling on the earth to sing together, this psalm, rather than reinforcing national differences, equalizes humanity. The second verse continues by giving all people a common origin with God, noting that "without our aid He did us make." Because Christians are "[God's] folk," their sense of belonging is entirely rooted in and defined through God, rather than their allegiance to other nations or cultures. Both of these songs, in emphasizing "all people" singing together in a future "happy land," echo the previously mentioned periodical anecdote of the English missionary supporters expecting their voices to join with "all the nations of the earth" in "singing their Saviour's praise" (119). Religious texts, suggested both by their lyrics and by the experience of singing them, allow believers to find a common identity as Christians that overrides other national and cultural allegiances.[82]

Although Jarwin presents these song choices to the chief, it is, significantly, the British sailor who makes the final selections, and his choices are illuminating: in the scene Jarwin changes his tune—both literally and figuratively—to reveal a changed understanding of himself in relationship with the tribespeople. Because Big Chief is "lost in meditation," Jarwin begins with the former group of songs rather than the latter, "bellow[ing] with all of the strength of his lungs one of those nautical ditties." Both Jarwin's song choice and the strength with which he sings expose the tenacity with which he is attempting to hold on to his English identity in the face of the silent chief. The song

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[82] Please note that I am not suggesting that religious texts are the only texts that can create unity among speakers and listeners. Also, in articulating this positive potential, I am not attempting to diminish the negative effects of missionary participation in the colonial venture.

is out of place, however, which Jarwin seems to instinctually recognize; he "chang[es] the tune several times." After trying out many songs unsuccessfully, he finally "slid[es] gradually into a more gentle and melodious vein of song," which seems to please the chief, but even at this point Jarwin's choices seem out of place for both the chief and himself. In this instant, he notices the chief in a new way: he perceives "a dash of sadness in his master's countenance which he had never seen before," and this awareness causes him to wonder about its source. His recognition about the chief also helps Jarwin to become more aware of himself, to notice that he is experiencing "varying moods." As a result, he changes his songs yet again: "he gradually [comes] to plaintive songs, and then to psalms and hymns" (147). The changed songs and the altered relationships are in harmony: as he switches from shouting popular tunes to singing psalms and hymns, Jarwin moves away from physically intimidating the chief to sensitively considering his thoughts and feelings—actions that symbolically form solidarity with Big Chief across national and cultural lines. The change is perceptible in both characters. Immediately after Jarwin sings the psalms and hymns, Big Chief "at last […] seem[s] satisfied," and Jarwin voices his appreciation for the chief, telling Cuffy, "He's a wonderful c'racter, […] a most onaccountable sort o' man [sic]" (147). As Jarwin alters his songs, he also adjusts his perspective.

That this change is connected to Jarwin's national and cultural identity becomes clear in the ensuing scenes. The next time that Jarwin and Big Chief encounter each other, they have adopted key aspects of each other's cultures. Big Chief speaks "in broken English now" (155), and Jarwin speaks "of course, in the native tongue" (163). As they recognize together that Big Chief has treated his captive kindly, Jarwin extends his hand "and Big Chief, who had been taught the meaning of our English method of salutation, grasped it warmly and shook it with such vigour" (155-56). Immediately following their Western handshake, Big Chief reciprocates by acknowledging Jarwin in his tribe's way: "grasping Jarwin by his whiskers with both hands, rub[ing] noses with

him" (156). The significance of this exchange is not lost on Jarwin. He responds: "You shake hands with me English fashion—I rub noses with you South-Sea fashion. Give an'take; all right, old codger—'may our friendship last for ever,' as the old song puts it" (156). In recognizing his kinship with the chief, Jarwin now welcomes opportunities to communicate affection and esteem, regardless of the gesture's cultural origin. And, he expresses desire that he and the chief will be in relationship forever—an idea prompted by a song and in step with the psalm's and hymn's focus on praising God as a heavenly community "always" ("All People") and "for aye" (Fitz 49).

Unfortunately, the unity brought about by the religious songs is short-lived. Soon after this moment, Big Chief converts to Christianity, in large part through Jarwin's example, and he consequently offers Jarwin his freedom. Before his slave leaves the island, Big Chief asks him to speak to the tribe, identifying him to the group by stating his two coexisting and synchronized identities: "He is one Breetish tar—one Christian." The conversion, Jarwin's freedom, and Big Chief's request that Jarwin "tell [them] what [they] shall do" suddenly reverses the power dynamics, giving Jarwin greater authority over the chief. Initially Jarwin seems uncomfortable with his new role, scratching his head, staring confusedly at the tribe, and claiming his inadequacy to address them in this way. Big Chief insists, however, and Jarwin begins preaching. From the start of his sermon, something has clearly changed: he opens by addressing the audience in a manner that marks them as different from himself, calling them, "Big Chief, small chiefs, and niggers in general." He follows his salutation by revealing that he has started to identify more strongly with his English identity than his Christian one, stating (with an emphasis on first-person singular pronouns rather than plural ones), "I'm a 'Breetish tar,' as your great chief says truly—that's a fact; an' I'm a Christian—I *hope*," clarifying that his doubts are not about God, but "chiefly as regards [him]self" (163, original emphasis). As Jarwin continues to speak, his language becomes more strident and his tone grows more confident, so that by the time he reaches the sermon's climax, he sounds like a

seasoned, authoritative preacher: "Hold on to the Bible! That's the watchword. That's your sheet-anchor […]. It's good holdin' ground is the Bible—it's the *only* holdin' ground" (165, original emphasis). Jarwin concludes by demanding that the tribe return to Raratonga in order to learn from the missionaries. The native people accept this advice, with an elderly chief acknowledging that Jarwin "was so learned, and they so ignorant" (167). Both Jarwin and the tribe testify to their dissimilarity—ironically, at the native people's moment of conversion, which is, according to Christian teaching, exactly when they become united in Christ.

Through the sermon, Jarwin and the tribespeople experience what John L. and Jean Comaroff have described as an assumption of evangelical missionaries: that speech acts, such as sermons, could conjure the presence of God. As a result, preaching grants authority to the speaker and requires receptivity from the listener: "The preacher [is] the vehicle of Truth as faithful representation; the believer, its sentient recipient" (2: 66). This relationship formed through preaching differs markedly from that created through singing or reciting common texts. While singing provides Jarwin with what Anderson calls "an experience of simultaneity" (145), thereby allowing him to identify with the tribespeople, preaching a sermon divides him from them by underscoring "a space […] between speaker and listener, a moral gulf to be breached" (Comaroff 2: 66). Instead of being connected by texts meant to be sung in unison, Jarwin now speaks a message all his own, with no communal text—and therefore with no possibility of being shared with others. In addition, the context of the sermon grants his words more power than those of anyone else, further distancing him from his congregation. This relational reversal points back to Jarwin's experience of the revolutionary power of religious texts. Although the only true "happy land" is in heaven, a joyful community can exist on earth too, made visible when European sailors and South Sea cannibals can form authentic friendships and share aspects of their cultures with each other—all made possible through the power of song.

If only it were not so ephemeral. From here until the end of the novel, prompted by his newfound authority, Jarwin emphasizes his British identity over his common humanity with the tribespeople. Note these examples: He goes for a walk wearing his old trousers and flannel shirt, which show that he is "still a fair specimen of a British tar"—in spite of the fact that his coexisting identities were visible in the very threads of his clothing (much like the tattoos on his pale skin), which were "patched and re-patched to such an extent with native cloth, that very little of the original fabric was visible" (168-69). Then, when he stands for the first time on the quarterdeck of the England-bound ship, the text says he is "himself again"—referring to his restoration to health, but also suggesting a return to his British identity (176). And, in contrast with their earlier cross-cultural greetings, Big Chief and Jarwin say goodbye to each other with pieces of fabric that speak to their distinctive cultures: Big Chief waves goodbye "with a scrap of native cloth," while Jarwin "pull[s] out his handkerchief." The novel ends with the island disappearing from Jarwin's sight, growing "fainter and fainter, until it sank at last into the great bosom of the Pacific Ocean," only to be replaced by his next vision of "the white cliffs of Old England" (179). In taking a homebound ship to England, Jarwin also symbolically breaks away from his understanding of himself in relationship with the native people. Since he was able to avoid receiving tattoos on his face and hands, Jarwin, by wearing Western attire, can prevent others from seeing his tattoos—and thereby deny his skin the opportunity to speak.

Jarwin and Cuffy, therefore, along with the other missionary memoirs and periodical articles examined in this chapter, suggest that reciting religious texts can prompt more than one kind of conversion. Although they are intended to draw a speaker into relationship with God, by imprinting sacred words on a reciter's heart, in actuality they often bring about another kind of relational transformation—particularly for Westerners. Reciting common texts like Bible verses, hymns, or the catechism causes the orator to come face-to-face with another (or "an Other")—occasionally literally, as in

Moffat's case, but more often figuratively, as European Christians become increasingly aware, over shared religious texts, of their participation in a global community. Those reciting memorized passages, then, reflect on and respond to the duplication of their texts, but more significantly, of themselves—often in forms they did not predict or expect. They ask unavoidable questions of identity: how are we, as British Christians, in relationship with *you*—the African "fantastic figure," the Jamaican "black man," the South Sea tribal chief?

Nineteenth-century texts suggest two responses to that question. Frequently, as we have seen, the answer fits precisely into Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry: Westerners identify their native imitators as "almost the same, *but not quite*," portraying them as less civilized, less authentic, and less devout than their European counterparts ("Of Mimicry" 123, original emphasis). In this way, the recitation of religious texts serves as yet another sign of Western dominance and imperialism, as British missionaries both compel a certain behavior and control its available interpretations. The second answer, however, is both more compelling and more subversive. Occasionally religious memorization prompts a new kind of identification—one that emphasizes the Western and native speakers as "the same" instead of "almost the same." In providing "occasions for unisonality" (Anderson 145), reciting religious texts allows some speakers, like Jarwin, to transcend national and cultural identities in order to locate a more inclusive communal identity based on shared humanity and a common faith. Although this equalizing possibility is paradoxical in being brought about by Christianity (which, like most religions, inherently excludes those who do not profess belief), and flawed in failing to be sustained (at least in this fictional case), it is no less revolutionary. The memorization of religious texts—rather than simply being a matter of tradition, routine, or education—has extraordinary potential to shape how a person views him- or herself in relationship with others around the world. To return to the opening anecdote from the *Missionary Gleaner,* in which an ambiguous pronoun obscures whether the author refers

to the transport of Bibles or of missionaries, perhaps the distinction is not as significant as it might seem. In some cases, circulating religious texts around the globe allows for international travel of another kind as well: for Westerners and native people to metaphorically mingle together, their voices joining across the sea.

CONCLUSION: REMEMBERING BACKWARD AND FORWARD

> Once, let me pause upon a memorable period of my life. Let me stand aside, to see the phantoms of those days go by me, accompanying the shadow of myself, in dim procession.
>
> Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*

> "That's the effect of living backwards," the Queen said kindly: "it always makes one a little giddy at first—"
> "Living backwards!" Alice repeated in great astonishment. "I never heard of such a thing!"
> "—but there's one great advantage in it, that one's memory works both ways."
> "I'm sure *mine* only works one way," Alice remarked. "I can't remember things before they happen."
> "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards," the Queen remarked.
>
> Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

In the same way that David Copperfield pauses to reflect upon "a memorable period" of his life, it seems fitting at the close of a dissertation about memory and the memorable to offer a scholastic kind of retrospect as well (577). The previous four chapters have done much to complicate understandings of nineteenth-century quotation. Instead of simply highlighting external factors—the texts that circulated in nineteenth-century Britain, or the amount of education or elegance a character has obtained—quotations point inwards, too, presenting characters with material and language from which to understand his, or, in most cases, *her* self. Although my readings of *Matilda* and *The Mill on the Floss* demonstrate rote learning's potential to erode a young woman's personal and religious identity, my chapters centered on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Jarwin and Cuffy* locate possibilities for gaining critical thinking skills and forming cross-cultural relationships through a person's response to quoted texts. Most significantly, however, my project demonstrates that an understanding of nineteenth-century quotation practices reveals the workings of much larger forces in nineteenth-century society. A seemingly straightforward moment, such as a character reciting a line or two of poetry, offers interdisciplinary insights about forms of reading, functions of memory, ideas about gender, beliefs about religion, and methods of

imperialism. Consequently, when my dissertation's title refers to the "character of memorization," the phrase conveys two meanings. It suggests that the literary personages I analyze—despairing Matilda, passionate Maggie, curious Alice, and homesick Jarwin—are characters who have assembled understandings of themselves from their memorized texts. At the same time, the phase articulates my project of exploring the qualities of nineteenth-century memorization, identifying the insights it reveals about both the minutiae of everyday routines and the complexity of entire belief systems.

Following the White Queen's advice, I also want to encourage my memory to "[work] both ways"—to look forward in addition to considering the past (150). In a broad sense, my dissertation most significantly contributes to Victorian Studies in demonstrating the revolutionary potential of a seemingly insignificant daily practice. In examining rote learning in secular and religious education, my project illustrates Michel de Certeau's overarching claim in *The Practice of Everyday Life* that consumers' everyday practices, such as reading, talking, walking, dwelling, and cooking are important to study. He argues that such practices reveal how systems operate and how power relationships are formed and resisted. While I see memorization and quotation as having some negative potential in addition to the more positive capability that de Certeau identifies, my project still affirms the need for more work on daily routines and traditions. For example, what might nineteenth-century practices as varied as lending money, attending church, playing cards, assigning names to homes, and burying the dead reveal? While some areas of study may come up empty, I suspect that many more will provide illuminating and indispensable glimpses into nineteenth-century life and literature.

In addition, I hope this study's exploration of quotation, identity, and fiction will encourage scholars to take a closer look at other manifestations and meanings of nineteenth-century quotation—particularly ones with more positive nuances. These sources of study could include characters who use quotation to humorous effect (such as Captain Ned Cuttle from Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, who punctuates his

popular quotations with gestures from the hook that has replaced his right hand) or novelistic and poetic epigraphs (such as those placed by George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Christina Rossetti at the start of their chapters or works). Further attention also could be paid to authorship, quotation, and inspiration, particularly noting circumstances in which quotations—somewhat paradoxically—prompt original creative work. As Rebecca Wells-Jopling notes, in refuting claims that all writing is always already-quoted, "Assembling quotations and gluing them together with argumentation or poetry, as the case may be, is a creative act" (60). Or, as Ralph Waldo Emerson has pithily stated, "Only an inventor knows how to borrow." Many nineteenth-century authors used their mental stores of memorized texts as points of origin for their own original work. As a couple of particularly interesting cases in point, Matthew Arnold kept reams of quotation notebooks, and Janet Hamilton memorized profuse amounts of texts and composed poetry entirely by memory. An exploration of the life and work of working-class authors, such as Hamilton, would likely prove particularly rich for the insights that they would reveal about the role of social class in affecting practices and meanings of memorization. A study of misquotation also might reveal the creativity and insight of readers and writers, because, as Gary Saul Morson notes, misquotations are "bound to be superior to the original extract." Contrary to those who assume that the original version must be the best one, Morson suggests that "newer versions improve older ones," revealing that what appear to be errors of sloppiness are instead evidence of a process of re-authorship (218). Since quotation was pervasive in nineteenth-century culture, literary and otherwise, it offers abundant opportunities for further inquiry.

Personally, I see the contours of my next project within my existing work on nineteenth-century religion—an area that has traditionally received too little attention from Victorian scholars, though no arena was so central, so pervasive, or so contested for the Victorians themselves. I plan to mine the largely untapped archive of nineteenth-century missionary periodicals that I consulted for my final chapter. Paying greater

attention to differences of denomination, individual missionaries, and native people's reactions than that chapter's space allowed, I will reconstruct more fully how missionaries intended texts to be used overseas—although their intentions did not always become reality—in their attempts to "circulate" the Gospel. This project examines quotation twice over. In addition to exploring memorization and recitation as some of the tools missionaries used to disseminate their faith, I plan to study the way that missionaries experienced their own words being turned into quotable extracts within the periodicals. Missionary publications, which were based upon letters and reports sent to the home missions agencies, had an explicit agenda of raising and maintaining financial and moral support. Consequently, their editors made careful decisions about which parts of the missionary reports to publish. Although historians have acknowledged that editors revised, amended, and excised the original letters home, scholars have not compared the original missionary archives with the periodicals in order to discover which stories and sentiments never reached the British public. In taking up these areas of study, my next project will not only expand upon the exploration of quotation that I undertook in these pages, but it will continue to shed light on the troubled relationships among Christianity, texts, and imperialism.

Because this dissertation centers on education, I cannot help but hope that the questions it prompts about education and identity also make their way into the classroom. Quite simply, my dissertation suggests that *how* we teach matters just as much as *what* we teach. In many ways, higher education in the contemporary United States already falls in line with this philosophy: a focus on student-centered classrooms and critical thinking skills has largely replaced rote learning for some time. Recently, however, contemporary pedagogical methods have been brought into question. In a May 1, 2009 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* David Glenn notes that two recent psychological studies have suggested that "active recall," which includes memorization and recitation, "is the most effective way to inscribe something in the long-term

memory." Advocates of such an approach add that some subjects, such as biology, history, or economics, require the absorption of facts; students in those disciplines could benefit from active recall techniques. In contrast, some educators fear that such an approach "might generate rote memorization at the expense of deeper kinds of learning" and turn students into robots—a metaphor that recalls Mary Wollstonecraft's comparison of reciting children to parrots and puppets. Other educators point out that research does not always translate seamlessly into classroom practice. Because some previous educational decisions based upon studies have since been revealed to be erroneous, one professor interviewed for the article offers what he sees as a path to compromise: encouraging researchers and educators to collaborate together to develop approaches to teaching that also consider current scholarship.

As teachers of literature, we, too, can challenge ourselves to discover new approaches and techniques that help students think deeply about the texts they encounter and then to voice their complex thoughts in effective ways. Publicly engaged courses, in particular, invite students into a form of education in which they take ownership of their learning and connect the classroom content with their lives and relationships off campus. By partnering with local organizations, students in engaged-learning classes develop collaborative and reciprocal relationships with community members, integrating their course of study with identified community needs. If, as my dissertation suggests, education can influence students' identities, then courses such as these that encourage personal reflection and real-world application, in addition to disciplinary knowledge, are all the more valuable. Even in literature courses confined to the more traditional classroom walls, however, professors have a tremendous power available to them to encourage personal and cross-cultural awareness. Because texts can metaphorically travel—both descending into a person's mind and crossing over national and cultural boundaries—they can allow a person to make significant journeys of understanding, too.

As the traveling metaphor reminds us, in some parts of the world the implications of this dissertation are not simply figurative. In the last several years, two notable bestselling books have brought international issues of education, gender, and identity to our culture's attention. Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran,* for example, details the author's teaching of censored works of American and British literature to young women in repressive Iran. That experience, she writes, had a profound impact on the young women's understandings of themselves; their reading allowed them to rediscover "that [they] were also living, breathing human beings" (25). Greg Mortenson's work building schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan, detailed in *Three Cups of Tea* and, more recently, *Stones into Schools,* also demonstrates education's ability to change lives and communities. The region in which Mortenson works proliferates with extremist *madrassas,* Islamic schools that teach militant *jihad* through rote learning. Mortenson counters these schools by providing a balanced, broad education, particularly for young women, believing that such learning contributes to a person's sense of self. "The first time a child writes their name, it's very empowering," he states. "All of a sudden, that child has an identity. They become somebody" (qtd. in Duszak). He also notes that education reduces infant mortality, slows population growth, improves quality of life, and weakens the influence of terrorists. Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat ironically, Mortenson is also not afraid to counter the *madrassas*' rote learning with some quotations of his own. In a speech given at the University of Delaware, Mortenson said, "I hate to keep going back to proverbs and quotes, but that's kind of how I live my life." Citing an African proverb, he added, "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual. If you educate a girl, you educate a community" (qtd. in Duszak). Although this dissertation suggests that quotations sometimes limit perceptions, Mortenson offers a reminder that they also, when combined with critical thinking and cross-cultural relationships, have the power to contribute to the liberation of minds and communities.

As I journey myself from Iowa to Bangladesh in order to teach at the Asian University for Women (AUW), these concerns could not be more personal or challenging. The young women I will teach—many of whom will come from poor, rural, and refugee populations—will have traveled to AUW's campus from all over the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. In their previous classrooms, they will have learned by rote, but at AUW, they will receive an education focused on building critical thinking, communication, and leadership skills. At the university's 2008 inaugural ceremony, Jack Meyer, the chairman of the university's Board of Directors said, "The rote learning and memorization that is so typical of women's education in Asia will not do." He added, "We want movers and shakers" (qtd. in "Asian"). I share the vision of Meyer and the other university's leaders. I also believe that providing a liberal arts education will empower and prepare the young women to make a difference in their communities, becoming role models and agents of change. At the same time, from this dissertation I have learned that all forms of education have meanings and effects beyond the ones that educators propose and that Western intervention in foreign locales carries the potential for ill even when performed with the most beneficent intentions. Although these realizations prompt me to approach my new position with humility and thoughtfulness, my research also encourages me to begin my teaching career with great expectation. In the same way that Alice bursts out of Wonderland, these young women, I hope, will also break free from the social, economic, and ideological constraints they have experienced. I look forward to the first day of class, when I will call their names one by one, and they—like Alice in the culminating courtroom scene—will answer, "Here!"

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