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HENRY REED AND WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

An Editor–Author Relationship and the Production of British Romantic Discourse

Bianca Falbo



FROM 1837 TO 1854, HENRY REED, Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, served as William Wordsworth's editor in America, and with Wordsworth's approbation did much to promote the poet's trans-Atlantic reputation. Reed's work not only shaped American readers' ideas about the poet, but influenced as well Wordsworth's ideas about his own work—particularly, about how he wanted that work to be received. Looking closely at Reed's preparation of a one-volume American edition of the complete works, this essay will show how specific editorial practices employed in compiling a 'complete and uniform' edition produced a more 'Wordsworthian' collection—one highlighting the work of the imagination—than the four-volume London collection on which Reed's was based. Reed's edition has not received much critical attention, but a closer look offers both a better understanding of an important mechanism by which Wordsworth's poetry in America was circulated, and also serves as an example of how the apparatus of the textual edition contributed to the emergence of Wordsworth's reputation and the circulation of British Romantic discourse.

Henry Reed established his reputation as an American authority on Wordsworth with the publication of his one-volume edition of *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* in 1837.¹ A review of Reed's volume, published in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* in 1839, called it a 'beautifully-executed edition', 'heedfully adopted from the London edition', and a 'very valuable addition to every library claiming to contain the English classics'.² Herman Melville (who, in fact, disliked Wordsworth's poetry) owned a copy of Reed's edition,³ as did Wordsworth himself who wrote to Reed in August of 1837 to express his thanks and approval on receiving a copy of the book: 'Upon returning from a tour of several months upon the Continent I find two letters from you awaiting my arrival, along with the edition of my poems you have done me the honour of editing'.⁴ When the author of a series of travel pieces that appeared in *Godley's* in 1844 visited Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, it was the engraving of Wordsworth from the frontispiece of Reed's edition against which he measured the poet's appearance in real life: 'The likeness given in Professor Reed's edition [...] has

been good', he writes, 'but [Wordsworth's] face is now longer and thinner'.⁵ Regarding Wordsworth's opinion of the edition, the author observes:

[Wordsworth's] library was small, but select, and he showed me with great pleasure a beautifully bound volume of the American edition of his works, sent to him by Professor Henry Reed. He told me that Mr. Murray had never produced an edition that suited him as well.⁶

That Reed's edition 'suited' Wordsworth is also evidenced by the fact that, following Reed's example, Wordsworth published a one-volume edition of his complete works, adopting key features of the American edition with respect to the arrangement and presentation of his writing, features of the collected works with which Wordsworth was preoccupied throughout his lifetime.

The example of Reed's volume and its subsequent influence on Wordsworth show how the print sources which made Romantic-period writing available have contributed to the emergence of British Romantic discourse and the impact that discourse has had on literary history. On the importance of the complete edition for the study of literary history, Andrew Nash has commented that 'it is possible to see the collected edition as one of the main determinants of our modern sense of authorship'.⁷ By collecting together an author's 'complete works', for example, a collected edition highlights the connection between an author and his writing, reinforcing the idea that a text is a direct reflection of its author's mind, and in the case of a great author, of his genius. In addition, in their editorial apparatus (tables of contents, for example, running titles, footnotes), critical editions establish continuities across individual works, further reinforcing the idea of the author as a unifying presence behind the text (the presence described by Michel Foucault as the 'author function').⁸ And of course it follows that these features of textual editions have consequences for readers, too. Footnotes, for example, although they mediate between reader and text, can appear to do just the opposite: they exist, in other words, to enhance a reader's access to the text, thereby theoretically decreasing the distance between reader and text; in practical terms, however, they add more text, thereby creating opportunities for further—not less—interpretive work.

As the work of Jerome McGann and, more recently, Clifford Siskin has demonstrated, such assumptions about the relations among authors, texts, and readers must be understood in the context of the legacy of British Romanticism.⁹ McGann's *Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* shows how twentieth-century criticism of British Romantics has tended to repeat and recirculate rather than historicise and interrogate assumptions about authorship, imaginative writing, and literary value. Such writing, he argues, has helped perpetuate the ideology of Romantic poems. Building on the work of McGann and also Raymond Williams, Siskin has shown how these same assumptions have mattered profoundly to the emergence of 'Literature' as a special (selective, elite, transcendent) category of writing: 'The reason that Romantic discourse so

thoroughly penetrates the study of Literature', Siskin explains, 'is that Literature emerged in its presently narrowed—but thus deep and disciplinary—form during that period and thus *in* that discourse'.¹⁰ Accordingly, Siskin has argued, the history of literature needs to be understood within the larger context of the history of writing, which for him includes 'the entire configuration of writing, print and silent reading'.¹¹ In an alternative history of the kind imagined by Siskin the collected edition (no less than the writing of twentieth-century critics) plays a prominent role as a vehicle informed by and also helping to reinscribe Romantic ideology. A project like Reed's requires a second look, then, because of how it figures (and thus fixes) *in writing* the close relationship between the 'inherent' literary qualities of Wordsworth's writing and Wordsworth's place in literary history.

Reed-ing Wordsworth

Henry Reed's plan for an American edition of the complete works arose in large part because of Reed's enthusiasm for Wordsworth's poetry. As a reader, Reed admired the didactic nature of Wordsworth's poems, and that particular feature of the poems, he believed, made them worthwhile for an American audience. In his first letter to Wordsworth, sent in 1836 along with a copy of the American edition, Reed describes the effect of the poems on himself and his wife:

The salutary warnings from your pages have, I persuade myself, not been addressed in vain: communing with you there, I have felt my nature elevated—I have learned to look with a better spirit on all around me. You cannot be indifferent to hearing that by your agency your fellow-beings at the distance of thousands of miles are thus benefited.¹²

In this letter, Reed represents himself and his wife not only as avid readers, but devoted students who return to the poems again and again for re-reading and reflection:

When after some lapse of time we have recurred to our cherished volume, we have felt that you were aiding us in 'binding our days together by natural piety.' We find the periods of several successive years all associated with 'Simon Lee' and 'Michael' and 'old Adam'—with 'Margaret' and with our prime favourite *Matthew*.¹³

Moreover, Reed continues, Wordsworth's patriotic spirit, reflected in his poems, stirs similar feelings on the part of the reader:

I feel that I have unconsciously been taught by you a warmer and more filial attachment to old England. But what is more, in your example I have discovered the best elements of a true and rational patriotism, and guided most safely by the light of your feeling, I have a deeper love for my own country. (p. 3)

In fact, Reed's feeling of having 'unconsciously been taught' aptly describes a characteristic effect of Wordsworth's poems whereby they instruct the reader by putting him or her in a position of hermeneutic mastery: the poem's message or moral is not directly stated; instead, the poem positions the reader to draw his or her own conclusion and, in so doing, effectively dissolves the boundary between author and reader.

Consider 'Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman', for example, one of the poems mentioned in the passage above. Halfway through the story of 'the old huntsman', the poem's speaker interrupts himself to directly address the reader:

My gentle reader, I perceive
 How patiently you've waited,
 And I'm afraid that you expect
 Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind
 Such stores as silent thought can bring,
 O gentle reader! you would find
 A tale in everything.¹⁴

There is no 'tale', the narrator explains, except what the reader 'would find' for himself, 'such stores as silent thought can bring'. The narrator goes on to describe his encounter with Simon Lee but, as promised, does not himself identify the point of his anecdote. Instead, in the final stanza, the narrator's change of heart is marked typographically by a dash:

The tears into his eyes were brought,
 And thanks and praises seemed to run
 So fast out of his heart, I thought
 They never would have done.
 —I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
 With coldness still returning.
 Alas! the gratitude of men
 Has oftner left me mourning. (pp. 97–104)

By shifting responsibility for interpretation onto the reader here, the poem instructs without overtly seeming to do so. The reader, for all intents and purposes, derives for him or herself the story's significance.

In a blank verse poem like 'Michael', another poem admired by Reed in the passage quoted above, this same effect is heightened because of the way, as Antony Easthope has demonstrated, the unrhymed iambic pentameter lines create the impression of a speaking voice and thus further encourage the reader's 'imaginary identification' with the first-person speaker.¹⁵ The reader learns what the poem's speaker learns about the corrupting effects of the city (a characteristic Wordsworthian trope), only the instructional apparatus is invisible because the subject position (the position of mastery) is always already 'written into the discourse' of the form itself.¹⁶

This notion of Wordsworth—the poet as mentor—derived from the effect of the poems themselves, was the one that Reed wanted to recover for American readers. In his correspondence with Wordsworth, Reed talks often about the poet's reputation in America on these terms. Regarding his own suggestion for a poem about Niagara Falls, for example, Reed wrote to Wordsworth in March 1840:

When I reflect how you have taught mankind to look upon the face of Nature, what spot in the wide world is there so grand as that one, whence *by you* could be uttered, to *all* to whom English words are dear, a strain that should endure as long as that unfailling torrent or that language.¹⁷

And writing to Wordsworth in November 1841, Reed argued, 'if there is one thing more gratifying than another to every one to whom your poetry is dear, it is to observe the constant indications of it's [*sic*] influence upon minds of high reflective power and also upon minds quite differently constituted'.¹⁸ Reed's comments in these letters suggest that he saw Wordsworth's poetry as an ideal instructional venue, not only because of Wordsworth's cultural authority as a British author, but more importantly because he believed the poetry itself transcended national boundaries and thus had universal appeal.

A 'Complete and Uniform' Edition: Negotiating Authority, Restoring the Text
At first glance, there is nothing obviously 'American' about Reed's one-volume American edition which, its Preface claims, is 'adopted with great care' from the four-volume London edition of 1832 (*CPW*, p. iii). Reed's editorial apparatus is minimal: a short 'Preface by the American Editor' and some notes included at the ends of the sections on 'Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood', 'Poems of the Imagination', 'Poems of Sentiment and Reflection', and 'The Excursion'. But Reed's project in and of itself—the desire to import, as it were, an authentic Wordsworth—reflects conservative opinions in the Anglo-American literary field at large in the early part of the nineteenth century which held that America, not yet capable of producing its own national literature, might still look to England for literary culture. Reed's edition offers Wordsworth as such a cultural resource by promising access to the authentic (uncorrupted) poems, and, accordingly, the mind/genius of the poet himself.

Before Reed's edition of *The Complete Poetical Works* in 1837, Americans could have been familiar with the poetry of William Wordsworth through a number of different venues, most of which, because there was no international copyright law, were pirated. Individual poems were reprinted in literary, popular, and school collections, as well as in newspapers and periodicals. There were also a few collections of Wordsworth by American publishers: in 1802, there was an edition of *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems*; in 1824, Boston printers Hilliard and Metcalf published *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* in four volumes; and in 1836, just a year before Reed's edition, the 'first complete

American edition, from the last London edition' was published in one volume by Peck and Newton of New Haven, Connecticut.¹⁹ Like Reed, some American admirers of Wordsworth may have owned or otherwise had access to British editions. Or there was also the possibility that they imported the pirated Paris edition of the collected poems published by the Galignani Press in 1828.²⁰ And, finally, Wordsworth was the kind of author—like William Shakespeare, Felicia Hemans, Sir Walter Scott, and Lord Byron—who, probably because of the frequency with which his work appeared in school literature, also circulated widely and more diffusely in the form of excerpts and quotations.

Dismayed at the proliferation of unauthorised and often faulty reproductions, Reed set out to produce an authoritative American edition of Wordsworth's poems. As he would later explain to Wordsworth in a letter dated January 1839,

The editorship was assumed [...] solely for the purpose of placing myself between you and the reprinters here and thus guarding your works from the errors and the abuse to which in the present defective state of legislation in International copyright the writings of foreign authors are more or less exposed. Perhaps I am not quite correct in saying this was the only motive,—because I had also an ambition to associate my name with those productions which had been long regarded by me with the most affectionate and thankful veneration.²¹

Reed's motivation—his concern, on one hand about how the poems circulated, and his admiration, on the other for the poems themselves—reflects a belief on his part that, under the proper conditions, Wordsworth's poetry spoke for itself. And it is this belief that guides his editorial work on the American edition.

In his 'Preface by the American Editor', Reed explains in some detail the shape and scope of his editorial project. 'This volume', he writes, 'is published with a view to present a complete and uniform Edition of the Poetical Works of William Wordsworth' (*CPW*, p. iii). The phrase, 'complete and uniform', is noteworthy. Reed's edition was more 'complete' than the London edition on which it was based because it included material never before published with the poet's collected works: 'A Description of the Country of the Lakes in the North of England', first published anonymously in 1810 as an introduction to Joseph Wilkinson's *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire*; the poems from *Yarrow Revisited*, published in 1835 (i.e. after the last London edition); and some additional poems published since the *Yarrow Revisited* poems. What Reed may have meant by 'uniform', though, is not entirely clear. His use of the term could reflect his intention that the American edition, unlike the unauthorised reprints, be free of errors. In addition, 'uniform' can be read in relation to his efforts to make the collection more accessible for readers. For example, the four-volume London edition divided up Wordsworth's various prose writings (e.g., the 'Essay Supplementary to the Preface' of 1815, the 'Essay Upon

Epitaphs'), including one or two of them at the ends of the individual volumes. Reed's edition, however, being a single volume, included all the prose writings at the end, as appendices, 'for the greater convenience of reference, and from a regard to their value' (*CPW*, p. iv). And, finally, 'uniform' can be understood in relation to Reed's efforts to produce an edition that was, for all intents and purposes, in keeping with the spirit of Wordsworth's edition—especially the poet's intentions regarding the classifications of the poems.²²

These multiple connotations suggest that Reed's project is more complex than it might, at first, appear. That is, in producing his 'complete and uniform' edition, Reed was doing more than reprinting the contents of the London edition. In addition to the changes described above, the most immediately obvious difference in Reed's edition was its size—Reed's version of the collected works condensed the four-volume London edition, which was printed in single columns of type, into one volume with double-column pages. On one hand, this arrangement of the text likely created difficulties, aesthetic as well as visual, for readers of the American volume. Reed's pages, though roughly twice the size of Wordsworth's, are considerably more crowded, especially the prose writing, because there is more print and less white space. On the other hand, the double columns give a 'uniform' appearance to the volume and, even more importantly for Reed, make it possible to include all of Wordsworth's writing in a single volume.

Although Reed's edition looked different from Wordsworth's, its claims of authenticity were sincere. That is, Reed's edition did indeed give readers access to the 'complete' Wordsworth. As with any edited collection, though, its author is a product of the editing, and the 'Wordsworth' of the American edition was one who was carefully constructed by Reed. This point is reflected on the title page. Wordsworth's name is more prominent than Reed's, but Reed's is not so small as to go unnoticed. Reed's name—and by association, his authority (represented by his title, 'Professor of English Literature in the University of Pennsylvania')—does not compete with Wordsworth's, but the way the two names appear on the page makes it clear that this is an *edition* rather than a reprint by the publisher or some anonymous compiler.

The text of Reed's title page dramatises something of the larger dilemma that Reed faced as an editor: in producing his 'complete and uniform' collection, he had to make changes to Wordsworth's arrangement and presentation of the collection, and in doing so, he necessarily walked a fine line between undermining and reinscribing Wordsworth's authority as author. I do not mean to imply that Reed was interested in challenging Wordsworth's authority by supplanting or outdoing the London edition. Reed's project certainly seems intended as a corrective response to pirated editions. I am suggesting, however, that in producing a 'complete and uniform' edition, Reed ran the risk of appearing to understand the poet's work in ways that the poet himself did not. And for Reed who saw Wordsworth as a mentor, as the kind of cultural and moral

authority Americans ought to revere, it was necessary to convince readers of his own editorial expertise without undermining Wordsworth's role as author. This difficulty is mitigated in the American edition through Reed's strategic use of the paratextual apparatus at his disposal in ways that appear to reflect, and in doing so reinscribe, his understanding of the poet's intentions.

That is, by deferring—or appearing to defer—to the author's intentions, Reed could justify decisions made even when those intentions were unspoken, as they were, for example, regarding placement of Wordsworth's essay on the Lake District. This essay in Reed's edition appears as the fourth of six appendices. At the bottom of the page, there is a note by Wordsworth explaining that the essay first appeared in Wilkinson's *Select Views* ('an expensive work, and necessarily of limited circulation') and is

now, with emendations and additions, attached to this volume; from a consciousness of its having been written in the same spirit which dictated several of the poems, and from a belief that it will tend materially to illustrate them. (*CPW*, p. 515)

The 'volume' to which Wordsworth refers in this passage is *The River Duddon* published in 1820.²³ Reed's note justifying the essay's inclusion in the American edition appears beneath Wordsworth's note:

[The republication here mentioned, was made in the Volume containing 'Sonnets to the River Duddon and other Poems published in 1820.' No other reason than that stated by the Author himself need be given for introducing into the present Edition this Essay descriptive of the Scenery of the Lakes, and thus restoring its appropriate connection with the Poems.—H.R.] (*CPW*, p. 515)

Like all of Reed's notes in the American edition, this one is enclosed in brackets and signed 'H.R.' This editorial practice, common in Reed's day, would have been familiar to readers. Typographically, Reed's note is clearly distinguished from Wordsworth's note, and Reed's position as editor clearly distinguished in relation to Wordsworth's position as author. Thus, Reed inhabits a conventional space (i.e., conventional for his position as editor). At the same time, what he does in this space is interesting, because, in his deference to Wordsworth's authority ('No other reason than that stated by the Author himself need be given [...]'), he confirms his own. He says, in effect, this essay belongs with the poems because the author says it does; the decision to include the essay was prefigured in a decision the author previously made.

Reed's move here is typical of how he defers to—and thus reinscribes—Wordsworth's authority in order to justify his own editorial practice. But there is more to it than that since, as the above example demonstrates, there is a dialectical relationship between authorial intention and the representation of those intentions in the editorial apparatus. Put another way, to what extent does Reed's decision here reflect Wordsworth's intentions and to what extent does it fill in the gaps, so to speak, to create a narrative of intention? To answer this

question, it is useful to know something more about the publication history of the Lake District essay itself.

After its anonymous publication in Joseph Wilkinson's *Select Views* in 1810, Wordsworth's essay was, as his note above explains, published in his own *Sonnets to the River Duddon* in 1820. The essay was published separately, again under Wordsworth's name, and with slightly revised titles, in 1822, 1823, and 1835.²⁴ Wordsworth's decision to include the essay with the River Duddon poems is, as Reed maintains, a good reason to include it as well in the collected edition since that volume, though issued separately, was intended to be the third volume of *Poems by William Wordsworth*, the first two volumes of which consisted of the 1815 *Poems*.²⁵ Stephen Gill explains the context for this practice:

Before the 1830s, publishers issued books not in durable casing but in flimsy boards, sometimes only in paper wrappers, which were discarded when the purchaser had the volume bound. It was thus possible, even usual, for volumes bought over a number of years to be bound uniformly to make a set. When *The River Duddon* was published purchasers were informed that 'This Publication, together with The "Thanksgiving Ode", Jan. 18. 1816, "The Tale of Peter Bell," and "The Waggoner," completes the third and last volume of the Author's Miscellaneous Poems', and an alternative title page was included so that the book could be bound up into a uniform set, not as a separate volume, *The River Duddon etc.*, but as volume III of *Poems by William Wordsworth, etc.*²⁶

It is tempting to read the publication history of this essay (from an anonymous piece in someone else's book, to its appearance under Wordsworth's name in the *River Duddon* volume, to its publication in volume III of the complete poems) as one that corresponds neatly to Wordsworth's rising status as an author. But, in fact, when the essay was first issued under his name in 1820, Wordsworth did not yet enjoy the kind of reputation he was coming to have by the time he knew Reed and, especially, after his death in 1850. More pertinent, then, is how the essay's incorporation in the complete poems contributed to a notion of Wordsworth as the personality behind the work.

And it is in relation to this notion of authorship that Reed's decision to include the essay in his American edition is key. As the above history suggests, Reed's decision is grounded in his observation of Wordsworth's own inclination for collecting and organising his work so that it might be read as a unified project. But the editorial apparatus by means of which Reed justifies his decision also constructs Wordsworth as an 'author' in ways that later emerge as hallmarks of Romanticism. Reed's editorial gloss on Wordsworth's note, for example, points the reader to the reason 'stated by the Author himself'—Wordsworth's belief that the essay 'will tend materially to illustrate' the poems—and effectively ignores the parenthetical comment about the essay's initially limited (and, although Wordsworth doesn't make explicit, anonymous) circulation, as

well as Wordsworth's mention of 'emendations and additions'. Thus, in Reed's gloss, writing is represented as a reflection of a state of mind and the product of a 'dictating spirit' rather than the exigencies of a form (an introduction to a travel book) or a print opportunity (the opportunity to earn money from the essay's 'republication').

All of this points to a notion of authorship that has come to be thought of as inherently 'Romantic' because of the way it foregrounds self-reflexivity (intention, thinking about thinking) and, in effect, imagines the text as a reflection of its author's mind. This was a notion of authorship that informed and organised Wordsworth's own editions, in the way his Prefaces (especially the 1815 Preface on his classifications of the poems) and notes appear to explain his intentions and thereby to instruct the reader about the meaning of the text. Reed's gloss on Wordsworth's note amplifies the general effect of such features by means of a specific editorial practice and, by constructing a notion of what is authentically 'Wordsworthian', consequently shows how a textual edition functions in the production of discourse. Such notions of authorship, McGann, Siskin, and others have argued, are part of the ideology of Romantic poems that modern criticism has traditionally perpetuated rather than exposed. In his capacity as editor, Henry Reed participates in this process by inhabiting the position of the ideal reader inscribed in Wordsworth's poems and other prose writing. But Reed's American edition is an example of how the production of this ideology is also, and in particular instances more immediately so, the consequence of the way specific modes of textual production inevitably highlight selected elements of an author's work. The assumptions about authorship inherent in and perpetuated by a textual edition like Reed's—assumptions about intention, for example, or the relationship between an author and his work—complement and amplify the presence of those same assumptions in the work of an author like Wordsworth, and consequently make him available to be recovered later in the century as a British Romantic, a group which never existed in its own day as it would later be constructed and institutionalised beginning in the 1860s.

The 'Yarrow Revisited' Poems

Some aspects of his project gave Reed more difficulty as an editor than others. Compared to his decision to 'restore' to the collection the essay on the lakes, incorporating the poems from *Yarrow Revisited* was a more complicated undertaking. The Yarrow poems had been published after the last London edition, and so they had not yet been incorporated into the collected poems, although Wordsworth had included a note to the volume explaining his intention to do so.²⁷ As an editor, Reed had to figure out how to incorporate the Yarrow poems. Most of them reappear in Reed's edition in three categories, or classes, whose contents and titles are based on categories from *Yarrow Revisited*: 'Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems, Composed (Two Excepted) During a Tour in Scotland, and on the English Border, in the Autumn of 1831', 'Sonnets Composed

or Suggested During a Tour in Scotland in the Summer of 1833', and 'Evening Voluntaries'. The other poems from *Yarrow Revisited*, as Reed notes in the Preface, are 'interspersed' among Wordsworth's existing classifications.²⁸ His explanation, offered in the Preface to his edition, shows how Reed constructs himself as the ideal Wordsworthian reader, and in so doing, recirculates the terms of value associated with that reader—particularly those reinscribing the didactic nature of Wordsworth's poems (in effect, Reed learns from the poems themselves where to place them) and also the role of the 'reflecting reader'.

In preparing the American edition, Reed explains:

It was at once obvious that great incongruity would result from inserting after the former collection of Poems, as arranged by Mr. Wordsworth [i.e., the 1832 London edition], the contents of the volume since published [i.e., *Yarrow Revisited*] in an order wholly different. Such a course would have been in direct violation of the Poet's expressed intention, and would have betrayed an ignorance or distrust in his principles of classification, or a timidity in applying them. It would have been a method purely mechanical, and calculated to impair the effect of that philosophical arrangement, which was designed 'as a commentary unostentatiously directing the attention of those, who read with reflection, to the Poet's purposes.' (CPW, p. 3)

The line in quotes is Reed's rewriting of a line from Wordsworth's own Preface to his 1815 collected poems in which the poet explains his system of classification in detail. 'I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random', Wordsworth explains,

if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, anything material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and vice versa.²⁹

Wordsworth's distinction between the 'reflecting' and 'unreflecting' reader was a fairly standard way at the time (in prefaces, for example, and other kinds of addresses to readers as well as in instructional literature) of positing the thoughtful, as opposed to the careless, reader. As a metaphor, reading as

'reflecting' characterises the importance the role of the author had come to have in shaping early-nineteenth-century reading practices. The aim of reflective reading, in other words, was the recovery of the author's meaning or intention, which was often described in terms of a mirror image 'reflected' or imprinted 'on the mind' of the reader. In this passage, Wordsworth is explaining that the 'reflecting reader' of his collected poems would understand his classifications as a 'commentary' on his intentions but would not allow that to interfere with the 'natural effect' of individual poems.

However, in order to incorporate the poems from *Yarrow Revisited* in the American edition, Reed was necessarily preoccupied with Wordsworth's classifications. In the interest of producing a 'complete and uniform' edition, he had to figure out how the individual poems fit into Wordsworth's organising categories, and in his 'Preface by the American Editor', he ventriloquises the same passage quoted above from Wordsworth's 1815 Preface in order to explain his rationale. 'In editing this volume', he explains,

I have [...] ventured to adopt the only alternative which presented itself—to anticipate Mr. Wordsworth's unexecuted intention of interspersing the contents of the volume entitled 'Yarrow Revisited, &c' among the poems already arranged by him.—I have been guided by an attentive study of the principles of classification stated in the general Preface, and of the character of each poem to which they were to be applied. In some instances special directions for arrangement had been given by the Poet himself;—these have been carefully followed. In many instances the close similarity between groups of the unarranged poems, and those which had been arranged, left little room for error. With respect to the detached pieces, it has been felt to be a delicate undertaking to decide under which class each one of them should be appropriately arranged. This has been attempted with an anxious sense of the care it required, though with an assurance that there was no possibility of impairing the individual interest of any of the poems.

(*CPW*, p. iv)

In this passage, Reed implicitly characterises himself as a 'reflecting Reader' by working within the terms of the author's Preface and thereby claiming to represent the poet's intentions: Where Wordsworth's 'reflecting Reader' is open to the 'natural effect of the pieces, individually', Reed works 'with an assurance' that his arrangement won't 'impair [...] the individual interest of any of the poems'. Interestingly, the way Reed's language echoes Wordsworth's, the notion of 'natural effect' gets rewritten as 'individual interest', and the revision commodifies the value of the individual poem over and above its placement in the collection. Taking its cues from Wordsworth's Preface, then, Reed's Preface ultimately highlights and re-circulates a connection between literary value and the transcending of generic boundaries—a connection that not only

came to define British Romantic writing, but the influence of the Romantics on terms of value for literary study. As the next section will demonstrate, following Wordsworth's plan, Reed slightly alters the presentation of Wordsworth's organising categories so that in the American edition the majority of poems appear to transcend not only generic but also period and national boundaries that defined the contents of the original London edition.

The Production of Discourse: The Wordsworthian Imagination

One of the most interesting and consequential features of Reed's project and his effort to produce a 'complete and uniform' edition was that he extended Wordsworth's class of 'Poems of the Imagination' so that it incorporated other classes as sub-categories. In the London edition, that is, 'Poems of the Imagination' preceded the paired classes of 'Miscellaneous Sonnets', parts one and two. In Reed's edition, these two classes as well as the next twelve (which included the two classes of Yarrow poems mentioned above³⁰) became sub-categories of 'Poems of the Imagination'. This change in the arrangement of the poems might seem a minor detail; however its significance lies in the fact that in Reed's edition, more poems were classed as 'Poems of the Imagination' than in Wordsworth's edition. In the Table of Contents, the change is indicated typographically in the way the titles of the classes are printed. 'POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION', like the titles of the other classes, is in larger capital letters, while the sub-classes appear in smaller capitals. (In the London edition, all of the titles are the same size.) In addition, 'Poems of the Imagination', appears as a running title at the top of the right-hand page, from pages 130 to 323, roughly at the centre of Reed's volume, and covering a considerably larger portion of the book than in the London edition. (Someone opening Reed's edition to read the sonnet on Westminster Bridge, for example, which is under the sub-heading 'Miscellaneous Sonnets.—Part Second', would see 'Poems of the Imagination' as the running title at the top of the recto page. In the London edition from which Reed was working, the running title would have been 'Miscellaneous Sonnets'.) In his Preface, Reed notes that 'Pains have been taken to indicate typographically, in a manner more clear than in any former edition, the general classification of the Poems' (*CPW*, p. 4). But it was a typographical change that had a substantive effect, especially in the context of Reed's one-volume edition, because it made 'Poems of the Imagination' a more central (literally occupying the centre of the book) and prominent class.

Reed was aware of the way a single-volume edition called attention to Wordsworth's classifications. In a letter to Wordsworth in August 1845, he wrote:

I am glad to hear that you are preparing an Octavo Edition of your Poems and that it will contain some additions. A single-volume Edition is desirable—especially as it will have a peculiar interest in giving a complete classification of the poems.³¹

In his reply, Wordsworth thanked the editor for the insight into his own intentions:

I do not remember whether I have mentioned to you that following your example I have greatly extended the class entitled Poems of the Imagination, thinking as you must have done that if Imagination were predominant in the class, it was not indispensable that it should pervade every poem which it contained. Limiting the class as I had done before seemed to imply, and to the uncandid or observing did so, that the faculty which is the *preimum mobile* in Poetry had little to do, in the estimation of the author, with Pieces not arranged under that head. I therefore feel much obliged to you for suggesting by your practice the plan which I have adopted.³²

In response to this letter, Reed explains that he is able to ‘apply’ Wordsworth’s ‘principles of classification’ because he has taken ‘a good deal of pains in studying’ them. ‘In extending the class of “Poems of Imagination”’, he writes, ‘I felt sure I was not going wrong’.³³ As he does in the ‘Preface’ to the *Complete Works*, Reed reinscribes Wordsworth’s terms to authorise his own editorial practice and the result—as Wordsworth’s letter implies—is that the American editor produces an arrangement of the poems that is more characteristically ‘Wordsworthian’ than Wordsworth’s own arrangement. In the process, Reed highlights (by calling attention to) the role of ‘imagination’ in Wordsworth’s poetry—an association that Wordsworth himself authorises and reinscribes when he incorporates this change into his own one-volume edition. What finally emerges in this process, then, is an emphasis on the Wordsworthian imagination, a trope that would later become one of the hallmarks of Wordsworth’s poetry and of his position in the canon of British Romanticism.

When Reed published a revised edition of Wordsworth’s collected poems in 1851, the year after the poet’s death, he made much of the fact that his first edition not only earned Wordsworth’s approval, but caused the poet to revise his arrangement of the poems. In his Preface to the revised edition, Reed includes the passages from Wordsworth’s letters, quoted above,³⁴ in which the poet thanks him for ‘the pains [...] bestowed upon the work’ and describes plans for his own one-volume edition that will follow Reed’s example by ‘extending’ the class of ‘Poems of the Imagination’. Reed also includes a ‘Table of General Titles’ listing all the classes and sub-classes which likewise called attention to the prominence of ‘Poems of the Imagination’. In his ongoing effort to produce a ‘complete’ edition, Reed’s second edition incorporates features of Wordsworth’s 1845 edition, including an ‘Index to the Poems’ and an ‘Index of First Lines’. Such features, Reed hopes, together with the Table of Contents which includes, for each poem, its date of composition ‘will prove of great convenience, as giving [...] such facilities for reference as are peculiarly needed in a collection containing many short poems’.³⁵ As in the first American edition, Reed claims

in the second to be scrupulous about following Wordsworth's classifications: 'In the present volume', he explains,

the text of the former edition [i.e. the first American edition] has been for the most part retained; all the additional poems have been introduced, and the arrangement made to correspond more nearly in the details of it with that adopted by the Author.

(*CPW* [1851], p. iv)

Reed's comments here show how a notion of Wordsworthian discourse can be said to emerge across these editions, from Reed's one-volume American edition in 1837, to Wordsworth's one-volume edition of 1845, to Reed's second edition in 1851 which incorporates Wordsworth's revisions to both the 1841 single-volume as well as the 1850–51 seven-volume editions. Although specific poems are shifted in and out, 'Poems of the Imagination' remains a key, organising category, containing more poems than any other class. As a result of Reed's revision, that is, most of Wordsworth's poems become poems of the imagination.

There is one other interesting consequence of Reed expanding Wordsworth's category of imagination. Reed's 'complete and uniform' arrangement of the poems, on behalf of Wordsworth's intentions and in the interest of importing an authentic Wordsworth for American readers, converts to sub-headings under 'Poems of the Imagination' nearly all the categories that refer to specifically British locations. In making 'Imagination' a more prominent feature of the edition, then, Reed produces, in effect, a less British Wordsworth. The editorial apparatus, that is, subordinates national differences to universal appeal. It is tempting to read this effect as one intended to appeal to Reed's audience—tempting to say, in other words, that American readers would find Wordsworth more palatable if his value could be said to transcend national boundaries. That Reed, himself, held this belief about Wordsworth's poems also makes such a conclusion seem reasonable, but while it makes sense that Reed universalises Wordsworth for an American audience, it is also important to consider that as a category, 'universal appeal' was one that had gained a certain cultural currency by the early nineteenth century. It was something that was considered to be a hallmark of great writers like Shakespeare and Milton. So when Reed, through strategic use of the editorial apparatus, implies that Wordsworth has 'universal appeal', he likewise confirms the poet's status as a great author. Moreover, other evidence suggests that this emphasis is more than a coincidence. In the second edition, Wordsworth's universal appeal is further distilled through an accumulation of paratexts, some of which are reprinted from the London editions, and some of which are Reed's own contribution. In comparison to Reed's first edition, then, the second edition takes on the added responsibility of being not only 'the most complete collection' but also a memorial to Wordsworth's life and career.³⁶

Textual Production and Terms of Value for Literary Study

The real significance of Reed's American edition, I have argued, is not simply that it supplies bibliographic information about particular revisions to Wordsworth's collected works. Rather, the project of examining this volume in the context of Reed's relationship with Wordsworth has consequences for our current understanding of 'British Romanticism', a category which has served, in its various instantiations since the late nineteenth century, as an important organising moment for the study of a certain period in the history of English Literature. Thus, my aim here is not simply to call attention to the relationship between Reed and Wordsworth, but rather to extrapolate from that relationship implications it has for the study of Romantic-period writing and ultimately the study of literary texts in general.

First, some implications for the study of British Romanticism. The example of Reed's edition shows how certain key tropes of Romanticism like 'imagination' can be tied to the production and circulation of the texts that, over time, have come to constitute the category itself, that the institutionalising of those tropes has as much to do with literary critics' failures to historicise, as McGann has argued, as with the production and reception of those texts—how they represent the written works themselves, how they construct authors and readers, how they figure reading and writing. I say the 'example of Reed's project', because his relationship with Wordsworth is one instance of many such relationships between editors and authors of the period which, when re-examined, might disclose the mechanisms by which organising tropes and narratives in the discourse of Romanticism have become institutionalised. An examination of these kinds of relationships invites a kind of historical work that exposes the cultural contexts within which ways of figuring the work of authoring and the work of reading later designated 'Romantic' emerged and circulated.

To return, briefly, to Reed's example: in one sense, the process by which revisions to the collected poems take shape is the antithesis of the Romantic ideal. The idea of revision runs contrary to the image of the literary work as a direct reflection of its author's mind. Wordsworth's arrangement of the poems, that is, does not spring forth, perfectly conceived, from his own mind, but is, rather, an ongoing project, one that emerges out of the dialogue between author and editor/reader. But in another sense, the process itself of revising the collection by Reed and Wordsworth bears some resemblance to Wordsworth's description of the imagination—'a word [...] denoting operations of the mind upon [absent external] objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws'.³⁷ This claim, and the discussion that follows in which Wordsworth struggles to articulate his notion of how the imagination works, are part of the 1815 Preface which appears in all of the collected editions of the poems. The imagination has an 'endowing or modifying power', Wordsworth explains, and it also 'shapes and *creates*' by means of 'innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into

unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number'. In their revisions to the arrangement of the poems, Reed and Wordsworth, taking cues from the poems as well as one another's readings of the poems, perform just such operations so that the arrangement of poems in 'Poems of the Imagination' comes to be uniform with respect to the discussion of imagination in the 1815 Preface and, in turn, so that the collection itself coheres as a unified whole. In the 1851 edition, this coherence remains a priority,³⁸ and it is underscored by the accumulation of editorial apparatus intended as a memorial to Wordsworth's genius and his universal appeal. This appeal, moreover, takes precedence over Wordsworth's British heritage (although that heritage, by virtue of the complex cultural relationship between England and America, cannot be entirely subsumed). In its production of Wordsworth's universal appeal, the example of Reed's edition raises questions, as well, about the dissemination of British Romanticism—a movement which, as an *ex post facto* construction, is most often understood as traveling out from England. The example of Reed's edition shows how the emergence of British Romantic discourse was a trans-Atlantic phenomenon, that readers on both sides of the Atlantic shaped and were shaped by a common conversation.

Finally, then, the 'Romantic' view of the author and his work constructed by Reed's edition has implications for literary study because of the special place and influence that early-nineteenth-century writers and texts later designated as 'Romantic' have always had in the academy. At the same time that selected early-nineteenth-century authors were being grouped together as British Romantics in histories of English literature, the study of literature in English was becoming a legitimate field of academic study. Books like George L. Craik's *Compendius History of English Literature*, one of the first to group together early-nineteenth-century texts and authors, were used or excerpted for use in the classroom.³⁹ Thus, those terms of value associated with the work of early-nineteenth-century writers ('imagination', 'originality', 'genius', 'universal appeal') were recirculated as part of the academic language for literary study. Of course, these terms don't originate with the work of early-nineteenth-century writers, but rather, have shaped the emergence of 'literature' as a special category of writing since the eighteenth century. Reed's edition of Wordsworth is part of the legacy of earlier collected editions—like Samuel Johnson's Shakespeare, for example—responsible for shaping modern notions of authorship. Thus, the example of Reed's edition is instructive not only because it contributed to the cultural production of Wordsworth as a Romantic poet, but also because it reminds us of a fundamental relationship that has always existed between literary terms of value and modes of textual production. 

NOTES

1. *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (Philadelphia: Kay and Troutman, 1837). Reed's other Wordsworth publications included a long critical review that appeared in the *North American Review* (1839) on the occasion

- of a 2nd edn of the American *Complete Poetical Works, Poems from the Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (1841), which was a popular version of his 1-vol. complete edn, and a lecture on Wordsworth in his *Lectures on the British Poets* (1851). In his correspondence with Wordsworth, Reed suggested ideas for new poems as well as revisions and additions to Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Sonnets (particularly to acknowledge the common interests of the British Anglican and American Episcopal Churches). After the poet's death in 1850, Reed solicited American contributions for the poet's memorial and supervised publication of the American edition of the *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (1851) edited by the poet's brother, the Reverend Dr Christopher Wordsworth. Of all his Wordsworth publications, however, Reed's 1-vol. edn of the complete works seems to have attracted considerable attention among his contemporaries and, in addition, had consequences for subsequent editions by Wordsworth himself. Reed's volume was reprinted in 1839, 1846 and 1848. In 1851, Reed published a revised edn, which was still being reprinted as late as 1870. Unless otherwise noted, references to Henry Reed's American edition come from this 1st edn and will be given after quotations in the text, abbreviated as *CPW*.
2. 'Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth', *Knickerbocker Magazine* (1839), 181.
 3. *The Writings of Herman Melville*, ed. by Harrison Hayford and others, 15 vols (Evanston: Northwestern University, and Chicago: Newberry Library, 1968–91), IX: *The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces, 1839–1860* (1987), 695 n.
 4. *Letters of William Wordsworth: A New Selection*, ed. by Alan G. Hill, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967–93), VI, 444.
 5. Theo Ledyard Cuyler, 'The English Lakes and Wordsworth', *Godey's*, 24 (1833), 30–32 (p. 31).
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
 7. *The Culture of Collected Editions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 1. See also Neil Fraistat (ed.), *Poems in their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986). For readings of selected collections by Romantic poets, see Fraistat, *The Poem and the Book: Interpreting Collections of Romantic Poetry* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).
 8. 'What Is an Author?' in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 101–20 (p. 108).
 9. Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Clifford Siskin, *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse* (Oxford: OUP, 1988); Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
 10. Siskin, *Work of Writing*, p. 14.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
 12. Leslie Nathan Broughton (ed.), *Wordsworth and Reed: The Poet's Correspondence with His American Editor: 1836–1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1933), p. 3.
 13. Broughton, *Wordsworth and Reed*, p. 3.
 14. 'Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman, With an Incident in Which He Was Concerned', *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems 1797–1800*, ed. by James Butler and Karen

- Green (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 64–67 (69–76). Further references to this poem are given in the text.
15. Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (New York: Methuen, 1983), p. 75.
 16. *Ibid.*, pp. 75–76.
 17. Broughton, *Wordsworth and Reed*, p. 18.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
 19. *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* (Philadelphia: James Humphreys, 1802); *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 4 vols (Boston: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1824); *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (New Haven, CT: Peck and Newton, 1836). Like Reed's, the New Haven edition was a one-volume 'complete' edition, which meant that it was based on the most recent London edition, published in 1832, and it included the *Yarrow Revisited* poems which had been published in 1835. And as Reed's would, the New Haven edition condensed the four volumes into one with double-column pages. Reed's edition is slightly bigger in size than the New Haven edition (27 as compared to 24 cm) and considerably longer in terms of pages (551 as compared to 320). Neither the Boston nor the New Haven edition of the collected poems was reprinted.
- In addition to Reed's more extensive editorial apparatus, the other important difference between it and the New Haven edition is how the *Yarrow Revisited* poems are incorporated. With the exception of the title poem, 'Yarrow Revisited', which was classed (without explanation) with 'The Excursion', the New Haven edition added the contents of *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems* to the end of Wordsworth's original arrangement, which concluded with 'The Excursion'. As I will explain, Reed's edition 'interspersed'—as opposed to just adding—the contents of *Yarrow Revisited* according to Wordsworth's existing classification in the interest of producing a 'complete and uniform' edition.
20. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (Paris: Galignani, 1828).
 21. Broughton, *Wordsworth and Reed*, p. 5.
 22. Joseph Wilkinson, *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire* (London: Rudolph Ackerman, 1810). William Wordsworth, *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems* (London: Longman, 1835). William Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, 4 vols (London: Longman, 1832).
 23. William Wordsworth, *The River Duddon, A Series of Sonnets; Vaudracour and Julia; and Other Poems; To Which is Annexed, a Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes, in the North of England* (London: Longman 1820).
 24. Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 468, n. 132.
 25. William Wordsworth, *Poems*, 2 vols (London: Longman 1815).
 26. Gill, *Wordsworth: A Life*, pp. 335–36.
 27. 'Advertisement', *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems*.
 28. Although it is beyond the scope of the present essay, analysing the poems' migration from Wordsworth's volume to Reed's would be worthwhile and interesting, especially if the analysis considered this in the larger context of Wordsworth's on-going revisions to his collected works. For the purposes of discussion in this essay, I focus on Reed's explanation of how he decided where to place the poems.
 29. Wordsworth, *Poems*, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1815), rptd in facsimile, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1989), pp. xiv–xv.

30. i.e., 'Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems, Composed (Two Excepted) During a Tour in Scotland, and on the English Border, in the Autumn of 1831', 'Sonnets Composed or Suggested During a Tour in Scotland in the Summer of 1833'. 'Evening Voluntaries' was a sub-class of 'Poems of Sentiment and Reflection'.
31. Broughton, *Wordsworth and Reed*, p. 151.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
34. i.e., 19 Aug 1837; 31 July 1845; 27 Sep 1845.
35. *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, Poet Laureate, etc.* (Philadelphia: Troutman and Hayes, 1851), p. iv. Further references to this work given after quotations in the text.
36. Reed adds, for example, a biographical note and includes 'tributes paid to the genius of Wordsworth' by Hartley Coleridge, and Thomas Noon Talfourd (*CW*, p. iv).
37. *Shorter Poems, 1807–1820*, ed. by Karl H. Ketchum, *The Cornell Wordsworth* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 636.
38. Reed notes in the Preface that his edition is still the 'most complete' because it contains poems 'which were omitted (inadvertently it is believed,) from the latest London edition' (*CW*, p. iv), by which he means the 7-vol. edn of 1850–51.
39. George Craik, *Compendius History of English Literature* (New York: Scribner, 1864).

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