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Craftivism and Cottonian Bindings: “The Handiwork of Greta Hall”

This book, binding and all
Is the handiwork of Greta Hall
Robert Southey.ⁱ

The Craft of Proprietary Bookbinding

Robert Southey joked that he had “the richest library that ever was possessed by a poor man,”

amounting to some 14,000 volumes.ⁱⁱ Not all these works were professionally bound. The books of what he called his “Cottonian” library were bound in colorful printed dress fabrics by his wife, Edith Southey, his daughters, Edith May and Katherine Southey, and family friends including Sara Coleridge Jr.ⁱⁱⁱ Southey named these bindings, tongue-in-cheek, after the founding collection of manuscripts at the British Library, donated by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton. As Howard Nixon has pointed out, “Thanks to Southey’s dreadful pun, most collectors and booksellers have some knowledge of his chintz-covered bindings.”^{iv} The pun referenced the family’s limited means; as William Wordsworth wrote, “Southey has a little world dependent upon his industry.”^v Both the Southey and Coleridge families, co-living at Greta Hall in Keswick, depended for the most part upon Southey’s literary output for their income while Samuel Taylor Coleridge roamed elsewhere. But Southey’s industry was also dependent upon his ‘little world’: the female friends and family members who provided essential transcription, translation, and book conservation and cataloguing services. The women were central to literary production at Greta Hall, to what Harold Wilberforce Howe and Robert Woof have called Southey’s “literary factory.”^{vi} When Robert Southey presented a copy of his 1805 poem *Madoc* to his friend James Stanger, he inscribed the Cottonian-bound volume with the verse which features as the epigraph to this article: “Mr Stanger from the Author | This book binding and all | Is the handiwork of Greta Hall | R.S.” The verse aligns binding with content, encouraging us to read poetry as craft and craft as poetry,

recognising books as material artefacts of collaborative production, and suggesting the degree to which Southey was conscious of his work being a product of a collective effort, or of what Samantha Matthews has called “a familial literary culture.”^{vii}

Despite the renown of the ‘Cottonian’ volumes, which have taken on something of a mythical status in the rare books world, they are yet to feature as the subject of book historical scholarship. There have been many excellent studies of the material qualities of the book in the Romantic period which help us to better understand their potential significance, but, to borrow the words of Werner Gundersheimer, “It is no secret that bookbinding is an art which rarely receives its due.”^{viii} The marked lack of scholarship on Romantic period bindings is perhaps because bookbinding is a process which produces such diverse results.^{ix} While owners of significant private libraries might have desired the spines or backs of their volumes to coordinate in terms of their covering, color, and decoration, and standard styles certainly proliferated,^x bookbinding was a bespoke process which sought to imprint the stamp of the reader’s binding style on the cover of the text they purchased. As David Pearson puts it, “Binding was just the beginning of a customization cycle that developed as books passed from hand to hand.”^{xi} Throughout the Romantic period, printing was a much faster process than binding, and printed books proliferated more than ever. This was a moment immediately preceding the major engineering innovations which would further industrialize book production, such as the invention of steam presses and paper machines, penny papers, stereotype, and rail distribution, before the process of bookbinding would eventually catch up with the industrialized methods of printing.^{xii} In other words, the Romantic moment is the last point at which bookbinding continued to leave room for idiosyncrasy and subjectivization, being what Miller has called “un-mass production for the many.”^{xiii}

Scholarship on Romantic period bookbinding tends to be divided between studies of luxurious bespoke bindings and the nineteenth-century development of mass-produced

uniform cloth casings, leaving little room for studies of Cottonian binding other than in the occasional survey.^{xiv} Julia Miller points out the gap in the scholarship when it comes to proprietary interventions in binding, as in the use of overcovers, perhaps the closest binding style to Cottonian covers. Overcovers tend to be “regarded as an addition usually made by an owner, and as such, not part of the original binding [...] and therefore of little importance.” Nevertheless, she pleads for the capacity of such bindings to be instructive regarding the relationships between books and their users.^{xv} The kind of copy-specific scholarship and broad data collection required when dealing with such bookbinding has not, to my knowledge, yet been undertaken. Proprietary bookbinding sits just beyond the mainstream of book historical scholarship, not being evident through recourse to the usual archival records accrued by businesses, workers’ associations, and guilds, whose account books, minute books, and correspondence leave traces of a trade’s financial transactions. Indeed, proprietary and Cottonian bookbinding might be best defined as a ‘handicraft’ rather than a trade, as the term connotes skill and expertise while carrying the sense of being pursued for reasons beyond financial remuneration. Significantly, these are bindings produced at home rather than in a workplace, associated with domesticity rather than a professionalized public sphere, and thereby feminized and historically disregarded.

Scholarship on women and book production gathers pace, particularly for the nineteenth century, acknowledging the involvement of families in trade labor, with bookbinding in particular offering most opportunities for light intricate work to be undertaken by women and children.^{xvi} In looking beyond the book trades to the domestic and unremunerated ways in which women contributed to book design in this period, we can begin to historicize and to acknowledge the significance of Cottonian binding, a practice which cannot be omitted from any history of women and the book. In recent years, the work of Leslie Howsam, Michelle Levy, Kate Ozment and Sarah Werner has been foundational in

establishing a new feminist book history which, as Levy notes, has had to “look beyond print, beyond traditional genres, and finally, beyond notions of solitary authorship:” that is to say, beyond the constraints of what could be considered a “Romantic ideology.”^{xvii} The Bigger Six Collective, established in 2017 to challenge structural racism in the academic study of Romanticism and to promote the work of the historically marginalized, underlines the ways in which our conception of the agents of Romanticism might be incomplete or partial. This has coincided with a drive to recognize that, to quote Ozment, “the version of bibliography and book history that we cite and elevate as canon offered a haven of racial and gendered sameness.”^{xviii} Responding to Derrick Spires’ call for a “liberation bibliography,” this essay identifies proprietary binding and specifically Cottonian binding as “a site of knowledge production, activism, and possibility” historically rendered “invisible or irrelevant.”^{xix} Considering the potential of contemporary cultural theory to assist the recovery of women’s contributions to the Romantic book, this essay looks towards the twenty-first century emergence of ‘Craftivism’ a means of better acknowledging women’s historic creative labor. A more inclusive account of Romantic creativity can, as Jane Moore has argued, read poetry alongside craft, generating a theoretical space for treating women’s craft as meaning-making and transformative action.^{xx} Here, I propose that craft studies can help us to think in interdisciplinary ways about the history of women and the book, and of the place of women in Romanticism. A Craftivist reading of the Cottonian Library helps to illustrate the pressing need for a feminist book history to produce more generative, because more diverse, narratives about the history of the Romantic book.

Cottonian Binding

Cottonian bindings are complete fabric covers pasted over books in paper-covered boards (board and half-cloth bindings). They have pasted turn-ins tidily folded and pressed beneath endpapers repurposed as pastedowns, or sometimes, where no endpapers remain, printed

pages themselves reappropriated as pastedowns.^{xxi} The spines carry handwritten and hand-ruled labels in black ink on paper which is usually the same color as the fabric, indicating an abbreviated version of the work's title. The Southey-inscribed copy of Harriet Green's *Memoir of Amos Green* (1823) in the collection of Trinity College Cambridge survives intact and is a particularly neat example of a typical Cottonian binding (fig. 1).^{xxii}

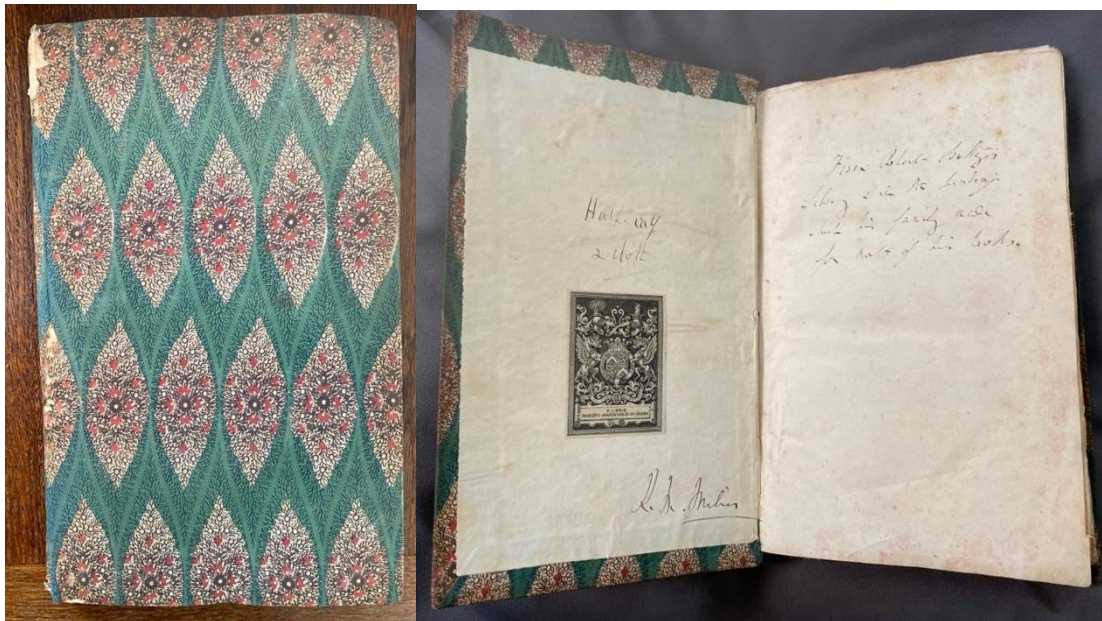


Figure 1: A Cottonian-bound copy of Harriet Green's *Memoir of Amos Green* (1823), Cambridge, Trinity College, Crewe 124.15.

The process of Cottonian bookbinding customized and mended books by (re)appropriating materials from dressmaking, with covers that were both a protectant and a conservation measure. Southey's son, Charles Cuthbert, informs us that Cottonian binding was a treatment reserved for "all those books of lesser value, which had become ragged and dirty."^{xxiii} As Southey wrote in 1837, "What we do here is, to repair and strengthen books in boards, and then fit them with garments in which they take their place in the Cottonian Library."^{xxiv} But this process was in the majority of cases applied to relatively recent, largely nineteenth-century, publications, rather than very old books. The earliest dated Cottonian binding from Greta Hall was published in 1750, a copy of *A Tour of Spain and Portugal*, by Udal Ap Rhys,

also known as Uvedale Price, acquired by Southey in 1808, when he added his autograph, and bound in bright blue and white stripes. But it is an outlier. Most other volumes are nineteenth-century publications. As well as being a conservation measure, then, Cottonian binding was also decorative, improving the appearance of shelves of books in boards which were never intended to be formally bound in any more expensive matter (like calf leather).

Because the books that were bound in the Cottonian style were for the most part originally sold in boards, they were therefore of lower value in general than books sold bound in leather. Though this could be considered an implicit value statement about the books' content, insufficient to invest in a leather binding of his house style, Southey's straightened circumstances are well known. Moreover, Cottonian covers adorn all kinds of books, from freebies to volumes of sentimental value. Cottonian volumes include purchases (as in his much-sought after copy of Rhys's *Tour*, having written in 1805 that "it is my intention to buy it whenever it falls in my way, – as a part of my collection"),^{xxv} free review copies (like Griffiths' *Travels* (1805), bound in golden flowers on a deep pink-red ground),^{xxvi} presentation copies (like William Knox's *Songs of Israel* (1824), bound in brown fabric with a black and white geometric pattern),^{xxvii} works by friends (as in the six green shamrock-bound volumes of the *Letters* (1811) of Anna Seward),^{xxviii} and Southey's own works (as in the copy of *Madoc*).

The meaning-making capacity of Cottonian binding is visible in the alignment of fabric design with book content. As Charles Cuthbert remembered in 1850, "With this work he was much interested and amused, as the ladies would often suit the pattern to the contents, clothing a Quaker work or a book of sermons in sober drab, poetry in some flowery design, and sometimes contriving a sly piece of satire at the contents of some well-known author by their choice of its covering."^{xxix} The blue and white stripes of Rhys's *Tour*, with its bright blue label, evoke the white and blue of traditional Portuguese Azulejos. For William

Mariner's *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands* (1817), a bright green cotton printed with repeating 'islands' of interlocking geometric shapes served for its dress, and the label encouraged the emphasis on islands by giving the work a short title of "Mariner's Tonga Islands."^{xxx} The floral chintz covering of the *Works* of Gilbert White, blue flowers with green vines on a white ground, mirrors the color scheme of the hand-colored engravings within the volumes, as in the image of "A Hybrid Bird" with a dark blue head, neck and feathers, lying on bright green grassland, with the background left plain (see fig. 2).^{xxxi}



Figure 2: *The Works of Gilbert White*, British Library.

But while certain volumes may have prompted wry smiles in their coordination of chintz to the work's themes, it appears that their main impact would be *en masse*. In 1836 Southey wrote,

Secluded as we now are from society, my daughters find sufficient variety of employment. [...] One room is almost fitted up with books of their binding: I call it the *Cottonian* library; no patch-work quilt was ever more diversified.^{xxxii}

Southey described the library as the work of his daughters, their “employment,” meaning their labor, explicitly so with the phrase “their binding.” He suggested that it prompts joy in both their makers and their owner. He went on to recount some recent work undertaken by Edith May Southey and Sara Coleridge Jr.:

They have just now attired two hundred volumes in this fashion. Their pleasure, indeed, in seeing the books in order, is not less than my own; and, indeed, the greater part of them are now in such order, that they are the pride of my eye as well as the joy of my heart.^{xxxiii}

Southey’s description of their enjoyment hints at the degree to which this was a collective enterprise embarked upon not simply as a cost-saving conservation measure but as an activity which would ultimately transform the appearance of the library, as the women’s “pleasure” derives in “seeing the books in order,” all two hundred of them at that time. The impression left by the Cottonian library would have been of the magnitude of women’s work in Romanticism. The library, the endeavor of a collective, works as a site-specific installation, an attraction and talking point, making visible women’s creative labor within the Romantic household.

Craftivism through History

No doubt the use of the term ‘Craftivism’ in relation to the romantic period will raise some eyebrows. Craftivism is, of course, a modern phenomenon, and the term emerged simultaneously across different groups of artists around the year 2003, as Betsy Greer reflects, “pointing to a shared frustration about issues like consumerism, materialism, anti-green living, a lack of personal expression, and overconsumption.”^{xxxiv} It first appeared in print in Greer’s *Knitting for Good* (2008), in a quotation from fashion designer and artist Otto von Busch, as a way of articulating his work as a craft that hacks existing practices.^{xxxv}

Together with Sarah Corbett, Greer has transformed these disparate statements of practice into the international Craftivist Collective movement fighting for creative social change.^{xxxvi}

Craftivism has benefited from a generation of feminist critics working to unveil the ‘private sphere’ as a damaging mythology which has historically obscured social relations embedded in the domestic.^{xxxvii} Such scholarship, which has reconfigured the home as “a site of subject production irreducible to mechanical reproduction,” looking beyond capitalist hegemonies to recover the value in women’s skills and knowledge systematically dispersed through the rise of the factory, has made the work of craftivism possible.^{xxxviii} What has not so far been noticed is the fact that much of this work has been historical or literary-historical scholarship, as epitomized by such milestone works as Jane Marcus’s *Art and Anger* (1988) and Rozsika Parker’s *The Subversive Stitch* (1984), both of which laid the foundations for productive and positive, rather than reductive, theorizations of the private sphere.^{xxxix} While the ways in which Craftivism has been shaped by literary and historical feminist scholarship have been acknowledged, however, the ways in which historic crafts might be approached anew through the lens of the Craftivist manifesto have not.

While Craftivism’s origins have been traced to 2003, there appears to be some appetite for considering its forebears. Ele Carpenter has argued that every generation has its activist crafters,^{xi} and Kirsty Robertson has asked what is gained and lost through the omission or erasure of a historical trajectory of radical craft practice. Both authors are predominantly concerned with the history of the second and third waves, mapping the transition from feminist embarrassment toward—then reclamation of—feminine crafts like knitting.^{xli} This move from embarrassment to pride was paralleled in early feminist literary scholarship, where the domestic was often dismissed by those who saw women’s relegation to sewing and other domestic endeavors as intrinsically limiting.^{xlii} After all, the late twentieth century was a period “when debates over issues of identity and representation made

the use of craft difficult precisely because of the way activist crafting used essentializing stereotypes of womanhood and domesticity.”^{xliii} But since, for Robertson in particular, the activism of knitting, embroidery, and quilting, or of what we might call ‘women’s work’, is premised upon their historic and continued subjugation, there are benefits to placing modern craftivism in a lineage descending from historic crafts and collectives.

Craft has a deep and complex relationship with history. It is traditional while also allowing its users to complicate their relationship with the past. But it also requires innovation and the use of experimental emerging tools, in what could be considered a celebration of contemporaneity. Cotton book coverings, especially given their bright colors and floral decorative patterns, hark back to hand-embroidered bindings of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, undertaken at first by professional craftsmen and women and then also by noblewomen in their leisure time.^{xliv} In this way they juxtapose an elite leisure activity with the Cottonian binders’ middling household management, anticipating what Bratich and Brush have called a “humor of incongruity,” and contributing to the class-based pun of their name.^{xlv}

Cottonian binding is a craft which also comments upon the social impact of industrialization. While bookbinding was on the cusp of becoming industrialized, printed cotton had already experienced just such a transformation from handcraft to factory product. Cottonian bookbindings therefore interrogate the act of book production and of industrialization more broadly, their colorful and engaging patterns foregrounding women’s creative labor. They also react against the creeping advance of industrialization, coming ever closer to the Lake District. The fabric covers replace intricate hand-embroidery and metallic threads with roller-printed, mass-produced reams of material woven in factories for which politicians drove down prices to the extreme. Dorothy Wordsworth wrote of the laborers in Halifax’s cotton and worsted mills, “a great part of the population is reduced to pauperism—a

dreadful evil. Things cannot go on in this way.”^{xlvi} Working class women were increasingly employed in these mills, raising questions about the share of—and the kinds of—labor undertaken by women in the period, as well as the propriety of taking women out of domestic work.^{xlvii} To suggest that Greta Hall incumbents were unaware of this wider political context for cotton manufacture would be naïve. Southey was the son of a linen draper and his sister-in-law, Martha Fricker, was a dressmaker in Bristol.^{xlviii} Cottonian bindings therefore function not only as a light-hearted nod to household economy but also as a stark commentary on the encroaching industrialization of the major towns, the decline of English textile trades, the unprofitability of the factories, and the poverty of those men and women forced to labor within them. They nod toward an imperial context in which Indian printed cottons were originally imported and then prohibited to protect British industry. Like the books’ more contemporary Craftivist counterparts, they criticize a capitalist economy and betray a nostalgia for a different world.

Perhaps most significant is the way in which, as spectacle, the Cottonian library was a radical comment upon the place of women’s creativity in the Romantic “literary factory.” What might have been considered the ‘private spheres’ of the Wordsworth and Southey homes were made in some sense public through the united households of Greta Hall and Dove Cottage (and later Rydal Mount), and the fame of their incumbents, which brought visitors and tourists alike. The women of all three households shared their time between Keswick, Grasmere, and Rydal and formed craft circles in which they could share skills, patterns and materials.

To clothe books in dress fabric was not an unmeaning act. As Alice Barnaby has demonstrated, the period between 1800 and 1850 gave rise to “a historically specific ontological continuum” between dress, drapery and female identity.^{xlix} Maureen Daly Goggin has argued that “Beyond production, the circulation and consumption of textiles and

needlework are among the most significant of embodied acts in material culture.”^l Goggin draws from Judy Attfield’s proposal that cloth is “one of the most intimate of thing-types that materializes the connection between the body and the outer world.”^{li} Cottonian bindings—books in female dress—allowed the Lake women to embody the library and transform the library space into a spectacle of feminine creativity. Like modern craftivism, which tends to be performative, interventionist, and transformative of a specific social or political space, Cottonian bookbinding could be seen to be a performative intervention into the usually drab interior surroundings of a home library, in this case, draping in rainbow-colored textiles the library of the Southey-Coleridge home and showcasing the women’s bookbinding practice.^{lii} The library was usually considered a masculine, public space, and Southey’s library in particular also functioned as parlor for guests. The bindings’ collective installation in the Cottonian library commented upon the male-dominated discourses of book collecting, book production, and interior design. Indeed, scholarship on book collecting from the nineteenth century sought to position women as the “enemies of books” and of gentlemen’s libraries.^{liii} Cottonian bookbinding could be seen as one of the craft practices in which

the social, performative and critical discourse around the work is central to its production and dissemination. Here craft is not simply a luddite desire for the localized handmade, but a social process of collective empowerment, action, expression and negotiation.^{liv}

Cottonian bookbinding installed women’s imaginative acts of meaning-making as artwork and centerpiece, with the expanse of mass-printed volumes in their bespoke—strikingly feminine—cotton dresses arresting the viewer with their comic incongruity, as would later be produced by military tanks draped in soft quilts of knitted pink wool. Through Cottonian binding the marginalized role of female authorship within the wider households of Greta Hall and Rydal Mount became strikingly evident.

If needlework may be seen “as a life-affirming and imaginatively engaged activity, one that unites the labor of the hand with artistic self-expression,” then so too can Cottonian binding.^{lv} As Schaffer has pointed out, “domestic handicraft was the standard against which women’s writing was constantly compared.”^{lvi} Jane Moore’s work on the status of needlecraft in the Romantic period identifies the parallels between textile work and poetry, despite being gendered and holding different cultural values.^{lvii} Disrupting “the dominant narrative in scholarship of the Romantic period of the needle as a tool of female oppression,” Moore argues that “Situating needlecraft within, rather than separate from, the realm of the traditionally male-dominated arena of Romantic poetry complicates, and potentially disrupts, the binary structures underpinning the ideology of separate spheres.”^{lviii} The needle has often been ideologically aligned with the pen, but scissors and paste working upon and materially altering the medium of the book is a practice that perhaps more than any other helps us to identify affinities between women’s craft and high Romantic art.

Cottonian bookbinding offered the Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth women a shared pursuit through which they might process and discuss their unique circumstances as the women of the Lake Circle, anticipating the women-only knitting circles and sewing circles reclaimed by Craftivist scholars as spaces of communication, material production, and subject formation.^{lix} The products of the Cottonian circle were not only useful artefacts, displayed around the home, but also became in their collective installation an attraction in their own right. This was a spectacle which depended not upon the content of the volumes but on their neat and vibrant—and ultimately female-authored—collective appearance.

Conclusion

Books in Cottonian bindings acquired new value after Southey’s death. *Amos Green* (1823), signed by Southey in 1825 and bound in a vibrant green patterned fabric, is inscribed “From Robert Southey’s Library & in the bindery which his family made for most of his books.”^{lx}

The Cottonian copy of William Nicolson's *Letters* (1809), signed by Southey in 1833 and bound in a fabric printed with green diamonds on white ground, is inscribed by a bookseller, "With Southey's Autograph Bound by His Wife."^{lxi} Edith's contribution to the volume seems to have made it all the more valuable. In 1844 Benjamin Bailey wrote in the Cottonian copy of *The Pursuits of Literature*, "This Book, late the Property of Dr Southey, was bought for me, as a memorial of that distinguished writer and amiable man, at the Sale of his magnificent Library at Keswick;--by my dear Friend, the Rev. James Bush."^{lxii} W.G. Browne's *Travels in Africa, Egypt, and Syria* (1806), bound by the Southey sisters in a deep pink colored fabric with a black ditsy print, inscribed on the title-page by Southey and featuring his characteristic Thomas Bewick bookplate, became a sentimental family heirloom, passed between close family friends, being later inscribed on the half title by Katherine Southey: "For John Wordsworth from Katherine Southey --This Book was purchased at the Sale Greta Hall June 1848. When a small portion of my fathers Library was sold. Keswick. Octbr. 1848."^{lxiii} Katherine here situates herself in the history of that library, passing on for posterity the Southey women's binding work as part of the library and of the Lake poets' unique heritage.

Leah Price has argued that, being a study of the medium as message, book history explores marginalia and marginalized persons but also becomes about ourselves: "It asks not only how past readers have made meaning (and therefore, by extension, how others have read differently from us); but also, closer to home, where the conditions of possibility for our own reading came from."^{lxiv} In the study of Cottonian bindings, book history has never been closer to craft studies. Both disciplines encourage us to consider the social, economic conditions and the identity politics which shape our place in the world, as suggested by the words of Bratic and Brush: "Craft fastens the concrete and the abstract into a material symbol. Therefore, its material is imbued with a mediated quality (as delivery system for messages but, more

importantly, as series of subjective processes, systems of meaning-making, technological principles). And once again, this encourages us to think media outside of its representational quality, in its binding capacities, subjectivication processes, and social value.”^{lxv}

Historicizing Craftivism acknowledges that fabric-based crafts functioned in the early nineteenth century, as they do now, as vehicles through which women have been constructed, but also through which they could construct themselves and generate discourses running counter to the dominant patriarchal narrative.^{lxvi}

The study of craft has much of importance to contribute to a study of the material text. It helps us to consider what has been the focus of—and what has been marginalized in—book historical scholarship. It helps us to appreciate the significance of dress fabric for Cottonian bindings, referring simultaneously to the social conditions of female bodies and to the painstaking methods by which this fabric would usually be transformed into dresses by their owners. A history of the Cottonian bindings offers an insight into an early instance of liberatory bibliography through craft as knowledge production and suggests that we might use the prompt of the new ‘Craftivism’ to revisit women’s work of the past in order to better recognize its radical possibilities. Through Cottonian bindings Edith Southey, Edith May Southey, Katherine Southey, and Sara Coleridge Jr. made prominent their roles as co-producers of books and their contributions to the intellectual environment of Greta Hall.

ⁱ Taken from an inscription to James Stanger in a Cottonian-bound copy of Southey’s *Madoc* (1805), itself untraceable, but copied onto the last endleaf of the Cottonian-bound copy of Udal ap Rhys, *A Tour through Spain and Portugal* (London: Robinson, 1750), Jerwood Centre 1995.R131.

ⁱⁱ Robert Southey to Mrs Bray, 9 August 1832, in *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. by John Wood Warter (London: Longman, 1856), vol. 4 of 4, 295.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mary Barker also bound Southey’s books but whether Cottonian or not remains unclear. I have not yet been able to verify the labor of Sarah Hutchinson, Sara Coleridge, Dora Wordsworth, and Mary Wordsworth. The argument that the books were bound not simply from dress fabric but from old dresses is derived from booksellers’ pencil annotations in two Cottonian volumes. One is a copy of William Nicolson’s *Letters on Various Subjects, Literary, Political, and Ecclesiastical* (London: Nichols, 1809), Jerwood Centre 1995.R165, signed by Southey in 1833 and bound in a fabric printed with green diamonds on white ground, inscribed “Cottonian bg made by Mrs Southey & daughts from their old dresses.” The other is a copy of A.S. Cottle’s translation of *Icelandic Poetry, or The Edda of Saedmund* (Bristol: Biggs, 1797), British Library C.61.b.14, inscribed by William Wordsworth and bound in a green fabric with small geometric markings. In a later hand, in pencil, the inside cover is annotated: “Bound in a piece of one of Mrs Wordsworth’s old gowns. See Southey’s Life where he mentions the good lady’s book-binding propensities.” However, the reference supporting the

latter claim uses ‘dress’ only as a standard metaphor for bookbinding. Charles Cuthbert Southey, *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, 6 vols (London: Longman, 1850), vol. 6, 17.

^{iv} Howard M. Nixon, *Five Centuries of English Bookbinding* (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 194.

^v Letter 320, William Wordsworth to Thomas Poole, Rydal, 28 April 1814, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, vol. 3, *The Middle Years Part II 1812-1820*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd edn. rev. by Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969), 146.

^{vi} Harold Wilberforce Howe and Robert Woof, *Greta Hall: Home of Coleridge and Southey* (London: Daedalus, 1977), 86.

^{vii} Samantha Matthews, “Importunate Applications and Old Affections: Robert Southey’s Album Verses,” *Romanticism*, 17.1 (2011): 77–93 [88].

^{viii} Werner Gundersheimer, Foreword, *Fine and Historic Bookbindings from the Folger Shakespeare Library*, by Frederick Bearman, Nati H. Krivatsy, and J. Franklin Mowery (Washington: Folger, 1992), 6. Important monographs include Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009); Michelle Levy, *Literary Manuscript Culture in Romantic Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2020); Aileen Douglas, *Work in Hand: Script, Print, and Writing, 1690-1840* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2017).

^{ix} Only the Multigraph Collective and Sadleir deal specifically, though briefly, with the Cottonian bindings. The Multigraph Collective, *Interacting with Print: Elements of Reading in the Era of Print Saturation* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2018), 58; Michael Sadleir, *The Evolution of Publishers’ Binding Styles 1770-1900* (London: Constable, 1930), 48.

^x The 1813 Associated Master Bookbinders’ price list listed forty-four different styles. Douglas Ball, *Victorian Publishers’ Bindings* (London: Library Association, 1985), 6.

^{xi} David Pearson, *Books as History: The Importance of Books Beyond their Texts* (London: British Library and Oak Knoll, 2008), 23.

^{xii} Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Period* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009), 8.

^{xiii} Julia Miller, *Books will Speak Plain*, 164, n. 255.

^{xiv} Maggs Bros Ltd., *Bookbinding in the British Isles: Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century. Catalogue 1075: Part II* (London: Maggs Bros, 1987), p. 164; Nixon, p. 194.

^{xv} Miller, *Meeting by Accident: Selected Historical Bindings* (Ann Arbor, MI: The Legacy Press, 2008), 307. Cottonian bindings do not feature within Miller’s study itself, though “‘Cottonian’ Library cloth cover” appears in the glossary.

^{xvi} Foot, *Bookbinders at Work: Their Roles and Methods* (London: British Library, 2006). Some recent scholarship on women in the British trades in the Romantic period includes: David Alexander, *Caroline Watson & Female Printmaking in Late Georgian England* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 2014); Lisa Unger Baskin, “The Myth of ‘Some Unconventional Women’,” *Printing History*, 23 (2018), 29-44; Reese Irwin, “Elizabeth Newbery, Publisher and Bookseller in Her Own Right: A Case Study from the Women’s Print History Project,” *Women in Print: Design and (Re)construction of Personal Histories*, vol. 1, ed. by Rose Roberto (Amsterdam: Lang, 2022); Levy, “Female Booksellers at the End of the Long Eighteenth Century,” *Huntington Library Quarterly: Women in Book History, 1660-1830*, ed. Betty A. Schellenberg and Levy, 84.1 (2021), 99-112; Paula McDowell, “Women and the Business of Print,” in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800*, ed. Vivien Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); Madeleine Viljoen, *Printing Women: Three Centuries of Female Printmakers, 1570-1900* (New York, NY: New York Public Library, 2015).

^{xvii} Levy, “Do Women Have a Book History?” 299, 304.

^{xviii} Kate Ozment, “Rationale for a Feminist Bibliography,” *Textual Cultures*, 13.1 (2020): 149-178 [160].

^{xix} Derrick Spires, “On Liberation Bibliography: The 2021 BSA Annual Meeting Keynote,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 116.1 (2022): 1-20 [2].

^{xx} Moore, 25.

^{xxi} *Parson’s Vade Mecum* (London: Salusbury, 1693), Jerwood Centre 1991.32, inscribed by William Wordsworth and bound in a blue and black plaid on a white ground.

^{xxii} Harriet Green, *Memoir of Amos Green* (York: Longman, 1823), Cambridge, Trinity College, Crewe 124.15.

^{xxiii} Charles Cuthbert Southey, 17.

^{xxiv} Southey to Mrs Bray, 23 February 1837, in *Selections*, vol. 4, 496.

^{xxv} Letter 1027, Robert Southey to Mary Barker, 26 January 1805, *Romantic Circles*, available at https://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/HTML/letterEEEd.26.1027.html, last accessed 12 August 2022.

^{xxvi} Julius Griffiths, *Travels in Europe* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1805), Jerwood Centre 1995.R160; Letter 1186, Robert Southey to Thomas Southey, 22 May 1806, *Romantic Circles*, available at http://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/HTML/letterEEEd.26.1186.html, last accessed 12 August 2022.

^{xxvii} William Knox, *Songs of Israel: Consisting of Lyrics, Founded upon the History and Poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures* (Edinburgh: Anderson, 1824), British Library C.109.aa.18.

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- xxxiii Ibid.
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- xxxv Otto von Bursch in Greer, *Knitting for Good*, 120.
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- xxxvii Jack Z. Bratich and Heidi M. Brush, "Fabricating Activism: Craft-Work, Popular Culture, Gender," *Utopian Studies*, 22.2 (2011): 233-260 [239].
- xxxviii Ibid, 239; 235.
- xxxix Jane Marcus, *Art & Anger: Reading like a Woman* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1988); Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984).
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- xli Kirsty Robertson, "Rebellious Doilies and Subversive Stitches: Writing a Craftivist History," in *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art*, ed. by Maria Elena Buszek (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2011), 184-203: [186].
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- xlvi Robertson, 186.
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- lii Willa Z. Silverman, *The New Bibliopolis: French Book Collectors and the Culture of Print, 1880-1914* (Toronto, CA: U of Toronto P, 2008), 165-167.
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- lv Jane Moore, "Pattern and Romantic Creativity," *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, New Series no. 163 (2016), 4-25 [7].
- lvi Schaffer, 21.
- lvii Moore, 5.
- lviii Moore, 5.

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^{lx} Green, *Memoir*.

^{lxi} Nicolson, *Letters*.

^{lxii} Thomas James Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues*, 5th ed., (London: Becket, 1798). *Biblio*, available at <https://www.biblio.com/book/pursuits-literature-satirical-poem-four-dialogues/d/1368428439?dcx=1368428439#gallery-1>, last accessed 12 August 2022.

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^{lxv} Bratich and Brush, 246.

^{lxvi} Heather Pristash, Inez Schaechterle, and Sue Carter Wood, "The Needle as the Pen: Intentionality, Needlework, and the Production of Alternative Discourses of Power," in *Needlework and Textiles, 1750-1950*, 13-30 [27].