Ripples of Water in the Letters and Novels of Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury (22 August 1812 – 23 September 1880)

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Fig 1: *Geraldine Jewsbury* (1850s). Photographer unknown, Mantell Album, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Introduction

This article explores water as a metaphor in the letters and novels of Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury (1812 -1880). There is a focus on the letters to Jane Welsh Carlyle (1801-1866) and Walter Baldock Durrant Mantell (1820 -1895) and the novels, *Zoe: The History of Two Lives* (1845) and *The Half Sisters: A Tale* (1848). Water as a metaphor reflects and embodies both the world being described and the process of honing that description in text (Mittlefehldt 137). Throughout her letters and novels, the metaphor of water is used to reflect both the everyday and the romantic.

Water, as Ursula Kluwick argues, has long been perceived as a potent literary symbol and Jewsbury uses the symbol of water to convey both the Victorian social and cultural world she inhabited and her inner world, her thoughts, her dreams, and her challenges. As a prominent Victorian author and reviewer and a prodigious letter writer, Jewsbury conceptualized water as a literary symbol or motif. Her representations of water were conceived as what Kluwick terms as bearing witness to how agency is shared by humans and their environment (245).

As the Introduction to the first Special issue of *AJVS* on Water argues (i), water persists in the human imagination as a place of paradox: fear, foreboding, possibility, and imagination. For Jewsbury water provides a space for metaphorical exploration within both her imagination and her everyday life.

Jules Law argues that consideration of the Victorian engagement with fluids, including water, must look beyond the symbolic: "fluids in the Victorian period were not simply a metaphoric or symbolic means of negotiating the relationship of the individual to an increasingly complex and rationalized public space, but a principal (and highly contested) medium through which social relations were actually negotiated" (12). Jewsbury's engagement with water as a medium through which social relations were negotiated is often subtle. Yet her use of metaphor is inherent in her writing as a Victorian woman who lived, as Burnham Bloom argues, at the centre of a cultural scene of a changing world (ix).

Brief Background to Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury (1812 – 1880)

Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury was born on August 22nd, 1812, in Measham, Leicestershire. Her parents were Thomas and Maria Jewsbury (formerly, Maria Smith, of Coleshill, Warwickshire). Her older sister Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800-1833) was also an author.[1] In 1818, when Geraldine was six years old, the family left Measham and moved to Manchester where her father became the Manchester agent for the West of England Insurance Company (Howe 29).[2] Manchester at this time was a boom town. The automation of the cotton industry had resulted in several steam-powered cotton mills springing up and with this

[1] Stokes (190) argues that it would be difficult to consider Geraldine Jewsbury in isolation from her older sister Maria Jane (1800-1833), especially when assessing the influences upon her in her early life. Maria Jane Jewsbury became a mother-figure to Geraldine and her brothers when their mother died in 1818. Maria also became a role model for Geraldine as a woman of letters. Maria Jane was 19 years old when her mother died and she became responsible for the management of the household, the care of her five siblings and her father. Despite her heavy domestic load, Maria Jane also managed to find time for writing and struck up a friendship with William Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy Wordsworth. Maria Jane contributed to several periodicals and published four books: *Phantasmagoria* (1825); and *Letters to the Young* in 1828 (originally composed of actual letters to Geraldine while she was away at the Misses Darby's boarding school, at Alder Mills near Tamworth, Derbyshire) and *The Three Histories* (1830). She also published *Lays of Leisure Hours*, a book of poetry, in 1829 (Howe 11).

In August 1832, shortly before Geraldine's 20th birthday, Maria Jane married the Reverend William Kew Fletcher, a chaplain of the British East India Company and the couple embarked for India. Geraldine never saw her beloved sister again. On the way to her husband's posting at Sholapore, in the Maharashtra state of India, Maria Jane contracted cholera and died on October 4th, 1833 (Howe 18).

[2] Susanne Howe Nobbe (1896 – 1984) wrote the first biography of Geraldine Jewsbury in 1935. She was a 1917 graduate of Vassar and spent several years working in social work and teaching before earning her PhD at Columbia in 1930. In 1933 she married George Nobbe, an English instructor at Columbia College. In 1935 she became the first woman in a humanities department to gain promotion as an assistant professor, following the publication of her book, *Geraldine Jewsbury, Her Life and Errors* (Rosenberg 220).

development there was also a growth in subsidiary functions such as bleaching and dyeing, glass-making, banking and accounting services, the building of housing to accommodate the factory workers, food markets, public houses and shops for a variety of wares (Messinger).

Living in Manchester was pivotal to Geraldine Jewsbury's literary life. In between her domestic duties she read voraciously and laid the foundations of her writing career (Connor 4). In 1843 Geraldine and her brother Frank transferred their household to Greenheys where they lived close by to Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell. Their little sitting room was to become a social and intellectual hub of Manchester where Geraldine provided supper, coffee, cigars and cigarettes and "where she swam happily in seas of talk" (Howe 66). Guests to this sociable home included individuals such as Thomas Ballantyne (Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*); Alexander Ireland (editor of *The Manchester Examiner and Times*); Francis Espinasse (writer); Hepworth Dixon (editor of the *Athenæum*); John Stores Smith (writer), and many other interesting and erudite Mancunians and visitors from both near and far (Connor, "Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury", 5).

Ripples of Water in Selected Excerpts from *Zoe: The History of Two Lives* (1845) and *The Half Sisters: A Tale* (1848)

Geraldine Jewsbury was well known as a novelist, manuscript reviewer and literary figure.[3] She reviewed for the literary periodical the *Athenæum* (Burnham Bloom ix).[4] Her first novel, *Zoe: The History of Two Lives* (1845) and her second novel, *The Half Sisters: A Tale* (1848) established her as an original and talented author. Shirley Foster in her introduction to the 1989 Virago publication of *Zoe: The History of Two Lives* argues that the characters Zoe Gifford and Everhard Burrows, the Roman Catholic priest, represent Jewsbury herself, analysing problems which she had personally experienced, the predicament of a gifted woman in a society which dictates gender roles and the agonies of a conscientious thinker who can no longer accept orthodox creeds. Everhard's character also draws on Jewsbury's own troubled spiritual experiences where she suffered a crisis of faith in her early twenties (Foster 8-9).

Joanne Wilkes in her introduction to *The Half Sisters: A Tale* argues that Jewsbury directly confronts the discontent which many women felt about their lives. The character Alice is given a middle-class conventional upbringing and marriage, whilst her half-sister, the illegitimate Bianca, pursues an acting career as a single woman (Wilkes xii - xiii). As Wilkes further argues, Jewsbury's characters in the novel can be read as representing the Victorian society in which women's potential was frequently hindered by their class and their marital status. The half-sisters

[3] Jewsbury wrote six novels in total: *Zoe* (1845); *The Half Sisters* (1848); *Marian Withers* (1851); *The Sorrows of Gentility* (1854); *Constance Herbert* (1855) and *Right or Wrong* (1859); two children's stories: *The History of an Adopted Child* (1852) and *Angelo or the Pine Forest in the Alps* (1855). She also edited Lady Morgan's *Memoirs, Autobiography, Diaries and Correspondence* (1862); contributed to a variety of periodicals including: *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*, the *Westminster Review*, Francis Espinasse's *Inspector*, Dickens's *Household Words*, and *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*. She also wrote over 2,300 reviews for the *Athenæum* and reported on more than 800 novels as a manuscript reader for Messrs Hurst and Blackett and the publishers Bentley and Son (Connor 2011, 16).

[4] The *Athenæum* was a widely read literary and scientific periodical, published between 1828 and 1923. It grew to become one of the most influential periodicals of the Victorian period (eventually metamorphosing into *The New Statesman*) and is regarded by historians as a mirror of that time. It contained reviews, articles, reports of learned societies, and news from the scientific and political worlds.
http://athenaeum.soi.city.ac.uk/aboutath.html

have a parent in common and can be expected both to resemble each other and to differ. Namely, women in general are not all the same, albeit one of the many deficiencies in their socialization is that they are treated as if they were (Wilkes xix).

For the most part references to water in *Zoe: The History of Two Lives* are literal. In Chapter One, the reader learns that an old Manor House in the little town of Sutton is to be refurbished after a long period of being uninhabited. Jewsbury draws on the image of stagnant water to convey decay and neglect. "The moat, which was filled with stagnant water, covered all over with duck-weed, was to be filled up and converted into a flower garden, with a pond for goldfish" (17).

While the term "stagnant water" is literal, it can also be viewed as a metaphor. Stagnant water contrasts with clean, running water, a symbol of life, essential for survival. Stagnant water not only conveys an image of impurity but on a metaphorical level it can portray a picture of depravity, where individuals have lost their moral compass. This metaphor can be seen as foreshadowing what is to come as Zoe and Everhard Burrows struggle to overcome their mutual love and desire for one another.

Everhard eventually leaves temptation behind him and travels to Germany and Zoe is left to tend to her husband and family. Sadly, though, the metaphor of hope and renewal conveyed in the image of filling up the stagnant water in the moat and converting it into a flower garden, with a pond for goldfish, never quite delivers on its promise. Both Everhard and Zoe live out their lives by following the moral ethics that guided them. After Everhard's death, Zoe continues on with her life but "with a composed and chastened spirit."

The water metaphor is similarly evoked by the character, the Comte de Mirabeau, a real-life French political figure. In dialogue with Mr Wilberforce (presumably the anti-slavery activist), Mirabeau states: "our vices are oftener habits than passions; habits wear men into uncouth shapes, as water models stones" (365).

The first part of this quote relating to vices is attributed to Antoine de Rivarol.[5] It is quite possible that Jewsbury was aware of this quote and of Rivarol, since her friend Thomas Carlyle mentions Rivarol in his book, *The French Revolution: A History* (1837). The second part of the quote, "habits wear men into uncouth shapes, as water models stones," can be read as cautionary advice. Habitual drinking for example can result in uncouth behaviour and a lack of refinement and grace, just as stones constantly exposed to water can be worn down and changed over time. On another level this quote can be read as a maxim, where Mirabeau offers a principle of good conduct, albeit somewhat hypocritically, as he is a man on familiar terms with "vice".

The metaphor of water in *The Half Sisters: A Tale* often evokes images of turbulent and choppy water. Bianca, the illegitimate half-sister, recalls a time when Conrad, her erstwhile beau, appears to have forsaken her:

> His once passionate love, old words of tenderness and endearment, all came back on her parched and burning heart; but it was like those poor shipwrecked wretches, who, dying of thirst, endeavour to assuage it with the salt sea-water, at the cost of madness.

[5] Refer to France, 2005. Antoine de Rivarol (1753—1801) was a self-styled comte. Though intended for the Church, Rivarol chose instead to pursue a career in, or on the fringes of, the Parisian salons.

> A violent fit of convulsive weeping, which seemed as if it would tear her frame to pieces (205).

Jewsbury draws on the literary device of pathos to elicit strong emotions from the readers. The imagery of "poor shipwrecked wretches" is heart-rending and the catastrophic end to these "poor shipwrecked wretches" is to die of thirst as salt-sea water cannot appease their need for drinking water. These images are then juxtaposed with an emotional display of violent and convulsive weeping, likening Bianca's undoubtedly salty tears with the salt sea-water, with the metaphorical inference that as the thirst of the shipwrecked wretches cannot be assuaged, neither can her deep sense of grief and loss.

Jewsbury draws on another water metaphor to illustrate Bianca's loneliness and isolation: "the reed to which she had clung had broken in her grasp and drifted away, leaving her to sink in the deep waters that were overwhelming her soul" (234). The metaphor of the reed breaking away can be read as a loss of faith in herself, loss of religious faith, loss of love and friendship. It also evokes an image of the plight of women on their own, the exclusion which often led to living in solitude and/or poverty, just as Geraldine Jewsbury did.

On another level the quote is very similar to Psalm 69. "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul… I am weary of my crying my throat is dried: Mine eyes fail while I wait for God." This similarity implies that Bianca is at a crisis or turning point in her life. She is weary of feeling depressed and despondent. She wants to overcome the dismal state of mind she has fallen into.

Ripples of Water in *Selected Letters*

Geraldine Jewsbury's voice and personality resonate strongly in her letters. Her relationship with Jane Welsh Carlyle was the closest and most intense of her life (Burnham Bloom 9). Jane Welsh Carlyle married Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) in 1826. The couple moved to Chelsea, London, in 1834 so Thomas could concentrate on his writing career. Known as the Sage of Chelsea, Thomas attracted many prominent Victorian writers, artists, and scientists to his and Jane's home in Cheyne Row.

Geraldine first read some essays by Thomas Carlyle in 1839 at a time in her life when she was searching for meaning and purpose. She had read Carlyle and wrote to him. He responded and a short correspondence ensued, eventually resulting in an invitation to his and Jane Carlyle's home, and an enduring friendship developed between Geraldine and Jane (Connor, "Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury" 6). At the age of 42, in 1854, Geraldine left her Manchester home and moved to London, initially lodging at 3 Oakley Street, Chelsea, so she could be close to Jane Carlyle.

Geraldine Jewsbury and Jane Carlyle had a lively correspondence but prior to her death, Jewsbury destroyed nearly all the letters from Jane, though several survived (Burnham Bloom 9). Jane Welsh Carlyle was well-known for her entertaining and witty letters, often causing the reader to laugh out loud (Chamberlain 11). Sadly, without the other side of the correspondence many of the intricacies of the friendship remain obscure.

Margaret Cruikshank argues that while there is no evidence to suggest Geraldine and Jane were lovers, their friendship was nevertheless intense and flourished for 25 years only, ending with Jane's death (60). Many of the letters Geraldine wrote to Jane could be interpreted as romantic and these have provided what Furneaux describes as "fertile ground for explorations of Victorian sensory culture, inciting nuanced attention to the emotional and erotic components of intimacy" (25). This article examines the language and imagery of water in both the minutiae of the everyday and the emotional intensity of romantic prose.

In the following excerpt Jewsbury conveys the idea of transforming frozen water into "actual flesh" drawing on the trope that conveys images of water as a shape-shifter, a metamorphic substance that constantly rearranges itself into different material forms (Kluwick 253).

> January 23, 1861
> Broughton, Manchester
> My dear Jane – I have not been "pausing for a reply" to my last letter – I have not written simply because my whole life has been *frozen* up and at the best all the strength I have has been used in *rowing against the stream* – it has been harder than I can understand to get the least thing of my own done – everybody's time and occupation and whole *stream of life* goes so contrary to all that I would do and have to do (letter cited in Howe 222).

In a few lines, Geraldine has conveyed the stream as a metaphor for a time in her life where she is working against the natural order, she is having to row against the stream and expend energy to keep afloat. She feels 'frozen' and caught up in the every-day humdrum of life.

As the letter notes, Jewsbury is writing from Manchester. She was visiting her brother Frank and the "everybody's time and occupation" she is referring to is regarding Frank and his family and the builders who were busily making repairs to Frank's home. All this activity was distracting and prevented her from writing. Indeed, the excerpts in the letter convey Jewsbury's attitude towards work. Her writing was a vocation but as a single woman she was reliant on regular income to maintain financial viability. If she was rowing against the stream, she was not being productive.

The image of a boatman rowing against the stream is also a quote from Charles Bucke's book from 1837, *The Book of Human Character*, where the narrator states: "all things hasten to decay, as a boatman rowing against the stream; if he relaxes his oars, the tide hurries him immediately down the river."[6] As a woman of letters, Jewsbury may well have been familiar with Bucke's work and this quote.

Jewsbury also encouraged other women to write and to be productive. The letter below can be read "as an argument for the sisterhood and emancipation of women" (Seidel 118).

[6] Charles Bucke (16 April 1781 – 31 July 1846) was an English writer who, despite being poor most of his life, still managed to produce roughly eleven different works, each varying in number of volumes and topics. Refer to: https://www.poemhunter.com/charles-bucke/

> Monday, October 6, 1851
> You have more sense and stronger judgment than any other woman I ever knew, or expect to know; also, you have had such singular life-experiences that it is in your power to say both strengthening and comforting things to other women. If you had had daughters, they would have been educated as few women have the luck to be, and I think you might have enough maternal feeling, sisterly affection, *esprit de corps*, or what you will, to wish to help other women in their very complicated duties and difficulties. Do not go to Mr. Carlyle for sympathy, *do not let him dash you with cold water*. You must respect your own work and your own motives; if people only did what others thought good and useful, half the work in the world would be left undone.
> (Ireland, Letter 121)

While this excerpt can be read as a universal statement about women's role in Victorian society, at its heart it is urging Jane not to allow her husband to deter or discourage her from her own writing, *do not let him dash you with cold water,* do not let him dampen your enthusiasm.

The metaphor of being dashed with cold water can also be interpreted as having one's desires being crushed and belittled. Jewsbury's own yearning to negotiate the relationship she wants to have with Walter Mantell, was similarly dashed with cold water (see below).

In an earlier letter to Jane, Geraldine offers her solace as she tries to come to terms with the death of her beloved mother.

> Monday, May 20, 1842
> My darling Love,
> Your letter came this morning and has made me more sad than I care to express.
> I am not surprised at anything you say. I should only wonder if it were not so. I know full well that giddy, uprooted feeling that leaves one wondering why one is left on the earth, or why one was ever sent here. Your loss is now what it was five months ago, when it first occurred: the strange thing is, not that we are so long in getting reconciled to our bereavement, but that we [are] able to find life tolerable after the "desire of our eyes has been taken away by a stroke." But the worst of it is, that in such afflictions as yours is the idea of ever becoming comforted is altogether loathsome, and so, my darling, I can do you no good. I can but see you *struggling in the dark waters*, *ready to be swallowed up in them*, and can help you in no wise.
> (Ireland, Letter 15)

The metaphor of *struggling in the dark waters*, *ready to be swallowed up in them* conveys her empathy for what Jane is enduring. The experience of deep grief is much like dying. Struggling in the dark waters, the deep recesses of the mind, being swallowed up by the anguish of loss. On one level, wanting to be swallowed up by these feelings, to metaphorically die, to metaphorically merge with the tides and float out to sea where one can be free of the deep depression causing such emotional pain.

Jalland (2022) argues that middle- and upper-class Victorians understood the value of reliving their memories of the past and talking about their dead loved ones as an aid to mourning. Jewsbury understood the need for Jane to relive her memories of her mother and to mourn her. Writing about her grief was therapeutic and cathartic, albeit harrowing as she s*truggled in the dark waters*.

The metaphor of water reflecting romantic aspirations is particularly apparent in Jewsbury's letters to Walter Baldock Durrant Mantell (1820 -1895). Mantell can be described as a 'Philo-Māori (lover of Māori) and a 'disruptive' New Zealand colonial politician. His friend, John George Cooke (1819–1880),[7] introduced him to the Carlyles and Geraldine Jewsbury in 1856. Geraldine was much taken with Mantell, and he found her companionable and easy to talk to. After Mantell returned to New Zealand in 1859 he and Geraldine corresponded for over twenty years. Their phenomenal literary exchange in the form of 500+ letters written between 1859 and 1880, the year Geraldine died, are archived in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (Wilkes 105).[8]

After living for many years in New Zealand, Mantell could speak te reo Māori (Māori language) and Jewsbury had asked him for a Māori name. He suggested Manu which means bird. In the early days of their correspondence, she wrote to him incessantly, sometimes on a daily basis, signing herself as Manu and addressing him as Matara, a transliteration of Mantell (Connor, "Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury" 14).

Jewsbury's utilization of water as a metaphor in her romantic prose to Mantell often conveys stormy emotions, passionate yearnings, and desperation. In excerpts from the following letter, she writes of Mantell's doomed love for Calliope Dilberoglue, referring to her as "C". Jewsbury had introduced Mantell to the Dilberoglues and Mantell had fallen hopelessly in love with the beautiful Calliope (Howe 154). Calliope's older brother and guardian Stauvros Dilberoglue, however, had insisted on her marrying a fellow Greek (Burnham Bloom 46).

> Saturday, November 21, 1857
> Manchester
> Dear Matara
>
> O Matara instead of stopping at home to eat your heart out & try the impossible to crush your love & blot out the recollection of C to regain your calm – what is not to be done not indeed to be desired – make out a relation which can be real – and sustained – the obstacles to the closest & highest earthly relationship are you are told absolutely insurmountable – therefore that is once for all sealed & set aside – now that we know that – we can adjust ourselves – one always can yield submission to a certainty to necessity – but all the time rich priceless love you feel is not dependent on one form of manifestation you may and you can be a great deal to C – you might brighten her actual life – you might help her to cultivate her mind to read –to study to occupy herself – for you of all men are the best companion – your own private passionate personality you <u>can</u> merge into the truest & noblest friendship – a friendship that will make you rich & strong…

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[7] Refer to Connor ("On Becoming 'Colonially Bitten'") for information on the background of John George Cooke and his friendships with Jane Welsh Carlye, Geraldine Jewsbury and Walter Mantell.

[8] Jewsbury's letters to Mantell are based on the transcriptions made by Waldo Hilary Dunn (1882 – 1969), an academic and author (Refer to https://library.osu.edu/collections/SPEC.RARE.CMS.0002/biographical-historical-note). Dunn travelled to New Zealand with an assistant and copied out the Jewsbury letters in longhand into notebooks which are now held by the Ohio State University. Those notebooks were used by Susanne Howe for her biography of Jewsbury (1935) and by Abigail Burnham Bloom for her biographical study of Jewsbury (2019). I am deeply indebted to Abigail Burnham Bloom, who gave me access to the typed transcripts of Dunn's notebooks.

> What you had *poured out as water was thrown back on you – as "not wanted" of "no use"* – I know that bitterness, but I know too that *true love like water can adapt itself to any shape – to any condition – let your love adapt itself to the condition…*
> I must see you, Manu.

In this excerpt water is perceived as a metaphor for the emotional pain apparent in Mantell's thwarted plans to marry Calliope Dilberoglue. It also conveys Jewsbury's emotional pain of not being the object of Mantell's affections. In a broader sense, Jewsbury is utilizing the metaphor to try and remove the fear of loss, to imply that what felt like love came into focus as only distraction (Watson 73). Again, the image of water as a shape-shifter is employed as Jewsbury states that true love, like water, can adapt itself to any shape (Kluwick 253).

> Monday, January 1859
> Matara, I do so want to see you again! There is so much I want to tell you yet I dare say I shall never say it but at times I feel that I would give a year's life thankfully to have one of the long evenings when you used to come – the deadly heartsickness of knowing you must go away – has gone – I don't even want to hold you; – one gives up – leaves loose of [*sic*] one's dearest friend but one does not love them for that – no – *one's regard like water takes <u>any</u> shape fills any vessel into which it may be poured knows no difference* I don't care less for you since I grew quite resigned to your going away to feel towards New Zealand as to an outlet with a new life career for you – for when the past has only been the training ground … Manu

The symbolic use of water is here not simply a metaphor but a way of negotiating the relationship Jewsbury has or rather wanted to have with Mantell. She is trying to rationalize her complex feelings, to acknowledge as Kluwick argues, that water as matter directs attention to the individuals and influences their engagement with one another (253). She is also re-using the image of water as a shape-shifter and as a metamorphic substance that can rearrange itself into different material forms.

Geraldine was distraught at Mantell leaving England and thought of asking John George Cooke to marry her and to take her out to New Zealand so she could watch over his life and interests (Howe 152). Eventually, though, Mantell and Geraldine came to a friendly understanding, and she was able to say goodbye to him in a calm and collected manner, imploring him to think of her as a friend without limitations (Howe 158). Mantell returned to New Zealand in October 1859 and in the months leading up to his departure her letters became more desperately passionate (Wilkes 105). The following excerpt demonstrates the poignancy of Geraldine's longing to be with Mantell.

> Wednesday July 20, 1859
> 3 Oakley Square
> Chelsea
> Come out – Dear Matara I have written this before early rising to secure – no matter where I am nor how occupied a great aching comes over me to want to see you everything looks black & feels flat – oh Matara if I could only speak to you or hear your voice for one minute *it would be like a drop of water in this great thirst.*
> Manu

That telling final sentence, *it would be like a drop of water in this great thirst,* is used eloquently to convey her deep need for Mantell: just as our bodies need to quench our thirst, to drink from

the eternal spring, in a spiritual sense, but also in a literal sense, for we cannot survive without water.

Over the years of their long correspondence Jewsbury became fascinated by the colony of New Zealand and eager to know more about Māori, the indigenous peoples. As Wilkes points out it is clear that both he and Jewsbury respected the Māori and wanted them to be given an autonomy to be themselves, rather than simply potential beneficiaries of European culture (110).

> March 24, 1869
> 43 Markham Square
> Chelsea S. W.
>
> Dear Matara, I begin this letter & shall post it & let it go when it pleases providence & the postal arrangements for, I have aimed at the mail days so often & missed that now I fire this off "quite promiscuous". ……
> I am very interested in the war, but I cannot find in my heart to read about it. The slaughter of those brave natives wrings my heart surely, we might have done something better with them than killing them – they are better generals then our own….
> I intend to invest in the Fortnightly for February – to send you Huxley's lecture which has driven many of its hearers howling & "put up the backs" of many others some saying it is new & strange & bad – others that it is old & "not proven" – I, say it is a solemn & grand lecture & there is nothing so sacred as facts - & *they will find their level like water & do no harm if we don't trifle with them*…..
> I often think of you & even tho' I may be silent you may be assured that you are remembered & now good-bye – for I am – sleepy! A blessed condition to be in the most blessed I think in this world.
> Yours affectionately
> Manu

While the discussion of the New Zealand issues is important, the water image in the letter is not linked to that concern. The discussion of the war doesn't relate to the Huxley article. Jewsbury uses the metaphor of water to validate Huxley's position, that there is nothing so sacred as facts - & *they will find their level like water & do no harm if we don't trifle with them.*[9] The statement that she will send Mantell a copy of Huxley's lecture could perhaps indicate an effort to chime in with his interests in natural history, biology, zoology and palaeontology.

Throughout her letters, to both Jane Welsh Carlyle and Walter Mantell, Geraldine Jewsbury negotiated social relationships both of a romantic and platonic nature. She frequently used water metaphors to express her emotional life, both emotional numbing and emotional joy.

The images of water she used often rested on a preconception of water as a shape-shifter, a metamorphic substance that constantly rearranges itself into different material forms. Water

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[9] Thomas Henry Huxley (1825 – 1895) was a biologist and scientist. He supported Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection. Huxley coined the word "agnostic" to describe his position on knowledge and religious belief – that one cannot, and should not claim to, know things for which one there is no evidence. Refer to https://humanists.uk/humanism/the-humanist-tradition/19th-century-freethinkers/huxley/

metaphors in her letters demonstrate her inner struggles when facing challenges and her deep emotional life. Water as a shape-shifter demonstrates her ability to adapt to reality and accept change. Frequently, though, water symbolism is used to denote optimism as can be seen in this final excerpt.

> March 15, 1870
> 43 Markham Square
> Chelsea
>
> Dear Matara
>
> Here is a second letter & I have not heard from you I don't know the time when – not since the prehistoric period, I think! But I suppose the *bread one casts upon the waters is returned to us in bread & butter in some future state of existence…*
> Your Manu

The metaphor used in this letter is based on a Biblical reference, Ecclesiastes 11:1, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (KJV).

Implicit in this reference is the notion that the blessings we send out will return to us. The metaphor is inferring that blessings will be returned to the person who is generous and hospitable. It seems to imply that if Mantell does take the time to write back to Jewsbury, it would show him in a more genial and generous light. It can also be taken to mean that if she writes a second letter without waiting to hear from him, she should be rewarded, presumably by him.

It is also possible that Geraldine was having a little gibe at Mantell regarding his impatience at the unavailing attempts to rectify the broken promises made to Ngāi Tahu iwi (tribe) (Sorrenson 1990). Well-known as having a temperamental personality, Mantell resented the procrastination over settlement of the Ngāi Tahu claim and felt that he has been unwittingly led to negotiate with them under false pretences (Sorrenson 1990).[10]

By referencing this metaphor from Ecclesiastes 11:1, Geraldine is also advising him to be patient albeit in a subtle and indirect manner. The bread one casts upon "waters" is like the tide that comes in and goes out. Even if you do not see the waters return to you in bread and butter immediately, keep on sowing, because in some future state of existence a boon is on the way extolling your efforts.

There was little difference in the way Jewsbury uses water when writing to Jane Carlyle and writing to Walter Mantell. She wrote to both from her very being, her authentic Self, and the metaphors she used were similar, in that they were used to convey her feelings and were also her attempt to give expression to their emotions as she perceived them.

Throughout her career, Geraldine Jewsbury was a novelist, reviewer, and publisher's reader. She was often frustrated with the portrayal of women exclusively in sensual and sentimental

[10] See Wilkes (1988) and Sorrenson (1990) for in-depth discussions on Mantell regarding his dealings with the Ngāi Tahu iwi (tribe).

terms (Roberts 411). For example, her frustration can be seen in her reader's reports and reviews of the novels of Rhoda Broughton.[11] She objected to the obvious sexuality of Broughton's heroines and denounced Broughton's first novel, *Not Wisely but Too Well* (1866) for its "hot blooded passion" and "lukewarm rose water sentimentality," calling it a story of "absolute and unredeemable nonsense" (Roberts 411).

Her use of the term, "lukewarm rose water sentimentality" is one of dismissal and scorn. Yet, rosewater is typically associated with femininity, delicacy and genteel finesse and sensitivity, all characteristics that Broughton's heroines seemingly do not possess. As Roberts (412) argues, Jewsbury clearly saw the novel's "sensual sentimentality" and "self-indulgent emotion" as stereotypical of a masculine view of women's lives.

Publishing was a booming business in the Victorian era and a dramatic increase in a literate reading public impacted on the production of fiction and literary works generally (Phillips 5). As a woman writer in Victorian England, Geraldine Jewsbury took advantage of the flowering of literary professionalism and the emergence of promising literary opportunities, such as the opening of new genres for women writers: the essay, the literary review, the periodical column, the biographical portrait, and historical sketch (Phillips 5). Within this context Jewsbury established herself a public narrative that constructed her as a woman out of the ordinary, someone "leading the way for Victorian women" where she used her literary voice to challenge the Victorian image of the "ideal woman" (Burnham Bloom 2). Her novels and her reviews are testament to this narrative. In the private sphere Jewsbury's letter writing served as contributing to the collective literary voice of women. Her letters provide an insight into her everyday life, her concerns, her hopes and her challenges.

Kluwick argues that the representation of water and water imagery in Victorian writing found expression where it was creatively rendered in images of aquatic agency and scenes of contact and intra-action between human characters and water (246). For Jewsbury, the ripples of water in her writing gave narrative form to her expressive and creative self.

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[11] Rhoda Broughton (1840 – 1920) was born in Denbigh, North Wales, the youngest daughter of the Reverend Delves Broughton. Although often referred to as a sensation novelist, her work is notable for being slightly risqué, rather than sensational.

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