*Journal of British Studies* (2025), **64**, e19, 1–22
doi:10.1017/jbr.2025.12

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

In this series, the journal's editors invite scholars to revisit their earlier work in light of new scholarship and from a fresh perspective. The exercise reminds us that history writing is a process that, because it serves the needs of the present, can never be complete. We are always rethinking, revising, reassessing what we think we can know about the past and what these attempts to understand and to make meaning tell us about our current predicament. Our profession values the ongoing conversation and debate that constitutes scholarship. We all have unfinished business to work through. We thank the scholars in this series for being brave enough to do this publicly.

# Buying People Is Wrong

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## Abstract

In 1805, during a lull in hostilities between England and France, minor Warwickshire landowner and slaveholder Bertie Greatheed was on a European tour with his family when his son died, leaving behind an illegitimate child. Greatheed acquired his granddaughter from her Dresden-based mother and brought the child up as his own. This article revisits Steedman's earlier scholarship on Greatheed, which focused on questions of domestic service, through the lens of slavery. It uses the seventeen volumes of his diary-writing compiled between 1805 and 1825 to explore the connections between Greatheed's ownership of enslaved people on his St. Kitts estate and his possession and nurturing of his grandchild. It considers the contradiction between Greatheed's position as an abolitionist and his profit from slavery and slave ownership, which he used not only to sustain a way of life, but also to develop Leamington, Warwickshire, into a spa town and pleasure resort.

## Buying people is wrong

> When once, he had told his father that it was wrong that people's relationships should be those of buyers and sellers, his father had gazed at him blankly. What else could they be? [He] was never ashamed that his background was of this sort; but he was surprised by it; it was not what he would, if he had met himself as a stranger, have expected.
>
> Malcolm Bradbury, *Eating People Is Wrong* (Secker and Warburg, 1959), 55.

This essay concerns a Warwickshire slave owner in the years *ca.*1800–25, who held his property—the Conaree/Canaries plantation at Basseterre, St. Kitts (St. Christopher's Island, in the Caribbean) and some eighty or so enslaved persons thereupon—at a vast distance from himself. He had inherited in his teens; he never visited his St. Kitts estate; in his

own economic person he did not purchase enslaved people. Moreover, Bertie Greatheed (1758–1826) claimed the name "abolitionist" and rejoiced when the slave trade (not possession of enslaved Africans but rather the transatlantic trade in them) was proscribed by act of Parliament in 1807. He did not buy enslaved people, but in 1805 he paid money to acquire his own grandchild. His 22-year-old son had died when, unbeknownst to him and his family, the child's mother was five months' pregnant.

So this essay is not about a 1950s UK provincial university and the high satire of academics attempting to steer their life and loves by some kind of ethical compass. Bradbury's novel is here at the start because it gave me *a line*, in the theatrical sense of prompt, or suggestion, about buying people and the effects of possession on the purchaser and his intimates and acquaintances. I wanted the novel's knowing, doomed drollery as a reminder of the impossibility of writing history in the comic mode. Historians have been instructed on this impossibility since the mid-eighteenth century, when irony, sarcasm, parody and satire were added to the list of forbidden forms.[1] There are modern discussions of Herodotus as the historian who can make you laugh, and cheery websites encouraging comedy in writing history. But there's always *a line* toward their end, to say that: slavery, the Holocaust, and, maybe, the actions of the English in Ireland *ca.* 1640–1922, are always, already, beyond laughter.[2]

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I first learned about Bertie Greatheed and the seventeen volumes of his diaries, deposited in Warwickshire County Record Office, in 1996.[3] I was supervising a PhD thesis on a comparison of the *départmental* town of Draguignan in France and the county town of Warwick, *ca.*1780–1820. The focus was print and literacy networks in both, and the student was making her way through every contemporary diary, letter collection, and account book she could find in the Warwick and Draguignan archives.[4] She'd spent a couple of weeks with the Greatheed diaries when she walked into my office for a supervision and declaimed theatrically: *He bought that child!* She told me about Bertie Greatheed paying off the Dresden mother of his dead son's child (*not very much money either!*) in 1805 and removing the baby to Guy's Cliffe house, near Warwick, where she was brought up as her grandparents' own. After the baby was baptized, she said, the mother disappeared from Greatheed's diaries. Her satiric outrage signaled how affecting was the story of the abandoned mother. She knew that Greatheed did not literally *purchase* the child, that this was a common financial arrangement in regard to illegitimate children before adoption became legal in Britain in 1926.[5]

She also told me about Greatheed's inheritance of his father's St. Kitts sugar plantation, his disdain for this, the major source of his income, and his identification with the abolitionist movement. What I asked *her* about was whether or not Greatheed wrote about his domestic servants. He did, extensively so, as I was to find while working on *Labours Lost*. He

[1] Carolyn Steedman, "Out of Somerset. Satire in Province and Metropolis," in *The Oxford Handbook of Eighteenth-Century Satire*, ed. Paddy Bullard (Oxford, 2019), 680–95.

[2] Peter Thonemann, "Not Quite Cambridge. Academia Today Would Frown on the Father of History," *Times Literary Supplement* no. 6241 (11 November 2022): 8–9; Carolyn Dewald, "Humour and Danger in Herodotus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, ed. Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola (Cambridge, 2006), 125–64; Elinor Evans, "Making History Funny: Is Any Historical Topic Off-limits?," *History Extra. The official website for BBC History Magazine and BBC History Revealed*, 29 July 2019, https://www.historyextra.com/membership/making-history-funny-what-historical-topic-off-limits-historian-greg-jenner/; this is a subscription-only site.

[3] Heber Percy of Guy's Cliffe, CR117, 1759–1826, Warwickshire County Record Office (hereafter WCRO).

[4] Denise Fowler, "Social Distinction and the Written Word. Two Provincial Case Studies, Warwick and Draguignan, 1780–1820" (PhD diss., Warwick University, 1998).

[5] Gill Rossini, *A History of Adoption in England and Wales 1850–1961* (Pen and Sword, 2014).

https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2025.12 Published online by Cambridge University Press

was to become my gentry informant on the labor relationship in English households of the period.[6] When the student told her tale from the archives to a graduate research forum, another student, who was working on eighteenth-century Caribbean slave systems, confessed that sometimes, in his heart, he could find some scrap of—he didn't know how to name it; pity?—for small-time slaveholders, of uncertain rank and status, born to the filthy system, working unyielding land with the two items of human property in their possession, unable to see any way out. But not, he added, for a Warwickshire landowner with an income from his acres assiduously augmented by his mother in her widowhood, a Caribbean sugar plantation, and in possession of nigh on a hundred enslaved people.

All of this was a long time ago, and information about Warwickshire slaveholders—many of Bertie Greatheed's neighbors—has grown exponentially. Twenty years of historical work has changed the local townscape—every street you walk, every bridge you cross—and it is now everyday knowledge that the development of the village of Leamington Priors (two miles from Guy's Cliffe, two miles from the county town of Warwick) into the resort of Leamington Spa, was largely funded by invested monies derived from slave-holding, including Greatheed's own. The bridge over the River Leam, dividing Old Town from Top Town, was built using stone purchased from the quarry on the Guy's Cliffe estate—one of the many ways Greatheed profited from the development of Leamington Spa.[7] In 1806 when he received a letter ("dated St Kitts 17th April. I expect plague enough from that odious quarter"), his mind immediately turned to ways of augmenting his income, to the value of land in Leamington, to the "probable increase" of the town as a watering place: how it "may grow to be very valuable."[8] The River Leam meets the River Avon about a mile from Guy's Cliffe; Greatheed clearly thought of his estate as a kind of Arcadia on the River Avon. I live in a house on a street that was built at the edge of the Greatheed acres, which had been sold off for speculative development by his granddaughter and grandson-in-law in the 1840s. He walked this way into town to experience the fruits of his investment in the new baths: "Went to Leamington … I bathed for the first time and found it very luxurious. A bath is prepared in 4 minutes."[9] In 2021 citizen and student historians proposed the renaming of Leamington streets called after local slaveholders. My street is named after a *place*: a hamlet, a civil parish, a mansion and land attached. Designated by a slaveholder's house rather than the slaveholder, it was not proposed for renaming, as was Greatheed Road.[10]

[6] Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost. Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009).

[7] For the quarry, see https://guyscliffehouse.co.uk/profile. Jonathan Morley, "Warwickshire and the Slave Trade," 24 September 2014, https://www.bbc.co.uk/coventry/content/articles/2007/03/28/warwickshire_slave_trade_feature.shtml; "Sugar and Slavery: A Warwickshire Story," https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-863-517; Will Barber Taylor, "The Slave Owners of Leamington Spa," *Medium*, 9 April 2022, https://blackadder345.medium.com/the-slave-owners-of-leamington-spa-17885cc8e7fb. For Greatheed's and other local slaveholders' multiple investments in the new spa resort, see Jane Croom, "An Eligible Spot for Building. The Suburban Development of Greatheed Land in New Milverton, 1824 –c.1900," *Warwickshire History* 15, no. 5 (2013): 217–34; Jane Croom, "The Speculative Development of the Parade, Royal Leamington Spa, c.1808–c.1838," *Warwickshire History* 17, no. 5 (2019): 221–41. Greatheed now has a Wikipedia entry; the nineteenth-century *DNB* entry has been updated: Corinna Russell, "Greatheed, Bertie (1759–1826), poet and playwright," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB), 23 September 2004, https://www.oxforddnb.com/search?q=greatheed%2C+bertie&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true; this is a subscription-only site.

[8] 1707/116, 5 June 1806, WCRO.

[9] 1707/121, 14 July 1814, WCRO.

[10] Hollie Marnitz, "A Proposal for Re-naming Leamington's Streets," June 2021, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/students/studentopportunities/engagement/w1/w6/renaming_leamington_streets_proposal.pdf, last accessed 1 July 2024 (link now dead); Leamington History Group, "Streets of Leamington, The List," 22 July 2019, https://leamingtonhistory.co.uk/streets-of-leamington-the-list/.

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Three decades ago, I read Greatheed's diaries for an account of his domestic labor force, in particular the childcare services it provided. In 2024, I returned to them to pursue the unfinished business of the "adopted" grandchild and her abandoned mother. Lisette Nepel had haunted me for twenty years; I wanted to find her, and her story. Thirty years ago, although I had transcribed all the passages in which Greatheed mentioned slavery—noting that they were as few in number as those mentioning the child's mother—my focus was on Greatheed as householder and employer, at home, 1805–25. I did not write about him as a slaveholder. Now, in 2024, I turned to the period covering the child's conception and birth, when the Greatheeds were not "at home" and employed local people as temporary servants. All the diaries and travel journals, written at home and all across Europe between 1782 and 1825, are an exercise in avoiding the topic of slaveholding. But after twenty years of scholarship and journalism on slavery's making of modern Britain, it was impossible to remain silent, as Greatheed was silent, on the Conaree plantation. To begin with you can see St. Kitts haunting Guy's Cliffe in the shape of his cousin and wife: born a Greatheed on the island, she became Ann Bertie Greatheed on their marriage in 1780.

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In 1802, during the lull in hostilities (the *mis-en-scène* here is the Napoleonic Wars) between England and France, Bertie Greatheed of Guy's Cliffe, his wife Ann ("Nancy," 1751–1826) and their twenty-one-year-old son (also Bertie, 1781–1804; henceforth "Bertie Jnr"), a painter of some renown, set out for Paris so that young Bertie might study the collection of European masterpieces acquired by Napoleonic conquest, then being assembled at the Louvre.[11] They arrived in December 1802. On the resumption of hostilities between France and England in May 1803, the family was detained in Paris as prisoners of war, as were many other British travelers in France. They became *détenus*, or "Napoleon's detainees."[12] They sought permission to return home, which was denied, but were allowed to travel to Dresden, Saxony, where they were resident from November 1803 to August 1804. Ann and Bertie Greatheed had by-passed Dresden when on a European tour undertaken after their marriage; that trip had lasted for nearly four years (1782–86). The Greatheeds were in Saxony in 1797–98 and again in 1799–1800.[13] They were modern, cosmopolitan European travelers. Now in Dresden again, in 1803–04 the situation was "delicate and difficult" in regard to the French—"what is to be done(?) ... If we stay by permission of the French Ministers here, we become doubly bound to an understanding and cannot leave Saxony. We

[11] Greatheed Jnr has an entry at https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/mrs-priscilla-kemble-17561845-54509, but with only one painting shown; there is no collection. His illustration of scenes from Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), done when he was 15 years old, are online: https://campuspress.yale.edu/walpole300/31-choice-19-coles-copy-of-the-castle-of-otranto/.

[12] J. P. T. Bury and J. C. Barry, eds., *An Englishman in Paris: 1803. The Journal of Bertie Greatheed* (Geoffrey Bles, 1953); Anne Morddel, "English Prisoners of War of the French First Empire," *Genealogists' Magazine* 30, no. 5 (2011): 153–60; Elodie Marie Duché, "A Passage to Imprisonment. The British Prisoners of War at Verdun under the First French Empire" (PhD diss., Warwick University, 2014), 1–34.

[13] Bury and Barry, eds., *Englishman in Paris*, xvii–xix; 1707/110, 6 June 1782–16 March 1786, "Travels in France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy," WCRO. In Florence Greatheed joined the literary group "The Idlers" (*gli Oziosi*), contributing to *The Arno Miscellany ... Fugitive Pieces Written by the Members of a Society Called the Oziosi ...* (Stamperia Bonducciana, 1784). He joined British sympathizers with the cause of Italian nationalism to compile *The Florence Miscellany* (G. Cam, 1785). This includes "An Ode to Mrs Greatheed": "O blest with Taste, with Genius blest, /Sole Mistress of thy BERTIE'S breast!" A Warwickshire neighbour thought Ann lovely, with "a gay vivacity of temper and an engaging sprightliness of manner, peculiarly her own. Never, perhaps, was there, in the married state, a more perfect union of minds," though she *was* older than him. William Field, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Opinions of the Reverend Samuel Parr ... Biographical Notices of Many of His Friends ... in two volumes* (Henry Colborn, 1828), 1: 209–10.

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have resolved to apply for leave to return (home)." Repeated applications to Paris failed, but the family was eventually issued with passports to quit Saxony.[14]

Greatheed Snr did not much enjoy his enforced sojourn in Dresden: "With the Saxons there never was nor never will be any society at all"; public entertainments always attracted "a trumpery crowd of vulgar stinking people"; at the theatre "Othello [was] murdered as no play ever was before." The lead looked like "a scrubby little blackguard negroe, dressed in a white uniform faced with red, saxon cocked hat and stiff boots"; he performed "like a dead harlequin."[15] It was certainly the case that "everything belonging to mind is absolutely superannuated here in Dresden which is in a state of moral decrepitude."[16] At a Court dinner he sat with "several I do not know nor want to know ... a rich Leipzig Banker ... who spoke vile French, confused all his Bs & Ps & Ds and Ts and stuffed his napkin deep and within his neck cloth that he might not beslobber himself." (*No one* could speak French properly.)[17] He occupied himself with comparing Dryden's translation of Juvenal with the original and writing a satire of his own.[18] His antipathy to Napoleon grew—"as much a tyrant throughout his Empire as he is at Paris"—exacerbated by rumors of an impending invasion of England.[19] The British envoy at Dresden thought that time in Paris had made him discard his former persona of "Citizen Greatheed" (he had contested the Leicester parliamentary election under that title in 1796). Yet his discourse had not then encompassed the *liberté et egalité* of his St. Kitts chattel slaves, any more that it did in Dresden seven years later. Envoy Wynn thought that,

> Mr. Greatheed's captivity in France has certainly had a very good effect upon him as he is now as violent an Aristocrat as he was before a Democrat. He told me the other day that he had been one of those "fools" who thought that the French Revolution was to work wonders & to set any Government upon what he then thought the right footing, but that he now saw the madness & wickedness of such an idea, & had been awakened to a right sense of the excellence of the Government & Constitution of his own Country.[20]

Greatheed himself distinguished between the principles of the early Revolution and the imperialist expansion of Bonaparte's Empire: "Indeed all Europe is so fallen as to be scarcely fit for a gentleman to live in."[21] Like his best friend (as Colin Haydon designates him) John Henry Williams, vicar of Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, he remained a Whiggish gentleman of somewhat liberal social sympathies.[22] Greatheed was a supporter of Charles James Fox,

[14] 1707/113, 18 February 1804, WCRO.

[15] 1707/113, 14, 18, 29 November 1803, WCRO.

[16] 1707/113, 16 January 1804, WCRO.

[17] 1707/113, 28 January 1804, WCRO.

[18] 1707/113, 28 November, 10 December 1803, 8 February, 17 June 1804, WCRO. Juvenal, *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden ...* (Tonson, 1693).

[19] 1707/114, 23 April 1804, WCRO. Mark Philp, ed., *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797–1815* (Routledge, 2006).

[20] "PERCY (afterwards GREATHEED BERTIE PERCY), Hon. Charles (1794–1870), of Guys Cliffe, nr. Warwick," in D. R. Fisher, ed., *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1820–1832* (2009), https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/percy-hon-charles-1794-1870; Rachel Leighton, ed., *Correspondence of Charlotte Grenville, Lady Williams Wynn and Her Three Sons ... 1795–1832* (John Murray, 1920), 78: Henry Williams Wynn to his mother, Dresden, 3 December 1803. One of Greatheed's complaints about Dresden was that Wynn "does not understand housekeeping"; this was after dining with him—Greatheed thought himself to be a good housekeeper. 1707/114, 15 May 1804, WCRO.

[21] 1707/114, 26 May 1804, WCRO.

[22] Colin Haydon, *John Henry Williams (1747–1829) "Political Clergymen": War, the French Revolution, and the Church of England* (Boydell, 2007).

https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2025.12 Published online by Cambridge University Press

thus embracing progressive liberalism, reformism, radicalism, and anti-monarchism. He mourned Fox's passing in 1806 by lauding his "long continued unavailing effort … to serve his ungrateful country;" Fox was ever "the friend of Liberty and Peace."[23]

The Greatheeds quit Dresden on 13 August 1804 and made their way to Vicenza, where *détenu* friends from Dresden were already living, arriving at the end of the month. Bertie Snr's "road-reading" included a recent *Letters* of Lady Mary Wortley Montague; his habit was to read about travelling, when travelling.[24] After a week-long trip to Venice to buy things for their rented house, Bertie Jnr died at Vicenza on 8 October 1804. A few days after his death a family friend told Greatheed Snr about the pregnancy of one Lisette Nepel (or Nepal, or Neppell, or Niepel), who was carrying Bertie Jnr's child. The baby was born in February 1805 and christened on 8 March at the residence of the "Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary of his Brittanick Majesty to the Court of Dresden." Father and mother (Bertie Greatheed Jnr and Lisette Nepal) were named on the baptism certificate.[25] Baby Ann Caroline Greatheed remained in Dresden until July 1805—"July 19 Friday Yesterday letters from … Dresden dated the 4th and 3rd instant makes us expect Ann Caroline in the course of a few days, for she began her journey on the 4th"—and was delivered to the Greatheeds in London on 5 August: "A blessed blessed day! We have a child again!"[26] Accompanied by a German wet-nurse, the newly constituted family came home to Guy's Cliffe in October 1805: "16th Wednesday … Left London … Our dear Girl cut her second tooth this day … October 17th Thursday … A day of unspeakable tryal and bitter misery. [Bertie's] Pictures, the Bronzes all unpacked … The child is in her father's room … October 19th Saturday … Unpacking and rearranging."[27] (Bertie Jnr's paintings, drawings and sketches had been sent ahead to Warwick by canal boat.) There followed a long account of Bertie's artwork and where in the house it was to be hung.

Greatheed had arranged an allowance for the baby's mother of 200 écus to be paid in five instalments, so up until July 1806.[28] They were paid to "Lisette Nepal" at the British residence in Dresden. She signed for them, but as one of the receipts is marked with a cross, and the five receipts including the "signatures" are in the same hand—probably of a British official at the residence—and in French, the language of British diplomacy, questions are raised about Nepel's literacy. On my reading of the diaries compiled between 1805 and his death in 1826, Greatheed mentioned her by name three times. In July 1806 he received from envoy Wynn the news that "Nepell goes on very well."[29] On 19 March 1807 someone from the British residence at Dresden "called & gave a good account of Nepell;" three weeks later

[23] 1707/116, 5 September 1806, WCRO.

[24] There was a 1799 German edition of the first volume of the letters, but there were over 40 editions published after 1763 and this could have been any one of them. *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W—-y M——e: written during her travels in Europe, Asia and Africa …* (Mylius, 1799).

[25] 1707/35, 8 March 1805, Baptism certificate of Ann Caroline Greatheed, daughter of the late Bertie Greatheed and Lisette Nepal, at Dresden, WCRO. For Wynn (1783–1856), "envoy extraordinary to Saxony June 1803–Oct. 1806," see "WILLIAMS WYNN, Henry Watkin (1783–1856), of Llanforda, Salop," in . R. Thorne, ed., *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1790–1820* (1986), https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/williams-wynn-henry-Watkin-1783-1856; *Stamford Mercury*, 21 October 1803; *Oracle and the Daily Advertiser*, 24 December 1803, 2 February 1807.

[26] 1707/116, 19 July, 5 August 1805, WCRO.

[27] 1707/116, 17 October 1805, WCRO.

[28] 1707/35, 1805–1806, "5 receipts of Lisette Nepal for quarterly payments of an annuity of 200 écus paid by Bertie Greatheed the elder by the hands of the British minister extraordinary at Dresden," WCRO. The silver écu that circulated in south Germany was worth perhaps half-a-crown in 1805, so Greatheed made a payment of about £25 in contemporary sterling value and something under £300 in today's money.

[29] 1707/116, 3 July 1806, WCRO.

https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2025.12 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Greatheed recorded sending her a letter.[30] Lisette Nepel was not a presence in her child's life and she is not a presence in the Saxon archives. She is not to be found.[31] Ann and Bertie Greatheed waited until Ann Caroline was eleven years old to tell her about her origins:

> May 5th Sunday [1816]—Nancy came down with our sweet Girl. She sat between us on the Sofa facing her father's picture and we told her whose it is and her own story. She received it like an angel. A painful hour! It has shaken us, and the agitation left us not during the day: no nor the morrow! Thank heaven it is over![32]

The Greatheeds wanted to replace their dead child with their own kin. They evidently wanted to care for her personally rather than support her and her mother financially. We can surmise that Lisette Nepel agreed to this arrangement, although her choice was constrained: even with financial support, living as a single mother would have been hard. Love and loss for everyone involved underpins this story. Yet: there *was* a financial transaction, a child *was* acquired for money. It was of a different order from the multiple transactions, over a hundred years, that enabled the purchase of the enslaved Africans who worked Greatheed's St. Kitts estate. Greatheed was able to ignore, or deny, or repress, the parallels between obtaining slave workers and obtaining Ann Caroline, as we shall see. But now, with the history of British slaveholding put in place over the last twenty years, we cannot do so.

Her grandparents loved Ann Caroline, as we now say, to pieces. Their love for her "soothed their bereavement."[33] "The object of our delight is vanished and a sweet infant of his, which he never knew of, in his stead!" Her grandfather "looked upon the beauteous infant lying by our side as her father used [to lie]; his image"; as he gazed on "the wonder of this almost miraculous gift my mind was filled with awe and gratitude!" She was always "sweet Ann Caroline," "my sweet little Girl," "our sweet child," "our little Angel."[34] He told the providential story of her existence again and again, recalling in August 1805 that this time last year "we were travelling, in the highest state of human felicity, through the beautiful Tirol, with the object of our pride, and our delight, beside us." And then, on arrival in Italy, their boy was taken. "We laboured home over country roads and stormy seas, persecuted by man and afflicted by heaven. But a being unknown; a being whose existence the father never suspected; and such as we in our first agony longed for with despair ... That Being ... is now smiling upon us in the fullness of beauty, and in the resemblance of our beloved Son."[35]

Greatheed recalled the very hour when he had learned of his granddaughter's existence. Samuel Peploe (who, with his wife, had also been detained in Dresden) had arrived in Vicenza before the Greatheeds:

[30] 1707/116, 3 July 1806, WCRO; 1707/117, 19 March and 14 April 1807, WCRO.

[31] Lars Thiele, Archiv Begleiter, Dresden, has made a thorough search of Saxon archives for Lisette Nepel and Magdalen Jurken, Ann Caroline's wet-nurse. There is information about the British envoy to the Court of Dresden and the Greatheeds' Court attendance, but no trace of Nepel or Jurken. They may not have been from Dresden; records were lost when the electoral state of Saxony became a kingdom in 1806. "With no official records for the baptism of Ann Caroline, no marriage record for Lisette and Bertie Jnr, no official travel note or similar official notes there are no possibilities for finding proofs of the origins of Lisette in Saxon archives": "Family Research Greatheed/Nepel in Dresden. Research Report," 17 July 2024.

[32] 1707/122, WCRO.

[33] Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England 1760–1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford, 2012), 205.

[34] 1707/116, 9 August 1805, WCRO; 1707/117, 25 October 1806, WCRO.

[35] 1707/116, 23 August 1805, WCRO.

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> It must have been about the 17th or 18th of October [1804] ... Peploe was walking with me ... [when he] gave me the letter which first announced the existence, in her Mother's womb, of this blessing so wonderfully bestowed upon us ... In the stupefaction of our misery, Nancy & I had recently been bewailing that there should be no offspring: that it was impossible there could be, or we must have known it, so much had our lives been passed in constant intercourse with him. Yet here is his offspring; now before our eyes: and; if other proof were wanting ... the stamp of his inestimable likeness! Heaven be praised.[36]

No need, should he have had any doubts about the mother's claim, to contest paternity: Ann Caroline herself was its visual proof.

Her grandfather thought a great deal about Ann Caroline's conception, its miraculous quality, about the puzzle of when it could possibly have happened. In Dresden their son was always with them, he wrote. Greatheed Snr's diaries covering the Dresden period do not bear this out. They went to the opera, the theatre, and court functions as a family, but Bertie Jnr attended dances, balls, and other public entertainments without his parents. He always went to "la Redoute"—a masked ball—by himself. He frequently dined with the Peploes and other British detainee families without his mother and father. By the time Ann Caroline was 15 months old, her grandfather believed he had worked out the time—to the very day—of her conception. He had been reading Ralph Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*, which he had purchased in London when waiting for the child's arrival.[37] Now, in springtime 1806, he read Cudworth alongside contemporary moral philosophy, William Warburton's daring Anglican theology from 1738–41, religious history, and a privately circulated manuscript on the nature of love.[38] In the early morning of 24 May he followed his usual practice of making notes of what had passed and what he had read yesterday, this day also transcribing a long passage from *The True Intellectual System* about "the soul ascending into generation." He had been thinking about this passage for several days, noting on Friday 23 May that "Yesterday two years that beauteous form began which was to be the earthly dwelling of our sweet Ann Caroline."[39]

His Dresden diary for May 1804 shows him out and about with his son, calling on their friends the Blatchfords and their new baby (17 May) where "Bertie made a little drawing of mother, nurse and child." In the evening, Bertie Jnr then went out with his mother. On 22 May "Bertie, Blatchford & I went to the [painting] gallery. This is the first time I have been there since it has opened for much before 12 one does not usually go out and at 4 we dine."[40] On 24 May Bertie Jnr received a letter from his former art tutor, William Artaud; he read it to his father who noted its contents. The very purpose of their trip

[36] 1707/117, 7 October 1807, WCRO. Samuel Peploe (1774–1845) of Garnstone, Herefordshire. He was a trustee of the Greatheed estate at Basseterre that passed to Ann Caroline's husband, the Honourable Charles Percy (afterwards Greatheed, Bertie Percy) on her marriage in 1822. Peploe's wife was Katherine-Frances, daughter of Grenada slave owner Sir George Cornewall, 2nd Baronet: Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, UCL https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/46554.

[37] Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: The First Part; Wherein All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted ...*, 2 vols (J. Walthoe, 1743); 1707/116, 25 July 1805, WCRO.

[38] Duguld Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1792); William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* [1738] (John Nicolls, 1788); William Roscoe, *The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, Called the Magnificent*, 2 vols (J. Edwards, 1795); Mary Tighe, *Psyche and the Legend of Love*, for the author 1805 (Longman, 1811); 1707/116, 23, 24 May 1806, WCRO.

[39] 1707/116, 24 May 1806, WCRO.

[40] Virginie Spenlé, "Von der Sammlung zum Museum. Die Dresdener Gemäldegalerie im Stallhof," *Dresdener Kunstblätter* 52 (2009): 59–64.

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was the advancement of Bertie's genius in painting.[41] He was not constantly with his parents; there were opportunities to get a child on Lisette Nepal. Greatheed's certainty that he knew the day conception took place was most likely derived from Nepel's letters (now lost) announcing her pregnancy.[42]

It is interesting that the culture consumed by the Greatheeds during their brief detention in Dresden focused attention on the figure, meaning, and symbolism of "the child." Greatheed's own play *The Regent*, a blank verse tragedy, which had run for nine nights in April 1788, had featured a mother in agony at the death of her son. He had been censured by some critics who thought a dead child carried onto the stage rather strong stuff.[43] Greatheed carried the dead child—the motif of the dead child—around with him, long before his actual child died in 1804; he carried his dead child in the shape of Ann Caroline, until his own death in 1826.

In Dresden, there was also Kotzebue's *Die Hussiten vor Naumberg* ("The Hussites Before Naumberg," first staged 1802) that father and son saw in November 1803; children of the town are the most significant chorus in this drama of the Hussite rebellion of the early fifteenth century.[44] Bertie Jnr painted a triptych (noted above) of mother, nurse, and child; he also spent some time on the portrait of a little boy of the *détenu* community whose mother was always late bringing him to sit (so she could get her dinner with them, thought Greatheed).[45] In August the family went to the Dresden picture gallery "expecting to see nothing, but were mistaken, for there is much good among mere trash." In writing up the visit, Bertie Snr concentrated on paintings that had the power "of affecting the feelings." The most striking was Reubens's *Massacre of the Innocents* (1609–10), which "excite[d] shuddering." He continued: "I am not over delicate and can bear to see Mrs Siddons in Isabella … the great emotions of the soul are delightful to me, but a man has scarcely the right to work so forcibly upon my imagination as Reubens does in this picture."[46] It was the dead babies on the canvas that wrenched his heart, one mother gazing at her slaughtered child, unable to believe her loss; it was all was "almost too much to bear." He spent three pages on this very rich collection.[47] The late romantic focus on "the child" as some kind of messenger or portent across all forms of representation is only ironic if one knows what the Greatheeds did not know in 1804—about the coming death of a son and birth of a granddaughter. In records that are silent on the major source of the Greatheeds' income, one would not expect any connection to be made between the dying of enslaved children on the St. Kitts plantation

[41] Robin Simon, "Artaud, William (1763–1823), portrait and history painter," *ODNB*, 23 September 2004, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-702; this is a subscription-only site. For Artaud's tutoring style, see Haydon, *John Henry Williams*, 132, 148.

[42] Such letters did exist: in August 1805 Greatheed brought one of his London solicitors "to see my child, and all the letters relating to her preceding her birth," 1707/16, 23 August 1805, WCRO. On 4 February 1806 he read "Nepell's letters … relative to … her pregnancy, and the heavenly boon of our sweet Ann Caroline," 1707/116, WCRO.

[43] *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 7 April 1788, 2.

[44] Bertie Snr and Ann read the play script to each other over the next few weeks. There was no English translation until 1819: *The Patriot Father, A Play in Five Acts; Freely Tr. from the German of … Kotzebue …* (Cornwall Gazette Office, 1819). The Greatheeds' reading and reading aloud in Dresden included: Robert Thomas Wilson, *History of the British Expedition to Egypt* (T. Egerton, 1803); Michael Symes, *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava sent by the Governor-general of India, in the Year 1795* (W. Bulmer, 1800); Samuel Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet* (G. & W. Nicol, 1800).

[45] 1707/114, 4, 28 June 1804, WCRO.

[46] Isabella and her child are characters in Thomas Southerne's stage tragedy *Isabella or The Fatal Marriage* (London, 1694). It is a type of pathetic-tragedy or "She-tragedy."

[47] 1707/114, 24 August 1804, WCRO.

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and the dead child figures of the high romantic era, though the information to do so was available in late eighteenth-century England.[48]

"She grows more charming every day," recorded Ann Caroline's grandfather in July 1806. "She has just learnt what it is to be put in the corner, and says good! good! she said to day the whole sentence Go to Papa, for she will call Nancy and me Papa & Mama Why not? It may form part of her Father's happiness to perceive that she does so."[49] He was an assiduous observer of the child's language development, recording much of her speech verbatim in the manner of several contemporary gentlemen anthropologists of the nursery.[50] He noted her babbling ("she makes, besides her little vocabulary a variety of articulate sounds in a tongue of her own").[51] Her grandparents had hopes of her singing voice, which they believed would be as beautiful as her person.[52] Her speech errors were charming; her grandparents were enchanted: "She sits at dinner with us when we have not strangers, and asks tuppa and posies: so she calls butter and strawberries."[53] In January 1807 she became "quite nervous at the loss of Sally [her nursemaid] and hearing us talk of the Jolly Miller most piteously, and half in tears, clinging to her Grandmamma repeated frequently, Nobody care for me!"[54] Later he was delighted by her mimicking of adult speech, as in May 1812 when "She came running down just after 8 in her little bedgown exclaiming I'm quite in despair of getting Liddy to dress me!"[55] Her mishaps were delightful to them, as when "our Ann Caroline kicked at the milk ... and, without any previous notice, she spouted it in a moment just into Smith's [the nursery maid] ear."[56]

"We live very much with our little girl," he wrote in July 1806: "she breakfasts with us, walks with us, and sits at table with us while we dine ... Her attempt to sing Pussy's a lady is very sweet."[57] He loved watching her night time routine.[58] The "dressing hour" sight of the "dear little Girl giv[ing] the pins and trudg[ing] about" her grandmother's room was utterly charming.[59] They moved her bed from the nursery into their own bedroom in September 1806 ("she sleeps in beauty and innocence by our side as her beloved father used to do").[60] Greatheed worried not at all that teething was slow and that at twelve months she appears to have been quite bald ("Backward in her hair;" "her hair ... comes remarkably slow"); on the contrary, "We are glad of it. So did her Father's before her ... May she resemble him in all things."[61] Her grandfather played with her, pushing her around the Guy's Cliffe kitchen garden in a wheelbarrow.[62] He and Ann Greatheed were hands-on, "modern"

[48] James Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (James Phillips, 1784), 89–90. Ramsay wrote out of his own experience of St. Kitts where he was Anglican incumbent in South Island, 1762–77.

[49] 1707/116, 18 July 1806, WCRO.

[50] Steedman, *Labours Lost*, 233–35.

[51] 1707/116, 4 May 1806, WCRO.

[52] 1707/116, 14 May 1806, WCRO. She did turn out to have a fine voice. Just before her marriage it was the foundation of some cruel jokes about its size, and her size: Charles Percy was about to marry "a great and fat heiress" said Maria Edgeworth in 1822. "PERCY (afterwards GREATHEED BERTIE PERCY)."

[53] 1707/116, 1 July 1806, WCRO.

[54] 1707/117, 9 January 1807, WCRO: "There was a jolly miller once, / Lived on the river Dee; / ... And this the burden of his song/Forever used to be, / I care for nobody, no not I, / And nobody cares for me."

[55] 1707/120, 29 May 1812, WCRO.

[56] 1707/117, 18 February 1807, WCRO.

[57] 1707/116, 26 July 1806, WCRO.

[58] 1707/116, 14 May 1806, WCRO.

[59] 1707/116, 28 August 1806, WCRO.

[60] 1707/116, 8 September 1806, WCRO.

[61] 1707/116, 4, 13 February 1806, WCRO.

[62] 1707/116, 2 September 1806, WCRO.

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parents: in November 1805, "to be sure that our dear little Girl had been properly vaccinated at Dresden we innoculated her too."[63] Both of them in their forties, they were vigorous and active, he a great walker, she an energetic, enterprising woman. In June 1806 "Nancy routed some ill bred Leminton [sic] bathers out of our walks"—they had come to swim in the mill pond adjacent the house.[64] Her grandfather did not think the child to be superior to others: his delight in Ann Caroline was a measure of his appreciation of all the children who are recorded in his journal. He thought his friend Ferguson's boy to be a particularly nice child. Ferguson had been with them in Paris and Dresden, and was the one to deliver Ann Caroline into her grandmother's arms in London in August 1805.[65] And another child was also frequently at Guy's Cliffe, doing the work of consolation. Harry (Henry) Williams, son of Greatheed Snr's closest friend, the vicar of Wellesbourne, was "forever visiting ... staying for days, dining and spending quiet evenings with the family," says his father's biographer. He was a year older than their dead son. "He was adored by Bertie and Anne Greatheed, and came to stand in their dead son's stead."[66] Harry's sisters sometimes looked after little Ann Caroline.

Greatheed made measure of the distance between these children of his acquaintance and those who labored for a living. When Robert Ferguson came to visit in May 1806, they went together to see the Parkes brothers' cotton and worsted manufactory in Warwick (William Parkes provided Greatheed with banking and financial services):

> to the Manufactory, and in good time to see everything. Very ingenious, very useful to the nation and to individuals, but very hateful to me. I know that this abridgement of labour enables us to undersell, which produces wealth; and that wealth is power; but I wish we had the same power some other way than this, which keeps my fellow creatures from their childhood in close rooms where their morals and their health are destroyed [,] their whole natural state perverted, and both mind and body invariably employed in uniform tedious operation.

[63] 1707/116, 17 November 1805, WCRO. The vaccination session was shared with another child who came to Guy's Cliffe with his mother. A local physician was in attendance, probably Dr Amos Middleton, author of *General Rules for Taking the Waters* (1806) and *A Chymical Analysis of the Lemington Waters* (H. Sharpe, 1808). The investment in human property on the Canaries plantation was protected by inoculation in 1773, and probably in other years; these are very sparse accounts. 1707/29, WCRO: Letters from Craister and Richard Greatheed to Lady Mary Greatheed and Bertie Greatheed 1753–74; 16 November 1773 to Mary Greatheed, telling of "smallpox on the island ... innoculated 59 of the Negroes on this Estate, who all had it very favourably excepting two."

[64] 1707/116, 6 June 1806, WCRO. Greatheed enjoyed remembering how Ann got their walking party out of trouble on an excursion out of Dresden in 1804. He, the great walker, got lost; he told the tale facetiously—the party worrying, finding his whitened bones long after his murder by rogue herdsmen. But Ann had no need of the annotated map he inserted in the journal showing the route from Lauban to Schmee Koppe; she found him and brought the party safely to their inn. 1707/114, 22 July 1804, WCRO. They were walking in Silesia (Schlesien) 90 km east of Dresden.

[65] This was Robert Ferguson (1769–1840), member of Parliament for Fife, 1806–07, 1831–41: FERGUSON, Robert (1769–1840), of Raith, Fife and 18 Portman Square, Mdx: http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/ferguson-robert-1769-1840. He was an important mineralogist: Brian Lloyd and Mary Lloyd, "The Journals of Robert Ferguson (1767–1840)," *The Mineralogical Record* 31, no. 5 (2000): 425–42. All accounts, including that in *The History of Parliament*, insist that he was childless, but in Paris in 1803 he had a child who delighted Greatheed: "Ferguson took me to see his beautiful little boy, just arrived, of whom he spoke to me for the first time. He is 6 years old, and his father has not seen him for a twelve months"; Bury and Barry, *Englishman in Paris*, 137: 30 April 1803.

[66] Haydon, *John Henry Williams*, 140.

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Back home at Guy's Cliffe he "went with Nancy to the hay and admired, yes delighted in the beautiful labours of husbandry."[67] He was willing and able to describe the exploitation of white working-class laborers, including child laborers, but was silent on any connection with the enslaved workers of the Caribbean.[68] As an enlightened gentleman he was disgusted by lingering traces of medieval barbarity: in January 1812 he walked into Warwick with the grown-up children of his friend Williams, where they saw "two people standing in the pillory: a man for an assault upon a girl & a woman for cruelty to her apprentice. This is the first time I ever saw the disgusting sight."[69] Yet were not worse punishments meted out at Conaree?

Ann Caroline experienced many carers during her early years. She remained in Dresden until she was five months old; it is not known who looked after her there. A wet-nurse was employed to accompany the child to England in July 1805. This suggests either that her mother did not breastfeed her or, conversely, that she did, and having been parted from her, a substitute breast was needed. After her arrival, her grandparents left the child in London with the wet-nurse, servants, and friends while they paid a month-long visit to the family's Lincolnshire estates. Magdalen Jurken, the wet-nurse, was trouble from the moment she set foot in England, according to Greatheed. He called her "the Amma." *Amah* was the Hindu term used by genteel Anglo-Indians for a nanny or nursery maid; it is also a variant of the German *amme* or wet-nurse. He started to note difficulties between Jurken and the other servants when Ann Caroline was weaned at eleven months ("Anne Caroline is beginning to be weaned not suddenly but by degrees. She grows more and more lovely, and her intellects enlarge rapidly … My sweet girl is weaning and … without any pining or reluctance").[70] There was no role for a wet-nurse now, though Jurken was still involved in Ann Caroline's care. Then in May 1806 "the Amma … behaved so ill that Ann Caroline is taken from her and Nancy has written to Ferguson to find the means of sending her home. All this teazes my Wife very much."[71] The child missed her: "The Amma who for her repeated misbehaviour has been taken from her met her on the stairs: Our pretty Ann Caroline told us this saying Amma—little kiss: and shewed by action that she had cry'd."[72] "The Amma is causing much disquiet in the house," he recorded in August; "there is nothing but quarrelling below and combinations to get [other servants] out of their places: We shall have no peace till that good-for-nothing German … is sent away."[73] Two days later,

> Magdalen Jurken the Amma set off for Stratford to proceed by the Mail [coach] to London, where she will remain … till … [she] sails for Hamburg. She has given us so much plague and vexation since our little girl was weaned, and it is perhaps all the better for had her behaviour been tolerably good she would have been a burthen to us for life.

[67] 1707/116, 25 June 1806, WCRO.

[68] In the contemporary campaign to abolish child labour, the analogy with Caribbean slavery was made frequently: John Andrew Hargreaves and Hilary Haigh, *Slavery in Yorkshire: Richard Oastler and the Campaign Against Child Labour in the Industrial Revolution* (Pen & Ink, 2012).

[69] 1707/119, 25 January 1812, WCRO. Punishment was central to how the plantation system worked: Catherine Hall, *Lucky Valley: Edward Long and the History of Racial Capitalism* (Cambridge, 2024), 87–155.

[70] 1707/116, 13, 15 January 1806, WCRO.

[71] 1707/116, 28 May 1806, WCRO.

[72] 1707/116, 17 June 1806, WCRO.

[73] 1707/116, 11 August 1806, WCRO. Jurken's particular target was the Williamses, butler and housekeeper. In 1811 they quit Greatheed's service to open the Bedford Hotel in Leamington. He was supportive and wrote advertisements for them, but did not invest. He marvelled at their financial acuity: they who "came into our service without much more money than was necessary to pay their way … to us … are now paying a rent, for land, hotel, mews, & lodging houses of £1311 PA." 1707/122, 31 March 1817, WCRO.

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He ruminated on the way in which,

> a wet nurse gets strong mechanical hold though the odds are that she is a worthless woman. Lucky that we have not a child of this Amma's own upon our hands: yet with all the misconduct the moment of parting was very painful. She goes home rich in clothes and will have 120 Thalers (her whole wages) for 60 weeks to receive at Dresden from Wynn

Jurken gone, the child's nurses and nursery maids would remain a problem because—not a point Greatheed made—their role encroached so much upon that of her grandparents. There was a high turnover in the next few years: "A maid … came to hire herself to wait on Ann Caroline in the place of poor Smith who may probably never be able to return" (Smith had been very ill; her mother had come to take her home) … "Mary Ann Hawkes came to wait upon our dear Girl instead of the hateful Bullivant. She is to have 9 pounds a year" … "Lidia [Lydia Timms] gave notice that she is going to be married and must leave us a great inconvenience."[74]

In general, Greatheed was a good employer—in Warwickshire; his labor force in St. Kitts were not "employed" in the contractual and legal sense; they were owned. He furthered his Warwickshire servants' interests where he could and where those interests did not impede his own. He appreciated the skills and knowledge of his gardeners. "He is full of stir and activity," he said of the newly arrived Dilworth in 1806. "There is no going on well in a country house without such a man."[75] By spring 1807 it had all gone wrong: "turned away Dilworth the Gardener who promised so fair at first, but proved as worthless, idle, and poaching a fellow as ever came into a Gentleman's service. I hope to clear him off the grounds on Saturday."[76] His programme of improvements to the Guy's Cliffe house and grounds encompassed the kitchen and laundry house. Alterations to passageways between kitchen, dairy, boot room, and the main house were for the purpose of reducing smells as well as convenience: he paid much attention to the wire (pull) of the servants' water closet between 1808 and 1813. He told "servant-jokes," better called "stupid jokes" (as in *they are really so stupid*!), as did other employers of his social standing. They told such jokes both to denigrate their domestic staff and to manage anxiety about the impossibility of life without them.[77] "Quite like Swift," he observed of a verse written by his friend the vicar of Wellesbourne, about a footman who had had the temerity to quit his place.[78] Like the rest of Warwickshire *bon-ton*, he worked on his jokes. He knew their form, and that mild self-denigration was part of the comedy, as when he ever-so-slightly sent himself up in noting that a gardener's "stubborn perseverance in injuring himself & inconveniencing me is very extraordinary."[79] He enjoyed popular literature (scandal-lit) about fraudster servants—deceiving, conniving, *what do you expect*? —as well as the next employer.[80]

He was highly conscious of himself as a hands-on country gentleman "improver": climbing up the Guy's Cliffe waterfall to gather rock plants for the pleasure garden; sawing, planing, and dovetailing his own garden furniture. Shortly after arriving at Guy's Cliffe with

[74] 1707/118, March, 5 June 1808, WCRO; 1707/120, 25 May 1812, WCRO. Lydia Timms was hired as a cook and laundry maid, but also provided a lot of childcare.

[75] 1707/116, 22 June 1806, WCRO.

[76] 1707/117, 12 February 1807, WCRO.

[77] Carolyn Steedman, "Servants and their Relationship to the Unconscious," *Journal of British Studies* 32, no. 3 (2003): 316–60.

[78] This was a reference to Jonathan Swift's satiric *Directions to Servants* (1745). 1707/125, 2 September 1824, WCRO.

[79] 1707/125, 16 February 1824, WCRO.

[80] The latest on the great deceivers Anne Brookhurst and Elizabeth Canning was a hot topic in central Warwickshire in 1808: 1707/118, 19, 21 April 1808, WCRO; Steedman, "Servants," 355.

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little Anne Caroline, he was faced with the enormous cost of living as he wished to live; yes, he knew that he had too many luxuries

> and too much of the world. My income is too much spent in my own enjoyments. But what can I do with this large house! How can I live in it at less expense! How can I leave it! And if I do leave it, where can I go? It is my wish to pass the remainder of my days in this my beautiful and native home. To let it again [as they had done when on their European tours] is impossible with these precious pictures. To shut it up and rove about once more like a houseless vagabond will never do

His expenses were great—but lavish hospitality was what a gentleman must provide; "a most crowded day inevitable occasionally in a country house 17 at table and all stayed the night," he noted in 1808.[81]

All "is far from well," he had mused earlier that year after a morning spent with his friend Parkes going over accounts: "with the power of spending after all deductions £1600 P:A, my outgoings are near 2000 and this for twice as much company as is agreeable to us. I believe that in no family is there more done for the money."[82] These "vulgar details of tedious poverty harrass me," he wrote during one period of economy in 1810 when he "let go" some of the household servants and changed the dinner hour to make a more efficient sitting of the domestics' meal.[83] He thought of retrenching and downsizing. He had a brief fantasy of love in a cottage, of sparing himself the expense of it all—all the improvements, the enclosure of land adjacent to Guy's Cliffe currently preoccupying him. But "My pictures: how could I leave my pictures."[84] His mind was able to encompass the idea of selling the Conaree plantation; but he did not, as we shall see. It was vulgar to think about these things; they jarred with the notion of himself as a practical, cultivated gentleman who could turn from reading Herodotus to determining that the workmen should limewash "the [necessary] house and granary gable end" a tasteful stone colour.[85] "So goes the time. One day making a garden bench, the next an Italian sonnet," was not a parody of the gentlemanly improver, however much it sounds like it.[86]

He started on Herodotus in 1812; his practice was to read for an hour and then give Ann Caroline an hour of writing exercises.[87] Modern critics emphasize Herodotus's focus on Scythian slavery, the way in which *The History* returns again and again to the system and to "Scythian distaste and disdain for slaves and slavery." At the same time Herodotus highlighted the "economic and social benefits … [of the] exchange of slaves … slaves were a key resource in processes of exchange which gave access to a range of significant imports."[88] There was room to draw analogies between the system in which he was personally engaged and a slave system of the ancient world; but we do not know if he did so.

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[81] 1707/8, 14 August 1808, WCRO.

[82] 1707/117, 4 February 1808, WCRO.

[83] 1707/119, 19 November 1810, WCRO.

[84] 1707/116, 8 February 1806, WCRO.

[85] 1707/120, 30 June 1812, WCRO.

[86] 1707/116, 26 July 1806, WCRO.

[87] He may have read in translation: Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus, translated from the Greek with Notes by the Reverend William Beloe in four volumes* (London, 1791, 1812, 1816); but his copy could have been Herodotus, *Graece et Latine, accedunt annotationes selectae, necnon index Latinus …* (William Laing, 1806). Or it may have been a copy from his Greek-learning schooldays at Norlands Academy (or later, at Eton College): Abraham Elim, *A Succinct Account of the Plan of Education, Established and Executed for Some Years Past, with Great Success at Norland House, near Kensington Gravel Pits, on the Acton Road* (for the author, 1772).

[88] David Braund, "Royal Scythians and the Slave-Trade in Herodotus' Scythia," *Antichthon* 42 (2008): 1–19.

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Greatheed complained about want of money, but he had the means to make Ann Caroline as English as she could legally be, though he was not unaware of the cost. He pursued the official denization of the child before she arrived in England. The denizen, explained William Blackstone, was neither a subject (with citizenship or nationality) nor an alien, but had a status rather like permanent residency today.[89] Denization was quicker and cheaper than naturalization, which required a private act of Parliament. Greatheed started the process in London a month before Ann Caroline arrived; he visited many attorneys, and officials at the Alien Office. He asked many London lawyers about denization and naturalization. One day in Long Acre he ran into Thomas Erskine (1st Baron, 1750–1823, Whig lawyer and politician; Greatheed was a well-connected country gentleman) who told him that "there is not the least difficulty in the naturalization of my sweet Ann Caroline";[90] but he evidently decided on the cheaper denization route. When in December 1805 he made yet another "affidavit respecting my sweet Ann Caroline," he was amused and exasperated to find it

> word for word like that taken before at Lincoln's Inn, but with the addition, after the promise to bring her up in the Protestant religion, which excluded the Roman Catholics(,) of the words "as practiced by the Church of England" which cuts off three millions more of good Englishmen. It is well for upon this occasion that I belong to the indisputable Church, however I may blanch at its intolerance.[91]

Here, in his own words, was an enlightened, tolerant, latitudinarian country gentleman, called radical in his youth, ensuring the future of his grandchild.[92] Denization took nearly two years. In March 1807 he travelled with his little family to London where he "got our dear Girl's letter of Denization and brought it home": "Ann Caroline Greatheed formerly of Dresden now of Guy's Cliffe in our county of Warwick, spinster (an alien born) [is now] ... a free Denizen and liege subject."[93] The two-year-old would one day become a married woman, so her ability to inherit and hold property would be inflected by her status under coverture: in Greatheed's last will, the Guy's Cliffe and St Kitts estates were to pass to his wife Anne, and on her death "beneficiary will be Ann Caroline Percy, wife of Hon. Charles Percy to receive rents, issues and profits of the said manors."[94]

Using the resources of the law and his comfortable income, Bertie Greatheed remade Ann Caroline's legal persona, and made her English. It is not possible to make cheap and easy comparisons between a European girl-child whose legal standing might be adjusted and transmuted by a male relative, and the enslaved Africans who provided the major part of Greatheed's income during his lifetime, for the latter were not understood as persons, let alone legal persons. And yet ... dwell on the comparison we must, if this business is ever to be finished. In all his recording of disgust at owning such a thing as the Conaree plantation, and disgust at the sordid source of his means of existence, he never *named* them, as "slaves" or as anything else; he never named them, *tout court*. (He never named Conaree.) He retained the word "slave" for "the slave trade" over the quarter century he kept his diaries and wrote some millions other words. The only entry in which he named St. Kitts (except to say a

[89] William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England, Book the First* (1765), 240; *Book the Second* (1766), 169 (Oxford, 2016).

[90] 1707/116, 5 August 1805, WCRO.

[91] 1707/ 116, 19 December 1805, WCRO.

[92] Haydon, *John Henry Williams*, for a discussion of Greatheed's faith.

[93] 1707/117, 17 March 1807, WCRO; 1707/35, 26 November 1805, "Denization of Ann Caroline Greatheed," WCRO.

[94] "Bertie Bertie Greatheed," Center for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, UCL, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146644215, citing The National Archives (TNA): PROB 11/1710/1, made at the time of Ann Caroline's marriage; it updated the will made on her arrival in 1805 (1707/116, 7, 18 August, 1 October 1805, WCRO). The last will determined that Charles Percy take the name of Greatheed for his wife to inherit.

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letter had been received therefrom) was in September 1808: when visiting the Greatheed Lincolnshire estates he read "Lediard's Naval History." He thought it "a very amusing work":

> The first settlement of St. Christophers he places in 1624 on the 28 of Jan when Capt Warriner arrived there with 15 persons only. At their arrival, they found 3 Frenchmen, who sought to oppose the Captain, and set the Indians on them; but they all soon became friends, and lived with the Indians a month. They then built a fort, and a house; and planted fruits. By Sepr. they had a crop of tobacco … All this while, they lived upon Cassava bread, potatoes, plantains, turtles, guavas & fish plenty. Such was the beginning, and so lately was that fruitful soil first cultivated from whose exuberance my Guy's Cliff has grown to its present beauty.[95]

He acknowledged where his bounty came from but wrote of St. Christopher's as a paradise of plenitude, not as it was in 1808. And we have to say *wrote*, not *imagined*. We cannot tell what he imagined, or thought, of the diet of his Conaree possessions; cannot tell what he had read, or not read, or suppressed, of information contained in the accounts sent to his mother, and to him, in his boyhood (certainly no guava in them, nor fresh fish!); or even whether or not he had read the accounts, or more recent communications.

Writing allows the writer the most complete denial; reading Greatheed's, all we can say, from a distance of two hundred years is that he effaced slavery by picturing pre-slavery settlement. The closest he came to acknowledging the reality of the system in which he was involved was in 1811, in recording that he had "Read the tryal of the atrocious monster Hodge. It fills one with disgust at the very idea of West India property. What is to be done when born to such an evil!"[96] It is with a line like this—*What is to be done* (which is not a question, but a peculiarly English expression of the irresponsibility that lies in fatalism, as in *It is what it is … Things are as they are … What can you do …*), and with the use of that exclamation mark!—that the reader may discern the performative nature of his writing. He knew his diaries would be read; he recorded modestly how "amusing" a young family friend had found them.[97] They were crafted productions, not the unmediated outpouring of soul and sensibility.

In the same way, the archive preserving Greatheed's journals has something of the carefully crafted about it. Samuel Greatheed died in 1765 when Bertie was six years old; he inherited from his mother after her death in 1774 when he was fifteen. The plantation was managed by his uncles, Craister and Richard Greatheed. There is a small collection of letters from them to Samuel, then to Lady Mary, and then to Bertie, dated 1753 to 1774. The Greatheeds owned the plantation for over a hundred years; the total number of accounts and letters could have been numbered in the thousands. There is a run of annual accounts from 1782–86, showing profits from quantities of sugar and rum sold and expenditure on the estate. As the Warwickshire Country Record Office catalogue entry highlights with a facsimile, the first set shows expenditure between December 1781 and August 1782 for "the care and attendance of your Negroes," and "For 3 Neck Collars for the Negroes" purchased from the same supplier as "1 Tongue and hook for the cattle."[98] The four sets of accounts

[95] Thomas Lediard, *The Naval History of England, in all its Branches. From the Norman Conquest in the Year 1066 … to … 1734 … In two Volumes* (J. Wilcox, 1785).

[96] 1707/119, 18 October 1811, WCRO. Arthur Hodge was a Tortolan-born (Virgin Islands) planter who was executed by hanging in 1811 for murdering one of his slaves. J. B. Miller, "A Monster of the Spanish Main," *Juridical Review* 15 (1970): 97–114; John Andrew, *The Hanging of Arthur Hodge: A Caribbean Anti-Slavery Milestone* (XLibris, 2000). Greatheed probably read *The Trial of A. H.* (J. Harding, 1811).

[97] "Mary Berry got hold of this journal of mine: she takes delight in it: I am sure I know not why she does; but I am glad of it." 1707/123, 8 July 1819, WCRO.

[98] 1707/29, 1707/30, WCRO.

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show monies paid to the island authorities for retrieving runaway slaves. Other expenditure was on the maintenance of an agricultural enterprise (screws, nails, planks, palings, fence posts, roofing materials and carpentry, masonry and farming implements), on the local and island taxes paid for the possession of enslaved persons, expenditure on bought-in enslaved craft workers, and on medical attention to the Conaree enslaved. They suffered terribly from injuries to their feet; local doctors and lay medical practitioners cured (or did not cure) many cases of yaws and tubboes.[99] Midwifery services were also brought in; slave babies were wanted to populate the estate.

If Greatheed read these accounts when he was in his early twenties, or later when he was a father and grandfather, there is not even the shadow of a hint that he made a connection between the slave children of Conaree and the white child to whom he bequeathed them. One has to assume that these records were transmitted every year until Greatheed's death in 1826, but that once he had determined in his mid-twenties that the whole business was loathsome, he asked his London and Liverpool bankers, agents, and attorneys to retain them, and thus *he did not look.* We must also assume that at some point before the Heber-Percy archive was deposited in the Warwickshire Country Record Office, in stages, in 1962, 1973, and 1976–77, decisions were made about the public display of a family past.[100]

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Greatheed's loathing for his Caribbean property is inscribed throughout his journals: no one reading them—in 1804, or 1824, or 2024—could be in any doubt that the author detested the trade in enslaved persons and his slave plantation. He wrote of "our own distressing property in the West Indies," of "that distant and hateful property," of how "my mind sickens whenever it is carried across the Atlantic by the business of my odious property there."[101] He believed that his distant possession had made him, as in the epigraph to this essay, "not what he would, if he had met himself as a stranger, have expected" himself to be. He did not express the anguish of ownership in the diaries he kept while in Paris and Dresden, even though he kept in touch with his bankers and the merchant house that managed his profits from Conaree. This was because, as we have seen, his image of the plantation was infinitely bound up with "home"—the house and estate at Guy's Cliffe. The house had been built—or rather altered and "improved" by his father—on and out of those profits. Once home in 1805, he expressed his anguish up until his death. He was elated when the slave trade abolition bill passed in the Commons and the Lords ("Thank heaven! The abolition of the slave trade has at last passed both houses of Parliament, with the opposition of only 16 members out of about 300. This surprising! What is become of all those who were so violently against it?").[102] In July 1814 he attended a meeting in Warwick to petition Parliament in protest against France's revival of the trade.[103]

"What a blessing if without great loss I could dispose of this horrid property," he wrote in September 1814; "I should be another man. But there is little chance of it."[104] There was little chance of it because life in Guy's Cliffe (house, name, estate, way of life) was built on and around the profits of "the horrid property." Financial difficulties were directly related

[99] "'Tubboe' … is the yaws granuloma forcing its way through the thick and hard sole of the negro foot," *Report on Yaws in Tobago, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and the Leeward Islands: Addressed to … Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies* (Eyre and Spotiswoode for HMSO, 1894).

[100] The Honourable Charles Bertie Percy, Ann Caroline's husband, was a nephew of the Duke of Northumberland. She continued to live at Guy's Cliffe after his death in 1870. Guy's Cliffe then passed to Lord Algernon Percy, younger son of the sixth Duke of Northumberland, then in 1922 to his daughter and her husband, Captain J. R. Heber-Percy. The Heber-Percys then "owned" the records to deposit.

[101] 1707/117, 8 February 1807, 19 June 1807, WCRO; C1707/121, 2 July 1814, WCRO.

[102] 1707/117, 8, 24 February 1807, WCRO.

[103] 1707/121, 8, 11 July 1814, WCRO; *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, 11 July 1814.

[104] 1707/121, 19 September 1814, WCRO.

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to Conaree. There was sometimes amelioration of these difficulties, as in 1807, when there was news from his agent that a new merchant house had been engaged and that the firm of Shipley Williams & Co. of Liverpool was known "to be very respectable."[105] Now the plantation was being leased out at £1,600 per annum with Shipley Williams as his brokers.[106] But nothing was reliable: in October 1810 there was news that the "house of Williams of Liverpool has stopped payment. A heavy blow on me. There are hopes that the house though pressed will yet stand."[107]

The 21st October 1810 was "a day not to be forgotten: it needs no journal":

> A deep review of a very deranged state of finance followed by the stoppage of all West India rent. Met Tomes & Parkes.[108] Must reduce expenses clear of all taxation to £600 pa. This with our house is equal to an income of £1000 pa with the two burdens of house & taxes to bear. If we do this we are respectable, independent, and, as the WI derangement is only temporary, we may soon be in better circumstances than ever.[109]

"There will be many unpleasant details to go through" he added, not least the shedding of Guy's Cliffe domestic staff. Ann Caroline lost a nursery maid: "troubled at the thoughts of parting with [her] ... She brought us five shillings out of a little purse of hers to add to the common stock and relieve our difficulties."[110]

But the property was not gone; it was never gone. In 1814 he heard from an agent who "treats for Mr Deverel who has an Estate of 700 acres contiguous to mine & is now at Bath. It is not at all likely that we should agree us to terms, but the way is open to further treaty. Purchase seems to be Mr Deverel's first object ... But there is little chance of it."[111] His worries focused on his reduced human property (he did not put it like that) that (who) had been sold off when the house of Shipley & Williams went bankrupt in 1810. He learned in 1814 that numbers had been restored; that the estate was seen as a highly desirable piece of real estate; and that "there are twenty persons ready to offer for the plantation ... I feel for the first time for several years that I have a certain income from beyond the sea & I feel an interest & a confidence in my property there which never touched me before," which throws an interesting light on his protestations about its vileness.[112]

He "should be another man" he thought, if it ... would just all go away. This is something like the "disavowal" that shapes Catherine Hall's discussion of Edward Long in *Lucky Valley*. A sustained and forensic anger at the waste of so many human lives shapes her account of a man—Edward Long—who *really did know* about the barbarities of Caribbean slavery, but who spent three volumes of *The History of Jamaica* (1774) and an adult life literally *writing against* what he well knew.[113] Bertie Greatheed's disavowal was lodged even deeper, embedded as something akin to a childish wish that someone would just take it away, make it better, make it disappear. There were few among his intimates and acquaintances who might have known

[105] 1707/117, 19 June 1807, WCRO.

[106] 1707/117, 21 January, 21 June 1807, WCRO. For merchant-house management of the system, see Hall, *Lucky Valley*, 156–201.

[107] 1707/119, 11 October 1810, WCRO.

[108] For Tomes, attorney, leading figure in the Warwick reform movement, banker and investor, and member of Parliament for Warwick 1826–32, see TOMES, John (1760–1844), of Jury Street, Warwick, Warws.: https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/tomes-john-1760-1844.

[109] 1707/119, 21 October 1810, WCRO.

[110] 1707/119, 22 October 1810, WCRO; "The successive departure of servants is painful," 1707/119, 24 November 1810, WCRO.

[111] 1707/121, 19 September 1814, WCRO.

[112] 1707/121, 10 December 1814, WCRO.

[113] Hall, *Lucky Valley*.

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something of what he felt. There are forty Warwickshire individuals who were compensated for the loss of their slaves under the Slavery Abolition Act in the Legacies of British Slave Ownership database. Greatheed did not dine with any of them—never named them. Samuel Peploe, one of the trustees of the St. Kitts estate, with whose family Bertie Jnr had been so intimate in Dresden, who in Vicenza in October 1804 delivered to Bertie Snr the letters announcing the existence of Ann Caroline, had a wife who brought with her the eventual portion of her slave-owning father's Grenada estate.[114] On his biographer's evidence, the topic of slavery was not raised between him and John Henry Williams, vicar of Wellesbourne and his "best friend." (It may have been given that Williams provided Greatheed with spiritual support over many years.) Since Bertie's wife was a creole, born on St. Kitts, there is room for speculation that she might have spoken into the deep silence about the Other Place that haunted Guy's Cliffe. But all we can tell is that he wanted the world to know (contemporaries, and those reading his journals now) that he detested the very idea of slavery and yet that there was no way out.

For his friend John Henry Williams's biographer, Greatheed was made on the model of the enlightened Christian gentleman. The enlightened Christian gentleman recorded the sermons he heard in local churches, without comment for the main part. His favorite source for private sermon-delivery to his household was Bishop Sherlock's *Sermons* in five volumes (1754–1758).[115] I cannot discern much connection to his own circumstances in the ones he named by their biblical text, but perhaps Romans 14:16—"Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil"—provoked reflection on their ironies.[116] In 1824 there were "Prayers at home and that sermon of Sherlock's which can not be too often read on Psalm 94.19—'In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.'"[117]

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In November 1807 Ann and Bertie Greatheed were in Liverpool. This was after they had learned that the merchant house of Shipley, Williams & Co had changed hands, and more immediately after the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade had received royal assent, on 25 March. To trade in human flesh was illegal from 1 May 1807. But there was still money to be made: the tourist industry had started to exploit the relics of the trade. There was a "guinea ship" down at the docks (a large cargo ship built or converted for transporting Black Africans across the Atlantic), "one of the few that still remains of those used in that most detestable traffic, now, thanks be to Heaven! no more. Her name is Mercury of about 300 tonns; she had only one voyage of 10½ months and cleared £16,000." Greatheed contemplated the numbers of slaves permitted on board, the time when

> she would have contained 700 ... Under deck the miserable wretches were stowed, the women aft, the boys in the middle; and the men in the large compartment forward each separated from the other by upright wooden pallisades and each having a grated hatchway to go up on deck. The height of these dreadful human cages is not quite sufficient to stand upright ... In this place the Slaves lay in two tier[s] fore and aft on each side.

[114] For Peploe, see footnote 36.

[115] Volume 5 was reissued in 1797: *Discourses Preached on Several Occasions. By the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Sherlock, D. D. ...* (Clarendon Press, 1797); or maybe Greatheed owned *Several Discourses Preached at the Temple Church ...*, 3 vols (J. Dickson and J. Fairburn, 1789).

[116] 1707/117, 28 February 1808, WCRO.

[117] 1707/125, 17 July 1824, WCRO.

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He continued:

> An old seaman showed me the vessel now upon sale with a besom at the mast head. [A broom, *for what?* To advertise that it was on the market? To cleanse and purify? To fend off evil spirits? To sweep the slave trade under the carpet of Britain's past?] He had been above 30 voyages to the coast and said, that even before the regulations as to number, the negroes were quite comfortable, and that since it was quite delightful, and the middle passage a perfect party of pleasure ... in which the sailors alone suffered any hardship, of which the captain would rather have 5 given to the deep than one black man. As for any feelings of a rational soul ... taken from his native land, torn from every tie of nature and blood ... consigned in an unknown hemisphere to perpetual slavery, that never seemed to enter his head. He had however seen in the former voyages seen 60 of these comfortable passengers die in a 6 or 7 week trip.

The man appeared "humane sensible and candid," wrote Greatheed. "He said very well now it was done with and there was an end to it!" His view was that the next thing the government should interfere with—"the next thing they should abolish"—was the impressing of seamen. He told the Greatheeds that "his only son of 19 was carried away, and who now cared for him[?]. Why, his maker his mother and himself." (The analogy with slavery was as central to the anti-impressment campaign as it was to the campaign for factory legislation.)[118] Greatheed's tour of the now defunct "guinea ship" allowed him to consign the slave trade to the past without acknowledging the mental gymnastics he himself had had to engage in to ignore his ongoing participation in enslavement.

The "old seaman" articulated what was first observed by social investigators of the mid-nineteenth century: the belief that the state cares first for *anyone* before it cares for its own working people (cares first for foreigners, refugees, the enslaved, asylum seekers, to bring the sentiment into 2024).[119] Greatheed questioned the man, found that "he had been a prisoner in France"; he spoke of "the badness of the government, and the good nature of the [French] people." As oral historian, social investigator Greatheed brooded on how social circumstance shaped political and social conviction. "In short, this old man who had passed his life in an occupation that the world supposes sufficient to extinguish every sentiment of mercy, and to convert a man into a tiger, has every appearance of religion, and is only under the mistake of considering Africans as cattle and not as fellow creatures." To ask *why*, if Greatheed thought of Africans as fellow creatures, could his mind not encompass his own profit from their enslavement, is probably the wrong question. The peroration he constructed out of the seaman's words limited itself to condemnation of the horrors of the middle passage; his discourse had always condemned the slave *trade* and it did so now. Speaking in the words of the "old seaman," he did what he had done all his life: preserve a perfect silence on the plantation system.

As far as an actually existing former sailor is concerned—would we expect an "enlightened" gentleman of the early nineteenth century to understand a laboring-class perspective? Understand the contemporary accusation that abolitionists spilled much ink over slavery in the colonies, but didn't give a fig for industrial "white slavery" at home, or the wage slavery of small children? There was so very much that Bertie Greatheed didn't

[118] 1707/117, 7 November 1807, WCRO; Christopher P. Magra, "Anti-Impressment Riots and the Origins of the Age of Revolution," *International Review of Social History* 58 (2013): 131–51.

[119] Discussing the 2024 Stockport Riots, David Olusoga wrote of one of "the most toxic and intentionally divisive falsehoods in the populist handbook"—that "the true working class are the 'white working class', and the difficulties they face are not a consequences of political choices ... but of 'elites' putting the needs of minority communities first." David Olusoga, "There Can Be No Excuses. The UK Riots Were Violent Racism Fomented by Populism," *Guardian*, 10 August 2024.

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understand. He had been brought up to it, this ignorant, not-understanding refusal to see. He remembered his teens, at home from school, watching the mowers in the meadow below Guy's Cliffe House. The family gave them beer as reward for being so neat in cutting right down to the water's edge. But watching from the window with his mother and aunt, all of them "expecting great fun" from the spectacle of plebeian debauchery, he saw that "they neither wrestled nor fought nor sang, but drank up their beer and went home." No one watching understood that the mowers were exhausted.[120] This was the early 1770s. It was easier to see social distinction when not at home: on an excursion out of Dresden "it was curious & rather disagreeable to observe the difference of our dinner and that of our conductors and carriers." The tourists had "breakfasted most earnestly twice ... [on] hen and tongue, and a fine mess of rice and iced wines and punch and heaven knows what ale," whilst the "little shrivelled fellows all gathered round a pan out of which each with his spoon took bread and milk as long as it lasted after which half of them fell asleep."[121]

"Such is the price of habit, prejudice and self-interest" he concluded at the end of his conversation with the Liverpool seaman in 1807, attributing to a working-class man the habits of mind and economic self-interest that sustained his own forty years of slave ownership. He *bought* and *brought* a child *into* this system, so that in 1835 Ann Caroline was compensated by the sum of £1,223 6s 7d for 84 slaves, emancipated under 1833 Slavery Abolition Act. He had paid a sum of money to her mother for her possession in 1805; he had expended a greater sum on making her "a free Denizen and liege subject." But she was not free to receive these monies in her own person: as a married woman, interpellated by the system of *coverture*, her husband Charles Percy "owned" the compensation money. Everyone was involved in the buying and selling and owning of people: many spoke of marriage under coverture as slavery, of all human relationships as "those of buyers and sellers ... What else could they be?"'

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Twenty years ago, Greatheed made me laugh. I thought him so *very large*, so very satisfied with his own self: "There are not many Gentlemen of near 49 years of age, and near 19 stone weight who make nothing of walking 8 miles out to dinner and 8 miles home again."[122] I was diverted by the idea of his striding past what in the 1860s would become my front door, on his way to a pre-booked spa treatment. He walked, I am sure of that; he paid the assessed taxes on a carriage and horse, but it is unlikely he had them harnessed up for a journey of a mere two miles. Back then, reading that he had got his "new pantry cleared out and fit for use and a very excellent one it is," was like a session with *Good Housekeeping*, indulging my pantry-envy.[123] By sniggering at him in an imagined Guy's Cliffe kitchen along with the servants, I made my allegiance with the workers who, wearied by the gales of laughter at the latest "servant joke" echoing from the dining room, managed the conditions of their life and labor by laughing right back.*

Greatheed's critical opinions entertained me (despite it all, they still do): he wrote of French pastoral as all "little lambkins with pink ribbons"; in the Saxon countryside he observed that "If it were not for the German travel writers I should be sentimental here, but their trash makes me afraid of even hinting at a sensation."[124] He was entertaining because he was aware of himself *as* a reader and as being read. He left a detailed account of his reading over twenty years; many historians can be diverted by working out how a mind in the

[120] 1707/116, 16 June 1806, WCRO.

[121] 1707/114, 20 July 1804, WCRO.

[122] 1707/118, 2 March, 24 July 1808, WCRO.

[123] 1707/118, 4 February 1809, WCRO.

[124] The lambkins remark was occasioned by reading Louis Pierre Florian, *Estelle* (Debure, 1788); 1707/113, 30 January 1804, WCRO; 1707/114, 20 July 1804, for the sentimental trash, WCRO.

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past was shaped by the written word. But not now, not anymore. No more laughter now. In 1817, receiving what appeared to be better news than usual from St. Kitts, he described by fecal analogy having brought himself "by immense effort to a West India letter, which gave the same relief as a dose of calomel [a laxative] in a case of long obstruction."[125] But he couldn't get it out. He couldn't eliminate it. This property, this house, this income, this status; this politics; those plays and books, that satire in the manner of Juvenal, and all that translation from the Latin and the Greek; this life; all that love. All of it shit. Every road you walk, every bridge you cross; this history here, now, that I have written: all shit.[126]

***Coda from the kitchen**: *I do know, as a servant, about the other place that shadows this one; I am not a fool. I have eyes and ears, and I can read, like everyone else in this kitchen. And there's always been that old chestnut "A Present for Servants" (13th edn, 1805) handed out willy-nilly by clergymen and employers for a century past, and to me, when I first went to service at the age of ten. Have I never heard "of Slaves in the Plantations and how they are used ... by some who are more savage than they Negroes they call so?" it asks. Thinking on these things, maybe I will appreciate my master and his lady, do my "Work heartily, without grudging." Fiddle to that! Back home, in our house, my father has started to cut up the multiple copies bestowed on our family since 1693 (1st edn) for use as bum wipes in the privy.*

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[125] 1707/122, 15 March 1817, WCRO. Calomel was mercurous chloride.

[126] Recent television drama has shifted the adverbial clause of place, as in *This Town* (drama series, BBC 1, 2024) and *This Country* (sitcom mockumentary, BBC 3, 2017), from the situational to the temporal, that is, to the historical. Here, "this history" or *This History*, suggest that everyday language has also become more "historical" when slavery is discussed.

**Cite this article:** Carolyn Steedman, "Buying People Is Wrong," *Journal of British Studies* 64 (2025): e19. https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2025.12