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The Legacy of Rudolph Ackermann and Nineteenth-Century British Literary Annuals

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Abstract

By November 1822, the British reading public had already voraciously consumed both Walter Scott’s expensive novels and Rudolf Ackermann’s exquisite lithographs. The next decade, referred to by some scholars as dormant and unproductive, is in fact bursting with *Forget Me Nots*, *Friendship’s Offerings*, *Keepsakes*, and *Literary Souvenirs*. By wrapping literature, poetry, and art into an alluring package, editors and publishers saturated the market with a new, popular, and best-selling genre, the literary annual. In this excerpt from the introduction to *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual*, the foundations of the literary annual, its Poetess Tradition, its varied and sometimes canonical authors are introduced in conjunction with the formative print culture and history of early nineteenth-century Britain.

[M]ay all mothers, who would so be shocked, be dom’d! As if mothers were such sort of logicians as to infer the future hanging of *their* child from the theoretical hangibility . . . of every infant. . . . [M]y whole heart is faint, and my whole head is sick (how is it?) at this damned, canting *unmasculine unbawdy* (I had almost said) age!

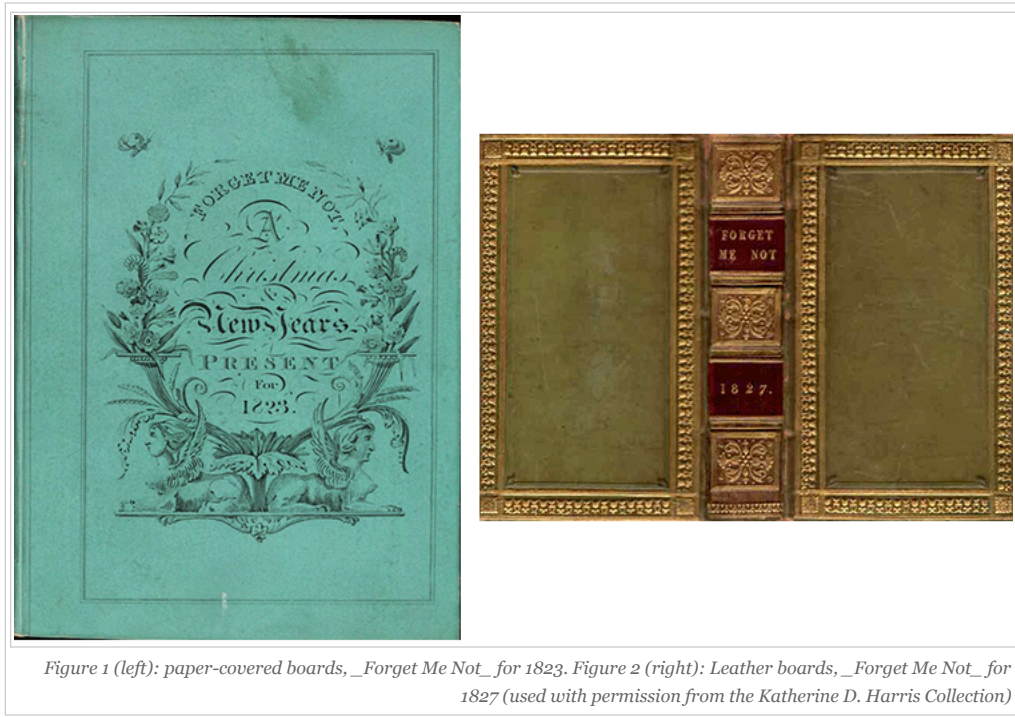
—Charles Lamb, Letter 474 (1829; emphasis added)

By November 1822, the British reading public had already voraciously consumed both Walter Scott’s expensive novels and Rudolf Ackermann’s exquisite lithographs. The next decade, referred to by some scholars as dormant and unproductive, is in fact bursting with *Forget Me Nots*, *Friendship’s Offerings*, *Keepsakes*, and *Literary Souvenirs*.

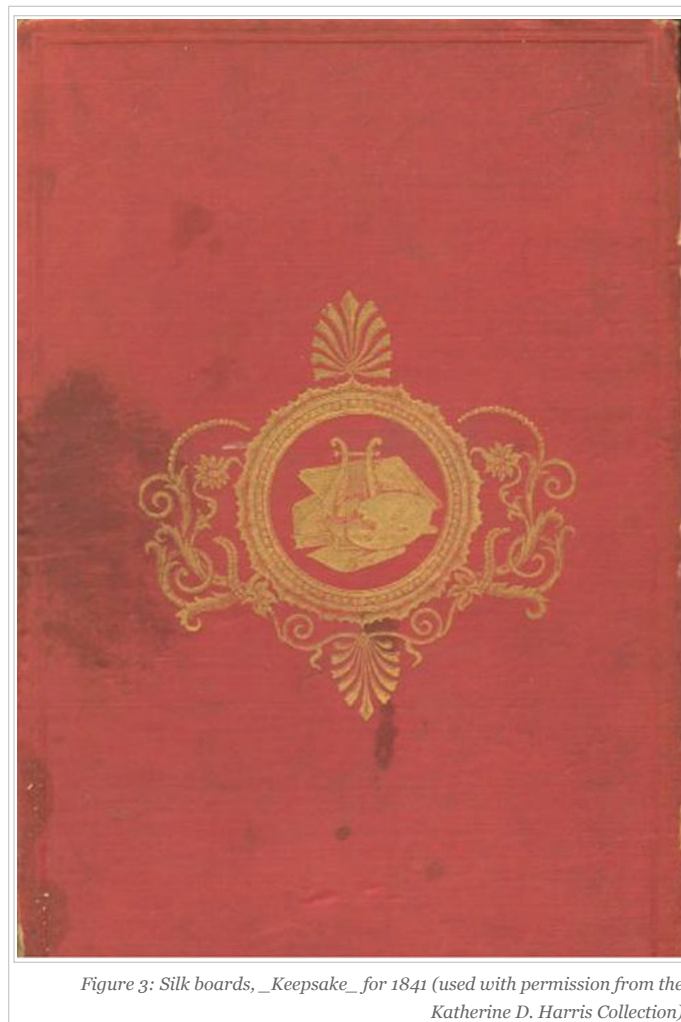
The literary annual—with its poetry, short stories, dramatic scenes, sheet music, travel accounts, political statements, historical renderings, classical references, descriptions of Europe, war accounts, artwork, portraits, lavish bindings, and bevy of famous authors—introduced a literary and visual genre that would be both scorned and embraced by England and beyond. Literary annuals are early nineteenth-century British texts published yearly in England from 1822 to 1860, intended primarily for a middle-class audience and therefore moderately priced (between twelve shillings and three pounds). Initially published in duodecimo or octavo sizes, the decoratively bound volumes exuded a feminine delicacy that attracted a primarily female readership.

Initially published in diminutive, decoratively bound volumes filled with engravings of popularly recognized artwork and “sentimental” poetry and prose, the annuals attracted a primarily middle-class female readership. The annuals were released each November, making them an ideal Christmas gift, lover’s present, or token of friendship. Selling more than 100,000 copies during each holiday season, the annuals were accused of causing an epidemic and inspiring an “unmasculine,” “unbawdy age” that lasted through 1860 and lingered in derivative forms until the early twentieth century in both the United States and Europe. The annual thrived in the 1820s and after despite—or perhaps because of—its “feminine” writing and beautiful form.

Originally published in paper boards from 1823-26 (Fig. 1), the annuals were usually whisked away to be re-bound in beautiful leather covers (Fig. 2).



By 1828, publishers employed the latest innovations in binding and switched to silk to amplify the value of the material object (Fig. 3).



Each annual typically offered a confined space for dedication (Fig. 4).

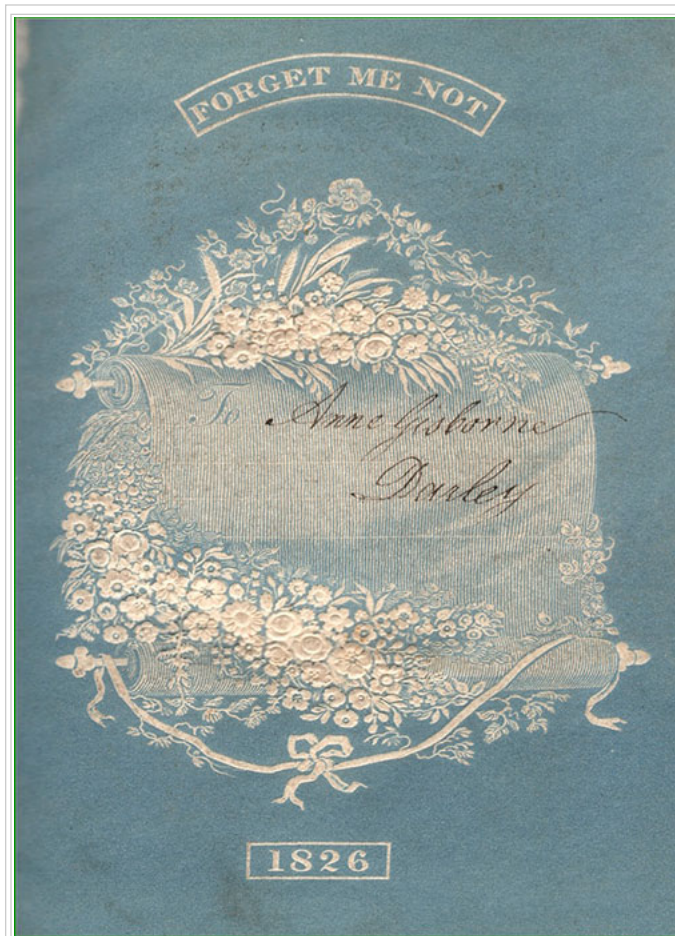


Figure 4: Inscription page, *Forget Me Not* for 1826 (used with permission from the Katherine D. Harris Collection)

Early annuals offered practical information similar to the Stationer's Company's almanac. But that would soon disappear in favor of more literary and visual content.

138 FRIENDSHIP'S OFFERING; OR,
A
COMPENDIOUS WEATHER GUIDE.

The following Table, duly observed, will, it is believed, not seldom fail to render the peruser *weather-wise*. At least, it is constructed from philosophical considerations of the attractive Influences of the Sun and Moon; in their several relative positions to our Earth; and the data here laid down; are confirmed by the experience of many years' actual observation.

New and Full Moon.	Summer.	Winter.
If it be new or full Moon, or the Moon entering into the 1st or last quar. at 12 noon.	Very rainy.	Snow and rain.
If between the hours of 2 and 4 aftern. 4 and 6 even.	Changeable.	Fair and mild.
6 and 8.	{ Fair, if wind at N. or S. W.	{ Fair and frosty if wind at N. or N. E.
8 and 10.	{ Rainy, if wind at S. or S. W.	{ Rain or Snow, if S. or S. W.
10 and 12 night.	Ditto.	Ditto.
12 and 2 noon.	Fair.	Fair and frosty.
2 and 4.	{ Cold with frequent showers.	{ Hard frost, unless wind or S. W.
4 and 6.	Rain.	Ditto.
6 and 8.	Wind and rain.	Stormy weather.
8 and 10.	Changeable.	{ Cold rain, if wind be W. ; snow, if E.
10 and 12 noon.	Frequent showers.	Cold with high wind.

219 THE ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE.

NEW HACKNEY-COACH FARES.

FARES COMPUTED BY DISTANCE.

Not exceeding	s. d.	Not exceeding	s. d.
1 Mile.	1 0	7 Miles	8 6
1 Mile and a Half	1 6	7 Miles and a Half.	9 0
2 Miles	2 0	8 Miles	9 6
2 Miles and a Half	3 0	8 Miles and a Half.	10 0
3 Miles	3 6	9 Miles	11 0
3 Miles and a Half	4 0	9 Miles and a Half.	11 6
4 Miles	4 6	10 Miles	12 0
4 Miles and a Half	5 0	10 Miles and a Half.	12 6
5 Miles	5 6	11 Miles	13 0
5 Miles and a Half	6 0	11 Miles and a Half.	13 6
6 Miles	7 0	12 Miles	14 0
6 Miles and a Half	8 0		

And so on for any further Distance after the Rate of 6d. for every Half Mile; and an additional 6d. for every Two Miles completed.

FARES COMPUTED BY TIME.

Not exceeding	s. d.	Not exceeding	s. d.
30 Minutes	1 0	2 Hours & 20 Minutes	6 0
45 Minutes	1 6	2 Hours & 40 Minutes	7 0
1 Hour	2 0	3 Hours	8 0
1 Hour & 20 Minutes	3 0	3 Hours & 20 Minutes	9 0
1 Hour & 40 Minutes	4 0	3 Hours & 40 Minutes	10 0
2 Hours	5 0	4 Hours	11 0

And for any further Time, 6d. for every Fifteen Minutes.
The Fares are to be taken by the Hour or Mile only, and not by the Day.

Figure 5: *Hackney Fares*, *Friendship's Offering* (used with permission from the Katherine D. Harris Collection)

Engravings, anywhere from 10-20 per volume, were cast from popular paintings but rarely garnered fame for the engraver, who was deemed a mere copyist and denied entrance into the Royal Academy (Figs. 6a and 6b).



Figure 6a (left): John Martin's "Seventh Plague of Egypt" (Oil on Canvas, 1823) and Figure 6b (right): Collections Database, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Often engravings were commissioned and then well-known poets were asked to render an accompanying poem, work for hire—eventually much to the poet's dismay. *Everyone* contributed to the annuals, even if they despised the genre, including William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron (posthumously), Mary Shelley, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, John Clare, Charles Dickens, James Hogg, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Southey, Lord Tennyson, William Hazlitt, and many more.^[1] Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon were two of the more popular literary annual contributors. In the following ekphrastic rendering, Hemans provides the linguistic "painting" of the engraving:



Figure 7: "Mother and Child" engraving, 1825 *Literary Souvenir* (used with permission from the Katherine D. Harris Collection)

"Mother and Child" by Felicia Hemans
(from 1825 *Literary Souvenir*)

Where art thou, Boy?— Heaven, heaven! the babe is playing
Even on the margin of the dizzy steep!
Haste—hush! a breath, my agony betraying,
And he is gone!— beneath him rolls the deep!
Could I but keep the bursting cry suppress'd,
And win him back in silence to my breast!

Thou 'rt safe!— Thou com'st, with smiles my fond arms meeting
 Blest, fearless child!— I, I have tasted death!
 Nearer! that I may *feel* thy warm heart beating!
 And see thy bright hair floating in my breath!
 Nearer! to still my bosom's yearning pain, —
 I clasp thee now, mine own! thou 'rt here again!

With a large audience almost immediately clamoring for more literary annuals, Rudolph Ackermann and his editor, Frederic Shoberl, created a second *Forget Me Not* for 1824 and found themselves competing with *Friendship's Offering* and *The Graces*. By 1828, 15 English literary annual titles had joined the market only to vie for an audience against 30 more titles by 1830. The popularity created an immediate retail success:

1828: 100,000 copies of 15 titles = aggregate retail value £70,000+

1829: Britain: 43 titles
 America: 60+ titles
 European colonies: 15 titles

1840: Britain: ~40 titles^[2]

1860: The annual and its poetess tradition had been subsumed into women's magazines and the periodical press only to be resurrected briefly in 1929 by Modernist author, Vita Sackville West, in homage to the popular form, the Romantic-era poetess and the annual's creator, Rudolph Ackermann.

The trade in annuals had become so popular that various titles emerged with hopes and promises of continuing a yearly publication. But with titles like *Olive Branch* and *Zoölogical Keepsake* appearing and vanishing in a single year, more often than not that promise was broken. Many factors led to the success or demise of a particular title—external appearance, engraving quality, literary contents, popular authors, editorial arrangement, marketing, and reviews. This last element provided an introduction and public face to each annual by recommending, denouncing or simply excerpting its contents.

Even with all of this popular success, the critical condescension surrounding the literary annual would haunt the genre well into the nineteenth century. After finally sputtering out in England in 1857, the literary annual reappeared as an homage to Rudolph Ackermann during the 1930s—even after Charles Tallent-Bateman condescendingly recommends annuals and poetess poetry as the cakes of literature:

The Annuals created a *craze*, the craze denoted some *insanity* in the public mind of the period; and much of this insanity is apparent within the curious circle of prolific writers, from which the general contributions were obtained. . . . This Annual was ephemeral not because it was effeminate; but because it was *unequal*, with a bias towards the *trivial*. It was one of the "*cakes*" of literature, not the bread. And even cakes become distasteful, when they provide only two or three currants each, notwithstanding that the surface is liberally endowed with *sugar*. (90, 97; emphasis added)

ACKERMANN'S ROLE IN CREATING THE LITERARY ANNUAL

Rudolph Ackermann (1764-1834), a printseller, book-seller, publisher, inventor, and businessman, popularized aquatint, lithography, and illustrated books from his vast London publishing house, R. Ackermann, and the Repository of Arts shop. Ackermann's shop preceded the opening of the [National Gallery](#) in 1824, but his idea was that his shop, commercial as it was, would essentially exhibit artwork by those who were not admitted into the [Royal Academy](#), especially the work by his engravers, draftsmen, and colormen. His shop and publications had a reciprocal relationship that catered to the idea of consumerism. An industrious inventor, he built a successful business on innovative printing technology and capitalized on current movements in politics and culture but never seemed to personally subscribe to political views himself. By maintaining some distance from British politics, Ackermann adeptly negotiated the conflict between his German heritage and the growing sense of British nationalism: "To the end of his days he retained a strongly marked German pronunciation of the English language, which gave additional flavour to the banter and jests uttered in his fine bass voice; but he wrote in English with great purity on matters of affection and of business long before middle life" (qtd. in Samuels 130).



Many publishers, artists, and authors, including Alaric A. Watts, John Clare, J. B. Papworth, John Murray, James Hogg, William Jerdan, Sir Walter Scott, J. M. W. Turner, William Combe, Thomas Rowlandson, and Thomas Hood, refer to Ackermann in their memoirs and letters with a certain fondness.^[3] In 1796, Ackermann began laying the foundation for creating his public/private salon at the Repository of Arts: he moved from No. 96 Strand to a spacious multilevel building at No. 101 Strand and ran a drawing school at No. 101 until 1806, when he closed it to make room for his now-famous Repository of Arts shop (Jervis 101). Upstairs were the gallery, tea room, circulating library, and evening talks or *conversazione* for invited guests (101). According to Judith Thompson, with this segregated design Ackermann set up a hierarchy whereby the affluent and elite were invited upstairs, while the common consumer was allowed to browse the endless supply of artwork and art supplies downstairs. Ackermann sold subscriptions to the third-floor circulating library where patrons could borrow books as well as prints, watercolors, and drawings (Birmingham 138). The ground floor was the Repository—a large, and very successful, shop that sold furniture in addition to prints.

Ackermann's shop was not the only one on [the Strand](#) to mix art and commerce. Ann Bermingham notes that [the Strand](#) also housed Lackington Allen & Co.'s Temple of the Muses and S. & J. Fuller's Temple of Fancy, both of which sold art supplies and artwork to an elite clientele to mingle "art, education, and commerce [in the production of] a hybrid social institutional environment. These shops were places of social intercourse, commercial exchange, and aesthetic instruction . . . [and] invested both commerce and art with an aura of domestic comfort" (127).



Ackermann printed and bound his publications in his building and employed a bevy of craftsmen, artisans, and artists to produce his popular publications: letterpress printers, bookbinders, leather suppliers, ink suppliers, fancy papers, colormen, and more, as chronicled by Bermingham and by Ackermann's principal biographer, John Ford (46). After successfully establishing a business based on hand-colored aquatint plates, in 1818 Ackermann became one of the first British publishers to operate and own a lithography press.^[4]

When the thirty-year lease on No. 101 Strand expired in 1827, Ackermann removed to No. 96 Strand, which had been completely redesigned by his friend, the architect J. B. Papworth (Jervis 108),^[5] with a massive warehouse, a private residence, showrooms, a library, ware rooms, printing presses, gilders' rooms, and framers' quarters spread over eight floors (Ford and Fraser 50). This new location also had the bonus of easy access: "The facility of access for Carriages to his New Premises, and the convenience for their waiting in Beaufort Buildings, are advantages to which he cannot refrain from directing their attention" (publisher's insert, *Edinburgh Review*).

With more than 450 volumes (Ford 220-32) attributed to his publishing house and a yearly income of £30,000, Ackermann succeeded in building a recognizable brand, especially with colored plates. His most important contributions to the publishing culture of early nineteenth-century England were the result of various friendships and networks that he established, the successful and productive relationship between Thomas Rowlandson and William Combe among them.^[6]

Ackermann also found a way to make architecture accessible and artistic to his clientele by displaying architecture in 372,000 aquatint engravings for his topographical books published from 1811 through 1816: *The History of the Abbey Church of St. Peter's Westminster*, *A History of the University of Oxford*, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, and *The History of the Colleges of Winchester, Eton and Westminster* (Jervis 103). With the publication of the *Microcosm of London* (1808-11),^[7] Ackermann "elevated the commercial building to the status of the major public landmarks featured in his famous and popular aquatints, equivalent to a church [or] a parliament building" (Bermingham 184). Bermingham suggests that this multivolume work is a sign of a culture of commerce rather than a focus on art. In other words, Ackermann's publication "is on the social and cultural institutions of London, the theaters, the shops, and the markets; the things that made the city an exciting and interesting place" (135). By focusing its engravings and articles on commercial buildings instead of historical landmarks, the *Microcosm* buoyed this idea of civic pride. Ackermann, like other shop owners, converted this pride into national pride with his monthly magazine, *The Repository of Arts* (published 1809-28). Ackermann eventually realized that the primary audience for the *Repository* should be women and shifted the tone and content of articles toward women, including fashion and cultural events as the primary topics. His shift, along with that of other publishers, encouraged "female consumption by characterizing it as a patriotic and virtuous exhibition of taste in the home" (Bermingham 140).

Ackermann is credited with establishing lithography as a fine art in England (*DNB* 58),^[8] earning a reputation for the beautiful color plates and aquatints that he produced in *The Repository of Arts*, an "elegant and fashionable periodical Work contain[ing] upwards of 500 coloured Engravings, and form[ing] a Library of itself; it presents entertainment and information to every taste, and will serve as a mirror of the times, and a work of reference to future ages" (advert in 1824 *Forget Me Not*). Mimicking the very popular *Lady's Magazine*, which began in 1770 and ceased publication in 1837, Ackermann's magazine contained plates of the latest fashionable dresses and hats, descriptions of the fabrics and design, and the occasional fabric sample. At a price of three shillings, sixpence, this magazine accumulated three thousand subscribers in its first year, 1809, and appeared regularly until 1828.^[9] By its conclusion, the magazine had seen forty volumes produced in monthly parts ("Ackerman," *DNB* 59)—quite a success, considering the reading public's fickle tastes.


The Poetical Magazine (1809-10) began the very successful relationship between author William Combe and artist Thomas Rowlandson, which eventually resulted in several volumes of *The Tours of Dr. Syntax* (1812, 1816, 1820-21). Allen Samuels notes that publishers during Ackermann's time were responsible for throwing focus on either the engravings or the writing, judging which was to be most profitable. Ackermann readily employed this technique with many of his works, including, most notably, the *Forget Me Not* (Samuels 379). However, his practice of employing artists to first render images and then writers to explicate the visual was practiced even before he turned to the literary annuals. Rosemary Hill notes that Auguste Pugin, illustrator of Gothic architecture for *The Microcosm of London* and frequent contributor to Ackermann's *Repository of Arts*, drew images for which his daughter, Catherine, often wrote text to accompany ("A. C. Pugin" 16).^[10]

With this established printing house and consumer base, Ackermann created a system of printing that yielded a higher production rate. Because of this, consumers of the first literary annual, *Forget Me Not* and later annuals, did not subscribe to the publication. Instead, in some years, Ackermann printed upwards of 20,000 copies in a year from a quarter of a million plates per edition (Ford 64-65).^[11]

Ackermann understood the value of a beautiful volume and committed his business to producing works that married print culture to visual and verbal beauty. More importantly, he understood the business of producing and re-

producing literary and artistic culture. His goal, in the end, was to produce commodified and exportable representations of England's best works in a time when readers were overwhelmed with reading materials.

Remaking European Invention with British Ingenuity

Many other publishers produced annuals that outsold Rudolph Ackermann's *Forget Me Not* (1823-47), but this inventor, who established the literary annual as an extremely marketable model, came to represent Englishness, femininity, and popular artistry because he believed in elevating all aspects of printing to the form of art rather than relegating publishing work to craftsmanship. Andrew Boyle and Ralph Thompson trace the literary annual's lineage to the Parisian *Almanach des Muses* (1765-1833) and its German imitation *Musen Almanach* (1770) (Thompson 3). But Charles T. Tallent-Bateman, in a 1902 article, cites the German *Minerva* (1809-33, published in [Leipzig](#)  by Ernst Fleischer) as the annual's precursor. British influences include the Stationers' Company almanacs; Southey's *Annual Anthology*, published in two volumes (1799 and 1780); *The Poetical Register and Repository of Fugitive Poetry*, published 1801-11; and *Angelica's Ladies Library, or Parents and Guardians Present*, published in 1794 (Thompson 165). But the British literary annual tradition begun by Rudolph Ackermann carved out a niche and format that were unique and separate from those of the almanac and poetry anthologies.^[12] Given his goals for the annuals, Ackermann, as a threshold figure between market and aesthetics, created a product for early nineteenth-century readers that represented the highest form of British ingenuity coupled with taste, that indefatigable marker of class boundaries in early nineteenth-century England.

In advertisements for and the preface to the first *Forget Me Not* volume, published in November 1822, Ackermann's publication solidified the literary annual genre—a genre that was protected by editors and vociferously defended by reviewers until 1828:

- *Purpose*: Annuals are "expressly designed to serve as annual tokens of friendship or affection" (advert in 1823 *Forget Me Not*).
- *Publication time frame*: "It is intended that the Forget-Me-Not shall be ready for delivery every year, early in November" (Preface to 1823 *Forget Me Not* vii).
- *Continual evolution*: "[T]he Publisher has no doubt that, in the prosecution of his plan, he shall be enabled, by experience, to introduce improvements into the succeeding volumes" (vii).
- *Authorship*: "[H]e shall neglect no means to secure the contributions of the most eminent writers, both at home and abroad" (vii).
- *Originality*: "To convey an idea of the nature of the pieces which compose the bulk of this volume, it will be sufficient to state that they will consist chiefly of original and interesting Tales and Poetry" (advert in 1823 *Forget Me Not*).
- *Engravings*: "[W]hile his long and extensive connexion with the Arts, and the credit with which he has acquitted himself in his various undertakings in that line, will, he trusts, be a satisfactory pledge that his best exertions shall not be wanting to give to this Work in a decided superiority in regard to its embellishments, over every other existing publication of the kind" (Preface to 1823 *Forget Me Not* viii).
- *Useful information*: "The third portion comprises a Chronicle of Remarkable Events during the past year: a Genealogy of the Reigning Sovereigns of Europe and their Families; a List of Ambassadors resident at the different Courts; and a variety of other particulars extremely useful for reference to persons of all classes" (advert in 1823 *Forget Me Not*).
- *Exterior format*: "The Forget Me Not is done up in a case for the pocket, and its external decorations display corresponding elegance and taste with the general execution of the interior" (advert in 1823 *Forget Me Not*).

With each criterion, Ackermann creates a sense of propriety, education, and social grace that would mark the literary annual for the next decade. He not only establishes the purpose of the volume by highlighting its physical features and editorial practices but also offers instructions to consumers to purchase the volume with the intent of distributing it further. By locating the publication date in the following year but releasing the volume in November, Ackermann ensured that annuals would become part of, if not the cause for, widespread holiday exchanges of literary materials that mimicked the long-standing practice of Almanac Day. Reviewers staunchly condemned any pretender annual that was published outside the holiday time frame, November through January, yet still claimed to be of the literary annual family.^[13] In one promise, Ackermann assured consumers that costly volumes would be guided by an experienced publisher who would respond to consumer requests for a better product each year. In turn, each editor would use the preface to proclaim improvements to his (or her) title for each succeeding year.

This promise of originally authored material establishes the literary annual as more than an anthology; the authors are generally contemporary British figures instead of writers of classic literature. And as is discussed later, literature from abroad would not overwhelm the annual's contents. Presenting original works by contemporary authors requires consideration of authorial ownership, but by promising originality, Ackermann committed to commodifying

a representation of fresh, current national literature. However, this claim of originality would plague the editors of the annuals through the 1830s.

Though the declaration of including superior engravings is standard, Ackermann meant to use his experience and established audience to create a personal, portable exhibit of text and image, thereby merging the latest vogue for visualizing literature and turning readers into spectators. An annual had to contain both literature and engravings to be considered within the family.

With the useful information, Ackermann attempted to establish the literary annual as referential and useful across class boundaries, similar to the almanac. However, because of the cost (twelve shillings), the working classes were presumably not included in this declaration. A list of coach fares was included to aid a lady in ensuring that she was treated fairly; but confronting a coachman about overcharging the fare would belie the purpose of the annual—to instruct in morality, feeling, and taste. Because it is mere information, this element was eventually discarded for the 1825 volume, in favor of additional creative contributions.

The neoclassical embellishments adorning early annuals' covers and slipcases remind readers of the three graces: charm, beauty, and literature. Ackermann, with this final marker of the literary annual, focused on establishing the literary annual in association with *taste*, a slippery term that denotes pleasure, desire, appetite, imagination, and shared feelings, according to the philosophers Thomas Hobbes, Edmund Burke, and Immanuel Kant. Carolyn Korsmeyer, in "Tastes and Pleasures," notes that "[t]aste requires intimate, first-hand acquaintance with its objects" (par. 12) and "also provides the guiding metaphor used to describe the ability to discern beauty in nature and art" (par. 11).

For Charles Lamb (160; quoted in the opening epigraph), writing to B. W. Procter in January 1829, the annuals represented women readers' lack of rationalism. After having his sonnet rejected by Thomas Hood because "it would shock all mothers," Lamb lashed out against the entire genre for eliding appreciation of literary aesthetics: "and may all mothers, who would so be shocked, be dom'd!" (160; see epigraph). Though this letter reeks of Lamb's frustration, the "unmasculine unbawdy . . . age" comment reflects the debate between base pleasures and aesthetic taste—a debate that was directed toward the annuals only after the genre became successful. In fact, Ackermann promised taste and propriety in the annuals but often used that promise only to sell annuals.

The association with pleasure and beauty was problematic for women readers during the early nineteenth century. Ackermann and various annual editors would continually defend the genre as tasteful while printing literary materials that were perhaps more scintillating and aligned with the idea that aesthetic taste is rooted in physical sensation (as is discussed by Denise Gigante in *Taste: A Literary History*). The diminutive size—duodecimo, 3.5 x 5.5 in.—represents a particular form of femininity by being portable in the pocket or in the hand. Though the size eventually grew to quarto editions without slipcases and instead wrapped in silk covers, the annual's embellished boards marked the extravagance of the entire genre and were continued through its lifetime, even in rebindings.

Why Ackermann's *Forget Me Not* succeeded where other earlier experiments had failed is still somewhat of a mystery. Numerous conduct manuals flooded the market during the 1790s. Some ladies' magazines were beginning to flourish, but they were not as permanent a material object as the annuals. The mystery lies in the combination of German publishing history and literary culture, as well as in Ackermann's business savvy in the London publishing industry. Ackermann's willingness to invent new forms and demonstrate shifts in taste-making stemmed from his ability to eschew the traditions of British publishing and literary culture. As a German émigré, he was the right man to capitalize on these middle-class reading audiences.

Nineteenth-Century Print Culture

Middle-class merchants, bankers, professional men, and manufacturers "could spend full evenings with their families and their books" (Altick 86). The twelve-shilling annual fell between the sensational cheap reading materials and the expensive "corrupting" novels. *Forget Me Not*, *The Keepsake*, and *The Literary Souvenir* avoided contents that celebrated indoctrinating evangelical preachings, though the *Friendship's Offering* seemed to focus more in this area. Like many printed materials in the early nineteenth century, annuals were marketed as "wholesome literature" for the entire family that moved beyond the quick entertainment of a broadside or a daily. The contents of the annuals appealed to that small class of readers and book buyers with limited leisure—a class growing exponentially in British society.

Competing serial publications at the annual's advent were predominantly periodicals, journals, and cheap twopenny newspapers. Annuals were something new, different, and substantial. Their contents and physical appearance communicated a different standard of propriety and morality than even the ubiquitous temperance pamphlets. The literary annual made its British debut at a moment in print culture when innovative technological advances, literacy rates, demand for reading materials, and publishing and book-selling practices increased the production of printed materials.

Stereotype (introduced in 1802),^[14] machine printing (by steam press, introduced in 1814),^[15] and paper tenacity (through use of the Fourdrinier machine, introduced in 1807) were new technologies that increased the production rates and numbers of reading materials available to the increasingly literate British population. Allan C. Dooley, in *Author and Printer in Victorian England*, suggests that stereotyping influenced the canon by offering authors the opportunity to reprint their works. However, authors were hesitant to commit to stereotyping, because the plates

would effectively seal the text from future revisions though "the author's profits on later impressions would be greater, and a book need never be unavailable as long as the plates or paper matrices were kept" (78).

Frederick Kilgour reports that "[t]he population in England and Wales doubled, from approximately nine million in 1801 to eighteen million in 1851. . . . From 1750 to 1840 in England and Wales the literacy rate of men went from 63 to 68 percent, and that of women from 36 to 52 percent" (99). Evangelicalism, according to Richard Altick in *The English Common Reader*, contributed to this increase in literacy, because the movement inspired the mass production of Bibles all over England and encouraged the "working class" to become literate:^[16] "[P]roselytizing religion, the distribution of Bibles and didactic literature became a large industry" (100). Printing technology improved just as substantial book orders were submitted, and the British working classes were ready to become more literate through reading these free pamphlets (103-4). Altick also attributes the increase in literacy to inventions in reading apparatus, including low-cost spectacles, oil and paraffin lamps, low-cost candles, and peaceful locales outside the home (91-94).



Consumers and readers had a choice, and the expense of the material marked the class of the consumer. A majority of the contents in the most prolific materials, periodicals, consisted of sensational news and hurriedly written fiction—definitely not the literary and aesthetic qualities espoused by the literary annuals. Editors and publishers, Ackermann especially, marketed the annual as a lovingly assembled mass of thoughtful literary and visual renderings for quiet contemplation or studious conversation.

To compete with the litany of literary materials (both salacious and didactic), Ackermann relied on his shop's first- and second-floor clientele to recognize the annual as worthy of their time and money. The variety of burgeoning genres of reading material during the early nineteenth century included fiction (as exemplified by Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* [1794] and Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* [1814]), serialized fiction (Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* [1836] and *Master Humphrey's Clock* [1840]), silver fork novels (Thomas Henry Lister's *Granby* [1826]),^[17] poetry volumes (by such authors as Charlotte Smith, Hannah More, Sir Walter Scott, George Gordon Byron, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and Felicia Hemans), nonfiction personal accounts (such as Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* [1789] and Mary Wollstonecraft's and Helen Maria Williams's *Letters*), juvenile literature (by authors such as Anna Letitia Barbauld and Wollstonecraft), conduct manuals (such as those by Wollstonecraft), textbooks and reference works (including Cobbett's *Grammar of the English Language* [1818]), twopenny and threepenny weekly and daily newspapers (Limbird's *Mirror of Literature* [established in 1822],^[18] *Penny Magazine* [established in 1832], *Nic Nacs*, *Diorama*, *Freebooters*, *Batatelles*, and sixty others), monthly and quarterly magazines (such as *Town and Country Magazine* and *Fraser's Magazine*), review periodicals (*Quarterly Review*, *Analytical Review*, *The Literary Gazette*, *Monthly Review*, and *The Gentleman's Magazine*), art periodicals (as exemplified by Ackermann's *Repository of Arts*), women's periodicals (*The Ladies Diary*, *Lady's Monthly Museum*, and *The Lady's Magazine*), literary annuals (such as *Forget Me Not* [established in 1823]), juvenile literature, comics, classic reprints (such as the expurgated *The Family Shakespeare* [1818] and Shakespeare's plays [1825]), theatrical journalism, and temperance periodicals.^[19]

Book production alone, excluding periodicals and newspapers, "in the nineteenth century exceeded that of the eighteenth by 440 percent," which Kilgour attributes to printed materials becoming less labor intensive in setting type, creating paper, or printing multiple copies and the division of bookselling from printing (112). In "On Cheap Periodical Literature," published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in June 1825, the anonymous author observes the quantity and quality of the voluminous amounts of publications: "This is the golden age of literary and commercial enterprise. Never was the press more actively employed, or ampler scope allowed for the diffusion of every species of information, than at the present period. . . . Never were publications so numerous, or of such varied character" (483).

Annuals were priced out of the range of a working-class, and even a moderate-income middle-class, family. Altick's research concludes that a middle-class family—an economic stratum slightly higher than that of the industrial worker—earned a modest weekly income of "48s.[shillings], or roughly £125 a year; a benefited clergyman lived well, if hardly in splendor, on £300 to £400; an officer of the line could marry on £200 to £400" (276). Both the working and middle classes could afford only a few books a year. However, the increased availability and cheap price of newspapers afforded an opportunity for the unskilled laborers in the working class to access reading materials—whether as the original consumer or as the tenth reader.

The more esteemed reading materials began at two shillings with critical periodicals, but the annuals were not the most expensive materials available—and Ackermann ensured that his *Forget Me Not* was priced at the lower end of the scale. Between 1814 and 1823, a three-volume novel, the more expensive reading, was sold at a retail price of between fifteen and twenty-one shillings (a guinea). Sir Walter Scott's novels sold at the higher end and eventually reached a retail price of thirty-one shillings, sixpence by 1820. As a result of this exorbitant price, caused by the booksellers' collusion, the high price of paper, and the cost of hand labor (Altick 262), fiction readers accessed the circulating libraries for a shared copy of popular novels; there, readers could leisurely pore over all of the latest fiction at thirty-five shillings per year (Altick 263). Between 1827 and 1832, the remainders or reprint business also thrived in competition with the expensive novels; non-copyrighted works were available as "number publications and classic re-print series" (Altick 264). In numbered publications, the subscribers paid weekly for the installment of fiction or nonfiction literature. Ackermann, aware of his audience, increased the price only slightly from year to year, as opposed to pressing consumers to expend three pounds.

The working class typically did not enjoy the benefits of the circulating library. The high cost of living and low wages during the early nineteenth century precluded them from obtaining a spare five shillings, which would buy five

pounds of butter or ten pounds of meat (Altick 276). These reprints and numbered publications were, in effect, still priced out of the range of the average factory worker regardless of the materials intended to be the "economy book" for them. The middle and lower-middle classes enjoyed these economy books and benefited from the cheap form of entertainment more than any other literate class. However, the cheaper reading materials suffered from sensationalism, which left this set of people without "wholesome literature" with which to educate themselves. As a result, a relatively small number of consumers enjoyed literature of the higher quality that was produced by publishers such as Ackermann.

From Germany to Latin America: Ackermann Nationalizes the Annual



Relying on the various debates surrounding aesthetic and literary taste and the turn from rational thought, Ackermann constructed his literary annual business venture around beauty. The resultant product, the *Forget Me Not*, encapsulated elements from already successful genres, including the French literary "almanach," the German "Taschenbuch" (pocket-book), and the "album" and traditional "almanac." Ackermann and Shoberl acknowledge these predecessors in the preface to the first *Forget Me Not*:

The British Public is here presented with the *first attempt to rival the numerous and elegant publications of the Continent*, expressly designed to serve as tokens of remembrance, friendship, or affection, at that season of the year which ancient custom has particularly consecrated to the interchange of such memorials. The Publisher flatters himself that as well from the nature of the literary department, in which *it has been his aim to unite the agreeable with the useful*, as from the execution of the graphic embellishments, this first volume of the *Forget-Me-Not* will be deemed not unworthy of the purpose for which it is intended. . . .

. . . [A]mong the documents introduced into the concluding sheets, the Publisher begs leave to direct the Reader's attention to the important Tables exhibiting the results of the late Census, compiled from the returns of the Population of Great Britain, just printed by order of the House of Commons. For some of the other useful articles of reference in this part of the volume, he professes his obligations to the *Gotha Almanac*, a work of acknowledged accuracy and of high reputation on the Continent. (v, vii; emphasis added)

Focusing on the utility of the first *Forget Me Not* and pointing to the tables and charts, Ackermann authorizes the information with the stamp of the British government and European information. Mention of the "Continent" lends the annual a cosmopolitan reputation, which is intended to draw in an audience interested in European and British information while simultaneously erasing those same boundaries: "In submitting to the Public that plan of the work here announced, the Projector candidly acknowledges that he is influenced by the honest ambition of rivalling at least, if not surpassing[,] the many elegant and tasteful productions of the Continent, expressly designed to serve as annual tokens of friendship or affection" (1823 advert). Having evolved into a very savvy businessman, Ackermann was constantly attuned to the changes in nationalism ever-present in London and used a rhetoric in his publishing that unmistakably built upon patriotism, as Ann Bermingham notes in *Learning to Draw*: "Commerce, in Ackermann's mind, was a nationalistic, public-spirited labor and during the wars he made every effort to mix business with patriotism by producing endless caricatures of the French and by publishing books like *Loyal Volunteers of London* in 1809. . . . More ambitious schemes ranged from a proposal to leaflet [Paris](#) by balloon with anti-Bonaparte literature to a successful fund-raising effort for the relief of war-torn [Germany](#)" (142). Because of [Leipzig's](#) importance to British trade on the Continent, John Ford supposes that Ackermann's patriotism and benevolence toward the citizens of [Leipzig](#) were buoyed by the British government, and his reward was naturalization in 1809, an act that would reap trade benefits seven years later (32, 33).^[20]



Ackermann admittedly borrowed from the German tradition of the *Taschenbuch*,^[21] or pocket-book, "a small book, adapted to be conveniently carried in the pocket" ("pocket-book," *OED*), which focuses less on "useful information" and more on literature. Roger Chartier, Lydia Cochrane, and Guglielmo Cavallo claim in *A History of Reading in the West* that the size of the book impacted the place and space intended for reading: "Because the codex was not bound to fixed conventions of manufacture and make-up, but could instead take on different formats and sizes ranging from a handy pocket size to a weighty tome, it changed the way the book was correlated to the physiology of reading. The physical structure of certain books dictated, hindered or at least suggested certain postures, gestures and ways of reading" (87). With an intentional portability in the smaller duodecimo size and comfort that serial form offers to readers, the early annuals were meant for transportation and entertainment rather than serious study. This association of book size with leisurely reading is perhaps the reason that editors were so adamantly vociferous in their prefaces about the literary merit and visual pleasure to be derived from the contents of their annuals.

However much Ackermann attributes his *Forget Me Not* and the literary annual form to this German production, the reviewers and editors began at this moment to praise Ackermann's literary emulation and to colonize the German form in the name of England. In December 1823, a review in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* historicized the success of the *Taschenbuch* and its German authors:

However, all things go on in *melius*, and this year has produced some very pretty and ingenious attempts at turning the epidemic curiosity of Christmas into channels of instruction and intellectual amusement. Among those in the natural progress of improvement, the last is to be presumed the best; and the work, whose title stands at the head of this article, strikes us as not merely the best in point of invention and

decoration, but to be, from its original composition, the subjects of its poetry, and the tendency of its spirit, as strikingly deserving of a place in the library, as on the table of the drawing-room of fashion.

The Germans, of all men the wisest in their literary generation, have led the way in this species of performance, and some of the greatest names that ever figured in German literature, have indulged their taste, and enhanced their reputation, by contributing to the Yearly Literary Pocket Books, and Souvenirs. Schiller's most vivid poems first found their way to popular applause through this avenue; Goethe, the idol of his countrymen, and undoubtedly a poet of singular genius, sent out some of his most beautiful tales and scattered conceptions on what he quaintly calls, the "Papillon Wings" of the "*Taschenbuch*." Kotzebue, a writer of more dubious fame, though at the height of the lighter drama, often floated his lesser plays into the world on those wings; and, perhaps, on the whole, there is no portion of German authorship more popular, than those yearly records of its happy thoughts, and slighter sketches of vigorous design;—those memorials of past beauty and promises of future attraction. Their productiveness as a mere speculation is evident from their number, their eager rivalry, and their increasing excellence; *and our English neglect of so interesting a mode of authorship, is among the more striking instances of the tardiness with which sometimes crosses the seas.* (669; emphasis added)

[With the publication of several literary annual titles by November 1823, the reviewer finds that that month in particular presented a "carnival" of literary fun—a transformation of the dowdy, domestic German tone inherent in *Taschenbücher*. The review effectively erases the German influence only to replace it with a celebration of British nationalism. This is a case of importing a foreign form and then successfully translating it into a British commodity as part of the Christmas gift-giving phenomenon. The reviewer continues,

The majority, however, of these German *Souvenirs*, have the stamp of their country rather too heavily laid upon them for our taste. Wisdom out of season, and prolixity that disdains an aid, solemn catalogues of names important to none but their possessors, and unwieldy labour of a reluctant and cloudy imagination, make the majority the weightiest performances that ever augmented the weight of a winter, between the [Rhine](#) and the [Danube](#). But, unquestionably, all the good may be accessible without its counterpoise; and it might be difficult to limit the interest capable of being brought within the pages of an annual publication, expressly devoted to mingling the graceful and the useful; the attractive tale, the animated poetry, the dignity of moral thought, and the elegance of high life, and its captivating and brilliant recollections. (669)



Though celebratory at first, the reviewer draws boundaries in comparing the literary quality and taste of the British and German productions because of tone and useful information—perhaps not very useful to the English. But the Germans, who populated a significant number of London's printing houses, defended their national heritage while working toward British patriotism. Frederic Shoberl, who is of German descent, defends German literature in the preface to his translation of *Parables by D. F. A. Krummacher: Translated from the German* (1824 [priced at six shillings]): "The Translator, therefore, will detain the reader no longer than to express a confident hope that the appearance of a volume of such unexceptionable tendency will contribute to shake the national prejudice against foreign literature in general entertained by some of his countrymen, whose minds ought to be superior to that sentiment" (iv).


Shoberl's defense of German literature may not have necessarily been warranted by 1828; the *Foreign Quarterly Review* was regularly critiquing twenty-eight to thirty German *Taschenbücher* each year—and commending them on their literariness in comparison to the British versions:

We still remember, with what gladness and avidity, when resident in [Germany](#), we seized on the *first Taschenbuch* of the season, bringing home with us two copies, one to lie on the drawing-room table, (for we would not be too selfish,) and the other to be indeed *our pocket-book* and companion, in our walks through the dark autumnal forests, till every page had been carefully read, and we had formed our own unbiassed opinion of its merits. In two or three days we had a second volume to be welcomed in like manner,—then another—and another,—till towards the end of November, when they were all out, and even the "Aglaiä," latest and coyest of beauties, had made her appearance, we rejoiced to find ourselves in arrears as to our duties of reader and critic, and would perhaps for a month or two afterwards, purposely reserve half a dozen volumes, in order to have the comfortable reflection that our amusement was not exhausted, that the Christmas roses were not all blown and withered, and that the virgin lustre of the Minerva's, Cornelia's, Aurora's, Orpheus's, &c. &c. had not yet on too familiar acquaintance "faded into the light of common day."—Nor need this feeling seem overstrained and capricious, when it is taken into consideration that these annuals, though now very inferior to our own in point of graphic embellishment, are yet in literary merit, especially in their prose essays, greatly superior,—the *best* writers in [Germany](#) having frequently exerted themselves *in good earnest*, to render these publications important and interesting, while in our country, a short hasty fragment from a *highly* distinguished author has been in most instances as much as any Souvenir-editor could hope to obtain. ("Article 15" 642)

According to Frederick Burwick, in the foreword to William Taylor's biography by Georg Herzfeld, German literature had already influenced British culture by 1790 specifically because of Taylor's translations of German literature (2-3). Kurt Mueller-Vollmer attributes the early nineteenth-century British appropriation of German works to the publication of Germaine de Staël's *On Germany*, published in England in 1813 (152), and the numerous translations of *De l'Allemagne*. Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, published in 1830, fostered an English affinity for German poetry because Taylor included translations that were accessible to English speakers. With the Hanoverian

kings on the British throne during the 1790s, a mutual cultural exchange between the countries seems plausible, including the exchange of printing techniques and reading materials (Burwick 3).^[22]

Ackermann never publicly admitted to "borrowing" more than the format of this German tradition, but many clues point toward the *Forget Me Not* as the translated British version of a German pocket-book, the *Vergissmeinnicht*, a title that translates to "forget me not." Ackermann would have seen copies of this German pocket-book. Todd Kontje, in "Male Fantasies," suggests that 1770 marks the establishment of a German culture, including a national literature, distinct from any other nations' influence and just five years before Ackermann set up shop in London's printing district (131). In an analysis of correspondence between two German-Jewish authors, Donovan Anderson found that the 1813 publication of Germaine de Staël's novel, *De l'Allemagne*, "contested an exclusive and inward looking German identity and took Staël's book as an opportunity to reflect on questions of authorship" (559).

Though we do not have explicit evidence of Ackermann's knowledge of the *Vergissmeinnicht*, tangible links exist between the two titles, the least of which is Ackermann's abridged publication of an English translation of *Mimili*, a novel that was overwhelmingly successful in 1815 [Germany](#) and had been translated into several languages by 1824. ^[23] *Mimili*, originally written by German author Heinrich Clauren (a.k.a. Karl Gottlieb Samuel Heun), tells the story of a Swiss woman's naïve, inadvertent sexuality and conflicted love. A foreign traveler, a young man, approaches the young shepherdess's bucolic home and is welcomed by her father. The young man falls in love with Mimili but is often tempted by her beauty. He makes several sexual advances but is rebuffed. By the time he must leave, he begs Mimili's father for permission to marry her. Her father, not wanting to be hasty and acknowledging that this young man is the first that Mimili has encountered, asks him to return in a year to see whether the passion still burns between them. During this year, the patriotic young man joins the military and disappears after the 1815 Battle of [Waterloo](#). When Mimili receives a friend's letter informing her of her young man's fate, she mourns endlessly until the moment when the young man miraculously appears, having been only wounded in the battle. They are married as evidence of their fortitude and genuine love. 

Originally published in the German magazine *Der Freimüthige (The Free Speaker)* from 1815 through 1819, Clauren's novel *Mimili* sold nine thousand copies in three years (Saul 265) and inspired a genre of sentimental prose that capped the German Enlightenment and was typically referred to pejoratively as part of Biedermeier literature, a "derisive statement about the earlier period's unsophisticated aesthetics [as well as] a nostalgia for what was perceived to be an uncomplicated idyll of domestic comfort and family values that were lost with the arrival of the industrial revolution" ("Biedermeier" 88-89). This style of writing also signals a shift toward family and relationships as opposed to concern for the self or individual experience.

In 1839, German literary critic Herman Marggraff reflected on *Mimili* as "a threat to German culture" and described Clauren's work as almost pornographic and certainly erotically charged for an audience of men:

The reader is warned that we are now in the period in which the authors of almanacs and the late Clauren are leading the dance of literature. Mediocrity, naked, unadorned, wanton, with its paunch, wallowed on the slovenly couch of literature and on the boards of the stage. There it stretched itself and blinked its eyes, and molded, with the very soft wax of language, delicate little fingers with kissable lips and velvety cheeks, with dainty calves and lovely legs that could be seen as far as the garters, for Mimili's frock was rather short; and quite a good deal of the bosom could be seen for the bodice was cut low. (qtd. in Löwenthal 36-37)

Based on the success of *Mimili*, Clauren began publishing an annual pocket-book entitled *Vergissmeinnicht (Forget Me Not)*, named after the flower given to the young man by our heroine, Mimili. This successful German publication ran from 1818 to 1834 and was published in duodecimo with a few engravings and long prose pieces by Clauren that totaled approximately five hundred pages per volume. The 1818 and 1821-23 volumes include only a sonnet at the outset of each volume and perhaps one other poem afterwards. The *Foreign Quarterly Review* in 1828 was lukewarm in its reception of the German pocket-book, described as

edited, indeed hitherto exclusively written by H. Clauren, an author who has never been a special favourite with us, though his works are highly popular in [Germany](#), and some translated specimens have been well received in England. His Annual seldom exhibits poetry, and now consists of two novels, entitled "The Three Orphans," and "Love in the Mail Coach." Prefaced by a laudatory sonnet of Hofrath Winkler, this volume seems to be as lively and well adapted, *ad captandum* [to please or arouse the rabble], as its predecessors. ("Article 15" 645)

Ignoring this type of negative reception that had been consistent since Clauren's publication of *Mimili* in 1815 and the *Vergissmeinnicht* in 1818—or perhaps because of it—Ackermann borrowed the title to create his *Forget Me Not*. Ackermann and his editor, Frederic Shoberl—also of German descent—translated, condensed, and published an English version of Clauren's *Mimili* in the 1824 *Forget Me Not*. Ackermann's translation follows the seemingly didactic path of the German original, including the more lascivious tests of Mimili's chastity. With this type of ladies' publication, one would expect that *Mimili* would become expurgated or even bowdlerized, but not so. The battle scenes and Mimili's fashions are expunged, perhaps in the interest of space. After all, Ackermann condensed the novel from 150 pages to 62 duodecimo pages. The engravings of Mimili herself do not necessarily represent the heaving bosoms of either version. In fact, these are in the tradition of the bucolic landscape scenes that would come to dominate the literary annuals, scenes engraved by those craftsmen whom Ackermann advocated for entry into the [Royal Academy](#) as "artists."

As was the tradition of the day, much literature and many engravings were plucked from more expensive hardbound publications and republished in periodicals, such as the weekly *Mirror of Literature*, for consumption by the lower classes. Ackermann's version of *Mimili* apparently was revised without attribution to Claren and published in *The Flowers of Literature*, a four-volume anthology published in 1824 as a hardbound edition that professed to collect the finest literature from several years. With a similar mission, *The Portfolio* for 1824, a twopence sixteen-page weekly periodical, borrowed an even further abbreviated and defiantly expurgated version of Claren's novel from *The Flowers of Literature*, reduced the tale to five pages of double-column text spread over two weeks, and retitled it "The Soldier's Reward: A Tale of the Mountains." The new title removes *Mimili* as the main character, while the revised story refocuses the reader on patriotism, war, and the domestic role of women—a true Biedermeier account. Gone are the "pornographic" references to *Mimili*'s heaving bosom and her shapely calves, with the exception of the soldier's initial description:

She indeed seemed to the romantic fancy of our youthful traveller, no less than a beautiful though frail vision. She appeared not to have passed her 16th year, and, joined to a form the most exquisite, possessed the most beautiful countenance imagination can conceive. Youth and health revelled in her dimpled cheek, in her coral lips, and the plumpness of her whole love-inspiring figure. The silent mirrors of her soul were of an azure blue, and protected from your admiring gaze by long and silken lashes, which tempered the fire of her own passion-fraught glances. She was drest in a simple though elegant dress; she wore a corset of velvet, with muslin sleeves; a habit-shirt of the finest cambric, modestly, though to our traveller's mind, enviously concealing her neck and bosom, and yet not so much as to deprive you of an idea of its beautiful whiteness, which sight was sufficient to remind you of the "glance that some saint has of heaven in his dreams." Her petticoat would be, to our English notions, rather too short, and yet he would not have it half an inch less for the world; inasmuch as it gave sufficient testimony of an exquisitely shaped leg, and a well turned ancle [*sic*]. (no. 74: 217)

The engravings of *Mimili* in the *Forget Me Not* do not necessarily represent either Claren's or Ackermann's version. [24] Nor do they seem to represent the pornographic references made by Margraff.

This alteration to the translated and then continued revisions to British versions of *Mimili* is important for two reasons: first, the contents of literary annuals were marketed as respectable literature intended to counteract the titillation of novels and periodical readings; and second, they were supposed to represent the best of British literary culture and publishing. Ackermann's version of *Mimili* would certainly draw reviewers' disdain, similar to that received from German critics, in addition to the negative British and German reviews of the *Vergissmeinnicht*. Why would Ackermann include a piece that was essentially considered a contamination of literary culture? Did he not then anticipate the eventual disdain for his literary annual in England? Or did he foresee the continued transmission of this tale to the weekly periodicals and an inherently larger, less-educated reading public?

If we consider that Ackermann had participated in restitution efforts for German victims of Napoleon's 1813 and 1814 campaigns, then perhaps anglicizing *Mimili* and offering up a reconstituted *Vergissmeinnicht* was a response to the German critics and an effort to preserve German culture while celebrating British innovation. Or perhaps Ackermann and Shoberl were actively engaging in nationalizing German literature for the British. Andrew Piper suggests that "translations in the early nineteenth century played a key role in importing and domesticating the foreign, in smoothing over such linguistic differences. In responding to the increasingly mass, and monolingual, reading public, romantic translations contributed to the standardization of European cultures. . . . Translations drew attention to the foreign as much as they made such foreignness intelligible to domestic audiences" (155). Piper also suggests that translations allowed British publishers to avoid authorial control and copyright issues with translations, all the while supplying the public with new content (155). Translators, then, Piper continues, "came to stand in the romantic age for a new industrializing world of letters" (155). Shoberl, an experienced and successful translator of German and French texts, [25] would have most likely committed the German prose to an appropriate English translation.

The story of *Mimili* was more than a tale of morality and sentimentality—it represents a patriotic triumph over war and an enemy that had plagued the British throughout the Romantic era. For his women readers, Ackermann failed to be wholly didactic in publishing *Mimili*, but perhaps he was not completely loyal to the idea of representing femininity in another repressive literary representation. Instead, he offered women an eroticism without overindulging in celebrations of warfare as originally portrayed in Claren's version. Or was he attempting to transport the Biedermeier literary culture into England to encourage moving away from British High Romanticism and into a cosmopolitan representation of Britishness?

Because of Claren's international success and an extremely public plagiarism lawsuit, Londonites would have been familiar with Claren's name. After all, he was the epitome of the literary annual writer: prolific, popular, and profitable (Kontje 136). By condensing Claren's best-selling novel into a short story in his 1824 *Forget Me Not*, Ackermann tied himself to a German tradition of literature and print culture that he only mildly acknowledged in print. The title and Claren are not the only connections, though.

The *Vergissmeinnicht* format evolved to include a series of unpaginated poems that are accompanied by engravings interspersed among the first twenty-five pages; the more significant number of remaining pages contains only prose pieces. The 1821 volume opens with an emblematic sonnet, [26] similar in topic, tone, and poetic focus to that of the 1823 *Forget Me Not*.

Sonnet

Modestly, I bloom along the streams
 Whose little ripples refresh me
 What glares from out my eye, however,
 Will speak to you in confident timbre.


"Do you wish to tear me from the little stem?
 Am I simply to be plucked for the lady-love?
 [or] For the boyfriend, who, constantly clasps hands with you?
 At all events, on account of fragile weakness of the heart?"







So the little flower—An emblem of its image
 Is found in this little book, and it [book] echoes its [flower's] words.
 Ah! A heart rich only in feelings:
 May it reach its kindred heart.
 Then every leaf will proclaim it widely/openly,
 That—Forget-me-not—should be its motto.


In the last stanza of the *Vergissmeinnicht's* opening sonnet, the flower encourages an invisible listener (and potential flower picker) to equate the sentimental flower with its namesake book and "pluck" from the book instead of the flower from the stream's bank. With this book, the sentimental feelings inspired by the flower will be transmitted to the recipient of the book. This person will then "forget me not"—"me" being the listener, the book, and the flower—a motto echoed in Ackermann's *Forget Me Not* and many other literary annuals.

Claren's were not the only German translations slipped into the *Forget Me Not*: Ackermann also relied on the fiction of Augustus von Kotzebue, a prolific German novelist and playwright who was violently murdered in 1819 and whose autobiography was offered by a London publisher in 1827. According to Matthew Scott, more than thirty of Kotzebue's plays were either translated or adapted for the British stage in the 1790s ("Circulation" par. 13). The translations of his work represent a moment of prolific production for England—one that Ackermann capitalized on when it came time to produce a literary annual with recognizable, popular authors. Kotzebue's prose appears three times in Ackermann's literary annuals, but after 1824, no prominent German author appeared in Ackermann's annual again.^[27]

Often, a translated piece of prose or poetry in a literary annual heralds the "translated by/of/from" in the subtitle to signal the appropriation of foreign literature into the British tradition. In a review of titles listed in Harry E. Hootman's database of British annuals and gift books, the rough estimates of foreign literature translated or adapted for British literary annuals (1823-50) suggest that translations and adaptations did not overwhelm the annuals' contents.^[28] However, these numbers indicate the predilection of publishers and editors for endorsing poetry and prose that focused on matters external to England.^[29]

Not satisfied with remaining a London business and importing literature with translations, Ackermann ventured into exporting the *Repository of Arts* magazine to [New York](#), [Halifax](#), [Quebec](#), the West Indies, [Hamburg](#), [Lisbon](#), [Cadiz](#), [Gibraltar](#), [Malta](#), the Mediterranean, [the Cape of Good Hope](#), and the East Indies (Jervis 105). Eventually, he would export his *Forget Me Not* to Latin American countries, translated as *No Me Olvides*, beginning in 1824. 

In 1825, Ackermann sent his youngest son, George, to [Mexico](#) to inquire about setting up bookselling enterprises. After drafting a seemingly reluctant Spaniard, Joseph Blanco White,^[30] as author and editor, Ackermann ventured into the Catholic, Spanish-speaking industry of [Mexico](#), [Guatemala](#), [Caracas](#), [Colombia](#), and [Argentina](#) with *No Me Olvides*. Evidence from the *Literary Gazette* and the *Foreign Review* indicates that Pablo de Mendibil continued editorial duties between 1827 and 1829: "*No Me Olvides*.—*Collection de Producciones en Prosa i Verso Originales, Imitadas i Traduzidas para MDCCCXXIX*. Por D. Pablo de Mendibil, Ackermann, Mejico: asimismo en [Colombia](#), [Buenos Aires](#), [Chile](#), [Peru](#), i [Guatemala](#)." A review in the *Literary Gazette* in 1829 states, "The 'No Me Olvides' is a partial translation of the 'Forget me not,' but in great part composed of original articles, among which we should wish to particularize several of peculiar merit. Suffice it to remark, that the lover of a well-drawn picture of Spanish manners will be highly gratified with 'El Remolon de la Escuela,' one of the most charming sketches which we remember to have read" (262). Playing on the original didactic and moralistic qualities of the early annuals, this reviewer notes the impact these ideals of Britishness were expected to have on the already-elite society of Latin America.^[31]      

In 1825, Ackermann installed his oldest son, Rudolph Jr., in a [Regent Street](#) print shop, where he operated for the next forty years, eventually dropping "Jr." and renaming his shop The Eclipse Sporting and Military Gallery. After Ackermann's stroke in 1830, the three younger sons took over R. Ackermann, briefly adding "& Co." to title pages but renaming the entire business Ackermann & Co. in 1832. The 1834 *Forget Me Not* volume indicates a discrepancy in business titles and possibly signals piracy in the printing world. The 1834 volume that I inspected lists the publisher on the title page as "Ackerman & Co.," leaving off the second *n* in Ackermann's name. This volume, published and distributed in November 1833, continues the trend of Ackermann's vacillating public name, but it may also signal one or more of several significant reasons, including the following: illegal printed 

editions of the 1834 volume, which would not have been uncommon; the further evolution of Ackermann's business; his loss of control (he died in 1834 and had turned over the business to his sons in 1830); or a serious mistake by printers that was not caught by the detail-oriented Ackermann, perhaps because of his imminent death. Ackermann's family would continue to lead the publishing industry in illustration books and decorative prints for the next twenty years.

After a successful career in the publishing industry, Ackermann made his last venture, the *Forget Me Not*, one of his most successful because he anticipated his readers' desires for a collection of literary and artistic materials that could become a valuable family heirloom, a literary work that would influence aesthetic taste and empower a female readership well beyond his death.

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ENDNOTES

[1] For an index of prominent contributions to American and British literary annual titles, see Appendix B, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual 1823-1835*.

[2] For a list of American and British literary annual titles, see Appendix A, *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual 1823-1835*.

[3] Allen M. Samuels suggests that this savvy, German-born entrepreneur can only be qualified by the business records that he left behind. Without a centralized archive of his letters, we can only surmise the accuracy of a *Notes and Queries* article's (1869) description. Very few accounts exist of Ackermann's workplace, with the exception of a single 1798 mention by colorist John Sell Cotman, and that provided by his son, Miles Edmund. John Ford, Ackermann's only biographer, paints a picture of a well-liked humanitarian.

[4] According to Colin Franklin, Ackermann was a friend of Alois Senefelder, a German who invented lithography in 1798 and then published (in English by Ackermann in 1819) in *A Complete Course of Lithography*. Lithography allows the artist to draw directly onto stone without the intervention of a line engraver. Around 1819, Ackermann employed William Combe to write an argument against a proposed tax on the type of stone used for lithography, the best of which came from Germany (Franklin 57-58). Combe's treatise employed Ackermann's favorite technique, encouraging leadership in a quickly evolving world economy: "Lithography, though well known, as it is most extensively to the very great Advantage of the places where it has been more particularly cultivated and encouraged—It is however but new in this country, though if cultivated and encouraged promises uncommon improvement in a branch of the fine Arts, which have taken such deep root in the British soil, and form such beneficial article in the trade of it" (Franklin 58).

[5] Because of his relationship with Ackermann, Papworth contributed five prose descriptions of architecture, the type of descriptions that moved Ackermann to elevate architecture to artistic rendering: "Regent Street" (FMN 1824), "Porch of the *Chartres Cathedral*" (FMN 1836), "The Doge's Palace, Venice" (FMN 1837), "Monuments of the Scaligers" (FMN 1846), and "Ratisbon Cathedral" (FMN 1847). Each essay is accompanied by an engraving of the same title.

[6] Allen Samuels proposes that Ackermann's relationship with Rowlandson extended the influence of the Picturesque movement in London during the early nineteenth century because Ackermann "promoted art as illustration" ("Publishing the Picturesque" 242).

[7] Ackermann collaborated with celebrated artist, Auguste Charles Pugin, to great success on this project. See Rosemary Hill, "A.C. Pugin" 11-19.

[8] For an in-depth view of Ackermann's business, see John Ford's article "Ackermann Imprints and Publications." For a discussion that locates Ackermann in larger nineteenth-century history, see Matthew Kutcher's first dissertation chapter, "Rudolf Ackermann and the Politics of a British Culture Industry." For an overview of the history of lithography in the early nineteenth century and Ackermann's contributions, see Karen F. Beall 195-201.

[9] By selling subscriptions, essentially a pre-order of a magazine or book made by individuals as opposed to booksellers, publishers could ideally determine budgets and profits before committing an issue to print.

[10] Pugin allowed three paintings to be rendered into engravings for the *Forget Me Not (FMN)* in addition to his other work with Ackermann: "The Pavilion, Brighton, West Front" (FMN 1826); "The Pavilion, Banqueting Room" (FMN 1826); and the Presentation (FMN 1834). The pavilion artworks are accompanied by an anonymously authored prose description, "The Pavilion, His Majesty's Palace, at Brighton," and a third engraving not drawn by Pugin. For Pugin's son's influence on the Gothic Revival in architecture (carrying on his father's legacy) during the first half of the nineteenth century, see Hill "Reformation to Millennium: Pugin's Contrasts in the History of English Thought" 26-41.

[11] Literary annuals were at first produced for a subscriber but were quite rapidly converted to consumer publications which were pre-ordered by various booksellers depending upon the authors, editors and publishers involved in a title. Orders also increased if the annual had a reputation for selling well during the previous year. Of course, reviews and circulation numbers were important in these decisions. Though many scholars have been able to track circulation numbers as offered by the original publishing houses or revealed in an editor's preface, it has been virtually impossible to assess actual ownership, gift-giving, or readership of literary annuals. Inscriptions give us some idea about a particular volume's provenance and ownership, but the literary annuals are not held in any cohesive collection enough to assess these issues.

[12] French and German scholars have evaluated and indexed the impact of the almanac and pocket-book on literary annuals published in various countries. The French studies include John Grand-Carteret's *Les Almanachs Français* (1896), B.H. Gausseron's *Les Keepsakes et les Annuaire Illustrés de l'Époque Romantique* (1896), Frédéric Lachèvre's *Bibliographie Sommaire des Keepsakes et Autres Recueils Collectifs 1823-1848* (1929) and *Bibliographie Sommaire de l'Almanach des Muses (1765-1833)* (1928). The German studies include Paul Merker's *Reallexikon de Deutschen Literaturgeschichte* (1926-1928), Hans Köhring's *Bibliographie der Almanache, Kalender and Taschenbücher 1750-1860* (1929), R. Pissin's *Almanache der Romantik* (1910), Hans Grantzow's *Geschichte des*

Göttinger und des Vossischen Musenalmanachs (1909), Wolfgang Seyffert's *Schiller's Musenalmanache* (1913). V.A. Wien has created a list of European annuals in *Almanache, Kalender, Taschenbücher, Anthologien* (Ralph Thompson 165-66).

[13] For a discussion of the Christmas trade and commodification of books, see Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas* (1997), Andrew Piper, chapter four, *Dreaming in Books* (2009), and Kooistra, chapter four, *Poetry, Pictures and Popular Publishing* (2011).

[14] In *The Evolution of the Book*, Frederick Kilgour describes stereotyping as "[a] process for producing a metal printing plate by infusing a plaster mold of typeset text with lead-rich type metal to produce an exact reproduction of the original type [which] is useful for printing newspapers, as well as books for which reprinting is anticipated" (106).

[15] Though the steam press became standard operating machinery in the production of newspapers and was a catalyst for dailies' and weeklies' lower retail prices, it did not replace the more expensive hand labor in book printing until the 1830s (Altick 277). See also Elizabeth Eisenstein's *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of an Ending* (2011).

[16] Altick describes the "working class" as lower-middle and lower classes who were "ranks of unskilled labor" as opposed to the "old-established middle class (merchants and bankers), large employers of labor, superior members of professions" (82). With the movement from cottage industries to mechanized labor, more people were moving to urban areas during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The working class, as the largest-growing consumer class during that time, was a heterogeneous mixture of reading publics as well as economic levels—with their income, some in this class could be grouped with the lower middle class, a working class of literate and skilled laborers. The reading materials in demand depended heavily upon the income of these skilled laborers: "people who benefitted from the spread of elementary education and whose occupations required not only that they be literate but that they keep their reading faculty in repair. And because these people shared more in the century's prosperity than did the unskilled laborers, they were in a somewhat better position to buy cheap books and periodicals as these became available" (83). "Cheap books and periodicals" were less costly to produce and more effective in rapid production.

[17] This long-lasting genre focused particularly on the eccentricities of upper-class lifestyle. Tamara Wagner labels the genre both escapist and censorious of the "frivolities and often supercilious emphasis on the aesthetic rather than the moral that characterised aristocratic high society" (par. 1). According to Wagner, the genre lasted throughout the nineteenth century but was popular during late 1820s and 1830s because of publisher Henry Colburn's advertising and recruiting skills. Hazlitt (who coined the term), Thackeray, and Carlyle criticized the silver fork society and the itinerant novels in various works, including *Vanity Fair* and *Sartor Resartus* (Wagner, pars. 1-2). For further reading on silver-fork society and literature, see Alison Adburgham's *Silver Fork Society: Fashionable Life and Literature from 1814-1840*.

[18] For a discussion of the twopenny newspaper's cultural capital, see Brian E. Maidment's article, "'Penny' Wise, 'Penny' Foolish?: Popular Periodicals and the 'March of Intellect' in the 1820s and 1830s."

[19] These authors, titles and dates were amassed from primary research of newspapers, periodicals and printed materials from 1789-1860. Some references were taken from J. R. de J. Jackson's enumerative bibliography, *Romantic Poetry by Women*, Richard Altick's appendices in *The English Common Reader* (381-96), and "On Cheap Periodical Literature" in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1825 (483-86).

[20] In 1814, Ackermann again engaged in relief support, this time on behalf of orphans and widows affected by the Battle of Leipzig. The King of Saxony recognized his work and awarded him the Order of Civil Merit. Printed posthumously, *A Short Account of Successful Exertions in Behalf of the Fatherless and Widows After the War in 1814* provided correspondence and accounts of Ackermann's efforts. This pamphlet was apparently published to "increase the Subscriptions for the Fatherless and Widows of 1870 and 1871" by relaying the generosity of Ackermann in supporting victims after an assault on Leipzig, as recounted in the *Narrative of the Most Remarkable Events which occurred in and near Leipzig ... 1813* written by Frederic Shoberl. Sir Walter Scott wrote to Ackermann commending him on his endeavors. He calls Ackermann's *Narrative* "the most striking picture I ever read of the realities of war" (14 from March 26, 1813 letter). Ackermann also took in French and Spanish immigrants to work in his printing house, but this is a well-documented fact—and some suggest, perhaps not so benevolent.

[21] Ackermann and subsequent literary historians capitalize and italicize the word "taschenbuch" when writing about its influence on the *Forget Me Not*. In English, this grammatical structure infers that the word is a title. In German, though, all nouns are capitalized.

[22] For further information on William Taylor and his Anglo-Germanic influence in England, see Georg Herzfeld, "William Taylor of Norwich: A Study of the Influence of Modern German Literature in England."

[23] For a discussion of *Mimili* as it relates to German nationalism, authorial control and German parodies, see Todd Kontje's "Male Fantasies, Female Readers: Fictions of the Nation in the Early Restoration."

[24] From *Internet Archive* (<http://archive.org/details/mimilieineerzhoheunuoft>) accessed 8 July 2013.

[25] His translations include *A History of the Female Sex* (1808) and Kotzebue's play, *The Patriot Father* (1830) from German and *Travels to Jerusalem and the Holy Land through Egypt by the Viscount Chateaubriand* (1833) and *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1833) from French.

[26] Translated by Professor Scott Westrem, CUNY Graduate Center.

[27] Ackermann lost control of the volumes in 1831 when he turned over the business to his sons. Though his sons were educated in a London-based German-speaking school, they did not harbor the same loyalty to the homeland as their father.

[28] For a list of these findings, see Table 1.2 in *Forget Me Not: The Rise of the British Literary Annual* (57).

[29] Hootman's database "consists of artist and author indexes of 4,700 illustration items and 13,200 literary items from 283 British literary annuals" from 1823-1850 <<http://www.britannials.com/>>, including the comic annuals. This is the only digital resource available to data mine the voluminous amounts of material published in the British literary annuals. Subtitles are inconsistently included in Hootman's database, which makes it difficult to assess the real effect of translations in the annuals. This is an area where further work is necessary after an appropriately encoded digital database has been established.

[30] For a discussion of Blanco White's work, see Joselyn Almeida, "Blanco White and the Making of Anglo-Hispanic Romanticism" (437-56). John Ford proposes that José Joaquín de Mora wrote and translated materials for *No Me Olvides* 1824-1826 (*Ackermann 1783-1983*) probably based on a review in *The Foreign Review* (1 [1828]: 323-24).

[31] For this Spanish translation of the successful *Forget Me Not*, Ackermann re-used the plates and their accompanying prose or poetry in *No Me Olvides*. In both 1828 volumes, *No Me Olvides'* table of contents doesn't include authors' names. Here, Ackermann publishes a translated volume and consents to erasing the original authors' names—a continuation of the debate surrounding anonymous contributions that plagued the first few years of British literary annual production.

