

# Thomas Lobell Beddoes Society



Woodcut of The Dance of Death, from the Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493

# The Newsletter

*Number Fourteen 2010*





## Beddoes to his Critic

'Tell the students I obsess,  
Tell them something's wrong with me.  
That medicine will help. Impress  
Them with your sage psychiatry.

'Tell them that I'm manic, that  
These phases alternate with gloom.  
When others stood for Life, I sat.  
Let these statements fill the room.

'And if perhaps you find one doubt,  
Resist your observations, then,  
Let the final clincher out:  
Tell them that I favored men.

'But when you've thus disposed of me,  
And kept yourself from facing death,  
Do not think we're finished. See,  
I await your dying breath.'

*Richard Geyer*





## Editorial

Welcome to Newsletter 14. It's two years since the last issue – poor form for an annual! – but here's evidence that something's still astir on the Ship of Fools.

Members will know that following John Beddoes' resignation as chairman the Society is in a period of transition. The meeting on 13th March resolved that we will continue to pursue our original aim to publicise and promote the work of Thomas Lovell Beddoes. But there are still difficulties to overcome, the most urgent being to appoint a new chairman and secretary. This must be done at the AGM on 25th September (1 pm at The Devereux, 20 Devereux Court, Essex Street, The Strand, London WC2R 3JJ). We hope that by holding the meeting in London as many members as possible will be able to attend and join the discussion: the Society needs you.

After the AGM John will become a Patron of the Society. Without John there wouldn't be a Thomas Lovell Beddoes Society. Its growth and development over 16 years has been in great part due to his enthusiasm, dedication and plain good will and humour. And *nerve* – who else would dare knock on a person's door two hours before the crack of noon just to ask if a slumbering Beddoes fan happened to be somewhere in the house? You've been thanked before, John, but thanks again.

We hope you will enjoy this issue. Honor Hewett opens new perspectives on the relation between Beddoes' poetry and that of his contemporary Thomas Hood. Richard Geyer's spent many an hour in the Beddoes cellar and come up with more inviting ale, wine and Moët than most of us could drink on a lost weekend. The late Muriel Maby reminds us of the remarkable John King while Hugh Parry's out hunting with his blunderbuss again. We also reprint an extract from one of Dr Beddoes' scarcer works, the long poem *Alexander's Expedition Down the Hydaspes & the Indus to the Indian Ocean*.

We are and will be grateful to all members (and others) who offer contributions – articles, poems, news items, proposals – or alert us to texts we'd be interested to reprint. So long as we receive enough of those the Newsletter *will* in future be an annual.

*Alan Halsey and Stephen Davies*

# Contents

Thomas Lovell Beddoes and Thomas Hood, by Honor Hewett .....	1
Thomas Lovell Beddoes and Alcohol, by Richard Geyer .....	22
<i>Alexander's Expedition down the Hydaspes and the Indus to the Indian Ocean</i> , by Dr Thomas Beddoes .....	32
John King: Surgeon of Clifton, by Muriel Maby .....	40
'There's no Romance in that', Review of Sharon Murphy, <i>Maria Edgeworth and Romance</i> , by Hugh Parry .....	43
Bibliographies of Dr Thomas Beddoes and Thomas Lovell Beddoes, 2009-2010, by Richard Geyer .....	50
Notes on Contributors .....	53



*'The Bills of Mortality', an illustration from  
Thomas Hood's Comic Annual of 1834*



## Thomas Lovell Beddoes and Thomas Hood: *Death and the Body as Represented in their Poetry*

Honor Hewett

### *Introduction*

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES and Thomas Hood are arguably two of the most intriguing writers of the late Romantic era. They appear at first to be vastly different characters, not obviously lending themselves to comparison, but my hope is that through showing the cultural forces that link them this study will demonstrate otherwise and provide an insight into these enthralling figures.

Beddoes was the son of a politically-active chemist and physician who can be credited for his part in investigating the use of gases in medicine, famously leading to his assistant Humphry Davy's championing of nitrous oxide as an anaesthetic.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Lovell followed his father's example by studying physiology, surgery and chemistry at Göttingen. A lifelong engagement with radical politics and those associated with it can perhaps also be attributed to his father's influence. It has been suggested that before his death in 1808 Thomas Beddoes' passion for anatomy was such that in order to educate his children in the discipline he would 'perform dissections on animals as well as humans, even going so far as to force his five-year-old son to pull out egg sacks from fertile fish.'<sup>2</sup> Although somewhat unusual, Beddoes's background was wealthy enough that he lived, in many ways, the life of a gentleman. He was avidly committed to his studies, as the following quotation from one of his letters demonstrates:

Up at 5, Anatomical reading till 6—translation from English into German till 7—  
Prepare for Blumenbach's lecture on comp. Anat<sup>y</sup> & breakfast till 8—Blumenbach's  
lecture till 9—Stromeyer's lecture on Chemistry till 10. 10 to 1/2 p. 12, Practical  
Zootomy—1/2 p. 12 to 1 English into German or German literary reading with a  
pipe—1 to 2 Anatomical lecture. 2 to 3 anatomical reading. 3 to 4 Osteology...<sup>3</sup>

There was obviously no shortage of activity in his days, as the letter continues in the same vein, but the importance of his busy life lies in the fact that he had the financial security to enable him firstly to study at all, but also to devote what free time he had to writing. He published *The Improvisatore* in 1821 and *The Brides' Tragedy* a year later, but the majority of his work was published posthumously, fuelling the possibility that, although he loved it dearly, writing for Beddoes was a passion and not a viable career choice. Herein lies the main point of difference

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael Neve, 'Beddoes, Thomas' (1760-1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1919>.

<sup>2</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler 'Dying with a Vengeance: Dead Brides and the Death-fetish in T.L. Beddoes' in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes* ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007) pp.207-228 (p.225).

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Thomas Forbes Kelsall in H.W. Donner, ed., *The Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935) pp. 608-609.

with Hood, and this is something that is covered in more detail in my final chapter. Beddoes's major work is considered to be *Death's Jest-Book*, which he began in 1825 and worked on for the rest of his life, although he never brought it to a final form.<sup>4</sup> Much of what is now published as his 'poetry' was written with the intention to include it in this work. Beddoes committed suicide by drinking poison in 1849, but a previous attempt had involved him opening an artery in his leg, which Susan J. Wolfson and Peter J. Manning note 'soon required amputation below the knee.'<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Hood came from distinctly more humble beginnings: his father, Thomas Hood senior, was a bookseller but died in 1811 (followed shortly by one of his sons) before the young Thomas reached the age of twelve.<sup>6</sup> Following this event, Hood changed schools, and then began work as a clerk in a counting-house, although he was later forced to leave this position due to ill health. His 'fragility' limited potential opportunities, but he took up an apprenticeship to an engraver, which he completed despite a two year gap for rest when his health once again became precarious.<sup>7</sup> While still practising his trade several years later, in 1821, Hood received an invitation from John Taylor to become editorial assistant on *The London Magazine* and as Joy Flint notes, 'from this time onwards he was a professional author, earning his living by writing and editing.'<sup>8</sup> Walter Jerrold records how Hood's position at the magazine came about following an incident which I feel can only be described as macabre, for while tragic, one cannot fail to see the humour in it (Beddoes would certainly have approved). The man whom Hood replaced, John Scott — some time prior to 1821 — had begun a rivalry between his own magazine, *The London*, and rival publication *Blackwood's*, which eventually led to a duel between himself and a friend of John Gibson Lockhart, the editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Scott was killed in this contest and consequently his position was offered to Hood.<sup>9</sup> Scott lost his life over the arguably trivial matter of his magazine's reputation, but had the outcome been otherwise it is impossible to know if Hood would ever have achieved such recognition as he did. He was incredibly popular in his time, and although it could be argued that writing was just as much a passion for him as it was for Beddoes (indeed Joy Flint states that there is 'no call to doubt his own assertion that he never wrote anything that did not please himself') one cannot escape the fact that their impetuses were vastly different.<sup>10</sup> Beddoes wrote for pleasure, utilising the gentleman's luxury of waiting for the descent of the muse, but his contemporary was forced — in his own words — 'to be a lively Hood for a livelihood'.<sup>11</sup>

These brief summaries of biographical information provide us with an introduction to these two writers. During the course of this essay I hope to investigate their respective representations of the subjects of death and (due to the intrinsic connection between the two) anatomy, and the ways in which they may be linked to their specific cultural positions.

An inescapable observation for any scholar of Beddoes is that almost no study of this fascinating figure can proceed without making reference to his death-fetish. As Michael Bradshaw writes, 'Beddoes's subject as a writer was always death.'<sup>12</sup> It prevails as a topic

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Lovell Beddoes, *Death's Jest-Book: The 1829 Text*, ed. by Michael Bradshaw (Manchester: Carcanet/Routledge, 2003) p.xii.

<sup>5</sup> Susan J. Wolfson and Peter J. Manning, ed., *Selected Poems of Thomas Hood, Winthrop Mackworth Praed and Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000) p.251.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Jerrold, *Thomas Hood: His Life and Times* (1907; New York: Greenwood Press, 1969) p.10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>8</sup> Joy Flint, ed., *Thomas Hood: Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992) p.9.

<sup>9</sup> Jerrold, p.93.

<sup>10</sup> Flint, p.13.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Bradshaw, *Resurrection Songs: The Poetry of Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (Aldershot, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001) p.6.



throughout this poet's work, and thus it is impossible to ignore. But what of Hood? His obsession is predominantly with puns and wordplay, he has no professional medical knowledge and doesn't seem to be quite as absorbed in or transfixed by the subject of death as Beddoes, and yet there is certainly no shortage of material to draw upon, if one wishes to investigate his representations of it. Flint notes that 'an atmosphere of death and foreboding clings to much of Hood's writing, comic as well as serious',<sup>13</sup> and James Reeves suggests that 'a concern, already traceable in Beddoes, amounting at times to an obsession, with death and decay'<sup>14</sup> might be something which Hood procured through his admiration of Keats. In any case, the interest exists, and underlies what is often picked up on in writing on Hood; he is very much a split personality, a divided character. While his poetry was intended for the genteel, family-based, middle-class readership of annuals, it is often grotesque and macabre, and the laughter it produces may often be darker than it at first seems. Hood as a man seems very closely linked to the topic of death (albeit in a different way to Beddoes) by virtue of his childhood experiences, lifelong fragility and frequent money problems. For Hood, death always loomed near, in the form of memory, but more crucially as a very real possibility for the near future. This ever-present force is perceptible throughout much of his work, leading Wolfson and Manning to comment:

Thackeray gives a telling portrait. He recalled seeing Hood 'once as a young man, at a dinner ... I quite remember his pale face; he was thin and deaf, and very silent; he scarcely opened his lips during the dinner, and he made one pun'. That a pun is the sole issue of this near death-in-life aptly indicates a body of work that might, as much as Beddoes's, be called 'Death's Jest-Book.'<sup>15</sup>

It is possible to see then that Beddoes's fascination with mortality and anatomy and Hood's acute awareness of the human body's frailty can be attributed in some way to their personal experiences. Both writers struggled with the concept of death throughout their lives and the first aim of this discussion will be to investigate the ways in which this struggle manifests itself in their writing.

My second aim is born of another link between these two 'late Romantic' poets.<sup>16</sup> This connection is fairly complex, and shall be expanded presently, but in short, Hood and Beddoes are associated by the possibility that they were not 'late Romantics' at all. I would contend that the time at which they wrote, and the sensibility of their work isn't quite Romantic — although it obviously has reference points there — but nor is it what would come to be known as Victorian.

I propose then that this discussion will examine two main themes: the representation of anatomy and death in the works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes and Thomas Hood; and the ways in which their outlooks can be attributed to the curious period in which they found themselves writing.

---

<sup>13</sup> Flint, p.16.

<sup>14</sup> James Reeves, ed., *Five Late Romantic Poets* (London: Heinemann, 1974) p.148.

<sup>15</sup> Wolfson and Manning, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> Hood and Beddoes are included in Reeves's anthology entitled *Five Late Romantic Poets*.

## *'The Undiscovered Country': Representing the Unknowable*

Death stands above me, whispering low  
I know not what into my ear:  
Of his strange language all I know  
Is, there is not a word of fear.

*Walter Savage Landor*

Nor dread nor hope attend  
A dying animal;  
A man awaits his end  
Dreading and hoping all;  
Many times he died,  
Many times rose again.  
A great man in his pride  
Confronting murderous men  
Casts derision upon  
Supersession of breath;  
He knows death to the bone —  
Man has created death.

*William Butler Yeats*

Understanding that death is very much in the foreground for both Beddoes and Hood, it is important to assess the idea of its representation in general before moving on to engage with specific examples. This chapter will serve to introduce the problem of representing death, and the plethora of reactions that the subject can — and does — induce. It will look to poems such as Beddoes's 'Death Sweet' and Hood's 'Stanzas (Farewell, Life!)' to serve as examples of both poets' indecisiveness over what it really means to die, and of how they as individuals may feel about their own mortality.

Death has long been, and continues to be, a problematic but popular concept for consideration, particularly in literature. I would propose that this is due to the fact that it is — as Shakespeare famously wrote in *Hamlet* — 'the undiscovered country'. In their introduction to a collection of essays entitled *Death and Representation* Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elisabeth Bronfen point out that '... the most obvious thing about death is that it can only be represented. There is no knowing death and then returning to write about it'.<sup>17</sup> This is crucial to note, most predominantly because it plays to the nature of the poet. The representation of such an intangible subject provides a challenge, and the opportunity to exercise the imagination almost without limit. It is poetically accessible by virtue of being realistically unreachable; one cannot be proved wrong in one's depiction. The way in which we perceive death is entirely created from its representation — that is not to say it is entirely imagined, but it cannot exist to us in any real sense, therefore, as stated by Yeats at the beginning of this chapter, 'Man has created death' or to use the slightly more technical words of Goodwin and Bronfen: 'Death is ... necessarily constructed by a culture; it grounds the many ways a culture stabilizes and represents itself ...'.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elisabeth Bronfen, *Death and Representation: Essays on Subjection* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) p.4.

<sup>18</sup> Goodwin and Bronfen, p.6.

The construction of death by culture has some implications for its flexibility, meaning that it would not be correct to think of death as a *completely* blank slate: for of course, that which already exists will influence new creation, and over time culture agrees that certain motifs are common to certain situations. It is as a consequence of this that particular rituals and images are often to be found within representation of death. Ruth Richardson has produced a detailed examination of the meaning of death in the nineteenth century entitled *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*. Within it she details how folklore and the oral tradition have been key factors in the persistence of certain rituals and superstitions — for example the holding of a wake (to ensure that the deceased was definitely dead) or the washing of the corpse as ‘a kind of baptism for the next life’<sup>19</sup> — many of which still exist in some form to this day.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that there are recognised approaches to death is significant, but does not greatly impair the scope for experimentation that it allows, meaning that one does not really question too seriously the fact that Hood and Beddoes seem to change their opinions on the subject depending on which specific works one chooses to read: they are merely exercising their right as poets to manipulate subjects as they wish. There is of course the possibility that there is something a little more profound at work here however, and that is that they are experimenting with these different viewpoints in an attempt to better understand — and therefore come to terms with — their own mortality: an idea that I would ask the reader to keep in mind until the next chapter when I will refer to it in detail.

Beddoes’s fragment ‘Death Sweet’ is a poem which presents death in a positive light, as a beautiful experience to be eagerly anticipated:

Is it not sweet to die? for, what is death,  
But sighing that we ne’er may sigh again,  
Getting a length beyond our tedious selves;  
But trampling the last tear from poisonous sorrow,  
Spilling our woes, crushing our frozen hopes,  
And passing like an incense out of man?  
Then, if the body felt, what were its sense,  
Turning to daisies gently in the grave,  
If not the soul’s most delicate delight  
When it does filtrate, through the pores of thought,  
In love and the enamelled flowers of song?<sup>21</sup>

In the main, this poem depicts the act of dying as a kind of gentle escape from the turmoil of life and all its sorrows and tediousness. The soul separates from the body almost imperceptibly, ‘like an incense’ (l.6), floating inoffensively away. I am particularly intrigued by this simile, for incense is a substance that has little effect aside from inducing a brief olfactory pleasure to those that come near, and this is not immediately comparable to death, the impact of which can have long-lasting and greatly distressing effects to those left behind. Interestingly however, incense is also a substance with a long historical connection to death, having been used since pre-biblical times to cover the smell of corpses (hence the gifts of frankincense and myrrh presented to Jesus at his birth were omens of his forthcoming death).

---

<sup>19</sup> Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* (London, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987) p.19.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>21</sup> *The Works*, p.243.

'Death Sweet' implores its reader not to be afraid of dying. Christopher Ricks feels that in this poem 'Beddoes hankers for oblivion'<sup>22</sup> and it would certainly appear that the intention is to convince us to joyfully anticipate the 'soul's most delicate delight' (l.9). The idea is almost sexual, as so often in Beddoes's writing. The term suggests a kind of spiritual orgasm, and yet this delight at the moment of release may not be confined only to the soul. Bradshaw points out that there is an ambiguity to the final question of the poem when he writes

Does the body really partake 'selflessly' and vicariously of the soul's ecstasy, which derives from having cast the body off? or is the speaker suggesting a parallel bliss experienced by the body at the point of chemical dissolution into elements and daisies?<sup>23</sup>

The answers to these questions are not easily obtained from the poem, and open up an entirely different topic of discussion that this study is too short to go into, but I make reference to these questions in order to introduce themes of ambiguity and confusion that often arise in representations of death. In his book *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology*, Michael Wheeler notes that '... writing on death is frequently ambiguous, and in deathbed scenes and graveyard scenes — key sites of communication and interpretation — alternative discourses are often either conflated or confused.'<sup>24</sup> Although we cannot be sure — for the nature of fragmentary poetry is that it leaves certain things unsaid, and questions unanswered — it is entirely plausible that Beddoes intended this ambiguity to be present in order to highlight the fact that we cannot truly *know* death.

While 'Death Sweet' took place in a graveyard 'Stanzas (Farewell, Life!)', the last poem to be written by Thomas Hood, was born in Wheeler's alternative setting for ambiguity in death: the bed. Wolfson records that Hood wrote this in January 1845, and died in May of the same year 'after nearly five months of confinement to his bed'.<sup>25</sup> That it was penned so closely to the time of the poet's death — around a month into his experience of being bedridden — adds an extra level of poignancy to the poem. Its very existence suggests that soon after taking to his bed Hood realised he wasn't going to leave it again, and so crafted his 'last words'. Although not literally his final utterances, it seems fitting that a man who had spent so much of his life at the centre of his country's popular literary scene should leave such an artefact but in doing so he demonstrated his status as a kind of 'premature' Victorian. As Wheeler notes, 'the last words of the dying ... had a special significance for the Victorians, and became something of a literary convention in their own right'.<sup>26</sup> Hood was not, strictly speaking, a Victorian poet: he is a little too early for this. His place in literary history will be considered more fully in the chapters that follow, but for now it is enough to consider that he was a writer above all else, up until the very end of his life.

'Stanzas (Farewell, Life!)' could be seen to present both a positive and a negative side to death within the same poem.

Farewell, Life! My senses swim;  
And the world is growing dim;

---

<sup>22</sup> Christopher Ricks, *The Force of Poetry* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press: 1987) p.139.

<sup>23</sup> Bradshaw, pp.17-18.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p.28.

<sup>25</sup> Wolfson and Manning, p.343.

<sup>26</sup> Wheeler p.30.

Thronging shadows cloud the light,  
Like the advent of the night, —  
Colder, colder, colder still  
Upward steals a vapour chill —  
Strong the earthy odour grows —  
I smell the Mould above the Rose!<sup>27</sup>

This first stanza articulates a certain amount of fear, and although there is no overriding sense of blind, flailing panic here, one certainly gets the impression that the speaker finds these sensations unpleasant, and thus we have a stark contrast within this stanza to the ‘soul’s most delicate delight’ articulated in Beddoes’s ‘Death Sweet’. The ‘thronging shadows’ (l.3), the ‘cold’ (l.5) and the ‘earthy odour’ (l.7) are all images that evoke a sense of claustrophobia, and through them the reader is offered the possibility that the speaker is being buried. The speaker may of course be mistaken due to the waning senses, but burial and a feeling of being ‘closed in’ are certainly implied. By the last line of the stanza it seems that all is lost and that death is a dark and certain prospect, but suddenly we are presented with:

Welcome, Life! The Spirit strives!  
Strength returns, and hope revives;  
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn  
Fly like shadows at the morn, —  
O’er the earth there comes a bloom —  
Sunny light for sullen gloom,  
Warm perfume for vapour cold —  
I smell the Rose above the Mould!<sup>28</sup>

This second stanza is a complete antithesis to the first: everything becomes immediately brighter and we are told that there is *hope*, and yet we are once again — as was the case with ‘Death Sweet’ — left with ambiguities. There are three possibilities regarding what has actually befallen the speaker: firstly, he could merely have drifted out of consciousness and then regained it (delirium brought on by severe sickness might impair the judgement enough to make one believe oneself dying in this instance); or he could *actually* have died, and been somehow resurrected; but the third option is most interesting because of the parallels with Beddoes’s poem. Could ‘Farewell, Life!’ *also* be a depiction of the soul leaving the material body? I believe so. The darkness of the first stanza creates the mood for those moments in which the body is dying and the second stanza articulates the bliss brought about by the departure of the soul. Although not explicitly stated within the poem, I feel that the dispersing clouds and shadows scatter as the spirit rises. The inversion of the final line seems to add weight to this idea, for when the speaker was ‘falling’ into death he was closer to the Mould, or soil, being able to smell it most predominantly, but in the second stanza this is reversed, as if he were emerging from it. Of particular note are the ‘bloom’ (l.13) and ‘perfume’ (l.15) analogies for they correspond marvellously with Beddoes’s ‘daisies’ and incense, and allow us to add flowers to our list of common death analogies.

This can be related to Act V Scene III of *Death’s Jest-Book*, the scene in which Sibylla tells her friends that her death is imminent, but that she is not afraid:

---

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Hood, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Hood* (London: Little Brown, 1857) p.172 ll.1-8.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.172, ll.9-16.

... when old age or sorrow brings us nearer  
To spirits and their interests, we see  
Few features of mankind in outward nature;  
But rather signs inviting us to heaven.  
I love flowers too; not for a young girl's reason,  
But because these brief visitors to us  
Rise yearly from the neighbourhood of the dead,  
To show us how far fairer and more lovely  
Their world is; and return thither again,  
Like parting friends that beckon us to follow,  
And lead the way silent and smilingly.<sup>29</sup>

To consider nature as a metaphor for mankind is a typically Romantic idea, but here Beddoes turns this somewhat on its head by suggesting that one cannot really find the image of living man within it. Instead nature is a call to the more serene world of the dead. Flowers appear in this passage almost as a pathway to this place, and Sibylla is not frightened of her demise because the flowers put her at ease, reminding her of the comparative beauty of the place that the dead inhabit compared to our mortal lives. Once again we see death as peaceful and a release from the pain of life, and Diane Long Hoeveler provides her own highly interesting (although very gruesome) flower analogy in her essay 'Dying With a Vengeance: Dead Brides and the Death-Fetish in Thomas Lovell Beddoes' and in so doing, gives us a potential insight into why Hood, Beddoes and others like them may have felt such a desperate need to fantasise over a blissful death:

From the 1780s and continuing through the 1830s, throughout the parishes of Paris, dead bodies began floating to the surface of the graveyards that encircled a number of city churches. In the marshy grounds along the Seine, bodies of the poor, who had been buried without coffins, simply appeared in spring as if in full bloom, like perennials that no one remembered having planted.<sup>30</sup>

As we shall see in the course of this discussion, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were not, in general, a conducive environment to enable the dead to lie quietly, and this fact would certainly not have escaped Hood and Beddoes, thus accounting for these beautiful but idealised representations of death.

### *'We Murder to Dissect': Poetry and Anxieties Concerning the Body*

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;  
Our meddling intellect  
Mis-shapes the beautiful form of things:  
We murder to dissect.

*William Wordsworth*

---

<sup>29</sup> Beddoes, *Death's Jest-Book: The 1829 Text*, ed. Michael Bradshaw. V.iii.ll.30- 40.

<sup>30</sup> Hoeveler, p.209.

Within this chapter I hope to briefly investigate the ways in which the practice of dissection relates to poetry and to assess ideas about perception of the body, in order to account further for Hood and Beddoes's shared love of dark themes.

It is Ricks' opinion that for Beddoes 'not only was much poetry — most of his own poetry — about murder ..., but poetry itself was often a kind of murder' and that Beddoes 'might have agreed with Wordsworth that "We murder to dissect" but not have thought it so bad a thing.'<sup>31</sup> I concur, and believe that his position as an anatomist accounts for this. However, I note the point primarily because I want to consider the idea of 'murdering to dissect' more closely, and how this may apply to Hood and Beddoes's poetry. If we murder to dissect, and poetry is murder, then accordingly we must — in a sense — write poetry to dissect. For what is poetry, if not a means of close contemplation and analysis of a given topic? Bradshaw's comment that 'dissection, physiological or literary, may be the attempt to consider the whole by breaking it down into parts' would appear to confirm the validity of this idea.<sup>32</sup>

With this in mind we would do well to think also about the relevance of dissection to Hood and Beddoes in a historical sense. The fact that Beddoes was an anatomist can be assumed almost unquestionably to influence his feelings, and I feel that broader ideas are perhaps better considered here. I want to assess the way in which the threat of dissection permeated the *entire* public consciousness and was not just something to be considered by medical minds, for I feel this demonstrates how 'of its time' much of the writing of Hood and Beddoes really was. Accordingly, Flint notes that 'more and more Hood's subject-matter was taken from "incidents and situations from common life" and his writing, humorous and serious, related to the actual world in which he lived'<sup>33</sup> — and as I shall explain, the body and its fate (particularly if that fate happened to be dissection) were definitely widespread contemporary concerns.

In *Murdering to Dissect* Tim Marshall informs us that 'throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Anatomy Act imposed upon the world of poverty a punishment which previously had been reserved for murderers.'<sup>34</sup> The punishment to which Marshall refers is dissection. Prior to 1832 the only legal corpses which anatomy schools could obtain for dissection were those of criminals who had been put to death. The introduction of the Anatomy Act enabled the schools to procure the bodies of workhouse inmates who had died, or people too poor to afford funerals. Richardson agrees with Marshall, explaining that although this saved the government money it added a criminal element to poverty.<sup>35</sup> Even the word 'dissection' was 'familiar to everyone as the murderer's fate' and started to be replaced and avoided<sup>36</sup> but people were well aware what their fate would be if they died poor. The apparent purpose of the law was to limit the number of bodies obtained by illegal means. Grave-robbers, resurrectionists, body snatchers — they go by many names — stole corpses to sell to the anatomy schools. While this practice is abhorrent, Richardson points out that it was at least a little less socially discriminating, for almost everyone was a potential target of the body snatchers. Only the very, very wealthy escaped the possibility by being buried in deep graves and 'double coffins'.<sup>37</sup> The Anatomy Act did not successfully serve its purpose, and bodies continued to be stolen; like the floating corpses

---

<sup>31</sup> Ricks, p.137.

<sup>32</sup> Bradshaw, p.116.

<sup>33</sup> Flint, p.19.

<sup>34</sup> Tim Marshall, *Murdering to Dissect: Grave-robbing, Frankenstein and the Anatomy Literature* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>35</sup> Richardson, p.128.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.129.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.80.

noted by Hoeveler in the previous chapter, this can be seen as a further reason for the nineteenth century dread of dying.

I should explain at this point that anxieties over the material body were not just confined to the post-mortem arena. Hood's preoccupation with the vulnerability of the human body — particularly his own — is well documented, and similarly Bradshaw says of Beddoes that 'there is a fascination with the fact that however frail it may be, this material [the body] is where and how all people exist'.<sup>38</sup> These corresponding worries lead us to an interesting point: the body may be the location and means in which and by which everyone is alive, but I would like to consider that its weakness is also the reason we die: whether it be from illness, injury or age every cause of death is due in some way to the body being unable to function any longer, and thus to be wary of this seems a natural reaction.

James Robert Allard's intriguing observations concerning ownership of the body can further account for anxieties over it. He notes that 'one's "own" body seems to become less one's own with each medical-scientific advance and medical-juridical proceeding' and explains that as medical professionals became more expert *they* were given control over the patients' bodies.<sup>39</sup> And if the slipping grasp on one's already substantially unpredictable and uncontrollable material form, coupled with inevitable death, was not enough to warrant unease amongst those of Hood and Beddoes's generation then we might also consider that a key idea for the first Romantics had been that of revolution. By the time Hood and Beddoes began their writing careers the hope for an uprising felt by their predecessors had started to wane severely. While it may not seem immediately connected to issues of the body the link becomes clearer as we consider this more closely: David Wright notes that 'one reason why the French Revolution of 1789 was a central experience to Romantic poets is that they saw it as essentially a revolution to emancipate the individual.'<sup>40</sup> This revolution failed, and subsequent optimism for similar concerns was proved unfounded, which surely means that the 'individual' remained enslaved. If we couple this with my earlier points we are left with a rather bleak image of imprisoned minds inhabiting vulnerable husks that they cannot even lay claim to, being carried to inevitable death. I propose then that we are beginning to build up a further understanding of the contemporary anxieties that I have previously commented on, as well as the many reasons that subjects such as the body and death were so significant for Beddoes and Hood.

There are four poems that I would like to look at closely in light of the information I have just related. The first of these is 'Resurrection Song' by Beddoes, because although it doesn't deal overtly with dissection, it is associated with the idea. As it is another short fragment I shall quote it in full:

Thread the nerves through the right holes,  
Get out of my bones, you wormy souls.  
Shut up my stomach, the ribs are full:  
Muscles be steady and ready to pull.  
Heart and artery merrily shake  
And eyelid go up, for we're going to wake. —  
His eye must be brighter — one more rub!  
And pull up the nostrils! his nose was snub.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Bradshaw, p.121.

<sup>39</sup> James Robert Allard, *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) p.7.

<sup>40</sup> David Wright, ed., *The Penguin Book of Romantic Verse*, p.xiv.

<sup>41</sup> *The Works*, p.90.





'Tis hard we can't give up our breath,  
And to the earth our earth bequeath,  
Without Death Fetches after death,  
Who thus exhume us!  
And snatch us from our homes beneath,  
And hearths posthumous.

[...]

'Alas!' he sighed, 'I'm sore afraid,  
A dozen pangs my heart invade;  
But when I drove a certain trade  
In flesh and in bone,  
There was a little bargain made  
About my own.'

[...]

'Ten guineas did not quite suffice,  
And so I sold my body twice;  
Twice would not do — I sold it thrice,  
Forgive my crimes!  
In short I have received its price  
A dozen times!'<sup>46</sup>

The first stanza quoted is especially noteworthy because once again we are presented with a situation where the dead are not permitted peace. It is interesting that Hood is lamenting this, considering that the subject of this poem intentionally sold his body, so we can perhaps determine that the poet is here invoking his well-known social conscience. The third stanza that I have quoted (XL) suggests that money problems made this the only solution and that he did not think of the consequences, but faced with them he regrets his decision. Death is portrayed again as rest and also as similar to earthly life by the use of images of 'home' and 'hearth'. To be 'snatched' from this is frightening and distressing and yet as the protagonist has brought this on himself he is denied the peace that death might otherwise bring.

The poems in this chapter give us highly undignified views of death, very unlike those we saw in the previous chapter in such examples as Act V scene iii of *Death's Jest-Book*. In these poems death is certainly not something to be longed for; whether the loss of dignity is self-imposed, as in 'Jack Hall', or induced by some outside source as in 'Dream of Dying' it is nonetheless a source of intense fear. The most notable thing about these representations of death in relation to this study is the fact that they are probably only slightly exaggerated articulations of the true feelings of people at the time.

The final poem that I would like to assess in this chapter is another of Thomas Hood's. 'Mary's Ghost: A Pathetic Ballad' tells the story of a victim of body snatching but also brings us to the themes of the next chapter: ghosts and the ballad tradition. 'Mary's Ghost' was first published in the second series of *Whims and Oddities* in 1827, before the implementation of the Anatomy Act, but the fact that the practice still continued to an extent afterwards ensured that this poem remained relevant throughout the century.

---

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Hood, *Whims and Oddities in Prose and Verse* (London: Edward Moxon, 1854) pp.246- 258.

'Twas in the middle of the night,  
To sleep young William tried,  
When Mary's ghost came stealing in,  
And stood at his bed-side.

O William dear! O William dear!  
My rest eternal ceases;  
Alas! my everlasting peace  
Is broken into pieces.

I thought the last of all my cares  
Would end with my last minute;  
But tho' I went to my long home,  
I didn't stay long in it.

The body-snatchers they have come,  
And made a snatch at me;  
It's very hard them kind of men  
Won't let a body be!

You thought that I was buried deep,  
Quite decent like and chary,  
But from her grave in Mary-bone,  
They've come and boned your Mary.

The arm that used to take your arm  
Is took to Dr. Vyse;  
And both my legs are gone to walk  
The hospital at Guy's.

I vow'd that you should have my hand,  
But fate gives us denial;  
You'll find it there, at Dr. Bell's  
In spirits and a phial.

As for my feet, the little feet  
You used to call so pretty,  
There's one, I know, in Bedford Row,  
The t'other's in the City.

I can't tell where my head is gone,  
But Doctor Carpue can:  
As for my trunk, it's all pack'd up  
To go by Pickford's van.

I wished you'd go to Mr. P.  
And save me such a ride;  
I don't half like the outside place,  
They've took for my inside.

The cock it crows — I must be gone!  
My William, we must part!  
But I'll be yours in death, altho'  
Sir Astley has my heart.

Don't go to weep upon my grave,  
And think that there I be;  
They haven't left an atom there  
Of my anatomie.

In this poem, Hood's personal form of dissection comes into play: a linguistic dismantling. Wolfson and Manning comment that within Hood's poetry, when a pun occurs, it is most frequently attached to a morbid theme, and that 'the word becomes double, splitting in two, often as the poetry describes a body dismembered, becoming a dispensable or marketable inventory of parts'.<sup>47</sup> And that is certainly the case here; with every stanza of the poem poor Mary loses another piece of herself to the seemingly never-ending list of anatomists and physicians. The hospitals mentioned are real, and some of the names mentioned can be traced to real medical men of the period, although in *Five Late Romantic Poets* Reeves claims in his notes to this poem that they are fictional names. Some of them may be, but Richardson's book can account for three of them: Dr. Bell is likely to be Charles Bell and Carpue is J. Carpue, both of whom are recorded to have received bodies from a well-known gang of resurrectionists.<sup>48</sup> 'Sir Astley' is Sir Astley Cooper who was thought of as somewhat of a hypocrite for being so centrally involved in body snatching and yet openly expressing 'his mistrust of the men in his pay [the grave-robbers]'.<sup>49</sup>

This poem is very typical of Hood's macabre personality, for although the issue with which it engages is incredibly serious and potentially very upsetting he cannot resist the temptation to pun. Most poignant, however, are the last lines, 'They haven't left an atom there / Of my anatomie.' Although the use of 'an atom' is an instrument in the word play, due to its alliterative effect with the word 'anatomie' it also serves to demonstrate the absolute and total destruction that the grave-robbers have caused. An 'atom' is so small, but they could not even leave that: *every* last part of her is gone.

One of the other most interesting points about this poem is the fact that it is, as the title suggests, a ballad. Ballads are a traditional form of poetry, often set to music (as Wolfson informs us that 'Mary's Ghost' was in 1829).<sup>50</sup> That 'Mary's Ghost' adheres to this form *and* features a ghost introduces the basic theme of the next chapter, 'The Past Comes Back to Haunt Us'.

---

<sup>47</sup> Wolfson and Manning, p.4.

<sup>48</sup> Richardson, p.61.

<sup>49</sup> Richardson, p.117.

<sup>50</sup> Wolfson and Manning, p.324.

## *The Past Comes Back to Haunt Us: Resurrecting the Traditional*

O me! why have they not buried me deep enough?  
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,  
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
Maybe still I am but half-dead;  
Then I cannot be wholly dumb,  
I will cry to the steps above my head,  
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come  
To bury me, bury me  
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

*Alfred Lord Tennyson*

A cursory glance at the contents page of Hood's *Works* will show that the number of poems entitled simply 'Ballad' is quite substantial. This would suggest that Thomas Hood was a great fan of the ballad, and it is recorded that Beddoes too was 'keenly interested in the ballad form...'<sup>51</sup> Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* is often considered to have been the text which effectively catalysed the Romantic movement; Donald Thomas is keen to inform us that within Romantic thinking there was a great deal of looking to the past, and that one aspect of this was 'a new curiosity over ballad poetry.'<sup>52</sup> I propose that for the reasons that have been outlined in this essay thus far, Beddoes and Hood — effectively situated as they were 'between two worlds' — had every cause to reminisce fondly about a less complicated past. I will be assessing this idea in more detail during the next chapter, but for the moment I plan to look at examples of Hood and Beddoes's poetry that has been inspired by the traditional ballad, and also to consider the importance of ghosts as a theme within this poetry.

Earlier in this discussion, while considering how death is often represented, I touched upon a point made by Ruth Richardson about the way in which themes and customs that are commonly associated with death were often born in folklore or the tradition of oral poetry, and this is something important to bear in mind as we proceed through this chapter. Superstitions and ideas that originated before Hood and Beddoes's time are present within their work, and indeed many of them persist even now, in modern poetry and everyday life.

According to Hugh Shields the theme of 'the ghostly visitant to a former sweetheart was well known in old ballads of the Germanic countries' and 'writers in English attempted ... to dress the traditional theme of the revenant lover in modern garb...'<sup>53</sup> and this is certainly what Hood was attempting in 'Mary's Ghost' by taking inspiration from the traditional ballad's 'ghostly lover' but having a very relevant fate befall her. It is true of the other ballad-inspired works considered here that they too can be considered in this way, simply by virtue of when they were written, but the 'modern garb' imposed upon them by their respective writers is another instance of resurrection not bringing forth the exact same person that they had been when alive. Resurrection in general then might be considered unpredictable: it is not an exact science, as 'Resurrection Song' demonstrated in the last chapter. A point that does not apply to Beddoes's ballad-resurrections, however, is that Hood's are lent a further act of modernity by virtue of their publication in magazines: they are commodified in a way that was not possible during the first manifestations of ballads, but as Evelyn Kendrick Wells records 'if it is an archaic survival it still

---

<sup>51</sup> Hoeveler, p.219.

<sup>52</sup> Donald Serrell Thomas, *The Post Romantics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) p.3.

<sup>53</sup> Hugh Shields, 'The Dead Lovers Return in Modern English Ballad Tradition', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, 17. Jahrg., (1972), pp. 98-114 (p.98).

contains the living seed out of which art grows ... building on its past and changing with its present.<sup>54</sup> Hoeveler writes that 'it is necessary to unpack the leitmotif of death eroticism by casting our eyes back to some of the earliest ballad forms ...'<sup>55</sup> and it is possible to see that the influence of traditional ballad stories, some of which were incredibly gruesome, will have inspired these writers in some way.

Beddoes's 'The Ghosts' Moonshine', according to Hoeveler, adheres to the 'murdered girl' and 'criminal-brought-to-justice formula-ballad'.<sup>56</sup> This is somewhat in opposition to Hood's 'Mary's Ghost', for in that poem no one was brought to justice for their crime, although I would propose that the poem itself is a kind of justice in that it brought *every* resurrectionist into the public eye.

In the first stanza of 'The Ghosts' Moonshine' we are given the impression that two lovers are lying together near the hanging corpse of a murderer, but as the poem progresses we see that the bride is actually the murder victim and has been killed by her lover. The poem's eerie refrain is most powerful:

Is that the wind? No, no;  
Only two devils, that blow  
Through the murderer's ribs to and fro  
In the ghosts' moonshine.<sup>57</sup>

It evokes a wonderfully grotesque image of the swinging, decomposed corpse of the murderer. The speaker is the lover, reassuring his bride until halfway through the third stanza, when it is revealed that *he* is the murderer himself, as the female voice declares:

— My blood is spilt like wine,  
Thou hast strangled and slain me, lover,  
Thou hast stabbed me, dear,  
In the ghosts' moonshine.<sup>58</sup>

Even after this terrible injustice, the victim continues to refer to her killer affectionately, a disturbing fact that encapsulates perfectly Beddoes's love of the macabre.

I would suggest that it is easy to see why ballads were so appealing to Hood and Beddoes. I have made mention of the different cultural factors which made death an uneasy proposition for many at the time, and if we may for a moment consider this alongside the loss of the optimism of early Romanticism, and the generally unstable feelings whether one could lay claim to one's own body, we begin to build up a picture of a time that was somewhat difficult to live in. The notion of a ballad calls forth ideas of a less complicated, more idyllic time: it is also a very typically Romantic trait to use them. It is usually considered that Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* marks the start of the Romantic movement, and they were reacting to industrialisation and social problems, issues which had undoubtedly increased by the time Beddoes and Hood were writing.

---

<sup>54</sup> Evelyn Kendrick Wells, *The Ballad Tree* (New York: The Ronald Press: 1950) pp.8-9.

<sup>55</sup> Hoeveler, p.219.

<sup>56</sup> Hoeveler, p.220.

<sup>57</sup> *The Works*, pp.95-96.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, ll.32-35.

## *Chronological Misplacement: Hood and Beddoes as Anachronisms*

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,  
The other powerless to be born,  
With nowhere yet to rest my head,  
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.

*Matthew Arnold*

I suggested in the previous chapter that Beddoes and Hood had good reason to want to look to the past for inspiration. My aim now is to summarise the way in which these poets might be considered anachronistic, for I believe that if they had difficulty with their sense of historical identity then this, along with the fact that death was a contemporary concern, can be considered a valid explanation for the sensibility of their poetry.

By the time Hood and Beddoes were publishing their first major works Wordsworth had long since laid down his radical pen, and during the four years between Beddoes's *The Improvisatore* (1821) and Hood's *Odes and Addresses to Great People* (1825) Keats, Shelley and Byron all died. So while the writing lives of Hood and Beddoes had scarcely begun, the second generation of Romanticism was fading visibly away. One cannot attribute exact dates to a literary movement, but it seems clear that although it is now an accepted view that there were two differing generations of Romantic poets (the first including such figures as Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge, and the second, Shelley, Byron and Keats) Beddoes and Hood fit comfortably into neither of these. The 'end' of the second generation of Romanticism and the delay between this and the emergence of the values that characterise what we might now term 'Victorian Poetry' leaves our subjects (and arguably many of their contemporaries) in a kind of literary limbo, floating between two movements, neither of which can comfortably house them. This uneasy historical position sets these poets apart from what came before and afterwards, and I feel that it accounts for what we have seen of their engagement with values and ideas that related to Romanticism, but also for the presence of an altogether different feeling alongside this. This late manifestation of Romanticism grew from the unfounded optimism and failed radicalism of the figures from the earlier generations which represented, as I have already commented, a loss of identity that is linked to perception of the body. The dejection and darkness exists only because it had the time to grow and fester atop the many disappointments of the Romantic era; thus these poets, being slightly too late for the second generation of Romantics, are blessed with the benefit of hindsight.

As far as Hood is concerned there is no explicit admission of the feeling that he is chronologically misplaced, but one element of his personality that is often picked up on by critics may serve as a suggestion that he was unsure of his identity. Rodney Stenning Edgecombe records that Hood had 'oppositional elements',<sup>59</sup> meaning his moral conscience set against his compulsion to 'jump ... tumble ... turn language head over heels, and leap through grammar.'<sup>60</sup> Despite his seemingly stable place in the world of literature Hood, by virtue of his almost schizophrenic poetic voice, is undoubtedly a figure much troubled by where he belongs. According to Gerald Massey

---

<sup>59</sup> Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, *A Self-Divided Poet: Form and Texture in the Work of Thomas Hood* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006) p.viii.

<sup>60</sup> Flint, p.14.

he is just the personification of antithesis: — large wit and small hope — that means laughter next-door to tears; mirth with a mournful ring to it; merry fancies holding the pall of laughter, or letting its coffin gently into the grave; light gracefully fringing the skirts of darkness; life deftly masking the hiding place of death.<sup>61</sup>

It is often said that he would have been better to have abandoned his humour altogether, although I don't believe this is the case. One such holder of this opinion happens to be a friend of Beddoes: Bryan Waller Procter, who adopted the pen-name 'Barry Cornwall'. He lamented Hood's 'giving up serious poetry for the sake of cracking the shells of jokes which have not always a kernel!'<sup>62</sup> And Beddoes himself seems to regard 'career-poets' disdainfully, as evidenced by the following comment to Procter: 'don't talk to me of Magazines; they are vermin I detest ...'<sup>63</sup> Perhaps even more explicit is his view that

The state of literature now is painful and humiliating enough — every one will write for £15 a sheet; — Who for the love of art, who for fame, who for the purpose of continuing the noble stream of English minds? We ought too to look back with late repentance & remorse on our intoxicated praise, now cooling, of Lord Byron: — such a man to be so spoken of when the world possessed Goëthe, Schiller, Shelley!<sup>64</sup>

It is possible to see Beddoes as somewhat conceited here, a privileged man unaware of the struggle to earn a living that many went through, as Hood did. The quotation above would seem to suggest that Beddoes would not have considered Hood's poetry 'art', nor would he have seen it as 'continuing the noble stream of English minds' but, according to Flint, Hood 'pleaded eloquently for "the dignity of the craft"'.<sup>65</sup> This is crucial chiefly because it confirms that Hood himself saw what he was doing as a 'craft', as merit worthy.

It is well documented that both Hood and Beddoes were strongly influenced by particular predecessors. In his early work Hood often attempts to emulate Keats (examples of this include 'Ode: Autumn' and 'Ode to the Moon') and it is not unfair to say that Beddoes was somewhat obsessed by Shelley:

The disappearance of Shelley from the world seems, like the tropical setting of that luminary, to which his poetical genius can alone be compared with reference to the companions of his day, to have been followed by instant darkness and owl-season ... if I were the literary weather-guesser for 1825 I would safely prognosticate fog, rain, blight in due succession for its dullard months ...

The above are Beddoes's own words. It is clear to see that he felt that no writer of his generation could light the darkness that Shelley's absence had brought about. The letter from which it was taken was written almost two years after Shelley's death, and Beddoes is still feeling the effects. In his essay 'Death and his Sweetheart' David M. Baulch contends that 'the death of Shelley signifies the death of English Poetry for Beddoes, and both of these deaths coincide

---

<sup>61</sup> Gerald Massey 'Thomas Hood Poet and Punster' at *Gerald-Massey.org* [http://gerald-massey.org.uk/hood/b\\_massey\\_on\\_hood\\_1.htm](http://gerald-massey.org.uk/hood/b_massey_on_hood_1.htm).

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Beddoes and Procter to Kelsall (1825), *The Works* p.597.

<sup>63</sup> Letter to Procter (1826), *The Works* p.616.

<sup>64</sup> Letter from Beddoes and Procter to Kelsall (1825), *The Works* p.598.

<sup>65</sup> Flint, p.12.



roughly with his own figurative death from the British literary scene.<sup>66</sup> Beddoes moved to Germany in 1825.

They look also to the past, perhaps because it is impossible to look to the future, although it is considered by Ricks that 'one of the things that is always Beddoes's credit ... is his having anticipated so many later modes'<sup>67</sup> and Flint notes that 'portraits of Hood as a young man, both actual and verbal, show a ... typically Victorian figure.'<sup>68</sup> There is only a certain extent to which they can be forward-looking, and the past holds more of a certain comfort. Like Wordsworth's, Hood's work was 'firmly anchored in deep conviction of the worth of "the great and simple affections of our nature" and in his sense of his own common humanity.'<sup>69</sup>

I do begin to feel  
As if I were a ghost among the men,  
As all I loved are; for their affections  
Hang on things new, young, and unknown to me:  
And that I am is but the obstinate will  
Of this my hostile body.<sup>70</sup>

So declares the Duke in *Death's Jest-Book*, but these lines could almost describe the author's own feelings. He seemed to feel that he existed in the wrong era; that the age in which he found himself held very little for him. It also harks back to my earlier point about the body as a vessel beyond the control of its inhabitant mind. Ezra Pound uses the same quotation in 'Beddoes and Chronology', in which he suggests that there is a difficulty with Beddoes's 'literary position'.<sup>71</sup> Neither Beddoes nor his contemporary Hood can be considered Romantic without some discomfort. To consider Hood, a successful career-poet, as 'not of his time' is not as preposterous as it may seem if one considers for a moment that there may have been little for him to 'fit in' to. It seems to be a trend among critics to consider the 1830s and 40s as a kind of 'transition phase'. And therefore if the work of either Hood or Beddoes appears, as we have seen it does, to be neither truly Romantic or Victorian in sensibility, it is because they themselves were neither of these.

Donald Thomas points out that Hood 'was but one example of the energy of English writing in the raffish and turbulent period of the 1830s and early 1840s' and that

in his most outlandish whimsy, [he] kept alive one important strain of romanticism. It also appeared in Thomas Lovell Beddoes who worked on *Death's Jest-Book* for many years until his suicide in 1849. These macabre preoccupations in poetry became more important to the post-romantics than to most of their forbears.<sup>72</sup>

So both the poets in question are here united in their love of the macabre, and this is related to their position in history. To a certain extent their preoccupations were borrowed from their Romantic predecessors but they also served to influence those who came later: figures such as

---

<sup>66</sup> David M. Baulch, 'Death and His Sweetheart: Revolution and Return in Death's Jest Book' in Berns and Bradshaw, *Ashgate Companion*, pp.49-66 (p.50).

<sup>67</sup> Ricks, p.141.

<sup>68</sup> Flint, p.10.

<sup>69</sup> Flint, p.10.

<sup>70</sup> *Death's Jest-Book*, IV.i.70-75.

<sup>71</sup> Ezra Pound, 'Beddoes and Chronology' in Cookson, William, ed., *Ezra Pound: Selected Prose 1909-1965* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973).

<sup>72</sup> Thomas, pp.2-4.

Browning and Tennyson. Their writing lives therefore 'span the years which saw the Romantic imagination and temper develop into the Victorian.'<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

'To write about death is to write about any given theme' writes Bradshaw, and it would seem that this is one point that my study has been able to prove.<sup>74</sup> We have seen that death can never be truly understood but that there still exists the desire to *try*. It can be a metaphor for many things: most predominantly in relation to this study it is used by Beddoes to express his despair at the declining literary scene, while for Hood it is a means of retaining his position in the very scene that Beddoes so despairs of. But the very action of using the subject also has functions, more closely linked to the actual ceasing of life, as opposed to anything metaphorical: whether it is an attempt to find answers and cope with fear or to evoke particular feelings within a reading public as a precursor to social change.

We have also discovered that the predominance of death is related to Hood and Beddoes's places in literary history: that these two facts exist alongside each other is not consequential. We have seen that factors such as the loss of idols, advances in medicine and a decline of the possibility of revolution, amongst others, contributed to instil their poetry with a darker mood, above all referential to the past that demonstrates a movement away from that which has gone before. As a result of this, and the fluid way in which literary movements begin, develop and end, Beddoes and Hood found themselves, as Thomas points out, close to orphans — unsuitable for adoption by their surrounding movements. Ghosts of a more pastoral England, of a better literary climate and of loved ones linger beneath much of their work, and their clinging to it is a reaction to the instability of their own time and the problems of identity that arise from this. This discussion has dealt with only the very smallest sample of their work but the same thinking can be applied to much of it. These two seemingly very different poets have a lot in common; as I am sure they would be equally surprised to discover.

## Bibliography

- Allard, James Robert, *Romanticism, Medicine and the Poet's Body* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)
- Barker, Francis, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005)
- Beddoes, Thomas Lovell, *Death's Jest-Book: The 1829 Text*, ed. by Michael Bradshaw (Manchester: Carcanet/Routledge, 2003)
- Beddoes, Thomas Lovell, *Death's Jest-Book; or, The Day Will Come: A new edition of the later text established by H. W. Donner*, ed. by Alan Halsey (Sheffield: West House Books, 2003)
- Berns, Ute and Michael Bradshaw ed, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)
- Bradshaw, Michael, *Resurrection Songs: The Poetry of Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (Aldershot, Burlington, VT : Ashgate, 2001)
- Brander, Laurence, *Thomas Hood* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1963)
- Crossan, Greg, 'That wolf-howled, witch-prayed, owl-sung fool': Beddoes and the Play of Words', *Journal of the Thomas Lovell Beddoes Society*, Vol. 11, (2005) 26-31

---

<sup>73</sup> Flint, p.11

<sup>74</sup> Bradshaw, p.6.

- Cookson, William, ed., *Ezra Pound: Selected Prose 1909-1965* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973)
- Donner, H.W., ed., *The Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935)
- Edgecombe, Rodney Stenning, *A Self-Divided Poet: Form and Texture in the Verse of Thomas Hood* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006)
- Freud, Sigmund, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, ed. Angela Richards (London: Penguin, 1991)
- Flint, Joy, ed., *Thomas Hood: Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992)
- Goodwin, Sarah Webster & Elisabeth Bronfen, *Death and Representation* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993)
- Gosse, Edmund, ed., *The Poetical Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, vol. 1 (London: J.M. Dent, 1890)
- Grotjahn, Martin, M.D., *Beyond Laughter: Humor and the Subconscious* (New York, Toronto and London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1957)
- Hadfield, John, *A Chamber of Horrors: An Anthology of the Macabre in Words and Pictures* (London: Studio Vista Limited, 1965)
- Hood, Thomas, *The Poetical Works*, 3 vols (London: Little Brown, 1857)
- Hood, Thomas, *Whims and Oddities in Prose and Verse* (London: Edward Moxon, 1854)
- Jerrold, Walter, *Thomas Hood: His Life and Times*, (1907; New York: Greenwood Press, 1969)
- Low, Dennis, *The Literary Protégées of the Lake Poets* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2006)
- Marshall, Tim, *Murdering To Dissect: Grave-robbing, Frankenstein and the Anatomy Literature* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995)
- Reeves, James, ed., *Five Late Romantic Poets* (London: Heinemann, 1974)
- Reid, J. C., *Thomas Hood* (London: Routledge, 1963)
- Richardson, Ruth, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* (London, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987)
- Ricks, Christopher, *The Force of Poetry* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Storey, Mark, *Poetry and Humour, from Cowper to Clough* (London and Basingstoke, 1979)
- Thomas, Donald Serrell, *The Post-Romantics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)
- Watson, J. R., *English Poetry of the Romantic Period 1789-1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1985)
- Wells, Evelyn Kendrick, *The Ballad Tree: A Study of British and American Ballads, Their Folklore, Verse, and Music* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950)
- Wheeler, Michael, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Wolfson, Susan J. and Peter J. Manning, ed., *Selected Poems of Thomas Hood, Winthrop Mackworth Praed and Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000)
- Wright, David, ed., *English Romantic Verse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970)

### *Electronic Resources*

- Flint, Joy, 'Hood, Thomas (1799-1845)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/> [accessed February 2008]
- Massey, Gerald, 'Thomas Hood, Poet and Punster', taken from *Gerald-Massey.org* [http://gerald-massey.org.uk/hood/b\\_massey\\_on\\_hood\\_1.htm](http://gerald-massey.org.uk/hood/b_massey_on_hood_1.htm) [accessed September 2007]
- Neve, Michael, 'Beddoes, Thomas (1760-1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article1919> [accessed February 2008]
- Phantom Wooer: The Thomas Lovell Beddoes Website <<http://www.phantomwooer.org/>>
- Shields, Hugh 'The Dead Lovers Return in Modern English Ballad Tradition', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, 17. Jahrg., (1972), pp. 98-114 <http://www.jstor.org/pss/847175> [accessed February 2008]

# T.L. Beddoes and Alcohol

Richard Geyer

‘Small beer was my toothless infancy, the days of my childhood I passed in stout, porter comforted my years of Love, but my beard growing I took to sack, and now I quench the aspiration of my soul in these good wines of Hungary.’ —

*Isbrand, Death's Jest-Book Act II Sc. i.*

There is some uncertainty about the significance of alcohol in the life of Thomas Lovell Beddoes. The scant biographical information available to us contains a few dramatic incidents but little else of value. Beddoes' letters and creative productions are other sources of information. The many references to alcohol in his work can help us to appreciate his understanding of alcohol and constitute an important line of evidence in determining the place of alcohol within his biography.

## 1. Literature Review

There do not appear to be any previous studies in English devoted to the topic of Beddoes and alcohol. H.W. Donner provides or summarizes the available biographical sources (*Browning Box, Making, Plays, Tobler, Works*). These will be described in the 'Biographical Sources' section below. Relying on these sources, some scholars have claimed that Beddoes was an alcoholic. Hiram Kellogg Johnson writes that 'he was heavily alcoholic and to some clinicians, much of his odd, eccentric behavior in his later years would suggest an alcoholic deterioration' (465). Marjean D. Purinton describes Beddoes as 'an alcoholic, often depressed' (178).

Alcohol is occasionally mentioned in the context of Beddoes' creative productions. Gregory Patrick Ross notes that 'For Beddoes, liquor was always metaphor for creation ...' (196). John S. Agar, on the other hand, writes, 'The image of wine is one which recurs repeatedly through Beddoes' works, and especially in *Death's Jest-Book*, and it nearly always has connotations of physical and moral degradation' (389). Agar outlines the 'vinous evolution' of Isbrand, a character in *Death's Jest-Book*, noting 'Power is the ultimate wine for a man like Isbrand, and it will make him drunk' (387). Charles Alva Hoyt describes Orazio, one of the characters in Beddoes' incomplete drama *The Second Brother* as 'a misunderstood genius who dissipates himself only in order to hide his deep and uncomfortable thoughts' (100-1). Purinton discusses how Beddoes' knowledge of alcohol abuse in others is present in his work. 'In *Torrismond*, the title character as Techno-Gothic grotesque/ghost represents early nineteenth-century understandings of the physiological effects of excessive drinking,' and she cites a number of negative physical and psychological consequences of alcohol outlined in works by Beddoes' father, Dr Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808), and the physician Thomas Trotter (d. 1832), including digestive and neurological ailments, and insanity (183). Purinton sees Trotter's combination of physical and psychological treatment of alcoholism 'being played out in T.L. Beddoes's fragmentary dramas' (183-4). While the common views of society would have informed Beddoes' understanding of alcohol, as we will see, his own understanding was not limited to those views.

## 2. Biographical Sources

Beddoes was drinking 'porter and gin' by his mid-teens (Donner, *Browning Box* 57). In an 1823 letter to Bryan Waller Procter, Beddoes asks 'is not Port at once a spirit and a red sea, still the Lord of "all the proctors, all the doctors", the master of Masters, and the Mistress of Bachelors of arts?' (Donner, *Works* 577). However, Thomas Forbes Kelsall describing Beddoes in 1823 indicates that 'To the sordid vices, he was altogether a stranger...' (xxvi).

Donner notes, 'Beddoes, when under the influence of drink, was perhaps not always on his best behaviour' (Donner, *Making* 334). In 1829 while Beddoes was studying at Göttingen University, there was a drunken incident in which Beddoes broke into a professor's house, kicked policemen, smashed a bottle with a stick and threw furniture and other things out a window, injuring a turkey to the point that a decision was made to put it to death (Donner, *Making* 264-6). 'On the following morning Beddoes emerged and in the company of a few friends consumed eight bottles of wine in celebration of his deeds' (Donner, *Plays* xliii). On the evening after the ensuing university court proceedings, he arrived at a restaurant 'where in a threatening manner he insisted on being given wine, which however was refused' (Donner, *Making* 266). As a result of his misdeeds Beddoes was expelled from the university and left town, owing a large wine bill to an innkeeper (Donner, *Plays* xliv).

During the 1830s Beddoes had a 'habit of stopping on his tours to drink beer and talk politics to the people in the inns he passed' (Donner, *Making* 304). In an 1837 letter to Thomas Forbes Kelsall, Beddoes wrote 'not seldom drink I...' (Donner, *Works* 665).

In an 1841 letter to William Minton Beddoes, Beddoes assesses Munich by writing that 'the beer is excellent, but that is the only good thing in it' (Donner, *Works* 671).

Beddoes praises the drinking of the Swiss in an 1842 letter to Leonhard Tobler. 'In Zürich lieben alle partheien, glaube ich, einen guten und grossen Schoppen / oder auch mehrere: und das halte ich für eine ihrer vorzüglichen Eigenschaften' ('In Zurich everyone drinks at least a little, and this I take to be an excellent characteristic of the people there'; Donner, *Tobler* 243). Later in the letter he adds "Mir wäre eine Welt ohne Wein und Bier ungeniessbar" ('A world without wine and beer would to me be unbearable'; Donner, *Tobler* 244).

In 1845 'a fearful noise' coming from Beddoes' room resulted in the arrival of police and Beddoes being charged with disturbing the peace, for which a heavy fine was paid; Donner attributes this incident to 'Lord Alcohol' (Donner, *Making* 372).

During an 1846 trip to England, Donner writes that 'it seems to have caused no little sensation when he made his appearance at Cheney Longville riding astride a donkey and, apparently, none too sober' (Donner, *Plays* lxxv). During the six months spent at Cheney Longville 'he remained shut up in his room reading, smoking, and drinking' (Donner, *Plays* lxxv). While in England Beddoes was arrested for attempting to set fire to the Drury Lane theatre, an incident which Donner again associates with 'Lord Alcohol' (Donner, *Making* 375-6).

In 1848, the year before he committed suicide, there was a bizarre incident in which Beddoes deliberately cut open an artery in his leg very early one morning. While this seems like the type of incident that could be alcohol-related, the Swiss waiter who related the story to Beddoes' cousin Zoë King specifically denied any such connection (Donner, *Browning Box* 76). This does not however rule out the possibility that alcohol played an indirect role in the incident by negatively affecting Beddoes' emotional balance and restraint.

### 3. Positive Aspects of Alcohol

Beddoes either explicitly praises alcohol or portrays alcohol in some positive way on numerous occasions in his work. Ale is 'inviting' in 'The New Cecilia'. (Donner, *Works* 112). 'To a Bunch of Grapes', a poem from the early collection *The Improvisatore*, notes the ability of fermented grapes to 'breathe on our cheeks a downy bloom / with pleasure glowing' (Donner, *Works* 58). In 'Leopold', also from *The Improvisatore*, we are told of 'Pleasure, hatched beneath the bowl, / That warbles rapture to the soul' (Donner, *Works* 40). In 'Isbrand's Song' Isbrand sings 'I'll not be a fool like the nightingale / Who sits up all midnight without any ale' (Donner, *Works* 90). In the incomplete drama *Torrismond Amadeus* calls for 'One cup, — one more liquid delight, my friends' (Donner, *Works* 269) and proclaims 'I soak my heart's dear roots in wine ... Till every tendril of my straying veins / Rings with delight' (Donner, *Works* 270).

Alcohol is associated with general happiness. 'But first he filled a brimming cup, / For his heart was light and gay' comes from the ballad 'Isbrand's Revenge' (Donner, *Works* 91). In 'Silenus in Proteus' there is the sighing 'Oh those were happy days, heaped up with wine-skins' (Donner, *Works* 137) while in the unfinished drama *The Second Brother* there is a call to 'be mirthful with your cup' (Donner, *Works* 312). 'Jests and laughter' are connected with the goblet in the early poem 'Albert and Emily' (Donner, *Works* 16), and in the lines from 'Silenus in Proteus' 'Then quite full of wine — ... / I sat upon my ass and laughed at Jove' (Donner, *Works* 137) drinking is associated with a freedom from cares. In the drama *The Brides' Tragedy* Lord Ernest responds to Olivia's report of Hesperus' gloom and anxiety by saying 'I warrant wine will cure him' (Donner, *Works* 24).

Alcohol has a magical, heightening quality for Beddoes. In *Death's Jest-Book* Wolfram refers to 'wine, red, black, or purple-bubbling wine, / That takes a man by the brain and whirls him round, / By Bacchus' lip!' (Donner, *Works* 479). In *The Second Brother* Orazio is described as 'a man / After the heart of Bacchus! ... with the carriage of a god' (Donner, *Works* 285). In *Torrismond Amadeus* notes 'This wine ... 'tis spicy, cool, and clear / As is a magic fount where rainbows grow' (Donner, *Works* 269) and it 'works an intellectual alchemy, / Touching the thoughts to sunshine' (Donner, *Works* 269). In *Death's Jest-Book* Isbrand remarks 'And I by wine... / Will be, my own way, heavenly in my clay' (Donner, *Works* 470). Orazio says that alcohol will 'light the woody sides of some dim world, / Which shall be Bacchus' godson-star' and he exclaims 'Wine in a ruby! / I'll solemnize their beauty in a draught, / Pressed from the summer of an hundred vines' (Donner, *Works* 287).

It encourages creative expression. 'Ye cups ... pour your music, let it flow, / 'Tis Bacchus' son who walks below' is taken from a song in *The Second Brother* (Donner, *Works* 287). In 'Leopold', after Leopold has spent some time drinking, 'A lay of wildness loud he sung, / While the old dame in silence hung / Upon the marvels of his tongue' (Donner, *Works* 40). To Isbrand, poetry comes with 'the fourth bottle' (Donner, *Works* 394).

Isbrand associates alcohol use with fullness of life. 'Thou knowest how fishy I am in my liquid delights. Dryness is akin to barrenness, and of barrenness comes nakedness and bareness, and these are melancholy, being the parables of human extremity, and of the uttermost of death and a pig's tail: therefore, good Kate, 'tis the duty of a wise man to thirst and the part of a good woman to wet his lips' (Donner, *Works* 394).

Drinking can aid the development of thought. Isbrand announces 'we will call the cup to counsel' (Donner, *Works* 471). And it facilitates understanding. In *Death's Jest-Book* Melveric says

to Wolfram 'I would we had much wine; 'twould bring us sooner / To the right point' (Donner, *Works* 360).

It is a pleasant way to pass the time. In *The Second Brother* Michele urges 'So let's not talk / And breathe away the time, whose sands are thawed / Into such purple tears, but drink it off' (Donner, *Works* 285).

Alcohol is a way of escape from the mundane world. In *Death's Jest-Book* a sailor calls for 'wine, hostess, ale and brandy. My legs hate walking on this stupid dead earth' (Donner, *Works* 395).

It is physically refreshing. In *Death's Jest-Book* Ziba offers wine 'pressed from its fruit to wash Sesostris' throat / Or sweeten the hot palate of Cambyses' (Donner, *Works* 480).

Alcohol can induce a protective or restorative sleep. In *Death's Jest-Book* Athulf yearns 'Precious cup, / A few drops more of thy somniferous balm, / To keep out spectres from my dreams to-night' (Donner, *Works* 463).

Finally, drinking is a way of disrespecting religion, which would have been appealing to Beddoes. 'Now we're in Christendom, my lads, we'll get drunk once more. A curse on their watery superstition!' also comes from *Death's Jest-Book* (Donner, *Works* 394).

#### 4. Toasts

There are many toasts in Beddoes' dramatic writings. Toasting represents another positive aspect of alcohol both as a method of social bonding and with respect to the specific wishes the toasts express.

The toasts 'We'll have her health; come, fill your goblets round, / The bride, Olivia' (Donner, *Works* 219) and 'May we ne'er feel a woe; we drink to her' (Donner, *Works* 220) are both found in *The Brides' Tragedy*. 'Long live the lion! / We'll drink his tawny health: he gave us wine' is an example from *Death's Jest-Book* (Donner, *Works* 346).

#### 5. Negative Aspects of Alcohol

Beddoes is also keenly aware of the negative aspects of alcohol. In *Death's Jest-Book* Kate observes 'the wine is sweet, but a sweet seducer' (Donner, *Works* 394). Christopher Moylan describes 'The New Cecilia' as 'a satire of poets as hard-drinking, flatulent fools' (238). Beddoes' 'The Masque in the Moon' refers to 'Bacchus the sot' (Donner, *Works* 169).

Purinton describes Torrismond's 'irresponsible drinking and rioting' as 'turning him into a grotesque' to his father, the Duke of Ferrara, 'who concludes that the alcoholic body of Torrismond needs to be removed' (184). The Duke deplors Torrismond's behaviour, complaining that the rights of 'reverend citizens' are 'torn off and trampled 'neath his drunken foot' (Donner, *Works* 278). Another character in the play, Garcia, charges that Torrismond is 'tied to no law except his lawless will' (Donner, *Works* 268).

In *The Second Brother* the idea that alcohol leads to poor behaviour is also present. Ezril exclaims to Orazio's guards 'What! Would you stain the holy throne of justice ... with the foul juices of your drunken veins?' (Donner, *Works* 303). In 'A Civil Ghost' sobriety is linked with propriety (Donner, *Works* 256). In *Death's Jest-Book* Athulf says 'devils of abandonment will ... call in Sins to come, and drink with them / Out of my heart' (Donner, *Works* 417).

Foolish talk is associated with alcohol on many occasions in Beddoes' writings. There is a reference to 'beer-pot orators' in *Torrismond* (Donner, *Works* 278). In an 1825 letter to Kelsall, Beddoes writes 'Their follies ... are laughed at every where but in the university pothouses when they grow glorious on the fumes of smallest ale & rankest tobacco' (Donner, *Works* 607). In

'Erminia Abbondata' Erminia characterizes her wild talk as akin to the result of 'supping up a draught of wine' (Donner, *Works* 263). In *Death's Jest-Book* Adalmar dismisses Athulf's words by saying 'Fie sir, these are the spiced sighs of a heart, / That bubbles under wine; utter rhyme-gilding, / Beneath man's sober use' (Donner, *Works* 408) and Isbrand asks 'If you are sane or sober, / What do you mean?' (Donner, *Works* 481). In *The Brides' Tragedy* Hesperus asks 'Who's this greybeard driveller? / Go, find your wits, old fellow, that bald skull / Is full of leaks; hence! look in last night's bowl' (Donner, *Works* 223) and talks of a ghost leaving his tomb 'to blab a drunken lie' (Donner, *Works* 220). In the 1826 verse letter to Procter, the way to defeat Death is to 'make him play / Momus o'er wine by torchlight' (Donner, *Works* 615). Drinking can lead to letting one's guard down in conversation. 'In plottings there is ... some fellow who doth talk / In sleep or in his cups, or tells his tale, / Love-drunk' (Donner, *Works* 474). The significant number of references in this category suggests that Beddoes did a good deal of his drinking in social situations, and this is consistent with his involvement in politics, and with Donner's description of his frequent drinking at inns in the 1830s.

Alcohol is associated with false imaginings. 'The old gods / Were only men and wine' (Donner, *Works* 434). And it is even connected with madness. In an 1825 verse letter to Procter, Beddoes writes 'Give him thy bosom, dark Melpomene, / And let him of thy goblet and thine eye / Exhaust the swimming deep insanity' (Donner, *Works* 602).

Alcohol makes a person vulnerable. Melveric notes 'Already has our slave, / The grape juice, left the side-door of the youngest / Open to me' (Donner, *Works* 411). And it provides only a false solution to problems. In 'Leopold' we learn, 'Vain the solace sought / From wine, that bubbles with disease and steams / With embryo riot' (Donner, *Works* 49).

There are a few direct references to alcoholism in Beddoes' work. 'My goblet's golden lips are dry... / Rain, O! rain, or it will die; / Rain, fill it up!' (Donner, *Works* 94), from the 'Drinking Song', is probably a reference to the 'thirst' of the alcoholic and the desire to avoid the onset of withdrawal symptoms, while in 'The New Cecilia' the breakfast of the 'tipsy gipsy' begins with a tankard of ale (Donner, *Works* 112).

## 6. 'Lord Alcohol'

The song 'Lord Alcohol' provides a good illustration of Beddoes' mixed assessment of alcohol. It appears in *The Ivory Gate* (1830-9) and is sung by Norman, who implores 'Let me sing you a hymn of triumph, in which I defend my own opinions on the subject of this night's discussion' (Donner, *Works* 138):

### 'Lord Alcohol'

#### I.

Who tames the lion now?  
Who smoothes Jove's wrinkles now?  
Who is the reckless wight  
That in the horrid middle  
Of the deserted night  
Doth play upon man's brain,  
As on a wanton fiddle,  
The mad and magic strain,  
The reeling, tripping sound,



To which the world goes round?  
Sing heigh! ho! diddle!  
And then say —  
Love, quotha, Love? Nay, nay!  
It is a spirit fine  
Of ale or ancient wine,  
Lord Alcohol, the drunken fay,  
Lord Alcohol alway!

II.

Who maketh pipe-clay man  
Think all that nature can?  
Who dares the gods to flout,  
Lay fate beneath the table,  
And maketh him stammer out  
A thousand monstrous things,  
For history a fable,  
Dish-clouts for kings?  
And sends the world along  
Singing a ribald song  
Of heigho! Babel?  
Who, I pray —  
Love, quotha, Love? Nay, nay!  
It is a spirit fine  
Of ale or ancient wine,  
Lord Alcohol, the drunken fay,  
Lord Alcohol alway!

(Donner, *Works* 138-9)

Alcohol can relax the drinker and dissolve even the greatest mental disturbance: ‘Who tames the lion now / Who smoothes Jove’s wrinkles now?’ And it can encourage flights of thought and imagination: ‘Who maketh pipe-clay man / Think all that nature can’. It promotes a carefree happiness, it ‘sends the world along / Singing a ribald song / of heigho!’

At the same time, alcohol’s ability to excite, its ‘mad and magic strain’, can make the drinker ‘stammer out / A thousand monstrous things’.

If there is any doubt about which side wins this ‘debate’ within Beddoes’ mind (at least during the 1830s), the refrain provides the answer: ‘Lord Alcohol, the drunken fay, / Lord Alcohol alway!’

## 7. Figurative Uses of Alcohol

Alcohol is many times used in a figurative sense in the Beddoes corpus. Donner writes, “‘empty wine-bubbles’ is Torrismond’s name for his young friends and former companions’ (Donner, *Making* 148). Swollen cheeks are described as like ‘the red wine’s bubbles, / In petulant debate’ by Floribel in *The Brides’ Tragedy* (Donner, *Works* 177). In an 1824 letter to Kelsall, Beddoes urges him to ‘crush Campbell, throw Bowles into the fire, Bernard & such small beer into the pig’s trough’ (Donner, *Works* 592). ‘The Oviparous Tailor’ has a ‘small-beer sinner’ (Donner, *Works* 113). In an 1837 letter to Kelsall, Beddoes makes reference to a book of ‘prosaic poetry and

poetical prose' he is writing, which 'will, I hope, turn out not quite the smallest ale brewed out with the water of the fountain of ye horse's foot' (Donner, *Works* 659). In 'Leopold', charity 'pours libations from the balmy eye' (Donner, *Works* 42). In 'Man's Petty Universe Contrasted with the True' a wren's nest is described as 'the wren's small goblet of a home' (Donner, *Works* 249). In the *Death's Jest-Book* fragment 'The Duke Overpowered by Enemies' we are told 'Drunken with storm he totters' (Donner, *Works* 493).

## 8. *Alcohol and Blood*

Alcohol is sometimes used to refer to blood. 'My blood is spilt like wine' appears in 'The Ghosts' Moonshine' (Donner, *Works* 96). The stabbed Isbrand claims 'It is wine I spilt, / Not blood, that trickles down' (Donner, *Works* 484). The early poem 'Alfarabi', from *The Improvisatore*, makes reference to 'War the bacchanal of blood' (Donner, *Works* 9). In *Death's Jest-Book*, Hell is 'blood-drunken' (Donner, *Works* 414). At other times the figurative relationship is reversed. As early as 'Albert and Emily', from *The Improvisatore*, there are 'goblets flushed with blood-red wine' (Donner, *Works* 15). The 'Drinking Song' from *Outidana* contains 'Well bled, o thou berry!' (Donner, *Works* 68) and 'To a Bunch of Grapes' includes 'In polished urn be flowing, / With blood of nectar' (Donner, *Works* 58). In *Death's Jest-Book*, Ziba commands 'Flow wine, like Moorish gore' (Donner, *Works* 375). In 'The Romance of the Lily', an early poem, 'there's a chalice in her hand, whence bloody flashes gleam' (Donner, *Works* 62). Alcohol and blood can even be interchangeable. Isbrand claims 'Liquors can lay them: / Grape-juice or vein-juice' (Donner, *Works* 426). The significant number of figurative references between alcohol and blood suggests that for Beddoes this was not merely the adoption of a poetic convention, but also an indication that for him drinking might at times have had a quasi-sacramental, vampiric or some other spiritual dimension.

## 9. *Alcohol and Death*

The figurative relationship between alcohol and blood is one example of a relationship between alcohol and death that exists in Beddoes' work. The evolution and variety in Beddoes' views about death make it impossible to neatly summarize this relationship. As Hoyt notes, 'Beddoes saw death differently at different periods of his life, and described it as he saw it' (92).

The poisoned drinks in Beddoes' work suggest an association between alcohol and death. Having drunk poison, Athulf says of the devil 'The fiend hath made me death-drunk' (Donner, *Works* 456). In the  $\beta$  version of *Death's Jest-Book* Ziba brings poisoned wine that he claims 'is charmed; / And they who drink of such have magic dreams' (Donner, *Works* 372). In the  $\gamma$  version 'magic dreams' are instead 'Elysian dreams' (Donner, *Works* 373). Siegfried says to the self-poisoned Athulf 'Peace, thou bold drunken fellow that liest there!' (Donner, *Works* 460). In one of the fragments of *Love's Arrow Poisoned* poison is drunk from goblets (Donner, *Works* 257-8).

In *The Brides' Tragedy* drinking is also mentioned in connection with murder. Prior to her death at the hands of Hesperus, Floribel implores him to 'leave this mirth, / or I must weep', to which Hesperus replies "Twill serve to fill the goblets / For our carousal' (Donner, *Works* 206). Hesperus later proclaims that the lips of the dying Floribel 'have quaffed / Life to the dregs, and found death at the bottom, / The sugar of the draught' (Donner, *Works* 208).

The notion of alcohol as a vehicle to death is given expression by Mandrake, who says 'I will give thee a pint-bottle of my patent liquid — Eternity' (Donner, *Works* 335). Isbrand's equation of 'grape-juice' with 'vein-juice' was noted earlier. In another identification of alcohol with death, Isbrand claims 'while a man might change two goblets' liquors, / I laid the lips of their two graves together, / And poured my brother into hers' (Donner, *Works* 416). When to drink is to drink of death itself, drunkenness becomes a way of experiencing a temporary 'death', it is a form of suicide, and it seems reasonable to conjecture that for Beddoes drinking may at times have had this value.

On other occasions Beddoes seems to view drinking as a way of mocking death, of expressing its inability to intimidate him. In the 1826 verse letter to Procter, Beddoes writes 'But he who fills the cups and makes the jest / Pipes to the dancers, is the fool o' the feast. / Who's he ... dotard Death' (Donner, *Works* 87). In *Death's Jest-Book* there is the taunting toast 'Then round with the health of Death, round with the health / Of Death the bony, Death the great; round, round. / Empty yourselves, all cups, unto the health / Of great King Death!' (Donner, *Works* 480-1). Drinking out of a skull can be viewed as a show of contempt for death. The 'Drinking Song' provides an example:

Drink! for cold's the weather,  
The scull that roofed a human soul,  
Is it not my drinking bowl?  
Let us quaff together  
That wine the hebrew witch did brew  
Of nightshade fruit and sap of yew  
Melted in the forehead dew  
Of a dead man on the heather.  
Drink then and be merry!  
The scull that held the life of man,  
Is it not our liquor can?  
Well bled, o thou berry!

(Donner, *Works* 68)

Donner comments that 'there is nothing but the recklessness of youth in the drinking of toasts out of dead men's skulls' (Donner, *Making* 127). In 'The Song that Wolfram Heard in Hell' ('Old Adam, the carrion crow') the two crows 'drink and make merry' in the skull of Cleopatra, which is filled with 'the tears of blue eyes' (Donner, *Works* 94). Here the idea of drinking to alleviate sorrow appears to be one shade of meaning.

Elsewhere, however, skull-drinking takes on a more sinister aspect. In 'A Murderer' Beddoes writes 'I mean / To drink my punch out of your scull to-night' (Donner, *Works* 239).

There are other associations between alcohol and death. In an endorsement of the drinking career, one of the fishermen in *Death's Jest-Book* says 'let thy nose die purple on strong beer, and stout be thy porter to paradise' (Donner, *Works* 385). The line 'And it is Plague, the spotted fiend, the drunkard of the tomb' (Donner, *Works* 62), from 'The Romance of the Lily', suggests the rapacious thirst of the heavy drinker, while the lines 'And its liquor is of Phlegethon, and Aetna's wrathful stream, / And icy dews of death' speak to the destructive potential of alcohol (Donner, *Works* 62).

In *The Second Brother* Armida recalls a feast in which 'Strange things were said by accident' and a toast containing the 'wrong words', 'One fellow drank my death, meaning my health' (Donner, *Works* 292) was spoken. This toast is later dismissed as a false perception due to

'melancholy' (Donner, *Works* 292). Here the underlying view is that death is the curative for the ills of personal experience. Drinking is a way to celebrate that positive value.

### 10. *The Suicide Note*

The association between alcohol and death is continued into the suicide note that Beddoes wrote. The note includes an instruction that '*W. Beddoes* must have a *case* (50 bottles—) of Champagne *Moët 1847* growth to drink my health in' (Donner, *Works* 683). Here Beddoes is referencing the 'wrong words' of the melancholic toast from *The Second Brother* just described. Beddoes' choice of words should therefore be taken as an indication of the sadness he was feeling when he chose to commit suicide, and his hope that death would bring an end to his troubles.

Fifty bottles are of course perhaps a few more than are necessary for one person to effect a toast. This could indicate that at the end of his life Beddoes' concept of alcohol involved drinking to oblivion.

### 11. *The Question of Alcoholism*

How does the preceding collection of sources bear on the question of whether Beddoes was an alcoholic? In assessing this material one is immediately struck by the profusion of references to alcohol in what is really a fairly small body of writing. If one of the characteristics of alcoholics is a preoccupation with the object of their affection then the sheer number of references here is suggestive.

Beddoes' detailed assessment of the positive and negative aspects of alcohol, the ready use of alcohol in his figurative language and the strong association of alcohol with what was to him the most pressing philosophical question, the nature and significance of death, all point toward alcohol playing a significant role in his life. His use of the name 'Lord Alcohol' is perhaps a sign of its influence over him. Alcohol permeates his thinking to the extent that he even refers to people as beers, and sees wine bubbles in rosy cheeks. There is evidence of improper, even suicidal, attitudes toward drinking in his writing.

While the biographical sources are limited in number, they are telling. Binge drinking is present in the early episode at Göttingen, and importantly it is also present in the 1845 Swiss incident that led to police intervention, which suggests that this was probably a lifelong pattern of drinking and not one that was confined to his college years. The donkey-riding and Drury Lane incidents demonstrate a loss of control. In one of his letters Beddoes admits to frequent drinking, and there is evidence for a pattern of continuous drinking in the description of his stay at Cheney Longville in 1846. Beddoes' statement to Tobler that a world without wine and beer would be 'unbearable' indicates dependence. If the evidence for alcoholism is circumstantial, it is nevertheless strong.

### 12. *Conclusion*

This article has delineated and classified the vast majority of the sources available for the study of Beddoes and alcohol. It has focused on outlining Beddoes' complex understanding of alcohol, and while the article has thus been biographical in purpose the source material presented here can hopefully serve as a foundation for future literary studies in this area. For example, much work needs to be done on Beddoes' use of alcohol as a device in advancing and developing the

thought and action in his dramas. Since alcohol appears to have played such an important role in Beddoes' life it seems reasonable to expect that it played an important role in his writing too, and that this area of study could yield interesting and worthwhile results.

### *Works Cited*

- Agar, John S. 'Isbrand and T.L. Beddoes' Aspiring Hero.' *Studia Neophilologica* 45.2 (1973): 372-91. Print.
- Donner, H.W., ed. *The Browning Box: Or, The Life and Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes as Reflected in Letters by His Friends and Admirers*. London: Oxford UP, 1935. Print.
- Donner, H.W., ed. *Plays and Poems of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. By Thomas Lovell Beddoes. London: Routledge, 1950. Print.
- Donner, H.W. 'T.L. Beddoes to Leonhard Tobler: Eight German Letters.' *Studia Neophilologica* 35.2 (1963): 227-55. Print.
- Donner, H.W., ed. *Thomas Lovell Beddoes: The Making of a Poet*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1935. Print.
- Donner, H.W., ed. *The Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. By Thomas Lovell Beddoes. London: Oxford UP, 1935. Print.
- Hoyt, Charles Alva. 'Theme and Imagery in the Poetry of T.L. Beddoes.' *Studia Neophilologica* 35.1 (1963): 85-103. Print.
- Johnson, Hiram Kellogg. 'Thomas Lovell Beddoes: A Psychiatric Study.' *Psychiatric Quarterly* 17 (1943): 446-69. Print.
- Kelsall, Thomas Forbes, ed. *The Poems Posthumous and Collected of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. By Thomas Lovell Beddoes. London, William Pickering, 1851. Print.
- Moylan, Christopher. 'T.L. Beddoes's Terminable or Interminable End.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. Ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. 177-92. Print.
- Purinton, Marjean D. 'Three of Thomas Lovell Beddoes's Dramatic Fragments: Fractured Techno-Gothic Appendages and Thomas Beddoes's *Hygëia*.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. Ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007. 177-92. Print.
- Ross, Gregory Patrick. 'The Cherub and the Bacchanal: The Poetry of Thomas Lovell Beddoes.' Diss. UCLA, 1983. Print.

## Alexander's Expedition

*down the Hydaspes and the Indus to the Indian Ocean.*

by Dr Thomas Beddoes

The poem of which we publish the following extract appeared anonymously in 1792 in a quarto bearing the imprint 'London: Sold by J. Murray, No. 32, Fleet-Street; and James Phillips, George-Yard, Lombard-Street'. In fact it was printed for private circulation by J. Edmunds, a bookseller and printer in Madeley, Shropshire, and funded by a Madeley ironmaster, William Reynolds. Its eight wood-engravings in the style of Bewick are the unattributed work of Edward Dyas, a parish clerk, described in the Advertisement as 'an uneducated and uninstructed artist, if such an application be not a profanation of the term, in a remote village', and we must hope that Mr Dyas received the author's remarks in a kindlier light than they now appear; to be told in print that the 'designs would have been better if ...' seems a trifle discouraging. Beddoes takes greater pride in the fact that 'The *compositor* was a young woman in the same village'. He does not reveal that she was Edmunds' daughter but hopes that 'it will readily be granted that employment for women is among the greatest desiderata of society'.

The Advertisement confesses that 'In order to impose upon a few of their common acquaintance, the writer, in a few passages at least, attempted to assume the style of the most elegant of modern poets'. Anonymity is archly maintained but the debt to Erasmus Darwin would have been evident to any contemporary reader, not merely in the poetic manner and style but in the profusion of lengthy foot- & endnotes to which the verse of both poets is largely subservient. Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* which had been published in two parts in 1789 and 1791 had rapidly become one of the most celebrated poems of its time: there were six English



reprints between 1791 and 1824 as well as Irish and American editions and translations into French, Portuguese and Italian. Wordsworth and Coleridge were early admirers although their own innovations in poetic diction would soon make Darwin's verse look fatally old-fashioned: its stiff and unashamedly didactic couplets with their emphatic rhymes and exclamatory personifications seem to later readers a mechanical and moribund echo of the Augustan heyday. The quarto editions of *The Botanic Garden* are nevertheless handsome and seductive productions which Dr Beddoes and Mr Edmunds' daughter beguilingly imitated.

Alan Halsey

Now the new LORD of PERSIA's wide domain  
Down fierce HYDASPES seeks the INDIAN Main;  
High on the leading prow the Conqueror stands,  
Eyes purer skies, and marks diverging strands.  
A thousand sails attendant catch the wind,

And yet a thousand press the wave behind;  
Two Veteran hosts, outstretched on either hand,  
Wide wave their wings and sweep the trembling land.  
The serried Phalanx **TERROR** stalks beside,  
And shakes o'er blazing helms his crested pride;  
While **VICTORY**, still companion of his way,  
Sounds her loud trump and flaunts her banners gay.

By moss-grown cliffs, where infant fountains weep;  
Where cataracts thunder down the shattered steep;  
Where from the rocky pier and stream-worn cave  
Umbrageous forests span the lurid wave,  
Swift-gliding galleys trace the mazy way,  
Their clamours mingle, and their state display.  
Forth from their secret glooms and rugged soil,  
The voice of Uproar calls the Sons of spoil;  
Far o'er acclaiming shores the bounding throngs  
Attend the triumph with barbaric songs,  
Or, spent with haste, on wreathes of prostrate grass  
Recumbent, watch the long procession pass;  
Admiring much, as varied barks succeed,  
But most the wonder of the wafted steed.  
—The line flows on, by many a palmy isle,  
Round jutting capes, down many a deep defile,  
Where rifted mountains o'er the lost array  
Fling their vast shadows, and exclude the day;  
While Echo, listening from her dripping cave,  
Mocks the shrill cry, dashed oar, and rippling wave.  
—Now, quick emerging, o'er the wandering vale  
Peeps the proud beak, and gleams the illumined sail—  
—Now sudden horror chills the jocund course—  
Impetuous rivers clash with headlong force—  
Dire seeths the foam, and loud the surges roar;  
The deafened Bands suspend the uplifted oar;  
Back reels the flood—devouring eddies curl—  
And foundering keels revolve with dizzy whirl.

From distant heights, the Shepherd's awe-struck gaze  
War's pomp terrific, pacing slow, surveys;  
O'er his strained bosom, billowy passions roll  
Their adverse tides, and poise his struggling soul.  
'Quick, quick avert thy fascinated sight;  
'To safer climes oh speed thy instant flight.'  
Thus Danger warns—in vain—the potent charm  
Roots his fixed foot and grasps his rigid arm.  
—So when dark volumes of the labouring storm  
Sail slow o'er earth, and day's bright arch deform,  
Swift floods of flame when skies unfolding pour,  
And onward rolls the long explosive roar,

Pale, sad, transfixed, the gasping Wanderer stands,  
Resigns his swimming head and powerless hands:  
Yet, ere he sinks, with mild reviving glow  
Back to the seats of sense his spirits flow;  
Then breaks thy gloom, Despair; Hope's streaming light  
Scares the gaunt forms that cross thy troubled night;  
And Fancy, sallying mid the wild career,  
Bids Wonder ope the close-pressed lids of Fear.

With deep-felt tread the sounding march disturbs  
The dark recesses of the matted herbs;  
Uncoiling Serpents rear the towery crest,  
Point the dire hiss, and swell the speckled breast;  
Swift, Terror's arm lays low the hideous heads,  
The venomed monsters dart to distant beds;  
Aghast the Tyger and the Lion quake,  
Shrink from their bulk and crouch within the brake.

Through quivering foliage steely lustres glance;  
With kindling eye-ball from his holy trance,



Behold! The soul-abstracted FAQUIR start,  
And human feelings touch his palsied heart.  
—And YOU, mild tenants of the peaceful shore,  
Which ne'er Invader's step profaned before,  
Who bask secure amid your sunny glades,  
Or ply the loom beneath your scented shades,  
How throbb'd each gentle breast with wild alarms,  
As o'er you burst the startling blaze of arms?—

—Roused mid the silence of their lone retreats,  
Your RAJAHS haste from forest-cinctured seats,  
Spice, gold, and gems, and fine-wrought fabrics bring,  
And soothe with gifts out-spread the Stranger-King.  
The glowing HERO—while responsive shores  
Ring to the labour of unnumbered oars,  
While with slow pace, his long-protracted train  
Toils up the steep, expands along the plain;



While Tribes of tawnier hue and lighter dress  
Submissive awe, by suppliant signs express,  
And Patriarchs hoar, and Chiefs of manly prime  
Bend to the Warrior of the Western clime;  
From the scared groves as plumes unknown arise,  
Strange notes resound, and glance more vivid dies;  
As stems of ranker growth and gaudier flowers  
Entwine wild fragrance round unfading bowers,  
And Giant trunks outstretch their mightier shoots,  
Spread ampler leaves, and tempt with fairer fruits;  
As to their dark pavilions, terror-chaced,  
Grim tyrants of the forest, growling, haste;  
In swift succession as before his eyes  
A new Creation's crowded wonders rise—  
—And now, his nodding prows triumphant dance  
O'er swelling waves, on Indus' broad expanse;  
With eye astonished now he marks the tide  
Propel its curly foam, now slow subside;  
Now lifts, with startled ear, the angry BORE  
His whelming wave urge on, and boisterous roar—  
—Long mute, long fixed by Extacy's controul,  
Pours forth at last the fervour of his soul.

'Hail, Thou unnamed of Greece! Thou sportive God!  
'Controller of the flood! Whose changeful nod  
'Now rolls thy living liquids o'er the strand,  
'Now calls them refluent from thy lawns of sand,  
'Who now, with arm upreared and murmurs hoarse,  
'Full in mid stream impellest their furious course;  
'Thee I invoke! Thy name, thy nature say:  
'Oh! Grant thy presence to the eye of Day!  
'So shall thy censors blaze, thy temples rise,  
'And Nations offer rightful sacrifice.  
'Our Western Main thou scornest—Benumbing Sleep  
'With leaden sceptre quells that sluggish Deep.'  
So spake the Monarch, and with arms outspread,  
Bowed to the Power unknown his radiant head;  
Musing he bends, as though beneath the wave  
He saw revealed the Godhead's chrystal cave;  
Then, slow with sweeping eye, from shore to shore  
The twinkling mass of waters measures o'er;  
Now, with uplifted brow, pursues the gale,  
Whose playful pinion fans the panting vale;  
Marks giant harvests wave, or grassy dells  
Wind their soft lap around the copse-crowned swells;  
Now o'er the forest's closely-tufted head  
He longs with airy step aloft to tread;  
O'er checquered shades where whispering branches play,  
On Nature's yielding couch his limbs to lay:

Now starts, with infant eagerness, to chace  
The bright-plumed rivals of the insect race.  
—Soft, soothing scenes! you lulled to short repose  
An heart, where ever-restless ardour glows,  
The calm you breathe could still the Victor's mind,  
Though soaring hopes perturb, and wreaths fresh-twined:  
—On the green sod, awhile his eye-balls rest;  
Joy's genial tide pervades his rising breast;  
And hark! His tongue the bland emotions owns,  
And warbles Gratulation's dulcet tones.

'Ye Fields for ever fair, Thou, mighty stream!  
'Bright regions! blest beyond the Muse's dream!  
'Thou, fruitful womb of ever-teeming Earth!  
'Ye fostering skies, that rear each beauteous birth!  
'Trees, that aloft uprear your stately height!  
'Whose sombrous branches shed a noontide night!  
'Groves, that for ever wear the smile of spring!  
'Gay birds, that wave the many-tinted wing!  
'Of Reptiles, Fishes, Brutes stupendous forms!  
'And Ye, of nameless Insects glittering swarms!  
—'Sons of soft toil, whose shuttle Beauty throws,  
'Whose tints the Graces' earnest hands dispose,  
'Whose guileless bosom Care avoids and Crime,  
'Gay as your groves and cloudless as your clime!  
'Primæval Piles, that rose in massive pride,  
'Ere Western Art her first, faint effort tried!  
'Ye Brachmans old, whom purer æras bore,  
'Ere Western Science lisped her infant lore!  
'How will your wonders flush the Athenian Sage?  
'How ray with glory my historic page?

'Ne'er—though the series of my martial toils  
'Has led my footsteps o'er a thousand soils—  
'Ne'er through my breast has equal transport streamed,  
'Ne'er on these eyes such pure effulgence beamed.  
'How mean thy vale, O Tempe! ah how vain  
'The boast, Euphrates, of thy boundless plain!  
'How fade the glories of the favoured tide,  
'Whose waves beneath my rising bulwarks glide!  
'Nor Fancy now, with lingering fondness strays  
'O'er those fair fields, where sparkling Pharphar plays;  
'Where his smooth state reflects Damascus' towers,  
'Or pleased Orontes, mid his whispering bowers,  
'Hears Syrian Virgins pour the thrilling strain,  
'Breathe the warm sigh, and soothe the tender pain.

'Ye blooms, that proud display the glowing hue,  
'And sip the beverage of ambrosial dew!

‘Skies, that the Seasons bind in lasting peace,  
‘And bid the discord of the rivals cease,  
‘Save Winter’s ruthless soul—HE drives afar  
‘O’er blasted realms his tempest-shaken car—  
‘And you, where Dayspring’s freshest glances shine,  
‘Fair Gardens, planted by an hand divine!  
‘She, at whose call the clime remote appears,  
‘Who spreads Existence through departed years—  
‘Oft shall HER hand before my charmed sight,  
‘Your smiling semblance hold, and colours bright;  
‘And Fancy still, mid Night’s inspiring shades,  
‘With fond illusion rove among your glades.  
—‘Pause! vagrant Airs, whose wings afar diffuse  
‘The floating fragrance of your balmy dews,  
‘A moment pause! then, gently flitting, bear  
‘Wide o’er Elysian lands the vow I swear.  
—‘When every clime shall see my flag unfurled,  
‘And boundless Commerce mix a cultured world,  
‘From mad misrule reclaimed, and brutal strife,  
‘Trained to the soft civilities of life,  
‘When Home’s dear ties shall fix each roaming horde,  
‘And Earth shall kneel before her Grecian Lord,  
‘Here shall my arms be hung—in this retreat  
‘My age repose—here fix its silent seat.’

Here closed his lips—still spake his glistening eye,  
Still Admiration heaved her deep-drawn sigh;  
Around the soul-wrapt Chief—in crowded rings  
His kindling warriors press—the destined Kings,  
Of mighty states—They catch the Monarch’s fire:  
Their gestures, soon, the train remote inspire;  
From soul to soul triumphant ardours run,  
And all partake the bliss of Philip’s son;  
At first low murmurs creep; at length the bands  
Ope their glad lips and smite their joyous hands,  
The land and waters pour exulting cries,  
And pealing shouts assail the Indian Skies—  
—HE, from applauding myriads loud acclaim,  
Accepts the omen of immortal fame,  
And feels assuaged, in that enraptured hour,  
His ardent thirst of Glory and of Power.

And now the Hosts, on India’s sultry verge,  
See smooth-spread shores receive the sailing Surge;  
Hoarse round his sinuous sweep of marshy bounds  
Hear Ocean murmur storm-portending sounds,  
Or roar, impatient, from his wave-worn cells,  
Loud o’er the lands, where listening Plenty dwells.

To HER scared eye, as Fate's dark leaves disclose  
The ghastly characters of India's woes,  
Thy parting sail, O King, the pensive Muse  
With many a sigh, down Indus' stream, pursues.  
—Large was thy thought, and liberal was thy soul,  
Nor stooped thy glance beneath bright Honour's goal;  
Beyond the Sage's amplest grasp, thy mind  
Embraced the mighty mass of human kind,  
And spurned, with firm disdain, the barbarous rule,  
Framed by the Founder of the subtle School.—  
Where awful History, mid the dome of Fame,  
Awards the Tyrant's and the Conqueror's shame,  
Humanity's mild voice, still raised for THEE,  
Abates the rigour of her stern decree.  
For Sympathy could melt that feeling breast,  
And vanquished realms thy healing mercy blest;  
On agonizing woe and captive fear,  
Thy pity dropped the warm balsamic tear:—  
And each soft deed, through many a distant age,  
Shall swell the canvas, and bedew the Stage.

Lo! in redundant current, Commerce pours,  
Obedient to thy call, her Eastern stores;  
And still, though Plague and Rapine range the land,  
Her spicy bale perfumes thy chosen strand.  
And oh! had years matured the fair design,  
Of which thy Genius traced the wondrous line;  
Had GENERAL CONCORD, from her finished fane,  
Shed her pure light, and breathed her strains humane,  
Man's varied race, from far-dissevered lands,  
Her courts had thronged, and pledged discoloured hands;  
Her shrines had witnessed varying voices blend  
The vow, and in the stranger hail the friend;  
Stern Scythia's clans had cast their rage aside,  
Unsocial Greece renounced her scornful pride;  
And long, beneath thy star's protecting ray,  
Had bloomed the regions of the rising day;  
With keen awakened sense, the listening child  
Still on his mother's fearless bosom smiled,  
As, deep concealed o'er-arching shades among,  
Content had caroled blithe his chearing song.  
And still, from far, the swarm of plunderers loured,  
Eyed the fair fruits, and but in thought devoured.

But Earth's fond Hopes, how blasted in their bloom!  
How feels a World convulsed thy fated doom!  
What mingling sounds of woe and outrage rise!  
How wild the eddying dust of Ruin flies!  
See frantic Chiefs the Master's pile deface,

Dash down his walls, and shake the deep-laid base!

Mourn, India, mourn—the womb of future Time  
Teems with the fruit of each portentous crime.  
The Crescent onward leads consuming hosts,  
And Carnage dogs the Cross along thy coasts;  
From Christian strands, the Rage accursed of gain  
Wafts all the Furies in her baleful train:  
Their eye-ball strained, impatient of the way,  
They snuff, with nostril broad, the distant prey.  
—And now, the Rout pollutes the hallowed shore,  
That nursed young Art, and infant Science bore.  
Fierce, in the van, her firebrand Warfare waves,  
Dire, at her heels, the cry of hell-hounds raves;  
Roused by the yell, the Greedy and the Bold  
Start to the savage chance of blood and gold.

The poem continues for another 274 lines with a sustained diatribe against later (and particularly British) imperialist depredations. The Darwinesque style can scarcely have appealed to Dr Beddoes' son but Thomas Lovell was probably well acquainted with Darwin's ideas and poetry, and there are passages in *Death's Jest-Book* which arguably allude to them. Isbrand's 'evolutionary' conceits in Act I Sc. i ('certain steaks and Barons of beef gone human' etc.) seem to pastiche some of Darwin's bolder notions. The masque of the Deaths in the 'ruins of a spacious Gothic Cathedral' (*DJ-B V iv*) may be compared with Darwin's

The ponderous portals of the church unbar, –  
Hoarse on their hinge the ponderous portals jar;  
As through the colour'd glass the moon beam falls,  
Huge shapeless spectres quiver on the walls;  
Low murmurs creep along the hollow ground,  
And to each step the pealing aisles resound;  
By glimmering lamps, protecting saints among,  
The shrines all trembling as they pass along,  
O'er the still choir with hideous laugh they move,  
(Fiends yell below, and angels weep above!)

Mandrake's 'fairer than the snows of Hekla' is possibly another allusion to Darwin:

High in the frozen North where HECCLA glows,  
And melts in torrents his coeval snows

— and that Darwin elsewhere has a footnote rehearsing traditional mandrake lore will surprise no one.

AH

## John King: Surgeon of Clifton

**Muriel Maby**

**W**HO IS JOHN KING? I can hear you asking yourselves. A well-known figure of his time, he is practically unheard-of today. Born in Switzerland in 1766 as Johann Koenig he rebelled against his family's wishes for him to enter the Church, where his prospects of preferment were good. Instead he came to London hoping to earn his living by his talents for engraving and writing. Finding this impossible he decided to study surgery under Mr Abernethy of St Bartholomew's Hospital.

After qualifying as a surgeon he was commissioned in July 1799 as an ensign in the 2nd Shropshire Regiment of militia. Later in 1799 he was in touch with Dr Thomas Beddoes at his Pneumatic Medical Institute in Dowry Square, Bristol, having been recommended to the doctor by Mr Abernethy.

However, before going to the Pneumatic Medical Institute, and apparently with Dr Beddoe's approval, he accompanied Tom Wedgwood, younger brother of the famous Josiah Wedgwood, on a voyage to the West Indies where Tom hoped to find a cure for an illness that was, in fact, later to prove fatal. Very soon, tiring of his travels, Tom and his companions returned to England and John King joined Dr Beddoes at the Pneumatic Medical Institute.

Besides his medical activities Dr Beddoes at this time was the centre of an interesting social circle that included Bristol-born Robert Southey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Joseph Cottle, the bookseller who published Coleridge and Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*. For a short time the young Cornishman Humphrey Davy worked with Dr Beddoes before going on to London. It was thus a scintillating circle that John King entered on his arrival in Bristol.

The Pneumatic Medical Institute had become a hospital, and King's appointment was to look after the patients as well as to take part in the experiments that were carried on there. His engraving expertise was useful in providing illustrations for written work. After Humphrey Davy left the Pneumatic Medical Institute in 1805 its character changed. Sometime in 1803-04 Beddoes opened a branch establishment in the heart of the old city of Bristol. The site that he chose was little Tower Court in Broad Quay, which is shown in the 1825 map of Bristol by Ashmead. By 1805-06 it was in the hands of Dr Stock and Dr Pritchard, with John King acting as surgeon and vaccinator.

In 1802 John King had married Emmeline Edgeworth, a sister of the Anna Edgeworth whom Dr Beddoes had married eight years earlier, and thus King and Beddoes become brothers-in-law. The match was not popular with the Edgeworth family. They did not attend the wedding and for many years there were polite exchanges of letters between King and his father-in-law over the amount of Emmeline's dowry.

On 1 August 1803, however, King was writing to his father-in-law on happier matters to report the birth of a daughter (given the name Zoë by her father) but only after a dangerous labour of seventeen hours. Robert Southey, writing to a friend from Bristol on 31 July 1803, says, 'Poor King, who is our bleeder and purger in ordinary, keeps house with his wife, who is, I fear, past all hope in a childbed fever, so that instead of having him to keep us, I am obliged to go and look after him, and find a far worse house than I left at home.' Fortunately, this gloomy

foreboding was not justified, and Emmeline recovered to bear two more children, a second daughter, Psyche Emmeline, and a son, Edgeworth King, who unhappily died in childhood at the age of ten.

King had been forced to ask his father-in-law to raise a loan of 400 guineas for him. This Edgeworth did, saying that the interest would be £25 per annum and that he would repay this by deducting it from the £80 per year that he sent to King as Emmeline's dowry. At this time the Kings were still living in Dowry Square but not, apparently, in the house used for the Pneumatic Medical Institute. In 1811, however, they moved to 26 Mall, Clifton.

Immediately after moving, King was laid up with a dangerous inflammation of the liver, which meant that he was unable to practice for some time and that he was in considerable financial difficulties until an inheritance from his family in Switzerland eased the situation. At one point he was sufficiently well off to have a carriage and horses, and he kept open house for his friends and relations.

One of these relations, his nephew Thomas Lovell Beddoes, the poet and doctor, thought highly of his 'demi-uncle' and said in a letter to a friend that if it had not been for his uncle's unpopular democratic political views and ecclesiastical antipathy he might have 'been one of the most opulent and celebrated, as he is confessedly one of the best, living surgeons.' It was probably these same views that prevented him from being elected to the staff of Bristol Royal Infirmary.

Besides his interest in medicine John King was very interested in art, and numbered many of the members of the Bristol School of Artists amongst his friends. This interest also brought him into contact with John Gibbons, who belonged to a Bristol family and whose uncle William Gibbons (1732-1807) was a former mayor of Bristol. King and Gibbons, who lived in Staffordshire, carried on a correspondence for many years. Gibbons, a rich man, was a patron of the arts, and John King acted as a friendly intermediary between the patron and the young members of the Bristol School of Artists. At one time John Gibbons's nephew became a pupil of King but the relationship between them did not run smoothly and young William Gibbons left, but not before he had fallen in love with King's younger daughter Psyche, whom he later married.

The writings of John King, apart from his letters and reports of experiments, consist of a short treatise on physical education, a few pages of memoranda, two letters to the local papers and a series of somewhat lengthy reviews of art exhibitions. Perhaps the most interesting of these are the memoranda, in which he describes in detail his everyday life. He records every patient visited, and the treatment prescribed, as well as financial statements of all the monies received and paid out.

Perhaps John King's own phrase 'teased by care' best sums up his life's work, although another favourite word, 'bustle', gives an idea of what was certainly an energetic life. Another man with a more flexible disposition might, in the circumstances, and with the same ability and dedication, have won the fame and fortune that eluded King himself. Dr Pritchard, with whom King worked in the Preventative Medical Institute, thought well enough of him to get him elected as a member of the medical society of which the membership was limited to twelve. He went to meetings of the Philosophical Society and he seems to have been a well-known citizen of Bristol and was well liked by the circle that knew him intimately.

After leaving 26 Mall in 1844 King went to Bath for two years where he lived at 13 Orange Grove. He then returned to Bristol where he stayed at 3 Boyce's Buildings. He died there on 18

August 1846. He was buried in Arno's Vale Cemetery and his epitaph was written by Walter Savage Landor:

HAVING ACQUIRED AN EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE  
ESPECIALLY IN THE DISEASES  
TO WHICH THE HUMAN FORM IS LIABLE  
NEGLIGENT OF FORTUNE  
ASSIDUOUS IN SOLACING THE POOR  
BELOVED BY FAMILY AND KINDRED  
HONOURED BY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS  
SOUGHT AND CONSULTED BY STRANGERS  
AND NOW CALLED TO RECEIVE HIS REWARD  
BY HIM WHOSE MINISTER HE WAS  
HERE RESTS FROM HIS LABOURS  
AMIDST THE BENEDICTION OF THEM ALL  
JOHN KING  
HE WAS BORN AT BERN IN SWITZERLAND,  
OF WHICH CITY HE WAS A PATRICIAN.  
HE PRACTISED AS A SURGEON AT CLIFTON ALMOST 50 YEARS,  
AND DIED THERE ON THE 18TH DAY OF AUGUST 1846,  
AGED 80

### *Sources:*

1. *Bristol archives*; Bristol Record Office.
2. *Wedgwood archives*; University of Keele Library.
3. *Private collection*; Mrs H. Colvin.
4. *Private collection*; Mrs Edward Gibbons.
5. Cartwright, F.F. *The English pioneers of anaesthesia*.
6. Warter, J.W. *Selections from the letters of Robert Southey*.
7. Gosse, Edmond, editor. *The Letters of T.L. Beddoes*.
8. Donner, H.W., editor. *The Works of Thomas Lovell Beddoes*.



## 'There's No Romance in That'

Sharon Murphy, *Maria Edgeworth and Romance*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004. 208pp. €55.00

Reviewed by Hugh Parry

Maria Edgeworth was deeply worried about the inflammatory potential of unsuitable literature. Sharon Murphy quotes and then squeezes dry the fairly casual, and rather daft, remark in *Essays on Professional Education* that *Robinson Crusoe* 'should not early be chosen for boys of an enterprising temper, unless they are intended for a seafaring life, or for the army,' but is all right for girls, who know that any aspiration to travel and, indeed, to demonstrate enterprise of any kind, is patently absurd. (I wonder what Lady Stanhope read in her impressionable years.)

Romance fiction is destabilising. It inculcates desires which are not only impracticable but morally to be deplored in that they challenge the structure of society which a responsible writer should seek to buttress. This society is patriarchal, for Edgeworth, but with a modern twist. Its basis is the family, where the hierarchy has wobbled a bit but without catastrophic disturbance: the executive powers are still invested in the husband and paterfamilias, but the wife and mother has conceded these by *consent*, which now makes the marriage a partnership rather than a feudal imposition. The family is also the model in the wider world, where Britain is the paterfamilias governing as much territory as it can plant a flag on, educating lesser breeds into an acknowledgement of its cultural supremacy and benign efficiency.

Well, you will struggle to find an apologist now for such assumptions, and they led Edgeworth down some slippery narrative paths. Justifying slavery, for one. Murphy takes aim at a story called 'The Grateful Negro' and peppers it for a chapter; this is like hitting a barn-door at five paces, because its awfulness is indefensible. Parallels are drawn with Aphra Behn, whose *Oroonoko* also features a magnanimous slave who is inclined towards obedience and loyalty by sympathetic treatment, but even a sceptical reader should admit that Behn knew what she was talking about and was, from her own observations, scathing about the general quality of the colonists in both Sumatra and Virginia, whereas Edgeworth's work is a rehash of what she has read, and her portrayal of the slaveowners is along the simplistic lines normal in her most didactic fiction: good slaver / bad slaver, like good land agent / bad land agent, good girl / bad girl.

The discussion of 'The Grateful Negro', however, is only an extended warm-up to the longest chapter in the book, 'Romancing Ireland', which reasonably sees the Irish novels as part of a propagandistic discourse on the benefits of English colonisation. The Irish Catholic is not exactly a slave, of course, but is sometimes infantilised as patronisingly as the 'savage', and can only clamber out of the mire of ignorance and poverty with the aid of benevolent Anglo-Protestant landlords, like the Edgeworths themselves, who are prepared to shoulder the burden of educating their inferiors. Such, at least, is the overt message, reinforcing the English readers' awareness of destiny but also warning them of the responsibilities which the executive classes are too prone to ignore, seduced either by purely mercantile rapacity and self-interest, or by the sybaritic delights of 'Society'.

At the family level, Edgeworth advocated a rational approach by both parties to the business of mating. The man must choose a partner who will collaborate with him in the performance of social duties as far as befits her in the sphere to which she is properly confined; the woman must offer the example of a straight backbone and firmly-rooted moral stance to the man who is ('frailty, thy name ...') liable to crumple and backslide. This leads to the endorsement of Caesar / Caesar's wife double standards. The male leads can be tiresome puppies who struggle towards an appreciation of their true function via all sorts of immature errors, while the girls must keep their escutcheons utterly unblotted, with teenagers displaying the quiet gravitas of matrons. Particularly repulsive is the behaviour of young Lord Colambre in *The Absentee*, who is determined to drop his beloved because she might have been born out of wedlock. He only condescends to change his mind when a *deus ex machina* is finally lowered on to the stage to resolve the storm-in-a-teacup issue of whether a silly young officer had impregnated a convent schoolgirl with or without a marriage licence.

Murphy picks over all this ground: the sexism, the racism, the chauvinism. She highlights a couple of maggoty specimens of snobbery too. Edgeworth was torn between the desire to educate the lower classes, chivvying them to the uplands of self-improvement (the rise in living standards should lift their morals too), and the need to ensure that they didn't climb above what their betters regarded as their plateau. So Lame Jervas raises himself from a child-labourer in a brutal tin-mine to a life of consequence, property and moderate wealth, but we are to suppose that he was rescued from a pursuit nearly as undesirable as mining. He employs his advancing literacy by writing some verses on a thistle, and is squelched by his benefactor, who shows him some *proper* poetry and follows this humiliation up with: 'it was not likely, if I [Jervas] turned my industry to writing verses, that I should ever either earn my bread or equal those who had enjoyed greater advantages of leisure and education.' If only John Clare had absorbed this lesson. Likewise, a promising talent is withered by the mistress of a supposedly model school for poor girls:

A few days after Mad. de Fleury had told Victoire the fable of the lion and the mouse, she was informed by sister Frances that Victoire had put the fable into verse. It was wonderfully well done for a child of nine years old, and Mad. de Fleury was tempted to praise the lines; but, checking the enthusiasm of the moment, she considered whether it would be advantageous to cultivate her pupil's talent for poetry ...

Dancing and music are not encouraged either – what, for 'mantua-makers'? Just as well Richard Lovell Edgeworth didn't say, 'Novels? Not a very feminine activity. Who's going to supervise the servants while you scribble?'

Some very easy targets, then, for the bien-pensants of Academia to shoot at. But what about the title of Murphy's book – where's the 'romance'? Here she stakes a claim to what she considers less-charted territory. Her thesis is that the didactic message of Edgeworth's writings, both the fiction and the educational theory, is subverted, or at least gently skewed, by a stronger predilection for romance than would seem appropriate for someone who believes that the genre is opposed to the values which literature should embody and recommend.

Romance is mighty hard to avoid, though, because it is such a nebulous term. There is the Mills-and-Boonish sense of a story in which passionate love is highlighted and, normally, rewarded. Since marriage is the most natural conclusion to a novel by Edgeworth, and the essence of a good one is partnership without coercion, it is difficult to deny sexual attraction altogether, although it can be downplayed. Consider the qualities of Mr Vincent, who volunteers himself as a suitor to Belinda Portman:

He was about two and twenty; his person and manners were striking and engaging; he was tall, and remarkably handsome; he had large dark eyes, an aquiline nose, fine hair, and a manly sunburnt complexion; his countenance was open and friendly, and when he spoke upon any interesting subject it lighted up, and became full of fire and animation.

Now let us eavesdrop upon Miss Portman's thoughts about Mr Hervey:

She feared to indulge the romantic hope of ever being loved by a man of superior genius and virtue, with a temper and manners suited to her taste. – The only person she had seen, who at all answered this description, was Mr Hervey, and it was firmly fixed in her mind, that he was not a marrying man, and consequently not a man of whom any prudent woman would suffer herself to think with partiality. She could not doubt that he liked her society and conversation; his manner had sometimes expressed more than cold esteem.

We might agree that the polymathic, nervous intelligence of Hervey is unpromising husband material. Vincent, if we cut through the verbiage, is radiantly sexy. But: 'whilst his heart was agitated by his new passion, he could scarcely believe, that he had ever been interested by any other feelings.' This in practice means that sexual passion is likely to be supplanted by the joys of the billiard-table if absence or resistance is applied to his ardour. He is also – which clinches the matter – a Creole.

In fact, there is a double Sense and Sensibility act in *Belinda*, with a Creole female to match the appealing but rationally defective Vincent. Mr Hervey acts as a guardian and sponsor to her, but she conceives a crush on him as she grows up, and he sleep-walks towards a marriage with this child-bride on whom he has been conducting Frankensteinian social experiments, despite the intellectual mismatch. The relative crispness with which Belinda is able to send Vincent packing, and the morass into which the intellectual and obsessively scrupulous Hervey slips indicate the different degrees of control which Edgeworth thinks men and women are capable of exercising in sexual matters.

Bloodless as the authorially approved marriages seem, they are at least the rational choices of the couples themselves, rather than arranged contracts of convenience, so one may say that Edgeworth is ambivalent about strong emotion. She writhed inside her straitjacket of propriety, admitting in letters that her own cool heroines got on her nerves. The gushing, ardent ones, though, are supposed to make us wince at their inadequate training and self-discipline. Virginia the Creole is rechristened by Hervey after a character in a romance, and her reading has done her the kind of damage Edgeworth is so anxious to avoid: 'Virginia had been inspired by romances with the most excellent notions of female delicacy and honour; but from her perfect ignorance, these were rather vague ideas than principles of conduct'; more brusquely, 'a sentimental girl, who had been spoiled by early novel-reading'.

The problem is not one of immorality, but rather of unrealistic expectations – which could, at worst, lead to the errors which young men can commit and then put behind them, but which ruin young women irredeemably. Girls expecting to place their dainty feet on a pedestal raised by gallant knights will find that there is likely to be a trap-door in it. Murphy almost ignores *Belinda*, and indeed all the other English novels, but gives some space to one of Edgeworth's tales for adolescents, 'Angelina; or l'amie inconnue', which firmly focuses on the damage of cramming oneself with hi-falutin' indigestible literature. Not only did Angelina's parents (now dead) fail to

monitor her reading properly, but she has compounded the damage by joining a circulating library. This time the problem is the cultivation of a sensibility that provokes a hot-house quasi-Lesbian crush-by-correspondence and a quest for a refined life-style with Araminta, the kindred spirit – who, of course, turns out to be a butch vulgarian smelling of brandy.

But – there are buts. It takes some determination to make the unromantic Araminta Hodges into an independently-minded challenger of male prerogative to be covertly admired, as Murphy suggests, but it is hard not to see these disillusioning and even dangerous experiences as a valuable education for Angelina, who is rightly dissatisfied with life at home as the ward of a shallow guardian – and it is a genuine adventure as exciting and eye-opening in a way as those in boys' stories set in more exotic climes than South Wales. Edgeworth mocks Angelina's expectations of a more glamorous literary pilgrimage: 'She had the misfortune, and it is a great misfortune to a young lady of her way of thinking – to meet with no difficulties or adventures – nothing interesting upon her journey. – She arrived, with inglorious safety, at Cardiff.' If it is true, though, that she 'was a young woman of considerable abilities: her want of what the world calls common sense arose from certain mistakes in her education' – then one might say that her very folly has enabled her to remedy her deficiencies.

Pain and disillusion certainly are part of the learning process. Consider the story of 'The Purple Jar', which seems to have made an impact disproportionate to its slightness. Rosamond presses her seven-year-old nose against London shop windows and yearns; she particularly hankers after a pretty purple pot. Offered the choice by mamma, she opts for this rather than the new pair of shoes which she needs. When she inspects the purchase closely back at home, she finds that the purple colour comes from the noxious liquid inside, which when poured away leaves a boring plain glass jar. She suffers all kinds of character-strengthening discomforts and disappointments from the lack of a decent pair of shoes until the parents relent – which they still have not done by the end of the story. 'I hope, I shall be wiser another time,' blurts the chastened mite.

It might be retorted that the choice is an unfair one in that new shoes for a growing child are an obligation on parents who can well afford them, not a luxury to be withheld to prove a point. Furthermore, the child is allowed to make a mistake which is the result of an ignorance from which her parents should arguably be protecting her; mamma hints that 'if you were to see it nearer, if you were to examine it, you might be disappointed,' but why should a child mistrust appearances, not knowing what a chemist's is, or having any reason, in terms of her experience, to doubt that the purple is a quality intrinsic to the container itself? What seems to be proved by this is that utility is to be valued over ornament, especially perhaps for a girl, who is to grow up into a solicitous contributor to society, a paragon of dutifulness. What the story actually demonstrates is something different, i.e. 'caveat emptor'. Is it that Edgeworth cannot quite bring herself to deprecate an aesthetic longing in a child, but has to qualify the harshness of the moral by making the beauty specious?

How, indeed, can a novelist maintain a moral defence of utilitarianism and realism? The term 'romance', as well as referring to an exalted or passionate form of sexual love, or to an idealistic rather than pragmatic outlook, may refer to certain ingredients in a narrative. Murphy likes to quote Northrop Frye saying that 'Most romances end happily, with a return to the state of identity, and begin with a departure from it.' This seems a hugely capacious definition, which could include the stories of writers who would be horrified by the suggestion that they had written romances.

If we shun such airy generalities, we could list motifs which crop up in certain interrelated types of tale: fairy stories, myths, the Greek romances of Heliodorus, Longus or Chariton, and the Elizabethan novellas of Greene, Lodge and Sidney. Foundlings, shipwrecks, disguised identities, last-minute inheritances, remarkable coincidences, belated recognitions, faithful love under terrible stress, attempted rapes, imprisonments, magnificent martial derring-do overcoming impossible odds, etc. From time to time, as we have seen, Edgeworth wrinkles her nose and warns us that no such cheapjack devices are going to disfigure her story. Oh really? In her own day, the *Quarterly Review* bleated about the 'threadbare improbability' and 'stale surprise' of the story 'Emilie de Coulanges'. Foundlings? mistaken identities? shipwrecks? life-transforming inheritances? Check. 'By one of those extraordinary coincidences which sometimes occur in real life ...' – yes, Miss Edgeworth, of course they do. She was not a skilful or imaginative plotter, and she needed melodramatic devices to propel her narratives, even if she also wriggled a bit and essayed a pose of lofty irony towards those very recipes which a novelist can hardly dispense with. From the same *Quarterly Review*, Murphy quotes praise of the delicacy and nuances of Edgeworth's character development, but with an embarrassed whimper about the astringency of the plotting: 'To our shame, however, we must acknowledge that we always think her most agreeable when she deviates a little from her rigid realities, and concedes to the corrupted taste of her readers some petty sprinkling of romantic feeling and extraordinary incident'.

It's a thin line to walk between melodramatic incident and not enough incident, and a reader's reaction may be hard to gauge. I think again of those strictures on the limited suitability of *Robinson Crusoe*. Is this really a book to recommend to boys in whom the love of adventure and travel is to be stimulated? A series of disasters, which cause Crusoe to berate himself for the folly of ignoring his father's impassioned plea to curb his restlessness, and then the bulk of the book ironically confining him to a space far more restricted than need have been his lot if he had stayed in England. The novel may be a paradigm of colonialism, but Crusoe's life story hardly seems inspirational except for the bourgeois virtue of 'Make do and mend'. That, I suggest, is a tiny example of a considerable problem: Edgeworth pontificating about a masculine world which she knows inadequately.

More pernicious works than *Robinson Crusoe* (or *Tom Jones*, which so deplorably confirms young Ormond in his oafishness) await the impressionable young female. We have seen Angelina fall for the preciousness of Platonic friendship; what is going to happen to Leonora when she reads this:

Condemned to incessant hypocrisy, or everlasting misery, woman is the slave or the outcast of society. Confidence in our fellow-creatures, or in ourselves, alike forbidden us, to what purpose have we understandings, which we may not use? hearts, which we may not trust? To our unhappy sex genius and sensibility are the most treacherous gifts of Heaven. Why should we cultivate talents merely to gratify the caprice of tyrants?

Why seek for knowledge, which can prove only that our wretchedness is irremediable?

Heady stuff. Leonora's mother is anxious that the liberalisation of women's intellectual development should alarm men as little as possible. Enlightenment must be accompanied by modest decorum so that men are denied the excuse to connect female innocence with female ignorance – and then along come harridans to overstimulate the cauldron like Mary Wollstonecraft, or Mrs Freke in *Belinda* with her horsy laugh, taste for transvestism and breezy mockery of patriarchal values. Whether mocking or indignant, such women must be exposed for more than

the folly of their opinions – there is a core of real malignity in Mrs Freke and Olivia, Leonora's spluttering correspondent.

So many booby-traps secreted in books, then. Read anything foreign, of course, at your peril. Olivia consoles herself and confirms her warped principles by plunging into the self-indulgent gloom of German novels. Lady Davenant in *Helen* permitted herself to indulge political ambitions, encouraged by French blue-stocking literature: 'It is really astonishing what a mischievous effect these few passages produced on my mind.' She dissolves her salon when told how much she is being sniggered at behind her back, but Edgeworth can see that giving up a folly may not heal the underlying problem: the frustration of intelligence going to waste. Second fiddle is not much of a part when you want your share of the good tunes: as another character in *Helen* says, 'It is always permitted to woman to use her intellects so far as to comprehend what man says; her knowledge, of whatever sort, never comes amiss when it serves only to illustrate what is said by one of the lords of creation.'

If 'romance' includes, as Murphy suggests, the desire to treat aspiration or fantasy as if it were real, a discussion of female emancipation must be very cautious and milk-and-watery if it is to avoid falling into that category in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. What Murphy's book shapes up to do is demonstrate how much subversive 'romancing' sneaks into Edgeworth's work. Well, does an extended pastiche/parody of feminist critiques of the status quo constitute a willingness, perhaps subconscious, to give these views an airing, like a brief whiff of ozone in a stuffy room before you close the windows because you might catch your death in the draught? Edgeworth could presumably respond that she has carefully assassinated the characters of all who express heterodox opinions in her books. A novelist, though, is in the wrong trade if he or she cannot reproduce a wide range of views and to a certain extent get under the skin of characters who might be disapproved of. Avoid the improper ideas, the theme of dissatisfaction with one's appointed mundane lot, erotic attraction, a longing for excitement or beauty, and the sort of narrative coups that make page-turning a necessity rather than a worthy duty – all of which are aspects of romance in its broadest sense – and you will not be a best-selling novelist. Edgeworth was a best-selling novelist. The syllogism will prove that Sharon Murphy has found a viable topic.

I've just blazed away at this topic with a clumsy blunderbuss; I wonder why, with far better resources and a publishing deal, Murphy left so much out. I suspect that it is really the Irish angle which engaged her interest. Colonialism is the ism she wants to tilt at, and the Anglo-Protestant hegemony (that's a word which always tells you that an academic's temper is starting to rise) is to be seen as another branch of the tree greedily absorbing nutrients and overshadowing the West Indies and India as well as Ireland. For their own good, of course, as Edgeworth sort-of believed.

Two final thoughts. Erotic romance was toxic reading matter because, as Clara Reeve said in *The Progress of Romance* (1785, quoted by Murphy), young women will never be satisfied by mundanity thereafter: 'If a plain man addresses her in rational terms and pays her the greatest of compliments, – that of desiring to spend his life with her, – that is not sufficient, her vanity is disappointed, she expects to meet a Hero in Romance'. Or, in the plaintive words of Thomas Hood's sentimental fantasist:

Love – even love – goes smoothly on  
A railway sort of track –  
No flinty sire, no jealous Don!  
No hearts upon the rack;  
No Polidore, no Theodore,  
His ugly name is Mat,  
Plain Matthew Pratt, and nothing more –  
There's no romance in that! ...

Of light guitar I cannot boast,  
He never serenades;  
He writes, and sends it by the post,  
He doesn't bribe the maids:  
No stealth, no hempen ladder – no!  
He comes with a loud rat-tat,  
That startles half of Bedford Row –  
There's no romance in that!

But, of course, there are no plain men in Edgeworth's novels.

Finally, I suggest a moratorium, infinitely extendable for preference, on 'ontological', which appears 39 times in one chapter. I am, however, intrigued by the sensation one might get when being 'ontologically seduced'. Perhaps it's like this:

There was a young man from the Coast  
Who had an affair with a ghost.  
At the height of orgasm  
This she-ectoplasm  
Said, 'I think I can feel it – almost.'



# Beddoes Bibliographies,

compiled by **Richard Geyer**

## 1: *Dr Thomas Beddoes: 2007-2009*

- Barrell, John. Review of *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr. Beddoes and His Sons of Genius*, by Mike Jay. *London Review of Books* 31.22 (2009): 21+. Print.
- Carey, John. Review of *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr. Beddoes and His Sons of Genius*, by Mike Jay. *Sunday Times* [London] 26 Apr. 2009: 39. Print.
- 'Doctor Whose Joke Almost Caused a Riot.' *Bristol Evening Post* 27 Feb. 2007: 38. Print.
- Fox, Robert. 'The Many Worlds of Thomas Beddoes.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 211-3. Print.
- Hunting, Penelope. 'Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808), Founder of the Pneumatic Medical Institution.' *Journal of Medical Biography* 16.4 (2008): 235-6. Print.
- Jay, Mike. 'The Atmosphere of Heaven: The 1799 Nitrous Oxide Researches Reconsidered.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 297-309. Print.
- Jay, Mike. *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr. Beddoes and His Sons of Genius*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. Print.
- Kendall, Joshua. *The Man Who Made Lists: Love, Death, Madness, and the Creation of Roget's Thesaurus*. New York: Putnam's, 2008. Print.
- Levere, Trevor H. 'Between Enlightenment and Romanticism: The Case of Dr. Thomas Beddoes.' *Hans Christian Ørsted and the Romantic Legacy in Science: Ideas, Disciplines, Practices*. Ed. Robert M. Brain, Robert S. Cohen and Ole Knudsen. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007. Print. *Boston Studies in the Phil. of Science*. 241.
- Levere, Trevor H. 'Dr. Thomas Beddoes (1760-1808) and the Lunar Society of Birmingham: Collaborations in Medicine and Science.' *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30.2 (2007): 209-226. Print.
- Levere, Trevor H. 'Dr. Thomas Beddoes: Chemistry, Medicine, and the Perils of Democracy.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 215-29. Print.
- Miller, David Philip and Trevor H. Levere. "'Inhale It and See?": The Collaboration Between Thomas Beddoes and James Watt in Pneumatic Medicine.' *Ambix* 55.1 (2008): 5-28. Print.
- Morus, Iwan Rhys. 'Radicals, Romantics and Electrical Showmen: Placing Galvanism at the End of the English Enlightenment.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 263-75. Print.
- Pancaldi, Giuliano. 'On Hybrid Objects and Their Trajectories: Beddoes, Davy and the Battery.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 247-62. Print.
- Rousseau, George. 'Political Gout: Dissolute Patients, Deceitful Physicians, and Other Blue Devils.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 277-96. Print.



- Scull, Andrew. Review of *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr. Beddoes and His Sons of Genius*, by Mike Jay. *Times Literary Supplement* 30 Oct. 2009: 3+. Print.
- Seymour, Miranda. Review of *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr. Beddoes and His Sons of Genius*, by Mike Jay. *Literary Review* Aug. 2009: 46-7. Print.
- Stewart, Larry. 'His Majesty's Subjects: From Laboratory to Human Experiment in Pneumatic Chemistry.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 231-45. Print.
- Uglow, Jenny. Review of *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr. Beddoes and His Sons of Genius*, by Mike Jay. *New York Review of Books* 57.1 (2010): 57-59. Print.
- Vickers, Neil. 'Thomas Beddoes and the German Psychological Tradition.' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 63.3 (2009): 311-21. Print.

## 2: *Thomas Lovell Beddoes: 2007-2009*

- Allard, James Robert. *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body*. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Baker, John Haydn. Review of *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. *The Byron Journal* 37.1 (2009): 84-5. Print.
- Baulch, David M. "Death and his sweetheart": Revolution and Return in *Death's Jest-Book*.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Berns, Ute. 'Performing Genres in *Death's Jest-Book*: Tragedy as Harlequinade.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Berns, Ute. 'Thomas Lovell Beddoes and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach.' *British and European Romanticisms*, ed. Christoph Bode and Fritz-Wilhelm Neumann. Trier, Ger.: Wissenschaftlicher, 2007. Print.
- Berns, Ute and Michael Bradshaw, ed. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Bradshaw, Michael. 'The *Jest-Book*, the Body, and the State.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Burwick, Frederick. '*Death's Jest-Book* and the Pathological Imagination.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Edgecombe, Rodney Stenning. 'An Allusion to "Endymion" in Beddoes's "Phantom-Wooer".' *Notes and Queries* 253.4 (2008): 440-1. Print.
- Edgecombe, Rodney Stenning. 'Operatic Sources for *Death's Jest-Book*.' *Notes and Queries* 253.4 (2008): 441-3. Print.
- Eley, Elem. *Drifts and Shadows: American Song for the New Millennium*. Albany: Albany Records, 2007. CD. [includes words by Thomas Lovell Beddoes]

- Geyer, Richard. '2006 Bibliography.' The Newsletter or *The Day Will Come* 13 (2008): 12. Print.
- Halsey, Alan. 'Beddoes and the Theatre of Cruelty; or, the Problem of Isbrand's Sister: Some thoughts arising while re-editing *Death's Jest-Book*.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Halsey, Alan. Review of *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body*, by James Robert Allard. The Newsletter or *The Day Will Come* 13 (2008): 8-9. Print.
- Hoeverler, Diane Long. 'Dying with a Vengeance: Dead Brides and the Death-Fetish in T.L. Beddoes.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Holt, Jeff. 'Laughter in the Charnel House.' The Newsletter or *The Day Will Come* 13 (2008): 2. Print. [Poem]
- Hörmann, Raphael. "Liberty[']s smile melts tyrants down in time": T.L. Beddoes's *Death's Jest-Book* and German Revolutionary Discourse in Heine, Börne, and Büchner.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Johnston, Andrew James. 'Thomas Lovell Beddoes and the Vampires of History: Reading the Poet's German Prose.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Leach, Nat. 'Between the "Hostile Body" and the "Hieroglyphic Human Soul": The Ethics of Beddoes's "Mental Theatre".' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Moylan, Christopher. 'T.L. Beddoes's Terminable or Interminable End.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- O'Neill, Michael. "'The latch-string of a new world's wicket": Poetry and Agency in *Death's Jest-Book*; or *The Fool's Tragedy*.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Parry, Hugh. Review of *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. The Newsletter or *The Day Will Come* 13 (2008): 9-12. Print.
- Parry, Hugh. 'Talk on TLB at "The Dead Poets".' The Newsletter or *The Day Will Come* 13 (2008): 3-7. Print.
- Purinton, Marjean D. 'Three of Thomas Lovell Beddoes's Dramatic Fragments: Fractured Techno-Gothic Appendages and Thomas Beddoes's *Hygëia*.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Rees, Shelley. '*The Brides' Tragedy* and the Myth of Cupid and Psyche.' *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes*, ed. Ute Berns and Michael Bradshaw. Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2007. Print.

Ruston, Sharon. Review of *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body*, by James Robert Allard. *The Byron Journal* 36.2 (2008): 182-3. Print.

Williams, Natalie. *Dream Pedlary*. Grosvenor Place, Austral.: Australian Music Centre, 2007. Print. [Score]

## Notes on Contributors

MURIEL MABY died in July 2009 at the age of 102. Although she had lived in Malvern since 1960 she was born in Bristol and maintained a lifelong interest in the city and its history, writing articles on Thomas Beddoes, John King and other eminent residents. After a period of teaching in girls' boarding schools she had returned to the city during the Second World War, when she was employed censoring mail sent to neutral countries and the Merchant Navy. After the war she pioneered a course in Bristol history and trained guides to the city for the Festival of Britain. She was a member of the Bristol Medico-Historical Society, the Architectural Society, Malvern Writers' Circle and the Barbara Pym Society. Her articles appeared in history journals in the UK and USA, and she was a regular contributor to *The Oldie*. Her memoir, *Miscellany*, was published in 1999. Leslie Punter's bronze head of Muriel Maby was recently shown at the Richard Cork Gallery and has been awarded the Society of Portrait Sculptors Freakley Prize.

HONOR HEWETT graduated from Manchester Metropolitan University in 2008. She lives in Sussex where she works as a bookseller. She writes: 'I was a Thomas Hood devotee to begin with but somewhere along the line Beddoes crept in as a rival for my affections. I've always liked writers who are somehow unusual and it particularly interests me when they aren't widely remembered: it makes me wonder how they came to be sidelined, and it was this interest that led to the piece you will read in the Newsletter.'

RICHARD GEYER has been a librarian at Adrian College in Michigan since 1991. He maintains the Thomas Lovell Beddoes Society website and has regularly published bibliographical articles in the Newsletter. He edited the e-journal *Contemporary Rhyme* from 2004 to 2008. His poetry has appeared in several small-press poetry periodicals, including *Candelabrum Poetry Magazine* (UK) and *frisson: disconcerting verse* (USA). His chapbooks are included in the Harris Collection of American Poetry and Plays at Brown University, one of the leading research collections of American poetry in the USA.

HUGH PARRY edits *The Wool-Gatherer*, or as he himself says he *is* the Wool-Gatherer. He has taught in adult education for over 20 years and now runs residential courses in a wide range of literature, from Sappho to Stoppard, Hoccleve to Hopkins, the Venerable Bede to *The Beano*. 'My optimistic belief,' he writes, 'is that there exists, at least potentially, a substantial minority of "general readers", and that they are hardly being catered for at all these days.'

## The Thomas Lovell Beddoes Society

Following the resignation of John Beddoes earlier this year, we will be electing several new officers at the AGM in London on 25 September 2010. Meanwhile, the present List of Officers is necessarily somewhat provisional.

### *Patrons*

Patrick Leigh Fermor DSO, OBE, Messenia, Greece  
Professor James R.Thompson, Ohio University, US  
Kevin Crossley-Holland FRSL, Burnham Market, Suffolk UK  
Reginald Hill, Ravenglass, UK

### *Executive Committee, Offices and Trustees*

#### ***Chair (until September 2010)***

John Lovell Beddoes, 9 Amber Court Belper, Derbyshire DE56 1HG, [john@beddoes.demon.co.uk](mailto:john@beddoes.demon.co.uk)

#### ***Secretary***

To be appointed September 2010

#### ***Treasurer***

Magda Rasey, Yew Tree House, 31 Woodside Morley, Derbyshire DE7 5DG,  
[rasey@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:rasey@globalnet.co.uk)

#### ***Website manager: [www.phantomwooer.org](http://www.phantomwooer.org)***

Richard Geyer, Adrian College, MI, US, [rgeyer@adrian.edu](mailto:rgeyer@adrian.edu)

#### ***'Doomsday' Journal Editor***

Shelley Rees , 3416 Walking Sky Rd. Edmond, OK 73013 US, [reess@cox.net](mailto:reess@cox.net)

#### ***The Newsletter Editors***

Alan Halsey, Contributions Editor, [alan@nethedge.demon.co.uk](mailto:alan@nethedge.demon.co.uk)

Stephen Davies, Production Editor, [dragoman@talktalk.net](mailto:dragoman@talktalk.net)

ISSN: 1357 7751

# DOOMSDAY

The Journal of the Thomas Lovell Beddoes  
Society

*Seeks scholarly articles in areas including but not limited to:*

## People

- Thomas Lovell Beddoes
- Dr. Thomas Beddoes
- Maria Edgeworth
- Barry Cornwall

## Ideas

- Romanticism
- Gothic literature
- The literary grotesque
- Queer literature



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

For more information or to submit an article for consideration, please visit *Doomsday* at <http://www.usao.edu/doomsday> or contact Dr. Shelley S. Rees, Managing Editor, at [srees@usao.edu](mailto:srees@usao.edu).

*Doomsday: The Journal of the Thomas Lovell Beddoes Society* is a peer-reviewed academic journal published by the Thomas Lovell Beddoes Society and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

For more information about the Thomas Lovell Beddoes Society, visit <http://www.phantomwoer.org>.