NARRATIVE AS ARCHIVE:
ETHNO-HISTORICAL PARATEXTS IN BRITISH LITERATURE, 1760-1830

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ETHNO-HISTORICAL PARATEXTS IN BRITISH LITERATURE, 1760-1830

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ABSTRACT

Narrative as Archive contributes to the small-but-growing body of scholarship on paratexts—specifically footnotes—in imaginative literatures of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Britain. I argue that these annotated literatures are Enlightenment-inspired, Foucauldian discursive sites (archives). These archives consist of collected ideas of human history catalogued through the annotations that de- and re-contextualize them into an imaginative record as a way to explore and come to terms with Britain’s past. To illustrate this claim, I wed archival research with media-historical readings of works by the antiquarian Thomas Percy, the Irish novelist Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), the poet Lord Byron, and the Scottish author James Hogg. I argue that the literary footnote offers these authors-as-editors a way to collect and curate textual artifacts into an imaginative record in order to explore and come to terms with the past. Narrative as Archive calls attention to the collapse of distinctions between author/editor, page/margin, poetry/prose. In sum, I argue that greater consideration to the material manifestations of knowledge work in these imaginative literatures can allow critics to navigate the division between form and content—and between media history and literary analysis—in the study of Enlightenment and Romantic-Era British Literature. This body of work offers an especially rich archive for exploration, in part because it initially was constructed as one.
“Books and the man I sing,” declares Alexander Pope in the opening lines of *The Dunciad* (1728). In the spirit of Pope’s bibliographic declaration in verse along with the text’s paratexts (its footnotes and footnotes upon footnotes), many writers sang, so to speak, about their books and their material and ethno-historical particularities through the apparatus of the footnote. Books, too, sang about themselves and called attention to their material properties by incorporating more and more paratextual materials with authorizing and editorial commentary, no matter what the genre—including fiction. And, with the advent of what Benedict Anderson describes as a “golden age of vernacularizing lexicographers, grammarians, philologists, and literateurs” (71) in the middle of the eighteenth century, footnotes became a hallmark of antiquarian and archival literatures for both Enlightenment and Romantic-era writers.

Throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, paratexts became increasingly central in defining literary genres and shaping readers’ expectations of texts.\(^1\) This was an era with a distinctly “bibliographic imagination,” as Andrew Piper has suggested (5, 7), and this imagination was fueled by what Christina Lupton has termed “knowing books”: books aware of and playing upon their own materiality (7). Editors and authors acting as editors actively inserted their own voices into both original works and collections of traditional material with critical frames, prefaces, headnotes, footnotes, and endnotes: the antiquarian commentary that Thomas Gray included in the second editions

\(^1\) Paratexts include those apparatuses that enable “a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public” (Genette 1), such as title pages, prefaces, and footnotes.
of his odes “The Progress of Poesy” and “The Bard” (1770), for instance; or the playful, mock-editorial preface of Maria Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent* (1800), along with paratexts reflecting the actual editorial assistance of her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth; and the secondary, prose narrative of historical subjectivity woven by Charlotte Smith in her reflective notes to *Beachy Head* (1807). Some footnotes even threatened to overtake the text.

In this dissertation, I turn my attention to the now-unsung apparatus of the footnote (along with its paratextual siblings, the headnote and endnote) in imaginative literatures. I argue here that such paratexts hold singular importance in literary history. Not only do they allow poetry and prose to transcend classifications of form and genre; they also shape the text in which they appear into a kind of museum, an archive of traditions, ideas, and verbal artifacts—an historical repository that is shaped to tell a story. Paratexts prevail especially within ballad collections, real or purported translations of traditional narratives, and historically informed novels. We can observe numerous footnotes and prefaces of a distinctly ethno-historical intent—of domesticating the other or of making the foreign seem familiar while retaining its distinct foreign-ness—that help to shape the text as a whole into a carefully curated archive. Paratexts thoroughly problematize ways we commonly perceive the role and voice of the author; with paratexts, the role of the author becomes inextricable from that of the editor and of reader as well. Put simply, paratexts complicate the way we think of the author function; they contain, critique, and ultimately curate the works that they frame.
Therefore, I argue here for the necessity of paratexts as a tool for what I consider knowledge work: the ways constellations of ideas are produced, organized, distributed, and given meaning in literature. I move beyond explaining such paratexts as merely “an anxiety regarding materiality” (Stewart 67), and, in doing so, I aim to expand our understanding of a once-wildly popular form of heavily annotated poetry and fiction from 1760 through 1830. I suggest that these paratexts perform knowledge work by allowing poetry and prose to transcend classifications of form and genre—for instance, from antiquarian catalogue to imaginative narrative or vice versa—and to become systematic records of both real and invented traditions. These records are indicative of what I consider the “enlightened romanticism” of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the juxtaposition of empirical knowledge production with the nostalgia of constructing a cultural genealogy. Reading narrative works as archives allows us to better understand the nuances of editorial intervention in traditional (and “traditional”) texts. Moreover, the very hybridity of “narrative as archive” turns our attention to the increasing prevalence of generic hybridity over the course of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century.

The “Footnote Fetish” of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The period 1728-1832 can be regarded as the age of the literary footnote, reaching from Alexander Pope’s satiric commentary in *The Dunciad* (1728) and *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729) through Walter Scott’s erudite annotations in the Magnum Opus editions of his Waverley novels (1829-32). Prior to Pope and subsequent to Scott, the literary
footnote is a paratext rarely appearing in fictional works until it rises again to prominence in twentieth-century post-modernism. Interestingly, the word “footnote” itself formally entered the lexicon as late as the mid-nineteenth century, well after the footnote fell out of fashion in fiction; it presumably first appears in William Savage’s *A Dictionary of the Art of Printing* (1841): “Bottom notes…are also termed Foot Notes” (88; italics in original), as the *Oxford English Dictionary* entry for “footnote, n.” suggests. However, this art of printing bottom notes in literary works reaches well back into the eighteenth century (and references to notes are definitely in existence in eighteenth-century works), particularly as part of the growing popularity of literary antiquarianism. I draw a strong distinction between those footnotes appearing in literary works (fiction, poetry, and the like) versus those in scholarly works (historiography, for instance). In addition to functional differences between academic documentation and authorial/editorial commentary in fictions, the differences in critical attention to the varied forms of footnotes are vast. The literary footnote is a unique genre that has not yet received due critical attention, unlike the footnote in scholarly works, which has been widely unpacked in Anthony Grafton’s *The Footnote: A Curious History* (1997); Chuck Zerby’s *The Devil’s Details: A History of the Footnote* (2002); and Robert Hauptman’s *Documentation: A History and Critique of Attribution, Commentary, Glosses, Marginalia, Notes, Bibliographies, Works-Cited Lists, and Citation Indexing and Analysis* (2008), to name a few.

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2 Aside from my gestures to Pope as a chronological bookend for the literary epoch I define, I purposefully eschew reading the footnote as a tool of satire and meta-commentary. I limit my discussion here to simply ethno-historical paratexts, rather than footnotes of all tones and purposes in order to provide a deeper and more nuanced inquiry into the distinct form and function of sincere, literary footnotes in imaginative literatures from 1760-1830. I do acknowledge, however, the unique importance of the footnote as a crucial tool for satire and meta-commentary in the eighteenth century through literature today.
I suggest that the “important and ubiquitous phenomenon” (Watson 4) of the literary footnote can best be understood as the material manifestation of an emphasis on objectivity and classification that emerged from the Enlightenment. Clifford Siskin and William Warner describe this emphasis on particularities of the past as a “turn toward more specialized and localized knowledges and practices” (26) that occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; Susan Stewart has unpacked this turn and its literary manifestations in historically and ethnographically inclined texts as stemming from “a rising archaeology that demonstrated both the reappearance and disappearance of the past” (67). I see one aspect of this turn as the prolific application of ethno-historical paratexts in imaginative literatures. I provide here a sampling of passages that showcase this interest in local and historical particularities and evince the obsessive preoccupation with paratextual materials in literary texts.

Ballad collectors throughout the last half of the eighteenth century and through the first decades of the nineteenth century are today among the most widely recognized users of paratextual apparatuses. Their paratexts—primarily headnotes, footnotes, and endnotes—largely focus on situating the central text within its ethno-historical context. For instance, Thomas Percy, in *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), is often seen as setting the standard for providing scholarly commentary on a literary form often viewed as far from scholarly: oral-derived traditional ballads. His paratexts take on an objective and erudite tone, setting Percy apart from his sources and the original material, thereby inviting the reader to distinguish Percy’s editorship from the ballads’ oral traditional authorship (See Figure I.1).
On these pages from “Edom O’ Gordon,” Percy uses the paratext of the headnote to draw attention to the variety of sources from which he compiled his definitive version; he states that “the reader will here find it improved, and enlarged with several fine stanzas, recovered from a fragment of the same ballad” also in Percy’s possession (99). He then describes the political backdrop of the narrative, situating the ballad within its cultural, geographical, and temporal frame as well as within a literal, textual frame. By painting a vivid picture of the landscape in which this ballad takes place, Percy invites the reader into the narrative and showcases his erudite engagement with the regional history surrounding the tradition’s location of origin. However, Percy simultaneously distances
himself from the narrative by claiming that he takes no agency in creating the narrative—only “improving” the narrative “preserved in the memory of a lady, that is now dead” (99)—and by using the passive voice to suggest some critical distance in phrases presenting the facts of the conflict between the narrative’s personages, like “this fact… was…pointed out to [the Editor],” or “it has been found,” (101) and “it should seem,” or “as I have been informed” (100).

On the matter of “improving” the narrative, Percy says very little, other than that in collating the few extant versions of the narrative, “uniformity required that the additional stanzas supplied from [the folio] should be clothed in the Scottish orthography and idiom: this has therefore been attempted, though perhaps imperfectly” (100). In the text of the ballad itself, Percy identifies three lines that he states are “restored” (100) from an earlier published version of the ballad, and subsequently “clothed” in artificial orthography and idiom. He identifies these textual features he has placed into the narrative and glosses the recurring phrase “O gin” as “A Scottish idiom to express great admiration” (104) and clarifies the lines “Thame, luiks to freits, my master deir, / Then freits wil follow thame” as a Scottish turn of phrase expressing “them that look after omens of ill luck, ill luck will follow” (105). Here, Percy’s critical paratexts and interventions in the text itself illustrate how he both identifies with and distance himself from the narrative by reading/writing/editing as both “insider” and “outsider” with multiple voices and perspectives speaking through this ballad and its commentary: the original text of tradition, Percy’s interventions of “restoration” and “improvement” within the ballad, and the critical, erudite commentary he provides. The relationship between the
text and paratext not only “undoes” the signs of authorship, as noted by Genette (39), but also does the signs of authorship by calling out the distinctions between oral informants and remediated variations collated by Percy. Ultimately, from the curatorial presence in the notes accompanying the traditional narratives, we can see that the paratexts are precisely the site of remediation: the notes describe the oral and print sources and document the dissemination and transmission of the stories. Within the cacophony of voices presenting the poems (as well as within the poems themselves) the notes represent Percy’s magisterial voice tying together the diverse style of different manuscript fragments—that is, Percy’s editorship. The presentation of information on the page positions the reader as a cultural insider while simultaneously asking the reader to approach the narrative as a critical outsider.

Following Percy’s monumental Reliques, such prolific use of headnotes, footnotes, prefaces, endnotes, and marginal annotation became a generic convention of the ballad collection. Walter Scott followed Percy’s model with his overwhelming paratexts in Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802)—his annotations and pedantic emendations take up more space on the pages than the primary material itself! Building on Percy’s model of extensive headnotes, Scott provides an erudite and ethnographic lens (albeit with liberal creative license) into the lives and histories of the people contributing to his collection by providing narratives about his sources. For example, in the three-part ballad “Thomas the Rhymer”—a text with a very complex dynamic with its respective paratexts—Scott states that the first part is entirely from tradition, the second is adapted from an existing narrative and modified for his readers, and the third is entirely Scott’s
own invention. He offers his own editorial notes regarding the origins of the narrative tradition based on the life of a prophetic bard from the Border regions—as heralded in the title to Scott’s collection. Scott states:

The popular tale bears that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence, he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress when she should intimate her pleasure… To this old tale the Editor has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of Cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind to the Land of Faëry. (579-80)

Scott labels the three parts of the poems as “Part First—Ancient,” “Part Second—Altered from Ancient Prophecies,” and “Part Third—Modern (by the Editor).” The labels to his emendations suggest deep knowledge of the Border Ballads, showcasing his abilities to alter ancient prophecies into a more cohesive narrative (in his aesthetic of Border balladry) and “to commemorate the Rhymer’s poetical fame” (601). Scott’s extensive annotations in “Thomas the Rhymer,” among all other compositions traditional and original, frame Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border as a hybrid reading experience of cultural history and ethnography, ballad history, and creative composition. In his paratexts, Scott attempts to stand near to the tradition by invoking his native Scottish
roots to compose additions in line with the original narrative, while simultaneously
distancing himself from it by casting an erudite eye over the ballad and commenting on
its position within Scottish cultural history.

In a revision of this model of annotation, James Hogg retaliated against Scott’s
critical model of paratexts, which in Hogg’s view provided a relatively cold, pedantic
grasp of local knowledge. Hogg states in “Memoir of the Life of James Hogg,” which he
prefixes to *The Mountain Bard* (1807), that he can do better than Scott. Drawing upon his
family’s rich legacy in traditional song, Hogg claimed he could offer an insider’s
perspective by providing a first-hand relationship with the primary material, suggesting
that Scott’s scholarly stance distanced him from the material which Scott had collected as
an outsider. To that end, Hogg produced *The Mountain Bard*, a two-part collection of
“Ballads in Imitation of the Ancients” and “Songs Adapted to the Times,” among several
other collections of Scottish songs and stories published during the first decades of the
nineteenth century. In *The Mountain Bard*, Hogg adopts a more casual, narrative voice—
less scholarly than Scott, but presenting himself as just as informed by being personally
familiar with the narrative traditions and therefore more worthy of presenting imitative
ballads. Hogg states that he “chose a number of traditional facts” (“Memoir” 15), one of
which led to the composition of “The Pedlar.” He introduces this ballad as being
“founded on a fact, which has been magnified by popular credulity and superstition into

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3 Scott and Hogg’s relationship with each other and their relationship with their source material is
further complicated by the fact that Hogg’s mother, Margaret Laidlaw Hogg, was one of Scott’s primary
sources of oral traditional material gathered for his 1802 collection.

4 This choice of claiming “traditional facts” as the basis for authority anticipates Hogg’s
authorizing, paratextual commentary framing *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*,
nearly 20 years later. For a thorough discussion of Hogg’s use of tradition within paratexts, see Chapter
Four.
the terrible story which follows. It is here related, according to the *best informed* old people about Ettrick, as nearly as consistent with the method pursued in telling it” (26). Following the “terrible story,” Hogg provides extensive paratexts, adopting a voice of familiarity with both the reader and his content. For example, accompanying the lines “O lady, ‘tis dark, and I heard the dead bell! / And I darna gae yonder for goud nor fee” (ll. 33-34), Hogg provides a detailed personal anecdote relaying his familiarity with the “superstitious awe” of the “dead bell”:

This reminds me of a trifling anecdote, which I will here relate as an instance…. Amongst people less conversant in the manners of the cottage than I have been, it may reasonably be suspected that I am prone to magnify these vulgar superstitions, in order to give countenance to several of them hinted at in the ballads. Therefore, as this book is designed solely for amusement, I hope I shall be excused for here detailing a few more of them, which still linger amongst the wilds of the country to this day, and which I have been an eye witness to a thousand times; and from these the reader may judge what they must have been in the times to which these ballads refer. (31-32)

Here, Hogg both aligns himself with and distances himself from the traditions from which he borrows. He is an “eye witness” and native participant of the narrative tradition. He employs the paratext to tell yet another story supporting the fantastic events of the ballad narrative to ensure that the reader might be fully immersed in the tradition and therefore fully immersed in the ballad reading experience as well. Hogg’s navigation of
the relationships between oral and written forms and between primary text and paratextual features offers a unique model of editorship: Hogg posits himself solidly within the narrative tradition; Scott straddles the position of being within the narrative while attempting to offer an objective account; and Percy remains at a far critical distance.

These paratextual practices extend far beyond Percy, Scott, Hogg, and the art of ballad collection. The practice of annotation in imaginative literature extends also to women writers seeking to lend a voice of authority to their original creative compositions while upholding the desire for local and historical particularity and in the process, achieving a generic hybridity by now characteristic of enlightened romanticism. One example is Anna Seward’s *Elegy on Captain Cook* (1780). In this poem, Seward draws heavily on Captain James Cook’s journals as sources of inspiration for her verse, accompanying poetic lines with footnoted commentary that segregates her lyric voice from her critical engagement with Cook’s ethnographic accounts in his journals. Seward praises Cook’s unflagging resolve to sail through “the scorch’d Equator, and th’ Antarctic wave” (26); she heralds him as “the new Columbus” (58), with the sky above the valiant explorer personified as the Goddess of Hope; it is around the head of this Goddess that “the plumy *Peterels soar” (59). Seward objectively describes this poetic reference to the “plumy *Peterels”: “The peterel is a bird found in the frozen seas; its neck and tail are white, and its wings of a bright blue” (6n). Seward’s annotations also present direct quotations from the elegized Cook himself. When she writes of the sailors “Furling the* iron sails with numbed hands” (69), for instance, she quotes Cook’s journal in the
accompanying note: “*Furling the iron sails.*—“Our sails and rigging were so frozen, that they seemed plates of iron” (7n). The symphony of voices provides an introduction to Seward’s pedagogical, poetical project of literature as cultural education as well its nuances of imperialism.\(^5\)

Similarly, Charlotte Smith incorporates extensive endnotes to present critical natural and national histories alongside her poetic ruminations, most notably in her poems “The Emigrants” and “Beachy Head” (1807) and also in *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784).\(^6\) The notes to “Beachy Head” provide a prose narrative in adjunct to the poetic reflections on location and history. With these notes, Smith transforms “history” into something tangible, particular, and poetically present by drawing attention to the architectural ruins that stand on a

…beacon’d ridge

Of black-down shagg’d with heath,* …

…its brow

Catching the last rays of the evening sun

That gleam between the nearer park’s old oaks,

Then lighten up the river, and make prominent

The portal, and the ruin’d battlements**

Of that dismantled fortress… (ll. 491-98)

\(^5\) For further discussion of paratexts and implicit imperialism, see Chapter Three.

\(^6\) Smith’s poem was originally posthumously published with the annotations formatted as endnotes. Yet, interestingly, modern, critical editions of her poetry most often format these as footnotes. For the purposes of my argument of narrative archiving, I collapse distinctions between footnotes and endnotes. I recognize that there is a definite difference in reader engagement and the physiological properties of reading endnotes versus footnotes. However, for my argument of notes’ curatorial commentary, the distinction is of no matter.
To these eight lines on ruins in a landscape, Smith provides two descriptive notes:

*This is an high ridge, extending between Sussex and Surry. It is covered with heath, and has almost always a dark appearance. On it is a telegraph.

**In this country there are several of the fortresses or castles built by Stephen of Blois, in his contention for the kingdom, with the daughter of Henry the First, the empress Matilda. Some of these are now converted into farm houses. (170)

Across the poetic lines and prose annotations, Smith moves between the past and the present, engaging two distinct authorial voices. These voices remark on the general appearance and architectural development of this landscape—covered in heath and by strongholds erected amidst political schemes—before concisely and precisely stating the advancements of technology and civilization now part of its contemporary appearance—the telegraph and conversions of the fortresses into farmhouses. Smith uses her editorial voice in the paratexts to showcase the particularities of history versus the broader strokes of poetic imagery within the lines of the poem. Smith’s model of annotation, like that of many of her contemporaries, represents a literary antiquarian endeavor—an enlightened romanticism—that aims to localize and particularize larger historical events in a narrative mode of poetic expression. Critics held mixed reviews for these extensive annotations. One reviewer of Smith’s “Beachy Head” calculated that her notes “occupy about a third of the volume. They chiefly explain the names of plants, flowers and birds, which Mrs. Smith was always fond of introducing with rather too much affectation of science. Upon

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7 This topic is addressed at length in Chapter One.
the whole we do not think these productions will add much to her reputation” (*Cabinet*
41). I propose to rethink what these productions add not only to Smith’s productions, but also to those of her contemporaries.

Scholarship on footnotes in literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has slowly begun to gain ground within the past few years; this interest in printing and paratexts is perhaps due to the rise in critical interest in electronic media and digital humanities, as Jerome McGann’s *Radiant Textuality* and Andrew Piper’s *Dreaming in Books* suggest. Within this small-but-growing focus, the majority of scholarship and criticism revolves around the footnote in the satire of the early and mid-eighteenth century—the works of Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Henry Fielding, and Laurence Sterne being the most popular subjects of study—and in the epic romances of Robert Southey and Walter Scott in the early nineteenth century. Most studies of paratexts within literary works acknowledge the relationship between the footnote and other forms of paratexts (specifically marginal glosses) and the footnote’s Enlightenment emergence as distinctly separate from the marginal gloss. The genealogy of the footnote is an especially rich field of study in early modern literature with profound implications for understanding the habits of individual readers and writers and the culture of reading in an era when authority was shifting from a sacred to a secular locus. Lawrence Lipking, Evelyn B. Tribble, and William W. E. Slights variously discuss ways in which we can observe the footnote’s development from the printed marginal gloss, and the printed marginal gloss developing from hand-written reader interventions in a text. Likewise, H.
J. Jackson’s studies of Romantic-era readers and their margin notes stand in adjunct to the focus of this dissertation.

Scholars have observed the phenomenon of paratexts pervading a wide range of literary productions through the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth.8 A few broader studies address these paratextual forms as well: Barbara Benedict’s chapter on footnotes and prefaces in *The Cambridge History of the Novel* offers a succinct overview of the kinds of paratexts one will find in novels. Alex Watson’s recent monograph, *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page*, provides the first—and thus far the only—book-length study specifically on the footnote in individual literary works. He summarizes the historical context of eighteenth-century annotation and reads the annotations of Romantic-era writers through a post-colonial lens: the margins of the page literally mediate the margins of the British Empire. Most of these critics have read the footnote as a maneuvering of identity that provides a locus of authority for the narrative.

I argue in this dissertation that, with their role as custodians of the artifacts represented within the texts, these paratexts are textual indicators of remediation from oral tradition to print commodity, from archive to narrative. I contend further that narrative archives—literary works curated with footnotes, such as those I discuss in this dissertation—are self-consciously mediated and remediated through the technology of the

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8 Examples include Frank Palmeri’s study of the satiric annotations to Jonathan Swift’s *Tale of a Tub*; Shari Benstock’s and Martin C. Battestin’s examinations of Alexander Pope’s *The Dunciad*, Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, and Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*; Dahlia Porter’s and Jacqueline Labbe’s considerations of the taxonomic annotations in the poetry of Erasmus Darwin, Anna Seward, and Charlotte Smith; Clare Simmons’, Diego Saglia’s, and David Simpson’s arguments for the imperialism evident in Robert Southey’s annotations in *Thalaba the Destroyer*; and Fiona Robertson’s and Robert Mayer’s discussions of the authorizing annotations that Walter Scott appends to his Waverley novels in the Magnum Opus edition.
footnote. Fictional works featuring dense editorial interventions, such as the literary footnote, require further scholarly scrutiny in order to make sense of this once wildly popular practice of paratextual curation. I aim to do precisely this in this dissertation, harnessing the emerging methodology of media archaeology along with the vocabulary of new media as a way of reading the navigations of authority, hybridity, and readership in old media, in print.

**Narrative Archi(ve)textures**

The title of this dissertation, *Narrative as Archive*, plays upon the tension and contrast between narratives and archives: a narrative is conventionally understood as an organized and contextualized literary presentation, whereas an archive is a decontextualized repository of artifacts. It ranges in form—from orderly, curated museum to disorderly, uncurated curiosity cabinet—and is the result of our impulses to collect, classify, contain, critique, contextualize, and to create a sense of continuity with our...

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9 We may further characterize this epoch of literature in terms of desire, noting the emergence of a distinct, literary “footnote fetish”—or the “‘info lust’ that so characterizes the modern period,” as Siskin and Warner have suggested in *This is Enlightenment* (26). Desire, in the Kantian sense, is a faculty that, along with knowledge and the feeling of pleasure and pain, is what comprises the human mind and judgment (Kant 13). The faculty of desire, therefore, arises from a productive relationship between beauty and pleasure that leads to action, including knowledge-making. With this active role of the reader in making knowledge, we might draw upon Barthes’ concept of the pleasure of the text—“what I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon the fine surface: I read on, I skip, I look up, I dip in again” (11-12)—and the act of reading a text “inside out” (Barthes 26). Intersecting with Kant’s and Barthes’ concepts of desire as the culmination of pleasure, representation, and reconstruction or remediation, is Jacques Derrida’s influential discussion of the archive, *Le Mal d’Archive, or Archive Fever* (1994). Derrida’s psychoanalytic explanation of archival activity as arising out of the tension between our desires for destruction and eradication (our death drive) and for collection and conservation (our pleasure principle)—“It [the impulse to mine for information] is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive, even if there’s too much of it” (91)—allows us to better understand how and why Enlightenment- and Romantic-era narratives presented a stockpiling of information expressed through annotation and other paratextual literary frames.
pasts. In its broadest sense, an archive is “a place in which public records or other important historic documents are kept” (“archive, n.”). However, as Jacques Derrida succinctly states, “nothing is less clear today than the word ‘archive’” (90). The surge in archival studies of late has signaled that archives are a highly nuanced system of collection, storage, and, ultimately, I argue, of storytelling—of narrative. Narratives and archives as not as oppositional as many may think; the archive’s narrative system (and likewise the narrative’s archival agency) requires greater attention.

Supporting my assertion for the narratologic agency of the archive is Michel Foucault’s assessment of the archive as “a system of discursivity … a system of utterability” (Archaeology 129). The archive stands for the desire of knowledge production and containment, represents suspicion and subjectivity of political agendas, and allows—even encourages—romanticizing the past while prescribing its boundaries (Manoff 13; Osborne 52; Withers 304; Ernst, “Archival Action”; Spivak 263; Richards 4, 6-7; Said 41; Keen 9, 229; Lynch 69; and Steedman 1165, 1167). It is at once whole and incomplete, both objective and subjective, as Hayden White argues throughout The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation. White’s assertion echoes Derrida’s claim that the archive “produces as much as it records the event” (17). In this sense, according to Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “archives are then not pristine storehouses of historical documentation that has piled up, but a reflection of and often justification for the society that creates them” (12). The archive is,
thus, an instrument of power and of subjugation; of heteronomy and autonomy; of creation, destruction, and re-creation. If archives are by nature subjective and laden with implicit assumptions and agendas, it behooves us to attend to the narratives they impose, as well as to the archival tendencies of literary, fictional narratives, for the archive is thus an instrument of narrative.

Building upon these concepts of the archive as inherently narratologic in nature—utterable, subjective, historical and historicizing—I present my claim for reading annotated fictions, poetic and prose narratives, as archives. Novels and narrative poems characterized by their extensive annotations become, in essence, Foucauldian, discursive sites for collecting ideas and images of human history, cataloguing and containing them. Thus, through ethno-historical paratexts, narratives become archives that reshape (and romance) collected ideological artifacts into a new textual, literary record as a way to explore and come to terms with the past—Britain’s past, in the case of the four writers studied in this dissertation.

Through the active and conscientious use of curatorial paratexts, a narrative becomes codified as a carefully documented record of cultural artifacts—verbal, ideological, ethnographic, and so forth. This concept builds upon media theorist Wolfgang Ernst’s proposition that “narrative was a means to master the arbitrariness of collections in a meaningful way” (“Archi (ve)textures of Museology” 21). I rework Ernst’s analysis of the museum as a site for both storage and storytelling by considering his juxtaposition of archaeology and archiving in his essay “Archi(ve)textures of
Museology.” Accordingly, I read novels and narrative poems as museums.12 Imaginative literature, therefore, presents narratives as archives: they both store and narrate the historical, political, and cultural ethos exhibited in the central text and curated in the paratext, the footnotes.

Gérard Genette’s *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* provides the taxonomic vocabulary for paratexts as their own salient genre. He describes paratexts at length as liminal apparatuses:

More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*...a “vestibule” that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an “undefined zone” between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or on the outward side (turned toward the world’s discourse around the text), an edge, or as Philippe Lejeune put it, “a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls the reading of the text.” Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that...is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it...[to] influence how the text is received” (1-2, 7)

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12 This museum analogy is drawn out further in Chapter Two.
The recurring theme throughout this summary is that paratexts, particularly the footnote, are liminal (on the edges of a text), illuminating (enhancing meaning), and limiting (managing interpretation): as a boundary, threshold, vestibule, or fringe, a footnote is outside the text—not wholly text itself, but rather a way of accessing the text. And, as an access point, a paratext is illuminating in that it projects meaning onto the text itself, but, in doing so, it manages the reading experience, thereby limiting the reader’s interpretive abilities (à la Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s 1817 directive gloss of The Ancient Mariner).

More recently, Anthony Grafton’s The Footnote: A Curious History and Chuck Zerby’s The Devil’s Details: A History of Footnotes have expanded on Genette’s taxonomy of paratexts by providing diachronic accounts of the footnote specifically, chronicling its Enlightenment establishment in scholarly writing. Grafton writes that by “the eighteenth century, the historical footnote was a high form of literary art” (1), and that when “the historian writes with footnotes, [the] historical narrative tells a distinctively modern, double story” (23). Likewise, Zerby states that the footnote is the humanistic element of historiography: “footnotes let us hear the missteps of biases, and hear pathos, subtle decisions, scandal and anger” (5), actuating the various tensions inherent in the ideology and presentation of a persuasive text (18). But, I suggest, the literary footnote—while often adhering to these principles of historiography and objectivity that Grafton and Zerby identify in the scholarly note—is also a tool of subjectivity, subversion, and cultural and political criticism.13

13 I explore this aspect of the footnote at greater length in Chapter Three.
In addition to these typological and genealogical accounts of the footnote, the language and theories of new media provide a useful way for talking about the interface between text and paratext, akin to digital hypertext, as several literary historians have noted (Siskin and Warner 19; Piper 7; McGann 54, 68-70). Indeed, as Patricia Fumerton has suggested, “something very new is afoot via the workings of the web in the ways we collect and think about the past” (13). The modern, digital realm of narrative production and consumption has, in a sense, recaptured and reinvented the early days of print culture where reading was a social activity and anxieties surrounded the easy access to print production and consumption. There is an equivalent anxiety today about a “certain democratizing (cultural) effect of Internet-based communications” (Kluitenberg 61). Written texts, Adriaan van der Weel suggests, have “given material shape to opinion, knowledge, creative ideas, and so on for centuries” (3). One way we might understand the concepts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century materiality that this digital analogy pinpoints is through the new-media concept of remediation. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define “remediation” as “the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms” (273); likewise, Lev Manovich argues that this logic works by “translating, refashioning, and reforming other media, both on the level of content and form” (Manovich 89). Simply put, paratexts function like hyperlinks in storing, containing, or archiving the information within narratives while also redirecting and opening up the reading experience.14

14 I provide a direct application of this analogy in the Epilogue.
The hypermediacy (or material self-awareness) of literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries offers an easy access point into readers’ and writers’ relationships with ethno-historical information. A literary excavation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paratexts—footnotes and other editorial frames—through the vocabulary of new media leads naturally into the methodological approach of media archaeology. Media archaeology can, perhaps, be explained most simply as an inquiry into “how stories are recorded, in what kind of physical media, what kinds of processes and durations…the apparatus that conveys the past as fact, not just as story” (Parikka, “Archival” 7). This approach, Parikka states, reads “media cultures as sedimented and layered, a fold of time and materiality where the past might be suddenly discovered anew, and the new technologies grow obsolete increasingly fast”; yet, Parikka acknowledges, media archaeology is also self-consciously anachronistic: “New media might be here and slowly changing our user habits, but old media never left us. They are continuously remediated, resurfacing, finding new uses, contexts, adaptations” (What is Media Archaeology 3). In distinctly twentieth- and twenty-first century terms, these media are “remixed.”

Therefore, media archaeology excavates the means by which narratives are transmitted and archived, paying close attention to the influence and interplay among media forms. Building upon what Ernst and Parikka advance regarding the interrogation of media forms within their historical context, along with Foucault’s discursive concepts of epistemology in The Archaeology of Knowledge and his foundational discussions of the Author, I mine the footnote and authorizing editorial frames, reading them—per media
archaeology—within their generic and authorial boundary-blurring contexts throughout poetic and prose fictional narratives.

Using this approach, I aim to answer questions raised by Susan Stewart that probe texts’ ability to contain, represent, define, and redefine cultural history:

How does the present appropriate the past? How does our gaze upon the past, even when articulated as a desire to escape mediation, always separate us from the past? How do aspects of culture become periodized in time just as under tourism they become localized in space? How do certain forms become emblematic of ways of life? (68).

In response to these questions of genre fixation, historical representation, and cultural mediation, I unpack texts representative of what I have termed the age of the literary footnote (1728-1832). I focus more specifically on the latter half of this period wherein paratexts were often ethno-historical in nature, providing both subjective and objective—insider and outsider—perspectives on the cultures and histories described and critiqued in the texts. These ethno-historical paratexts and their plurality of perspectives allow for the fictional narratives to function as archives, subjectively romanced into literary records, as I have suggested above, that provided authors, editors, and readers alike an opportunity to explore and come to terms with Britain’s past.

**Narrative And/As Archive**

This dissertation, with its critical reading of footnotes in fiction as archival agents, answers Stewart’s call to “search for a model of the evaluative relations between time and
genre by focusing on a process that is both historical and historicizing” (73). I contend that ethno-historical paratexts provide a model for effective evaluation of the boundaries of genre and authority. Moreover, the methodology of media archaeology is both historical and historicizing; it is, according to Parikka, “a history-theory enterprise in which temporal excavation of media functions as a theoretical force...a reading of old media and new media in parallel lines” (“What” n.p.). Accordingly, I read annotated media productions as instances of media-archaeological art: textual productions that are self-consciously and self-referentially commenting on their own materiality and mediality as artifacts representative of and rooted in the Enlightenment- and Romantic-era climates of particularity and oral-written remediation, respectively.

In addition to representing an undeniable expression of desire for historicity and locality, paratexts are signs both of authorship and of authorization. Paratexts gain this duality through what Genette regards as their “discursive nature”:

[T]he authorial annotation of a text of fiction or poetry, by dint of its discursive nature, unavoidably marks a break in the enunciative regime…[and is] used most often with texts whose fictionality is very “impure,” very conspicuous for its historical references or sometimes for its philosophical reflections: novels or poems whose notes for the most part bear precisely on the nonfiction aspect of the narrative. (332)

The “discursive nature” that Genette references here echoes Bakhtin’s concepts of “hybrid discourse”—that is, the interplay between the author and text, text and reader, author and reader, and the compositional process enacted in this discursive space—as
well as Foucault’s notion of the archive itself. Shari Benstock suggests that “[b]asically, the footnote in fiction operates in much the same way as it does in criticism: to call attention to the presence of author and reader on textual grounds” (206). Likewise, Lawrence Lipking states that the existence—even simply the possibility—of glosses and footnotes “demonstrates that the space surrounding print is not a vacuum but a plenum” (613). This plenum is made evident in the ways that notes “call out” and “[render] more exact” the meaning of the text, as David Simpson writes, “while at the same time the main text is implicitly found wanting, in need of further explication. Something more needs to be said, but it appears in small print, as if not fully belonging to the poem, and yet somehow pertinent” (109). That is, the paratexts provide context, exacting the meaning of an imperfect text; in their material manifestation, these contextualizing frames are both part of and apart from the main text, relegated to the margins and often set in fine print.

The result of this location in and dislocation from the text, as both Genette and Simpson have observed, is a schism—and it is in this schism where the convoluted roles of the author, editor, and reader become both tangled together and yet more clear at the same time. This dissertation reads that schism between text and paratext, author and editor—the “enunciative regime” that Genette draws our attention to, or the “not fully belonging” text, as Simpson presents it—by considering the archival role of authorial annotation in poetic and prose fictions of narrative archives.

Resisting the impulse of many media theorists to divorce form from content, I do not separate the materiality of the texts analyzed within this dissertation from their
literary contents. Instead, borrowing from the approaches of Leah Price and Christina Lupton, who unite narrative theory with book history, I read the content of the texts as demonstrating authors’ awareness of their text’s material, archival nature; form and content stand in a symbiotic relationship with each other. I illustrate this complementary relationship in the following chapters which draw upon significant literary moments and representative publications in both poetic and prose fiction to address how the narrative functions as an archive. This focus on archives both allows for a nuanced argument about the specific texts under analysis and holds broader implications for studies in the Enlightenment and Romantic eras—acknowledging that today’s so-called old media (print) were “not always old, and studying them in terms that allow us to understand what it meant for them to be new is a timely and culturally important task” (Gitelman and Pingree xi). Specifically, this dissertation advances the argument that the annotations in many literary works of this period allow these works to function as curated collections or archives. By focusing on the editorial or curatorial paratexts in these works, we can view them in new ways as systematic records of tradition, be they real or invented.

The four chapters I provide each consider the intricacies of these paratextual presences, showing how these narratives function as archives by virtue of their dense and innovative forms of annotation. Chapter One, “Annotations and Antiquarianism,” takes up the literary antiquarian Thomas Percy’s *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763). In both its printed and manuscript versions, this work presents a rich case study in the paratextual curation of textual artifacts as read through a lens of media archaeology: Percy translates selections of Old Norse poetry and provides elaborate headnotes and footnotes presenting
cultural details so that the poems could be accessible for eighteenth-century British readers. Drawing upon original manuscript research conducted in the Bodleian Library, I critically examine the layers of composition, editing, and authority evident in Percy’s annotated translation of Old Icelandic verse. Moreover, considering the work-in-progress nature of these texts and paratexts sheds light on the ways authors interacted with their texts, imagined readers’ needs, and composed paratextual materials that—when read critically as more than just textual appendages—provide commentary on these relational aspects. The discussion in this chapter establishes a more comprehensive picture of antiquarian methodologies for remediating and repurposing traditional narratives through the integration of paratextual framing devices.

In Chapter Two, “Footnotes and Knowledge Work,” I leap ahead 50 years and address the heavily curated, footnoted fiction of Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan’s The Wild Irish Girl (1806). Like Percy’s collection of poems, Owenson’s novel also functions as a collection—here, a collection of ethno-historical observations on eighteenth-century Ireland and its cultural politics. Her novel provides the most evident illustration of narrative-as-archive due to the novel’s dense and discursive footnotes. Drawing upon the concepts of museum studies and the history of the museum as a knowledge-producing institution, I look to the relationship between the text and its dense paratexts to provide a museological analysis of this work. I focus on Owenson’s innovative method of weaving facts into fiction, which has larger implications for studies in fiction of the period, including that of Walter Scott. Viewed in this museological, cross-referential light,
Enlightenment- and Romantic-era paratexts may be said to anticipate some of the referential and transformational opportunities of digital media.

Building upon the previous chapter’s emphasis on the curatorial function of antiquarian details within footnotes, Chapter Three, “Textual Imperialism,” examines George Gordon, Lord Byron’s fragmented Turkish tale, *The Giaour* (1813). In this chapter, I consider specifically how Byron utilized paratextual commentary to explore the boundaries of genre and authority in this poem. He claims the storyline is drawn from a Turkish storyteller and then translated into English; he then remediated the narrative into English verse fragments and curated it with his extensive annotations. The result is an extensively and confusedly annotated poem. Examining the footnotes in correlation with their accompanying lines, I argue that the margins effectively unseat the locus of authority on the page: the notes disrupt the narrative and introduce an uncertainty into Byron’s authorial and editorial voice. In other words, Byron’s annotations represent the sincere application of a previously satiric form of reflection and meta-commentary prominent in the early half of the eighteenth century (as in Pope’s *The Dunciad* or Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*). The analysis in this chapter illustrates the tensions between eighteenth-century and Romantic-era narrative tropes by emphasizing how margins can be used to subvert and disrupt the narrative of the main page by attempting (on the surface, at least) to unify the narrative.

Lastly, Chapter Four, “The Pleasure of the Paratext,” presents a counterexample of Byron’s sincere use of previously satiric forms in James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). Hogg’s novel presents a quixotic work in
the most literal sense of being modeled upon Cervantes’ monumental metafiction, featuring an intricate series of embedded paratextual frames. I analyze these frames through a Barthesian lens and argue that the novel becomes a place where different kinds of genres can be stored. On the surface, *Justified Sinner* mirrors the material form and paratextual construction of publications of collected narrative traditions, such as Percy’s *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*. But because the work is entirely a fiction, Hogg must wrap the primary narrative in a thicker cloak of paratextual materials in order to obfuscate his identity as author, and even to veil his efforts as “editor.” As such, *Justified Sinner* represents a significant moment in the material history of the novel as an archive of genres. Reading *Justified Sinner* in this way prompts a reconsideration of histories of authority and materiality in fiction.

I conclude this dissertation by drawing upon the notions of new media to further probe the archival nature of the texts studied here. I show how the literary footnote promotes dynamic ways of reading that are closely related to hypertext today. As I explore in my epilogue, analogies to digital media have the potential to shed new light in print-era paratexts, for we are, according to McGann, “entering a period when the entirety of our received cultural archive of materials, not least of all our books and manuscripts, will have to be reconceived” (169).15 Thus, acknowledging this digital analogue provides a useful way of thinking about how we use media to organize our knowledge in digital media today.

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15 See further Piper 93-94; McGann 71; Foley 7-8, 13.
Interpreting imaginative narratives as ethno-historical, archival spaces through their union of text and paratext, the convergence of orality and literacy, and the collapse of the roles of author, editor, and audience, provides a fresh approach to studies of the novel and narrative poetry in literary criticism and book history. Moreover, the collapse of generic distinctions (poetry and prose) and periodization (Enlightenment and Romanticism) offers bold new ways for reconceiving how we define and categorize texts based on their time of inception, aesthetics of presentation, and evidence of authorial/editorial intervention. Indeed, the literary footnote is a material relic of Enlightenment emphases on classification, categorization, and objective description; simultaneously, it is also indicative of Romantic preoccupations with reimagining ethnic heritages, national identification, and narrative traditions. British literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries offers an especially rich archive for exploration, in part because it constructed itself as an archive to begin with.
Annotations and Antiquarianism in Thomas Percy’s
Five Pieces of Runic Poetry

Antiquarian Thomas Percy (1729-1811), best known for his monumental Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765), began his career as antiquarian and media archaeologist by compiling collections of translated verse—including his edition of Old Norse poetry in English translation. While he was compiling this work intended for publication two years previously in 1761, his mentor, the poet William Shenstone (1714-63), wrote Percy a letter, admonishing him for not managing a more timely publication. Shenstone writes, “How happens it, I beseech you, that you have suppressed the Runick Fragments etc., ‘till Mr. M’Pherson has Published His Poem? Why will you suffer the publick to be quite cloyed with this kind of writing, ere you avail yourself of their Appetite?” (Brooks 124 [4 Dec 1761]). It is humorous in hindsight that Shenstone urged Percy to publish his Norse poetry because readers would undoubtedly embrace the translations in the same way that they had embraced Scottish philologist James Macpherson’s Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Galic or Erse Language (1760). Readers embraced literary relics from Britain’s past, Shenstone suggested, and they could have greatly benefitted from reading Percy’s thoughtful translations and carefully researched editorial commentary on a different aspect of Britain’s past—the Scandinavian influences.
A revaluation of literary antiquarianism throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is long overdue. Literary antiquarianism, I argue, is far more than the nationalist or political project that many critics have reduced it to (Connell 163-64; Kidd 6, 185-88; Sweet 12, 119-20). Although these scholars astutely associate antiquarianism with politics, their claims of anachronism have been overemphasized, casting a shadow over the motives for antiquarian literary production, including the curation of textual artifacts. Instead of focusing solely on the political motivations of antiquarian production, I draw upon the historical/theoretical premises of media archaeology both as a way to excavate the layers of text and paratext in Percy’s remediations and as a way to describe Percy’s own literary antiquarian endeavors. His practice of media archaeology, moreover, is typical of the body of editors, translators, and remediators of the antiquarian and ethnographic narratives that were prevalent throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Accordingly, literary antiquarianism is more a philosophical than a political project, as Percy’s body of works indicates. In them, he unearths the “treasures of native genius” (*Five Pieces* xiii) and celebrates the perceived primitivism of these treasures while adopting a cyclical model of history. He offers readers a way of using the past in order to understand the present.

In this chapter, I argue that the media-archaeological methodologies present in Percy’s compilation and translation of *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763)—the five brief poems drawn from Old Nordic narrative traditions and rendered in prose: “The Incantation of Hervor,” “The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog,” “The Ransome of Egill the Scald,” “The Funeral Song of Hacon,” and “The Complaint of Harold”—provide an
approach to antiquarianism that can serve as a useful model for critics today. This methodology can be particularly useful when we seek to understand the intersections or layers of materiality, authority, and genre. These layers are vividly present in the paratextual framing devices adopted by author-editors in this period. *Runic Poetry* work provides unique insight into ways that authors interacted with their texts, imagined their readers’ needs, and composed paratextual materials to create and curate a narrative-as-archive. Percy, specifically, assisted in constructing and complicating British national identity as an identity woven together from the varied cultural threads that comprise Britain’s Celtic and Germanic pasts. In this chapter, I place *Runic Poetry* alongside Percy’s far more famous *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and compare the curatorial or interpretive model of editorship Percy imparts in the two works to introduce the kind of literary knowledge work that is my larger concern.

**The Making and Meaning of an Annotated Poem**

James Macpherson’s widely read *Fragments* work cast a shadow over the blossoming trend of remediated ancient narratives. Accordingly, Shenstone urged Percy to publish quickly both to capitalize on the public’s appetite for remediated ancient poetry—an appetite that Macpherson seemed to monopolize in the early 1760s with his dubious *Fragments*—and to vindicate the sullied scalds. Percy himself doubted Macpherson’s veracity, writing to fellow antiquary Evan Evans in 1761 that “hardly one reader in ten believes [Macpherson’s] specimens already produced to be genuine” translations from late-antique Gaelic (Lewis 19 [15 Oct 1761]). Percy repeated these doubts in his editorial
preface to *Runic Poetry*, blatantly criticizing the “boundless field for licence [sic]” (vi) that he accuses Macpherson of adopting in the “translation” (or invention) of his Fragments—criticisms that anticipate Joseph Ritson’s attack on Percy’s own liberal editorial hand (*Letters* 1:152). To vindicate ancient poetry, the roots of which had been sullied by Macpherson’s literary masquerade, Percy threw himself into producing a refined edition of definitively ancient Scaldic poetry (Scandinavian minstrelsy), an act that ushered in a new chapter in the history of remediation practices and literary antiquarianism, presenting readers with *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*.

To emphasize the poetic quality of the Norse poems and their comparative authenticity, Percy positions his publication of Old Norse verse squarely alongside Macpherson’s Celtic *Fragments*, gesturing towards his own sense of humility as editor and translator: “it would be vain to deny, as it is perhaps impolitic to mention, that this attempt is owing to the success of the *Erse* fragments” (vi). Percy’s use of “impolitic” to define how he positions his work alongside Macpherson’s is ambiguous, perhaps deliberately so: it may be unwise to assume that his work deserves the same warm reception as Macpherson’s lauded *Fragments* (the vanity mentioned in the previous phrase); at the same time, it might be unscrupulous to liken his remediations to Macpherson’s fabrications and risk making himself sound derivative. Nevertheless, Percy continues in this trope of modesty, remarking on the lackluster poetics of his own translations (in a sense anticipating his critics’ reactions) while backhandedly

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16 In a 1789 letter to Irish antiquarian Joseph Cooper Walker, Ritson writes of Percy’s editing in *Reliques* that “As a publication of uncommon elegance and poetical merit I have always been, and still am, a warm admirer of Bishop Percy’s *Reliques...*” but acknowledges that “I have been persuaded he has not on every occasion been so scrupulously attentive to his originals as I think the work required” (1.152).
complimenting the poetics of Macpherson’s verse: “It is by no means for the interest of this little work, to have it brought into a comparison with those beautiful pieces, after which it must appear to the greatest disadvantage” (vi). But, declares Percy, “till the Translator of those poems thinks it proper to produce his originals, it is impossible to say whether they do not owe their superiority, if not their whole existence, entirely to himself” (vi).

Through the inclusion of vast paratexts—headnotes, footnotes, endnotes, even appendices, prefaces, and title page ornamentations—Percy sought to curate the narratives and make them accessible for his English reading audience by providing the “few miscellaneous observations” (Five Pieces 6) necessary for readers to comprehend the poems within their original contexts, as though readers themselves were transported back in time to the tenth century. He creates a sense of antiquity through fragmentation and emphasizes readers’ need for curatorial commentary in order to make the poems feel familiar while calling them out as definitively foreign. In a sense, he re-creates his own antiquarian archival experiences.

For Percy’s model of media archeology, enhancing fragmentation is what allows an archive to become a narrative, and a narrative to become an archive. Because, according to Percy, the Scandinavians had preserved “their ancient manners longest” (Percy, “Essay” 26)—they maintained their primitivism, or “naïvety” in the terms of Friedrich Schiller (31, 79)—theirs is the strongest European literature to provide access to “the human mind in its almost original state of nature” (Percy, Five Pieces xiv). Through these naïve texts, we are able to “go back to the origins of their own language
and poetry,” as philosopher Friedrich Schlegel put it at the close of the eighteenth century, “and release the old power, the sublime spirit which lies dormant, unrecognized, in the documents of the fatherland’s prehistory” (Schlegel 74). For Percy, to dig into these literary artifacts is to dig into the noble, native, and naïve state of human nature.

The result of Percy’s philological project is what I am calling an “epistemology of origins”: a philosophical celebration of the origins of the British people, their poetry, and eighteenth-century philologists’ and philosophers’ knowledge of these. This emphasis on nativism or celebration of primitivism (wherein Iceland becomes Britain within Percy’s Rousseauian conjectural history) illustrates what Noah Heringman has observed as “an alternative antiquarian focus on British history that attempts to engage with ‘antient Britons’ on their own terms,” in which Classical, Celtic, and Gothic histories are synthesized as British (57, 221).

For reasons yet unknown, Percy did not publish his *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry Translated from the Islandic Language* in 1761, as he had originally intended. Percy dismisses the two-year delay in publication as “an accident,” and he never directly addresses the reason for the delay in publication in any of his correspondence or journals. Nevertheless, this “accident” and subsequent delay provided readers with two years to become “quite cloyed with this kind of writing” as Shenstone had warned, and to grow tired of the “sensational literary and cultural discoveries,” invented or otherwise, abounding in the eighteenth century (Russett 1). By the time Percy’s *Runic Poetry* appeared in print, it might have appeared that the public had lost their appetite for such discoveries and recoveries, even though the rage continued to grow, as the warm
reception of Percy’s *Reliques* demonstrates. The slim volume was received coolly, overshadowed by the critical success of Macpherson’s more novel *Fragments* and weighed down by what reviewers have reckoned as shortcomings in the poetics of the translations and the somber selection of texts. One reviewer wrote:

> for want of … a poetic turn in the translation, [the poems] lose much of their natural effect. We do not think our Editor also very happy in his choice of the pieces here published; remembering to have read some performances in Bartholinus, which, we think, afforded preferable specimens of this northern poetry. (“Five Pieces” 283)

Other critics have been less gentle in their commentary, describing Percy’s translations as “feeble,” and even “jéjuene [sic] to the verge of grotesqueness” (Farley 85, 33). At best, reviewers have been merely indifferent, criticizing the lack of ingenuity (discoveries of late antique and medieval poetry had become commonplace by 1763) and bemoaning the poetics of the translations, but lauding the editorial framework—the paratexts—calling them “curious” and “instructive” (“Art. VIII.” 308).

*Runic Poetry* has been all but forgotten in literary history, perhaps not surprisingly, given these spiritless reviews. It sporadically surfaces in passing references to the surge of interest in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse literatures in Britain during the eighteenth century (Wawn 27-30; Wilson 63-64). Along with Margaret Smith’s and Kathryn Sutherland’s bibliographic summaries of *Runic Poetry*, Margaret Clunies Ross

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17 By “Bartholinus,” the reviewer is most likely referring to Danish Antiquary, Thomas Bartholinus (1659-90). He published a Latin version of “The Complaint of Harold” in *Antiquitatum Danicarum de Causes Contmtae a Danis adhuc gentilibus Mortis libri tres* (1689), pp. 154-57, 420-21. The reviewer’s comparison between Bartholinus’s Latin version and Percy’s English version overlooks the difficulties of translation that rendered the poems accessible for a broader English reading audience.
and Robert Rix have discussed *Runic Poetry* in conversations about antiquarianism, canon building, and the emergence of Romantic conceptions of British national history and national poetics (Ross 51-74; Rix, “Introduction” n.p., “Runes” 114-44, “Thomas Percy” 197-229). Ross describes the shared formal features of Macpherson’s *Fragments* and Percy’s *Runic Poetry*; she also claims that this work represents Percy’s “education in Old Norse studies and the development of his understanding of medieval Scandinavian culture” (75), leading to his later translation of *Northern Antiquities* (1770) from French antiquarian Paul-Henri Mallet’s *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poesie des Celtes* (1756). Rix, likewise, reads *Runic Poetry* as Percy’s direct alternative to Macpherson’s *Fragments*; he argues for the literary merit of Percy’s publication by acknowledging the ways this work attempted to “restore balance in the book market, which [Percy] believed was overzealous for Scottish poetry” (“Thomas” 199). Percy’s literary connection with Macpherson is a valuable connection to draw. However, I contend that we should read this work for its own merit as a chapter in the history of literary antiquarianism and media archaeology.

Therefore, I place *Runic Poetry* here in its own critical spotlight, beyond the implied binary of Macpherson/Percy and Ossian/Snorri Sturluson (the Scottish and Icelandic near-mythic storytellers, respectively) in order to highlight the contribution of Percy’s paratexts to the larger field of “generic experimentation” in the literary world at the close of the eighteenth century (Rajan and Wright 1). This publication demonstrates what Kathryn Sutherland has heralded as “the enthusiasm for early romance and traditional poetry” and for the “imaginative freedom” offered by these verse forms (414).
Percy’s *Runic Poetry* likewise fits into what Kelsey Jackson Williams has recently explained as the larger trend of “co-opting…Norse themes into Romantic poetry” which represents “a defining moment in English literature’s engagement with the Norse literary heritage” (709-09). Beyond simply representing an under-examined trend in literary history, Percy’s *Runic Poetry* serves as an important media-archaeological artifact, due primarily to what Nick Groom calls the work’s “authenticating mechanism” or “prodigious textuality” (85, 87). It allows us, in the terms proposed by Jussi Parikka, “to analyze the regimes of memory and creative practices” (2)—to more fully understand Percy’s philological project of an epistemology of origins along with indicating the extent and limits of this (Percy’s attempts to comprehend the origins of British culture and identity) and what he wished to convey of this to his readers. To undertake this excavation, I turn to the compositional history of *Runic Poetry*: Percy’s correspondence and the manuscripts of his translations that contain his annotations, seemingly composed concomitantly with the translation and remediation of the verses.18

When Percy initially began his project of translating and representing Old Norse poetry for English readers, he sent off a sample of his translations to William Shenstone for his mentor’s perusal and appraisal. With the sample, Percy wrote that “you will probably be disgusted to see it so incumbered with Notes” (Brooks 70 [Sept 1760]). Percy was correct in supposing Shenstone’s disgust. Nevertheless, Percy kept the encumbering annotations when he published his work. The resulting paratexts guide readers through the layers of linguistic and cultural exchange that these poems underwent.

18 The manuscripts for Percy’s *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* are housed in the Bodleian Library (MS Percy c.7, fols. 1-33). See Appendix A for my transcription of Percy’s fair copies of “The Incantation of Hervor” (Fols. 3-11) and The Funeral Song of King Hacon” (Fols. 26-27).
in their transference from the voice of the scald to the pen of the antiquarian and their translations from Old Norse to Latin to English. In remediating this transfer, Percy attempts to raise a single, magisterial voice through the paratexts by providing ample paratextual matter to frame the five short pieces comprising *Runic Poetry*, striking what Andrew Piper has regarded as the “delicate balancing act between the proprietary and the commons…[that is] enacted in the margins” (104). These frames (specifically the preface, headnotes, and footnotes) blur generic boundaries of poetry and literary scholarship. Moreover, they serve to curate the collection, providing contextual information: to guide readers through the poem as though they had firsthand knowledge of the cultural particulars that Percy glosses—glosses that he claims “are unavoidable, as the Piece would be unintelligible without them” (Brooks 70 [Sept. 1760). But the inclusion of the framing annotations goes directly against the advice Percy was given by Shenstone, who warned him that:

The absolute Necessity of Notes, will be the Rock that you may chance to split upon. I hope they will be as short as possible, and either at the end of every Piece; or thrown into the Form of Glossary at the end of the Collection. Perhaps some small Preface at the Beginning also, may supersede the Use of Many [notes]…. The Original [transcriptions], I should think, had much better be omitted … lest this, together with the Notes, may load the text more than is agreeable (Brooks 74 [1 Oct 1760]).

The following month, Shenstone again cautioned Percy against crowding the pages with editorial commentary, even for the sake of contextualization and reader accessibility: “I
would wish you to consult for Simplicity as much as possible.—Some old words, I
presume (which it will be necessary to preserve) must be explained by modern ones—For
these alone, I would reserve the bottom of each Page” (Brooks 77 [10 Nov 1760]).
Nevertheless, Percy persisted in his curatorial editorship, providing transcriptions of the
Icelandic originals from which he drew his translations, even though “nobody will
understand [them]” (Brooks 71 [Sept 1760])—in order to support his assertion of the
authentic antiquity of these works. The curated (even constructed) antiquity of these
works, in turn, supports his epistemological project of British cultural origins.

The contextualizing annotations are especially dense in Percy’s re-presentation of
“The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog.” This poem tells of the exploits of the titular poet,
warrior, pirate, and legendary ruler, Regner Lodbrog (Old Norse, *Ragnarr Lodbrók*), as
spoken by Lodbrog himself. To the text of the poem, Percy provides eleven footnotes,
seven of which are glosses of kennings and other vocabulary along with references to his
choices in diction and phrasing during his translation efforts. The remaining four
footnotes are more densely ethnographic in nature, providing contextual information
regarding names, places, and cultural practices. The seven philological footnotes (those
reflecting language) specifically provide glosses for the kennings—often literal
renderings—that are characteristic of medieval narrative forms. For example, he glosses
the phrase “the wolves of the sea*” (36) as “*A poetical name for the fishes of
prey” (36n).¹⁹ And, on the lines “…we gained rivers of blood* for the ravenous wolf:
ample food for the yellow-footed fowl” (27-28), Percy comments, “*Literally ‘Rivers of

¹⁹ Percy glosses this kenning once again in “The Ransome of Egill the Scald, noting that “wolves
in the sea*” indicates “*an Islandic phrase for fishes of prey” (53, 53n).
wounds.’” —By the yellow-footed fowl is meant the eagle” (28n). Just a few lines later, the poem references the “habitation of the gods*” (29); again, Percy provides the literal: “*Literally, ‘to the hall of Odin’” (29n). Likewise, to the lines “the spear resounded: the banners shone* upon the coats of mail” (35-36), Percy remarks, “*Or more properly ‘reflected the sunshine upon the coat of mail’” (36n). Despite its pedantry, the focus on the literal reflects Percy’s goal of presenting as accurate an edition of translated poetry as possible.

Percy insists on accuracy, even though he departs from accurate and literal translations himself. Throughout his editorial preface, Percy asserts that he “had no such boundless field for license” (vi), such as Macpherson had had in “inventing” his Fragments (or merely “improving” the originals). Instead, Percy writes that “it behoved him therefore to be as exact as possible” (vii). And yet, he sometimes veers from this editing philosophy of “as exact as possible.” He acknowledges that

sometimes where a sentence was obscure, he hath ventured to drop it …
sometimes for the sake of perspicuity it was necessary to alter the arrangement of a period; and sometimes to throw in a few explanatory words: and even once or twice to substitute a more simple expression instead of the complex and enigmatic phrase of the original. (vii)

Although Percy presents his editing practices as being entirely for the benefit of the reader, it is probable that the purposeful fragmentation of certain poems is intended as evidence of the real antiquity of the runic relics: “Sometimes indeed, where a sentence was obscure, he hath ventured to drop it, and the asterisks which occur will denote such
omissions” (vii). But, in fact, the sources Percy is working from are not as full of gaps as he makes them out to be. This purposeful fragmentation occurs primarily in “The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog.” Twice in the first stanza alone, Percy highlights these omissions: “We fought with swords: * * * when in Gothland I slew an enormous serpent: my reward was the beatuteous Thora. Thence I was deemed a man: they called me Lodbrog from that slaughter. * * * I thrust the monster through with my spear, with the steel productive of splendid rewards” (27). The Old Norse original and Latin intermediary indicate that Percy omitted the line “Hitt vas æ fyr lōngu” (Latin: “Haud post longum tempus”) meaning roughly “by no means after a long time.” These simulated lacunae go directly against Shenstone’s advice to Percy regarding the smoothing or polishing of language Percy sought to effect in his editing:

As to alterations of a word or two, I do not esteem it a point of Conscience to particularize them on this occasion. Perhaps, where a whole Line or More is alter’d, it may be proper enough to give some Intimation of it. The Italick type may answer this purpose, if you do not employ it on other occasions. It will have the appearance of a modern Toe or Finger, which is allowably added to the best old Statues: And I think I should always let the Publick imagine, that these were owing to Gaps, rather than to faulty Passages. (Brooks 72-73 [1 Oct 1760])

The editor should avoid drawing attention to his textual appendages—his interventions and alterations, Shenstone suggests.20 He later contradicts this hard-and-fast claim,

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20 Shenstone’s choice of anatomic terms to describe textual manipulation is striking, particularly as it anticipates the emergence of the terminology of footnote in the nineteenth century.
implying in a letter from the following year that invasive editorial interventions can be entirely necessary: “Many old Pieces, without some alteration, will do nothing; and, with your amendments, will be striking” (Brooks 118 [Sept 1761]). This fragmentation can be read as more than just a modest acknowledgement of the translator’s imitations or opportunities to heed Shenstone and “let the Publick imagine, that these were owing to Gaps, rather than to faulty Passages.” In fact, fragmentation is often seen as a hallmark of literary antiquarianism, defining and defying narrative closure by illustrating the search for native, unspoiled, or naïve genius (Brodey 6). It is a “reconfiguration,” as Alexander Regier states, of critical, historical, and aesthetic constructs of narrative and nationalism, gesturing towards Romanticism (6).

In his reconfigurations and appropriations, Percy adds to the poetic text more than he subtracts, while indicating imagined absences—suggesting the fragmentation of a work that is, in fact, whole. He indicates two omissions through the lacunae, but there is only one; he also takes poetic liberties in describing Thora as “beauteous,” a description that does not appear in either the Old Icelandic original Percy provides, or his Latin intermediary, which read simply “Tha feinkum vier Thoru”\(^{21}\) and “Tunc impetravimus Thoram,” both meaning generally “then we obtained Thora.” Interestingly, Percy provides extensive commentary on the figure of Thora, explaining the role of Thora within the poem and within the broader mythology of Regner Lodgrog. He writes:

N.B. Thora, mentioned in the first stanza, was daughter of some little Gothic prince, whose palace was infested by a larger serpent; he offered

\(^{21}\) This phrase is more accurately represented as “Þá féngum vër Bóru.”
his daughter in marriage to any one that would kill the monster and set her
free. Regner accomplished the achievement…This is the poetical account
of this adventure: but history informs us that Thora was kept prisoner by
one of her father’s vassals, whose name was Orme or SERPENT, and that it
was from this man that Regner delivered her. (25-26)

The single mention of Thora in the poem does not seem to invite such extensive
commentary, especially when Ælla, king of Northumberland, and Aslauga, Regner’s
second wife and mother of his children, take greater precedence in the poem’s narrative
(39-41). By calling greater attention to Thora in his notes as well as in his additions to the
text, Percy establishes a stronger sense of characterization by appealing to contemporary
narrative convention and readerly empathy, necessitating some backstory for Thora in his
headnote and in the added description of her beauty.

The lacunae also raise several questions regarding both the meaning of the poem
as well as the translating and editing practices producing this piece. Is this blatant
omission more or less egregious than the invention and loose editing practices Percy was
hoping to avoid? Does indicating that he purposefully omitted some words or phrases
ameliorate the lack of precise translation? And what do the paratexts indicating omission
inserted here do for the reading and interpretation of “The Dying Ode of Regner
Lodbrog”? In answer to these questions, I suggest that Percy is attempting to create a
stronger sense of antiquity and recovery: in a sense, he is providing the polite reader with
a sort of reenactment of his media-archaeological experience with the manuscripts.
Through the spurious indications of omission, the lacunae invite the reader to engage
with the poem on an editorial level, taking on a sort of compositional role in imagining what might be omitted, thereby bringing in another level of composition and transfer of authority from the poet, to translator-editor, to reader-as-writer. Percy embraces fragmentation, utilizing the trope of reconstructing fragmented documents, as made famous by Horace Walpole’s definitive gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).

In other words, as readers encountering indications of omissions, we are made aware that we are not accessing the poem in its entirety as original audiences would have. In this awareness, we also know the limitations of the translation and its presentation. We might appreciate the fact that the translator held back from obscuring the text with inaccurate translations or confusing turns of phrase. We might also resent that we are not given the opportunity to determine for ourselves the obscurity or clarity of the poem due to the missing information. Regardless of reader responses, these paratextual materials—the intentional lacunae and editorial fragmentations—work to situate Percy’s publication squarely within the realm of antiquarianism and the contemporary vogue for recovered fragments by purposefully fragmenting a complete text and calling attention to fragmentation. In doing so, these paratexts of absence provide a stronger sense of ancient and recovered manuscripts than the poetic text does alone.

Percy’s translation of the poetic text of “The Incantation of Hervor” provides another glimpse of the knowledge work of the mid-eighteenth century and richly illustrates the complex layers of authority and textuality provided by Percy in his media-archaeological endeavors.22 The poem tells the story of Hervor, daughter of the slain

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22 Interestingly, “The Incantation of Hervor” is the only poem of the five “runic” poems that features a female protagonist. Further discussion of this point is needed.
Angantyr, and her brave pursuit of her father and his brothers into the afterlife in order to claim what she believes is rightfully her inheritance, Tirfing. The few footnotes Percy provides to this poem in its published form primarily address the object of reverence in the poem: Angantyr’s sword, Tirfing. Percy comments simply that “Tirfing is the name of the sword. The etymology of this word is not known” (15n), and later remarks on the Scandinavian practice of inscribing runes on their weapons: “It was usual with the northern warriors to inscribe Runic characters on their weapons, to prevent their being dulled or blunted by enchantment [sic], as also to give them a keenness and strength which nothing could resist” (17n). The narrative’s emphasis on origins, objects, inheritance, and kinship directly reflect Percy’s own media-archaeological project with its material-based emphasis on origins and the passing on of language and custom through text-based objects—a cultural inheritance shared between the “sister dialects” (Five Pieces iv) and sister nations of England and Iceland.

Percy, as translator, places kinship and hereditary property and customs in the foreground of the poem’s diction. There are over a dozen references to kinship, with familial relationships mentioned in nearly every stanza of the poem. Hervor and Angantyr, the poem’s speakers, do not refer to themselves or to each other by first- and second-person pronouns; rather, they use third-person appellations denoting kinship: “daughter” (14), “father” (15), “offspring” (16). As the poem progresses, the references to kinship diminish and are replaced with more distant terms as Hervor and Angantyr talk through their dispute—“young maid” (16), “brave man” (17), “false woman” (19)—but the poem closes on a strong note of familial connection again, with Hervor once again
addressing her “slain father” (20) and Angantyr his “daughter” (20). Concepts of kinship and the rhetorical importance of family labels are key, equating with Percy’s familial description of English linguistic history. He describes the language of the poem’s composition as an “ancient sister dialect” of English: “…the mother of the modern Swedish and Danish tongues, in like manner as the Anglo-Saxon is the parent of our English” (*Five Pieces* iv-v). Kinship and lineages are crucial to negotiating the customs of inheritance and objects of memory. In turn, the objects of memory described within the poem resonate within Percy’s model of an epistemology of origins: of understanding and maintaining a memory of the past, often as it relates to contemporary cultural ethos, constructing both chronological and cultural unity.

The poem itself opens with Hervor addressing her father at his grave in order to obtain what she deems as her rightful inheritance, his sword: “Give me, out of the tomb, the hardened sword… deliver me the sword” (13-14). Angantyr attempts to explain that by possessing Tirfing she will “destroy almost all thy offspring” (16). But Hervor persists: “Art thou unwilling, Angantyr, to give an inheritance to thy only child?” (15). “The Incantation of Hervor” ends with Hervor departing from her father’s grave, bearing the sword. She promises to “Keep, and take in hand, the sharp sword, which thou hast let me have” (20). Hervor has proven her strength by summoning her father’s spirit and showing her resilience, twice stating that she neither cares nor fears “about what my sons may hereafter quarrel” (19, 20). Regardless of the object’s meaning or presumed outcomes, Hervor remains steadfast in her devotion to her father’s memory through her determination to obtain the sword. Similarly, Percy remains devoted to his poetic project
of translation and annotation, despite the censures of Shenstone regarding the public’s waning appetite for recovered folk literatures. And, as the sword was reckoned to be Hervor’s downfall, so too Percy’s *Runic Poetry* brought the editor-translator no lasting glory.

In the fair copy of his manuscript for this poem (Percy c.7, fols. 3-11), Percy first documents the provenance of the story: its origins from “old Islandic history,” the subsequent seventeenth-century “Swedish version and Latin notes by Oleus Virelius” and its early eighteenth-century appearance in the sixth volume of Dryden’s *Miscellany* (1716). Percy then summarizes the backstory leading up to Hervor’s titular incantation over her father’s grave: the genealogy of Angantyr and the battle in which he fell. Within the poem, Percy drafts seven notes, explaining: 1) the magical properties of spoken rites, 2) the integration of mythical creatures (such as dwarves) into the narrative, 3) Scandinavian burial practices, 4) the maintenance of weaponry, 5) interpretations of lines in the poem, 6) the magical properties of runes, and 7) an explanation of his editing practices along with a gloss of a kenning.

This manuscript reveals one way in which Percy organized his ideas for the annotations as he was transcribing the fair copy: on the right-hand page, Percy wrote down the lines of the poem and provided indicators of placement for the notes. On the facing page, Percy wrote down the notes, as in the example pictured here (Figure 1.1). Here, Percy glosses the poetic line “I do not fear, 7 O slain father” with the comment on the facing page, “7* The original words are *Ulfa greiner*, which literally signifies ‘A Morsel torn from the wolves.’ This is an Islandic Phrase for a dead body.” With this gloss,
Figure 1.1. MS Percy c7, fols. 9v-10r. Courtesy of the Bodleian Library
Percy shows his shortcomings as translator: “slain father” is far less metaphorical than the Icelandic “morsel torn from the wolves.” Moreover, the movement required to navigate between the text and its gloss tears the reader away from one of the most pivotal moments within the heartfelt exchange between Herva and Angantyr. Perhaps wisely, this footnote was omitted in the published version, and Percy’s descriptions of his editing practices are explained in the preface rather than through abundant annotations to the poems.

More than merely providing a space to explain editing choices, however, this juxtaposition of paratext and text on facing pages allows Percy to fully integrate his own editorial commentary with the poetic text—he becomes author/editor on the left-hand page, and translator/editor on the right. This textual arrangement demonstrates his efforts in mediating between the original language and cultural beliefs and meeting the intellectual needs of contemporary Anglophone readers. The text and paratext are here intermixed; the narrative is only minimally disrupted if the reader chooses to engage with the left-hand page, but the disruptions are meaningful since the annotations provide illuminating commentary on some potentially confusing aspects of the poem: the mythological history of forging weapons or the belief in the power of words and names that is imperative to the form and meaning of this poem in its original Old Norse. But this kind of paratextual-textual juxtaposition or minimally invasive commentary indicated in the manuscripts was not part of Percy’s plan for publication. Accordingly, on the last sheet of the manuscript (fol. 11), Percy includes what appears to be a note to Robert Dodsley, his printer, stating “I would have the Notes printed separately / at the end of the
piece, in the order in which they are numbered” (Figure 1.2) and providing the first few words of the sometimes-lengthy notes.

Figure 1.2. MS Percy c7, fol. 11v. Courtesy of the Bodleian Library

On these manuscript leaves, we can see Percy’s media-archaeological methodology at play as he performs the knowledge work of annotation. The goal of this work is to authorize the poetic text’s revelations about Britain’s supposed cultural origins.

The published version features a slightly different arrangement of the notes; they appear at the beginning of the document, following the contextualization and provenance of the narrative that Percy provides. He claims that “to prevent as much as possible the
interruption of notes, it was thought proper to premise a few miscellaneous observations” (6) and includes five prefatory notes—but not the total of seven lengthy notes provided in the manuscript. Undoubtedly, the prefatory notes serve to isolate the longer glosses and more expansive explanations and contextualizations so that the remaining footnotes might be shorter. Moreover, the choice to place the notes in the front rather than having them “printed separately at the end of the piece” anticipates readers’ need for “insider” knowledge to fully grasp the implicit meanings of the poem. By placing the contextualizations at the outset of the poem, Percy provides readers with the chance to read the poems and masquerade as “insiders,” having a stronger framework of the culture and mythology reflected in the poem. Regardless of the notes’ location, it is significant that Percy documents them in the text to facilitate the separation of text and paratext: the paratext can then take precedence and become the text. The interruption that Percy sought to avoid becomes increasingly evident, as does the curatorial relationship the notes have to their prompting, primary text. This curatorial relationship evinces Percy’s epistemology of origins: that is, he believes that authentic cultural origins may be excavated in the process of editing a text.

Percy’s manuscripts, in comparison with their published counterparts, shed greater light on the media-archaeological “sediments” and “layers” indicative of Percy’s own approach to literary antiquarianism. The annotations Percy has added to the poems provide an interesting glimpse into what people read, thought, knew (or thought they knew), and what they did not know—as well as into the knowledge work that antiquarian authors and editors, like Percy, engaged in. The notes, likewise, indicate the intricate
relationship between text and paratext and among remediation, translation, and invention.

The annotations in Percy’s manuscripts of *Runic Poetry* provide an especially rich ground for inquiry into this relationship; they cast greater light on how Percy worked as an editor to shape and control the ideas he sought to foreground—the mythological context and the literary merit of the poems.

**Collapsing British Cultural Distinctions**

The annotations Percy provides also indicate his conception of ethnicities within the mosaic of Britain’s cultural history. His epistemology of origins embraces a lesser-acknowledged aspect of British history, its Gothic history, in order to reevaluate the various stages of British cultural history and to explore the various ways of writing British history. One of the most distinct aspects of Percy’s project is his interchangeable presentation of “Celtic” and “Gothic.” This lack of a distinction between what we now understand as different ethnic groups and periods of history projects what Sweet has called a “distortion” and indicates a decisive “Anglo-centric agenda” (219), wherein nearly everything can be claimed as contributing to British identity. But, despite Percy’s conflations of “Celtic” and “Gothic” in his manuscript, I suggest that Percy’s distortion is unintentional and is not intended to be politically charged, as Sweet suggests the Anglo-centric agenda always must be. Kidd’s description of such conflation is more in line with

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23 The productions of ballad collectors and literary critics are widespread in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Like Percy, knowledge workers and media archaeologists—including Richard Hurd (1720-1808), Thomas Warton (1728-90), and Joseph Ritson (1752-1803)—propose various versions and revisions of British history. Hurd, Warton, and Ritson all laud the distinct literariness of Britain’s distant past, opposed to Percy’s elevation of primitivism and remediation of oral poetry. Recently, scholars have drawn connections between these literati—and antiquarians—and the shaping of the British literary canon (Kramnick 1095-1101).
Percy’s development of his epistemology of origins; Kidd describes this phenomenon more neutrally as a “fluidity of identity construction” (5). Percy emphasizes the divide between British cultural and mythological roots, specifically the English language and the Celtic language and literature celebrated by the likes of Macpherson and his readers. In highlighting the history of the English language, Percy eschews older, Celtic connections and focuses on the more recent past of Anglo-Saxon influence on the roots of English linguistic and literary history, which complements the picture painted by Macpherson of the Celtic influence on British culture and history. Percy celebrates, instead, “[t]hat daring spirit and vigour of imagination” and the “very extensive and complicated” mythology of the Norse (viii). Furthermore, since a single history cannot capture every stage of invasion and layer of influence on England, Percy’s history is not as distorted or myopically “Anglo-centric” as some have suggested. And, despite his misapplications of terminology in his manuscript drafts and correspondence with William Shenstone, Percy apparently never intended to present Britain as an entirely homogenous group where Celtic equates to Gothic. Nor did he merely change his mind and attempt to write his 
Runic Poetry away from the vein of Celtic verse as made popular by Macpherson. Rather, Percy highlights a different time in Britain’s vast history of cultural exchange.24

The “fluidity of identity construction” wherein Celtic is conflated with Gothic, as Kidd has put it, is unmistakeably evident in Percy’s editorial commentary to “The Ransome of Egill the Scald.” More so than other poems, Percy directly posits this work into English poetic and political history, both in addressing the linguistic history of this

24 By 1765 with Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Percy had regularized his terminology of Celtic versus Gothic. In this sense, we can read Runic Poetry as an incubator or drawing board for his epistemology of origins, as well as of his media-archaeological and editorial methods.
poem’s composition and in the narrative context of the poem itself. Presenting an elegiac narrative of Eric Blodox or Bloodaxe (Old Norse, *Eiríkr blóðax*), a tenth-century King of Norway, “The Ransome of Egill the Scald” collapses these distinctly different ethnic histories in telling the story of Eric’s invasions of England, his role as an anachronistically British leader, and his valiant death. In fact, the eponymous Scald of the poem, Egill (more properly known as the verifiable tenth-century poet, Egil Skallagrímsson) claims his role in this poem is to “present to the English chief the songs of Odin” (49). Relating martial events in the poem, Egill comments that “the commander of the Scotish fleet fed fat the birds of prey” (52). At the close of the headnote, Percy makes it a point to remark upon the distinct English and Scottish references, ignoring the fact that at this point in history, the Scots were aligned with the Norse against the Anglo-Saxon leadership in Northumbria. Percy, instead, provides both English and Scottish leadership titles to Eric:

> In the following poem, Eric is called THE ENGLISH CHIEF, in compliment to his having gained some footing in the kingdom of Northumberland. —

> He is also intitlted THE COMMANDER OF THE FLEET OF SCOTS; from his having auxiliaries of that nation: it was usual for the Scots to join the Danes &c. in their irruptions into the southern parts of the island. (46-47)

In this prefatory note, Percy challenges notions of cultural ownership, collapsing political distinctions of nation while heralding the poem which he claims also does so: he presents this poem’s illustrious position within the Icelandic canon while also singling out the historical connection between Scandinavia and Britain by identifying a Norseman as an
English and Scottish ruler, even though historically, the Scots and English were often in conflict. Eric could somehow be both, representing the leadership of England, Scotland, and Norway simultaneously.

Mirroring the thematic aspects of duality within the poem is the materiality of the text: the footnotes and prefatory remarks Percy provides for each poem can likewise exist as both text and paratext at the same time: “most often, then, the paratext is itself a text” (Genette 7), materialized in text-based form and discursive in nature (Genette 325). The paratext is constantly in dialogue with the text. Therefore, the framing features in “The Ransome of Egill” are paratext in that their composition is prompted by the original poems which they frame. They are also text in that the editorial commentary often takes primacy over the narratives provided within the poem: as Percy’s reviewers pointed out, the poetry itself “is not very striking,” but the editorial commentary “accompanying the whole with very instructive notes” renders the poems intelligible by “throw[ing] great light upon those curious pieces” (“Art. VIII.” 308, 310). In other words, the twenty-one stanzas of “The Ransome of Egill”—as well as those of the four other poems—would be rendered relatively meaningless without Percy’s essayistic explanations.

In this sense, the poetry becomes almost an appendage to Percy’s antiquarian essays on the origins of English literature. As part of his efforts to curate and contextualize his translations for English readers, Percy’s editorial framework indicates a distinct and repeated conflation of national and ethnic distinctions—specifically the interchangeability of “Celtic” versus “Norse” or “Gothic” in his early manuscript drafts of the many paratexts. These manuscripts also reveal ways that Percy assisted in
constructing—and complicating—British national identity in the mid-eighteenth century through his convoluted antiquarian classifications and editorial commentary.

For instance, in his manuscript of “Funeral Song of Hacon” (MS Percy c.7, fols. 26-27), Percy erroneously places this poem within a Celtic context and provides it with Celtic origins. He prefaces the poem by stating that it was “Composed by Tyrindur the Scalde. (Or Celtic Poet),” and that it is “a very ancient piece of Celtic Icelandic Poetry” (fol. 26). In a note set at the end of the poem, Percy remarks on his translation and the interventions he made in the text: “The above translation is literally made verbatim from the literal Latin version of the Swedish Editor: what additions I conceived necessary to render it in [Celtic] or more flowing, are included in brackets” (fol. 27). At the very least, Percy is consistent in his inconsistencies of conflating the cultural and linguistic distinctions between Celtic and Gothic while compiling his manuscripts for publication—and more so in “Funeral Song of Hacon” than elsewhere. His manuscript notes for this poem contain six references to “Celtic,” many of which Percy edited out in his own manuscript prior to publication: Thor is glossed as “*The Mars of the Celtic Nations,” and Walhalla (or Valhalla) is explained as “*The Celtic Gothic Elisium.”

Amidst these repeated inaccuracies regarding the poem’s ethnic origins, Percy provides lengthy notes of explanation to allow his readers to be fully immersed in the cultural backdrop of the narrative, providing “insider” access, so to speak, to the rich mythology of the Pagan religion of medieval Scandinavians—but again collapsing the distinction between national and ethnic labels. For example, one stanza in Percy’s translation reads:
The Wolf *Fenris* freed from his Chains

Shall range thro’ the world among the Sons of Men

Before so renowned & so good a king

Shall again walk in the desolate Path of his Kingdom (MS Percy c.7, fol. 27)

Presuming that his readers would not be familiar with the reference to “The Wolf Fenris,” Percy provides the following contextual explanation:

*The meaning of this stanza is, that there shall never be such another king before the dipolation [sic] of the world. —For the Celts by the Wolf *Fenris* understood a kind of Daemon, or evil being, at enmity with the Gods, & at present chained up by them from doing mischief: but who was doomed hereafter to get loose and to destroy both *Odin* and the world. (MS Percy c.7, fol. 27)*

In this note, Percy not only contextualizes the mythological and associative meanings of “The Wolf Fenris”; he also again conflates “Celtic” with “Gothic” and does not correct the conflation here. He places “the Wolf Fenris” within Celtic mythology, but concludes the note by referring to Odin, a deity whose position outside Celtic mythology he established earlier. A few lines later, Percy glosses Odin* as “NB. The *Odin* of the Goths, was the *Wodin* of the Saxons.” With this explanation showing the shared mythology between the Goths of the European continent and the Saxons of Britain, Percy invites

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25 Unlike several other manuscript notes which were relegated to a general summary in the headnote, this specific footnote is retained in the printed work. There, it reads: “By the wolf Fenris, the northern nations understood a kind of demon or evil principle at enmity with the gods, who, tho’ at present chained up from doing mischief, was hereafter to break loose and destroy the world. See the Edda” (70).
readers to blur the lines between time and place—to rethink prejudiced distinctions between classifications of people, place, and time: Britain was earlier peopled by the Celts, later replaced by various Germanic tribes (including the Saxons) over the course of centuries of invasions.

Percy calls attention to the tumultuous history building into British cultural identity while simultaneously, somehow, collapsing different phases of British cultural origins. He uses Macpherson’s model of re-presenting poetry of Britain’s variegated and culturally and politically far-reaching past, but turns in a drastically different direction, embracing instead a later era of British history—the Anglo-Saxon era—and aims to harmonize the distinctly Norse traditions and values with those of the Celts as celebrated by Macpherson. As stated above, Percy’s *Runic Poetry* pushes back against the “Celtophilia” characterizing the literary appetite of this period—the “poetics and vernacular revivals of the late-eighteenth century,” to which Katie Trumpener calls attention (8)—and promotes a reevaluation of British cultural past. But, of course, this philosophical project failed while Macpherson’s Celtic project soared in comparison, despite rampant critical protestations over Macpherson’s fast-and-loose model of translation. Eighteenth-century readers, it would seem, cared more for a romanticized, more ancient, Celtic history of Britain, rather than a considerably more recent Scandinavian-influenced history. Two years later with *Reliques*, Percy promoted a more distinctly Celtic focus on Britain’s past—with scattered nods to the Scandinavian influences on bardic poetry.
Percy, in the manuscript for *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*, not only repeatedly blurs the boundaries between Celtic and Gothic; he also blurs the boundaries between page and margin, text and paratext. The “Funeral Song of Hacon” features a method to scripting the notes different from “The Incantation of Hervor” with its crisp arrangement of annotation on the facing pages. In the “Funeral song of Hacon,” Percy allows the notes to creep into the space of the texts, using not the facing page but the liberal margins of the folio sheets to draft his commentary, littering the page of neatly ordered four-line stanzas with asterisks and associated explanations (Figure 1.3). Even though Percy’s poetic stanzas are very clearly arranged on the page, the annotations are not. This placement of the notes allows the text of the notes to run into the text of the poem itself, further conflating distinctions of textuality (primary text versus paratext and page versus margin), of genre (poetry versus prose, imaginative literature versus scholarship), and of authority (poet versus editor, author versus translator).
The words were the thunder, [on the sound of] striking blood.

"The sound" addressed: "The battle

Thrice of the sound is from the sound of the sword.

The sound from the sword is a sound more than the sound of the sword.

The sound hied with blood were fought with the thunder.

There they played in the battle contending for victory.

The blood and blood flowed in the sight of the sword.

Many men, perished Thor, the slayer from the sword.

The words of the sound, "so great, they were the eyes of the cloud

Of home." - vid. Bridges of Blood.

Thus said the King's heart with the sword

Battles broken, a main of the sun.

As the poet said before, "there was much of his heart.

The poet said, "more powerful to the kingdom the head.

The words were heard on the hill of the sword: The wind spake from him

Then the voices of the gods are augmented

For they invite the king: they invite 7 voices

With a great multitude to the kingdom.

The king heard this

[he heard] what the eloquent men of Norway heard, who rode on

The king heard it: the land of horses.

They stood in their helmets, they leaned on their arms

Hear said, why dost thou goinglead give this conclusion to the

Tears and the tears might have been expected from the gods.

We are the lands, potent people. Kings that are not masters of the

This year, an army is called to battle those who, with a great and

With your sign of your hand. And she

Mother of the land to her marriage with

a particular emphasis.
The layout creates conflict and unease between the text and paratext: which takes precedence? What is the relative authority between the translated text and the translator’s notes? Is this a work of poetry, or is it a collection of antiquarian essays with poetic illustrations?

In answer to these questions, I suggest that the interwoven spatial relationship between text and paratext in this manuscript—and its published counterpart—is one of interdependence: the many paratexts come into existence only through the generation of the text. In turn, the paratexts interpret and project meaning back onto the generating text. The few footnotes within this poem reflect back to the text of the poem itself, establishing a circular relationship between the textual components of the page and the margin. This circular relationship illustrates the inherent referentiality of paratexts, specifically footnotes, as specified by Genette (321). In the published form, the interdependent and referential relationship provides readers with the choice to navigate between the narrative and the note, across the page and the margin, and through the text and its accompanying paratexts—acting, in effect, as co-authors and co-editors along with Percy in remediating the Old Norse narratives.26

As indicated in these manuscripts, Percy partially rectified his error of cultural conflation by periodically editing out “Celtic” and replacing it with “Icelandic.” The corrections are sporadic, but they nevertheless indicate Percy’s shift away from the pervasive ideology of “yoking…Celtic and German” (Kidd 207) and towards rectifying what he understood as a grave “mistake” of “confounding the Gothic and Celtic

26 I interrogate this dialogic reading-as-writing process further in Chapter Two and Three.
languages &c” (Lewis 90 [23 April 1764]). In the published form of Runic Poetry, Percy provides no hints or even veiled gestures towards a Celtic position and history within these poems. But, despite this change of opinion regarding the language and cultural practices of the Celts and Goths, Percy himself notes that, regarding poetry from Britain’s past (both its Celtic and Germanic pasts), “the difference originally was not great” (*Reliques* 1.139). This assertion mirrors Macpherson’s claims in his 1762 “Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity, &c. of the Poems of Ossian the Son of Fingal”: “whether the Caledonians were a colony of the Celtic Germans, or the same with the Gauls that first possessed themselves of Britain, is a matter of no moment at this time” (44). Kidd has observed that the “yoking of Celt and German” (207) was a relatively pervasive ideology, largely due to what Percy observed in contemporary scholarship—especially Mallet’s influential *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poesie des Celtes*—as an indiscriminate identification of ethnic groups. Percy later clarified the distinction between Celtic and Gothic (Germanic) in his “Translator’s Preface” to *Northern Antiquities*, where he sought to provide extensive “proofs that the Teutonic and Celtic Nations were ab origine two distinct People” (i). But in establishing his literary antiquarian presence in the 1760s, he harnessed the popular conceptions of Celtic mythology and wedded these conceptions with the mythology of Britain’s Nordic history to unearth another layer of Britain’s cultural history: the Anglo-Saxon era and the aspects of political, cultural, linguistic, and literary history shared between Britain and the surrounding northern, Germanic nations. Percy persists in placing the poems within British culture, but he does so historically and politically as a way of lending value to
Percy’s choice to showcase the “treasures of native genius” (*Five Pieces* xiii) and advocate for the aesthetic value of Old Norse (and also Anglo-Saxon) poetry is precisely in line with early eighteenth-century efforts to give the Anglo-Saxon language scholarly repute, an effort that began nearly fifty years before Percy’s *Runic Poetry*. In 1715, antiquarian Elizabeth Elstob (1683-1756) published *The Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue*, the first known English-language primer of the Anglo-Saxon language. In this work, Elstob includes an essay, “An Apology for the Study of Northern Antiquities.” The study of “northern antiquities,” Elstob claims in both the title and the corresponding essay, is “very useful towards the understanding [of] our ancient English POETS, and other WRITERS” (title page); Percy echoes this claim in his Preface to *Runic Poetry*: “the study of ancient northern literature hath its important uses” (xiii).

Interestingly, Percy appropriates Elstob’s titular phrase “Northern Antiquities” for the title of his 1770 translation of Mallet’s *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poesie des Celtes*. Elstob’s essay and accompanying grammar strongly anticipate the later eighteenth-century antiquarian efforts of Percy regarding the merit of knowing the
language and poetry of Britain’s past. For these two antiquarians (and likely others),
literary revival, remediation, and re-presentation is less about politics than it is a
philological project exploring the boundaries of language and a philosophical project
exploring concepts and knowledge of ethno-cultural origins of earlier Britons, both Celtic
and Gothic alike from the various stages of British history.

Throughout his corpus of primitive poetry, Percy celebrates the “romantic
wildness” and the “true spirit of chivalry” abounding in the “NORTH COUNTRIE” (“Essay”
26), shared by both Britain and Scandinavia. In his influential “Essay on the Ancient
Bards and Minstrels” prefacing his far more famous and successful Reliques of Ancient
English Poetry, Percy refers readers to see his preface to Runic Poetry in order to
understand the similarities between the British bards and Gothic or Scandinavian Scalds
and the succession of Bards and Scalds by the less illustrious Minstrel and the
“indiscriminate” (10) or “inferior sort of” (26) poets, working primarily as hack writers
rather than as artists (10, 31n). As in the preface to Runic Poetry, Percy emphasizes the
high reverence placed upon these roles: “poets and their art were held among them in that
rude admiration” (9). This “rude admiration” led to the composition and preservation of
the poems Percy presents in his edited collections. But the illustrious role of the poet
diminished, Percy states, “[w]hen the Saxons were converted to christianity” and, as
literacy rose, “this rude admiration began to abate, and poetry was no longer a peculiar
profession” (10). The minstrel, however, in his role as itinerant singer recounting the mythologies and histories of the region, “retained many of the honours shown to their predecessors the Bards and Scalds” (10). Percy describes the shared cultural features between the role of the British bard and the Scandinavian scald, illustrating how kings and military leaders of both nations would rely upon this crucial figure for even military exploits and espionage: Percy relates that ninth-century English king Alfred “assumed the dress and character of a Minstrel” (10) in order to gain access to the Danish king and undermine the Danes’ military maneuvers; later, Percy adds, “a Danish king made use of the same disguise to explore the camp of our king Athelstan” (12). Percy continues with a long list of examples of the interplay between the nations that would become Great Britain and the Scandinavian nations, focusing specifically on the role of the professional poet (the bard, scald, or minstrel) and the influential role of poetry in composing national histories.

Percy provides a strong point of comparison between England’s history and the history of the neighboring Northern nations arising out of their shared poetic pasts. Percy points out that “most of them [the ancient Minstrels] are represented to have been of the North” (25). He credits this phenomenon to remoteness of the Scandinavian nations:

The ancient inhabitants of Sweden, Denmark and Norway retained their original manners and customs longer than any other of the Gothic tribes,

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27 Percy uses “peculiar” repeatedly in his various essays to refer to the culture and customs of medieval Celts, Scandinavians, and Anglo-Saxons alike. This word and its cognates appears only once in the preface to *Runic Poetry*, five times in the various essays included in *Reliques* (and three times more in his headnotes to the individual ballads wherein he provides editorial interpretations of the ballads’ form and content often remarked as “peculiar”), and eleven times in his editorial matter in *Northern Antiquities*, consistently used in a similar manner as a descriptor of the “peculiar” and “primitive” manners and customs of the past. Further study of his usage of this word is needed.
and brought them down nearer to our own times. The remoteness of their situation rendered access to them slow and difficult: nor was it till the tenth and eleventh centuries that Christianity had gained an establishment among them. Hence it is that we are better acquainted with the peculiarities of their character, and have more of their original compositions handed down to us, than of any other of the northern nations.

(Five Pieces ii-iii)

Percy echoes this concept in his “Essay on the Ancient Bards and Minstrels”: “as our southern metropolis must have been ever the scene of novelty and refinement, the northern countries, as being most distant, would preserve their ancient manners longest, and of course the old poetry, in which those manners are so peculiarly described” (26). In both of these arguments, Percy explains the schism between the northern and southern climes more thoroughly while addressing the cultural cross-pollination arising from cultural encounters between the civilized and the barbaric. Hence, as England became more refined, it positively influenced the civility and sociocultural development of the “rude men” and their “old manners.” And, since the Scandinavian nations shared many aspects of political history with Britain, “the study of ancient northern literature hath its important uses” (Percy, Five Pieces xiii) as one means for understanding the history of Britain itself. These paratexts indicate Percy’s preoccupation with facts and particularities—the “antiquarian’s quest for authenticity” (McAuley 5) throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century. Percy’s emphasis on the authenticity of these poems—what
one critic calls his “reunification of poetry and fact” (Terry 301)—inaugurates his long-
term project of substantiating claims for the high social status of the minstrels.

The ones who compose the poetry, Percy writes, “were called by the significant
name of SCALD, a word which implies ‘a smoother or polisher of language’” (iv).
Moreover, Percy writes, the language smoothed and polished by the Scald is in close
kinship with the English language:

The LANGUAGE in which [the Scald’s] productions are preserved, and
which once prevailed pretty extensively in the north, is commonly called
ISLANDIC: Iceland being the place where it was supposed to be spoken in
greatest purity, and where it is to this day in use. The Islandic is the mother
of the modern Swedish and Danish tongues, in like manner as the Anglo-
Saxon is the parent of our English. Both these mother-tongues are dialects
of the ancient Gothic or Teutonic; and of so near affinity, that, in the
opinion of the learned, what was spoken in one of them, was without
much difficulty understood by those, who used the other. Hence it is, that
such as study the originals of our own language have constantly found it
necessary to call in the assistance of this ancient sister dialect. (iv-v)

The phrases indicating kinship (“mother,” “parent,” “sister”) are of particular importance
in understanding Percy’s antiquarian efforts and role in appropriating Nordic culture into
British history, echoing the language of kinship in “The Incantation of Hervor.” He
claims a sisterhood between Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon language and therefore poetry
—and by association between Nordic cultures of the past and British customs of his
present, a concept which upholds Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s theories of the “formation of
the languages of the North” in his *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (46-48). Thus,
because of the linguistic relationship between the Old Norse (Percy’s “Islandic”) and
Anglo-Saxon, the pieces of runic poetry are, therefore, pieces of the history of the British
isles.

It is clear that language is at the heart of the compositional process and
preparation of *Runic Poetry*. Percy takes on the role of “Scald” in translating and editing
Runic Poetry, smoothing and polishing the poetic productions he presents, akin to how
the Scandinavian scald works, as Percy states, “a smoother or polisher of
language” (iv). Furthermore, he draws an implicit ethnic connection between the
languages and histories of England and Iceland by highlighting the similarities of
vocabulary. Based on the claims Percy makes throughout his corpus of literary
antiquarianism—his recurring emphasis on the universality of minstrelsy (“On the
xvii)—this statement might be understood as applying to aspects beyond language alone;
a shared linguistic history implies a shared cultural and mythological ethos as well.

Bound up in Percy’s model of antiquarian editorship are the concepts of
ethnography, fragmentation, and interpretation—aspects of which are most clearly
evinced in his more streamlined *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. In this work, Percy
fully embraces his interwoven roles as antiquarian, scholarly editor, and remediator of
forgotten and fragmented ballad texts and navigates through the poem as both an insider
and outsider—a contemporary scald and modern editor. His paratexts indicate how he
adopts an authoritative role, providing “insider” information for his readers—or “ethno-cultural authority” in the words of Maureen McLane (194)—while remaining removed from the authority of the narrative by presenting this information as a distinct “outsider.”

In comparison with *Runic Poetry*, Percy demonstrates a more deft hand in *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* of presenting the curatorial paratexts; this change in editorial approach is perhaps based upon his textual experiments in *Runic Poetry* and advice from Shenstone regarding his compilation of the ballads. In *Reliques*, instead of directly calling out his own shortcomings as a translator or compiler, Percy allows the text to simply speak for itself with minimal notation of editorial interventions beyond the headnote and contextualizing marginal commentary. Of course, this more veiled model of editorship led to severe censure—by Ritson, among others—as models of editing developed from an interpretive position to an curatorial position.

His more polished editorship (but still invasive by modern academic standards) is presented most clearly in his representation of the traditional ballad, “The Battle of Otterbourne,” an ancient ballad in two parts. In his curatorial presentation of the ballad text, Percy adapts many of his editorial practices exercised in curating *Runic Poetry*, providing contextual commentary in a headnote and including more local explanations in footnotes scattered through the ballad, and, as he originally imagined presenting some of his Norse poems, following up the ballad with further curatorial commentary. Thematically, “The Battle of Otterbourne” is similar to the poems presented in *Runic Poetry*: it features a strong focus on national politics, heroism, and historical memory rather than focusing on the romantic entanglements, illegitimate children, and murder
plots that appear in countless other traditional ballads. However, this poem relies upon a staunch definition of cultural differences and national boundaries. Set in the late fourteenth century, “The Battle of Otterbourne” treats the titular subject: one of many conflicts between English and Scottish landowners, in this poem, Henry Percy and the Earl of Douglas—a conflict also treated in this ballad’s more famous counterpart, “The Ballad of Chevy Chase.” The ballad is set in Northumbria, along the border of England and Scotland in August, or “abowght the Lamasse tyde, / when husbonds wynn ther haye” [about the Lammas tide / when husbands get “in their hay”] (1.1-2, 21n). The Scottish Earl of Douglas led a deer hunt into English territory controlled by Sir Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland; this crossing prompted a dispute between the two earls and their parties, and the ballad recounts how the Earl of Douglas and many of his fellow Scotsmen were slain by the English. The ballad closes “with the allowable partiality of an English poet” (75), invoking the audience to pray for Henry Percy’s soul, “For he was a gentyll knyght” (2.168).

This ballad conveys the importance of kinship as the basis of as political allegiances—the division between Scottish and English ruling houses, anachronistically understood as “nationalism”—and privileges speech and action over scenic description. Yet, within the actions conveyed, the ballad places a distinct emphasis upon the particulars of places and objects in conveying detailed bardic accounts of historical events. Within the 28 quatrains of the first fitt alone, there are numerous references to specific places within the northern reaches of England—“Bamboroweshyre” [Bamburgh], “Newe Castelle” [Newcastle], and “Barwyke upon Twede” [Berwick upon Tweed], for
instance—places which Percy often draws attention to in his editorial commentary. For instance, to the third stanza, Percy provides the following general remark: “The several stations here mentioned are well-known places in Northumberland” (77n) and includes detailed descriptions of the “well-known places.” Several stanzas later, Percy remarks upon the poetic line “Otterborne in the hygh way*” (1.51) and provides a particular summary of this location: “*Otterbourn is near the old Watling-street road, in the parish of Elson. The Scots were encamped in a grassy plain near the river Read. The place where the Scots and English fought is still called Battle Riggs” (79n). Likewise, this ballad portrays several objects and animals objects as central to the narrative of action—not the least of which is “The roo* full rekeles ther sche rinnes” [The roe full reckless, there she runs] (1.53), the deer prompting the chase which led to the battle. Percy remarks on this deer in a footnote, “*Roe-bucks were to be found upon the wastes not far from Hexham in the reign of Geo. I” (79n), placing even greater importance upon the deer by singling out this living artifact within the poem and supporting the idea of the poem as a true historical account with attention to Enlightenment particularities.

The poem also draws attention to various material objects implemented in the political conflict and subsequent deaths: “the standards schone” (1.26), “a pype of wyne” [a pipe of wine] (1.65), “pavyleon dore” [pavilion door] (1.81, 1.97), “armure bryght” [armor bright] (1.105), “scharpe arowes” [sharp arrows] (2.58), “swords” and “bassonetts” (II.88, 89), “beeres / Of byrch, and haysell graye” [biers / of birch and hazel grey] (2.153-54). Percy further emphasizes these martial objects by placing them within his contemporary context. The poem describes the coats of arms of the houses of Douglas
and Percy as follows: “The blodye Harte in the Dowglas armes” [The bloody hart in the Douglas arms] and “By syde stode Starres thre” [Beside stood stars three] (2.65, 2.68) on the arms of Douglas, and “The whyte Lyon on the Ynglysh parte” [The white lion on the English part] and “The Lucetts and the Cressawnts both” [The luces and crescents both] (2.69, 2.72) for the house of Percy (not to be confused with the antiquarian editor). Percy provides a footnote to further describe these standards and to place the poetic description into its current setting in the eighteenth century and to allow readers to comprehend the poem as though they themselves had intimate knowledge of the objects’ particulars:

The ancient arms of Douglas are pretty accurately emblazoned in the former stanza, and if the readings were, “the crowned harte,” and “Above stode starres thre,” it would be minutely exact at this day. As for the Percy family, one of their ancient badges or cognizances was “a white lion” statant, and the “silver crescent” continues to be used by them to this day: they also give “three luces argent” for one of their quarters. (82n)

Percy’s paratexts are here particularly peculiar. Not only does he provide suppositions of what might be written in the poem itself; he writes these suppositions in an artificially antiquated orthography. By commenting on these artifacts represented within the poem, Percy draws greater attention to the coats of arms than had he simply let the poetic depiction stand on its own. Percy’s emphasis on ancient material culture within the ballad demonstrates Heringman’s assessment of “the connections between the literary and the empirical” within the ballad revival of the late eighteenth century (7).  

Furthermore,  

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28 See further Heringman 9-17.
by being called out and having attention drawn to it, this portion of text subtly takes on
greater precedence than the preceding and following stanzas through its accompanying
commentary of context and supposition.

More important than the standards and their poetic descriptions are the names of
those involved in the battle, the earls and lord fighting alongside “the Douglas” and “the
Percy” as they are commonly referred to within the poem. In his role as editor, Thomas
Percy provides footnotes to gloss some of the antiquated names with their more modern
spellings: “The yerle of Mentaye*” (1.101) is glossed as “*The Earl of Menteith” (80n),
and “The Lorde of Bowghan*” (1.105) as “*The Lord Buchan” (80n). Following the
ballad text, Percy appends a list of nineteen names appearing in the poem, which he states
“are found to have belonged to families of distinction” (85), thereby lending a sense of
biography to the ancient ballad. “The Battle of Otterbourne” commits to bardic memory
the names of those English and Scottish heroes who died valiantly in battle, exactly like
“The Incantation of Hervor” where Hervor and Angantyr recite the names of their
ancestors or “The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog” where Regner recounts in great detail
the places where he fought and the kinsmen he fought alongside.

In addition to calling attention to the particularities of places and objects, Percy’s
footnotes are also explicitly indicative of his editorship. Not only does he provide a
detailed headnote about the ballad’s transmission and the provenance of his manuscript
sources along with a lengthy endnote which provides a biographical summary of the
various personages referenced in both “The Battle of Otterbourne” and its historical
counterpart, “The Battle of Chevy Chase.” Percy also devotes nearly half of the footnotes
to documenting his collations from his manuscript sources and his “improvements” upon these (77n, 79n, 80n, 81n, 85n). Together, these notes of factual references and editorial intervention, he suggests, illuminate how the poem “may be made to appear from authentic records” (85), emphasizing the historiographical role of poetry or “treasures of native genius”—akin to his championing of the Scandinavian relics published two years previously that shed light, according to Percy, on Britain’s own cultural history.

This analysis of “The Battle of Otterbourne” is not merely a lengthy digression from the chapter’s primary focus on *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*. Rather, this analysis illustrates Thomas Percy’s larger media-archaeological art and editorial perspectives. Indeed, it is necessary to recognize the interpretive function of the eighteenth-century editor rather than the objective functions we commonly associate with editors today, as Marcus Walsh has stated: “eighteenth-century scholarly editors…entertained…rather different ideas of the author and of the text…[providing less] privileging of the author in textual editing and interpretation” (7, 13). Percy’s approach to editing both *Runic Poetry* and *Reliques* upholds this assertion; he does more than simply present the text with contextual explanations. Moreover, Percy’s rendition and curation of “The Battle of Otterbourne” indicates the role of ethno-historical documentation and editorial interpretation in the eighteenth-century epistemology of origins. It is the editor’s duty to present readers with interpretations of the poem and applications of the poetic information within the footnotes, headnotes, and endnotes in order to effectively educate readers on Britain’s vast mosaic of cultural history, rather than allowing readers to draw their own—and potentially erroneous—interpretations of the exotic information.
Paratexts, Poetry and Primitivism

*Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* ushered in a new era for literary antiquarianism and text-based, archival appropriations of cultural history. Thomas Percy contributed to a growing taste for Scandinavian mythology and antiquarianism as part of British literary history. In the years following Percy’s *Runic Poetry*, readers were treated to Thomas Gray’s “The Fatal Sisters: An Ode” and “The Descent of Odin” (1768) (both with extensive footnotes), William Blake’s “Gwin, King of Norway” (1783), Robert Southey’s “The Race of Odin” and “The Death of Odin” (1795), and Anna Seward’s “Herva at the Tomb of Angantyr: A Runic Dialogue” (1796) (also composed with dense paratextual commentary).

The relative obscurity of Percy’s *Runic Poetry*, in contrast to the monumental status of his *Reliques*, calls into question the necessity of recovering this text: it made little to no impact on his contemporary readers, let alone on readers today (only one single article exists directly addressing *Runic Poetry*; it surfaces in passing references within a handful of other essays). I have here read *Runic Poetry* as not only an artifact indicative of cultural trends in Scandinavian antiquarianism—and antiquarianism more broadly—of the mid-eighteenth century but also as representing a significant moment in eighteenth-century media-archaeological art. To borrow Parikka’s definition, it investigates “intermedial relations and media historical borrowings across time and media in a fashion that is…about writing about media” (137). Likewise, as Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne C. Henry suggest, “to mark a text is also to make it… [F]eatures such as punctuation, footnotes, epigraphs, white space and marginalia, marks that traditionally
have been ignored in literary criticism, can be examined for their contribution to a text's meaning” (xvii).

Literary antiquarians, translators, and remediators—such as Percy acting as translator (of both language and medium) and as editor of both *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* and *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*—often sought to convey authenticity through vast annotations. These paratexts lend authority to his editorial interpretations of antique verse. Percy continues in a tradition of revising cultural and literary history out of the synthesis of Gothic and Celtic poetic history into uniquely Runic (and still British) poetry substantiated with editorial comments. He establishes a sense of validity for his created myth through his own annotations and footnotes, presenting detailed illustrations of specific customs and cultural phenomena to showcase his compilation of the “treasures of native genius.”
FOOTNOTES AND KNOWLEDGE WORK IN SYDNEY OWENSON’S
\textit{THE WILD IRISH GIRL}

Upon turning the pages of Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan’s (bap. 1783-1859) epistolary novel, \textit{The Wild Irish Girl} (1806), the reader cannot help but notice the vast footnotes running through most pages of the novel—footnotes that present a scholarly narrative, complementary to the fictional storyline. In all its printings, the novel is divided horizontally into two sections: the fictional, romance narrative filling the upper, main-text portion of the page, and a scholarly narrative within the footnotes that sometimes overwhelm the page. In fact, one footnote in Letter XXVII consists of nearly 1,900 words and fills nearly 11 full pages in the text’s original octavo format (Figure 2.1). This paratextual, scholarly narrative within \textit{The Wild Irish Girl} raises many questions about the novel’s organization of knowledge about its use of textuality to collect and convey knowledge: when does a footnote become an instrument of the narrative rather than scholarly commentary or authorization? At what point does the primary text lose its primacy to the paratextual commentary? Ultimately, how are we to conceive of the relationship between the text and paratext in \textit{The Wild Irish Girl}?
In answer to these questions, I read *The Wild Irish Girl* as a narrative museum and show that the footnotes in this novel do more than just exhibit their functions of “multiplicity,” “interruption,” “impacted reading,” or undermining—as various critics have recently termed the interplay between fiction and footnotes (Grafton 94; Zerby 3; Simpson 114). Such paratexts are often found in fiction over the long eighteenth century and representative of wider trends in restructuring and representing knowledge. Instead, I argue, the footnotes in this novel indicate Owenson’s engagement with what I call

“knowledge work”: the production, organization, and distribution of ideas as well as knowledge work’s material associations with the long-eighteenth-century practices and values of antiquarianism. Moreover, the similarities between the antiquarian publications and Owenson’s national tale aligned with Enlightenment values of categorization and containment invite us to rethink the artificial distinction between Enlightenment and Romantic qualities of writers and their productions, including the Magnum Opus editions of Walter Scott’s monumental Waverley novels (1814-32) and Lord Byron’s widely read Turkish Tales (1813-15).

Through her integration of vast footnotes to both curate and subvert the novel’s main text, Owenson pens *The Wild Irish Girl* as if it were a rich archive of Irish cultural artifacts. Within her novel, she composes a “Wild Irish Museum.” The footnotes curate the main text by providing Owenson’s voice with a platform to oversee the text and to offer ways of interpreting the narrative. She is able to act as a custodian of the text rather than merely the author and editor; the notes enable her to practice, as Andrew Piper has called it, “auto-editorialism” (120). The presentation of information within *The Wild Irish Girl*’s footnotes supports cultural historians’ assertions of an innate human desire to collect and organize collections as a way of making meaning of our world (Hooper-Greenhill 133; Pearce 1-4, 48-50). In *The Wild Irish Girl*, the footnotes, like museum labels, interpret and provide contextual information for the text-based artifacts on display within the narrative exhibition.²⁹ Together, the artifacts and labels—the text and paratext

—create an exhibit that promotes a more complex view than the artifacts or storyline could on their own.

This museological reading of *The Wild Irish Girl* has been called for by several critics of the novel, but none has yet offered this way of reading the text and its symbiotic relationship with its paratexts. I aim here to begin rectifying this neglect, adopting Natasha Tessone’s and Katja Jylkka’s call for further inquiry into the antiquarian and archival impulses in Owenson’s footnotes (Tessone 169, 175; Jylkka 84-85). I borrow Claire Connolly’s assertion to consider Owenson’s footnotes as a valid part of the novel instead of dismissing them as mock scholarship with fabricated sources, as early critiques of *The Wild Irish Girl* often suggested (lvii). I focus here on Owenson’s epistemological strategy of weaving facts into fictional genres by analyzing her textual union of artifact and curation, fiction and scholarship. I parse out this union by drawing upon Wolfgang Ernst’s and Jussi Parikka’s concepts of media archaeology along with Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge. I argue that, read within their post-Enlightenment medial and epistemological contexts, the dense annotations present, document, and organize information in order to create new perspectives, new knowledge. In presenting this knowledge work, the footnotes tie together the various philosophical threads of Owenson’s rich textual tapestry: Anglo-Irish politics, gendered authorship and authority, textuality, and antiquarian inquiry. Reading the footnotes in *The Wild Irish Girl* (and in long-eighteenth-century texts more broadly) as the tools of knowledge work provides us with a fresh way of considering the once-prominent genre of footnoted fiction.
With this concept of knowledge work in mind, it becomes apparent that the footnotes in *The Wild Irish Girl* are not merely a tool with the sole purpose of “multiplicity,” “interruption,” “impacted reading,” or “undermining.” Rather, they are a purposeful complement to Owenson’s fictional narrative, one that blurs boundaries of genre and authority by veiling within prose romance her larger project of revaluing Irish cultural and material history, literally and ideologically underscoring the fiction. In this way, the novel becomes a host or vehicle for the scholarship contained within the footnotes while the footnotes reflect the synergy of form and function back upon the text, beckoning the reader to take part in constructing the narrative (to put the *work* in “knowledge work”). Careful reading of Owenson’s footnotes—both alongside their foundational text and in (albeit artificial) isolation from the narrative—allows us to realize how she purposefully utilized a textual convention often associated with both scholarship and satire to problematize the narrative of romance and to unite the objectivity of antiquarianism with cautious patriotism.

This slightly more distant reading that I propose allows us to understand the textuality of *The Wild Irish Girl* in new ways as an artifact of long-eighteenth-century knowledge work. Moreover, this reading invites us to read outward from Owenson’s text to notice similar patterns in the heavily annotated narratives of her contemporaries and to determine how these texts might also be literary agents of knowledge work. I begin by looking at how the novel’s plot supports and reflects its textual and paratextual form; I then consider the notes in isolation from the narrative and identify the political agenda within their own narrative, complementary to the main novel’s attention to politics and
gendered authority. I close by returning to the museum metaphor and drawing out the implications of the antiquarian inquiry presented in both the narrative and notes—its relationship with the undercurrents of politics, gender, textuality, and authority.

Knowledge Work and the Novel

Print historian Chuck Zerby has described the footnote as a mechanism that “humanizes scholarship” (9). Humanized scholarship in the form of footnotes in fictional and lyric works has slowly been gaining ground in literary studies over the past decade. These recent examinations of scholarly and mock-scholarly annotated narratives—the “geopolitical encyclopedic epic-romance in English verse,” as David Simpson has attempted to define it (11)—engage predominantly with the epic romances of Walter Scott and Robert Southey as well as the taxonomic poetics of Charlotte Smith, Anna Seward, and Erasmus Darwin. Owenson’s footnotes in *The Wild Irish Girl* “exhibit the very multiplicity of sources upon which the composition… is based. They highlight the collecting and the collectivity that was at the heart” of collected editions, and even novels (Piper 110). Thus, with its vast and intricate footnotes of ethnographic documentation and personal reflections, *The Wild Irish Girl* naturally falls into the once-popular category of annotated narratives that instruct and entertain while blurring salient boundaries of genre and authority.

*The Wild Irish Girl* is part saccharine romance, part epistolary novel, part travel narrative, part political allegory, part antiquarian account, part history primer, and part dissertation that argues for a reconsideration of the cultural and historical merit of
Ireland. The main text consists primarily of Horatio’s letters to a correspondent, J.D., and an introductory series of letters between Horatio and his father, along with a brief third-person, non-epistolary concluding frame. Horatio’s letters document his travels through the Irish countryside with anecdotes of “the Irish character in all its primeval ferocity” (17). The novel opens with Horatio’s banishment from England to his father’s estate “on the north-west coast of Connaught…the classic ground of Ireland” (17). Horatio provides a detailed account of his arrival in Ireland and journey to Inismore, recounting ethnographic observations of “the tone of national character and manner” (16). Upon arriving at his father’s Irish estate, Horatio hears of O’Melville—romanticized as the last Prince of Inismore—and his daughter Glorvina, described as being “like nothing upon the face of God’s creation but herself” (40). These living relics of Irish antiquity live in the ruinous Castle of Inismore situated on land expropriated by Horatio’s family. After just one look at Glorvina, Horatio instantly becomes smitten, even climbing a perilous pinnacle to catch just one more glimpse of her. He falls from the rock and is taken in by the Prince and Glorvina to recover. Horatio is convinced that the Prince and Glorvina would despise him if they knew his identity: he has descended from the English landlords and fears that he would suffer the “cold aversion of irreclaimable prejudice” if they were to discover his family’s role in alienating their hereditary property (53). To forestall this “cold aversion,” he adopts the appellation “Henry Mortimer” and

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30 It is noteworthy that despite the novel’s epistolary form, as Mary Jean Corbett remarks, “the novel never becomes a dialogue between two writers; the letters instead take on the quality of a journal or confession in which Horatio’s most immediate audience is himself” (94). In fact, the only point of dialogic epistolary exchange occurs in the introductory letters between Horatio and his father where the politics of landholding and Anglo-Irish relationships are established.
masquerades as a traveling landscape painter, promising to instruct Glorvina in the art during his convalescence.

Horatio’s letters soon turn from providing an ethnographic overview to recounting conversations he holds with Glorvina, and he includes summaries of their conversations about poetry, music, fashion, political history, religious history, and the like. Over the course of Horatio’s residence in the Castle of Inismore, he falls even more passionately in love with Glorvina, but soon learns that she is intended to marry another man (who readers later learn is actually Horatio’s father). Incensed, Horatio leaves the Castle and returns to the lodge of his father’s estate where he receives a letter announcing that his father will soon be arriving in Dublin along with the father of a woman arranged to marry Horatio. None of the arranged marriages occur, however, as a sudden *deus ex machina* voice of the conclusion reveals. Instead, Horatio and Glorvina are allowed to wed, successfully resolving a marriage plot that has been the focus of most critical conversations addressing this novel.

Readers are guided through this romance with 125 intricate footnotes (one of which is a footnote subjoined to another footnote and includes a citation to an explanation given in a previous footnote) that indicate Owenson’s exercise in knowledge work conditioned by an Enlightenment impulse to privilege fact within fiction. Within the footnotes, Owenson references a wide array of authors and titles, ranging from antiquarian histories, to treatises on Irish politics, to travel narratives, to bardic poetry. In today’s age of Internet search engines, almost each of Owenson’s direct citations is easily verifiable, and each of the quotations and paraphrases that Owenson provides are readily
found within her primary sources (even though she does sometimes misquote or provide slight errors in documentation in the form of inaccurate or inverted page numbers, misspelled names, and so forth). Indeed, Owenson’s annotations are not nearly as spurious as some have attempted to claim. Some of her footnotes rely on anecdotes drawn from oral tradition or personal conversations and correspondence that are difficult to trace and therefore verify; other footnotes do provide inaccurate citations or misquotations of existing documents (inverting a sentence or replacing a word with a similar concept, for instance). Her method of documentation certainly does not measure up to today’s standards of scholarship, but that is no reason to accuse Owenson of falsifying or laying claim to non-existent sources, as early critics of her work often did. Moreover, many of the works that Owenson cites themselves feature dense annotation and marginal commentary. Owenson mines the footnotes of these works for the content of many of her footnotes; in fact, 10 of her 80 citational footnotes contain text drawn directly from the footnotes in her sources.

The vast notes provide, according to Jane Stevenson a “heady and intricate blend of the historical and the fantastic”; they are, as Joep Leerssen heralds them, “part of [the book’s] maverick charm” and “a textual shadow zone” that shifts the interest of the text to an “interest in Ireland itself rather than in the girl who metonymically personifies it” (102). Ina Ferris reads the annotations as the means through which the fictitious editor of the letters can authenticate the culture and history of Ireland (Achievement 126; “Narrating” 291). Others have examined the ideological and material connections of marginality (page and nation) and read Owenson’s footnotes as a site of marginalized
expression and as a representation of invasion and union, both textually and politically (Watson 8, 49-50; Douglass). Just as the Englishman Horatio has been banished to the British Empire’s Celtic margins, so too has Owenson’s argument for the admiration of Irish culture, history, and national character been banished to the margins of the page. Her dense footnotes prompt a distinct disruption of the narrative, and this disruption ultimately achieves a hybridity of genre as well as of reduces “the distance between author and reader by turning the reader into an author herself” (Bolter 4) in attending to the margins and the scholarly documentation.

Owenson not only incorporated a syncopated reading rhythm with her footnotes; she also seems to embrace the interruptions and lack of linearity in her narrative construction. In a gesture of metacommentary on the interruptive nature of her text and paratext, Owenson calls direct attention to the narrative interruption occurring within her own fictional narrative. When Horatio is traveling through the Irish countryside, he stops to visit the aging bard of the Magilligans to experience first-hand the “‘Sons of Song’” (193). Horatio says that he “found the venerable bard* cheerful and communicative, and he seemed to enter even with an eager readiness on the circumstances of his past life, while his ‘soul seemed heightened by the song,’ with which at intervals he interrupted his narrative” (193-95). Owenson’s use of the phrase “he interrupted his narrative” to describe an autoethnographic account periodically punctuated with musical references is a precise description of Owenson’s own narrative style of a storyline periodically punctuated by autoethnographic footnotes. The annotation to the phrase “the venerable bard” presents a purposeful interruption of Horatio’s fictional
narrative of interruption. Owenson’s footnote contains an extremely lengthy account of
the Bard of the Magilligans as quoted from a letter from “the Rev. Mr. Sampson, of
Magilligan, and forwarded to the author (through the medium of Dr. Patterson, of
Derry)” (193n). Owenson quotes the letter in full, leaving enough page space for only
two lines of Horatio’s narrative on each page of the eleven pages commanded by the
footnote, highlighting the symbiosis between form and function—between narrative and
note—in Owenson’s agenda of knowledge work within the novel.

For Owenson, footnotes like this one are more than markers of historiography, in
the tradition of Edward Gibbon (or of satire, in the poetic tradition of Alexander Pope);
her footnotes do more than simply present ancillary information through gestures of
authority. They provide greater meaning by actively engaging the reader in making the
text—the put the work in knowledge work. Like many of her contemporaries writing
ethnographically or taxonomically inclined lyrics and fictions, Owenson’s attention to the
footnote as an act of dialogic reading evinces David Simpson’s assessment of the
footnote in scholarly annotated fiction as—

…a demand or an invitation to lift our eyes off the page, to disturb the
contemplative spell that good [books] weaves around us as we read, and to
look outside a main text…for significant information. It is, in a very
simple physiological way that involves the movements of the body and the
persistence or failure of the attention span, a technique of estrangement
even as it can promise to render something more familiar and more
assured in its pedigree or provenance. It sends us elsewhere without really settling in advance what we will find when we go there. (112)

The footnote is as physiological as it is philosophical: it influences the rhythms of reading and influences the ways we interpret the genre and the claims or allusions in the text.

Footnotes play the Pied Piper, beckoning us away from the narrative on the page to that in the margins; they sometimes remove us from the work altogether, leading us to track down other text—the text’s “participant awareness,” according to Christina Lupton, or its attempts “to predict or prescribe or proscribe the reading of others,” in the words of Leah Price (Lupton 2; Price 12). In this harried networking and directive reading (or misdirective reading), the novel with footnotes becomes an agent of knowledge work. It is in the movement through this textual network that coincide with the moments when the spell of the narrative is broken that knowledge work can take place: when the reader is invited to make greater meaning of the narrative by considering the fiction from the perspective offered in the footnotes—and, potentially, of creating new knowledge.

**Knowledge Work and the Narrative as Archive**

The tension underlying the novel’s juxtaposition of narrating and collecting (of text and paratext) invites us to clearly see the knowledge work at play within the novel: the invitation to readers to join in the dialectic of composition and interpretation of artifacts archived in the notes and set on display within the narrative. Throughout her epistolary narrative, Owenson repeatedly sets various Irish artifacts—both material and immaterial—on display and places them within the context of human use; within the
footnotes, she removes the human context and provides historical and objective explanations. The antiquarian commentary on artifacts displayed in the narrative reads much like the object labels found in a museum—hence my claim for reading the narrative of *The Wild Irish Girl* as also an archive, curated and punctuated with the “thousand delicious comments” of the curator (which, in the case here, would be Owenson). The museological reading of antiquities in *The Wild Irish Girl* that I propose here picks up Ernst’s notion that the narrative structure within a museum exhibit stems from literature. He suggests that the museum, before being a place, was a text; the modern museum developed from narrative techniques of informing the reader (later the visitor) on the details of objects presented and organizing information in a way that would stimulate the reader’s/viewer’s imagination. Cultural historians identify this desire as manifesting itself historically in forms such as the early modern *Wunderkammer* or “curiosity cabinet” of collected but unorganized artifacts. These artifacts were later given order and meaning with the establishment of various Royal Societies at the close of the eighteenth century, and later still the emergence of the museum as an orderly institution well into the nineteenth century. Objects were archived in rooms devoted to curiosity, archived through utilization in narrative texts, and finally set on display in the institutional museum (Ernst, “Archi(ve)textures” 20, 22; Parikka, *What is Media Archaeology* 64).31

Similarly, Owenson has archived and curated objects in the hall of the fictional Castle of Inismore, represented in *The Wild Irish Girl*’s text and given contextualization in the paratexts. Owenson embraces her antiquarian impulses to collect and classify

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31 See also Peacocke, 1-20.
objects within *The Wild Irish Girl*, thereby presenting us with a collection of Irish antiquities set on display in the narrative and curated in the notes, akin to those antiquarian treatises from which she drew in composing her footnotes, including Sylvester O’Halloran’s *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland* (1772); volume four of Charles Vallancey’s six-volume *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis* (1770-1804; Vol. 4 1784); and Joseph Cooper Walker’s *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786).

However, unlike these treatises, Owenson’s novel—like a curated exhibition—is organized to tell a story. The diachronic narrative and the synchronic paratexts in *The Wild Irish Girl* unite to establish a unique narrative exhibit within a veritable museum held between the book’s covers to suggest a contextual or thematic relationship among artifacts on display. Together, the artifacts and labels (the text and paratext) create an exhibit that promotes a hybridized glimpse into Irish antiquities—more so than the artifacts or storyline could provide on their own. Considering the role of paratexts alongside the text highlights the novel’s intricate layers of textuality by disrupting reductive genre classifications. Therefore, by looking to the broader trends in Enlightenment epistemology, we can gain a better idea of how to interpret the multi-genre, layered narratives that Owenson weaves in *The Wild Irish Girl*. This interpretation, in turn, allows us to understand more fully the ways this book is not only a product of epistemological trends, but also as contributing to the varied landscape of antiquarian literary productions.
One crucial site of collecting activity within the novel is Horatio’s documentation of the fictional Castle of Inismore, which Horatio even describes as an “armory, a museum, a cabinet of national antiquities, and national curiosities” (98). This “emporium of the antiquities of Inismore” (100; emphasis in the original) has fallen into romantic ruin, “grand even in desolation, and magnificent in decay” (43). He records the “dilapidated architecture” (45) through his paintings and drawings, thereby exhibiting his own collection of Irish cultural landscapes. Here we can see how Horatio himself has modeled his engagement with Ireland as that of a collector, archivist, and most notably, an antiquarian draftsman. And, at this point in the novel, Horatio’s account of the objects (along with Owenson’s scattered footnotes) truly does read more like a descriptive catalogue of the collected martial relics and the various architectural details of the Castle ruins than it does a romance. Horatio describes the Castle’s architecture as follows:

Almost every evening after vespers, we all assemble in a spacious hall,* which had been shut up for near a century, and first opened by the present prince when he was driven for shelter to his paternal ruins…[the hall] runs the full length of the castle as it now stands (for the centre of the building only, has escaped the dilapidations of time), and its beautifully arched roof is enriched with numerous devices, which mark the spirit of that day in which it was erected. This very curious roof is supported by two rows of pillars of that elegant spiral lightness which characterizes the Gothic order in a certain stage of its progress. The floor is a finely tessellated pavement; and the ample but ungrated hearths which terminate it at either extremity,
blaze every evening with the cheering contributions of a neighboring bog.

The windows, which are high, narrow, and arched, command on one side a
noble view of the ocean, on the other they are boarded up. (98-99)

Here, Owenson, in the voice of Horatio, draws careful attention to the appearance of the hall, making note of the grandeur of the “paternal ruins” and the Gothic elements of a “beautifully arched roof,” “rows of pillars,” “tessellated pavement,” and “high, narrow, and arched” windows. Owenson accompanies these spatial descriptions of the ruinous hall with a scholarly footnote which references O’Halloran: “*‘Amidst the ruins of Buan Ratha, near Limerick, is a princely hall and spacious chambers; the fine stucco in many of which is yet visible, though uninhabitable for near a century’—O’Halloran’s *Introduction to the Study of the Hist. and Antiq. of Ireland, p. 8*” (98n).  

Through the instructive interruption of the footnote, Owenson prompts readers to periodically pause during the tour of her Irish architecture exhibit within the narrative. Much like museum object labels, Owenson’s paratexts point readers to her sources for further information and illustration. Additionally, when we take up the invitation to consult O’Halloran, it becomes evident how Horatio’s attention to the structural details of this hall closely mirror the details provided in the illustrations and descriptions of ancient Irish architecture in O’Halloran’s work.

There is a distinct cacophony of voices with the fictional Horatio, the authorial Owenson, and the secondary O’Halloran all presenting complementary views on Irish cultural history, with Horatio serving as the magisterial voice or an amalgamation of the

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32 This quotation is actually found on page 84 of O’Halloran’s text, not page 8. It is unclear if Owenson is deliberately inaccurate in her citation practices, or if this is a simple—albeit grievous—error in record keeping and transcription. Given Owenson’s proclivities for particularity, it is likely the latter.
three. Owenson’s Horatio argues in impassioned tones for restoring the esteem for ancient Ireland and an attention to ruins, just as O’Halloran does in his historical treatise that evidently served as an inspiration or source for the architectural scenes Owenson’s paints in *The Wild Irish Girl*. As does Horatio in the fictional narrative, O’Halloran, too, romantically regards architectural ruins as “the pride of ages, and the glory of Ireland” (85), including the venerated round towers of ancient Ireland which he illustrates in a state of ruin (Figure 2.2).33

Additionally, concerning the remains of the medieval walls of Kilmalloca, County Limerick, O’Halloran writes that “ever since going to decay…it is at this day…so striking an object, that I doubt if a more venerable and august ruin can any where be found” (87). Like O’Halloran, Horatio finds ruins sublime. His descriptions of the ruins of the Castle of Inismore and surrounding buildings are notably similar: “And sure, Fancy, in her boldest flight, never gave to the fairy vision of poetic dreams, a combination of images more poetically fine, more strikingly picturesque, or more impressively touching. Nearly one half of the chapel of Inismore has fallen into decay” (45). At this point in the novel, Horatio has become, in effect, an avatar of O’Halloran. Horatio espouses the same opinion in largely the same language, specifically describing the “decay” of the ruins as “striking.” Additionally, the adjectives used by both share the same reverent tone, despite some slight differences in specific vocabulary: “venerable and august,” “poetically fine,” “impressively touching.” The confluence of

33 On practices of Irish historiography and cultural revaluation, particularly in relation to ruinous Celtic and Druidic architecture, see Lennon 102-13.
Figure 2.2. “A round tower or anchorite retreat adjoining St. Boyne’s Cross” in Sylvester O’Halloran, *An Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland* (1772), p. 213
fictional, authorial, and custodial voices can certainly be confusing, but the tool of the footnote allows for the voices to remain distinct in their textual harmony of advancing knowledge.

The word “ruin” and its various cognates appear numerous times throughout the novel, used generally to describe architectural and landscape features. Horatio describes the Castle of Inismore as “a finely interesting ruin which spread grandly desolate” (49), a “ruinous old place” (33); he calls attention to the “ruined cloisters” (45), “ruinous arcade” (48), “ruined arch” (64), “ruinous edifice” (210)—along with the “dilapidated architecture” and “broken steps” (45) of the castle and its adjacent chapel. These details of decay within the narrative are given greater weight by also being called out periodically through the footnotes. *The Wild Irish Girl*’s attention to ruins supports Crystal B. Lake’s assertion that, like antiquarian discourse and documents, fictional narratives can turn an appreciative eye toward “the underappreciated fragments of… history, [which] elevates the decayed to the category of the beautiful” (675). This attention to and reverence for Irish history is akin to the projects of the Irish antiquaries that Owenson relies upon in curating her collection, as presented above. Ultimately, Horatio’s emphasis on ruin and neglect points to the underlying political theme of Owenson’s narrative—an aspect that again mirrors O’Halloran’s antiquarian project and how he conveys his passion for restoring veneration for Irish history:

> So blindly and wilfully [*sic*] prejudiced have modern writers concerning Ireland been, that our very maritime cities, in which the lofty towers, strong walls, and elegant buildings, bespeak the power as well as taste of
the antient Irish, are all attributed to the Danes—a savage, barbarous crew, whose interruptions like those of their successors the Saxons, were everywhere marked with blood, rapine, and desolation! We everywhere read of countries laid waste, people as well as buildings destroyed by these barbarians, but not a word of improvements, whilst the evidences of foreign, as well as domestic antient writers, are clearly in our favour.

(86-87)

The diction in this passage is remarkably similar to that of Owenson—the purposeful reversal of perspective, painting the English as equally odious as they had painted the Irish—demonstrates their shared opinions on the devaluation of Irish history. Like O’Halloran, Owenson does not shy away from calling out the destructive effects of neglecting Irish culture and history and even begins incorporating an urgency into her own commentary scattered throughout her footnotes. Moreover, in calling out O’Halloran in a footnote, Owenson draws the reader’s attention away from the romance narrative to consider the case for political urgency implicit in her footnotes—and all of this deftly done by writing about a ruined castle and documenting her description with support from the antiquarian O’Halloran.

The architecture and relics depicted within *The Wild Irish Girl* appear in the novel collected both figuratively (through the critical paratexts) and literally (through the fictional text), as an act of remediation. The key difference between Owenson’s critical romance novel and the antiquaries’ critical essays and illustrations lies in the way the artifacts are contextualized—Owenson’s narrative as archive, versus antiquarian’s
“exclusive subjection” of the artifacts, in the terms of Wolfang Ernst. Antiquarians often relied upon simple objective descriptions (sometimes visual illustrations) to exhibit the documented artifact, thereby removing the object entirely from the context of human use (Figures 2.3 and 2.4).

Vallancey provides minimal commentary on these relics; he simply provides the illustrations and labels the objects, placing greater emphasis on identifying and remediating the relics rather than contextualizing them. For example, in describing the instruments illustrated on Plate VII—the *Crotal, Corbasnas* or *Cibbual*—Vallancey states that Figure 2 “represents a brazen trumpet of antient Irish, many of them are found in our bogs. This drawing was made from one in the College Museum...The construction of the Stoc here represented, is singular, the mouth hold is on the side, and so large, no musical note could be produced” (IV.46). The emphasis here is on the instrument’s history and construction rather than its use in ancient Irish culture.
However, in Owenson’s model of antiquarianism, narrative becomes a tool to exhibit the artifact and to situate it into the context of human use. This human contextualization can be explained through media archaeology as a “materialist emancipation of the object from an exclusive subjection to textual analysis” (Ernst, *Digital Memory* 43), lending her archive greater meaning through the narrative. For example, Owenson removes the Irish harp of Brien Boirohm (tenth-century Irish chieftain) from its display in Trinity College Dublin where it was placed in 1782 and places it the human context alongside Glorvina. When Glorvina tells Horatio about the musical history of Ireland, Horatio asks if her harp follows the original design of ancient Irish harps. Glorvina replies,

\[\text{34 On human contextualization of exoticized artifacts, Nicholas Thomas writes that “it is precisely this contextualization in human action—action that is accorded some moral or historical significance—that is at the greatest remove in images of curiosities,” such as seen in antiquarians’ illustrations and re-accorded in Owenson’s narrative re-contextualization.}\]
“Not exactly, for I have strung it with gut instead of wire, merely for the gratification of my own ear,* but it is, however, precisely the same form as that preserved in the Irish university, which belonged to one of the most celebrated of our heroes, Brian Boru; for the warrior and the bard often united in the character of our kings” (68).

The asterisk in the middle of this passage calls the reader’s attention to a footnote that provides a verbal illustration of the Irish harp on “display” within the main text. In the note, Owenson draws upon the authority of “a very eminent modern Irish bard, Mr. O’Neil” who describes the Irish harp in greater detail: “‘My harp has thirty-six strings’ (the harp of *Brian Boiromh* had but 28 strings), ‘of four kinds of wire, increasing in strength from treble to bass; your method of turning yours (by octaves and fifths) is perfectly correct; but a change of keys or half tones, can only be effected by the tuning hammer’” (68n). This description within the footnote focuses only on the Irish harp and its utility; Owenson, in the narrative, both describes the harp and places it into the context of human use. The knowledge is presented in the margins, and the reader does the work of uniting the information in the footnotes with the corresponding contextualization in the narrative.

Of all the interesting Irish relics described and displayed within various antiquarian publications, none is more prevalent than the harp; thus it is fitting that Owenson’s verbal description can be seen as drawn from two specific antiquarian sources. Although Owenson cites her contextual description as coming from Mr.
O’Neil, her presentation of the artifact and accompanying verbal illustration are unquestionably paralleled in the models of collection and exhibition in both Charles Vallancey’s Collectanea and Joseph Cooper Walker’s Historical Memoirs (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

Figure 2.5. “Plate V. The Harp of Brien Boromh and the Irish Crown” in Charles Vallancey, Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis, Vol. 4 (1784)

Accompanying their illustrations, both antiquarians briefly describe the particulars of the tenth-century High King of Ireland, Brian Boru (Bóiromhe, in Irish). Such description is akin to Owenson’s remediation of the harp from Horatio’s narrative but without the materialist emancipation Owenson provides by placing the harp in Glorvina’s hands.

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35 Owenson is presumably referring to Arthur O’Neill (ca. 1737-1816), a prominent Irish harpist.
Vallancey details the history of the harp’s ownership as well as its material construction, being thirty-two inches high, containing twenty-eight keys, and “bear[ing] evidence of an expert artist” (IV.33-34). Walker, however, makes it a point to discredit this account of the harp held in Trinity College, stating in a footnote that “the antiquity of this Harp is certainly very high; but I cannot think that it is so high as the age of Brien” (60). Walker likewise focuses on the specific harp’s physical properties, supporting the description in Owenson’s footnote: “the Harp is thirty-two inches high…[it] has twenty-eight keys, and as many string holes, consequently there were as many strings” (60-61).

Vallancey’s image uniting objects of warriors and bards (crowns and harps), portray the details that Owenson points out in the curatorial footnote: the twenty-eight strings, the varying weights of the wire, and the method of stringing the harp that requires a tuning hammer to change keys or changing pitch by one-half step. Along with the famous harp, Vallancey’s illustration portrays of “the crown of Ireland”—an object illustrating the ruling position that Boru held in ancient Ireland and supporting Glorvina’s
assertion that “‘the warrior and the bard often united in the character of our kings’” (68). And, because two of Owenson’s trusted sources contain illustrations of this specific artifact, it is fair to assume a singular importance placed upon remediating this particular object in antiquarian accounts. The Irish harp has thus ensured a place of significance within Owenson’s own museum. These exhibitions of the Irish harp illustrate what Ernst describes as a choice to focus “not on speakers but rather the agency of the machine” (Digital Memory 45). That is, each of these exhibits place the artifact within a context of use rather than simply describing its features, as in the catalogue of martial relics. The focus is not simply the object, but also the cultural force contained within the object.

The novel harnesses the power of its knowledge work within its archive not by interpreting the collected objects, but by arranging them alongside the narrative, and by inviting the reader to engage with the collection, appreciating the artifacts for their own sake. In fact, within the letters comprising the storyline, concepts of organization and cataloguing are always associated with emotions and of personal shortcomings: Horatio remarks on “the numerous catalogue of my faults” (5); “the organization of those feelings” (9); and “the catalogue of procrastination and mischance” (18). Walter Benjamin writes that the collector has a relationship with objects and artifacts “which does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian value—that is, their usefulness—but studies and loves them as the scene, the stage, of their fate” (60). But while the footnotes most definitely archive, organize, and catalogue the objects on display within the narrative—architectural ruins, martial relics, musical artifacts, among others—the
narrative itself resists ideas of organization and cataloguing by presenting the objects within human context rather than mere or haphazard collection.

The transfer of authority from the contextualization of an artifact to its catalogue comes also with a transfer of authority from authorial to authoritative voices—from female to male voices, respectively. Indeed, the politics of gender and its role in knowledge work is of the utmost importance in considering the varied voices of authority across the narrative and its notes. The antiquarian details in Owenson’s novel present a complex transfer of authority between male and female voices, influenced by the standards of antiquarianism, thereby allowing us to further understand The Wild Irish Girl as a work of antiquarianism through our own media-critical antiquarianism. For instance, in the 1785 volume of *Archaeologia: or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*, Elizabeth Rawdon, the Countess of Moira, became the first woman to contribute to the journal with her account of a skeleton “dug out of a Bog” on the Moira estate. But the Countess is not allowed to speak for herself; her account is mediated through a “Letter to the Hon. John Theophilus Rawdon” and then “communicated by Mr. Barrington” (90). The letter itself is written in the first person, presenting a detailed account of the skeleton from the Countess herself. However, the headnote introducing the letter provides the account with male authority and places it within a male perspective. In the account, the Countess extensively details the eight artifacts she identifies in the collection of remains: the skeleton and seven accompanying relics of garments, jewelry, even hair. She provides ample footnotes, akin to those which Owenson provides to her novel, offering vocabulary glosses and lengthy citations of male historians. The textual productions of both
Owenson and the Countess of Moira utilize the form and function of the footnote to curate collections of Irish antiquities. Both women’s narrative collections are layered and authenticated through myriad voices and textual and paratextual levels, thus illustrating the notion of “the margins as a territory in which [to] negotiate [one’s] marginal identity as an Irish woman” (Watson 8) while also “linking material experience with cognitive reflection through a pleasurable and ennobling fusion of reason and sensibility” (Gidal 15-16).

Owenson’s ethnographic paratexts accompanying the narrative exhibition do more than simply authenticate the events presented as fiction by invoking a male scholarly authority to shore up her own observations. In a confusing transfer of authority in its narration, *The Wild Irish Girl* relies upon the female voice of Glorvina to narrate various episodes of Irish history—but it is the male voice of Horatio that records Glorvina’s history in print, thereby providing a sense of permanency. Meanwhile, the fictional narrative is by the woman writer, Sydney Owenson. Owenson, however, seeks to authenticate the history through both her fictional male voice of Horatio and the male authors and antiquarians she cites in her footnotes. Like Lake’s assessments of Sarah Scott’s antiquarian efforts in her quasi-utopian novel *Millennium Hall* (1761), Owenson’s “novel relies on seemingly masculinist discourses of antiquity to buttress its feminist politics” (661), undoing the underlying gendered constructions of antiquarian authorship.
and the role of gender in shaping historical inquiry (and the associated relationship between novels and the domestic versus the political).\(^{36}\)

With their boundary-blurring capacities, Owenson’s footnotes—the margins—are the space where her knowledge work takes place: her project of documenting the historiography, ethnography, and politics evident in her fiction. They separate “historical modernity from tradition,” in the words of print historian Anthony Grafton (24); they indicate a generic departure of *The Wild Irish Girl* from the historical romances that had appeared in the recent prior decades and gesture toward the emergence of Walter Scott’s model of historical fiction within the following decade. Moreover, the footnote’s ability to “expand our horizons into uncontainable archives,” as Simpson puts it (111), showcases Owenson’s engagement with typically masculine discourses of archive-driven historiography. Kasmer observes that “by the end of the eighteenth century, history writing’s specialization prohibited women from taking part fully in formal history writing” (7). History and history writing had become separated from the romance forms with which it was associated in literature earlier in the eighteenth century and had taken on what Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob recognize as a “modern form as an organized, disciplined inquiry” (52). This inquiry would have been accessible only by men, because, as Bonnie G. Smith writes, only they “had the time to engage in the activities (archival research, teaching in universities) on which the founding of professional history depended” because women were thought “incapable of reaching the

\(^{36}\) On the gendered authorship of antiquarians, Rosemary Sweet claims that “if there were few histories by women written [in the eighteenth century], there were even fewer antiquarian publications” in *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain.* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 69. However, if we consider novels such as *Millennium Hall* and *The Wild Irish Girl* as antiquarian publications, however, this expands the field somewhat.
requisite profundities of either history or self-knowledge” (3). *The Wild Irish Girl* presents both a literary and material solution to this problem in its creation of an archive within its documentary footnotes.

As an antiquarian work, Owenson’s novel is also an artifact of knowledge work. The creation of meaning within the novel relies largely upon the efforts of the reader to unite the disparate text and paratexts marking the page. Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne C. Henry suggest, “to mark a text is also to make it… [F]eatures such as punctuation, footnotes, epigraphs, white space and marginalia, marks that traditionally have been ignored in literary criticism, can be examined for their contribution to a text’s meaning” (xvii). Therefore, to read the often-ignored paratexts that mark a page is to unearth the meaning offered by the text plus paratext. The reader must also distinguish between Owenson’s editorial voice, her authorial presence, and her creation of character: as the reader navigates from the text to the paratext and back into the text again, she observes how Owenson blends her own critical voice with the narrative voice of her fictional Horatio. Owenson draws upon a conventional model of critical, academic writing alongside the mode of fictional romance by bringing in a prolific use of footnotes. Through active generic blending, Owenson transcends the gendered boundaries of history writing and creates an archive of Irish cultural history through the narrative mode of fiction.
Knowledge Work and the Margins

When read separately from the text of the novel (and, admittedly, artificially), Owenson’s footnotes present a distinct trajectory. The narrative and the notes work to similar but different ends; they begin by succinctly glossing references to cultural practices or phrases of Anglo-Irish vernacular but sharply veer away from the primary narrative with lengthier, anecdotal, and essayistic commentary; they mark the fiction with the textual trappings of travel narratives and historiography but disrupting the trance of the romance narrative by providing a site for blatant social commentary and critique of Anglo-centric historiographical practices, creating what Jay David Bolter has termed a “network rather than the straight line suggested by the pages of a printed book” (ix). As may be expected given her pro-Hibernian stance, Owenson’s textual network is composed largely of Irish historians and poets, including, among others, *The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* (1787), Charlotte Brooks’s *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789), Edmund Burke’s *Reflection on the Revolution in France* (1790) and *Letter on the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics* (1782), Oliver Goldsmith’s “The Deserted Village” (1770), Charles Smith’s *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Kerry* (1774) and *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork* (1790), and William Parnell’s *An Enquiry into the Causes of Popular Discontents in Ireland* (1805). This textual network highlights what Shari Benstock has claimed (and in a footnote, nonetheless), that “to read a footnote is to be reminded of the inherent multertextuality of all texts” (220n2).
Owenson’s multitextual footnotes tell a rich story of their own, subsumed within the larger work as merely paratexts, but displaying as much vigor as the main text itself. The critical narrative—critical in both a scholarly and an ideological sense—is complementary to Owenson’s fictional narrative. Indeed, it is even more overt in its argument against English prejudice towards Irish culture and history than the narrative of the main text. Furthermore, the trajectory of the paratextual narrative moves from a focus on ethnography to history to literary anecdotes and finally to politics, each portrayed with an increasing urgency and with fewer but lengthier quotations. The footnotes steadily sever themselves from the main text and introduce a separate narrative, one less directly connected with the text, but one with the same aim of collecting relics of Irish history. More than just a historiographical convention and as a genre itself (Genette 319-43), the footnote provides Owenson with a platform for narrative subversion, not just disruption of linearity through antiquarian documentation. The subordination of the footnote to the main text allows for a subtle integration of Owenson’s argument, disembodied from the speakers in the novel; meanwhile, these subordinate footnotes exact control over the reading experience—should the reader choose to engage in them.37

The notes begin by tracing an ethnographic narrative, verbally painting the Irish cultural landscape alongside Horatio’s own drawings described in the fictional narrative. In addition to providing her own first-hand knowledge of Irish culture, Owenson draws upon travelogues and memoirs as her outside sources for many of her ethnographic

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37 I find this circularity interpretive control and the reading experience versus authorial intentions an important distinction: authors provide footnotes to exert some control over the interpretation of the text. But, in exerting their control through footnotes, the authors extend readers the option of engaging with the supporting material or not. We cannot know precisely how Owenson’s readers would have engaged with her footnotes; we do know that critics rallied against the pervasive trend of footnotes, but we also know that the works with footnotes were then very popular and highly influential.
annotations. On Irish hospitality, Owenson comments, “*‘Every unprejudiced traveller who visits them (the Irish), will be as much pleased with their cheerfulness as obliged by their hospitality; and will find them a brave, polite, and liberal people.’—Philosophical Survey through Ireland by MR. YOUNG” (16n). The ethnographic information within the footnotes excerpted here, as well as those throughout the novel, seeks to debunk notions of Irish intemperance and drunkenness; instead, Owenson makes a point to state how the Irish are “brave, polite, and liberal.” On traditional dress, she writes “*This manner of wearing the coat, so general among the peasantry, is deemed by the natives of the county of Galway a remnant of the Spanish modes” (23n); she further comments on traditional dress by calling attention to legwear: “*They are called ‘triathians.’ —Thus in a curious dissertation on an ancient marble statue, of a bag-piper, by Signor Canonico Orazio Maccari, of Corona, he notices, ‘Nudi sono i piedi ma due rozze calighe pastorali cuoprone le gambe’” (23n), which roughly translates to being “barefoot but wearing crude, pastoral leggings reaching to the calf of the leg.” Owenson’s ethnographical notes seek to challenge misconceptions of a savage, uncultivated Irish culture by pointing to “refined” Spanish fashion and showcasing her own erudition by appropriately quoting in Italian.

Next, the notes turn to a discussion of historiographic portrayals of Ireland, implicitly arguing for revaluing Irish cultural history by disavowing pervasive stereotypes. Owenson provides ethnographic information drawn from historical and antiquarian sources to temper assumptions of intemperance among the Irish while introducing the notion of established rules of civility among the ancient Irish militia. She
writes that “*The temperance of an Irish peasant in this respect is almost incredible…*

One of the rules observed by the Finian land, or ancient militia of Ireland, was to eat but once in the twenty-four hours. —See Keating’s History of Ireland” (24-25n). Owenson continually returns to the idea of undermining commonplace prejudices against the Irish and attempts to discredit these ethnocentric views. She challenges readers—at least those who choose to engage with her paratextual narrative—to reconsider commonly held opinions of the Irish people and to accord Irish history the reverence it deserves:

*It has been the fashion to throw an odium on the modern Irish, by undermining the basis of their ancient history, and vilifying their ancient national character. If an historian professes to have acquired his information from the records of the country, whose history he writes, his accounts are generally admitted as authentic, as the commentaries of Garcilorsso [sic] de Vega are considered as the chief pillars of Peruvian history, though avowed by their authorship to have been compiled from the old national ballads of the country; yet the old writers of Ireland, (the psalter of Cashel in particular) though they refer to those ancient records of their country, authenticated by existing manners and existing habits, are plunged into the oblivion of contemptuous neglect, or read, only to be discredited. (169n)

She argues that the biased histories that “throw an odium on the modern Irish” must be reconsidered—Irish history is exceedingly complex and should be recognized as such. While arguing this, Owenson simultaneously places Irish history into a larger world
history of colonization and cultural appropriation. She points out the double standard that acknowledges oral traditional materials from other nations (such as from Peru) as credible but that discredits and even casts contempt upon Irish oral tradition as historical source material. Owenson’s marginal narrative invites critical historians and imaginative readers alike to put an end to this prejudiced practice. Additionally, the passage she selects implies a desire to instill a sympathy for the native Irish akin to that felt for the oppressed Incas.

To rectify what she perceives as an injustice to Irish oral history, Owenson presents Irish oral traditional materials as part of her historical project and critical argument within the footnotes. She develops her efforts to validate Irish history and identity through poetical sources and literary anecdotes, in addition to the ethnographic sources. In these footnotes continuing literary anecdotes, Owenson draws upon Thomas Percy, Charlotte Brooke, James Macpherson, and Oliver Goldsmith along with a few lines of traditional ballads and references to ancient poems. For example, in a lengthy footnote regarding the history and high status of minstrelsy across Britain but particularly in Ireland, Owenson quotes the traditional ballad “King Estmere” from Percy’s Reliques:

> And you shall be a harper’s brother,
> Out of the north countrye,
> And I’ll be your boy so fine of sighte,
> And bear your harp by your knee.
> And thus they renesht\(^{38}\) them to ryde

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\(^{38}\) Owenson transcribes this word accurately from Percy. However, it is unclear how this word glosses into modern English; most likely it is a form of the Old English rëniæn [to prepare].
On two good Renish steedes,
And when they came to King Adland’s hall
Of red gold shone their weeds. (69n)\textsuperscript{39}

Along with this poetic interjection, Owenson turns to an English source for legitimating information regarding the status of the Irish culture of minstrelsy:

Dr Percy justly observes, that in this ballad, the character of the old minstrels (those successors to the bards) is placed in a very respectable light; for that “here we see one of them represented mounted on a fine horse, accompanied with an attendant to bear his harp, etc. etc.” And I believe in Ireland only, is the minstrel of remote antiquity justly represented in the itinerant bard of modern days. (69n)

She deftly shifts the English source to a distinctly Irish focus by pointing out the role and status of minstrelsy still maintained “in Ireland only.” In highlighting the Irish continuation of a vocation previously practiced also in England, Owenson highlights a continuity with the past that Ireland has been able to maintain, but which England has lost. Here, she voices what Joep Leerssen has referred to as the “literary-political formula that Ireland is a country tragically caught between its past and present, its dreams and its realities” ("Fiction Poetics" 284)—and also what Katie Trumpener has noted as a nationalist desire for a future based on reparations of the past, “a future in which a history of cultural achievements was at once honored, preserved, and rejoined” (30). Thus,

\textsuperscript{39}Owenson’s transcription of the ballad passage is grossly misquoted from Percy’s \textit{Reliques of Ancient English Poetry}. The first four lines of Owenson’s excerpt—which she presents as a single block of text, indicating a single stanza—are actually lines 155-58 in the traditional ballad, and the last four lines Owenson presents are lines 29-32. It remains unclear if this misquotation is a deliberate alteration or selective quoting, or if it is merely slipshod documentation.
situated at the crux of Enlightenment and Romantic knowledge work (of coupling antiquarianism’s particularity and utility with an idealization of the past), Owenson offers hope for an idyllic future of Ireland through her vision of chronological unity wrapped up within the role of the minstrel.

Owenson incorporates the opinions of Irish poet Charlotte Brooke for further support of the poetic merit of Irish literature as a way to portray a coveted culture, quoting from Brooke’s *Reliques of Irish Poetry*: “*‘Tis scarcely possible that any language can be more adapted to lyric poetry than the Irish; so great is the smoothness and harmony of its numbers: it is also possessed of a refined delicacy, a descriptive power, and an exquisite tender simplicity of expression*” (86n). This return to poetic history and clear romanticizing of poetic values and structures of the past is a demonstration of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s theory of language development, wherein he asserts during the “golden age” or “barbaric times” that “at first only poetry was spoken” (33, 12). Through Brooke’s assessment of poetic language, Owenson attempts to show the historical continuity that Ireland has maintained, unlike England’s poetic history and progression—the naïve versus the sentimental, to adopt the distinction drawn by the poet Friedrich Schiller (31, 79).

Finally, Owenson’s argument in the footnotes progresses into politics and social criticism. She provides a pointed critique of English prejudices against Irish culture and identity; she rallies against the unfair welfare policies enacted for Irish citizens and tenants of Anglo-Irish landholders. For this part of her argument, she draws heavily from
Edmund Burke’s political reflections and William Parnell’s impassioned *Enquiry into the Causes of Popular Discontents in Ireland*, which had been just published the year before.

Yet in other notes espousing social criticism, Owenson eschews documentation and uses the notes instead to present her own reasoned but passionate argument. She relies upon her pathos alone without any secondary sources in stating her case for the “once oppressed, but ever unsubdued spirit” (172n) of the Irish population. The most poignant portion of Owenson’s argument and engagement of herself as the scholarly authority on Irish politics appears in Letter XXV in a very lengthy footnote. Over the course of this 750-word footnote, Owenson first states her goal of “effacing[ing] from the Irish character the odium of cruelty; by which the venom of prejudiced aversion has polluted its surface” (171n). She then critiques British colonialism, comparing British invasions and accompanying histories to Spanish colonization of the Americas and their histories:

Had the Historiographer of MONTEZUMA or ALTALIBA defended the resistance of his countrymen, or recorded the woes from whence it sprang, though his QUIPAS was bathed in their blood, or embued [sic] with their tears, he would have unavailingly recorded them; for the victorious Spaniard was insensible to the woes he had created, and called the resistance it gave birth to CRUELTY. (171n)

The footnote continues in this feverish and passionate tone. Owenson abandons her scholarly persona and speaks as an impassioned Irish patriot. No longer do the notes merely “enable the reader to work backward from the established argument to the texts it
rests on,” as Grafton suggests (30). Rather, the footnotes of personal reflection and cultural commentary provide a paratextual platform for criticism that is related to the text in theme, but not in content. The various marginal critiques, such as this one, appear in the footnotes as an adjunct to the objective knowledge work enacted through the majority of the archival or documentary notes; they provide us with moments of pause where the narrative’s spell is broken and where we are able to more thoroughly reflect upon the offered information and opinion rather than be swept up into Horatio’s and Glorvina’s blossoming romance.

In this lengthy note, Owenson presents a history of British affiliations with Ireland prior to the 1800 Act of Union which promised to restore equality: “here many be found a remnant of an ancient British Colony, more pure and unmixed, than in any other part of the world. And here were committed those barbarities, which have recently attached the epithet of cruel to the name of Irishman!” (172n). She calls the reader’s attention to “ancient Irish independence” (172n) with a record entirely clean of bloodshed (and notably offers no citations to uphold this seeming oddity in world history). Here, her argument becomes increasingly impassioned as she reflects upon the injustice she sees enacted upon her native land and the people therein. This note—among several others of similar argumentative tone—refuses to submit to Benstock’s assessment of footnotes in fiction as belonging “to a fictional universe” and stemming “from a creative act rather than a critical one, and direct themselves toward the fiction and never toward an external construct, even when they cite ‘real’ works in the world outside particular fiction” (205).
Owenson’s secondary narrative becomes most developed in this footnote. It is not a note where she mentions herself or “the author;” it is not a note where she provides woolly quotations, citations of secondary sources, or visual descriptions of dress, artifacts, or events. It is a note where Owenson lets her voice speak loudly for itself and command a generous portion of the page, spanning over five pages in the original octavo format. It is a note where the curatorial voice of the paratext is entirely divorced from the narrative voice of the text. The note offers a strategic emotional appeal—presumably reflecting Owenson’s personal stance—and emphasizes what Benstock describes as “the interplay between author and subject, text and reader, that is always at work in fiction, giving us occasion to speculate on self-reflective narration as an aspect of textual authority” (205). This fiery footnote is one of the final annotations Owenson provides in the novel. Thus, we can read this lengthy footnote dedicated to debunking the myth of Irish depravity as the crux of Owenson’s argument for Irish equality, and the apex of Owenson’s presentation of knowledge work in the margins: her presentation of emotional argumentation coupled with a personalized antiquarianism.

**The Wild Irish Museum**

In a letter written to Owenson, while she was composing *The Wild Irish Girl*, Irish historian and antiquarian Joseph Cooper Walker offered his assistance regarding matters of Irish antiquities and folklore. He directed her to “collect some of [the Finian tales], and, perhaps, interweave them with the work on which you are at present employed. If you could obtain faithful descriptions of some of the scenes of those tales, you would
heighten the interest of your romance by occasionally introducing them” (261). Walker further suggests that Owenson imitate “the prose romance of the Irish, which was, I believe, generally interspersed with poetical pieces” (262). He then directs her to review Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) for some examples, and to secure an audience with the 109-year-old “Bard of the Maygelligans” to gather “many anecdotes of the Bards of the North during the last century” (263). It is evident that Walker’s unsolicited advice exercised considerable influence over the textual form of *The Wild Irish Girl*. Not only does Owenson cite passages of poetry from Percy’s *Reliques* (69) and provide the recommended account of the Bard of the Magilligans (193-95). She also takes to heart Walker’s stylistic suggestion of drawing upon “the prose romance of the Irish,” densely interspersing her own modern romance with the “faithful descriptions of some of those scenes” and the “poetical pieces” Walker calls for; she also sets her narrative in the same northwest region of Ireland where many of the Fenian Tales are set. Owenson also moves beyond imitating the style of established narrative forms and integrates the novel’s defining feature—the footnotes.

Footnotes in fiction, as the notes in *The Wild Irish Girl* attest, are far more complex than the one-note function of either scholarship or satire that scholars have accorded them to date. Focusing on Owenson’s footnotes allows us to recognize her engagement with the materiality of knowledge work: her use of abundant paratextual frames as a means to distill information and navigate the constellations of information.

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40 It is likely that Walker was referring to the Fenian Cycle of medieval Irish prose narrative. These stories are related to James Macpherson’s Ossianic prose-poems, but they carry their own distinct literary genealogy and connection within Irish mythology. See Eoin MacNeill and Gerard Murphy (eds. and trans.), *Duanaire Finn: The Book of the Lays of Fionn*, 3 vols. London: Irish Text Society, 1908-53. See also Charlotte Brooks, *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (Dublin: 1789), iii-x.
arrayed throughout her fiction. This arrangement of information alongside imagination presents another facet of what Lisa Kasmer has heralded as the “dichotomy of values separating genres in England at the time…[the] alignment of novels with ‘domestic life’ and historical romance with the ‘epic poem’ clearly marks ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ genres of writing” (Kasmer 2). Nevertheless, it is, perhaps, all too simple to dismiss such footnotes as pedantic ornamentation or as merely the hallmarks of an esoteric genre of fiction of the long eighteenth century—the “modern fashion of encumbering a [text] with a body of notes, swelled by quotations, which nobody reads, and everybody must pay for” condemned in the British Review’s review of Robert Southey’s Roderick the Last of the Goths (1814) (306). Yet, as this chapter has shown, attending to the dichotomy of page space (text and margin), authority (author and editor as well as gendered authorities of male versus female) and even narrative (fiction and scholarship) is paramount in understanding the interplay between gender and genre, information and imagination, and narratives and archives.

*The Wild Irish Girl*'s union of fiction and scholarship offers a rich study in hybrid genres and genre development, knowledge production and dissemination, antiquarian discourse, and archival theory. We must, therefore, critically acknowledge the complex functions of Owenson’s footnotes as the tools of knowledge work—in this case, the work of knowledge relating to a fascination with national identity and gendered authority interpreted via objects of the past. By looking to the broader trends in epistemology and the ill-defined shift from Enlightenment to Romanticism at the close of the long

eighteenth century, we can gain a better idea of how to conceptualize the hybridized and multi-layered fiction, scholarship, and critical analysis that appear within *The Wild Irish Girl*. From this vantage point, we might better grasp the complex history of the historical novel and its relationship with historical knowledge. Thus, in approaching this text from the perspective of knowledge work, we may recognize the many ways that Owenson documents, describes, and applies meaning to the artifacts collected within her wild Irish museum.
TEXTUAL IMPERIALISM IN GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON’S THE GIAOUR

In the extensive notes to the second canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812), George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) claimed that he was “not a collector,” nor was he an “admirer of collections” (191n). In his correspondence and throughout his poetry, Byron wrote pejoratively about collectors, antiquaries, and the textual trademarks of these individuals: the footnotes. Byron recognized the contemporary vogue for scholarly annotated narratives but implied that he himself would remain dismissive towards the practice. In 1811, he wrote to Robert Charles Dallas (editor of his early poetry) that he was “too much occupied with earthly cares, to waste time or trouble upon Rhyme or it’s [sic] modern indispensables—Annotations” (Byron’s Letters II, 99). Nevertheless, as his body of work demonstrates, Byron actively engaged with poetry’s “modern indispensables.” He even remarks in *Don Juan*, that “note or text / I never know the word which will come next” (IX, 327-28).

Throughout his corpus, Byron annotated many of his compositions in complex ways, both satiric and sincere. For instance, in the work that propelled him to fame, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Byron provided extensive commentary on cantos I, II, and IV, thereby complementing the quasi-fictional, verse narrative with anecdotes and personal opinions concerning Greek politics and culture. Likewise, in his Turkish Tales—the six poems solidifying his poetic reputation in the 1810s: *The Giaour* (1813), *The
Bride of Abydos (1813), The Corsair (1814), Lara (1814), The Siege of Corinth (1815), and Parisina (1815)—Byron again applied the technology of the footnote to his poetry. His annotation efforts contextualize the eastern imagery pervading the verse; the verse is the space of fiction with Byron’s formal and thematic simulations of “Easternness,” while the notes are the space of nonfiction and contextualization for a Western audience. Thus, through the notes to these poems, he interprets the Eastern culture presented in the often non-linear verses and translates the culture into a more objective, organized, and altogether more Western, textual form. In other words, Byron provides a poetic archive of Western interpretations of Eastern ideologies.

Despite Byron’s complex attitude toward annotations, and despite these annotations contributing to what David Simpson has defined as “geopolitical encyclopedic epic-romance in English verse” (111), Byron’s footnotes have been largely overlooked in scholarship to date. Scholarship on Byron’s knowledge work—such as that which claims to be concerned with “what Byron’s works attempt to tell their audience” (Bernhard Jackson 9)—generally provides minimal or no discussion of how annotations convey information to a reading audience; nor does it consider how Byron’s annotations are related to philosophies of knowledge throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those who do not entirely eschew these paratextual features are often dismissive of their poetic value, homogeneously characterizing the annotations as mock-scholarship or as merely indicative of Byron’s literary market savvy. This is the case in scholarship by Jane Stabler, Brian Nellist, David Seed, and A.B. England. Others—including Marilyn Butler, Jerome McGann, Stephen Cheeke, Barbara Ravelhofer, and
Olivera Jokic—have treated the notes as more significant features worthy of perhaps a paragraph or two of discussion in the context of Byron’s historical (and historiographical), political, or folkloric projects. But rarely are the notes given primacy in scholarship, despite their prominence in Byron’s poetry itself.

Alex Watson, Alice Levine, and Carla Pomarè are among the few scholars who have seen the significance of Byron’s highly nuanced models of marginal notation. Watson discusses the marginalia Byron wrote in 1816 in a copy of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), an originally un-annotated poem. Watson argues for acknowledging the readerly role of the author in providing marginal commentary (either at the point of composition and publication or in the years following), presenting the author as engaged in “carefully adjusting and readjusting the meaning of his text… commenting on or reshaping its meaning” (134-35). Levine’s aptly entitled article “Byronic Annotations” considers Byron’s use of annotation throughout his vast corpus, most famously in the lengthy asides to *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and his documentary glosses in the Eastern tales. Levine provides a macro-level reading of Byron’s notes, offering a typological overview of the kinds of annotations commonly found in his corpus and arguing that the notes indicate Byron’s imagined “ideal reader”: they reflect an “awareness that he is not only communicating with readers generally but ‘conversing’ directly with particular readers” (126). Pomarè, on the other hand, considers Byron’s “awareness of the ambiguities of history and its discourses” (4), focusing on the “emergence of history within the epistemological space” (13).
With this chapter, I turn to one of Byron’s most intricately annotated Oriental narratives, *The Giaour* (1813). This poem is well known as a fragmented and non-linear poem that grew exponentially with expansive revisions and additions during the year following its initial publication—a “snake of a poem,” as Byron referred to it in correspondence with his publisher, John Murray, in August 1813 (*Byron’s Letters and Journals*, III.100). In all its editions, *The Giaour*’s poetic narrative meanders through internal and external perspectives without any linearity or any clear chronology of the events surrounding the titular Giaour. But the meandering plot is not the driving force of the poem, as Saree Makdisi has explained in *Making England Western*. Rather, the poem’s impetus, Makdisi argues, arises from “the discordant and contradictory frames through which we access it.” Makdisi further argues that “what the poem gives us access to is not a single reality as seen from a series of perspectives, but, rather, a series of multiple realities” (163). These frames—including Byron’s editorial commentary in the footnotes—further complicate the already chaotic account. Ultimately, the editorial perspective of the notes attempts to organize and catalogue the information conveyed within a poetic narrative that by itself resists linearity.

*The Giaour* presents a rich case study in Byronic annotation, in that the annotations rely on a variety of authorities and enact an array of authorizing gestures towards the poem. More so than in Byron’s other annotated works, the annotations to *The Giaour* are varied in form and poetic effect, as Marilyn Butler has observed (87). The notes are not merely an interpretation of the poetic text (as the notes to *The Bride of Abydos* largely are), nor are they tangential asides and essays (as in *Childe Harold’s*
Pilgrimage), nor are they simply documentary glosses or satiric commentary (as in Don Juan). Instead, I argue, the annotations in The Giaour present an amalgamation of these forms and functions in their attempts to categorize and Anglicize—and essentially to colonize—the poetic text itself. Byron’s notes—in their attempts to force the fragmented Eastern text into a linear, objective model of Western scholarship—represent an authorial and authorizing act that I shall describe as “textual imperialism.” That is, Byron, in his editorial voice of the notes seems to take a colonial stance vis-à-vis the simulated Eastern content and context of the narrative, even while the poetic text remains markedly anti-colonial in tone. This tension results from the ideological construction of an “Eastern” ethos by a Western one. Thus, I contend that Byron remains true to his contempt for collections; the notes to The Giaour evince his resistance to authorial or editorial collection within the narrative in that they initiate interaction with (rather than collection of) the corresponding poetic narrative—as well as interaction with the reader.

Disrupting the Narrative

When The Giaour was initially published in March 1813, it contained 684 lines with 30 explanatory footnotes. The poem appeared in fourteen separate editions between 1813 and 1814; the seventh edition, published in as many months (December 1813), was the final one to appear under Byron’s own close supervision, as William H. Marshall, Michael Sundell, and Jerome McGann have noted. In its final form, The Giaour stretches to 1,334 lines with 43 endnotes (the footnotes were shifted to endnotes in the fourth edition, appearing in late August 1813, and they remained as such in many subsequent
editions). Of the 43 annotations in *The Giaour*, 30 are documentary, presenting relatively straightforward glosses of idiomatic expressions or culturally specific references; 12 are more essayistic in nature. Many of the notes rely on first-person explanations and provide interpretive commentary on both the lines of the poem and the ethnographic information documented in the annotation.

Like many authors, translators, and editors before him, Byron worked as a curator of his ethnographically inclined text, providing descriptive and contextualizing paratexts in order to make his verse more accessible for contemporary British readers. To that end, many of the notes contain objective, ethnographic information, ranging from geographical description to educational information or facts, as Levine has categorized them (127). Along with these notes of documentation are notes containing brief essays wherein Byron relates his own experiences in Albania and Greece. In these essays, Byron offers his cultural and political criticism, which is sometimes explicit, but often implicit. In addition to this variety of content, the notes to *The Giaour* present a variety of authorial and editorial styles, providing Byron with a useful space to enact a range of authorizing effects upon the poem: from empirical descriptions and dictionary definitions, to intertextual citations and references, to anecdotes and first-person narratives, and to

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42 Only one note does not fall into this simple rubric of either documentation or interpretation, and it is decidedly a mockery of the genre of scholarly annotated narratives. This note is appended to lines 1206-07, which first appeared in the seventh edition and read “…this grief / Looks not to priesthood for relief.” The note remarks that “The monk’s sermon is omitted. It seems to have had so little effect upon the patient, that it could have no hopes from the reader. It may be sufficient say, that it was of a customary length (as may be perceived from the interruptions and uneasiness of the penitent), and was delivered in the nasal tone of all orthodox preachers” (422n). For all of Byron’s mockery of annotated poetry, this is, interestingly, the only overt mockery of the genre within *The Giaour*. On this note and its relation to the Orientalism within the poem, see Butler 88.
allusions to Byron’s own body of work. With such an array of annotation and authorization styles, Byron evinces a complex attitude toward annotation.

In its meandering narrative, *The Giaour* presents a re-imagining of contemporary Turkish oral narratives that have memorialized the drowning of several young women by the despotic Ottoman ruler, Ali Pasha (1740-1822; governor of the Ottoman Empire’s European territory and host to several European travelers, including Byron), represented by Byron textually and paratextually for a British/Western audience. The spatial tension between the text and paratext accentuates the fragmentary and non-linear nature of *The Giaour*, drawing attention to Byron’s attempts to complete and make linear the narrative. It is often that “the text persuades, the notes prove,” writes Anthony Grafton (15); but in Byron’s ambitious project of *The Giaour*, the notes carry an equal burden of persuading and proving while also informing and reflecting. Byron harnesses the scholarly associations of the footnote to situate his poem within a more objective realm of historiography, in line with the objective style of eighteenth-century historiography, and less in the realm of pure romance and fiction. As David Simpson writes of Byron’s contemporary, Robert Southey, and his use of footnotes in *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), the appearance of annotation “stops us in our tracks before we have even settled into [the poem] and throws open the entire question of interpretive relations between English poets and Islamic stories, overpowering the lyrical sweep of the verse…by the seemingly dry apparatus of small print” (114). So too does Byron’s engagement with annotation in *The Giaour*. 
Byron’s use of annotation to contextualize the narrative while also highlighting the poem’s fragmentary nature can be seen most vividly in a comparison of the first note and the last. The very first note comments on the poetic text, “That tomb* which, gleaming o’er the cliff” (3), explaining this tomb as lying “...above the rocks on the promontory, by some supposed to be the sepulchre of Themistocles” (416n). The note sets this poem within a specific geographical context, placing the poem in the Mediterranean region by referring to the “sepulchre of Themistocles,” an Athenian politician and military leader in the sixth century, BCE—even though Byron leaves the precise location of “the promontory” unspecified. This contextualization emphasizes the exotic location and imagined Eastern ethos expressed within the poem by placing the poem within a distinctly Grecian—and not Ottoman—landscape. Readers are thus invited to draw upon their knowledge of the revered Classical realm in reading of the atrocities committed in contemporary Greece at the hands of the Ottomans. Moreover, the note collapses a salient sense of chronology, placing the late-eighteenth- or early-nineteenth-century events of the narrative within a more ancient context, inviting readers to abandon chronologic linearity as they enter the Grecian landscape of the Turkish Tale.

On the other end of the annotative spectrum is the final footnote. Unlike most other notes that provide a specific reference to a single line, the last footnote comments on the poem as a whole. This lengthy note is placed as an endnote in the first edition and is not specifically called out in relation to any particular line; it reads in the first edition:

The circumstance to which the above story relates was not very uncommon in Turkey. A few years ago the wife of Muchtar Pacha
complained to his father of his son’s supposed infidelity; he asked with whom, and she had the barbarity to give in a list of the twelve handsomest women in Yanina. They were seized, fastened up in sacks, and drowned in the lake the same night! One of the guards who was present informed me, that not one of the victims uttered a cry, or shewed a symptom of terror at so sudden a “wrench from all we know, from all we love.” The fate of Phrosine, the fairest of this sacrifice, is the subject of many a Romaic and Arnaut ditty.\textsuperscript{43} The story in the text is one told of a young Venetian many years ago, and now nearly forgotten. —I heard it by accident recited by one of the coffee-house story-tellers who abound in the Levant, and sing or recite their narratives. —The additions and interpolations by the translator will easily be distinguished from the rest by the want of Eastern imagery; and I regret that my memory has retained so few fragments of the original. (422-23n)

For the second edition, Byron gestures even further beyond the narrative itself and credits some of his literary inspirations in curating (or, perhaps, textually imperializing) the Ottoman narrative. He adds, “For the contents of some of the notes I am indebted partly to D’Herbelot, and partly to that most eastern, and, as Mr. Weber justly entitles it, ‘sublime tale,’ the ‘Caliph Vathek’” (423n). Later, in the fourth edition, Byron expands this note even further, stepping yet again outside the immediate context of the poem and its world:

\textsuperscript{43} Historian Katherine E. Fleming provides a more objective summary of the account referenced here, which Byron drew on as the impetus for his rendering of the narrative in \textit{The Giaour} (167-70).
I do not know from what source the author of that singular volume may have drawn his materials; some of his incidents are to be found in the “Bibliothéque Orientale;” but for correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European imitations; and bears such marks of originality, that those who have visited the East will find some difficulty in believing it to be more than a translation. As an Eastern tale, even Rasselas must bow before it; his “Happy Valley” will not bear a comparison with the “Hall of Eblis.” (423n)

In this addition to the fourth edition, Byron gestures away from his own seat of authority by remarking on the ethnographic merit of “that singular volume” anonymously published as *An Arabian Tale from an Unpublished Manuscript* (1786)—later known as William Beckford’s *Vathek*—and on the Orientalism of Samuel Johnson’s *Rasselas* in comparison to *Vathek*.44

In its various pieces and as a whole, this note contains several elements crucial for understanding Byron’s project as both a work of poetic art conveying a rich narrative and a work of veiled political criticism. It posits the world of the poem as one filtered through Byron’s own perspective as an outsider. Associated both with the closing lines of the poem and with the poem as a whole, the outside perspective of the annotation mirrors that of these lines. The final stanza of the poem is placed in the implied editor’s time and

44 It remains unclear how Byron understood the role of this literary criticism appearing in his concluding commentary; perhaps it is meant as an invitation to readers to compare Byron’s “correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination,” supported by the annotations, with those of *Vathek* and the un-annotated *Rasselas*. Interestingly, the references to Beckford and Johnson undermine Byron’s own ethnographic authority; neither Beckford nor Johnson actually travelled to the East as Byron did.
presented from the editor’s perspective outside the realm of the poem. Similarly, the corresponding annotation steps outside the predominant practice of providing context for the events and descriptions occurring within the poem’s narrative. It suggests the details necessary for comprehending the unraveling of The Giaour’s fragments by gesturing to “The circumstance to which the above story relates…” Furthermore, this note provides information regarding the compositional history of the narrative and the intricacies of its purported remediation: its oral-traditional origins, Byron’s overhearing the tale in recitation, and the translator’s “additions and interpolations” leading to the “want of Eastern imagery” throughout portions of the poem. Byron also calls attention to memory and his own limitations as compiler/editor/remediator; his comment that he regrets that his “memory has retained so few fragments of the original,” can suggest that all he gleaned from translation were fragments. Moreover, the nuances of pronoun use in these sentences are important, and I want to distinguish the shifts between Byron’s use of first- and third-person pronouns in positioning himself as eavesdropper in the coffee-house: he uses first person pronouns in describing the acquisition of the narrative (“I heard…my memory” [emphases mine]), but he places critical distance between acquiring the narrative and re-presenting it for English readers through use of the third-person “the translator.” Even though Byron is himself manufacturing the narrative, he does not claim it as his—it is not “my translation.” Thus, with this quick comment, Byron distances himself from the composition, appearing to outsource his authority as poet.

In all The Giaour’s various editions and their additions, Byron opens this note by remarking on the relative un-remarkableness of this narrative: the potentially shocking
events of homicide and revenge prompted by sexual relationships were “not very uncommon” at this time in Ottoman Greece. Byron supports this observation by relating an event that almost perfectly mirrors the events of the poem: of Ali Pasha receiving a complaint of his son’s infidelity by his daughter-in-law. By referencing the particularities of person and place within this anecdote—“Muchtar Pacha” (Ali Pasha’s son), “Phrosine,” and the place name “Yanina” [Ioannina]—Byron assumes a familiarity among his readers; the reader must be knowledgeable of Ottoman politics and geography in order to deduce the brutality of Ali Pasha (referenced only tangentially as “his [Muchtar Pacha’s] father”), “his [Ali Pasha’s] son,” and the otherwise unidentified Phrosine, analogous to Byron’s heroine, Leila. The reader must also be familiar with—or at the very least must imagine—the geography of the Ottoman Empire in order to determine the significance of the province of Yanina [Ioannina] as Ali’s domain. Readers should ideally also be aware of the contemporary contested politics of the Ionian islands and Ali’s role in facilitating Byron’s travels through Ottoman Greece and Albania (Fleming 27; Beaton 5, 248). In addition to relying on readerly familiarity with Ottoman geography and politics, Byron emphasizes his own familiarity with the events by citing how he heard an eyewitness account of the barbarity: “one of the guards who was present informed me.” This claim imparts what Jerome McGann has identified as a “cultural authenticity” by means of both the fragmentary and first-hand nature of the narration (Fiery Dust 142). Furthermore, by placing Ali’s son at the center of the events, Byron
remains judicious in his choice to remove Ali himself from the narrative, despite Ali’s role in the brutal events presumably inspiring Byron’s narrative.\textsuperscript{45}

The next sentence of this final note shifts from relying on eyewitness authority and personal familiarity to placing the foregoing fragments within a literary context as an authorizing and contextualizing gesture. In the second part of the sentence introducing the immediate account, Byron alludes to his own poetic text of \textit{The Giaour}. The closing lines of the poem, “This broken tale was all we knew / Of her he lov’d, or him he slew” (1333-34), are remarkably akin to the phrase Byron places within quotation marks in his annotation: “‘wrench from all we know, from all we love.’” The quoted phrase is not readily identifiable in any extant English literature; it is likely a loose translation of or reference to the “\textit{pniximon},” or “drowning tale,” an early-nineteenth-century Greek popular song heralding Kyra Frosine (Byron’s “Phrosine, the fairest of this sacrifice”) and her martyrdom at the hand of Ali Pasha (Fleming 167-69).\textsuperscript{46} The convention of quotation marks as “a frame for others’ words” (Finnegan 184) suggests to readers—both contemporary and today—that Byron is referring to the words of another narrative akin to his. This suggestion thereby implies a concrete connection, however slight, between Byron’s poetic tale and the “now nearly forgotten” story of the young Venetian that

\textsuperscript{45} This indirect portrayal of Ali is also a diplomatic gesture on Byron’s part; he does not place the Ottoman lord in the work directly and thereby maintains a political distance within his poem and its paratexts. Byron portrays the perceived barbarity of Ali Pasha in this same indirect manner in \textit{Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage}, drawing on “different Albinese songs” (198n) to characterize “Ali’s politesse” (Fleming 165) in ways that have prompted some scholars to consider the relationship between Byron and Ali Pasha one of sincere friendship without giving consideration to the exploitative nature of Byron’s interpretation of Ali’s leadership practices as hallmarks of Western perspectives of the East, which Edward Said describes (31-32). See also Cochran 20-30; Oueijan 81-82; Beaton 3-10; and Fleming 28.

\textsuperscript{46} Drawing on the contextual information Byron provides in his “Advertisement” to the poem, Alice Levine has determined the historical events of the narrative to have taken place at some point shortly after 1779 (\textit{Byron’s Poetry and Prose} 123n).
Byron implies as his source for the tale. With this allusion, Byron invites readers to participate, as Scott Simpkins has argued, in the “assembly” of the pieces of the work—or, as Inger Brody has termed it, to participate in “the imaginative completion of fragmentary evidence” (75). This strategy alluded to by the poem’s paratexts allows Byron to cultivate a dialogic readership.

In addition to placing the burden of narrative assembly on the reader, Byron further distances himself from the narrative by attempting to remove all claims to authority through the narrative contextualization in this endnote. He states that the poem is merely a remediation of Ottoman oral tradition, overheard from “one of the coffee-house story-tellers who abound in the Levant, and sing or recite their narratives”; he posits his intermediary, “the translator,” as owner of agency and authority in transmitting the tale. Tradition and translators are, then, the Authors of the poem, as it were (“Authors” is used more broadly here in the Foucauldian sense, referring to the author-function of storytellers in addition to the literate function of the author). Byron relinquishes his role of authority, suggesting instead that he is merely a passive receptacle of the narrative, one with a faulty memory. But the apparatus of the footnote allows him to reassert his authority as a compiler and editor in remediating the oral fragments into print.

Some scholars have attempted to reconcile Byron’s claims to mere editorship with an identifiable authentic Turkish oral tradition (Ravelhofer 23-26; McGann, *Fiery Dust* 143-47; Shilstone 97). Yet, regardless of its foundation in contemporary folklore, Byron’s outsourcing of authorial agency and the narrative’s conception successively weakened
with each subsequent edition. The Giaour may certainly have been inspired by Turkish oral traditions; but, like Macpherson’s Ossian, it cannot be definitely claimed as an actual translation; rather, it appears more as an imitation. In fact, Byron first envisioned his poem as an acknowledged imitation rather than as a translation in masquerade, as indicated in his first-draft manuscript, which reads “The Giaour. —Fragments of a Turkish imitat Translation” (Dep. Lovelace Byron, fol. 158; quoted with the permission of the Earl of Lytton). This initial inclination to label the poem as an imitation rather than

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47 Additionally, in an unpublished revision to Byron’s final, de-authorizing footnote, he conveys a vastly different source of the narrative, founded more in personal experience than in Ottoman lore and called out directly as a work of fiction. In this revision, he directs his publisher, John Murray, to reprint an extract of a letter from Lord Sligo (1788-1845), a college acquaintance of Byron later encountered in Athens. In this letter, Lord Sligo relates the particulars of the “adventure” which Byron claims “certainly first suggested to me the story of The Giaour (Byron’s Letters and Journals III.200). It is noteworthy that, although he is the protagonist in Lord Sligo’s narrative, Byron is again removed from a position of authority; he relies on a second party to relay information he himself knew. Byron entitled the letter, “Ld. S’s letter detailing what he heard at A in 1811 —on the circumstance which first suggested the idea of the G [iaour]”; it reads as follows:

You have requested me to tell you all that I heard at Athens about the affair of that Girl who was so near being put an end to while you were there. You have asked me to mention every circumstance in the remotest degree relating to it which I heard. In compliance with your wishes I write to you all I heard, and I cannot I imagine be [sic] very far from the fact as it happened only a day or two before I arrived at Athens and consequently the thing was a matter of common conversation at the time … The New Governor unaccustomed to have the intercourse with Christians which his predecessor had, had of course the barbarous Turkish Ideas with regard to Women. In consequence & in compliance with the Strict letter of the Mohammedan law he ordered her to be sowed up in a sack & thrown into the Sea, —as is indeed quite customary at Constantinople. As you were returning from Bathing in the Piræus you met the procession going down to execute the sentence of the Waywode on this unfortunate girl. Report continues to say that on finding out what the object of their journey was and who was the miserable sufferer, you immediately interfered, and on some delay in obeying your orders you were obliged to inform the leader of the escort that force should make him comply that on further hesitation you drew a pistol & told him that if he did not immediately obey your orders and come back with you to the Aga’s house you would shoot him dead: On this the man turned about, & went with you to the Governor’s house: here you succeeded partly by personal threats & partly by bribery & entreaty, to procure her pardon on condition of her leaving Athens. I was told that you then conveyed her in safety to the Convent & despatched her off at night to Thebes, where she found a safe asylum: Such is the story I heard, as nearly as I can recollect it at present; Should you wish to ask me any further questions about it I shall be very ready & willing to answer them. (Marchand I.257-58, 410n)

Byron directs Murray to include the letter “as a picture of Turkish ethics and having in some degree a reference to the fiction of the foregoing poem” (“The Giaour,” Complete Poetical Works 423n). Despite what this letter states regarding Byron’s intervention and heroics, this letter is more likely, as Peter Cochran and Leslie Marchand have suggested, an attempt to discredit reports of homoerotic behavior in the East (Cochran 32n; Byron’s Letters and Journals, III.102n). On Byron and homoeroticism in The Giaour, see Schneider; Crompton; Keenan 146; Dennis 64-94; and Sedgwick 21.
an unfaithful translation reflects authorial awareness of the poem’s ability to develop and grow over the course of the following year. But, in deciding to label the poem as a translation, Byron is able to remain “tucked away” in the footnotes, as McGann remarks (*Fiery Dust* 143). He is, in the words of Andrew Piper, a “ghost in the textual machine of the romantic book” (109): Byron’s footnotes indicate the “gradual, if incomplete, movement of the editor beyond the boundaries of his primary text and towards the margins” (Piper 105). And, with Byron’s banishment from the poetic text, the narrative is allowed to fully celebrate its fragmentation and non-linearity.

Between these vastly different annotations of documentation and authorization (or de-authorization) are over forty other pieces of paratextual commentary that altogether total over one-third of the entire work (2,356 words of annotation, compared to the verse’s 8,644 words). Notes like these, according to Simpson, “disturb the contemplative spell that good poetry weaves around us as we read” (112). For instance, the annotations to the vampire episode—an episode that is suddenly introduced into the narrative and just as suddenly abandoned—jar the reader out of the spell woven by the increasingly fantastic narrative. The contextualizing notes transport the reader out of the liminal space where the titular Giaour is cursed to remain “on earth as Vampire sent*” (755) and into a material, page space devoted to rationality. Byron explains this reference to vampires with a paragraph of literary scholarship juxtaposed with anecdotes of first-hand experience of vampire lore:

*The Vampire superstition is still general in the Levant. Honest Tournefort tells a long story, which Mr Southey, in the notes on Thalaba, quotes about
these “Vroucolochas,” as he calls them. The Romaic term is “Vardoulacha.” I recollect a whole family being terrified by the scream of a child, which they imagined must proceed from such a visitation. The Greeks never mention the word without horror. I find that “Broucolokas” is an old legitimate Hellenic appellation—at least is so applied to Arsenius, who, according to the Greeks, was after his death animated by the Devil. ——The moderns, however, use the word I mention. (420n)

This annotation is particularly illustrative of Byron’s approach to ethnographic documentation and narrative disruption. Interestingly, and as he does in the de-authorizing gestures in the final note, Byron here relocates his position of authority in the poem, relying instead on Southey’s source, the eighteenth-century French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort. Byron continues to contextualize the vampire lore, placing this otherworldly figure within a broader folkloric context. He objectively describes the “never-failing signs of a Vampire,” suggesting through his empirical tone that this annotation is one of corroboration, calling attention to the tension between irony and sincerity in this note and adding to the tension already implicit in any scholarly commentary on supernatural belief.

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48 Byron is here referring to Tournefort’s Relation d’un voyage du Levant (1717) [A Voyage to the Levant (1741)], I. 131, which Southey cites in a lengthy note in Thalaba the Destroyer, Book VIII. The note, represented by Southey as an “extract from the Mercure Historique et Politique. Octob. 1736” is appended to the poetic line “the vampire corse” and relates, in great detail, a cross-cultural overview of the vampire legend and various folk superstitions of the liminal space between life and death, human and daemon. What prompts Byron to apppellate Tournefort as “honest” remains unclear. However, Byron’s annotative metacommentary—his attention to annotation in the annotations to The Giaour—is characteristic of the scholarly annotated narratives in vogue at the outset of the nineteenth century; Sydney Owenson works similarly, citing the footnotes in the works that she cites in her own footnotes. Later on in The Giaour (and discussed at length below), Byron also calls attention to his footnotes in Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage.
Byron’s footnotes are certainly complex, demonstrating the author’s thoughtful engagement with this paratextual form and its various uses. With their combinations of contextualization, documentation, reflection, contradiction, and disruption, the notes to *The Giaour* fully illustrate Shari Benstock’s claim that “to read a footnote is to be reminded of the inherent multitextuality of all texts” (220n2). Not only do the notes demonstrate the intricate multitextuality Byron weaves throughout his notes (such as the references to Beckford, Richardson, Tournefort, and Southey discussed above); they also rely on the materiality of a text to harness paratexts’ disruptive force, reminding readers of the text’s very textuality. Byron’s poem remains firmly footed in its own world of fragmented and fantastic fiction, even while the notes repeatedly gesture outward to a larger world of texts and empires.

**Destabilizing Imperial Ideologies**

Within the Eastern landscape presented in the poem, Byron interjects his own personal experiences as a way to “humanize [the] scholarship,” to borrow the words of Chuck Zerby (9). Byron’s notes place their author within the context of the poem without being in the poem itself. Meanwhile, Byron’s private claims to abhor annotations are undermined, as are his dismissal of antiquarianism and collections. Moreover, the poem is built both around and by the annotations that posit this narrative as an archive or collection of immaterial cultural artifacts and personal experiences. *The Giaour* is, at its very core, a critique of Ottoman imperialism, even though this critique of imperialism is presented in a textual form that privileges Western notions of control and containment.
The Giaour’s textual containment mimics or mirrors the ideological containment of the East by Orientalism and its political containment by imperialism. One way to understand the ideologies at odds with each other in the poem in relation to its form is through Simpson’s explanation of an author’s “recourse to notes” as a “symptom of an uncertainty or anxiety about the remote, the foreign, the unfamiliar or the strange” (111). But Byron’s notes portraying Ottoman politics and religion do more than demonstrate what Simpson and others have seen as evidence of anxiety over the increasingly global cultural exchange through literature that fueled Anglo-centric notions of the Orient at the turn of the nineteenth century—an anxiety that Nigel Leask has explained as a “fear of the swamping of English propriety” with “grotesque oriental forms” (4). Leask has read The Giaour as Byron’s poetic response to Robert Southey’s Thalaba the Destroyer and The Curse of Kehama (1810), both of which Byron purportedly censured for the “inadequacy of their adaptation to occidental tastes” (Leask 21). I agree with Leask’s reading of The Giaour as a poetic response to contemporary tastes for ethnography. But I suggest further that through the notes Byron most clearly adapts oriental modes for occidental tastes within the Romantic mode of Orientalism; through footnotes, “the local is absorbed in the national” and international (Watson 5).

While the poetic text of The Giaour is anti-imperial, the form of the poem represents Western control, organization, and ways of thinking, which I am calling its “textual imperialism.” With its relatively sympathetic and conscientiously curated presentation of Islam and its pointed critique of the Ottoman Empire, The Giaour

49 See Woodring 166; Root 149-65; Leask 2, 60-61; Makdisi, Making England Western 158; and Butler 94.
destabilizes Western concepts of imperial power structures, even while upholding these structures of containment and categorization through its material form. The notes attempt to lay a frame of linear and enlightened organization upon the fragmented, discursive, and romantic narrative. To use the terms of Saree Makdisi, Byron presents an alternative to the emerging culture of imperialism and modernity in the early nineteenth century. But, rather than providing a direct antithesis to modernity and westernization, as Makdisi suggested in Romantic Imperialism (9-10), Byron creates an “alter-modernity” as Makdisi has more recently suggested (“Making”; Making 63): that is, Byron offers a narrative with a structure that is neither entirely rooted in fragmentation associated with textual recovery nor fully adoptive of the homogeneity and linearity indicative of modernity. The footnotes play the largest role in the poem’s alter-modernity; they are the elements that most plainly exhibit Makdisi’s claim that “what Byron is pushing us to think about, then, is not the clash over perspectives on, or representations of, a single reality, but rather the encounter and struggle between altogether different realities” (Making 163). The textuality of The Giaour destabilizes the boundaries of genre, authority, and the page itself while unsettling the perceived superiority of imperial political models.

When read together (arguably, as they ought to be), the text and paratext provide a rich representation of the Near East, interpreted through a Western model of textuality. The unsettling of imperial ideologies is plainly evinced in the narrative’s veiled critique of the Ottoman Empire along with the notes’ more blatant commentary on what Byron perceived as the shortcomings of Ottoman politics, even though the paratextual form
reads as inherently imperial/Western with the notes’ generic emphasis on objectivity and classification. In the opening lines of scene-setting, Byron provides what appears as a *Childe Harold*-like digression on the political landscape of “Greece—but living Greece no more!” (91), which then fell under what Byron represents as the tyrannical leadership of the Ottoman Empire:

> Fair clime! where every season smiles  
> Benignant o’er those blessed isles,  
> […]  
> Clime of the unforgotten brave!—  
> Whose land from plain to mountain-cave  
> Was Freedom’s home or Glory’s grave—  
> Shrine of the mighty! (7-8, 103-06).  

Certainly, the majority of the poem does not immediately appear as a political critique; however, these opening lines are not as divergent from the veiled political critique embedded within the following “mournful tale” (165) as might be assumed. For example, in a pointed critique of masculinity and autonomy, Byron remarks that contemporary Grecians have no liberty, that they are “Slaves—nay, the bondsmen of a Slave*” (151). He explains this assertion by drawing attention to the degeneration of Greek leadership over time: “*Athens is the property of the Kislar Aga (the slave of the seraglio and guardian of the women), who appoints the Waywode. A pandar and eunuch—these are not polite but true appellations—now governs the governor of Athens” (416-17; emphasis in the original). Here, Byron observes how Greece is not presided over by a ruler, but
rather a slave; and that slave was neither man nor woman, but a “pandar and eunuch.”

The “fair clime” and “blessed isles” (7, 8), which Byron celebrates in the opening line of the poem, have lost their purity and potency. The historical and political identity of Byron’s Greece is represented to be as androgynous and impotent as its leaders: a far cry indeed from the Greece of the Golden Age.

Byron maintains this emasculation of Ottoman men in his note describing the Giaour’s horse, which moves, he writes, “Swift as the hurled on high jerreed*” (251):

*Jerreed, or Djerrid, a blunted Turkish javelin, which is darted from horseback with great force and precision. It is a favourite exercise of the Mussulmans; but I know not if it can be called a manly one, since the most expert in the art are the Black Eunuchs of Constantinople. —I think, next to these, a Mamlouk at Smyrna was the most skilful that came within my own observation. (417; emphasis in the original)

Byron first explains the simile of the “hurled on high jerreed” by explaining this “favourite exercise of the Mussulmans.” But unlike some other notes where Byron merely documents and describes the reference, here he editorializes with a brief analysis of the sport, surmising that “I don’t know if it can be called a manly one.” In a deft move of a simple conjunction, “but,” Byron questions the notion of masculinity of the Turkish men of whom he writes. He explains his position, suggesting that it is, in fact, a sport perfected by neither man nor woman but by “the Black Eunuchs of Constantinople.” This androgyny supports Edward Said’s description of Orientalism as the nineteenth-century feminization of the East: it is represented as “passive, seminal, feminine, even silent and
supine” (138), opposed to the “ragingly masculine world of history and learning” (147) of
the West and contributing to what Makdisi has assessed as the “sense of displacement
between East and West” (156). I suggest, likewise, that the ideological, cultural, and
political displacement within the poem contributes to the textual displacement of the
reader navigating through the fragmented nature of the poem and its many perspectives.

A similar tension between text and paratext occurs regarding the portrayal and
perception of women in Byron’s Ottoman world. The poetic narrative and the notes alike
call into question the blatant disregard for women within the Oriental realm, and within
Ali Pasha’s realm, more specifically. Throughout The Giaour, it is clear that Byron was
troubled not only by the Ottoman imperial presence in Greece, but also by the Ottoman
culture of masculinity. In a pointed critique of the Ottoman culture of masculinity, Byron
questions what he takes to be their prevailing notion of women as merely the property of
brutal men:

Oh! Who young Leila’s glance could read
And keep that portion of his creed,*

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50 Interestingly—and in keeping with Said’s foundational reading of Orientalism as emasculation
—Ali Pasha is likewise feminized in many Western biographical accounts of him, as Kathryn Fleming
observes (135-45), as well as in Byron’s portrayals of him in Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage. In Canto 2 of
Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, Byron writes of the “man of war and woes” (554), Ali Pasha, and describes his
face in terms often associated with ideals of femininity that belie the bellicosity and malice harbored within
the man:
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace. (556-59)
Byron repurposes this description of Ali’s face in The Giaour, reversing it to reflect instead the eponymous
European hero as viewed from the perspective of an Ottoman native:
But in thy lineaments I trace
What Time shall strengthen, not efface
Though young and pale, that sallow front
Is scathed by fiery Passion’s brunt... (192-95)
In addition to the aspects of characterization and point of view illustrated here, the poetic relationship
between Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage and The Giaour requires further study, particularly the use of
annotation as a means of curation, intertextual commentary and, ultimately, of textual imperialism.
Which saith that woman is but dust,

A soulless toy for tyrant’s lust? (487-90)

Leila, as this passage conveys, is enticing. She is the object of desire and temptation for anyone who looks at her. And, as Byron writes, she more than just an object of desire; Leila is an inspiration to action: no one could behold her and adhere to the belief that “woman is but dust, / A soulless toy for tyrant’s lust,” Byron suggests. But rather than directly declaring that Leila is beautiful and would cause even the most devout man to stray from his misguided doctrine of masculine bravado—or so Byron believes—Byron couches his cultural criticism within the device of a rhetorical question: who could catch a glimpse of the woman and still believe that she is no better than dust? This rhetorical gesture of couched cultural critique elevates *The Giaour* beyond mere romance and storytelling and allows for Byron to engage in his own political commentary outside the confines of the annotations. 51 Byron also directly declares his disapproval of Ottoman gender politics by interpreting the perceived misinterpretation of women’s rights (or lack thereof) in seemingly misogynistic Islamic creeds. Within the note accompanying line 488, Byron explains this aspect of Islam as simply: “*A vulgar error*” (419n). He expands on this sharply worded response:

[T]he Koran allots at least a third of Paradise to well-behaved women; but by far the greatest number of Mussulmans interpret the text in their own way, and exclude their moieties from heaven. Being enemies to Platonics,

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51 Likewise, in the digressive second fragment of political commentary on the Ottoman Empire and the decline of Greece (lines 7-167), Byron relies heavily on rhetorical questions to drape the poetic veil over his political critique, layering question upon question in describing the current state of Greece.
they cannot discern “any fitness of things” in the souls of the other sex, conceiving them to be superseded by the Houris. (419)

Byron’s criticism in the poetic text may be hedged through his use of the rhetorical questions, but as this annotation indicates, his criticism in the paratext is most certainly not. Not only can the “creed” be reckoned as simply a “vulgar error,” but also those who hold it are “enemies” of reason if they read the Koran as indicating that women are merely “moieties” (and “well-behaved” moieties, at best)—objects to be divided, shared, and ultimately cast aside for the virgins of paradise (“superseded by the Houris”). Byron’s editorial voice attempts objectivity by presenting information both from and against the viewpoint of those he aims to discredit, while, at the same time, implicitly enforcing Western perceptions of the Islamic world as hypocritical, uneducated, and misogynistic.

Byron’s tone of censure in this note—the “vulgar” errors of the lusting tyrants, the determination to inaccurately interpret the Koran, and the inability to discern any value in women—should not be read as a wholesale critique of Islam. Although he may be critical of Islamic socio-political structures here, in other notes, Byron praises the aesthetics of Islamic religious practices. In one instance, he glosses the phrase “Alla Hu!” (734) as “the concluding words of the Muezzin’s call to prayer from the highest gallery on the exterior of the Minaret” (420n). He proceeds to explain the beauty of this religious practice: “On a still evening, when the Muezzin has a fine voice (which they frequently
Beyond explaining the context for this Arabic phrase, this note unsettles Eurocentric prejudices. The editorial voice of the notes has seemingly heard the “solemn sound of ‘Alla Hu!’” and therefore can speak to its solemnity and its beauty “beyond all the bells in Christendom.” This critical attention to the Eastern imagery in the poem functions as a cue to readers to recognize the original fragments of the poem, if we are to believe Byron’s editorial claim that “the additions and interpolations by the translator will easily be distinguished from the rest by the want of Eastern imagery” (423n).

In addition to the praise of the beauty in Islamic ritual expressed within the editorial framework of the footnotes, many lines of the poem portray stunning scenes of Islamic imagery—purportedly the original fragments. These lines immerse the reader in a cultural landscape that is distinctly Islamic and is characterized by beauty and joy. One such setting accompanies the Giaour’s pursuit of Hassan over the landscape where:

The Crescent glimmers on the hill,

The Mosque’s high lamps are quivering still

Though too remote for sound to wake

In echoes of the far tophaike,*

The flashes of each joyous peal

Are seen to prove the Moslem’s zeal,

To-night—set Rhamazani’s sun—

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52 It is interesting to note that this commentary on the Muezzin is the first and only footnote that Byron included in his first manuscript draft of the poem (Dep. Lovelace Byron 157, fol. 245; referenced with the permission of the Earl of Lytton). This note in the manuscript raises several questions: why did Byron choose to provide curatorial commentary on this part of the poem? How did the inclusion of notes progress from there? Exploration of the poem’s compositional history of annotation is certainly worth further exploration.
To-night—the Bairam feast’s begun—
To-night—but who and what art thou
Of foreign garb and fearful brow? (222-31)

This passage provides a vibrant specimen of Byron’s poetry, with its steady iambic tetrameter, consistent couplets, and rhythmic repetition of “To-night—” followed by the em-dash fragmentation. The imagery is also expressed in positive terms: the “Crescent glimmers,” the light from the “Mosque’s high lamps” quivers and yet is still; the martial sounds of the “tophaike” are “joyous” and “far,” removing any sense of pressing danger and instead indicate “zeal.” But the rhythm of this passage is disrupted when the lines shift suddenly from painting the cultural landscape to depicting the Giaour’s chase and posing the question that implicitly characterizes the Giaour as both foreign (Western) and fearful. Likewise, the trance that the reader is lulled into by the rhythmic repetition is broken with the call-out at line 225 and the accompanying gloss of “far tophaike*”:

“*‘Tophaike,’ musket. —The Bairam is announced by the cannon at sunset; the illumination of the Mosques, and the firing of all kinds of small arms, loaded with ball, proclaim it during the night” (417n). This annotation repeats many of the same ideas presented in the text of the poem: the illumination of the Mosques and the firing of arms in celebration, to “proclaim [Bairam’s feast] during the night.” The emotive poetic portrayal is contrasted by the dictionary-like exposition of the imagery within the poem.

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53 The structure of this passage echoes the pattern of repetition, fragmentation, and questions presented just a few lines earlier in lines 218-21:
A moment checked his wheeling steed—
A moment breathed him from his speed,
A moment on his stirrup stood—
Why looks he o’er the olive wood?—

Unlike the later lines referenced above, this passage demonstrates the Giaour’s actions rather than his person.
Byron’s notes both support and undermine, contextualize and destabilize, ensuring that the reader can never be fully immersed into the Eastern world of the Giaour and must thus remain conscious of the poem as an imitation.

Such a portrayal of the East as positive—even laudable—fits within Byron’s framework of textual imperialism in that the poem betrays a colonial mentality even though the poem is not pro-colonial in any literal sense. Moreover, *The Giaour* is certainly a fantasy about the Western “rescue” or a European re-colonization of Greece, as Saree Makdisi observes (*Romantic Imperialism* 205-06n; *Making* 152). However, it should be noted that the textual imperialism I remark on differs from Ottoman imperialism as well as British imperialism in that it is *material*—restricted to the page—rather than an applied, oppressive ideology. Nevertheless, the relationship between form and content and the treatment of Eastern ideologies and practices imparts Byron’s poetic project of textual imperialism. *The Giaour*’s imperializing footnotes succeed in their efforts of containment, even when relegated to endnotes in the fourth and following editions.

**Relocating Reader Expectations**

The material and ideological relationships implied in the juxtaposition of text (Eastern lore) with its paratext (Western categorization) parallel the rocky relationship between the modern and non-modern in *The Giaour*’s narrative and form. At the outset of the poem, Byron harnesses the technology of the footnote as a straightforwardly scholarly apparatus, explaining, for instance, that “The insect-queen of eastern spring, / O’er
emerald meadows of Kashmeer*” (389-90) refers to “*The blue-winged butterfly of Kashmeer, the most rare and beautiful of the species” (418n). Similarly, the image of a “Scorpion girt by fire*” (434) alludes “*…to the dubious suicide of the scorpion” (418n). In this model of annotation, Byron introduces the reader to the context of the poem, explaining the ecological and mythological significance of species found in the East: the Kashmeer butterfly and the desert scorpion, for instance. In so doing, he acts in the way that many scholar-poets have before him. Byron curates the artifacts of knowledge gathered during his eastern expeditions. Brian Nellist has suggested that, in The Giaour, Byron “considers the legends of the East under Western eyes, but then travels West to see its political intrigue and pettiness from a gaze requiring a grander, Eastern, perspective” (71-72). Thus, each note projects meaning onto the poetic lines by interpreting them for the readers. And, as the poem progresses, Byron allows his editorial voice of reflection to take precedence over that of curation or explanation; the notes emancipate themselves from their parent text as the narrative unfolds.

As they become emancipated from the poetic text, the annotations steadily become more essayistic in nature. There are fewer vocabulary glosses and definitions of allusions, idioms, or cultural practices and more anecdotal commentary wherein Byron paratextually places himself within the poem: its setting, compositional history, interpretation, and intertextual referentiality. Byron interprets the poetic text filtered through his own observations and experiences in the East. He provides accounts and anecdotes of events to which he was a witness and allows his presence in the paratexts to authorize the ethnographic details in the poetic text. He places himself within the
ethnography to personalize the political critique he provides (Elfenbein 13-15). As McGann observes in *The Beauty of Inflections*, Byron “wrote about himself, and … his books, like God’s human creatures, are all made in his image and likeness” (257; emphasis in original). This reliance on eye-witness authority indicates the value Byron saw in addressing the “much larger context of European affairs” while still inserting “his personal history” into the political history (*Beauty* 261). He positions himself as a cultural “insider,” so to speak, and provides narratives of his own experiences as a means of ethnographic documentation. But in his authorizing stance of “outsider-as-insider,” Byron still views the East through a Western perspective. Accordingly, he contributes to the larger trends of Orientalism prevalent during the early nineteenth century.

Byron’s notes also provide commentary on his revisionary process and the meaning created by calling attention to revision. In these more reflective notes, Byron presents the voice of a poet engaged in using the footnotes as a site for collecting and distributing knowledge, and then reflecting on that knowledge. For instance, in his gloss on “the jewel of Giamschid*” (479), Byron first simply explains the jewel as “*The celebrated fabulous ruby of Sultan Giamschid, the embellisher of Istakhar; from its splendour, named Schebgerag, ‘the torch of night;’ also, ‘the cup of the sun,’ &c.” (418n). But, in the fifth edition, Byron added the following: “—In the first editions ‘Giamschid’ was written as a word of three syllables; so D’Herbelot has it; but I am told Richardson reduces it to a disyllable, and writes ‘Jamschid.’ I have left in the text the orthography of
the one with the pronunciation of the other” (418n). With these two sentences, Byron emphasizes both the intertextual (or Benstock’s “multitextual”) and the dialogic properties of this poem specifically as well as of the footnote technology more broadly. But, the dialogism indicated here is not one of inter- or multitextuality or of readers’ engagement. Rather, the ethnographic documentation, orthographic explanation, and poetics referenced in this note illustrates Byron’s auto-dialogism—his myriad roles of composing, representing, and Westernizing Ottoman tradition in *The Giaour*. As the writer, here he also acts as a reader who then becomes an editor to curate the writer’s work for future readers. In this circular exchange, Byron takes on three salient roles of presentation, reception, and re-presentation.

Byron again showcases these three roles in the longest note of the poem, a 500-word note of reflection on the poem itself and on his own larger body of work. In glossing his description of “stern Taheer[’s]” (1076) intuition of Hassan’s imminent murder at the hands of the Giaour, Byron provides a lengthy commentary on the “superstition of a second-hearing” (421n). And, in what could be a simple documentation of this superstition, Byron offers an extended personal anecdote of his travels through Greece and Albania—much like his essays appended to *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* as endnotes—and even directly references these annotations in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. The meandering annotation includes a narrative of Byron’s travels through Eastern

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54 Byron is here referring readers to French orientalist Barthélemy d’Herbelot’s influential *Bibliothèque orientale, ou dictionnaire universel contenant tout ce qui regarde la connaissance des peuples de l’Orient* [Oriental Library: or Universal Dictionary Concerning all Knowledge of the Peoples of the East] (1697). d’Herbelot’s work had served as the standard reference for information regarding Eastern language, history, and ethnography throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Byron here is inviting readers to compare d’Herbelot’s entry on “Giamschid” (III.265) with that of English orientalist, philologist, and lexicographer, John Richardson, presumably in Richardson’s best-known work, *A Dictionary: Persian, Arabic, and English* (1777).
Europe with his Albanian servant Dervish Tahiri with an explanation of the latter’s belief in “second-hearing.” The lengthy and anecdotal nature of this note calls into question the complementary or authoritative function of this particular paratext. Indeed, Byron’s pejorative remarks on antiquarianism (“I thought he [Dervish Tahiri] was deranged into an antiquarian” [421n]) calls into question the very purpose of the notes themselves. While they seem to support an antiquarian-like poem, the notes also question the practice, even the sanity, of antiquarians. Whereas many of the other annotations are more objective (declarative statements of antiquarian discourse), this particular reflexive annotation unsettles the relationship between the text and paratext—likewise, between text and reader—regarding the perception of antiquarian discourse. This unsettling of the paratextual-textual relationship echoes the tension between scholarship and superstition addressed earlier, as well as the competing colonial and anti-colonial perspectives of the poem.

This particular note stands out from the dozens of other annotations in that it contains personalized and direct discourse, opposed to declarative statements or summaries of objective information found in most of the other notes. Read in conjunction with its prompting text in the poem (lines 1074-76) and in comparison with the other notes throughout the poem, this particular note offers the plainest example of Byron’s forays into textual collection. It also directly undermines his private claims to abhor annotation (at over 500 words, it is a very lengthy annotation) and to eschew collections (the note collects and displays the people, beliefs, and experiences gathered during Byron’s Eastern excursions). In addition to contextualizing Taheer’s “darkly boding
ear” (1076), the note’s extensive ethnographic details of people, places, beliefs, and snippets of vernacular phrases allow readers to more fully envision the setting and events described within the poem. With this travelogue-esque episode included in the poems’ notes, Byron enters the poem as more than merely an avid orientalist—as the documentary notes glossing lines of “Sultana of the Nightingale” (22) or “The loveliest bird of Franguestan” (506) might suggest. He enters here as more than simply the poet or possibly the remediator—as phrases like “I trust that few of my readers” (416n) or “I regret that my memory has retained so few fragments of the original” (423n) indicate.

Byron provides a dramatic dialogue between himself and Dervish Tahiri to provide a first-hand description of Taheer’s “darkly boding ear”: the phenomenon he calls “second-hearing,” which “fell once under [his] own observation” (421n). In these annotations, Byron repurposes the paratextual conventions of antiquarianism; he enters the poem and its curational commentary not as the collector or antiquarian, but as autobiographer.

Additionally, this note introduces another function of Byron’s footnotes: they serve as a place for authorial reflection. In the middle of the meandering note, Byron remarks, “On our return to Athens, we heard from Leoné (a prisoner set ashore some days after) of the intended attack of the Mainotes, mentioned, with the cause of its not taking place, in the notes to Childe Harold, Canto 2d” (421n). This comment is especially pertinent in determining how Byron utilized footnotes as an act of relocating the reader through reflection. Byron gestures outward from this poem, but he does not gesture to Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, or any of his sources on Oriental language and literature, as he does in several of the other notes. Rather, Byron places the reader of The Giaour
into his *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. He invites readers familiar with the latter to revisit the annotations and to connect the various pieces of the stories into a single, linear narrative of Byron’s travels; he invites readers unfamiliar with *Childe Harold* to read the poem and encounter its vast, essayistic annotations—and then, in response, to assemble the pieces of both poems into a single, linear travel narrative.

In order to make the poem’s fragmented nature and Orientalism tenable for readers, Byron repeatedly invites readers to join him in the narrative. He invites them to participate in the events of the story as well as in the creation of those events. The roles of author and reader become collapsed as the fragments are reconstructed, and the poem is composed dialogically as readers piece together the implicit and explicit intertextuality of the annotations. Byron actively asserts his agency and authority over the events in the narrative while relinquishing authority in constructing the narrative, placing that burden on the reader. Indeed, it is through the footnotes that readers, as Benstock observes, are “continually called to attention by the text and brought into collaboration with the author” (207).

In more explicitly Bakhtinian terms, the inclusion of notes indicates an artistic creation that beckons the reader to participate in the dialogic creation of meaning within the poem and its textual imperialism, uniting the “plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses” (6) represented in the poem and in its notes. The polyvocality is that of the subject culture: Ottoman, Greek, Muslim, and so forth. The syncretic or magisterial “voice” of the narrative is heteroglossic in this sense, much like the narrative voice of the novel in Bakhtin’s reading—it unifies and presents “the increasing
foreignness of speech as propriety,” according to Andrew Piper (80). The filtering of all these “voices” from multiple social locations through the voice of the narrator across both the text and paratext is an inescapable consequence of the work’s form. By providing the reader with agency in compiling the pieces of the narrative, the notes add to the polyvocality that the narrative conveys. But, in so doing, the polyvocality becomes increasingly monoglossic in that the notes rely on the reader to reassemble the poem into a largely pre-determined form. Ultimately, the poem’s narrative and meaning are inseparable from its material manifestation as textually imperial—even if thematically critical of imperialism.

Purposeful manipulation of paratextual conventions and tools like prefaces, dedications, epigraphs, signs of authorship, and, of course, footnotes—elements that “mediate the relations between text and reader” (Macksey xi)—can result in “the radical dislocation of readerly expectations” (Macksey xii). The reader is given what appears to be control over the narrative (deciding whether to read the annotations or to bypass them) even while the author exercises control over the text by illustrating an imaged relationship with an idealized reader, a relationship manipulated by and made most apparent in footnotes. The notes, in the terms of media theorist Jay David Bolter, indicate the “texture of possible readings” that “permit the reader to share in the dynamic process of writing” (9). In The Giaour, the reader shares the responsibility of compiling the poetic fragments into a cohesive whole. A colloquial analogy for this process lies in an Ikea bookcase: the poetic fragments are the boards, and the prose footnotes are the Allen wrench; it is up to the consumer/reader to reconstruct the pieces into a functional unit.
Textual Imperialism and Dialogic Reading

The kinds of annotations Byron weaves into *The Giaour* are representative of the larger trend of scholarly annotated narratives pervading the Enlightenment- and Romantic-era literary marketplace. Such manipulation and relocation can be determined as part of broader nineteenth-century trends of reevaluating genre and generic boundaries (Rajan and Wright 1). Byron’s paratexts do not engage in a curatorial relationship with their foundational texts or “remediate” them; his notes do not attempt to unite the disjointed voices of the narrative, as they do in Percy’s *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763), Owenson’s *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), and other similar, contemporary works. Instead, Byron utilizes the technology of marginal annotation as a way to present his version of Orientalism, both to document the cultural references and to reflect on his own experiences in Ottoman Greece. Byron’s union of fragmented poetic text and prose paratexts provides a comparative study of Ottoman and Greek culture while exploring the possibilities of genre and authority, pushing the boundaries of textuality and authority in narrative presentation. Byron’s study, in turn, contributes to the “turn toward more specialized and localized knowledges and practices” (Siskin and Warner 26) as evidenced in the preoccupation with and over-production of footnoted fictions and paratext-ridden poetry of the Enlightenment and Romantic eras.

*The Giaour* (which Byron glosses as meaning “infidel” [417n]) is an amalgamation of textual forms that reflect the deviance and unfaithfulness of the titular hero himself.\(^{55}\) Not only is the hero an infidel, the materiality of the text is also unfaithful

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\(^{55}\) One Turkish word for “infidel” is *gâvur*, often transliterated as “giaour.”
to any single poetic form: it is discursive, locating and relocating the reader between the fragmented narrative and the scholarly and anecdotal annotations. It is fragmented in form, non-linear in narrative development, neither entirely imitative of Turkish oral tradition, nor entirely an actual translation. The text of the poem is built around, and itself builds, the often-essayistic paratextual frames. In turn, the frames are “discordant and contradictory” (Makdisi, Making 161), collecting cultural relics and embracing antiquarian methodologies—despite Byron’s resistance against collection and antiquarianism. The notes attempt to explain the unexplainable, Westernize the Near East, modernize the un-modern, make fact out of fiction, and narrate an archive (or archive a narrative). Byron’s paratexts disrupt, relocate, and destabilize the text to the point where the text itself becomes subordinate to the paratext in an authorial-as-editorial act of textual imperialism.
While actual translations, collections, and remediations of traditional narratives
became commonplace in Enlightenment- and Romantic-era literatures, so did authorial
inventions of these forms, masquerading as tradition. Within these works, editorial
framing devices—footnotes, headnotes, elaborate prefaces, and so forth—also became
commonplace, serving as generic traits to imply a sense of tradition and authenticity
(Robertson 118-19). Like Scott, Coleridge, Southey, and many other contemporaries
working within such genres, Scottish author James Hogg (1770-1835) crafted pseudo-
ethnographic narratives that capitalized on the taste of readers eager for sensational
fictions. For instance, in prefacing his fictional “Translation from an Ancient Chaldee
Manuscript” published in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine (October 1817), Hogg writes
that “the present age seems destined to witness the recovery of many admirable pieces of
writing, which had been supposed to be lost forever” (89). Nearly a decade later, Hogg
published another recovery of lost writing, his curious The Private Memoirs and
Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824; hereafter referred to as simply Justified Sinner).
In this novel, Hogg draws upon the paratextual components associated with editorial
authorization and remediation. And, as he does with the forged “Chaldee Manuscript,”

56 Scholar Margaret Russett echoes Hogg’s sentiment of literary recovery and rediscovery in her
monograph on Romantic authenticity: “It has long been recognized that eighteenth-century Britain
abounded in sensational literary and cultural discoveries” (1).
Hogg presents the narrative as a found document (the titular “private memoirs and confessions”) framed by vast commentary provided by the fictional editor, along with an array of other paratexts—including an ostensibly authenticating facsimile of an excerpt from the sinner’s manuscript along with an extract of a letter first published in *Blackwood’s* in 1823 and signed by James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd.\(^{57}\)

Hogg’s novel is composed of individual, paratextual pieces that, when read together, form a more complex narrative than simply text on its own would provide. When approached through the lens of media archaeology, *Justified Sinner* beckons readers to disassemble the myriad paratextual components that frame the text and establish the novel as a whole, akin to the embedded pieces of a Russian nesting doll. This media theoretical interpretation invites us to “unsettle the question of the relationship between knowledge, information, code and power” (Chun 9). As an “umbrella for a collection of documents,” as Daniel Stout has recently described the novel’s construction (544), *Justified Sinner* presents a precise analogue with media theorists’ explanations of new media. Like new media today, it unsettles the material relationship among authority and information, found fragments and fiction, authors and editors, as well as authors and readers. Along with what I consider the main or center text itself of *Justified Sinner*—the framed fragment of the sinner’s memoir and confession—the paratextual components of the novel include: 1) the mock facsimile of the primary document from which the story is drawn, 2) the title page, 3) the dedication,  

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\(^{57}\) Because of the unorthodox narrative techniques in *Justified Sinner*, I refer to the fictitious editor of the editor’s narrative as simply “the editor.” I use “Hogg” to refer to the specific, historical author, and “the fictitious Hogg” in reference to the stylized caricature of himself that Hogg writes into the editor’s narrative.
4) the editor’s ‘authenticating’ narrative, and 5) the editor’s closing narrative, which includes an extract of a letter discussing the remains of a “Scots Mummy” signed by James Hogg and first printed in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* in 1823. Taken together, these frames attempt to blur the distinction between what is real and what is remediated.58

The book itself is playful. This playfulness of material self-awareness represents what media theorists Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define as “hypermediacy”: “a hyperconscious recognition or acknowledgement” by a text of itself as a text (38). Hypermediacy “asks us to take pleasure in the act of mediation…the logic of hypermediacy multiplies the signs of mediation and in this way tries to reproduce the rich sensorium of human experience” (14, 34). This language echoes Roland Barthes’ concepts of the pleasure of the text; Barthes theorizes that when a text is constructed in a way that incites active reader participation, it throws open literary codes and contracts and allows for the reader and writer to reverse roles with the reader taking an active role in de- and reconstructing the text. According to Barthes, this active engagement “wonderfully develops the pleasure of a text” (26). In other words, the act of responsible reading (active, sceptical, even sometimes ludic reading) leads to a unique pleasure in and of the text—a pleasure that stems from the moment when the reader experiences the text through the role of the writer. The pleasure of the text is play, and few works represent this play and pleasure better than Hogg’s hypermediated *Confessions*. Thus, drawing upon the influential scholarship of Ian Duncan, Peter Garside, and Penny

58 See Appendix B for images of each of these paratexts.
Fielding, I consider how the novel advocates for skeptical reading practices through its own preoccupation with print culture and readership. We must, as Alex Watson asserts, attend to “how readers—rather than writers—create meaning” and how “the meanings of texts are inseparable from their material manifestation” (1).

In this chapter, I demonstrate the complex ways that this book draws upon the culture of authorial masquerade promoted by Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine in order to utilize its materiality as an advocate for responsible—enlightened, sceptical—reading. That is, Hogg stresses reading through a lens that is part scepticism, part blissful abandon—to resist the urge of accepting at face value the spectacle provided in the gothic trappings of Confessions, but to enjoy the spectacle nonetheless. To do so, Hogg presents a complex and self-referential narrative that emphasizes the role of objectivity in the consumption of texts—or “proper investigation” in the words of the novel’s editor-character (171)—to indicate the need for responsible reading.

**Hogg’s Counterfeit Impersonation**

Despite its initial lackluster reception and long obscurity, Justified Sinner has gained significant popularity in current literary criticism; in fact, within the past 15 years alone, this novel has appeared in at least half a dozen new editions under different imprints, two of which are scholarly annotated editions. Hogg’s novel continues to gain status as one of the most popular books in current scholarship and criticism of nineteenth-

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century British literature, Scottish literature, conditions of authorship, and the history of
the novel—including material aspects of book history. *Justified Sinner* is a book often
read as attempting to capture many elements of Enlightenment editorial authority along
with Romantic genius; additionally, the story attempts to be understood as stemming
simultaneously from oral and written traditions (Fang 171; Oost 87; Fielding, Writing and
Orality 122).

Most scholarship on this bizarre book falls into two distinct and well-established
branches: first, discussions of the novel’s satire on Calvinism as a way of understanding
the politics of the Scottish Enlightenment, and second, discussions of the book as a veiled
allegory of the conditions of authorship at the turn of the nineteenth century. For some
scholars, including Ian Duncan (“Fanaticism and Enlightenment,” *Scott’s Shadow*,
“Sympathy”) and Douglas Mack (“Hogg’s Politics”), the novel presents a pointed critique
of philosophies of sentiment and sympathy; it reflects Hogg’s own political position and
views of his working-class roots grounded in Presbyterian traditions prevalent across
Lowland Scotland. For Peter Garside, Gillian Hughes, Daniel Stout, and Suzanne Gilbert,
*Justified Sinner* presents a way of understanding the politics of publishing in nineteenth-
century Edinburgh and navigates across models of authorship, such as tradition and
genius. Acknowledging these approaches to the novel, I position my inquiry alongside the
bibliographic scholarship and media-focused arguments of William St. Clair, Peter
Garside, and Penny Fielding. These critics, among others, have commented on the
various pieces comprising *Justified Sinner* and the reader’s responsibility for putting the
pieces together; the novel “is both literally and figuratively bound up with its own
processes of writing and publication” (Fielding, “The Private Memoirs” 135). Hogg incorporates a variety of paratextual framing devices that provide an alternately sincere and mocking commentary on both the primary narrative of Robert Wringham Colwan and upon the book as a material artifact portraying a record of tradition and the transmission of a tale. Interestingly enough, never have critics described these individual pieces “presenting” the text as a book (Genette 1) as paratextual devices. These devices merit greater consideration.

In this chapter, I consider the various devices both forming and framing *Justified Sinner*. I begin by considering the ways that Robert Wringham and the editor character both are preoccupied with print production and with responsible reading; I situate this preoccupation within the Blackwoodian culture of hypermediacy. I then step beyond the realm of *Justified Sinner* and place the novel within Hogg’s broader corpus of literary remediations of Scottish oral traditions in order to better ascertain the “authenticity effects” (to borrow Ian Duncan’s phrase) of *Justified Sinner*’s nested paratexts. Hogg, I suggest, capitalized on the vogue for remediated traditional narratives by purporting to remediate pieces of Scottish lore through the paratextual framing of the faux “found” fragment in *Justified Sinner*. Critically regarding the material properties of *Justified Sinner* provides insight into the tension between derivation and innovation running throughout Hogg’s novel. Therefore, this chapter’s inquiry into *Justified Sinner*—that “work of irregular genius” (“Review” 449)—sheds light on ways that Enlightenment- and Romantic-era authors manipulated media forms and obscured their authorial or
compositional roles to navigate between tradition and innovation in a book market enamored with paratexts suggesting both and neither simultaneously.

*Justified Sinner* provides a salient model for a bibliographic “network,” in the terms of Andrew Piper (25-26), that highlights the connectivity of readers and genres by showcasing “an engagement with the intense process of bookification” defining the early nineteenth century (101). It—like many other contemporaneous works in prose and verse featuring dense paratextual framing—represents a museum of sorts, remediating a found fragment and curating the fragment by framing it with paratexts authenticating the document and providing a necessary ethnographic context. On the surface, *Justified Sinner* mimics the material form—specifically the intricate paratextual framing—of published collections of traditional narratives popular in the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, such as Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), Walter Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders* (1802-03), even Hogg’s own *Jacobite Reliques* (1819). But because *Justified Sinner* is entirely a fiction, Hogg must wrap the primary narrative in an even thicker cloak of paratextual materials in order to obfuscate his identity as author, and even to veil his efforts as pseudo-editor.

*Justified Sinner* presents an integral part of the present inquiry into the symbiotic relationship between text and paratext within literary history. Through its reliance upon paratexts to frame and authorize the central text, *Justified Sinner* presents a twice-told tale of religious fanaticism and duplicity wrapped within an editorial frame that both presents the primary narrative and provides critical commentary upon it, at times even subsuming the central text entirely. Drawing upon eyewitness testimony, oral traditions,
and scholarly sleuthing through historical and judicial documents, the editor of *Justified Sinner* aims to authorize the fantastic account “of the rage of fanaticism in former days” (64). The editor’s opening narrative (appearing as a paratext) tells the family history of the seventeenth-century Colwans of Dalcastle: the unhappy marriage of friendly philanderer George Colwan to pious Rabina and the lives of their two sons, George Colwan and Robert Wringham Colwan (the latter is suggested to be fathered not by Colwan but by his namesake—and Rabina’s religious adviser—the Reverend Robert Wringham). George Colwan the younger is raised by his father and grows up to be a congenial fellow who, like his father, enjoys women, wine, and song. On the other hand, Robert Wringham Colwan is raised by his mother and Reverend Wringham to follow an extreme doctrine of Calvinist Predestination, wherein those predestined for salvation will reap great heavenly rewards, regardless of their lifestyle. Following complete separation as children, the two brothers meet in Edinburgh where Robert—relying upon his belief in his predestined justification of any action—begins tormenting his brother. The editor placidly narrates George’s murder witnessed only by a prostitute who identifies Robert and an unknown lookalike as the culprits. Robert disappears before his arrest, and the editor provides accounts drawn from oral reports and interviews before transcribing a scroll containing the titular “Private Memoirs and Confessions.”

Meanwhile, Robert’s memoir and confession (appearing as the central or primary text) recounts many of the same events, but this time introduces a new character, Gil-Martin, Robert’s darker self. This text describes George’s murder, which it seems that Robert committed while under Gil-Martin’s devilish influence. Robert eventually
separates his individual capacity for reason from Gil-Martin’s fanaticism, only to
discover that he has committed a string of gruesome murders throughout the Edinburgh
area. Robert exiles himself into countryside of southern Scotland where he writes his
memoirs, loses lucidity, and eventually commits suicide. Following Robert’s suicide, and
the inevitable conclusion of his text, the book returns to the paratext of the editor’s frame.
After marveling at the document—“What can this work be?” (165)—the editor describes
the paratexts and accounts for their material history: how the body and accompanying
scroll were discovered by a rural shepherd, identified in the text as James Hogg (169),
and how this Ettrick Shepherd had first drawn public attention to the body in a letter he
contributed to the August 1823 issue of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*. Following his
insertion of the epistolary extract of authenticity, the editor narrates his own ethnographic
research into the story—his travels to the Altrieve region to see the site of Robert
Wringham Colwan’s suicide first-hand. He does so both to satisfy his curiosity and to
verify his tale by appealing to the knowledge of “hundreds of living witnesses” (165) of
the narrative tradition. And because of the many authenticating frames offering specific
ethnographic details in *Justified Sinner*, the mediated narrative becomes real—or at the
very least, realistic.

To achieve this simulated reality in the materiality of *Justified Sinner*, Hogg relies
upon an intricate array of interdependent paratexts. Paratexts are an integral part of
making meaning within any text, but especially so within Hogg’s *Justified Sinner*. They
often work prescriptively to guide the reader through the narrative, in line with Genette’s
very definition of paratexts: they are a zone “of transaction: a privileged place of a
pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood and achieved—is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it...[to] influence how the text is received” (1, 7). Alternately, as in the case of *Justified Sinner*, paratexts can disrupt perceptions of reality. Readers of this novel must continually question, as Fiona Robertson states, “individual perception and the authority of the observer to explore the difficulties not just of approaching a traditional tale with the apparatus of historical enquiry, but also of any kind of narrative reconstruction” (92). Paratexts underscore this contract between the text and its readers: readers must more actively engage in connecting the seemingly disparate pieces to create a unified, linear narrative.

This contract is especially prominent—and problematized—in the playful genre of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century framed narratives; it is especially so in in Hogg’s *Justified Sinner*, with the way this novel inverts the expectations of text versus paratext, undoing the authentication implied by an editorial frame. Moreover, the content of these paratexts invites readers to read responsibly (that is, to read with skepticism, resisting the urge to accept at face value the spectacle provided in the gothic genre and other romance forms) by “expos[ing] the text’s incompleteness or imperfection” (Watson 5), or even its fabrication of fact in order to question the veracity of the presented events. Readers of this novel, as Robert Wringham Colwan also observes in his own narrative, must not be “too apt to read the wrong way” (72) by readily accepting a story at face value. Ultimately, and because of these paratexts, Hogg advocates for an enlightened readership in the age of romanticism: of finding pleasure and objectivity in reading across the
boundaries of cynicism and certainty, reason and romance, doubt and delight. Giving critical attention to the way the paratexts function as individual pieces within the larger whole sheds light on the preoccupation with print pervading the novel.

In other words, if read on its own in an un-remediated state, Robert’s scroll would convey a story vastly different from the one that Justified Sinner conveys in its entirety, because, as Genette has proposed, paratexts and the commentary they provide upon the text shape a reader’s interaction with the text. In fact, I suggest that the paratexts take precedence in presenting the plotline: somehow, the editor’s narrative simultaneously undermines perceived authority through definitive irony, mistrust, and mockery in the editor’s voice. The text becomes a paratext, and the paratexts become the text. At first, Justified Sinner appears to be little more than another novel rife with gothic conventions. However, upon further scrutiny, it becomes evident that this novel contains elements of a subtle and complicated satire upon critiques of the gothic genre. It does so by emphasizing the need for objectivity and rationality while attempting to sweep up readers with its rich storytelling. Due to its intricate framing, Justified Sinner’s awareness of its own material nature as print media is as much a part of the text as the story itself. The result of this tension is a mockery of gothic mockeries—a satire upon satire itself within a careful execution of paratextual prosopopeia: a “counterfeit impersonation,” according to George Puttenham’s The Art of English Poesie of 1589 (320n, 324).

It is clear through the self-aware paratexts composing the novel that Justified Sinner appears to mock its own existence simply by being aware of the multiple paratextual apparatuses that surround the “found” fragment at the heart of the story. The
intricate confluence of paratextual pieces establishes a circle of self-referentiality—a referentiality that “appeals to the reader to take entire responsibility for the imaginative and interpretive direction of the text” (Mei 61)—and collapses the roles of author and reader into a single body. The Facsimile points towards the text of the “found” fragment while the Editor’s Narrative refers back to the Facsimile and to the “found” fragment simultaneously. Likewise, the Editor’s Narrative embeds an “extract of an authentic letter” (165), pointing outwards to *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* while also gesturing inwards to the “private memoirs and confessions” by relating the information of the suicide and its accompanying lore yet again. Each paratext relies upon the others to tell the editor’s and the sinner’s intertwined stories (and stories about stories). I suggest further that the paratexts take precedence in presenting the plotline. The editor’s narrative simultaneously undermines perceived authority through definitive irony, mistrust, and mockery in the editor’s voice.60

This circuitous satire is most evident in the way the novel portrays the editor as an enlightened reader who becomes swept up in the romanticism of the sinner’s spectacular story: “What can this work be?…I cannot tell…if there were not hundreds of living witnesses to attest the truth of it, I would not bid any rational being believe it” (165). But the editor is able to recognize his awe, and he exercises his objectivity to go to the story’s source: “when this relation met my eye, I did not believe it; but from the moment that I perused it, I half formed the resolution of investigating these wonderful remains personally, if any such existed” (169). Ultimately, the editor finds the sensational

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60 Some scholars have recently addressed the use of irony in Hogg’s model of authorship. See Victoria Reid 48-64 and Thanisch and Thanisch 77-83.
narrative to be largely true, although he reserves his judgment on the supernatural nature of some events. Nevertheless, this revelation—stemming from his “proper investigation” (171)—justifies the editor’s wonderment and enjoyment in the story’s fantasy; and it thereby justifies the gothic genre by critiquing it. Justified Sinner is, again, a very satire upon satire.

As the author of the novel and creator of the fictional editor’s character, the actual author, James Hogg, also appears to advocate for objectivity and critical research. The editor models Hogg’s call for responsible reading by acknowledging his own original skepticism in the authenticity of the sinner’s memoir: “what can this work be?” (165). In addition to acknowledging his skepticism, the editor also demonstrates active research in determining the source and authenticity of the story. After voicing his skepticism over the sinner’s remarkable tale, the editor points readers to an even more remarkable account of events as described by James Hogg and published in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine. The editor presents the following imperatives to readers in order to inspire them to critically consider the narrative: “Attend to the sequel…take the following extract from an authentic letter” (165); and the editor is correct in calling the letter authentic in that it did appear in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine in August, 1823, despite its dubious claims to authenticity in Blackwood’s. The letter opens with an invocation of tradition similar to that in the editor’s own narrative opening the novel: “the little traditionary history…I have heard it likewise reported…thus far went oral tradition” (166-67). The letter then describes the strange set of circumstances surrounding the discovery of Robert Wringham Colwan’s body and his manuscript—including recounting some of the strange
occurrences surrounding Robert and his affinity with Gil-Martin, and the seemingly miraculous preservation of Robert’s body and clothing in his grave.

Following this letter, the editor remarks that “it bears the stamp of authenticity in every line,” but remains doubtful because he has “so often had I been hoaxed by the ingenious fancies displayed in that Magazine” (169)—a consideration likely referring to Hogg’s publication of the “Chaldee Manuscript” in the October, 1817 issue of Blackwood’s. Through the objectivity of the editor, Hogg asks readers to be skeptical—to resist taking at face value the antiquarian discoveries published in such periodicals—because even Hogg himself “‘has imposed as ingenious lies on the public ere now’” (169). So, demonstrating both curiosity over the sensational story and objective inquiry into the facts, the editor determines to go to the source. He gathers a small group of interested companions to travel to Edinburgh where he meets with a Mr. L–w, who directs them to Ettrick in order to meet with the author of the inserted letter inspiring the editor’s fascination with the tale, the fictional James Hogg himself. This fictional Hogg refuses to take part in the editor’s search, and the editor and his party hire the shepherd W–m B–e to take them to the site of the suicide’s grave. Peter Garside has identified Mr. L–w as likely referring to William Laidlaw (1780-1845), a distant, maternal relative of James Hogg and steward to Sir Walter Scott; Garside also supposes W–m B–e to refer to William Baillie, a local shepherd who had appeared in some of Hogg’s earlier rustic writings (“Notes” 250). The glimmer of reality here through the allusive names with which some contemporary readers would likely have been familiar is crucial to

61 For more on this document and its connection to Hogg’s later mock-editorial and mock-remediation efforts in Justified Sinner, see Fang.
understanding Hogg’s paratextual project. However, readers less familiar with the Blackwoodian ethos of hypermediacy and the playfulness of authorial personae would have a much more difficult time parsing out these veiled references from complete fiction. Thus, the narrative of the editor’s inquiry simultaneously establishes and undermines the authenticity of the fragment and frames. It is here where Hogg plays his hand of fiction and hypermediacy most clearly, beckoning the reader to fit together the pieces of his puzzle with utter enjoyment tempered with critical inquiry so as to avoid being “hoaxed by … ingenious fancies” or Hogg’s “ingenious lies.”

By the time of *Justified Sinner*’s publication, Hogg was already well-known as “the Ettrick Shepherd” throughout Scotland and lauded for his successful, rustic poetry and anthologies of traditional narratives and anecdotes. However, in the 1810s—the early years of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*—Hogg had a laughable persona cultivated for him by John Gibson Lockhart, John Wilson (aka “Christopher North”), and William Maginn, principle contributors to the magazine—who were, perhaps tellingly, never entrusted with the editorship of the periodical. Wilson, specifically, enjoyed casting Hogg into a role of the “Ettrick Shepherd,” a kind but uneducated poseur—a “carnivalesque exaggeration of Hogg as rural genius” (Duncan, “Introduction” xiv)—in his contributions to the magazine’s “Noctes Ambrosianae,” a series of fictional dialogues between a series of caricatured versions of Wilson, Hogg, and other members of the Edinburgh literary circle. Scholars have identified Hogg as the figurehead for the magazine’s establishment of fictional personas as part of the periodicals culture; Hogg, “through pseudonymity and anonymity, ostentatiously breaks the link between author and text” (Higgins 54). David
Higgins remarks further on this charade of identities, noting that “intoxicating textual
play, both within and between magazines” was one possible “positive consequence” to
Lockhart, Wilson, and Maginn’s appropriation of Hogg’s name for the “Ettrick Shepherd”
caricature (54). Likewise Thomas Richardson points out that Hogg certainly benefited
financially from the “Noctes,” as well as from the exposure of his works to a large
audience, “regardless of the actuality of his own authorship under the mantle of the
“Ettrick Shepherd” (187). 62

By introducing the caricature of himself within his own novel, Hogg caters to
reader’s experiences with the “Ettrick Shepherd” of Blackwoodian fame while subtly
pushing back against the conditions of Blackwoodian authorship as presented through the
framing of voices within voices, authority within authority, throughout the editor’s
narrative: Hogg’s fictional self in the role of editor, Hogg the contributor to Blackwood’s,
and the fictional Hogg or the “Ettrick Shepherd.” The editor’s closing narrative is rife
with irony, particularly regarding the identity of the editor, his informants, and the role of
authorship within a literary culture privileging the conscious cultivation of an authorial
persona. In fact, this culture was a big part of the literary circle contributing to

Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine from its beginnings in 1816. The culture of the
magazine was one of rollicking enjoyment in storytelling, described by author Mary
Russell Mitford as “‘a very libellous, naughty, wicked, scandalous, story-telling,

62 Higgins also points out the reverse: “Hogg was also aware of its negative side, especially given
his appearances in the Noctes Ambrosianae as the often comic figure of the Ettrick Shepherd. He found this
act of appropriation difficult to accept: even as it brought him into the Blackwood’s fold, it marked him out
as different from the journal’s more gentlemanly contributors” (54). On Hogg’s dealings with Lockhart and
Wilson, see also Richardson, “Introduction” xvii-lxx. For an account of Hogg’s own cultivation of a
similarly rustic but less pejorative persona through his contributions to Fraser’s Magazine, see Bock
249-51; Fang 171; Miller 115; Ian Duncan, “Authenticity Effects,” 95.
entertaining work”’ (qtd. in Morrison and Roberts 2) promoting an intricate network of author-text, author-reader, and author-author relationships.63

Thus, we might understand the caricatured depiction of Hogg as an ironic embracing of the simple, rustic “Ettrick Shepherd” invented by his fellow Blackwoodian literati, as well as an attempt to deliberately mislead further from deducing the actual identity of the author—or of the central and authorizing role of editor, as he is acknowledged in the 1828 intended reissue and posthumously published excerpts from the novel. By citing his previously published letter and presenting the caricature of himself as both rustic and deliberately misleading in his directions to the grave, Hogg fully embraces the pleasure of the text; he invites readers further into his fiction—“to regard it as a game” (Robertson 123)—by conflating what is remediated with what is real. In this remediation, Hogg beckons readers to experience the text in a way that Barthes later describes as the ‘abrasions’ that a reader imposes ‘upon the fine surface’ of a text, of reading and rereading some passages, skipping others, looking up from the page, dipping into the text again, and even re-enacting the actions of the writer himself (Barthes 11-12). It is through this complex interactivity that the reader can find pleasure, as Barthes does, while contributing to making meaning within the text by collapsing salient roles of writer/reader.

Most important to recognize in Hogg’s subversion of authorship and authority is the introduction of the fictional Hogg. The inclusion of this shadow of the actual, historical Hogg stresses the need for responsible reading by weakening the distinctions

63 For more information, see Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts, eds., Romanticism and Blackwood’s Magazine: “An Unprecedented Phenomenon.”
among the roles of authors, editors, and characters as voices of authority—and even as fictional inventions. The metacommentary and self-awareness of even characters within its pages highlights yet again the ways in which *Justified Sinner* is a book caught up in its own bookishness. The confluence of narrative voices and unique intersection of authorial personae further indicate the ways in which *Justified Sinner* is a book caught up in its own bookishness: the novel’s awareness of and attention to materiality is as much a part of its narrative as the convoluted plotline of confession is. In other words, *Justified Sinner* presents a secondary (possibly even a tertiary) narrative, conveyed through the paratexts, of the world of books and the realm of publishing as the novel launched a new phase of its history as a book. In fact, much of Robert’s commentary upon the materiality of text can be read as analogous to the materiality of *Justified Sinner* itself. Robert provides extensive commentary on his preparation of the manuscript for publication. He desires to publish his confessions as a “religious parable such as the *Pilgrim’s Progress*,” but the publisher advises against this. Instead, the publisher suggests that he “make it a pamphlet, and then if it did not sell, it would not cost me much; but that religious pamphlets, especially if they had a shade of allegory in them, were the very rage of the day” (152-53). Here again, the parallels between Robert’s commentary on his publication and branding efforts and those of James Hogg with *Justified Sinner* itself are unmistakable: the branding and choices of generic categories, the monetary output versus income dependent upon sales, and the engagement with a literary form that was “the very rage of the day.” Like Robert’s search to engage with the literary vogue, Hogg, as
mentioned earlier, sought to engage readers’ interests in sensationalist literary
discoveries.

Additionally, both Robert and the editor acknowledge the role that paratexts play
in creating literary deceptions. The editor remarks on the physical properties of the
“found” fragment—it is “a printed pamphlet” and a “little book” (173). He further
comments on his preparations for publication, citing his choices regarding the inclusion
of the facsimile: “The printed part ends at page 153, and the rest is in a fine old hand,
extremely small and close. I have ordered the printer to procure a fac-simile of it, to be
bound in with the volume” (174). Robert provides similar media-aware commentary in
describing his memoirs and confessions. He states precisely what the Ettrick Shepherd,
the editor, and the real Hogg all later declare in their own deceptions: “should any man
ever read this scroll, he will wonder at this confession, and deem it savage and
unnatural” (101). Hogg (the Ettrick Shepherd), in his letter to Christopher North,
certainly wondered at the confession, as did Hogg the editor of Justified Sinner; thus, we
might determine that Hogg (the author) calling out the deception of the found fragment is
an act of hiding the ruse in plain sight, so to speak, as part of the deception itself. Such
playful, meta-commentary requires a Barthesian reader who can exercise scepticism and
playfulness simultaneously.

Robert also demonstrates a keen eye for analyzing the layout of a page of text,
again drawing attention to the deceit and duplicity that can arise from material
manipulation. When he first meets Gil-Martin, Robert finds him reading a book that
“seemed a Bible, having columns, chapters, and verses, but it was in a language of which
I was wholly ignorant, and all intersected with red lines and verses” (85). In fact, this passage (ignoring for a moment the dark connotations of Gil-Martin’s devilish nature) can be read in comparison to the material qualities—the parts and subparts—of Hogg’s own novel. Gil-Martin’s book resembles a Bible, but it is not; *Justified Sinner* resembles a found fragment, but it is not. Penny Fielding has interpreted this metacommentary on print production through an analogy of spying and the early-nineteenth-century culture of espionage (“Approaches” 135-36). I, however, understand this focus on textuality and paratextuality shared between Robert Wringham Colwan and *Justified Sinner*’s editor as indicative of James Hogg’s own awareness of the importance of a text’s material nature in achieving authorial masquerade—or paratextual prosopopeia.

*Justified Sinner* embraces its own materiality through the mock-remediation of a purportedly oral traditional narrative framed by the paratextual forms that compose the majority of this book. Looking to the form and function of the paratexts framing this novel provides a useful entry point into examining how Hogg operated within the established form of the novel to launch a new phase of this genre. Furthermore, this examination illustrates how he drew upon the contemporary vogue for framed narratives while advocating for healthy readerly skepticism.

**Responsible Reading and Reader Responsibility**

As he had been doing for nearly two decades before publishing *Justified Sinner*, Hogg straddled the division between oral and written—tradition and innovation—through his editorial commentary on his tales, both traditional and invented. Specifically, in
Justified Sinner, this division is highlighted through Hogg’s documentation of the twice-told tale’s transmission and history of production and dissemination. The editor proclaims the events leading up to the Memoirs and Confessions as belonging to tradition. To bolster this assertion, the editor presents three salient appeals to tradition within the first two paragraphs alone: “It appears from tradition…to tradition I must appeal…It is well known” (4). In the opening and closing frame alike, the editor presents a written artifact that relies upon the oral authentication of the events presented in the narrative. His various annotations frame “an original document of a most singular nature” (64), akin to the authenticating gestures of editors of ballad collections and authors of gothic novels, who rely on uniting fragments with their paratextual commentary. After recounting the fantastic history of Robert Wringham Colwan and Gil-Martin, the editor concludes his contextualization and authorization of the “found” fragment, asserting that “this is all with which history, justiciary records, and tradition, furnish me relating to these matters” (64). He concludes his editorial narrative at the end of the book, again stating that the details in the fragment “corresponds so minutely with traditionary facts, that it could scarcely have missed to have been received as authentic” (175). Hogg’s opening paratexts suggest ways that readers should understand his role as editor: the details in the story correspond with details retained in tradition; therefore, the fragment is real.

Hogg further emphasizes this authenticity of the central text by drawing upon the words of the “fragment” itself for verification. The editor writes in the closing narrative, that has “ordered the printer to procure a fac-simile of it [the found manuscript], to be bound in with the volume” (173). The result is the facsimile placed as the frontispiece of
the publication. This facsimile highlights the gothic overtones running through the memoirs and confessions. Hogg draws upon the macabre diction often found in gothic literature, describing “trials,” “horrors,” “chasms,” and providing visceral images of “the horrors of hell.” Of course, the reader learns through the primary narrative that these are more psychological than physiological events, but at the outset of the novel, that distinction has not been established. At this point, the facsimile exists to entice the reader and to authenticate the text by presenting a wholly unedited rendition of the sinner’s narrative. More importantly for the remediation implied within this novel, the facsimile emphasizes the mock-remediated nature of the novel and introduces the reader to the text’s hypermediacy right from the outset.

Indeed, the self-aware and self-referential nature of the facsimile is itself used for authentication. The facsimile does not directly appeal to tradition as the editor’s frame repeatedly does. Instead, it implicitly authenticates the traditional origins of the narrative by suggesting that it comes from something real and referring readers to a specific page in the text—yet, interestingly, the handwriting of the facsimile does not resemble scripts common in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Individually, this paratext merely implies the origins of the narrative by mimicking the orthography of a first-hand account of a storyline attempting to be woven into Scottish lore; but it also undermines these implications by presenting a distinctly anachronistic orthography. Similar insular gestures exist in a wide range of editorial commentary upon collected narratives, gothic novels, and other remediated forms prominent in the Enlightenment and Romantic eras, showcasing the hypermediacy across a “variety of fascinating activities in literature of the
period” (Watson 4). This hypermediacy-as-authentication is plainly evident in the extensive headnotes and endnotes accompanying Hogg’s own body of works of remediated narratives and poetry inspired by local Scottish lore.

Hogg was well versed in providing editorial gestures towards tradition in prefacing paratexts, working to distance himself from the authorship and ownership of the narratives. For example, in *The Mountain Bard* (1807)—a two-part collection of original “Ballads in Imitation of the Ancients” and traditional “Songs Adapted to the Times”—Hogg also provides inter-referential commentary to authenticate his rendition of Scottish folklore, as discussed in the Introduction. Hogg’s authorizing anecdotes function like *Justified Sinner*’s facsimile: it provides an authenticating gesture and represents the event in Scots dialect, implying the connection between the primary, remediated text, and the paratexts Hogg provides as the frame. Not only does he convey the narratives themselves; he also presents paratextual materials to tell yet another story to support the fantastic events of the narratives, and to guide readers through them. But it is left up to the reader to read responsibly: to draw the connections and to accept or reject the self-authentication of the text and paratext.

It is also up to the reader to accept or reject the anonymity presented on the novel’s title page. Indeed, the information provided on *Justified Sinner*’s title page is sparse but significant (Figure 4.1).
THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS

AND CONFESSIONS

OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER:

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF:

WITH A DETAIL OF CURIOUS TRADITIONARY FACTS, AND
OTHER EVIDENCE, BY THE EDITOR.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, BROWN,
AND GREEN, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCXXIV.
Hogg implemented titular and generic labeling conventions in his contributions to the small but significant genre of literature featuring ethnographically inclined and often misleading frames. Genette points out that the declarations of the editor’s commentary present the “illocutionary force of its message” by announcing the editor’s “intention, or and interpretation” of his remediation efforts and curational intentions (10-11). Nevertheless, we must realize that a book’s title and title page are themselves relatively arbitrary and malleable. Genette even suggests that a title page is “an artificial object, an artifact of reception or of commentary” (55-56). The artifice and malleability of titles and title pages is, in fact, one key point in the tension between authenticating and discrediting the narrative of Justified Sinner. After the novel’s initial commercial failure, Hogg attempted to re-launch the novel, based on assertions of success among his acquaintances. He wrote to William Blackwood in August of 1828 that a “Mrs Hughes insists on the Confessions of a Sinner being republished with my name as she says it is positively the best story of that frightful kind that was ever written.” He directs Blackwood to “buy up the remaining copies as cheap as you can and make an edition of them for a trial” (The Collected Letters 300). The trial edition was to be published under a revamped title, The Suicide’s Grave. Edited by J. Hogg, in effort to rebrand the poorly received confessions.64

Interestingly, no extant copies of the full text of Hogg’s novel bearing the revised title page have been found; book historians surmise that printing a new title was perhaps a way to distribute unsold copies, or perhaps to simply humor the desperate Hogg

64 Peter Garside has calculated that “of the 1000 copies published in June 1824, more than half remained unsold two years later” (“Three Perils” 58); he further estimates that one bookseller’s ledger records how “only five copies were sold between June 1825 and June 1826” (59). From these dismal sales, Hogg earned a mere £2. William St. Clair’s quantitative analysis of printing and sales data of this novel supports Garside’s estimates (St. Clair 222).
Nearly a decade later, a heavily stripped down version of Hogg’s narrative was included in the fifth volume of the posthumously published *Tales and Sketches of the Ettrick Shepherd* (1837). For this repurposing of the story within an anthology, editors—but not Hogg himself, since he had died two years previously—removed nearly all the descriptions of religious fanaticism, despite the fact that these descriptions are the very essence of *Justified Sinner*. The editors then affixed a new title, closer to the novel’s original title: “The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Fanatic.”65 This malleability of a title page is precisely why readers must be healthily skeptical, as Hogg illustrates that the same exact story may be repurposed and rebranded by merely having a new title affixed to it.

The original title page emphasizes the role of textuality within the narrative by emphasizing narrative forms: memoirs and confessions. Conversely, the intended new title page of 1828 downplays the role of tradition (Figure 4.2). The story is no longer clearly situated as a remediated narrative authenticated by editorial frames. Instead, the new title of *A Suicide’s Grave* paired with an epigraph taken from William Cowper’s “Verses Subjoined to the Bill of Mortality for the Town of Northampton, 1788,” Stanza 8, calls attention to the mortal (rather than the moral) aspects of the storyline: the suicide, graves, grief, and bones. In addition, the original and revised title pages for Hogg’s novel lend different importance to the role of author versus editor.

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65 See Duncan, “Introduction” xvi; Mack, “The Suicide’s Grave” 19-21; Garside, “Introduction” lxxi-lxxii; and St. Clair 610.
THE

SUICIDE'S GRAVE;

OR,

MEMOIRS

AND

CONFESSIONS OF A SINNER.

Edited by

J. HOGG.

Sad waste! for which no after thrift stone's—
The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin;
Dewdrops may deck the turf that hides the bones,
But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY JAMES CLARKE AND CO.

1828.

Figure 4.2. Title Page for James Hogg, The Suicide's Grave
Hogg’s revised title page directly identifies himself as the editor of the document (it is unclear if this is intended to refer to the actual or the fictional Hogg), but still bears no indication of any author. Conversely, the original title page identifies an author—simply the sinner himself—and implies the role of an unnamed editor as one who validates the narrative by framing and consequently authorizing the narrative “with a detail of curious traditionary facts, and other evidence.” Hogg himself remains anonymous; or, at least, he attempts to do so. Despite Hogg’s attempts at anonymity for the sake of entrenching his novel deeply within the conventions of publications of curated traditional materials, many—if not all—readers readily ascertained his identity as author as soon as the book was published. One reviewer for *The Literary Gazette* writes, “it is…curious and interesting; a work of irregular genius, such as we might have expected from Mr. Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, whose it is” (449). Another reviewer remarks in *The Ladies’ Monthly Museum*, that “Mr. Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, is the author, or editor, or both” (106).

The various titles and arguably misleading title pages of *Justified Sinner* present an especially rich inquiry into the way paratexts direct a novel’s storyline, its reception, and interpretive possibilities. Indeed, as one critical reviewer aptly put it, *Justified Sinner* “exemplifies the old proverb—*Fronti nulla fides*—that is—‘Put no confidences in Title-pages’” (*The Ladies’ Monthly Museum* 106). This assessment gestures towards the fact that each title and piece of information on the title page of *Justified Sinner* lends varying emphasis to the role of authoring versus editing in the novel’s construction. Additionally, these titular elements draw attention to the materiality of the novel and the inauthenticity

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66 See also Russett 5-7, 15 and Robertson 92-93.
of Hogg’s remediation due to the malleability of the title and attribution of authors/editors, as a handful of scholars have observed (Fang 171; Mei 66; Miller 112; Oost 87). Unlike title pages which function to announce—sometimes spuriously—the appellation, form, and origins of the text contained within the work, prefaces (and postfaces) function “to ensure that the text is read properly…to get the book read and to get the book read properly” (Genette 197; emphases in original); prefaces draw a reader’s attention to the author’s verbal artistry and emphasize the novelty or traditionality of a work while verifying or denying its authenticity (199-200). It is, perhaps, unfair to stake a claim towards the authentication effects of *Justified Sinner* based solely on the novel’s title page; after all, we are warned against “judging a book by its cover.” But in analyzing the editor’s narrative, similar authenticating and discrediting gestures become readily apparent, akin to Byron’s self-contradictory antiquarian collecting in *The Giaour*.

The aforementioned dictum to “put no confidence in title pages” applies likewise to claims to editorship. This dictum is indicative of what some scholars have noted as the “Enlightenment scepticism” permeating Hogg’s novels and tales recounting elements of the supernatural (Tulloch 123; McCracken-Flesher 175). Throughout the paratexts of *Justified Sinner*, but most notably in the closing frames (the intertextual fragment of the *Blackwood’s* letter and episode with the Ettrick Shepherd), Hogg plays upon the characteristic culture of *Blackwood’s*: the narrative playfulness and authorial aliases or anonymity—of “experimentations with editorially-governed ‘third person’ narrations” (Garside, “Hogg and the Blackwoodian Novel” 9). The closing portion of the editor’s narrative frame features not only the editor’s enlightened search for the truth of
the suicide’s grave, but also indications of how easy it can be for authors and editors to manipulate and obscure their roles in producing a text, even to create entirely false identities. The Blackwood’s letter of 1823, quoted at length in the beginning of the editor’s closing narrative, is of particular importance in breaking apart the convoluted interplay of real and invented identities, and the caution against putting faith in claims to authorship and editorship.

This letter, signed by James Hogg, is notably addressed to Christopher North, the fictional character of the magazine’s “Noctes Ambrosianae” and pseudonym of Blackwood’s contributor John Wilson. The address to North is of particular importance in establishing the authorial charade by highlighting the intricate interplay between real and invented. We can presume that the signature of “James Hogg” on the letter refers to the actual person, not an invented persona because of a letter that Hogg wrote to William Blackwood, the magazine’s editor, in August of 1823, that, “I send you…the particulars of a curious incident that has excited great interest here” (Collected Letters 193). These “particulars” were then published in the magazine two months later and, as has been established, the novel building upon this facetious framework followed shortly thereafter. The blurred line between real personages and pseudonyms underscores Hogg’s subtle argument for responsible reading.

In the letter, Hogg shifts between his real self, as indicated by the letter to Blackwood, and his Ettrick Shepherd caricature, and he enters into a conversation with the invented North. He describes a recent personal encounter between himself and North: “Dear Sir Christy, You will remember, that, when you and I parted last at Ambrose’s, the
following dialogue passed between us” (“A Scots Mummy” 188). This interaction can best be described as an intricate deception and part of the larger ruse Hogg attempts to pull off with *Justified Sinner*. He continues describing careful particularities of his interaction with North, remarking on “the head of the narrow entry, immediately under the door of that celebrated tavern…standing with our backs toward each other” (188). These details are almost heavy-handed in their attempt to establish a particularity of time and place, indicating to the most skeptical of readers a desperation to authenticate this event. Hogg closes the letter to North by suggesting grimly that North might try to reproduce the experiment—“you have nothing more to do than hang yourself in a hay rope” (190)—and then abruptly shifting from this morose suggestion by cordially signing off, “I remain, my worthy friend, yours very truly, James Hogg” (190). With the shifts between real identity and invented persona and between sarcasm and sincerity, this letter conveys Hogg’s satire upon satire and the accompanying case he mounts for responsible reading.

Furthermore, after the publication of *Justified Sinner*, Hogg again writes to Blackwood, indicating his hopes for the success of his literary masquerade and commenting on how he presumes that Lockhart, Wilson, and Maginn might receive the novel: “they will not notice them at all as mine but as written by a Glasgow man by all means… This will give excellent and delightful scope and freedom” (*Collected Letters* 202; emphasis in original). In the complex ruse of unidentifiable authors and editors that is *Justified Sinner*, Hogg hoped to free himself from the limits of his “Ettrick Shepherd” caricature, as well as to free his novel from the limits of linear narrative and the
ethnographic authentication that historical tales had implicitly required up to this point. To do so, he attempted to capitalize on his “Ettrick Shepherd” caricature by penning something very far removed from the rustic style and Scots dialect often presented in his appearances in the “Noctes.” In this letter, Hogg identifies his pursuit of deceiving readers—specifically his colleagues at Blackwood’s—and writing something that appears as if it were written by an enlightened, inquisitive, and therefore responsible “Glasgow man” and not the rural, unenlightened, irresponsible “Ettrick Shepherd.”

For the purposes of this analysis, I suggest that it does not matter if Hogg was being sincere in his August 1823 address to Blackwood that the “curious incident” was, in fact, an actual, exciting, and interesting incident, or if Hogg was attempting to deceive Blackwood, or even if Blackwood was in on the literary ruse. What does matter is that the actual James Hogg conveyed this information—not the “Ettrick Shepherd,” not the invented editor, but the historically verifiable author himself. For nearly a year, Hogg had dedicated himself to establishing the veracity of the suicide’s grave: from sending Blackwood the “particulars of a curious incident” in August of 1823, to bringing the fictional Christopher North in on the ruse in August 1823, to publishing Justified Sinner in June 1824. Hogg, essentially, is a dedicated literary con artist whose con of Justified Sinner fell short. In a complex layering of invented authorial and editorial identities, Hogg pulls off a “long con” in the words of grifters—an act of deception that requires the con artist to dedicate himself to the scheme over a period of time in order to lay the groundwork necessary for achieving a successful con. By conning his readers, Hogg aims
to educate them in the their responsibilities as enlightened, skeptical-yet-playful readers who should put no trust in title pages.

**Material Confessions of Deception**

Hogg’s novel is one of dualities, divisions, and denials. Its material presentation is engrossed in dualities and divisions, just as the narrative focuses on its doubly-narrated events and doppelgangers. In fact, as one scholar has astutely observed, the novel is “preoccupied with doubling, writing, language, death, and their intersections” (Pope 233). Additionally, it spans, as Daniel Stout has observed,

- the divide between British modernity and native Scottish culture; between an Enlightened editor and a superstitious memoirist; between the rational and the ecstatic; between cultural alienation and cultural rootedness;
- between the abstracting work of dissemination and an organic scene of imminent production; and between the imperialist collector of artifacts and the native artisan. (537)

It is also, as I have shown in this chapter, a novel that navigates between derivation and innovation of material forms in order to muddy the identity of author and to project an agenda for active, skeptical, and responsible reading by requiring the reader to participate in piecing together the paratextually presented narrative—to harness the pleasure of the (para)text.

*With Justified Sinner,* Hogg played to his strengths as a collector and compiler of traditional Scottish narratives (Bold and Gilbert 18; Petrie 266-68; Tulloch 127), utilizing
establish editorial conventions in innovative ways. It is clear through the paratextual frames of Justified Sinner that Hogg was well versed in the conventions of publications of traditional narratives. Hogg himself was a reputed practitioner of collecting and remediating Scottish lore; in fact, his most successful publications were his compilations of traditional Scottish prose narratives, essays, and poetical sketches based on established lore. He published several collections of traditional and original works, including The Mountain Bard (1807), The Forest Minstrel (1810), The Brownie of Bodsbeck (1817), Winter Evening Tales (1820), The Shepherd’s Calendar (1829), and Altrive Tales (1832).

It is apparent that Hogg borrowed from textual conventions of traditional narrative collections to situate his novel within a distinct subset of the framed-narrative form popular in the Enlightenment and Romantic eras (Russett 13-49; Robertson 1-20; Fielding, Writing and Orality 8-11). While Justified Sinner shares many material similarities with oral tradition-to-print forms, it resists decisive classification by setting the tension among narrative, editorial, and ethnographical authorities in the foreground of the fiction. And, while Thomas Percy celebrates primitivism in Five Pieces of Runic Poetry, James Hogg cautions readers against such celebration with the skepticism underlying the remediation and reconstruction of Justified Sinner’s paratextual components.

But upon close—perhaps even skeptical—examination, the textual duality in Hogg’s novel becomes increasingly apparent. In Justified Sinner, Hogg turns generic conventions on their head, utilizing established editorial conventions in playful ways, while also drawing upon the intricate backstory of authentication and deception begun
nearly one year previously. Moreover, a discernible tension pervades the novel, arising
from the paratexts that work at cross-purposes to simultaneously authenticate and
discredit the “found” fragment. The title page and portions of the editor’s narrative aim to
authenticate an act of remediation; meanwhile, the other paratextual materials in *Justified
Sinner* discredit the actuality of events and undermine the authority of the various
speakers. The complexities that arise from navigating among text, paratext, author, and
editor beget a difficult mediation among these—and potentially other—sets of
dichotomies. Hogg’s compositional form positions his book at the intersection of
Enlightenment and Romantic narrative forms, derivation and innovation, authenticating
and discrediting, sincere and playful narratives, text and paratext. Suffice it to say that the
hypermmediacy of the novel’s many parts unsettles its form and function.

The trope of hypermediacy in novels and of fictional editors actively taking part
within their story’s plotline was a common narrative device throughout the eighteenth
century and into the nineteenth. Reaching back to Miguel Cervantes’ *Don Quixote de la
Mancha* (1605-15; translated into English 1612-20), the British incorporation of this
metafictional device can be seen most readily in the establishment of gothic and
sensationalist novels, as in Horace Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto* (1764); Mary
Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) and *The Last Man* (1826); and Jane
Loudon’s *The Mummy!* (1827). Other less gothic iterations of this trope include Henry
Fielding’s *Tom Jones* (1749); Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* (1771); Maria
Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent* (1801); and many of Walter Scott’s Waverley novels
(1814-32). In addition to these works, the longstanding tradition of fake editors as a
fictional narrative device extends to periodicals of the era as well, including Hogg’s own association with *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* where many of the contributors relied upon aliases and invented personae to publish purposefully playful literary “deceptions.” Simultaneously, while being rooted in the tradition of paratextual remediation of edited collections, *Confessions* illustrates an emerging chapter within the history of materiality in the novel genre more broadly, anticipating twentieth-century narrative trends as seen in the works of Vladimir Nabokov, Flann O’Brien, David Foster Wallace, and other postmodern writers.

In *Justified Sinner*, Hogg adopted the generic and textual conventions of metacommentary and embedded frames and utilized these tropes in abundance (i.e. editorial frames set within frames set within frames, and so forth). He used paratexts in ways that seem familiar and established, but still this work stands apart from its contemporaries as a work of fiction purporting to record historical fact—to connect invented events into a larger record of local, Scottish tradition. *Justified Sinner* embraces its own materiality through the mock-remediation of a purportedly oral traditional narrative framed by the paratextual forms that compose the majority of this book. Reading Hogg’s novel in this way prompts a reconsideration of the histories of authority and the ideological and material relationship between authorship and readership. As we critically examine a book so very aware of its own bookishness, we, like the novel’s reviewer, should remember, “*Fronti nulla fides*—that is—‘Put no confidences in Title-pages.’”
Throughout this dissertation I have excavated the layers of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century print materials in imaginative literatures. My aim in the epilogue is to unpack the connection between advancements in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century mediality—including the mediation (and remediation) of ethno-historically inclined paratexts—and twenty-first-century digital humanities. To do so, I draw upon Jerome McGann’s *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web*, Jay David Bolter’s *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, and John Miles Foley’s *Oral Tradition and the Internet: Pathways of the Mind* to address non-linearity, networks, and re-directed reading across text, paratext, and digital arenas. Thus, instead of merely wrapping up the broader discussion of ethno-historical paratexts in Enlightenment- and Romantic-era imaginative literatures, I present a brief re-reading of the various works considered throughout the dissertation. I do so in order both to summarize the main concepts of narratives-as-archives argued throughout the chapters, and to push these concepts forward to new research possibilities in the emerging methodologies of digital humanities by highlighting what I consider to be the redirective agency of the four works considered in the preceding chapters.

**The Digital Analogue**

I have illustrated the redirective agency of paratexts in my discussion of James Hogg’s *Justified Sinner*, the interdependent paratexts composing the novel, and their
implicit, and often contradictory, contract with the reader. But, while Hogg’s paratexts establish what I have termed “a circle of self-referentiality” (or hypermediacy), their redirective, referential nature posits them squarely under the umbrella terms of hypertextuality or hypermediacy. In this discussion, I divorce “hypertext” from its conventionally digital usage and rely upon this term to encapsulate the concepts of redirection, multitextuality and textual networking, and the readerly agency of navigating the information pathways presented across the paratexts. Hypertext, according to Bolter, “presents itself as an intensification, a hypermediation of the older medium [of print]” (43); it is acutely aware of itself and of its role of remediating print.

I suggest further that the literary footnote is an equally intense hypermedium that likewise emphasizes readers’ processes. To illustrate this analogy, I ask you to imagine, if you will, opening up your web browser to the Wikipedia entry for “The History of the British Isles” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_British_Isles). Far from being a simple chronology of British history, this web page is full of hyperlinks, inviting you to stray from the host narrative of the encyclopedic entry and to discover further details on “the establishment of Celtic languages in the islands,” for instance, or the “huge expansion of Britain’s colonial empire, mostly in Africa” in the nineteenth century. If you succumb to your curiosity (or perhaps it is to the temptation of the redirecting hyperlinks, given the desire-laden language of the archive), you will be redirected away from the host narrative and down a rich rabbit trail of encyclopedic inquiry: “Celtic languages,” for instance, might then direct you to “Asia Minor” as you delve into the link between migration patterns and linguistic history; you might also choose “revitalisation
movements” to read about the various twentieth-century efforts to minimize linguistic extinction. Each of these hyperlinks will then take you to myriad other web pages, each likely more remote from the initial narrative of “The History of the British Isles” than the last. The options are dizzying, to say the least. Like authors’ associative uses of redirecting footnotes in fictions, hypertext is associative: “because we think associatively, not linearly, hypertext allows us to write [in the same ways that] we think” (Bolter 42). Thus, it is up to the reader to decide how to reconstruct the nodes of visited webpages into a cohesive unit of information, akin to the dialogic reading-as-writing processes of the ethno-historical footnote in imaginative literature.

With such readily available pathways of information, we are inarguably saturated with access to it in both the eighteenth and twenty-first century, in both print and electronic forms, as Clifford Siskin and William Warner assert:

saturation means that more people have more access to the technology [of knowledge work] … it indicates that, strangely enough, direct access is not required—that even those lacking or refusing access are transformed by the ubiquitous presence of the technology. This is the tale now being retold by the early twenty-first-century advent of electronic and digital media. (19)

Even if we do not possess the information, we possess access to it. Likewise, readers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gained increasing access to a wide range of information and knowledge through imaginative literatures, even in the more limited form of footnotes. These works of fiction in both prose and poetry—when containing editorial commentary of pedagogical and encyclopedic intent—offer what Andrew Piper
has called “thick reading.” This “thick reading” stands in contrast to the “fluid reading” offered by non-annotated (or “plain text” in a twenty-first-century vocabulary). This thick, associative, hypertextual reading “dramatize[s] a space of vertical reading of multiple variants that overlay one another in complex ways” (Piper 93-94). I offer here a thick reading of the texts considered in the previous chapters and unpack the inter- and multi-textual properties of their ethno-historical paratexts.

Because the ethno-historical paratexts discussed in this dissertation work not only to contain, curate, and critique the texts they support (or “make” in the words of Genette), we might also posit that the eighteenth-century footnote is a medial precursor to the twenty-first-century hyperlink. Both forms—the literary footnote and the hyperlink—promote a decisively multiform and multilinear reading experience; both invite readers to take an active role in shaping their reading experience by either engaging in the outward redirection by the notes/links or choosing not to; and both exist in and contribute to distinct inter- and multi-textual archives of information. With both the footnote and the hyperlink, we are invited to actively engage in the intricate networks of information and imagination.

This multilinear construction of notes with notes and of the overall poetic narrative (text plus paratext plus inter- or multi-text) can “mime the way we think,” according to Foley (17, 19), due to the malleability of the narrative and its non-linearity in the movement from text to paratext and back to text. But how might this redirecive agency of the literary footnote and other editorial paratexts translate into today’s digital realm and the networks and pathways provided by the Internet? In heavily annotated and
framed narratives such as *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763), *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), *The Giaour* (1813), and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), we can observe how the primary text interacts with the paratexts much in the same way that hyperlinked text interacts with the text from which it was linked: the “elements and the structure are independent of each other” (Manovich 38), but the association of meaning for both text and paratext is entirely interdependent in its “aim to give the [reader] efficient access to information” (Manovich 215). Language like this—showing the link between readers’ movement, knowledge work, and textual elements—renders it plain to see how the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works function in a manner remarkably similar to digital media, thereby further supporting the parallel media properties of old media and new media.

Hypermedia today is recognized as providing “users with the ability to create, manipulate and/or examine a network of information-containing nodes interconnected by relational links” (Halasz and Meyer 30). In comparison, footnotes provide readers (at least those with large libraries) with the ability to refer to networks of information offset in the margins, and these footnotes contain information that can influence the meaning and interpretations of the narrative. In other words, the interactivity between the “callouts” in the text directs the reader to the margins to view a new portion of the narrative that is ideologically connected but structurally separate from the poetic text (Genette 321). Reading or not reading the accompanying editorial annotations provides the reader with different experiences (or “versions”) of the narrative. And, “by following the link,” as Lev Manovich writes—or engaging in the paratextual narrative of the
headnotes and footnotes—“the user retrieves a particular version of a document” (38).
The referential and interactive form of footnotes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century
print media aligns with the forms of access to information in digital media today.
Therefore, giving critical attention to the referential or interactive relationship between
text and paratext in media forms of the past allow us to better understand ways of
composing and reading in media forms of the present.

Now, in looking more closely at the texts considered in this dissertation, we might
consider, for instance, how Thomas Percy aids readers in understanding culturally
specific metaphors by directing them to consult Paul-Henri Mallet’s *L’introduction a
l’histoire de Dannemare* (also titled *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poesie des
Celtes* [1756]):

See these and more instances in a very elegant *French* book lately
published in *Denmark* and often quoted in the following pages, intitled
[sic] *L’introduction a l’histoire de Dannemare* Chev. Mallet, 4to. Which
contains a most curious and entertaining account of the ancient manners,
customs, religion, and mythology of the northern nation; besides many
striking specimens of their composition. A translation of this work is in
great forwardness, and will speedily be published. (ix-x)
The translation Percy references is presumably his own *Northern Antiquities* (1770) with
its expansive textual network stemming from further redirective commentary in his
translator’s preface as well as his editorial annotations—including directing readers to
*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in unpacking the distinction between “Gothic” and
“Celtic” (“Translator’s Preface” xxxviii)—and rectifying the collapse of this distinction made in *Runic Poetry*—and to *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* in editorial glosses to references to Icelandic verses, including his translation of Regner Lodbrok (I.121n).

Similarly, Sydney Owenson directs readers to further, scholarly sources through her footnotes. And, as mentioned in Chapter two, 10 of the 80 footnotes where Owenson directly cites outside sources contain text drawn directly from the footnotes in those sources. For example, her lengthy quotation of Charles Vallancey’s *Collectanea de rebus hibernicis* on the historical link between mythologies and place names is itself drawn from one of Vallancey’s footnotes. Readers with access to Vallancey’s text will find that Vallancey, in turn, directs readers outward to the eighteenth-century German theologian “Baugmarten’s Remarks on the English Univ. Hist. vol. ii. p. 121” (viii) for more general information on the historical link between mythologies and place names. Page 121 of Siegmund Jakob Baumgarten’s *A Supplement to the English Universal History Lately Published in London* (1760) refers readers to the “Chronologia Scythica” in eighteenth-century German Classicist and Sinologist Theophilus Siegfried Bayer’s *Opuscula ad historiam antiquam* (1760). Bayer’s catalogue of ancient history cites further historiographical works in its footnotes, and the redirection and textual networking continues. The collation of knowledge a reader can gain upon accepting the authorial/editorial invitation to see these sources furthers these authors’ epistemological and ethnocultural projects. But this knowledge is gained only when the reader (albeit one with a limitless library) engages in the hypertextual nature of these authors’ annotations—that is,
the dynamic, multitextual and recursively redirective properties of such ethnographic paratexts.

This recursive redirection (footnotes citing sources that cite further sources, and so on) is likewise apparent in Byron’s annotations in The Giaour. Like Percy, Byron directs readers to his own poetic works and reflections in his citations as well as to more scholarly sources, similar to Owenson’s methods. But whereas Percy cites himself relatively objectively, Byron is more subjective in his approach to self-citation. In the 500-word essay on antiquarianism, reflection, and Albanian superstition that I have unpacked at length in Chapter three, Byron writes, “On our return to Athens, we heard from Leoné (a prisoner set ashore some days after) of the intended attack of the Mainotes, mentioned, with the cause of its not taking place, in the notes to Childe Harold, Canto 2d” (421n). Upon turning to Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, Canto 2, the reader finds the prompting poetic text romanticizing Grecian culture, the loss of which is lamented in The Giaour: “But most the modern Pict’s ignoble boast, / To rive what Goth and Turk, and Time hath spared” (II.100-101). The lines’ accompanying annotation begins by addressing the famed Elgin Marbles and Lord Elgin himself. This annotation on the poem is accompanied with a further annotation upon the annotation providing more personal, less ethnographic, reflections upon Byron’s journey through the Levant, reflecting upon the sites he visited. In the midst of his description of Colonna, he references the intended attack later referenced in The Giaour:

In our second land excursion, we had a narrow escape from a party of Mainnotes, concealed in the caverns beneath. We were told afterwards, by
one of their prisoners subsequently ransomed, that they were deterred
from attacking us by the appearance of my two Albanians: conjecturing
very sagaciously, but falsely, that we had a complete guard of these
Arnaouts at hand, they remained stationary, and thus saved our party,
which was too small to have opposed any effectual resistance. (Childe
Harold 91n)

The astute reader will not only make note of the intertextuality between The Giaour and
Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage; following this shared episode in Byron’s reflexive
commentary is another redirective citation—a text-based “link,” so to speak: “Colonna is
no less a resort of painters than of pirates; there ‘The hireling artist plants his paltry
desk, / And makes degraded Nature picturesque.’ (See Hodgson’s Lady Jane Grey,
&c.)” (Childe Harold 91n)—this work cited being Francis Hodgson’s Lady Jane Grey: A
Tale in Two Books with Miscellaneous Poems in English and Latin (1809). 67 Byron cites
extensively beyond his own corpus, directing readings to the works of William
Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson, d’Herbelot, and English anthologist Henry William
Weber’s three-volume Tales of the East (1812). Weber, in turn, directs readers also to
Johnson’s Rasselas as well as to John Hawkesworth’s Almoran and Hamet (1760) for
greater information in unpacking the British representation of Eastern imagery in an early
engagement of what has come to be known as Orientalism (Weber 1.lxi). From this
hypertextuality, we can gain an idea not only of what Byron read while composing The

67 Byron omits a line in his quotation to create a pithy couplet rather than maintain Hodgson’s
rhyme scheme. The excerpt from “Lines on a Ruined Abbey in a Romantic Country” actually reads:
The hireling painter plants his paltry desk;
Views the vast wreck of a demolish’d world,
And makes degraded nature picturesque (14-16)
Giaour; but also of how Byron envisioned his fragmented imitation of Turkish oral tradition fitting into his own corpus as well as within the broader canon of British written literature. The scholarly references—and even the more reflective self-citations—direct readers to further works and further commentary, thereby underscoring the multitextuality inherent in footnoted fictions and narrative archives.

And, of course, Hogg’s paratexts in Justified Sinner are actively directive, redirecive, and misdirective, as I discuss at greater length in Chapter Four. But instead of gesturing outward to the vast network of texts like many of his contemporaries have done, as I have shown, Hogg’s layered paratexts gesture to a mock-multitextual network: one created and contained within his novel and its bibliographic history. But this mockery of textual networking and hypermediacy is the very essence of Hogg’s novel, and accordingly the hypertextuality of Justified Sinner should be read in line with the sincere practices of authoring, editing, and reading discussed above.

Ultimately, the inter-, multi-, and hypertextual annotations of Percy’s, Owenson’s, Byron’s, and Hogg’s works interrupt the literary reading experience, presenting the hypermediacy of the poem by drawing attention to the scholarship contained within the verse. These authors-as-editors’ notes provide readers with greater interpretive possibilities by gesturing outwards from the text and providing access to the humanistic element of history through anecdotes and applications. These authors’ paratexts work to establish authority for the narrator via an editor’s commentary, to set a tone for interpretation—even telling the reader how to read specific passages by pedantically pointing out allusions or references to other texts or cultural events—and to educate
readers by filling in the historical and ethnographic records of the narratives with scholarly information, such as names, dates, and lists of events. Such paratexts provide an associative construction of the narratives they accompany, directing readers from the primary text of the literary work to the paratexts with key ethno-historical, geographical, and political terms. Upon inquiring into these terms further, the reader will be directed to further sources, and so forth, until an intricate tapestry of information, interpretation, and imagination is woven across time and texts.

Furthermore, what this (arguably anachronistic) hypertextual reading indicates of these footnotes, as well as of ethno-historical paratexts more broadly, is that these authors and authors-as-editors were acutely aware of the textual networks in which they were working. The result of including these ethnohistorical paratexts is—in addition to the curation of a textual museum or the establishment of an archive as discussed previously—is a pathway through these textual networks at a time when the “information superhighway” of the twenty-first century was but a rugged footpath. And, what the brief mapping of the textual networks of the four works under discussion here indicates, is that the scope of the networks contributing to these narrative archives is about as limitless as the “archive of archives” (McGann 71), the Internet, is today. The dynamic archival, multi-textual, and fluid generic properties of footnoted fiction anticipate the associative and interactive reading of hypertext in today’s digital realm.
Conclusion

I have argued throughout this dissertation that many footnotes and other editorial apparatuses within narrative poetry and prose fiction hold singular importance in literary history because they not only allow poetry and prose to transcend classifications of form and genre; they also establish the text in which they appear as a text-based museum, archiving a collection of traditions, ideas, and verbal artifacts. It is especially within the types of texts addressed in these chapters—the ballad collections, real or purported translations of traditional narratives, and historically informed novels—where paratexts prevail. Hence, we can observe numerous paratexts of a distinctly ethno-historical intent (that is, an intent to document and domesticate the other) prompt the main texts to become an archive: a collection of verbal artifacts given deeper meaning through the paratextual commentary.

The increased attention to digital humanities over the past decade has prompted new inquiries into ways of reading and writing during the Enlightenment and Romantic eras—a time when our “old” media of print culture were once new. The analogy between anxieties over the current shift from print to digital production and consumption and Enlightenment- and Romantic-era anxieties over the burgeoning of print production and mass readership has become commonplace. Narrative theory and book history are no longer seen as adversarial approaches to literature but as complementary. Thus, interpreting creative, fictional narratives as an archival space through the union of text and paratext, oral and written, author and audience, provides a fresh approach to studies of the novel and narrative poetry in both literary criticism and book history. British
literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries offers an especially rich archive for exploration, in part because it constructed itself as an archive to begin with, as I have shown. Moreover, the collapse of generic distinctions and periodization offers bold new ways for re-conceiving the ways we define and categorize texts based on their time of inception, aesthetics of presentation, and evidence of authorial intervention.

Footnotes specifically, and paratexts more broadly, work to contain, critique, and ultimately curate the works that they frame: they render narratives as archives. Reading ethnographic paratexts in this way—as well as reading the author as curator—invites us to rethink how we define and categorize texts based on their time of inception, aesthetics of presentation, and evidence of authorial intervention. Once we harness the implications of these narratives’ function as archives, we might further theorize the annotation and authorial and authorial-as-editorial commentary pervading Enlightenment- and Romantic-era literary texts. This theorization can pave the way for new and nuanced critical conversations about curatorial and archival usages of paratexts, reading technologies, and the relationships between authors, readers, and texts as material artifacts, especially within digital production today. Finally, giving greater consideration to the material manifestations of knowledge work in these imaginative literatures can allow critics to navigate the division between form and content and between media history and literary analysis in the study of British Literature.
—Appendix A—

Percy c.7, fols. 3-11: “The Incantation of Hervor”

The Incantation
of
Hervor the Daughter of Angantyr.

From
The Islandic Original in the Hervarer Saga:
as translated by
Dr. Hickes.

See his Antiqua Literaturae Septentrionalis Oxon. 1705. folio.
Tom. 1. pag. 193.
It is also printed in Dryden’s Miscel. 12mo 1716.
Vol. 6. pag. 387

N.B. the Hervarer Saga, whence the following poem is
extracted, is an old Islandic History, the author & date of
which are not known, only that it is in general believed to
be of very great antiquity. It records the achievements of
Hervor, a celebrated Northern Heroine, as also the exploits
of her ancestors and descendants, in Sweden &c and other Coun-
tries of the North.

It was printed in a thin folio volume at Upsal in 1672,
with a Swedish version and Latin notes by Oleus Virelius.—
It contains many other curious pieces of Runic poetry and
seems tolerably complete & intire, yet we learn from Dr
Hickes [Tom. 2. p.311.] that in the royal Library at Stock-
holm is an ancient MS copy of this book much more intire and perfect.

Advertisement

Andgrym the grandfather of Hervor, was prince of
a part of Sweden now called Smalind he forcibly carried away out of Russia
Eyvor the Daughter of Snaflurlama, by whom he had
twelve sons; whereof four were Hervandur, Hiorvar-
adur, Hranic?, and Angantyr. —These twelve brethren according to the pervading custom of those times followed Piracy. In one of their expeditions they landed in the territories of Hialmar King of Biarmland in Ghulemarck?, and a short battle ensuring they all lost their lives; Angantyr fell the last of his brethren, having first with his own hand slain their adversary Hielmar. They were buried on the field of battle with their arms and it is at their tombs that Hervor, the daughter of Angantyr, who had made a voyage hither on purpose, makes the following invocation.

*[Being still unanswered she wonders that her father & uncles should be so mouldered to dust that nothing of them remains and adds]*

Notes

1. N.B. The Northern Nations held their ancient runic verses in such reverence, that they believed that merely by their means, provided they were uttered with great emotion of mind, without any other magic rites, they could raise the ghosts of the deceased; especially if they had worked themselves into a firm persuasion, that it would happen according to their desires.

   Accordingly Hervor in the first strophe or stanza calls upon her father to watch & deliver to her his sword. —This not succeeding in the next place she adjures him and his brothers, by all their arms, the shield &c to answer. —*[Being still disappointed she adds] as it were by way of imprecation

   Tuo sie ydur ofa
   shich Oleus Vierelius thus interprets
   May it be with your bowels
   As if they were preyed upon by fire & snakes
He proposes he knows not what is mean by
   Manra-mornid
& borrows the above interpretation from a similar passage in another piece, viz
   Alla quelie eitor usr
   Inrm rifia oc beata bal
   Neme suerdid sehir mier
   Ta mit randa jolna mal.
   May the poison of serpents & noxious fruits
Torment you all within your ribs
   Unless you deliver me the sword adorned with you.
[Vid. Olaus Verelius ad Hero. Sag. pag. 100. &—]

But Dr Hickes hath hit upon a solution of the difficulty
the result of which is the interpretation given in the trans
lation. Tom. 1. pag. 198. Note.

3* It was customary with the Northern Nations to bury the dead under
   a mound of earth but I know that any author mentions that they choose to do it
   at the roots of some trees thus in the Hist. Indeed one instance of such a practice in the (illegible)
   In the Hist. of Snorri Thurleson we have ^makes mention of the following a beautiful
   fragment of an ancient runic poem, which may be thus from
   but seems to be of too particular to be applicable to proved.
   —The eastern kings contended together with violent fury
   that the when they hanged the sons of Yngvorn hanged the generous
   practice king on a tree.
   was
   general.
   And there on a promontory is that ancient tree
   From On which the dead body was suspended
   Where the promontory called Strammeyerness? divides the bay there

Hervor
   1Awake, Angantyr, Hervor the only daughter
   of thee and Suafu doth awaken thee.
   Give me out of the tomb the hardened sword
   Which the 2dwarfs made for Suafurlama.

Hervadur, Hiorvardur, Hurani and Angantyr
With Helment & coat of mail, and a sharp sword
Which shield and accouterments and bloody spear
I wake up all under 3the roots of trees.*

   Are the Songs of Andgrym, who delighted in mischief
Now become dust and ashes. Can some of Eyvor’s sons
Now speak with me out of the habitations of the dead
Hervadur, Hiorvardur!

   So may you all be with in your ribs
As a thing that is hanged up to putrefy among insects
Unless you deliver me the sword which the dwarfs made
   * * * * * * * and the glorious belt
5. This he says to prevent his daughter from insisting any longer on his delivering up the sword, which is foresees will be destructive to his posterity

4 Tirfing.] It was usual with great warriors to distinguish their arms, & especially their swords by particular names  
Ol. Ver. pag. 49.

all on fire; and ni [sic] a flami: and the following words are song out of the tomb.]

Angangyr
Daughter Hervor, talk of spells to raise the dead
Why does thou call so. ²Wilt thou run on
To thy own mischief? Thou are mad & out of they senses
Who are desperately resolved to waken dead men
I was not buried either by father or other friends
Two which lived after me got ⁴Tirfing
One of whom is now ⁵possessor thereof.

Hervor
Thou has not tell the truth. So let Odin
Hide thee in the tomb, as thou has Tirfing by thee.
Art though unwilling, Angantyr,
To give an inheritance to thy only child.

6. It was usual with the Northern Nations to inscribe magic characters on their weapons to prevent their being dulled or blunted by evil arts, as also to give them a keenness & strength which nothing could resist  
Ol. Ver. pag.101.

Angantyr
I will tell thee Hervor what will come to pass
This Tirfing will if thou dost believe me
Destroy almost all thy offspring
Thou shalt have a son, who afterwards
Must possess Tirfing and many think
That he will be called Heidrek by the people.

Hervor
I do by enchantments make
That the dead shall never enjoy rest
Unless Angantyr deliver me Tirfing

* * * * * Hialmar's *

Dangerous to shields, the same of Hialmar.

Angantyr

Young Maid, I say, thou art of manlike courage
Who dost rove about by night to tombs
With spear engraven 6 with magical spells
With Helmet and Coat of Mail before the door of our hall.

2* By Duegar or Dwarfs the ancient Goths &c did not mean human Creatures defective in size or stature, but a distinct race of beings, a kind of lesser daemons, who inhabited the rocks & mountains were remarkably expert at forging weapons which were proof against all force or fraud. —Our notion of fairies seems derived from the opinion of Runic source:— Only the Dwarfs in the ancient Celtic Mythology performed nearly the same functions, nearly with the gigantic Cyclops in that of the Greeks.

See Olaus Ver. p. 44. 55. Dr Hicks. tom. 2. p.

Hervor

I took thee for a brave man, before I found out your state
Give me out of the tomb the workmanship of the dwarfs
Which hateth all coats of mail.
It is not good for the to hide it.

Angantyr

The death of Hialmar lies under my shoulders
It is all wrapt up in fire
I know no maid in any country
That dareth take this sword in hand

Hervor

I shall keep & take in my hand
The sharp sword if I may obtain it
I do not think that fire will burn
Which plays about the fight of deceased men

Angantyr

O conceited Hervor, thou art mad
Rather than thou in a moment sh'dst fall into the fire
I will give the sword out of the tomb
Young maid and not hide it from thee

[Then the sword was delivered into the hands of Hervor, who proceeds thus]

Thou dist well thou offspring of Heroes
That thou didst send me the sword out of the tomb
I am now better pleased, O Prince, to have it
Than if I had gotten all Norway.

Angantyr
False woman, thou dost not understand
What thou speakest foolishly of that, in which
Thou dost rejoice: For Tirfing shall
If thou wilt believe me, maid, destroy all thy offspring.

7* The original words are Ulfa greiner, which literally signifies “A Morsel torn from the wolves.” This is an Islandic Phrase for a dead body. Ol. Ver. p. 102.

Hervor
I must go to my Seamen.
Here I have no mind to stay longer
Little do I care, O Royal friend
About what my sons may hereafter quarrel.

Angantyr
Take and keep Hialar’s bane
Which thou shalt long have and enjoy
Touch but the edges of it, there is a poison in both of them
It is a most cruel devourer of men.

Hervor
I shall keep and take in hand
The sharp sword which thou hast let me have
I do not fear,7 O slain Father
About what my sons may hereafter quarrel.

Angantyr
Farewell daughter, I do quickly give the
Twelve men’s death: of thou can’st believe
With might and courage: even all the goods
That Andgrym’s sons left behind them.
Hervor

Dwell all of you safe in the tomb
I must begone and hasten hence
For I seem to be in the midst of a place
Where fire burneth round about me.

Finis.

I would have the Notes printed separately at the end of the piece, in the order in which they are numbered:

1. Awake] The Northern Nations &c
2. the Dwarfs] By Dwegar or Dwarfs &c
3. The roots of trees] It was customary &c
4. Tirfing] It was usual &c
5. One of whom is now possessor of] It was usual with great
6. magical Characters] It was usual with &c
7. the original words] O slain father] The original words &c

Finis.
PERCY C.7, FOLS. 26-27: "THE FUNERAL SONG OF KING HACON"

The Funeral Song of King Haco.* *See the End
Composed by Tyrindur the Scaldic. [Or Celtic Poet]
[From Snorro Sturlson’s Hist. of the Northern Kings, published in Swedish Gothic & Latin by Perringstkiold Stockholm 1697. fol. p. 163]

A very ancient piece of Celtic Icelandic Poetry.

Gondul & Scogul [the Goddesses of Destiny]
Were sent by Thor* to chuse among the kings Nations.
[One] of the race of Yngorn
Who sh’d go with Odin to inhabit Walhalla* *The Mars of the Celtic

*Sc. Haco
They found the Brother of Biorno* putting on his coat of mail
They found that excellent king ready to stand under his banner
The enemies fell: the sword was brandished
When was beginning the time of conflict.

The slayer of promises* conjured+ the inhabitants of Haleyg *sc. Haco +ie. prevailed on them by intreating to fight under his banners

He conjured the inhabitants of the Isles: he went to the battle
The renowned Chief had a gallant retinue of Northern Men
The Destroyer of the Danish Islands* stood under his helmet *Sc. Haco

The mighty sprightly Chief had [just before] cast away his arms: he had put off his coat of mail:
He had thrown them down in the field, a little before the battle began.
He was playing with the sons of renowned men, when he was compelled to defend his kingdom.
He stood The gallant king [now] stood under his gilded Helmet.
Then the Sword in the Hand of the King cut he brasen coverings* *sc. The brasen armour of his Enemies

[As easily] as if it had only divided water:
The Spears clashed together: the shields were broken.
The arms resounded against the skulls of men.

The Arms of Thor*, the arms of Bogone were trampled underfoot
The skulls of the warriors of Norway were secured with strong coverings
They joined battles in the Island Storda
Kings broke down the shining fences of shields, the stained them with human blood
*This means no more than Martial arms. Like the Martia Tela of Virgil.

The swords waxed hot* in the wounds [in the wounds] distilling blood
The long shields inclined themselves over the lives of men
The wounded body fell under upon the mountain promontory of Swords
The deluge from the Spears* ran down the shores of the Storda

*NB. The original saga “burnt in the wounds” ardebant: the Gothic periphrasis here for swords is, “Vulnurum ignes.”
*The deluge from the Spears is a paraphrasis for blood. vid. orig.

The wounds tinged with blood were mingled with the shields,*
There they played in the battle contending for might spoil
The blood was rapidly flowed in the slaughter storm of Odin
Many men perished thro’ the flowings* from the sword.

*The literal expression, “were mingled with the sky of the loud of arms”
*Sc. thro’ loss of blood

Now sate the Kings begirt with swords
With broken & maimed shields,
With Coats of Mail pierced thro’ with darts
The Host had [now] no thoughts [of] visiting the Hall of Odin* *i.e., No thoughts of death.

[When ^lo!^] Gondul leaned on the Hilt of her Sworn & thus bespake them
Now the Assembly of the Gods is augmented
For they invite [the King: they invite] Haco
With a great multitude to a banquet* i.e. they send him send a death-summons

The king heard this
[He heard] what the elegant Nyphs Nyphs of War, who ride on white horses, spake
The Nyphs were wise & prudent thought
They stood in [their] helmets, the leaned on their arms

Haco said, why dost thou *Geir-Scogul* give this conclusion to the battle
Surely benefits might have been expected from the Gods
We are the cause, retorted Scogul, that thou art master of the field
^[That]^ Thy enemies are compelled to betake themselves to flight

*NB. Geir signifies war. —This addition is here made to her name, with a particular emphasis

Scogul the wealthy* spake thus,
Now we must ride thro’ the green worlds of the Gods
Go tell Odin that ^the^ all-powerful King is coming to his Hall
That he is coming to see & meet him.

*She is called digir or the wealthy because she finally inherits and possesses all things

The God Odin said
Hermode & Brago my sons go to meet the King
For now the King, the renowned warrior
Approacheth to our Hall

The King was retuned from the battle
He stood all besprinkled with blood & spake thus
Odin seemeth to be succeeding and towards us
He smileth not on my soul.

Brago said
Thou of all the Heroes shalt henceforth enjoy eternal peace
Thou shalt freely drink ale freely with the Gods
Thou foe of Princes, hast there within, eight brethren

That good king answered & said
We will retain our arms [sc. in the grave*] i.e., have them buried with him.
These are
For the Helmet & coat of mail are choicely to be preserved his dying words
It is good to have the sword in readiness.

Then was manifest how religiously the king
Had kept the publick peace, free from all violation
Since all the Counsellirs of the Gods, all the [heavenly] powers
Ordered Haco to come to them sound & whole unmaimed.*

that king was born on a happy day, under a fortunate star
Who gained to himself such renown.
The choicest mention of his Age & Government
Shall forever be made: they shall be the subject of Songs.

*[Sc. last but one]
The Latin translation is salvas ot incohemi: which I suppose means as I have rendered it NB. The King survived the battle but died afterwds. of his wounds.

The Wolf Fenris* freed from his Chains
Shall range thro’ the world among the Sons of Men
Before so renowned & so good a king
Shall again walk in the desolate Path of his Kingdom

*The meaning of this stanza is, that there shall never be such another king before the dipolation of the world. —For the Celts by the Wolf Fenris understood a kind of Daemon, or evil being, at enmity with the Gods, & at present chained up by them from doing mischief: but who was doomed hereafter to get loose and to destroy both Odin and the world. See the Edda. Cap.

In battle die, his kindred yield to fate
The region,—the whole earth—is desolate & uninhabited.
Since Haco removed his abode & departed to the Gods.
Many nations are afflicted.

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NB. Haco the subject of the preceding Poem was a King of Norway, who lived about the time of our Athelstan. In Snorro’s History is a long account of his achievemts. He was the great Hero of the Norwegians, & the last of their Pagan Kings. The Author of this above ode was his Siatic or Poet Laureate. —What suggested the place of the ode, was the King’s surviving the battle, & afterwards dying of his wounds, which were not apprehended at first to be mortal.
The above translation is literally made verbatim from the literal Latin version of the Swedish Editor: what additions I conceived necessary to render it more flowing, are included in brackets.
THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS

AND CONFESSIONS

OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER:

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF:

WITH A DETAIL OF CURIOUS TRADITIONARY FACTS, AND OTHER EVIDENCE, BY THE EDITOR.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXXXIV.
“Dedication.” James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Edinburgh, 1824. It is difficult to determine the intention behind this dedication to William Smith, other than understanding it as yet another act of Romantic irony (discussed at length below) in order to establish distance between the actual authorship and the fictional editorship of the novel. Peter Garside writes that “there is no evidence that Hogg knew Smith personally,” thus the choice for “the Editor” to dedicate this novel to Smith might “be seen as part of a larger strategy” to lend further anonymity to the work by emphasizing the supposed Glasgow roots of the editor (“Notes” 211).

TO

THE HON. WILLIAM SMITH,

LORD PROVOST OF GLASGOW,

⁴c. ⁴c. ⁴c.

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS A SMALL MARK OF

THE EDITOR’S

ESTEEM FOR HIM AS A MAN,

AND RESPECT FOR HIM AS A MAGISTRATE.
It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan, about one hundred and fifty years ago, and for at least a century previous to that period. That family was supposed to have been a branch of the ancient family of Colquhoun, and it is certain that from it spring the Cowans that spread towards the Border. I find, that in the year 1687, George Colwan succeeded his uncle of the same name, in the lands of Dalchastel and Balgrennan; and this being all I can gather of the family from history, to tradition I must appeal for the remainder of the motley adventures of that house. But of the
hour of repentance is past, and now my fate is in-
evitable.—Amen, for ever! I will now seal up my little book, and conceal it; and cursed be he who trieth to alter or amend!

END OF THE MEMOIR.

WHAT can this work be? Sure, you will say, it must be an allegory; or (as the writer calls it) a religious parable, showing the dreadful danger of self-righteousness? I cannot tell. Attend to the sequel: which is a thing so extraordinary, so unprecedented, and so far out of the common course of human events, that if there were not hundreds of living witnesses to attest the truth of it, I would not bid any rational being believe it.

In the first place, take the following extract from an authentic letter, published in Blackwood's Magazine for August, 1823.

"On the top of a wild height called Cowans-croft, where the lands of three proprietors meet all at one point, there has been for long and many
“A Scots Mummy.” James Hogg, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* (Aug. 1823): 188-90. The events Hogg describes in great detail within the letter are most likely Hogg’s own invention; no single record has yet been found of such an event occurring in Scotland with the specific details Hogg provides. However, it is possible—but not yet proven—that Hogg’s narrative was influenced by various aspects of local legends. The literary history and implications of the letter alone deserve further study as a crucial part of establishing Hogg’s lasting literary persona and his role in the culture of *Blackwood’s Magazine*. See Garside, “Introduction” xliv.
Works Cited


“Particulars relative to a Human Skeleton, and the Garments that were found thereon, when dug out of a Bog at the Foot of Drumkeragh, a Mountain in the County of Down, and a Barony of Kinalearty, on Lord Moira’s Estate, in the Autumn of 1780. In a Letter to the Hon. John Theophilus Rawdon, by the Countess of Moira; communicated by Mr. Barrington.” *Archaeologia: or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*, 7 (1785): 90-110.


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“Rev. of Roderick, the last of the Goths,” British Review, 6 (1815): 306.


Born and raised in Duluth, Minnesota, Ruth Knezevich always dreamed of being an astronaut and exploring the world beyond Earth’s atmosphere. But upon not reaching the minimum height requirement for space travel, she decided to explore the many worlds within books instead. She received her BA in English summa cum laude and with departmental honors from the University of Minnesota Duluth. She left the lakes of Minnesota for the rivers of Missouri in 2009 when she matriculated at the University of Missouri to pursue her MA and PhD in English literature. Besides figuring out what to make of footnotes and devouring historical fiction, Ruth enjoys the music of the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Beethoven and spending time outdoors.