Editorial Voices in Isabella Bird's Rocky Mountain Letters:
A Case Study on Third-Party Editing in Women's Life Writing

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Introduction

Reading is an inherently collaborative process between the author, editor, and audience. The editor's primary (if not sole) purpose is to facilitate communication between the remaining two parties. The tasks of supporting the author's vision and promoting the reader's understanding are paramount but not always wholly compatible—particularly when the text being read and revised is life writing (e.g., diaries and letters). As mediators, editors always wield significant influence over readers' understanding of an author's intentions. In life writing, however, they are shaping readers' understanding of the author herself and her lived experiences (rather than her disembodied ideas or messaging) in a manner generally beyond her control. By explicitly acting on the author and, in consequence, implicitly acting on the reader, editors create a strain on their relationship with each. This strain raises ethical questions about how women are treated in media and practical questions about editorial approach (e.g., textual versus documentary editing).[1] The severity of this strain is impacted by the interaction between the editor's motivations for producing an edition, the author's level of agency in the production process (i.e., how the editor obtains their source material), and the author's chosen narrative. Herein, I use Isabella Bird's Rocky Mountain letters as a case study to discuss the editor's voice in women's life writings and how that voice manipulates the author and audience.

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[1]Serious discussion of editorial best practices is fairly recent. As the writers of *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (2008) note, "We also owe our readers a warning about a peculiar trait of documentary editors that creates a special challenge . . . practitioners have typically neglected to furnish the public with careful expositions of the principles and practices by which they pursue their goals. Indeed, it was editors' failure to write about editing that made the first edition of this *Guide* necessary in the 1980s" (Kline & Perdue 1).
A Guide defines textual editing as requiring "consciously applied critical judgment and scholarly experience to produce new, editorially emended texts" and is usually done with the goal of establishing "an ideal nonhistorical text" (2). Documentary editing is an approach to preparing "editions from source materials that can themselves be described as documents—artifacts inscribed on paper or a similar medium . . . whose unique physical characteristics and original nature give them special evidentiary value" (2–3).

I delve into editorial approaches taken in both contemporary and modern editions of Bird's letters. Contemporary editions take a nonhistorical–textual editing approach by virtue of the fact Bird was alive and working with publishing-house editors; her letters were a book manuscript, not yet historical documents to be carefully preserved. Modern editions are of greater interest here as, over time, more editorial approaches have become defined, standards have been formalized, and Bird's agency has decreased. These editions can (and arguably should) take a historical or documentary editing approach to facilitate transparency with the reader. This strategy might maintain or build on the author's self-constructed persona, depending on the source material.

Though ideals of recovery and preservation, the proclaimed goals of many modern editions of women's personal documents, are lovely and well intentioned, editors inevitably work with ulterior motives: career advancement, pedagogy, profit, and/or to assert their own messaging (to reinforce or perhaps destabilize social norms)—never mind subconscious biases. This discussion of editorial voice is necessary because the platonically ideal editor does not exist, and editors, as academics and publishers determining literary trends and standards, possess significant cultural authority. For instance, they shape canon, the "established standards of judgement and of taste" (Robinson 105). Through this authority, they also shape the discourse around the women they edit and guide readers to specific interpretations for internalization.

Feminists have discussed and pursued several methods of incorporating underrepresented perspectives to this "habitual[ly]" formed standard of what it means to be well read. "Whether dealing with popular genres or high art, commentary on the female tradition usually has been based on work that was published at some time and was produced by professional writers," but of greater interest here is the fact that "women's letters, diaries, journals, autobiographies, oral

histories, and private poetry have come under critical scrutiny as evidence of women's consciousness *and expression*" (Robinson 116–117). Of course, Bird was published and is well known within her niche of Victorian travel writers. She achieved fame, however, by writing her books in the format of interest, the epistle. While there are a number of possible reasons she and/or her editors chose to maintain this format (see "Contemporary Editions"), overlooking the propriety of the form would be negligent. Women may not have received the same encouragement as men to write fiction, journalism, or other popular genres, but they were expected to write letters. Bird did for herself as feminist scholars have suggested we do for women who could be recovered—she used a feminine form to infiltrate a male-dominated genre, travel writing.[2] Though diversifying the canon by introducing women's life writings certainly has its merits, this method presents concerns because it creates legacies for women that many of them could not have imagined, could not consent to, and may not have wanted.

Understanding the author's level of agency in the creation of her public persona is vital to the reader's ability to look at editorial voice critically. Source materials range from documents found long after the woman's death to manuscripts the woman consciously prepared for publication. Anne Lister (1791–1840), for instance, explicitly did not consent to the legacy her editor, Helena Whitbread, has created for her. Lister, a diarist who went to great lengths to keep her private life and thoughts illegible, encrypted sections of her diary in a code she created based on ancient Greek.[3] Whitbread published the only publicly available edition of Lister's diaries,

[2]Of course, men also travelled for health and published about their experiences. It was much more common, however, for men to travel with the intent to publish than it was for women. Bird makes a point of stating in a prefatory note to *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* that "[t]hese letters, as their style sufficiently indicates, were written without the remotest idea of publication" (Murray vii). Considering her Rocky Mountain letters are not her first travel publication (let alone her first epistolary publication), Bird's readers could reasonably doubt the veracity of her claim, reading it as performative humility that she did not intend to publish but was "request[ed]" to do so.
[3]These encrypted sections describe anything from her romantic encounters with other women to activities, such has mending her own stockings, that made her seem of a lower class.

The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister, in 2010, 170 years after Lister's death. That year, a movie with the same title came out, and more recently, the HBO series *Gentleman Jack* was released, rapidly popularizing a fictionalized version of her life. She is now remembered first and foremost as a "lesbian," a term which did not come into popularity until after her death. If she had access to modern gender and sexual identities, she may have identified as a trans man, considering her stereotypically masculine tendencies, or as gender nonconforming. She could not have anticipated how we talk about her even if she intended for her writings to be made public, and so referring to her in such terms is neither wholly accurate nor fair.[4]

Margaret Fountaine (1862–1940), on the other hand, did anticipate the publication of her diaries, but by her request, they were published posthumously. An accomplished lepidopterist, she donated a chest containing her twelve volumes of writings (part diary, part field journal) to the Norfolk Museum with a note requesting it not be opened until 15 April 1978 (100 years from the date she started keeping her diaries) and that she not be remembered for her girlhood flirtations:

> Before presenting this—the story of my life . . . I feel it incumbent upon me to offer some sort of apology for much that is recorded therein, especially during the first few years . . . a hundred years ago, when education of women was so shamelessly neglected, leaving the uninitiated female to commence life with all the yearnings of nature quite unexplained to her, and the follies and foibles of youth only too ready to enter the hitherto unoccupied, and possibly imaginative brain. (qtd. in Scott-Stokes 14)

[4]I want to explicitly note that I admire Whitbread's work and find it valuable. Anecdotally, I am aware of the inspiration she and Lister have been to young members of the LGBTQ+ community, and her work has spawned much of my own research. That said, all projects that put a figure under a microscope should be considered critically. A summary of Whitbread's work is available at www.annelister.co.uk (Moore n.p.).

Instead of heeding Fountaine's request, her editor, W.F. Cater, reduced her copious writings to two slender volumes, *Love Among the Butterflies* (1980) and *Butterflies and Late Loves* (1986), which as their titles suggest, focus on her love life over her scientific accomplishments.[5] Accordingly, readers understand her as coquettish.

While both Whitbread and Cater deny their authors' wishes and give perhaps undue emphases to these women's sexualities, their editions read differently because their motivations for editing and treatments of their audiences are distinct. Whitbread became interested in Lister as a local figure and enthralled with her story as an atypical representation of the Victorian woman. She is candid with the reader in her introduction, relaying facts in a relatively neutral manner. Cater, on the other hand, seems motivated by the old cliché, "sex sells," given the titles he chose and the tactics he perhaps thought necessary to produce popular editions of a nineteenth-century woman's work; he even speculates about the possibility that her donation contains an "unpublishable work on the collecting of diurnal lepidoptera" (13). In his introduction to the second volume, he credits the men in Fountaine's life with her accomplishments and narrativizes in a way that minimizes her agency in the events on which she wrote. Though some editors may not want their biases to be obvious to avoid criticism, providing basic information about the publication process is a best practice that should be observed. Whitbread, for instance, provides the selection criterion she used to determine which diary entries to include, noting "[f]or this volume of excerpts from Anne Lister's journals I have

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[5]Fountaine honed breeding techniques, has had a species of butterfly named after her, published in *The Etymologist*, had her specimens exhibited at the British Museum, and was among the first women invited to join the Linnean Society.
Cater suggests the only reason curators respected Fountaine's request that her donation not be opened right away was that they did not expect it to contain anything of value: "Fountaine, though the author of some papers for learned societies and respected among lepidopterists, is summed up now, not unkindly, as a useful collector, perhaps a great one, but not a great scientist," implying that, for this reason alone, "the box remained in the store rooms of the Castle Museum for nearly forty years" and that, had they known what was inside, this request too would have been ignored (14).

concentrated on the years 1816–24, the most emotionally dramatic period of her life, during which the development of two of her most significant relationships with women . . . is chronicled" (xxiii). Cater only implies his criterion through the titles of his editions. The veneer of decisive factuality that covers projects with a historical bent needs to be explicitly addressed in both the creation process and finalized edition.

As noted earlier, Bird's personal writings, unlike Lister's or Fountaine's, were published and republished often within her lifetime as well as posthumously, ameliorating concerns of consent and making her a comfortable focal point for this discussion on the responsibility of the editor. Her lengthy publishing history also facilitates a comparison of editorial approaches and changes in practices. In modern editions, her letter format demands the consideration of both textual- and documentary-editing practices. Though scholarly editions are products of textual editing (usually emended with the aim of creating a definitive edition of a particular work), principles of documentary editing contribute to a more transparent edition.

Of course, all creative writing is fictionalized. Bird's genuine self—a uniform personal character devoid of any airs or construction—is nonexistent, and authorial intention cannot be proven. Nevertheless, the maintenance of these impossibilities (e.g., the authentic author and her intentions) is generally the aspiration of good editorial work as the label "nonfiction" alludes to their existence. This aspirational true character, however, can conflict with the author's constructed persona. This tension between respecting the author and candor with the reader is the crux here: When do the author's and readers' best interests align? What happens when they do not?

To facilitate this discussion of editorial voice, I break down the editorial process as follows:[6]

- First-party editing—This part of the process comprises the editorial work of the author herself. Regarding women's life writings, the process is often meant to end here—their publication being strictly posthumous and unanticipated by the writer. In cases such as Bird's, however, this stage can be broken down further into private and public editing.
    - Private editing—This step is the editing that takes place as the author writes to her initial audience, whether herself (in the case of the diary) or a friend or relative (in the case of the letter). This step comprises two simultaneous actions, conscious and subconscious editing.
        - Conscious editing—This substep includes the choices the writer wittingly makes, such as going into details she knows will interest her target audience, including private jokes, omitting information if she is worried unwanted eyes might find her document, quietly revising events to appear the hero (or at least free from blame), and so on.
        - Subconscious editing—This substep is the editorial work the author performs without meaning to. It takes place inevitably as she fits her narrative to the limitations of a page. She omits insignificant or forgotten details and events, perhaps gives undue emphasis to something that is on her mind. Even typos are a form of editing.

[6]I begin to think about the editorial process in these terms in *In Search of Health, Freedom & Identity: An Analysis of Isabella Bird's and Margaret Fountaine's Renovation of Self through Travel & Travel Writing* (2016), a document which primarily focuses on questions regarding the development of identity through travel writing and first-party editing.

  - Public editing—This step does not always take place. It comprises the work an author does when and if she realizes her private writings will become public documents. At this point, she might excise details that seem too personal or insert new information for intellectual gravitas.
- Third-party editing—This category comprises the publisher's/editor's decisions, particularly those that are beyond the author's control, including the production of secondary materials, which inevitably alter the way the author of interest continues to be discussed.

By the end of this process, a persona of the author has been constructed for readers to engage with and judge. The author controls the majority of the process, but the final stage, third-party editing, is key because it marks the point when the narrative, though more closely associated with the woman than any other person or entity, is no longer owned by her; her life story belongs to a publishing house.

By virtue of the fact Bird was friends with her primary publisher, John Murray, she does not seem to be dramatically wronged in her contemporary editions. In modern editions,[7] however, frontmatter and backmatter are expected spaces that give the editor room to overtly sway the audience's perceptions of the author and her text. Even when the editor respects the author and her writing, they can underestimate or otherwise undervalue the reader.

Ideally, a third-party editor does not perform their work silently. *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (2008) states, "prefatory sections and appendixes are far more significant

[7]I focus on modern scholarly editions herein. Future work on the voice of the third-party editor could look at fan-fiction, which possibly creates more difficulty for women's reputations as they require readers to do more work to pull out truth. For instance, GoodReads reviews of Kari August's novel, *Reaching Rocky Mountain Jim* (2013), describe it as "informative," a "legacy [that] lives on," and "a good introduction to another part of history" (n.p.). Though Bird was fond of Nugent, based on what we know of her, she would not like the highlight of her travels to be a romance. Further, for a modern audience, this association damages her as Nugent is most famous for genocidal acts—slaughtering Native Americans.

in a documentary edition than in scholarly monographs or narrative histories. If readers are to make full use of any edition, they must know the project's standards . . . 'Full disclosure' should be every editor's motto" (Kline & Perdue 275). This guide advises editors to include the following information in the frontmatter of documentary editions:

- Statements of editorial method, covering textual matters, informational annotation, and other editorial policies.
- A list of all textual symbols used in the editorial texts and a list of any obscure abbreviations used.
- A list of short titles for published works and abbreviated forms designating repositories used in the edition or their appropriate equivalents.
- A list of permission and policy statements.

This information, particularly the statement of editorial method, helps the reader differentiate the editor's voice from the author's. Of course, modern good practices have not always been standards (style guides only came into popularity in the twentieth century) and are not always rigorously upheld. Ideally, a reader is vigilant for the editor's bias. A good editor, however, leaves as little work for the reader as possible.

The purpose here is neither to recover nor glorify. Scholars have well documented stories of women overcoming their circumstances and thriving in male-dominated fields, and Bird thoroughly performed this documentation for herself.[8] My goal here is not to analyze how or

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[8]She details her adventures outside Britain in *The English Woman in America* (1856), *The Hawaiian Archipelago: Six Months Among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands* (1875), "Australia Felix: Impressions of Victoria" (1877), "Letters from the Rocky Mountains" (1878), *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan A Record of Travels in the Interior, Including Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines of Nikkó and Isé* (1880), *The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither* (1883), "A Pilgrimage to Sinai" (1886), *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan, Including a Summer in the Upper Karun Region and a Visit to the Nestorian Rajans* (1891), "A Journey through Lesser Tibet" (1892), "Among the Tibetans" (1893), *Korea and Her Neighbours. A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country* (1898), *The Yangtze Valley and Beyond: An*

why Bird overcame and accomplished but rather to discuss the many presentations of her accomplishments for analysis. To this end, I focus on variance and editorial approaches in the following five editions, three contemporary and two modern, of Bird's Rocky Mountain letters:

- "Letters From the Rocky Mountains." *Leisure Hour*, 27, Religious Tract Society (RTS), 1878—The first public iteration of seventeen of Bird's Rocky Mountain letters.
- *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*. John Murray, London, 1879—The earliest available book edition.
- *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1879—The earliest available American edition.
- *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, edited by Daniel Boorstin, University of Oklahoma Press, 1960—A modern scholarly edition that was edited by a scholar of American history.
- *Letters to Henrietta*, edited by Kay Chubbuck, Northeastern University Press, 2002—A modern scholarly edition that elaborates on the original seventeen letters. This edition was compiled and edited by a writing professor and journalist.

I am referring to her Rocky Mountain letters partially because academics tend to focus on her travels in Asia and partially because her time in the Rockies is part of her first major expedition. I am intrigued by this early stage when she was first coming into fame as an adventurer and travel writer. To keep the scope of this discussion manageable, I focus on editorial voice in the frontmatter of these texts and Bird's twenty-two entries written from Estes Park. Of course, this

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account of Journeys in China, Chiefly in the Province of Sze Chuan and Among the Man-Tze of the Somo Territory (1899), *Chinese Pictures. Notes on Photographs Made in China* (1900), and "Notes on Morocco" (1901).

decision also skews the discussion of Bird. As undue emphasis must be given to a portion of these letters, however, I am choosing to focus on the region Bird also emphasized. An image of the Park is the frontispiece of the two noted 1879 editions. She also writes that this location had "become the goal of [her] journey and hopes," and when she finally arrives, exclaims, "*Estes Park!!!* . . . I wish I could let those three notes of admiration go to you instead of a letter. They mean everything that is rapturous and delightful—grandeur, cheerfulness, health, enjoyment, novelty, freedom . . . In everything it exceeds all my dreams" (*Leisure Hour* 110, 218). Further, Jim Nugent, whom she met in this region, has become a significant part of her posthumous fame (the pair even have a restaurant named after them in Estes Park). Looking at biography, reader expectations, Bird's relationship with her publishers, her genre and form, and effects of variance across versions of her Estes Park entries, I endeavor to reveal editorial voice and how it speaks with or over Bird's own to instruct the audience.[9]

Editor–Reader Relationship

In editing life writing, fulfilling the task of elucidating the text without biasing or intruding upon it is impossible. This circumstance makes reading for the author's voice particularly challenging and demands the editor clearly define their methodology so the text can be meaningfully interpreted—so it is clear to the reader what is being represented and what is being left out. In *The Resisting Reader*, Judith Fetterley describes the influence of a text (and by extension, its author and editor) over the reader as follows:

> The major works of American fiction constitute a series of designs on the female reader . . . One of the main things that keeps the design of our literature

[9]I would like to acknowledge here that this document, though more about Bird's publishers than the woman herself, is also an act of revision.

> unavailable to the consciousness of the woman reader, and hence impalpable, is the very posture of the apolitical, *the pretense that literature speaks universal truths* through forms from which all the merely personal, the purely subjective, has been burned away or at least transformed through the medium of art into the representative. (xi, emphasis added)

I find her sentiment relevant to genres beyond American fiction. Though it is certainly an overstatement to say that "the design of our literature is unavailable" to an alleged monolithic female audience, the lay reader, regardless of gender, is not necessarily trained to look at the editor's designs critically or even to perceive the editor as an actor with intentions.

The editor's goal in reproducing personal documents is likely to establish representatives of and build commentary on the aforementioned "female tradition." This avenue of incorporating underrepresented voices into the social discourse, though certainly valid and valuable, inevitably entails a sense of voyeurism that casts the woman author back into her conventional gender role as a passive object to be exposed. Of course, Bird wanted her letters to be viewed and could hardly be considered passive, so she is not a prime example of this conflict. Bird's level of agency, however, is not the norm. In other cases, authors likely would have found publishing their private documents a violation, perhaps prompting the reader to contemplate their own posterity. How editors represent their authors signals to the reader how their legacy could likewise be shaped by a third party, what details could become emblematic of their character based solely on what happens to get recorded. Accordingly, the author's and reader's long-term interests align. In the short-term, however, having access to more personal details, a more complete representation of the author's character, is as helpful to the reader as an account of the editor's decisions.

Despite Bird's control, her work was edited to a patriarchal standard. To the Victorians, "canonical" was defined as "an 'admitted' and 'accepted' standard of literary value . . . These values were not just those of aesthetics; rather, literary value accrued through other factors, such as appropriate politics, genre status, gender decorum, class affiliation, geographical identification, and national affiliation and patriotism" (Chapman 73). Then, as now, canonicity had different implications for women than for men: "canonical status for women was contingent on representations of personality, as the cult of celebrity was fueled through the explosion of print media . . . . Professionalism and professional success, as with popularity in general, did not necessarily translate into lasting canonical status; indeed, canonization . . . was ultimately a posthumous achievement" (Chapman 73). Despite Bird's involvement in the publication process, "she could not control all the important markers of value" (Chapman 74). In her period, her writing was competing in "a business more hospitable to men than to women, based as it was in the public masculine sphere" (Chapman 74). Part of what makes Bird compelling is that she went on stereotypically masculine adventures, but part of what made her acceptable to her Victorian audience is that she could still be scrutinized in the feminine form of the letter, an emotional space.[10]

Though editing women's documents presents ethical questions regarding the representation of women who had varying degrees of agency in the publication process, it is a hugely important area of scholarship that fills in some historical and literary gaps by offering previously unconsidered perspectives. Thus, the concern becomes how to go about publication in

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[10]Scholars often note the fame Bird achieved in her life. Yes, her books were popular, but she still met with criticism. Archeologist Sir Henry Austen Layard, wrote Hallam Murray, son of John Murray III, regarding Bird:

> I must say that I think a woman must be devoid of all delicacy and modesty who could travel as she did, without female attendant, among a crowd of dirty Persian muleteers and others. Had there been an imperative act of duty or some precise end in view it might have been different, but as far as I can gather she had no object but to satisfy her curiosity and love of travel. (qtd. in Carpenter 206)

a manner that respects, rather than merely exploits, the author as an actual person and fulfills the reader's short-term needs (and desires) for detail and clarity. This concern is multifaceted and should be addressed on multiple fronts, but establishing, adhering to, and announcing an approach to the text without wrapping it in "barbed wire"[11] are perhaps the most critical steps in addressing this issue. In the frontmatter, the editor should explicitly state their goals, selection criteria, and approach to revisions, and then operate quietly in the text itself, giving readers the information they need to discern the editor's voice while leaving them space to become immersed in the author's. To further promote understanding, it is beneficial to remind readers that, though the author and protagonist share a name, they are not the same—the latter is only a character *based on* the former. Representations of Bird created via various approaches to her Rocky Mountain letters are discussed in the subsequent sections on contemporary and modern editions.

By acting on the author, the editor acts on the reader. While the editor's job is to make the act of reading as easy as possible, the reader cannot passively interpret the text: "the first act of the feminist critic must be to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader and, by this refusal to assent, to begin the process of exoricising the male mind that has been implanted in us" (Fetterley xxii). Though the idea of a uniform or omnipresent "male mind" no longer holds, the editor does approach publication with intentions for how the audience will engage with the text and what they will take away from it. Readers owe it to the author to consider where her

[11]Lewis Mumford refers to the twenty diacritical marks used in a scholarly edition of Emerson's journals as "ruthless typographic mutilation" because "treated as an integral part of the printed line, [these marks] spit and sputter at the reader, not only to indicate cancellations, insertions or variants, but also unrecovered matter, unrecovered cancelled matter, accidentally mutilated manuscript, even erasures" in "Emerson Behind Barbed Wire" (4). Such extensive in-text annotation obscures rather than clarifies content for the average reader, ensuring only academics have access to the information.

voice has been manipulated by a third party and to themselves to be critical of what they are being told to internalize.

Editorial Voices in Bird's Rocky Mountain Letters

In her lifetime, Bird primarily published her Rocky Mountain letters through the RTS, John Murray, and G.P. Putnam's Sons. These editors are discussed in the section "Contemporary Editions." Of greater interest to me are the creators of more recent productions, which are discussed in the section "Modern Editions," because as scholarly editions, they carry a greater sense of definitiveness through their intent to educate. Even with significant deference to a base text, variance between editions of the same work is inevitable. Variance in substantives (revision to text) is perhaps more obviously interesting than variance in accidentals (revision to punctuation or formatting). Both, however, can influence a reader's interpretation.[12] I break down variance in substantives as follows:

- Addition—insertion of text not present in a previous version.
- Omission—removal of text not present in a previous version.
- Reorganization—rearrangement of text that appears in a previous version.
- Rephrasing—amendments to existing language (including adjustments to plurality and tense).

Before discussing Bird's third-party editors in detail, I introduce Bird as an author, character, and first-party editor in the following section in an effort to help clarify her voice and self-constructed persona in her writings.

[12]In 2020, I began a digital project, *From The Rockies: The Creation and Recreation of Isabella Bird*, to track variance across Murray, Putnam, scholarly, and unique editions of Bird's Rocky Mountain letters.

Biographical Introduction to Bird as Author, Character, and First-Party Editor

Though discerning a complete and true picture of Bird (1831–1904) is impossible, readers extrapolate a character of whom they have expectations based on facts and third-party representations of her[13]—traces of her strict, Christian upbringing; reflections of the sensibilities of her Victorian, British environment; and complaints of her chronic illness; and so on. Certainly, all these aspects are highlighted in her comprehensive biography, *The Life of Isabella Bird* (1906), by Anna Stoddart and reinforced in later biographies. Bird selected Stoddart as her biographer and guided her writing. Though Stoddart's representation likely aligns with how Bird desired to be viewed, manuscript evidence shows that the story Stoddart told is sometimes wholly false rather than inadvertently misleading as a result of omission; Chubbuck notes "unpublished correspondence between Stoddart and John Murray IV . . . [shows] Stoddart's insistence on publishing anecdotes about Isabella that Murray had proved false" (2). Stoddart protects Bird's reputation. Over time, however, biographies further emend the material Bird collaborated in making, possibly building on what was already false and tweaking what was true. On a broad scale, these revisions illustrate how publishers reconfigure Bird to suit the changing tastes of their audiences. Modern editors perhaps reveal more than Bird would have liked in the name of getting closer to the reality of her experiences after years of subtle distortions to her original text.

Stoddart, in consultation with Bird, takes steps to uphold Bird's ideal public persona. For instance, in *The Life*, Stoddart endeavors to imitate the balance that Bird strikes in her public

[13]Herein, the term "editor" extends beyond the usual definition ("A person who prepares an edition of written work by one or more authors for publication, by selecting and arranging the contents, adding commentary, etc.") to include authors of academic works on historical figures and biographers because they too revise the original narrative, offering information that may not have been volunteered by the figure herself ("editor, n." n.p.).

letters between depicting her as a competent adventurer thriving in a stereotypically masculine sphere and as an upstanding Victorian woman.[14] Bird found "Travellers are privileged to do the most improper things with perfect propriety," and she had to find a way to convey that propriety and her overall experience to an audience for whom such actions and ideas were totally unfamiliar (qtd. in Harper 158). In *In Search of Health* (2016), I discuss this conflict by setting up the three interdependent facets of identity that manifest in Victorian women's travel literature: the socialized self, "the identity … developed as a result of the … society in which [one grows] up"; the renovated self, "the identity [one comes] into during the process of her travels" by interacting with cultures other than her own; and the edited self, created "to account for these [former] two facets of identity" (3). In the case of published writers, like Bird, the edited self is layered, being developed "first more or less unconsciously as [she] decided what information would most interest [her] private audiences and second more deliberately as [she] or an editor decided how the masses should perceive [her]." The initial creation of Bird's edited self partially serves to justify the unconventional happiness she found abroad. In her Rocky Mountain letters,

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[14]We see Bird's concern with image often, but I offer the following as an example: In retaliation to a magazine writing "She donned masculine habiliments for greater convenience," Bird had a prefatory note added from the second edition onward clarifying:

> For the benefit of other lady travellers, I wish to explain that my "Hawaiian riding dress" is the "American Lady's Mountain Dress," a half-fitting jacket, a skirt reaching to the ankles, and full Turkish trousers gathered into frills which fall over the boots,—a thoroughly serviceable and feminine costume for mountaineering and other rough travelling in any part of the world. I add this explanation to the prefatory note, together with a rough sketch of the costume, in consequence of an erroneous statement in the *Times* of November 22d.
> I.L.B
> *November* 27, 1879.

This note appears in all John Murray's and G.P. Putnam's Son's subsequent editions of *A Lady's Life* produced in Bird's lifetime. Though she defends the femininity of this costume in her published letters, she was quite embarrassed to be caught wearing it; she states in a letter (that was not published until 2002) from February 22, 1873, "We were cantering round a sharp corner . . . when we had to pull our horses almost on their haunches to avoid running over the King his suite [and] the American admiral . . . When I saw these strangers and their well veiled stare I remembered that I was in a Bloomer Suit [i.e., her Hawaiian riding dress] astride a horse and that probably they had never seen such a thing! I wished I were anywhere else" (Chubbuck 59).

she constantly demures when she is praised for her success in masculine activities.[15] She also continually follows up tales of physical feats with stories of her domestic competency.[16] While Stoddart generally abets Bird in her goal of maintaining a ladylike image, doing so is not necessarily common of biographers of women travel writers. Often, titles of these biographies serve to "hint . . . that [female travelers] are slightly eccentric, and introduce a comic note that can easily be interpreted as mocking," serving to other these women from the model of femininity (Bassnett 226).[17] Stoddart, for better or worse, does her best to highlight what was conventional about Bird's life, setting up an expectation that her writing will reinforce British norms and values.

Before mentioning anything about Bird's life, Stoddart builds up Bird's association with her audience by firmly establishing her English ancestry in a chapter called "Parentage and Inheritance" (Chubbuck, who is discussed further in "Modern Editions," also emphasizes Bird's lineage, noting she was proud to be "a 'de Byrd', a member of 'that very old Warwickshire family . . . connected with several families of that English nobility'" [17]). To further root Bird in the norms of Victorian, British culture and define her socialized self, this chapter highlights Bird's reliance on her father, physical fragility, and nurturing and charitable behavior. Bird's father, Edward Bird, was an Anglican clergyman. His rigidity in Christian laws, particularly his insistence on total rest on the sabbath, caused him to lose two posts; he resigned from the

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[15]She writes, for instance, "I earnestly wished that the 'Greeley Tribune' had not given me a reputation for horsemanship, which had preceded me here. . . . There were many loafers about, and I shrank from going out and mounting in my old Hawaiian riding-dress, though Dr. and Mrs. H. assured me that I looked quite 'insignificant and unnoticeable'" (*Leisure Hour* 219).
[16]Reminders of domesticity are a common trait in the writings of Victorian female travelers. In an 1845 article, Elizabeth Rigby argues the "peculiar domestic nature of an Englishwoman's life . . . made her excel all others in the art of travelling [since] the four cardinal virtues of travelling—activity, punctuality, courage and independence—had already been developed at home, enabling her to achieve so much abroad" (qtd. in Wagner 178).
[17]Bassnett notes the following titles: *Ladies on the Loose*; *The Blessings of a Good, Thick Skirt*; and *Spinsters Abroad*. Some of these texts do reference Bird.

first (1842) and was stoned by his parishioners from the second (1847). Rather than presenting Bird's faith as learned, Stoddart suggests it is innate: "From her great-grandmother, grandmother, and father Isabella received the priceless inheritance of a soul-hunger and thirst for righteousness, which . . . was to dominate all that she observed," suggesting her travel was perhaps evangelical in purpose (4). In an interview, Bird does credit "[t]o [her] father's conversational questioning upon everything," her keen observational and horseback-riding skills for which she is famous, noting "[i]f we rode, he made me tell him about the crops in such-and-such fields—whether a water-wheel were under-shot, or over-shot, how each gate we passed through was hung, about animals seen and parishioners met" (qtd. in Stoddart 9–10). The Bird daughters were more formally educated by their mother, Dora Bird. When asked about her schooling, Bird once said, "it was all so wonderfully interesting that we sat spellbound when she explained things to us. We never should have liked an ordinary teacher" (qtd. in Stoddart 12). From her mother, she learned Latin, Greek, natural history, mathematics, and chemistry. Stoddart, however, notes that a large portion of Bird's knowledge is owed to her pleasure reading. From a young age she read works such as Archibald Alison, Anthony Trollope, and Charles Dickens, characterizing Bird as curious and ultimately suggesting she always had an academic inclination.

Other than sneaking away to read, the extent of Bird's youthful rebellion is represented in the following anecdote:

> [Bird] was left alone . . . Her mother, thinking her scarcely well . . . had wrapped her up and bidden her rest till she returned. Isabella was not more than five years old, but a little scheme had been forming in her active mind for some days . . . Out on the lawn was a round bed of ranunculuses, crimson and golden and glorious,

> which she longed to visit. It was forbidden, for the weather had been rainy . . . she stole out of her wrappings . . . [and] darted straight to the flower-bed, and walking round and round, counting the bright blossoms, touching them and kissing them, she filled her whole being with the joy of them, and flitted back to bed. She said no word about her escapade. (Stoddart 10–11)

This lone example of rule breaking hardly suggests a wild woman (as some later biography titles may suggest Bird was) but probably was recalled as an emblem of an innate impulse to venture outdoors to appreciate nature. Per Stoddart, Bird is a well-behaved woman who takes immense joy in God's creation.

Stoddart also characterizes Bird's youth by her illness. Early on, she gives the following description: "Her tiny body was fragile, her face white, and on her lips was the constant cry, 'I very tired'" (9). To ameliorate her symptoms, she was kept outside as much as possible. Of the few childhood anecdotes Stoddart offers, annual holidays at Taplow Hall with Bird's extended family are given emphasis. Though Stoddart tells the reader that Bird enjoyed these stays, she must note that the simple act of standing all Sunday wearied her. Stoddart goes on, "had her courage not risen above it she might have delivered herself over to confirmed ill-health and adorned a sofa all her days" (15). Here, Stoddart tells the audience that travel was a necessity—the only alternative being a life of total invalidism.[18] Bird seems to have sincerely believed that travel and her health were inextricably linked; in a private letter to her friend, Murray, she wrote regarding her conditional engagement, "not to be an invalid wife I am thinking of going abroad

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[18]Three years before Bird became famous in the Rockies for her superior horsemanship, she was so weak that "Dr. Moir suggested a steel net to support her head at the back when she required to sit up, her suffering being caused by the weight of her head on a diseased spine" (Stoddart 70).

to some region where I can live the same open air equestrian life which restored me before," in the Rocky Mountains (MS 42024, 27 July 1877).[19]

With the industrial revolution, it became increasingly common for women to travel. It was, however, rarer for women to travel alone as Bird did. The women with whom Stoddart compares her, Miss North, Miss Kingsley, Miss Gordon Cumming, Lady Baker, and Lady Burton, generally traveled with husbands or brothers, and even if they achieved their own fame, are still often discussed in terms of their male companions. Stoddart notes on the first page of *The Life* that Bird is remarkable for travelling with no protection "against the most powerful of terrorizing influences, namely, the solitude which magnifies peril and weakens resistance" (v). Bird's solitary travel across the United States and American territories, Australia, Hawaii, Japan, China, India, and the Middle East, already impressive considering the challenges posed by limited travel infrastructure (even after the invention of the steam engine), is made perhaps more impressive from the impact of her chronic illness. She had what modern scholars believe to be carbunculosis, "a staphylococcus skin infection that results in large, infectious knobs on the back and spine . . . accompanied by fever, fatigue, inflammation and malaise" (Chubbuck 6). Neither regular bloodlettings nor a cocktail of laudanum, potassium bromide, and chlorodyne ameliorating symptoms, doctors prescribed her a change of air, a perfectly acceptable excuse for a woman to go far without a chaperone.

The question arises "Is harm done by maintaining the narrative Bird and Stoddart constructed?" After all, conveying the author's messaging is a part of the job, and an editor possibly does harm to the woman by emending the content she left. In Bird's case, I wonder if the narrative she crafted damages her sister, Henrietta, to whom her letters were originally

[19]Her next expedition was to Japan.

written and *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* is dedicated. If we believe Bird's illness is at least in part manifestations of psychological distress as some modern editors suggest, it becomes significant that Bird started developing symptoms of her chronic illnesses (1835) shortly after Henrietta's birth (November 1834). Wagner notes, "the much-rehearsed truism 'that the woman traveller was somehow in flight from something, seeking to escape' domestic confines has become exposed as a fallacy that might reinforce the danger of essentialism" (176). Nevertheless, evidence suggests a possibility that competitiveness separated the sisters. Stoddart devotes a whole chapter, "'An Taon Bheannicht' ('The Blessed One')," of Bird's biography to Henrietta. In the first sentence, Henrietta is characterized by her sister's mourning. From here, she is characterized by her "unruffled peace" and her "moral rather than intellectual" genius, and then again, she is described in terms of her older sister: "Less complex of character, less powerful mentally, less courageous physically, than her gifted sister [Isabella]" (122). Later editors wholly contradict this ostensibly Isabella-approved description of the younger Bird.

Of course, Stoddart is not Bird's only biographer. Collective biography has been a popular genre throughout history. Alison Booth analyzes the conventions of this format from 1830 through 1940 in her digital project *Collective Biographies of Women: How Books Reshape Lives* (CBW).[20] A total of thirteen biographies on Bird appear in the following nine collections within CBW:

- *Memoirs of British Female Missionaries* (1841) by Thomas Timpson.
- *Celebrated Women Travellers of the Nineteenth Century* (1883) by William Henry Davenport Adams.

[20]This project is a relational database comprising "more than 900 [bibliographic entries of] all-female collections published in English between 1830 (when middle-class women's movements and publishing practices became more efficient) and 1940 (before the postwar publication boom produced too many volumes to tally)" when it was first made public. It now contains over 1,200 entries (*How to Make it* 2).

- *Heroines of Missionary Adventure* (1903) by Reverend Edwin Collas Dawson.
- *Some Famous Women* (1909) by Louise Creighton.
- *Missionary Heroines in Many Lands* (1912) by Reverend Edwin Collas Dawson.
- *The Girlhood of Famous Women* (1915) by Frederick John Snell.
- *Pioneer Women* (1930) by Margaret Emma Tabor.
- *Adventurous Women in South-East Asia* (1995) by John Gullick.
- *No Place for a Lady* (2002) by Barbara Hodgson.

Though nine is not a huge sample size, patterns can be gleaned from these titles alone regarding how the authors/editors/publishers approached Bird. From the covers of these collections, Bird is characterized as either a missionary, a traveler, or generally famous. Though Bird was the first woman inducted into the Royal Geographical Society and her works, at the time, were considered ethnography, none of these collections highlights her reputation as a scientist.[21] Earlier collections focus on her missionary work, but over time, her career as a traveler or adventurer becomes more consistently the focal point of her life story as told by others. This trend aligns with the development of feminism as a movement.

These collections also characterize the figures they discuss via association in the table of contents. Across these nine collections, Bird has nearly 200 "siblings," a term used to describe sets of women whose biographies appear in the same collection. As part of the analysis CBW facilitates, women are categorized per a set list of typologies. Bird is typed as "Adventure,

[21]Harper notes "While the modern concept of 'scientific' brings to mind the laboratory of the chemist of physicist, nineteenth-century science was less limited; it included elements of both hobby and mental discipline; it was a way of observing the world. Initially, eighteenth-and nineteenth-century science presented itself not as an area of study so much as a method which related observation to the forming of hypotheses, a method which could be applied to human activities as well as to the natural world. The natural history tradition was based on close and careful observations and made less distinction between the natural world and the people living in that world; thus, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, and archeology, as well as botany and geology, are scientific" (14–15).

physical feat or survival," "English," "Missionary," "Traveler, travel writer," "Writer," and "Writer, Epistolary."[22] Unsurprisingly, many of her siblings are the same types. These categorizations and associations suit what we know of Bird. She took steps in her personal writings to continually remind readers that she is a proper lady even as she thrives in the wilderness, and in CBW, authors generally recall her for her work and Christian endeavors (rather than portray her travelling unchaperoned and roughing it among men as scandalous). In fact, her travels, which her Victorian audience could readily have construed as unseemly, are safely couched among biographies of women who achieved fame, in part, because of their relationships to men (14 [15%] of her 96 travel-writer siblings are typed as daughter/mother/sister/wife "of notable man"; Trollope, for instance is "Mother of notable man"). Bird's reputation is further protected by her association with missionaries, minimizing the fact she also traveled for personal pleasure.[23]

What links Bird to her siblings in the two collective biographies, *Some Famous Women* and *The Girlhood of Famous Women*, themed around general famousness is perhaps more interesting if only because it is less clear. In these texts, she is aligned with such varied types as "Heroine in war," "Saint," (Joan of Arc); "Royalty," "Ruler" (Queen Elizabeth I); "Activist, Women's Rights," "Disabled, model or educator of the," "Reformer, political," "Writer, Nonfiction" (Helen Keller); among many other women quite different from herself—raising the questions (1) Why are these disparate women appearing together, and (2) how did the author actively go about fitting them together? These questions should be answered in the remainder of the frontmatter, the preface and/or introduction. The former collection seems to have been

[22]CBW contains nearly 300 typologies. Other categorizations may well apply to Bird. Nevertheless, these six are what the scholars who work on this project have drawn out as the most prominent.
[23]Bird did perform missionary work—founding a training center for medical missionaries for instance. Formal missionary work, however, is not a major aspect of her books.

created for posterity. Creighton writes, "In this little book I am going to tell you about some of the women who have been famous in the past. There are perhaps many names more famous than those I have chosen, but it was not always the best women who were the most talked about" (n.p.). Creighton wants to portray good women whose fame may not have persisted over time, offering a clear idea connecting her subjects: recovery. Frederick J. Snell, the editor of the latter work, has a less coherent through line. He wrote his text as a companion to *Boys Who Became Famous* (1914) and, arguably, for his pride, desiring to show how easy it was for him to disprove an unidentified person who "remarked on the paucity of great women" (Snell 5). Though Snell alleges he was sufficiently provoked by this comment to write a whole book to contradict it, he continues by saying that maybe none of the women in this book meet the requirements of greatness: "The present writer has not been conscious of any difficulty arising from this source [women], possibly because of the relative elasticity of the term 'famous.' A man or woman may be *famous* without being necessarily *great*." So, this book is not a direct response to the alleged "paucity." Snell's preface is an example of an obviously biased editorial voice. These women, though all famous, are not necessarily capable of fitting the "austere critics'" narrow definition of greatness as the men who appear in the companion text are. Nothing in Snell's frontmatter suggests that he is critical of this ostensible incompatibility, only that he accepts it as a norm.

No obvious modes of fame or qualities connect Snell's selection; the sixteen included women range from royalty, to writers, to adventurers, to saints, to performers. Despite the breadth of famous women, however, he notes, "If the number of chapters is rather fewer than in the former volume, the reason lies partially in the fullness with which some of the characters have narrated the circumstances of their early days, but more in the writer's deliberate choice of

a more detailed treatment" (5). Here, Snell notes (then quickly downplays) his implicit through line—the pre-existence of a successful biography or autobiography. Fourteen "of these little portraits have been drawn" after more comprehensive biographies (including four autobiographies).[24]

It is arguably bad form that Snell offers no "why" for creating this collection (other than to simply disprove an unidentified person, less interestingly, to turn a profit). The "how" he offers, pre-existing (auto)biography, is just as interesting from editorial perspective. Though relying on such source material makes sense—of the sixteen women he includes, half were published writers and, of course, their stories are told best in their own words—doing so raises questions: What is the point in reiteration? How is this text meaningfully different from an annotated bibliography with summaries? For Bird, his source material is Stoddart's biography, and the telling is so similar that his short biography almost reads as an abridged version of the chapter, "Parentage and Inheritance."[25] Perhaps contemporary readers were drawn to the convenience of summary or referred to such collections before deciding to buy a full-length biography or the subject woman's own work. Condensed tales of, in this case, women's success is instructive and/or inspiring particularly for a female audience. Editing an already partially fabricated work, however, possibly limits the informative value of the biography.

Modern scholars have turned to Bird's unpublished letters to divulge the deliberate fictionalizations in her books and biographies. While, in these documents, she often discusses her health, this topic does not feature prominently in her seventeen public Rocky Mountain letters.

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[24]Biographies: *Maria Edgeworth*, by Emily Lawless; *The Incomparable Mrs Siddons*, by C. Parsons; *Hannah More*, by A.M. Meakin; *Louisa May Alcott*, by Cheney; *Florence Nightingale*, by Sarah A. Tooley; *Jenny Lind*, by H.S.¸ Holland and W.R. Rockstro; *Marie Corelli*, by T.F.G. Cotes and R.S. Warren Bell; *Isabella Bird*, by Anna M. Stoddart; *The Girlhood of Queen Elizabeth*, by F.A. Mumby; and *The Girlhood of Queen Victoria*, edited by Viscount Esher.

[25]Undoubtedly, by today's standards, his short biography would be considered plagiarism of Stoddart's work.

When the subject of health does come up, it is almost always in reference to the wellbeing of others or the general healing properties of the environment. She makes frequent declarations along the lines of "There is health in every breath of air; I am much better already" and "all the requisites for health are present, including plenty of horses and grass to ride on" (*Leisure Hour* 218). Though health is Bird's polite reason for travel, she creates a more able-bodied persona for the public, which will be discussed further in "Contemporary Editions."

Henrietta is also a key factor in the publication of Bird's travel narrative because she was the original audience; the letters are framed around not only what Bird saw, but what specifically would interest Henrietta. Unfortunately, none of Henrietta's letters to her older sister are extant. Nevertheless, her responses shaped the ultimate content. Further, she helped revise the manuscripts for publication—in Isabella's words:

> One thing among many which made my letters to her what they were was the singular amount of her accumulated knowledge of countries of their geography products, government ethnology religion and botany. She always read and took notes of the best travels comparing them with naturalists and other books on the same subject. It made her mind so responsive to all one could tell and from her stores she could supply so much to fill in or correct the outlines. ("Diary-letters," 24 December 1889)

When refining her manuscripts, Isabella had the assistance of a woman so pious she was known about town as "The Blessed One." This circumstance too sets up the expectation that a Christian sense of morality will come through in Bird's letters.

A nineteenth-century reviewer wrote, "Almost all narratives of travel are interesting, either as conveying amusement to the general reader, or as affording instruction to the man of

science and the philosopher" (qtd. in Keighren et al. n.p.). This statement is true for Bird, in part, because her writing spans genres—travel literature, epistolary, autobiography, science writing, and now, documentary literature or history—and her writing has been embraced by her various publishers for all these traits. Genre aside, based on what we know of Bird, we might expect her letters to comprise subjects of health, religion, sublimity, and nature, but of course, what we know of Bird is curated by herself, scholars, and what passing eras have deemed important or insignificant regarding preservation of her work. Any number of characterizing events or documents could be lost to time. Having published often in her lifetime and being on friendly terms with her contemporary third-party editors, Bird did wield some influence in the public productions of her work, protecting herself from criticism but possibly doing some harm to her sister's legacy in the process. Scholars interested in the recovery of women could reasonably seek to flesh out Henrietta; doing so, naturally, impacts the characterization of her older sister.

Contemporary Editions

Early in her life, Bird regularly wrote articles for religious magazines, including *Good Words*, *The Family Treasury*, and *The Sunday Magazine*, all of which targeted a lower- and middle-class British audience. She did not begin her career an adventurer and travel writer, however, until she was middle-aged. Bird's Rocky Mountain letters were first reproduced by the RTS in their magazine, *Leisure Hour*, and then again in book form by John Murray and G.P. Putnam's Sons. Because Murray knew Bird personally and professionally, having met her before she was famous and worked with her consistently throughout her career as a traveler, I give greater attention to his editorial decisions.

Religious Tract Society

Though Bird worked with several religious magazines, she most often published her travel narratives in *Leisure Hour*: “Australia Felix: Impressions of Victoria” (1877), “Letters From the Rocky Mountains” (1878), and “A Pilgrimage to Sinai” (1886). As the first public iteration of Bird’s experience in the American west, “Letters From the Rocky Mountains” is the origin point of the publishing history for the seventeen letters that ultimately come to be known as *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains*. From here, we can look back at Bird’s original, private letters to her sister and manuscript drafts or forward to subsequent editions produced by other publishers. This first public version creates the baseline for later versions—any dramatic variance would be obvious. Unfortunately, little information on *Leisure Hour*’s publishing practices is available. The reputation and goals of RTS, frontmatter, and format, however, form a basis for analyzing editorial voice.

RTS was founded in 1799 on a mission to prevent the Christian middle class from getting distracted by secular content. Their earlier publications also included travel writing in the form of the epistle, so Bird’s work fits in with their tradition. Many of her travel books are adaptations of letters she wrote home, including *The English Woman in America* and *The Hawaiian Archipelago*, both of which were published by Murray before *Leisure Hour* produced “Letters From the Rocky Mountains.” RTS’s consistent inclusion of an epistolary section could suggest that maintaining a letter format was their decision rather than Bird’s, but it seems more likely that the editor asked Bird to publish in the magazine because her style already aligned with RTS’s.

“Extracts from Correspondence” was a recurring section in *The Tract Magazine*. This section reproduced letters from missionaries in Europe, North America, and Asia, reporting on

the distribution of the Society's literature and use of funds; "Thus, within one magazine readers encountered material proselytizing them [and] . . . accounts written from the point of view of those strategizing about proselytization" (Maurer 223). Accordingly, readers could "read about colonized subjects and understand them as fellow readers and peers likewise targeted by middle-class missionaries." Maurer aptly notes, "When we ask questions about how Victorians imagined their relationship to empire, we need to ask questions not just about what they read, but also about how they were *guided* to read" (224, emphasis added). She continues:

> Instead of emphasizing a spirit of readerly affiliation, the RTS produced an evangelical print culture that routinely asked readers to consume scenes of someone markedly unlike them reading what they had read before . . . not for the purpose of empathetically experiencing another's hardships . . . but rather for the purpose of re-experiencing their own past reading experiences. These experiences were always coextensive with conversion. (224)

Though RTS's style seems to shift slightly when they begin to produce *Leisure Hour*, a title "evoking . . . a bit of time shared by all readers," their goal remains moral instruction (229).

Leisure Hour, a weekly general-interest magazine that ran from 1852 through 1905, was RTS's most popular periodical. Each edition contained a mix of fiction, nonfiction (commonly travel writing), and poetry, all interspersed with illustrations—Bird is not the focal point of the publication. In fact, her seventeen letters do not even appear all together; readers must jump around and view, at least, snippets of other writings before resuming Bird's narrative. Thus, as women are characterized by their siblings in CBW, Bird is characterized by the other writers and content that share an issue with her. *Leisure Hour*'s frontmatter comprises a (noncomprehensive) list of illustrations, an index, and varieties. The index is organized by title, and the authors'

names do not appear alongside their work. Bird's "Letters" appear among content such as "African Exploration, Recent Central," "Bismarck on Socialism," "A flower Show and Home Encouragement Society," "Folk-Lore about Wells," and a range of biographies, highlighting both their instructive and entertainment value.

Though RTS's approach may have shifted with the production of *Leisure Hour*, the society's overall bias remains the same; as suggested by the magazine's subtitle, *A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation*, RTS aimed to instruct on Christian behavior and create a diversion from secular content. To Bird's contemporary audience, her association with this magazine likely boosted her popularity and protected her image. For a modern audience, however, this association sets up a critical view of Bird because it brings ideas of colonialism to the fore.

John Murray and G.P. Putnam's Sons

John Murray was the first to produce Bird's letters in a book format and to popularize them under the title *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains.* Often, Victorian publishing houses sought out manuscripts for publication (rather than operating by the submission process of modern publishers), as *Leisure Hour* did. The preface that appears in Murray's (and Putnam's) editions, however, suggests that Bird sought out publication from her friend because her letters "appeared last year in the *Leisure Hour* . . . and were so favourably received," and thus she "venture[s] to present them to the public in a separate form, as a record of very interesting travelling experiences, and of a phase of pioneer life which is rapidly passing away" (Murray vii). More than seven generations of Murrays formed a publishing dynasty. Founded in 1812, the famous publishing house persists as an imprint of Hodder & Stoughton. The Murrays were well known, having published works by such recognizable names as

Jane Austen, Charles Darwin, and Herman Melville. Unlike the ostensibly instructive aims of RTS, turning a profit and maintaining a gentlemanly social image were the Murray's goals. Indeed, their reputation helped secure a sense of respectability for Bird. Of course, across the generations who have operated this business, editing/publishing practices and cultural tastes vary; accordingly, so must their business strategy. The company, however, could not stray too far from *Leisure Hour*'s version of Bird's letters, with which the public was already familiar. The Murrays have always published across genres, but travel became a focal point under John Murray II (1778–1843) and John Murray III (1808–1892).

Notably, the majority of Murray's travel writers are men. Murray developed the market for travel writing as the official bookseller to the Admiralty by publishing the narratives of these enlisted men. Their reputation for travel was compounded in 1830, when Murray II became a founding member of the Royal Geographical Society and publisher of the organization's journal. He used these connections and hired within these "political and scientific networks and . . . trusted literary advisors . . . to evaluate travel manuscripts," but "[m]ore often than not, whether a travel account made it to print depended not so much on what it contained as a work of narrative or scientific description, but on where, geographically, its attention was focused and upon how, stylistically it was written" (Keighren n.p.). Keighren et al. aptly note, "The success of John Murray in travel publishing can be attributed to care taken in selecting titles for the press, in evaluating their appeal, in *shaping their content*, and in *directing* them to the right audience, in the right format, and at the right price" (emphasis added). Murray's method of shaping content seems to have varied from author to author. Their production of John Barrow's *Narrative of an Expedition to Explore the River Zaire* "replicated, word for word, the substance of Barrow's letter." Of course, most works were reviewed and revised more extensively either by Murray or

someone in his employ. The Murrays referred to their editors as "critics," and they often "repackage[ed] existing material in different formats and at different prices" to continue turning a profit over time with content they already owned (Keighren n.p.).

Throughout the nineteenth century, G.P. Putnam's Sons and Murray had a working relationship. Putnam both distributed Murray texts and published American versions. G.P. Putnam's Sons, like John Murray publishing, was a family business. The first iteration of the company, founded in New York in 1838 by George Palmer Putnam and John Wiley, was quite successful, and the pair eventually opened a London office. In 1849, however, Putnam separated from his partner and established the second iteration of this company, which his subsequent generations would inherit, again in New York. In 1996, G.P. Putnam's Sons became an imprint of Penguin. From correspondence between these publishers, we know Putnam consulted with Murray as they revised Bird's letters and asked Murray to include Bird in the process as well, and from Bird's correspondence with Murray, we know she enjoyed working directly with Putnam even though there is virtually no variance between Murray's and Putnam's editions (at least in the Estes Park entries).[26]

As noted previously, most renowned travel writers of the Victorian era were men; of more than 100 works of travel literature published by Murray between 1860 and 1892, only 17 were drafted by women, and 5 of these are by Bird.[27] This circumstance is perhaps owed to the political nature of the genre. Geopolitical factors heavily influence what regions of the world in which readers are interested, so as Keighren et al. point out, "Peace was also an important

[26]Regarding variance between the Estes Park entries in Murray's and Putnam's 1879 editions, there are "only thirteen minor differences: ten in comma usage, two in dashes and hyphens, and one in other punctuation. Ten of these differences are cases in which G.P. Putnam's Sons revised to match the version of the text that appears in the *Leisure Hour*" (*From The Rockies* n.p.).
[27]The other women are Lucy Sherrard Atkinson, Lady Di Beauclerk, Fanny Burry Palliser, Isobel Gill, Anne Blunt, Matilda Houston, F.D. Bridges, Hariot Dufferin and Ava, Janet Ross, and Susan Margaret McKinnon St. Maur (Peale 76).

prompt to state-sponsored exploration and geographical discovery. Approximately 20,000 British naval officers were on half pay post-war: finding a meaningful role for them was a pressing concern" (n.p.). John Barrow, a Murray travel writer, posited the following solution:

> To what purpose indeed could a portion of our naval force be, at any time, but more especially in a time of profound peace, more honourably or usefully employed, than in completing those *minutiæ* and details of geographical and hydrological science, of which grand outlines have been boldly and broadly sketched by Cook, Vancouver, Flinders, and other of our own countrymen. (qtd. in Keighren et al. n.p.)

The expectations of scholarship and political engagement and the danger of traveling to remote locations coded the genre masculine as did the popular style of writing about remote locations as feminine entities to be explored and conquered. Bird and Murray collaborated in constructing a persona who flourishes in such a masculine sphere while maintaining the femininity and decorum expected of a Victorian woman. And thus, "Letters From the Rocky Mountains" becomes *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, emphasizing that, even in the wilderness, Bird maintains her propriety.

A significant amount of initial variance[28] occurs between the *Leisure Hour* and Murray editions of Bird's letters. Formatting is expected to change in the transition from magazine to book because, in a book, space is less of a concern, which of course, also facilitates substantive changes, such as addition and rephrasing. Variance in accidentals is not always (or even frequently) in the name of grammatical accuracy; this type of change primarily occurs in the form of alterations to comma usage and placing informal names in quotes (e.g., "Jim" rather than

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[28]The term "initial variance" comprises the first instances of variance from the first publicly available version of Bird's letters, *Leisure Hour*'s text. Subsequent revisions are not included in this term.

Mr. Nugent). Murray's changes to *Leisure Hour*'s original comma usage tend toward the addition of commas or revision of commas to semicolons or em dashes—changes that create separation. Take the following sentences as punctuated by (1) *Leisure Hour* and (2) John Murray:

(1) Edwards with his wife and family were still believed to be here. A heavy snowstorm was expected, and all the sky, that vast dome which spans the plains, was overcast, but over the mountains it was a deep, still, sad blue, into which snowy peaks rose sunlighted. (670)

(2) Edwards, with his wife and family, were still believed to be here. A heavy snowstorm was expected, and all the sky—that vast dome which spans the plains—was overcast; but over the mountains it was a deep, still, sad, blue, into which snowy peaks rose sunlighted. (232)

Murray revises "with his wife and family" from a restrictive to a nonrestrictive clause by the addition of commas on either side even though doing so creates an error in subject–verb agreement. This decision puts the emphasis only on the man of the household; it is significant that Edwards, one of Birds' hosts at Estes Park, is still in the area—his family just happens to still be there because he is. In other words, Edwards is a main character in whom the audience should be interested—his family simply characterizes him. In the subsequent sentence, rather than minimizing a clause, he adds greater emphasis to the appositional phrase "that vast dome which spans the plains" by using em dashes rather than commas, reminding the reader that, in addition to the strong relationships Bird builds with the locals, she has just as strong a connection with nature, an inherent reverence for the sublime. Murray makes the sky's vastness more significant than its overcast state, further emphasizing this trait after the semicolon. Murray gives

more note than *Leisure Hour* to the sunshine just beyond the mountains. Such instances of variance in accidentals sway readers' perception of characterization and what elements of Bird's travels are most important to her.

Variance in substantives operates more obviously. Murray uses this sort of editing to a few ends. He leaves in Bird's signature at the end of each letter, consistently reminding readers that these documents were once personal. In doing so he either excites a voyeuristic pleasure in the reader or promotes their immersion by aligning them with Henrietta. Generally, he incorporates addition for the sake of specificity or greater detail. For instance, to the phrase "Consequently they [horses] exercise their intelligence for your advantage, and do their work rather as friends than as machines," Murray adds, "unless they are *broncos*" (*Leisure Hour* 219, Murray 87). Generic nouns like "letter" become "account of the ascent of Long's Peak," and so on (*Leisure Hour* 280, Murray 97). Her eye for detail is one of the characteristics for which she was most famous among her contemporaries.

When elaborations incorporated into Murray's editions have a bias, it is to make Bird appear more proper, capable, and/or ladylike than she reads in *Leisure Hour*. She closely associates with Nugent, notorious desperado, throughout her time in the mountains. Though modern readers often impose romantic tensions on the pair, Murray adds to a footnote clarifying "It was not until after I [Bird] left Colorado, not indeed until after his death, that I heard of the worst points of his character" (93). Murray's publication takes other steps to minimize the influence of Nugent's questionable character on that of the good lady Bird. Her description of her ascent and descent of Long's Peak with Nugent and two other young men illustrates this point. Bearing in mind that this climb would be quite arduous and Bird was a chronically ill woman, it should not be unseemly that her fellow travelers assisted her by carrying her to a

resting place secluded from theirs, but the passive “was carried . . . in a roll of blankets” becomes an active “retired . . . [and] wrapped myself in a roll of blankets” (*Leisure Hour* 285, Murray 116). A similar revision happens a few lines later. At first, the sentence reads, “‘Jim’ warmed some blankets for me to sit in, and made a roll of them for my back” (*Leisure Hour* 285). By the time Murray publishes this scene, Bird is “getting some blankets to sit in, and making a roll of them for [her] back” for herself (117). Such changes are perhaps evidence of Bird’s influence over Murray. Between these 1878 and 1879 publications she is presented as not only more able-bodied, but more ladylike in her independence.

In the *Leisure Hour* edition, Bird includes a note on an entry from approximately 20 November 1873, verifying the authenticity of this publication: “The following leaves of my journal letters are presented to the readers of the ‘Leisure Hour’ as they were written. They are monotonous and made up of trifling details, but they are a faithful picture of one phase of life in the solitudes of the Rocky Range” (*Leisure Hour* 693). Because this note appears in the middle of her letters rather than at the beginning, it may suggest to readers that the entries from before this date have been altered. This declaration of authenticity disappears from the book editions.

Bird’s contemporary editors worked with her to project an image of decorum that was likely not actually feasible under the rough conditions in which she traveled. The revisions from *Leisure Hour*’s language that assert Bird actively cared for herself minimize ideas of physical touch with ruffians, and lengthy insertions of observations and details of local phenomena helped establish her as an ethnographer.[29] These contemporary editions lack the infrastructure present in modern editions that enables editors to explicitly state their purpose and guide the audience how

[29]This mid-October entry, for instance, includes lengthy additions: https://fromtherockymountains.uvacreate.virginia.edu/from-the-rockies/estes-parkoctober-15-1873?path=estes-parkoctober-12-1873.

to read based on what they highlight in the frontmatter or what additional information (be it an index or selected criticism) they include in the backmatter.

Modern Editions

Several modern publishers have reproduced Bird's work. I focus on Daniel Boorstin's *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1960), produced through the University of Oklahoma Press, and Kay Chubbuck's *Letters to Henrietta* (2003), produced through Northeastern University Press[30] because, though both are edited by academics, they are dramatically different . Boorstin's edition is a recreation of the seventeen letters published in *Leisure Hour* and is meant to illustrate life in the Rockies during the 1870s. Chubbuck, on the other hand, reproduces letters from Bird's travels that had not been published previously in an effort to provide a more complete picture of Bird as a real person rather than as a character.[31] These editors' approaches reflect their priorities. Though both take a historical approach, Chubbuck's edition is a diplomatic transcription, prioritizing the author's judgement and voice, whereas Boorstin introduces frequent alterations to Bird's writing, prioritizing his own editorial judgement.

In his introduction, Boorstin offers no particular reason for creating his edition. He notes he is drawn to these letters, not because of an interest in Bird, but rather because "[i]t is a record of speedily changing American life in the days when the West was most full of change" (xiv). As he was a historian teaching at University of Chicago during the production of his book, one might assume his aims were educational, in which case his designs upon the reader, what he wants his and Bird's audience to learn, become the driving force of his editorial decisions.

[30]This text was originally published one year earlier by John Murray.
[31]Several events in *A Lady's Life* overlap with *Letters to Henrietta*. When compared, these editions show the extensive editing Bird did as she often compressed several days into one entry.

In terms of variance in accidentals, Boorstin primarily alters formatting, hyphen and dash usage, and spelling. I find that the long paragraphs and abundant use of hyphens present in Bird's contemporary editions are reflective of her associative style. While Boorstin's changes do not necessarily alter Bird's meaning, they do loosen the links that she and her contemporaries perceived. Boorstin also adds frequent paragraph breaks. This change is small but, in addition to creating separation Bird did not, it perhaps reflects an underestimation of his readers, an assumption that they cannot or will not confront a text unless it is visually broken up.

Regarding punctuation, Boorstin's removal of hyphenation generally aligns with modern rules of grammar. This decision, similarly to his formatting revisions, creates space. The punctuation in his base text, *Leisure Hour*, however, never makes comprehension difficult. As Boorstin does not announce his methodology, removing this trait of her contemporary publications seems like change for change's sake. Admittedly, the term "documentary editing" was not popular until the 1970s (after the publication of his edition). Nevertheless, pursuing a strategy similar to a documentary approach seems like it would have been a natural choice for a historian as it seeks "not to supply the words or phrases of a vanished archetype but rather to preserve the nuances of a source that has survived the ravages of time" (Kline & Perdue 3).

Americanization of Bird's spelling is another prevalent form of variance in accidentals in Boorstin's edition. Of course, spelling does not change the meaning of a word, but this decision does signal something about the editor's intentions. As Boorstin is a historian, a reader may reasonably expect his edition to be as close to the original language as possible to maintain authenticity to the period in which Bird wrote, her regional dialect, and the dialects she encountered in the Rockies. Assuming his goal was to create an educational text, he may have thought Americanizing her spelling made her letters more accessible to students and, therefore,

less distracting from his interest in a representation of American life during a dynamic time in the country's history, an underestimation of both readers' capability and Bird's talent as a writer to keep her audience fully engaged.

Many of his substantive changes are quite subtle. Some are the result of spelling changes; for instance, "hand-gallop," which is "[a] controlled gallop, in which the horse is kept well in hand to prevent its going too fast" becomes "hard gallop," which though it is not a formally recognized phrase, probably means the exact opposite (*Leisure Hour* 282, hand-gallop, n., Boorstin 85).[32] "Midland Counties'" becomes "Midland Countries'" (*Leisure Hour* 360, Boorstin 104). The latter is certainly a typo as Boorstin uses the original phrase, "Midland Counties," on the next page. Such an error creates ambiguity around whether other subtle substantive changes—making adjectives adverbs (and vice versa), changing plurality or tense, and so forth—are purposeful.

Boorstin's occasionally haphazard revisions to Bird's writing perhaps result because his primary interest is not preservation of the woman, but the locations she witnessed. His introduction brings up the land first and foremost. His first sentence reads, "The trip which took all the courage and stamina of this brave English horsewoman in 1873 has now become a casual summer excursion for American families" (xiii). Here, Bird is not the subject, but a part of an adjectival phrase, describing a place. Boorstin goes on, "This remarkable book can help us all recapture that peculiar mountain changelessness which has always fascinated men," praising the created rather than the creator and omitting the idea of woman altogether from the value of reading *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (xiii). In fact, Bird does not appear as a subject of a sentence until midway through the third paragraph of his introduction. Even the modern

[32]Googling "hard gallop" returns results about the difficulty level of galloping.

American traveler is discussed in active voice before her. When he discusses the woman, he introduces her place of birth, parentage, spinal disorder, and then her travels—all the usual subjects biographers have brought up since Stoddart.

After a summary of her life and travels, he does begin to praise her, noting "[i]t is hard to recall another woman in any age or country who traveled as widely, who saw so much and who left so perceptive a record of what she saw. There was nothing faddish or snobbish, and very little that was romantic in her travel interests" (xvi). He even ascribes to her a greater sense of free thinking than her male peers: "She did not try to retrace the steps of famous adventurers before her. Unlike Richard Halliburton, she was not interested in following the track of Cortés, of Hannibal, or of Alexander the Great. Unlike John Lawson Stoddard or Burton Holmes, she did not go gathering raw material for entertaining lectures or travel books," and he commends her for traveling without being a tourist, for maintaining an "objective focus" (xvi, xviii). Though he praises Bird, he ultimately concludes by paralleling her with the West, noting she "luxuriated in the paradoxes of this world . . . Her Rocky Mountain adventure symbolized that improbable combination of opposites which was the American West, and which was perhaps the most American aspect of that West" (xxi). Thus, reminiscent of male travelers' tendency to compare remote territories with women, Boorstin leaves his readers thinking about place over persona as they begin Bird's narrative.

Forty years after the publication of Boorstin's edition, Kay Chubbuck opens *Letters to Henrietta* with "an image, two-dimensional, black and white, dating from approximately 1899. In it, the subject is at the height of her fame. She stands proud—about four feet, eleven inches—clad in a loose-fitting gown of Chinese silk" (1). Before noting family history or illness, Chubbuck shows her reader Bird was a proud woman with the competence and ability to go far.

Chubbuck goes on, “When we look at the face, we see that the gaze is constructed: it is confident and imperious. It projects her reputation.” At this point, many biographers would bring up her charity work. Chubbuck, however, emphasizes Bird’s career and social circle: “She is the first female fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. She has dined with the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, and has been presented to the Queen. She is the author of a number of best-selling books . . . This photograph will be circulated and reproduced. It is part of the currency of her literary fashion.” Chubbuck introduces the reader not to a struggling woman, but to a fully empowered one. Only after establishing Bird’s accomplishments does Chubbuck allow her readers to “look at another image, dating from 1873. Here we see a woman less assured, her mouth slightly open, showing her teeth . . . she has none of the rigidity of the woman before. . . . She, too, has written books.” This image of Bird is taken in California, just before her expedition through the Rockies. Chubbuck pairs each image with a set of Bird’s publications associating Bird’s healthy self with her more adventurous publications—*The Hawaiian Archipelago*, *The Golden Cheronese*, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, and *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains*—and associating the invalid with her writings from locations with a culture similar to her home—*Aspects of Religion in the United States* and *An English Woman in America*. Travel could make Bird healthy, in no small part because it made her happy. After establishing a first impression in line with Bird’s self-constructed persona, Chubbuck offers her readers biographical information that helps them understand the text and offers insight into the creation of that persona but is information Bird did not elect to reveal, information she thought would remain personal.

Chubbuck, like many of Bird’s other editors, emphasizes that Bird never explicitly traveled for pleasure: “She believed in discipline, sacrifice and hard work. She undertook every journey for a cause – for health, for empire, for good deeds” (1). She also notes, however, that

"Isabella's guilt about her journeys meant that she jealously guarded her reputation" (2). Thus, Chubbuck reveals the purpose for her edition: "to explore a complex of truths and half-truths, unanswered questions, false leads and occasional loose ends." While truth is usually implicitly the goal of such editions, Chubbuck makes it explicit, putting more pressure on her editorial decisions. Fortunately, she is a candid editor. After stating her purpose, she provides a complete list of the source material with which she worked and acknowledges the limitations of her work: "How do we recreate a sense of what she was really like? The task of a biographer is to map and name, to presume the subject to be a finite structure. But real lives rarely, if ever, lend themselves to closure" (3). Though it may be easy to misconstrue Chubbuck's meaning here and decide Bird is simply making things up, she is highlighting an aspect of Bird's career that gets ignored with the label "nonfiction"—she is a writer, imaginative, and as Chubbuck notes, for everyone who writes autobiography, it "is hard to avoid writing about how things might have been, rather than how they were" (3). In the subsequent sections, she separates "What We Know," family history and education, from "What We Assume," Bird's intentions and motivations regarding religion and travel, both of which are bound up in her experience of illness. Bird alleged she not only got better when she traveled, but was completely cured of several of her myriad symptoms for the duration of her journeys.[33] For this reason, Chubbuck refers to her "in Victorian terms, [as] a 'neurasthenic': a woman bedevilled by physiological symptoms that arose principally from psychological problems" (6). This possibility creates an image of a woman who is perhaps alienated from her socialized self or had a tense relationship with her sibling, contradicting the persona Bird created.

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[33]Symptoms included "carbuncles on her spine, lesions on her legs. . . fevers, headaches, rashes, nausea, rheumatism, chest pains, muscle spasms, and hair loss . . . abscesses on her feet, and aching in her jaw" (Chubbuck 5).

Chubbuck also does the important task of contextualizing Henrietta in the section "What We Assume About Isabella's Relationship with Henrietta." It would be a mistake to minimize Henrietta's role in Bird's books because she was the real and is the imagined recipient; she is who these books are for. Though she is often cast as the more mild sister, never going beyond Britain, Henrietta was a scholar. She attended the University of Edinburgh; could translate Greek and Latin manuscripts; studied astronomy, botany, chemistry, and philosophy; read extensively; was an artist and published writer; and so on. She was not her sister's inferior as Stoddart suggests. Knowing to whom Bird wrote initially and who helped prepare her letters for publication is essential to determining Bird's voice. Significant to this understanding is the fact that Henrietta also had a desire to travel (her "ambition [was] to get beyond the parallel of 60°") but was perhaps stifled by her older sister:

> Isabella admits in her book on Hawaii that Henrietta had wanted to take part in her journeys but Isabella refused. Later, in 1878, when Isabella was ordered abroad once more, Henrietta fell conveniently ill. Was the pretext that a voyage might benefit her, too? Whatever the case, she was not allowed to go. Instead, Isabella needed Henrietta to stay at home performing the charitable work to which they had both been raised. It seems that Isabella saw her sister as a surrogate self, a *doppelgänger* that enabled her to revel 'with impunity' in her travels. (Chubbuck 10)

Chubbuck questions the authenticity of the terms of endearment that frequently appear in Bird's manuscript letters, positing "likely, the Bird sisters experienced a rivalry that their evangelical background made impossible for them to articulate" (11). Of course, any discussion of

motivation is inherently speculation, but serious consideration of Henrietta's role is a critical element of grasping Bird's content that not all editors document for the reader.

Chubbuck wraps up her introduction by reminding the reader of her own hand in the production of these letters: "*I* have presented Isabella as I myself most like her to be: complex, contradictory and many sided" (24, emphasis added). She stresses that she is presenting a picture of Bird via her curation of Bird's previously unpublished letters, rather than that Bird is presenting herself through her writing. After restating her purpose and preferences, she summarizes her approach:

> In editing these missives, I have tried to keep things as close as possible to the original manuscripts while also presenting them for a general readership. For this reason, a paragraph format has been added, and for purposes of space certain sections have been omitted or summarized. Explanations of unusual words are given in footnotes, while omissions are marked by ellipses in square brackets. (25)

Otherwise, she maintains Bird's choices regarding spelling, punctuation, and so forth. The letters Chubbuck provides are more or less unaltered. Though they are still revised versions of real events, they offer a more genuine sense of Bird's voice than the consciously edited documents that reached her contemporary audience.

Chubbuck includes 276-pages worth of Bird's letters from the sea, Australia, Hawaii, Colorado, Japan, China, and the Malay peninsula—57 of which were written from Colorado, and 22 were written from Estes Park specifically. Some of these entries do overlap with the content that first appeared in *Leisure Hour*. From this overlapping content, subtle but significant differences emerge from the originally published materials. Cuisine is bound to come up in any

travel narrative. In *Leisure Hour*, Bird boasts, "In this superb air and physically active life I can eat everything but pickled pork" (*Leisure Hour* 671). In her manuscript, however, she writes more honestly, "the air is superb and I sleep well . . . Anyhow I can hardly eat anything because of my teeth and sore mouth" (Chubbuck 175). Similarly to the variance from *Leisure Hour* to John Murray editions, the variance from manuscript to initial publication creates a Bird that is more able-bodied and carefree, even in the face of trials such as hunger.

Chubbuck favors her responsibility to the reader, and Boorstin, though he does intrude on the text with his stylistic preferences, leans (perhaps inadvertently) toward his responsibility of upholding the author's intentions. Boorstin does change her meaning in isolated instances, but he ultimately portrays Bird in line with her contemporary editors. His decisions, however, do a disservice to the reader by removing traits of the period in which the letters were written and published. Chubbuck makes Bird the absolute center of her edition, announcing to the reader what Bird left out and, thus, deliberately working against Bird's self-constructed persona. In doing so, she creates a better experience for the audience than Boorstin. She aids readers not only through giving an example of Bird's raw voice, but by reminding the audience of Henrietta, the person who upheld the other half of the conversation contained in these letters.

Conclusion

It is hardly controversial to say that the genre of women's life writings has both academic and entertainment value—as demonstrated by Bird's letters. Her oeuvre made the transition from popular literature to historical documents of recognizable significance across disciplines (from English literature to American history). Her writing style and manuscript evidence suggest that she took steps to guard her reputation, but her ability to do so was perhaps a luxury. Academics have taken interest in women, like Lister, who tried to protect themselves from scrutiny by

keeping their life writings completely private.[34] So, the crux of the ethical problem editors face is twofold: (1) deciding when a woman ceases to be an individual who had either desired to be forgotten or created a specific image for posterity and becomes a historical figure or symbol to hold up and analyze and (2) remaining cognizant of what their representation signals to the audience about their status and social expectations and how their experiences could be interpreted and further acted upon by third-party editors in the future.

Over time, even Bird's carefully constructed persona has been actively altered by scholars who have taken an interest in her for the genre in which she wrote, era in which she lived, locations and cultures she documented, and persona of the woman herself. Chubbuck, for instance, makes Bird the focal point of her edition. She explores fictionalization in Bird's writing in an endeavor to get closer to an elusive genuine character. By revealing previously private letters, Chubbuck both humanizes Bird and makes her an object for the reader's scrutiny. Bearing in mind that publishers have produced several editions of Bird's books and that each is a distortion (however slight) from Bird's voice, bringing together diplomatic transcriptions of Bird's original language is a massive benefit to the reader who, like Chubbuck, is interested in Bird as a real person. Doing so, however, is a revision of the persona Bird wanted readers to interpret as her true character. Boorstin, by contrast, shows an interest in the history Bird documented and, since Bird is then secondary, he does not characterize her as thoughtfully. Though he parrots the Bird-approved information and praises her work, he does not give the reader a sense of how he or any of Bird's previous editors have been actors in the reproduction her Rocky Mountain letters. As Bird's agency has diminished, readers have to work harder to separate the editor's designs from the author's.

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[34]In addition to encrypting some of her entries, Bird hid her diaries behind a panel in the wall of her home, Shibden Hall.

In the author–editor–reader relationship, the editor is the only figure who never takes a passive role. The author acts on the reader by conveying her experiences, and the reader acts on the author by interpreting and attributing meaning to them. As I have shown herein, the editor acts on both these parties by tinkering with the author's language and packaging it a certain way. Neither the author nor the reader, however, truly acts on the editor. Yes, editors are also readers, and authors, such as Bird, had the ability to make requests and perhaps sway the choices made during the publication process—but those choices are ultimately the editor's to make. Though the public text is the production of a third party, the general reader is likely to forget the editor exists altogether, perhaps even skipping over the frontmatter to get straight to the story. Regardless of whether readers are aware of it, the authority they give editors is substantial, and unless they consider editorial voice critically, it is particularly difficult for them to prioritize the author's voice.

Life writing (like any form of creative writing) and reading are imaginative acts. Chubbuck writes that the image Bird created of herself "is artificial, but it is no less true by virtue of its artifice" (2). In the process of scrutinizing Bird's first-party editorial decisions and subsequent fictionalizations, the editor speculates in the name of approximating what could have happened, provoking the reader's imagination and perhaps further fictionalization. Even though she had agency in the publication of her letters and wrote with a sense of posterity, modern editors carefully deconstruct Bird's contemporary edited self, the persona she hoped would persist, by teasing out sibling rivalries, alleging romantic relations with a man beneath her station, and creating doubt around her motivations for traveling through "unbeaten" terrains. As Bird is no longer an agent in the publication of her work, the public persona she constructed has

been remade by fans, scholars, and publishers, underscoring the power such editors wield over the legacies of women who never had agency in the publication process.

As we revisit editorial best practices, the fact we are creating legacies for real women must be kept at the center of the discussion—particularly regarding figures who lacked agency in the publication process. To balance the author's desires and reader's needs, the frontmatter should include not only the elements noted in *A Guide*, but also a statement regarding the author's intended audience (which may be no one), the circumstances around how the source materials were originally obtained (Were these documents found or donated? By whom?) and a reminder to the audience that what they are reading is incomplete, that even comprehensive editions are not the whole story. Doing so ensures clarity and emphasizes that the true character of the subject woman cannot be found here.

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