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THE PERFECT MATCH

Wordsworth's 'The Triad' and Coleridge's 'The Garden of Boccacio'

Derek Furr



FOR OVER A DECADE AFTER ITS FIRST EDITION IN 1828, Charles Heath's *Keepsake* stood out as the most elegant of the English annuals, its binding and engraving setting the high standard by which other giftbooks would be measured. But the 1829 volume, in particular, stands out to us because its boastful list of contributors includes William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, as well as Mary and Percy Shelley (whose work Mary had submitted), Robert Southey, and Sir Walter Scott, whose 'Magnum Opus' would soon be published. This illustrious and costly group of writers represented Heath's attempt to make the literary material of his work as matchless as its artistic materials—or, as Heath phrased it in his Preface to 1829, 'to render the *Keepsake* perfect in all its departments'.¹ On an infamous tour through the country with his editor, Frederic Mansel Reynolds, he paid handsomely for contributions from England's most established poets, including Romanticism's aging patriarchs, who proved adept at striking a financial bargain. For twelve pages of verse, Wordsworth was paid 100 guineas; for seven pages, Coleridge was offered £50: no less than the steel engravings or silk bindings that were Heath's chief innovations in the costly aesthetics of the giftbook, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the poetry they submitted to the 1829 *Keepsake* were moneyed matter.

Wordsworth and Coleridge's association with the 1829 book effectively collapsed the quintessentially Romantic distinction between the work of art and work for pay, summed up by Shelley in his 'Defense of Poetry': 'Poetry, and the principle of the Self, of which money is the visible incarnation, are the God and the mammon of the world'.² Eclipsed by the popular success of Felicia Hemans, L.E.L., and other frequent contributors to giftbooks like the *Keepsake*—books that unapologetically promoted a sentimental, materialistic aesthetic—Wordsworth and Coleridge found themselves rethinking their Romantic assumption that materialism compromises the high aesthetic and ethical purpose of authorship. Perhaps true poets could indeed serve both 'God' and 'mammon', the muse and moneyed self-interest.

Whether or not the Lake School was extinct, as Francis Jeffrey happily pronounced it in 1822, Wordsworth and Coleridge were decidedly less productive in the 1820s than in the decades before. After *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* was

published in 1822, Wordsworth wasn't to publish another volume of new verse until the 1830s. Coleridge devoted much of the early 1820s to his *Aids to Reflection* and published no new poems between 1819 and 1828. In a March 1828 letter to Lady Beaumont, he speculated that he could never 'resume Poetry', having composed only a handful of unfinished verses during the decade.³ Why this decline in poetic output? Financial distress and the trials of his son, Hartley, are often cited as sources of Coleridge's decline. Of Wordsworth, Stephen Gill has maintained that 'One need not subscribe to "Romantic" notions about the ideal conditions for production of poetry—suffering, solitude, imaginative possession, and so on—to see that during the fifth decade of Wordsworth's life many factors were working against it [writing poetry]', including family worries, poor health, 'social life' and 'enjoyment of fame'.⁴ As Peter Manning has pointed out, records from the sales of Wordsworth's poetry in the 1820s indicate that the poet's readership was limited, as were the financial returns on his time-consuming efforts to find a publisher for his *Collected Works*.⁵ Though his reputation was well-established, his *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* received largely negative reviews, and the poet was distressed by how long it took his volumes to sell out and how little he profited by them.

Whatever the reason for the dormancy of their muses in the early 1820s, the *Keepsake* revived both poets. It loosened the grip of the Romantic ideology, massaged their egos, and paid them handsomely for their troubles. Manning demonstrates that writing for the *Keepsake* promised Wordsworth two things he dearly desired: a wide readership and financial rewards. Coleridge was similarly invigorated by writing for the annuals, particularly by the promise of a wide readership. In an essay on Coleridge's giftbook contributions, Morton D. Paley recalls that in 1829, a downcast Samuel Taylor Coleridge was eager for both money and public exposure. Although Coleridge shared Wordsworth's quintessentially Romantic anxieties about pricing and selling poetry, dealing with the annuals gave him (Paley writes) 'a much-needed connection with a readership who knew him through some of his earlier works' and brought out interests that Coleridge shared with the 1829 reading public.⁶

Wordsworth and Coleridge's most provocative contributions to the 1829 volume, 'The Triad' and 'The Garden of Boccaccio', offer interesting insights into how those poets participated in the giftbook's sentimentality and gendered ideals of physical and spiritual beauty. On the subject of gender and the annuals, Anne Mellor notes that annuals like the *Keepsake*, marketed primarily to women, 'systematically constructed through word and picture the hegemonic ideal of feminine beauty', which treated women as 'specular' objects of a masculine gaze.⁷ Wordsworth in particular participates enthusiastically in the construction of this ideal; his 'The Triad' is a carefully crafted poeticisation of the giftbook's trade in feminine beauty. The *Keepsake* also traded on the idealisation of gift-giving, and Coleridge's 'The Garden of Boccaccio' is a sentimental celebration of a friendship's offering—an offering made by a woman and, in the giftbook

context, marked as characteristically, admirably *feminine*. Both of these poems draw upon the standard tropes and emotional affectations of sentimentalism, popularised by writers like L.E.L. and Hemans, and essential to the giftbook's articulation of beauty. In short, reading 'The Triad' and 'Boccacio' in context, we might conclude that Wordsworth and Coleridge are not so much reformed Romantics as they are *de facto* sentimental poets, comfortably at work within the conventions of the giftbook.

I

Beauty, gendered female and offered up for admiration and possession, is a preoccupation of the 1829 *Keepsake* and is the subject of William Wordsworth's 'own favourites' among his poetical contributions, 'The Triad' (*Keepsake*, pp. 72–78). Although Wordsworth had been ambivalent about publishing his work in such an overtly materialistic and stylised medium, and he was later to forswear the annuals as 'degrading to the Muses', it is clear that he took seriously and enjoyed the task of composing poems for the 1829 *Keepsake*. He believed that his poems 'The Wishing Gate' and 'The Country Girl' had 'merit', and asserted in a letter to Reynolds 'I will tell you frankly—I can write nothing better than a great part of "The Triad"—whether it be for your purpose or no'.⁸ 'The Triad' unquestionably serves the ideological purposes of the *Keepsake* well, as the poet no doubt knew. And even if Wordsworth remained somewhat anxious about being associated with the annuals, his 'Triad' betrays his elective affinities for the annual's gender ideology.

Wordsworth's 'triad' consists of three idealised women, whom the poet presents to an imagined suitor. To Isabella Fenwick, Wordsworth identified the women as Edith Southey, Dora Wordsworth, and Sara Coleridge—daughters of the Lake Poets—and each recognised the poem as a tribute to her. The poem, a desultory ode with pastoral effects, begins with a challenge and a proclamation, in which Wordsworth as bard and matchmaker declares domestic England to be the source of ideal female beauty. 'Show me the noblest Youth of present time', he cries, 'And I will mate and match him blissfully':

I will not fetch a Naiad from a flood
 Pure as herself—(song lacks not mightier power)
 Nor leaf-crowned Dryad from a pathless wood,
 Nor Sea-nymph, glistening from her coral bower;
 Mere Mortals, bodied forth in vision still,
 Shall with Mount Ida's triple lustre fill
 The chaster coverts of a British hill. (ll. 7–14)

The aging patriarch of 'The Triad' will proudly put modesty and femininity on display, will prostitute the private virtues of their female subjects—a paradox that in Wordsworth's poem deconstructs in such slippery lines as the 'chaster coverts of a British hill'. Wordsworth's immodest display of these women takes place, ostensibly, in seclusion, among 'coverts' suitably chaste for the unveiling

of such virtue. This is a private screening for the imagined suitor. But Wordsworth's coverts are located, ironically, on a hillside, specifically a 'British' hill—a British mount Olympus that lifts up these paragons of virtue for the approving gaze of good British subjects. And do not we, the readers of the *Keepsake*, stand by the suitor? And does not this poetical display have a particularly immodest forum, the scarlet red giftbook?⁹ Wordsworth admires these daughters' modest, domestic, peculiarly English beauty—so much that he will show it off, wager us that it is matchless, tempt us to purchase it.

Wordsworth goes on to command a processional of his English domestic goddesses, led by the 'handmaid lowly' Edith Southey (l. 61), and to delineate their desirable qualities—Dora's 'smiles and dimples' (l. 138) for example, and the 'azure field' of Sara's eyes (l. 193). The *Keepsake* does the same with its illustrations, or 'embellishments', parading female beauties before the gaze of English consumers. Examining giftbook representations of women in her biography of Letitia Landon, Glennis Stephenson notes three principal character types—the mother, the young woman displaying her 'elegant accomplishments', and the woman as sovereign England—and maintains that each served to delineate a 'female domestic ideal'.¹⁰ Stephenson's reading is certainly borne out by 'The Triad' and the *Keepsake*. Potential buyers and readers of the 1829 *Keepsake* opened their book to a portrait of the elegant Mrs Peel, wife of the famed English public man, and could page through a series of embellishments featuring delicate and submissive women and rosy-cheeked young ladies, not unlike the women of 'The Triad'.¹¹ This imagery was intended to define what a woman could/should be; delicate physical traits and demure posture were the idealised features of ladies who occupied, in Wordsworth's words, 'earth's proudest throne [...] an unambitious hearth' (ll. 52, 54). Young female readers of the *Keepsake*, in their mid-twenties like Wordsworth's triad, were invited to emulate such English treasures, and engraved copies of favourites could be purchased separately for a few pence.¹² Not unlike the 'noblest youth' in 'The Triad', young men who bought the *Keepsake* for their sweethearts (one recalls the pitiful Mr Ned Plymdale in Eliot's *Middlemarch*) were encouraged to invest a 'hegemonic ideal' of female beauty—the beauties of the book being a tribute to those of the love object. Wordsworth's poem, in short, perfectly mirrors the culture/economy in which the poet writes. The poem is 'about' its context.

Not least among the *Keepsake*'s feminine treasures is Wordsworth's portrait of Dora—the brightest and most impassioned among his flattering tributes to the three daughters. The lines could easily be a précis or a caption for one of the *Keepsake*'s embellishments, and the diction and tropes are strikingly similar to those we find in Letitia Landon's portraits. Indeed, a comparison of the Dora text with one of Landon's portraits from the 1829 *Keepsake* makes a strong case for reading Wordsworth as a quintessentially *sentimental* contributor. The following quatrain from 'The Triad' calls out for such a comparison:

She bears the stringed lute of old romance,
 That cheered the trellised arbour's privacy,
 And soothed war-wearied knights in raftered hall.
 How vivid, yet how delicate, her glee!

In the giftbook context, Dora is a character type—the female poetess of ‘old romance’, so called. By invoking ‘old romance’, Wordsworth locates his passage in a contemporary poetical discourse that had been developed largely by sentimental poets, Landon in particular, in giftbooks and volumes of poetry like *The Golden Violet, with its Tales of Romance and Chivalry*.

Dora's ‘stringed lute’, her ‘glowing cheek’, and soothing songs belong to the conventional imagery of this discourse, which is essential to the literature and engravings in the annuals. Witness Landon's lines to a portrait of Georgina, Duchess of Bedford (*Keepsake*, p. 121), in which the poet contends that Georgina's ‘stately beauty’ would have been better appreciated had she lived in ‘that old haunted time,/ When sovereign beauty was a thing sublime,/ For which knights went to battle, and her glove/ Had more of glory than of love’ (ll. 9–12). Landon's ‘haunted time’, like Wordsworth's ‘old romance’, is a sentimental space that serves primarily as a stage for the exhibition of nostalgia, and Georgina's ‘glove’, like Dora's ‘glowing cheek’, signifies beauty as the *Keepsake* defined it—feminine, physical, ‘superficial’ in the literal sense of the word. But it becomes increasingly clear as Landon's poem proceeds that she does not treasure this beauty or feel this nostalgia, in striking contrast with Wordsworth, for whom Dora's cheek and ‘old romance’ seem genuinely attractive. Landon goes on to write that in the ‘Present’—by which she means the present age and the present book—the ‘colour'd words’ of poetry have little to do with beauty; they are distilled from the ‘vague imagination’ of poets with only a pretended knowledge of and investment in beauty (ll. 19–30). Momentarily disillusioned with writing for giftbooks, Landon calls attention to the artificiality of her work, and thus to the affectations of the *Keepsake*. Landon's disillusionment contrasts sharply with Wordsworth's obvious pleasure in portraying Dora. Contrary to what we might expect, Landon's is the more *Romantic* work—she ends her poem in a Keatsian mode, enervated, self-conscious, and ‘wordless’ (l. 30) before her subject. The poem seems out of place in a book of beauty, while Wordsworth's ode, overtly stylised and secure in its pronouncements on beauty, is an integral part of the book's ideological project.¹³

For Wordsworth, new to the giftbook market, writing about ‘old romance’ and feminine beauty is stimulating. More to the point, writing about his daughter (like writing for the giftbook) is a deeply sentimental act. In fact, his revisions of the Dora section show us that his attachments to the daughter complement his commitments to the giftbook's ideological designs. Wordsworth sent at least two versions of the poem to Dora before its publication, including a series of additions and revisions copied into a March 1828 letter to her.¹⁴ He must have been especially attached to these lines, as to his daughter. In addi-

tion to metrical improvements and meticulous changes in diction and imagery, Wordsworth radically altered his representation of Dora's character. Take the following examples from the end of the Dora section, in which Wordsworth has suggested that when 'manners' and 'tutored elegance' fail Dora, her natural charm compensates. After the lines 'But her blushes are joy-flushes/ And the fault (if fault it be)':

Only ministers to quicken
Sallies of instinctive wit;
Unchecked in laughter-loving gaiety,
In all the motions of her spirit, free.

Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gaiety
And kindle sportive wit—
Leaving this Daughter of the mountains free. (ll. 166–69)

Dora's 'sallies of instinctive wit', too saucy and strong for a properly charming girl, become the more playful and harmless 'sportive wit'. Her 'gaiety' is 'quicken[ed]' by her faux pas in the revised version, for never would she or Wordsworth allow it to blossom 'unchecked', as in the first. Generally, the language of the second passage is more sensitive to Wordsworth's feminine ideal than the first, and the syntax of the revised version is simpler and less stilted. The made-over Dora is lively but not unfeminine. Worthy of a floral crown of 'Idalian rose', she will choose instead a display of natural piety—'one wildfloweret' adorns her virgin 'bosom' (ll. 114–18). Moreover, she has become a 'Daughter', a change that doubtless came from Wordsworth's heart. The portrait has Wordsworth's touch, but his touch—prompted by sentimental attachment to his subject as well as by his ideological designs—makes the portrait even more suitable for the *Keepsake*. 'Dora' in 'The Triad' is not only a tribute to Wordsworth's daughter and to his affection for her, but is also an allegory for the (female) reader's benefit.

Wordsworth laboured intensely over these lines to Dora and over 'The Triad' generally. And his labour found its reward not only in the handsome sums paid by Heath, but in the poet's successful crafting of a giftbook ode without really losing himself. Several years later, Wordsworth, again in a paternal mode, was to advise the aspiring female poet Maria Jane Jewsbury to 'let the Annuals pay—and with whomsoever you deal make hard bargains'.¹⁵ Thus, money would compensate the poet for compromises in her integrity and, ironically, for any Romantic anxiety she might feel about publicly associating with moneyed matters. But in 1829, Wordsworth has not really compromised himself, even if he has his Romantic perspectives on poetry and money. In 'The Triad', his shared interests with the annuals are more apparent than his anxieties. His ode is stylistically and ideologically suitable to him and to a book of beauty.

II

If Wordsworth is familiarly patriarchal in his 'Triad', Coleridge is just as familiarly despondent and needy in his most outstanding contribution to the 1829 *Keepsake*, his 'Garden of Boccacio' (pp. 282–85), a poem which he wrote to accompany an engraving after Thomas Stothard's 'Boccacio's Garden'. Just as Wordsworth discovered a personal affinity for the annual's gender ideology, Coleridge was to find its idealisation of 'gift giving' especially attractive. Indeed, 'The Garden of Boccacio' is essentially *about* the culture of 'giving' that the giftbook's purchasers and readers engaged in. Specifically, 'The Garden of Boccacio' describes the giving of a beautiful gift, a poet's subsequent encounter with the beautiful, and how objects like the *Keepsake* invite such encounters.

In the first stanza of the poem, Coleridge records how he came across this engraving. Finding the poet in a 'dreary mood', his 'Friend' Anne Gillman places before him an 'exquisite design' that lifts his spirits (ll. 3–14). Drawing on biographical evidence, Paley elucidates Coleridge's poetical account, demonstrating that Gillman approached Coleridge on Reynolds' behalf, to solicit a poem to accompany the engraving for the *Keepsake*. In essence, Paley writes, Gillman's gesture was 'an invitation to a commercial transaction'.¹⁶ But in context, commercial act and charitable act, commercial motive and charitable motive, are indistinguishable. Coleridge was staying with the Gillmans while he attempted to wean himself from opium, and his letters demonstrate that he secretly used the very money he received for his *Keepsake* contributions to pay off recent debts to an apothecary.¹⁷ He needed the money—but he also longed for Gillman's companionship. We might cynically label Gillman Reynolds' proxy or Coleridge's unwitting enabler, but Coleridge believed that his friend had ministered to him. In the spirit of the *gift* in 'giftbook', we might instead assume that Gillman was motivated by her genuine desire to retrieve her friend from a self-inflicted depression. Coleridge's poem maintains that by offering him the Stothard engraving, Gillman lured him away from his self-pity and invited him to imaginative productivity. Her 'invitation to a commercial transaction' either was or effectively became an act of grace and sympathy.

In essence, Gillman's gesture and Coleridge's reaction mirror the giving and receiving of an annual. Just as her invitation to commerce is Coleridge's means to beautiful experience, so the *Keepsake* reader can experience the beautiful by virtue of a friend's generous expenditures. Let us imagine that we have come across the following stanza beside the exquisite steel engraving 'The Garden of Boccacio' in the *Keepsake*. We received this book for Christmas, from a dear friend, perhaps a lover. The poem and engraving are near the end of the volume, so we have probably read through Wordsworth's 'The Triad' and pored over several Italian vistas. We read the following lines:

Of late, in one of those most weary hours,
When life seems emptied of all genial powers,
A dreary mood, which he who ne'er has known

May bless his happy lot, I sate alone;
 And, from the numbing spell to win relief,
 Call'd on the Past for thought of glee or grief.
 In vain! bereft alike of grief and glee,
 I sate and cow'r'd o'er my own vacancy!
 And as I watch'd the dull continuous ache,
 Which, all else slumb'ring, seem'd alone to wake;
 O Friend! long wont to notice yet conceal,
 And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,
 I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
 Place on my desk this exquisite design.
 Boccaccio's Garden and its faery,
 The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry!
 An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
 Framed in the silent poesy of form. (ll. 1–18)

Coleridge assumes that we giftbook readers have experienced *Weltschmerz*, if not personally then vicariously in our literary pursuits, and that we can therefore sympathise with the self-indulgent watch he keeps. But both we and the poet recognise the dangers of such narcissistic nihilism, and we welcome the friend's silent ministry. In keeping with the annual's gender ideology, Anne Gilman's friendship and its manifestations are peculiarly feminine. Perceptive but tactful, she quietly and subtly ministers to the poet's sick spirit, soothing by silence as Wordsworth's Dora soothed by song. Her friendship's offering is an 'exquisite design'—a phrase we have often seen in reference to the annuals and their embellishments. Beautiful objects generate beautiful feelings, and Gilman's gesture has its intended, peculiarly sentimental effect, as Coleridge relates: 'A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er my chest,/ As though an infant's finger touch'd my breast' (ll. 25–26). Exquisite beauty dispels darkness even as a baby's touch compels the affections. In giving Coleridge the Stothard engraving, Gilman recognizes the value of being sentimental, as did no doubt the one who gave us the 1829 *Keepsake*.

'The Garden of Boccaccio' thus opens with a celebration of gift-giving, even of *giftbook*-giving—a celebration, that is, of the *Keepsake* we now have in hand. Despondency transcended, the warmth of sentiment infused, Coleridge next enters into an imaginative reverie based on the engraving, and the lines before us supposedly represent the reverie as it happens. As Paley notes, Coleridge imagines himself a part of the fantastic scene in Boccaccio's garden, and gradually 'ekphrasis is abandoned in favor of the poet's own invention'.¹⁸ But Coleridge's 'invention'—specifically his nostalgic representation of Italy—is shaped by sentimental convention and by the expectations of his readers. Again his lines resonate with their context, demonstrating Coleridge's oneness with the *Keepsake*'s designs. Like Wordsworth's 'British hill', Coleridge's 'star-bright Italy' is a sentimental landscape. Although Coleridge's nostalgia for Florence and the Arno may derive partly from actual experience, lines like 'Fair cities,

gallant mansions, castles old' (l. 80) and 'the golden corn, the olive, and the vine' (l. 79) affect longing in the standard vocabulary of sentimental writing. The images do not so much describe 'Florence' as Coleridge felt it, as echo an idea of 'Italy' that has already been described and felt—Madame de Staël's *Corinne, ou l'Italie* (1807), for example, which had made Italy the favourite setting for women writing about a favourite subject, the intersection of poetic reverie, public display, and private sentiments.¹⁹ Coleridge's 'Florence' is the Italian dreamland we find throughout the 1829 volume, in the 'cypress groves', 'olive thicket', and 'poplar glade' of Lord Morpeth's 'On Leaving Italy' (*Keepsake*, p. 71: ll. 7–8), and in the 'kind Italian soil' of Naples in Mary Shelley's 'Fernando Eboli' (*Keepsake*, p. 204). Coleridge's landscape is, in short, one with which readers of the *Keepsake* were intimately acquainted and to which they were ever ready to return. In a sentimental mood, Coleridge revisits the 'brightest star in star-bright Italy' and graciously gives his readers what they want.

* * * * *

As a Romantic reading of Coleridge's reverie might suggest, 'The Garden of Boccaccio' is a product of emotion recollected in tranquillity. But it is, more accurately, the product of a friendship's offering, and of a powerful/empowering tradition of sentimental writing that Coleridge joins when he submits to the *Keepsake*. And like Wordsworth's 'The Triad', Coleridge's poem is the result of a contractual agreement—of an invitation to contribute (as Coleridge put it) 'a very small number of lines' in exchange for an 'attractive sum'.²⁰ To read 'The Garden of Boccaccio' and 'The Triad' is to read the giftbook itself—its peculiar qualities and ideological designs—poetically rendered. It is also to read the passions of Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1829, neither of whom could have been better equipped, sentimentally, to write giftbook poetry. In Wordsworth, the *Keepsake* finds an enthusiastic advocate for trade in feminine beauty, and 'The Triad' (disturbingly) makes poetry of that trade. If 'The Triad' is a brazen book of beauty, 'The Garden of Boccaccio' is a friendship's offering, with its quieter implications for the giftbook's gender ideology and its gracious work within the traditions of sentimentalism. Moreover, in Coleridge's poem, as in the experience it records and in the annual itself, the union of commerce, compassion, and creativity is successfully negotiated. In sum, the 1829 *Keepsake* does more than offer us revised Romanticism. It shows us Wordsworth and Coleridge at one with their market, restored to productivity not only by the promise of ample return for their labours but by the giftbook's aesthetic, so fully realised in their best contributions. 

NOTES

1. All references to Heath's preface, and texts of poems quoted in this essay, are taken from *The Keepsake*, ed. by Frederic Mansel Reynolds (London: Charles Heath, 1829).

2. Percy Shelley, 'Defense of Poetry', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 503.
3. Cited in Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Darker Reflections, 1804–1834* (New York: Pantheon, 1998), p. 552.
4. Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 350–51.
5. Peter Manning, 'Wordsworth in the *Keepsake*, 1829', in *Literature in the Marketplace*, ed. by John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 44–73.
6. Morton D. Paley, 'Coleridge and the *Annuals*', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 57 (Winter 1994), 3.
7. *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 111.
8. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: Volume IV, The Later Years, Part 1: 1821–1828*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt, revised by Alan G. Hill (2nd edn, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 692.
9. Contemporary economic history always lies just below the surface of the *Keepsake's* materials, as is evident in one of its unique 'embellishments', its red silk binding. Charles Heath's biographer asserts that this innovation 'was probably inspired by the well-publicised plight of the Spitalfields silk industry, which faced ruin from foreign competition'—John Heath, *The Heath Family Engravers, 1779–1878*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993), II, 55. Since 1773, the uneconomic English silk industry had been protected by the Spitalfields Act, which severely restricted silk imports and set a minimum wage for labourers. The Act was repealed in 1824 by a Tory parliament increasingly convinced of the benefits of free trade and the exclusion of government from wage arbitration. Subsequently, silk imports increased and prices dropped—a blow to labour but a boon for the middle-class consumer of luxury items. The shrewd Charles Heath capitalised on a renewed demand for silk by binding his giftbook in this rich material and dyeing it bright scarlet. Like the silk, the *Keepsake* was a luxurious bargain. For more information about the silk industry in the 1820s, see Barry J. Gordon, *Economic Doctrine and Tory Liberalism, 1824–1830* (London: Macmillan, 1979).
10. *Letitia Landon: The Woman behind L.E.L.* (Manchester: MUP, 1995), pp. 139–44.
11. The *Keepsake's* steel-engraved portraits were of a noticeably higher quality than illustrations in giftbooks prior to Heath's. Heath was instrumental in the introduction of steel-engraving into England—initially as a means of combating a growing cottage industry: the copper-plate forgery of paper bank notes. Steel engraving produced a sharper image and a more durable plate than the more common copper engraving. Thus, as Heath demonstrated to his future clients, banks could produce high quality notes with detailed images that were difficult to imitate. And they could produce these notes in greater quantity than ever before, something devoutly to be wished in an era of speculation. Heath later saw the potential that this engraving technique held for giftbook illustration, offering crisp images in great quantity, high quality at low cost. Thus the refined and delicate copies after Turner and Reynolds that would make the *Keepsake* a prized commodity inscribed, appropriately, a technique and craftsmanship that Heath practised and perfected in the actual production of money. Money quite literally generated artifice. A detailed explanation of steel engraving and its advantages over copper is offered by Frederic W. Faxon in *Literary Annuals and Gift Books:*

- A Bibliography, 1823–1832* (Pinner: Private Libraries Association, 1973), pp. 19–20. See also Heath, *Heath Family Engravers*, pp. 17–20.
12. Class, as well as gender, plays a role in this ‘emulation’, though a full treatment of it lies outside the scope of this essay. Many of the women portrayed in giftbooks were aristocrats, and as critic Sonia Hofkosh has noted, in purchasing an annual, middle-class consumers engaged in the semblance of aristocratic extravagance. See ‘Disfiguring Economies: Mary Shelley’s Short Stories’ in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Aubrey A. Fisch (New York: OUP, 1993), p. 203. See also Laura Mandell’s discussion of the giftbooks and ‘bourgeois aesthetic’ in ‘Hemans and the Gift-Book Aesthetic’, *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text*, 6 (June 2001), Online: Internet [12 July 2005]: <http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/romtext/articles/cc06_n01.html>.
 13. Jerome McGann offers a different perspective on Landon’s lines in *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
 14. See *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: Later Years, Part 1*, pp. 590–91.
 15. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Volume v: The Later Years, Part 1: 1829–1834*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt, revised by Alan G. Hill (2nd edn, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 28.
 16. Paley, ‘Coleridge and the Annuals’, p. 12.
 17. The narrative of Coleridge’s desperate state is poignantly implicit in letters 1639 and 1640, in particular, in *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Volume VI: 1826–1834*, ed. by Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).
 18. Paley, ‘Coleridge and the Annuals’, p. 14.
 19. Isobel Armstrong discusses this ‘movement to Italy’ and its importance for women’s poetry in *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 324–25.
 20. Coleridge, *Collected Letters, Vol. VI*, p. 761.

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