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THE TWO FACES OF THE *LONDON MAGAZINE*

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In his influential 1963 article on Lamb, Daniel Mulcahy argued that the Elian essays present two forces sometimes happily, sometimes unhappily, fused: the fantastic and the realistic. "Lamb's usual practice," Mulcahy wrote, "is to interweave with his tapestry of illusion a thread of reality. By this technique he creates the typically Elian point of view, in which the wonder and faith of a child interact with the awareness of an adult."[1] Mulcahy rightly suggests that in so doing Lamb was participating in some of the typical practices of the English Romantic movement.

But we can find an even more specific source for Lamb's "antithetical manner" in the nature of the early *London Magazine*. Lamb's first essay did not appear until the August, 1820, issue, and by that point the dual character of the magazine had already been established. In fact, the two faces of the *London Magazine* - which I shall call the critical and the creative - were suggested in the Prospectus and plainly made their first appearance in the initial issue. Those two dimensions are best represented by John Scott's editorial voice, and especially by his editorial "mouthpiece," the Lion's Head, and by Thomas Griffiths Wainewright's three personae, in particular Janus Weathercock. Not only was different matter presented by these literary players, but different *Weltanschauungen* were delivered to different kinds of created readers.

Such a dichotomy reflects the persistent Romantic belief in the distinction between the rational and the creative, a schism sometimes bridged by the powers of the imagination. Wordsworth, for example, may have believed that "Our meddling intellect / Miss-shapes the beauteous forms of things," but he also called Imagination "Reason in her most exalted mood."[2] Still, many of the Romantics, including Coleridge and the *Londoner*, De Quincey, saw imagination and reason as distinct faculties of the mind. More importantly for the *London Magazine*, several of the English Romantic writers applied such psychological areas to types of literary discourse: both Wordsworth and De Quincey, for example, classified literature according to such divisions of the human mind. If we modern readers at times find the content of these classifications overlapping or incongruous, it may well be because the Romantics saw their writings as presenting different perspectives for different groups of readers.

The distinction, then, between "rational" literature and "creative" literature was often blurred; and if we look over the contents of the first six issues of the *London Magazine*, we see pieces which fall into the former and essays which best fit into the latter - and some amphibious articles which seem to belong to both groups. John Scott undoubtedly wanted the magazine to present a balance and even a fusion between these two perspectives. Certainly his contemporaries could hardly agree on the main direction of the magazine. Both P G Patmore and Horatio Smith seemed to think Scott, and the critical/analytical content of the magazine its major appeal; while Bernard Barton felt that "short fugitive effusions" would be "capable of appreciation by the common run of readers."[4] Lamb, in his letters, also stressed the imaginative side of the *London*, and lamented the loss of the Opium Eater, Barry Cornwall, the Table-Talker and above all Janus Weathercock. "You must recruit," Lamb warned Hessey. "You will get too serious else. Janus was characteristic. He talked about it & about it. The Lond. Mag. wants the personal note too much. Blackw[d] owes everything to it."[5] Hazlitt, of course, could see no real unity in the post-Scott magazine, calling it a half-boiled rich plum-pudding.[6] But probably the best summary of the character of the *London Magazine* was written by its apprentice, Thomas Hood. In his 1829 eulogy, Hood showed clearly the division of the *London* into two camps: the critical/interpretative personae, and the imaginative and fanciful personae.

> Arrah, honey, why did you die? Had you not an editor, and elegant prose writers, and beautiful poets, and broths of boys for criticism and classics, and wits and humorists?...Hadn't you Lion's Heads with Traditional Literature? Hadn't you an Opium-Eater, and a Dwarf, and a Giant, and a Learned Lamb, and a Green Man?...Arrah, why did you die?[7]

Given such an array of pungent personalities, both colorful critics and striking imaginative writers, Hood's question is a hard one to answer. Certainly at first the two levels of the *London Magazine* worked successfully together, as John Scott had planned. Superficially, it seemed that Scott (and Baldwin) aimed to entertain and instruct his readers, drawing, perhaps, on the classical twin goals of poetry. "Our object," Scott wrote in the Prospectus,

> is to offer to the public a periodical work of the miscellaneous kind, entertaining by the variety of its contents, and conspicuous for its alertness in noticing matters of immediate interest; while at the same time it shall treat the important questions of social philosophy with care and attention indicating an ambition to take a respectable rank in literature. Essays and Criticisms on all the popular topics, amusements, events, and publications of the day will be found in our pages; and Scientific, Literary, and Political Notices will be gleaned for them from every part of Europe.[8]

Instruction, in the form of information and in the form of critical analysis, and entertainment, were to be the two chief concerns of the *London* readers, as Scott saw it. There could be no doubt that Scott intended to teach his readers a thing or two. He declared that "should we think any considerable body of readers unjust or uninformed, misled or uncandid, respecting honourable examples of the primitive and essential beauties of poetical composition, we shall not hesitate to probe the error to the quick..." (*LM*, I, vi).

This critical probing had to be balanced, of course, with the pleasures of verse, fiction, and generally imaginative writing. Scott admitted that "discussion must start fleeter and subtler game; excitements must be stronger; the stakes of all sorts higher; the game more complicated and hazardous." If the *London* did not compete on these terms, Scott knew, it would perish; and several historians of the journal agree that when instruction and improvement became the magazine's shibboleths under Knight's editorship, the end was in sight. Scott had a much broader view of what instructing his readers meant: it meant a re-creation of the present through critical and philosophical analysis and through creative prose and verse. "The *spirit* of things generally," Scott told his prospective readers, "and, above all, of the present time, it will be our business, or at least our endeavour, to catch, condense, and delineate" (*LM*, I, iv).

The representation of the spirit of the times in the *London Magazine* became, in the first year of its publication, the representation of distinct characters on the *London* stage. Foremost among them, at least, in the eyes of the *Londoners* themselves, as I have suggested, were Scott's editorial voice and Wainewright's Janus Weathercock. Later in that first year, of course, the "Learned Lamb" became another patron saint of the magazine, fusing the critical and fantastic strains in his *eidolon* of Elia. Historically, it was hardly surprising that fictious characters became the genii of the journal; obviously there was the tradition of Isaac Bickerstaff, the Spectator, Goldsmith's Citizen of the World, and even Johnson's Rambler to draw on. But the "form and pressure of the time" (as Scott wrote in the Prospectus to his earlier *Drakard's Paper*) seemed to demand embodiment in human form. Probably this derived ultimately from the philosophical and psychological premises of the Romantic era: if the structure of the socio-political world is shaped by the mind of man, then it is only natural to picture that world, and explain it, in terms of individuals. Certainly Wordsworth, De Quincey and Hazlitt all tried to "anatomise the frame of social life" in terms of the inner man; and here they may be echoing or borrowing a similar tradition current in the thought of the Schlegel brothers, Madame de Stael and Hegel. Besides such abstract sources, of course, we have to remember that the Regency was an age of magnificent and flamboyant personalities, and an era when great character actors and actresses dominated the boards.

John Scott did not unveil his distinctive *eidolon*, the Lion's Head, until the July, 1820, issue, but his critical perspective and his analytic voice were present in the magazine from the first issue. Scott evidently thought that his brand of analysis would "please the Million," as he wrote in his original blueprint for the *London*. Scott's journalism encompassed four aims: providing information on intellectual matters, especially continental issues; correcting the conventional wisdom on matters of taste and philosophy; probing the abstract, psycho-social forces operating behind ideas and events; and maintaining political impartiality.[9]

In fact Scott tried to sidestep politics in the *London*, a marked departure from his earlier editorial position in *Drakard's Paper*. "How little you say in the Prospectus about Politics!" Horatio Smith exclaimed to Scott.[10] Still, inevitably, politics seeped in, as it must in any journal that wanted to sell and that aimed to reflect the spirit of the times. While perhaps Scott stayed away from direct comment on political events, this did not stop him from commenting on the pollution of journalism by politics, and indeed, at the height of his political dispute with *Blackwood's*, he admitted that politics must be a part of the *London*'s fare.

> A publication, like ours, professing to reflect the actual features of the time, must be considered imperfect if it excludes [politics]; and, besides, we really feel ourselves responsible to our readers for affording them something like fair representation, and candid inquiry, on subjects so obscured by misrepresentation, and so abused by fraud.
>
> (*LM*, III, 156)

Scott intended to instruct his readers in political impartiality. He never lived to write directly on politics again, but without doubt his political affiliation, which Josephine Bauer calls "independent liberal," crops up in his literary reviews of Scott and Wordsworth, and of course in his attacks on "The Mohock Magazine," *Blackwood's*.

Scott, as he did in *Drakard's Paper*, is making a contract with a specific kind of reader: one who is perhaps deceived by fraudulent writers, but one who is open-minded, not only to different political slants, but to a wide range of subject matter. Scott's introduction to his Dramatic Review in *Drakard's Paper* is worth quoting because it served in many ways as a blueprint for Hazlitt's subjective and independent dramatic reviews in the *London*.

> ...in the conduct of our *DRAMATIC REVIEW*, we shall be free, resolute, and unbiassed; holding it our duty, as witnesses between the public and the theatre, "to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Unconnected with proprietors, authors, or performers, the mind of the writer will pursue its investigations uninterrupted from without; and a faithful picture of its impressions will be exhibited to the readers.[11]

This has important implications for the *London* essayists and the type of essay they wrote. It assumes, at base, an affective/subjective brand of criticism, one that is based on the critic's personal response to art and one that attempts to re-create such a response in its readers. It also assumes, or at the least endorses, a structure that is digressive and unstructured in the usual logical ways, a structure that is based on associative psychology. At the same time, such an editorial policy demands a reader who will respond emotionally to criticism and who will be interested in subjective, emotional and meditative responses to art.

As Scott had written in the Prospectus to the *London*, the most broad and general speculations of the writer would not be excluded from the pages of the magazine. And certainly Scott took a conspicuous lead in such broad perspectives. He had written in the Prospectus that the *London*'s investigations of literature would lead it into "an examination of the various questions that arise out of the great distinctions of national character, age, public circumstances, and personal disposition" (*LM*, I, v). In his first instalment of "Living Authors," Scott attempts an analysis not only of the mind of "The Author of the Scotch Novels," but gives a thumbnail sketch of the "Caledonian" mind, as Lamb was to call it later. "The writer of the Scotch novels betrays nothing of himself," John Scott writes,

> but the vivid impression which the genuine features of his subject have made on his mind: he is personally lost in the idea of the characters which he represents; and, whatever fault we may have to find with his descriptions, or whatever merit we may see in them, they all pass as more or less lucky seizures of the actual lineaments of nature. (*LM*, I, 13)

Through the characters of Sir Walter Scott's novels, then, the *London* editor attempted to trace the inner nature of the novelist. In one long sentence midway through his essay, Scott summarizes the novelist's qualities as love of nature, admiration for inner character, and acquaintance with low and high life (*LM*, I, 18). There is much more in the essay, of course. After recounting one memorable scene, John Scott bursts into this apostrophe:

> The sentiments of the heart of man seem to be essentially true and noble, however conflicting their manifestations may be in different individuals; and, once convinced of this, charity for what clashes with our own opinions and interests, sympathy with others in their misfortunes, and a sense of consolation when we struggle with affliction ourselves, grow up in the mind. (*LM*, I, 15)

This is a key to Scott's *modus operandi*, to his editorial persona, and to the kind of readers he wanted to attract. He wants (and expects) his readers to join him in this sympathetic union with Scott's characters; he is basing his interpretation on his own emotional reaction to the novels, and he is posing as a kind of common reader; he is delving beneath plot and characterization into the general, cosmic human psychology at work.

Later in the same piece, fulfilling his own promise to examine how "national character" affects literature, Scott gives a description of the Scottish temperament, and we should read this as Scott's proto-autobiography, his own version of the Caledonian mind, in sharp contrast to Lamb's in "Imperfect Sympathies." While Lamb accuses the Scots of literal-mindedness, Scott sees the Scottish people (and himself, of course) as nearly transcendental.

> When and where has there been another people so deeply and thoroughly imbued with an habitual inspiration of lofty thoughts and lofty conduct, as the Scottish nation was, when its whole soul and language, throughout all its classes, were full, even to saturation, of the majesty, efficacy, and eloquence of the Hebrew Scriptures? (*LM*, I, 19)

The road Scott was to take in the *London Magazine*, and the road on which he expected his readers to follow him, was the high road of "lofty thoughts and lofty conduct." The same sort of probing of character, preoccupation with profound topics, and political tolerance characterize Scott's "The Influence of Religious and Patriotic Feeling on Literature," which also appeared in the *London*'s maiden issue.

But Scott was not to find his most perfect editorial persona until the July, 1820 issue. With that issue began his "Lion's Head," an editorial preface well-remembered by Hood and other *Londoners*. The Lion's Head was in many respects a brilliant solution to the different problems Scott was facing. He needed an *eidolon* that would differentiate the *London* from its competitors, especially *Blackwood's*; he needed a persona that could handle both soap-box oration and amiable jocularity. At the same time, the Lion's Head suggested the stalwart, independent British liberal patriotism Scott had espoused since Waterloo, independent liberalism that he saw as the essence of the British character.[12] As the king of beasts, the Lion's Head could roam at will, and roar courageously when the occasion demanded, or purr with approbation. It was hardly a fantastic or incredible persona, but one purposely chosen to awake a whole train of associations in the mind of the reader.

It served, of course, three very practical ends. In this editorial "frontispiece," Scott could advertise the contents of the current issue, preview next month's offerings, and reply to correspondents and would-be contributors. After Scott's death, Tom Hood took over the Lion's Head and raised this latter function to the heights of the rococo pun with such one-liners as "The Echo we fear will not answer" or "The article on agricultural distress will only increase it."

Scott had already laid the groundwork for Hood's *bon mots*, but his humor tends to be more the vitriolic humor of satire than the flummery of Hood's word-games. He saw the Lion's Head as something more than self-puffing or editorial repartee. His very first instalment of the Lion's Head, in July, 1820, included an ironically self-deprecating defense of Wordsworth after the poet was attacked in another journal;

> The dignity of the office of an editor of a Magazine, we are not inclined to estimate so highly as we hope our readers do: nay, we have sometimes been inclined to class Magazine-reading with the predominating evils of the times - such as the National Debt, Liver Complaints, our Criminal Code, and the Ladies' Projecting Bonnets: - but if our vocation gives us advantages, which a higher one would not confer, for whipping indoors the troublesome fray that hang on the heels of noble natures in their passage to fame, we may surely feel our consciences at ease; and as to our *ambition* - why we must just be contented to let it subside to the faithful discharge of a street-beadle's duty. (*LM*, II, 7-8)

The Lion's Head is still concerned with lofty thoughts and lofty conduct, and it is claiming the prerogative of pummeling, if necessary, the heads of miscreants and offenders.

Scott by no means surrendered his right to explore his territory, to "snuff about" and wander into topical or philosophical matters in his leonine safaris. "This INSTITUTION," Scott explained in his second Lion's Head,

> has occasioned some inquiries; among others it has been asked, whether THE LION'S HEAD is *intended* to be *jocular*? It might be dangerous to answer this question - and Lions are not apt to commit themselves. Suffice it, then, to say, that our's roars *ex cathedra*, as the mouthpiece of the *Magazine*. According to the fulness of our Letter-box, he venteth his responses, retorts, or explanations; occasionally, too, pushing his nose a little beyond the bars of his own den, just to snuff what is going on about him. (*LM*, II, 122)

The Lion's Head was, obviously, an important means Scott used to stay in touch with a very large and significant sector of his readership: the *London*'s contributors and correspondents. At the same time it allowed him the freedom of jocularity and irony, as well as the rigors of serious argument.

Scott defended playfully the veracity of the Lion's Head and, in one early passage, differentiated the *London*'s readers from other, lower-class, less "cultured" readers:

> A suspicion is intimated by a correspondent, that the Lion's Head sometimes *fabricates*; and the paragraph (see last Number) on the advocate of Debating Clubs, is given as an instance. This is a great mistake, however; the Lion's Head does not belong to the manufacturing classes - nor would it put its penny into Cobbett's empty subscription box if it did. (*LM*, II, 242)

This is a declaration that covers a lot of ground: Scott is here making his political position known, is expressing his opinion on radical popular journalism, is delineating the social class of his readers, and is (with some ironic inversion) declaring his right to fabricate if he chooses, a right Lamb was to assert in a similar fashion in the pages of the Lion's Head (*LM*, IV, 465-66). Chiefly, however, it was with reality and truth that the Lion's Head dealt.

It was also a kind of billboard. "We are truly rich in prepared articles for our next Number," Scott wrote in November, 1820, "1st, We have a *chef-d'oeuvre* of a *Table-Talk* - the best yet, we think..." Scott had a good eye; he was referring to Hazlitt's "On the Pleasures of Painting." Scott was justifiably proud of the quality of the *London*, and since he was convinced the magazine was good because his editorial principles were sound, his advertisements sometimes transmute into policy statements.

> In the course of the last six months we have been lucky enough to make some most valuable acquisitions of Contributors, as the public cannot fail to have remarked, - and we have every reason to count on the fidelity of those who have joined us. The wish of the Conductors of THE LONDON MAGAZINE (for which the LION pledges his word of honour) is to give a free, independent, and honest tone to Literary discussion; - to introduce into it a spirit of candour, and to expel from it the common-place severities, as well as the maudlin praises that degrade criticism. (*LM*, II, 595)

In this passage we can clearly see how the Lion's Head, with its suggestions of courage, forthrightness, honor, was a superb distillation of Scott's editorial practices and voice, and a fitting symbol for the kind of independent-minded, honest English readers Scott wanted to cultivate. Of course, any literary lion, and the *London* Lion was no exception, who claims his duty is policing the world of Regency journalism, is bound to be a bit bumptious at times; and this egotism, along with the Lion's literal-mindedness, served well as a foil to the second "genius" or voice of the *London Magazine* - the dandified characters created by T G Wainewright.

Wainewright drew his personae from the Regency dandy tradition, just as Swift drew his Isaac Bickerstaff from the quacks and phony prognosticators of his day.[13] Though Wainewright playfully tried to differentiate his pseudonyms and to feign outrage when one was confused with another, all were cut from the same cloth. He created four in all: Egomet Bonmot, Janus Weathercock, the Roué, and Cornelius van Vinkbooms. Wainewright took a great deal of care in building up each *eidolon*, and he took a great deal of delight in suddenly tearing each down. He carried the discontinuity and the teasing of the reader that Lamb employed in his Elian essays to their extremes. At the same time, like the Lion's Head, Wainewright's pieces were often self-reflexive: they were advertisements for the magazine, they talked about it and about it.

Egomet Bonmot appeared in the first issue of the *London*, immediately behind John Scott's article on "Living Authors." In his "Modest Offer of Service from Mr. Bonmot to the Editor and Ancestral Enormities (Taken, with liberties, from the French)," Wainewright announces,

> SIR, Hearing it whispered that a luminary, in the form of a new magazine, is about to shew itself above our literary horizon, I hereby tender my powers of elevation to bring it, with trump and timbrel-clang, and general shout, to the zenith of triumphant popularity. (*LM*, I, 22)

What Wainewright goes on to develop in this prelude is a disjunct attitude towards his readers, reflected in a disjunct style with disjunct matter. He simultaneously hobnobs with and condescends to his readers. "I would have you know," Bonmot sniffs,

> that it is for me
> - no more difficile
> Than for a blackbird 'tis to whistle;
> to discourse in terms, comprehensible only to the initiate few, about the wits of Elizabeth's reign; nay to describe self-evident beauties in Chaucer, Spencer, Milton, and all the poets that have ever lived: - dead things with inbreathed sense I am able to pierce, and, by windy suspirations of oracular breath, pour into any reader's mind the genuine characteristics of the great and good of every kindred and nation under heaven. I know how to apply sententious opinions in the mode of modern infallibility. (*LM*, I, 22)

In other words, Bonmot is promising both to enlighten and confuse his readers, and to say nothing at all in a great burst of hot air. It is, like so much academic discourse, spouting learned twaddle, the main difference being that it does so with mock, not real, bravado. Bonmot is taking a potshot at the Reviews and *Blackwood's* by claiming expertise in "modern infallibility;" and while Scott's editorial voice hardly claims infallibility, it is certainly sententious and high-minded, in sharp contrast to Bonmot's ironic self-advertisement. Bonmot warns his readers that his pieces will be broken, open-ended, abrupt. Like Tristam Shandy, the only thing that really holds Wainewright's essays together is his persona itself, which has defined itself as discontinuous, and has, in a sense, created its own license for broken style and fractured form.[14]

Janus Weathercock was perhaps most characteristic of all Wainewright's masks. His tabby cat, his mustard-yellow gloves, his quizzing glass, all added up to a dandified aesthete. A late description of Janus's boudoir - with its sundome, its utter silence, its blue silk drapery, its conservatory - epitomized, as well as Janus's other paraphernalia, his character.[15] But probably his own voice catches his personality most fully. "And now, my pupils," Janus wrote at one point,

> I will do a very handsome thing; for if any of you, living west of the Strand, will ensure me a roast leg of mutton, and potatoes, a glass of good port, and an air from a pretty lady, married or single, I will, at a three days summons, unless better engaged, with my very best *loons* on, deliver my judgment, gratis, on all matters connected with *taste*, past, present, and to come. - Witness our hand, from our pomona-green morrocco *chaise lounge*. (*LM*, IV, 664)

With slight differences, Wainewright's other pseudonymns, C van Vinkbooms, Egomet Bonmot, and the Roué, display the same traits: conceit, condescension, voluptuousness, "culture," and fashion-consciousness. Despite his efforts to separate a Roué from a Dandy, Wainewright's description of a Roué fits all four of his characters nicely: "Ease, self-possession, *la porte de cavalier*," scholarship, "elegant accomplishments."[16]

Like Janus Weathercock, van Vinkbooms is a dilettante of art, and he shares Weathercock's expansive ego and his discursive style. Perhaps van Vinkbooms is a bit more pedantic, and a bit less polished and decadent; but the resemblance was so close Wainewright could have Weathercock complain about Cornelius van Vinkbooms.

> Who is that fellow with the Batavian, broad-bottom, tobacco-scented name - Wankin, Wynken, Stinking Brooms (as it has been said that Elia

> called him one day), who takes liberties with my appellation and style? Some broken picture-cleaver, or hackney drawing-master I take it; though I recollect some one whispering that it was my Lord Stafford's dilettante porter. (*LM*, V. 470)

Here we see, among other things, the self-reflexive nature of Wainewright's characters, talking about themselves, about the magazine and its editor, about the other *London* writers. It is a technique that constantly breaks the flow of reading and forces the reader to consider the medium, earlier numbers, other essays. The mock-complimentary address Wainewright often applies to his readers; at other times he is condescendingly expository, or even quite intimate. "Yet only think, propriety and decorum-loving reader," Janus declares in a tribute to Spring, "of Janus, that austere, sour, solid critic and philosopher - the sheet-anchor of the *LONDON* - rolling under a hedge, like a little boy, or a cow!!! Suppose we had been caught in the fact, by the Editor, or any of the proprietors!" (*LM*, I, 627). And in the condescending vein: "And now, reader of MINE; wert thou admitted, for a moment, within the veil of mystery, among the puppets of a magazine, thou would'st learn, that it is not an *unknown* thing for authors to criticize *their own works*..." (*LM*, I, 660).

That last passage serves as a cut at *Blackwood's* and the *New Monthly*, as well as talking down to Janus's reader. But Janus was not above open solicitation to his readers:

> Dear readers, who have had the politeness to go so far with me - good night - God bless you all - and keep you free from such a vile fever and inflamed wind-pipe as I have now! If any of you are good-natured and idle, you cannot employ a few minutes more charitably, than by writing a line or two to our amiable Editors (*signed Constant Readers!!*) requesting them by all means "to continue the agreeable and popular lectures" of JANUS WEATHERCOCK. (*LM*, VI, 453)

As all these passages suggest, Wainewright, in his various guises, sparred with the other *Londoners*, especially the Editor, incessantly. In the June, 1820, issue, for example, Janus (to the obvious irritation of the editor) does not complete his "Jumble," his review of the Exhibition and theater. It is completed later in the same issue - inserted late, the Editor claims - and it is paired with a review of the Royal Academy Exhibition probably written by Scott (*LM*, I, 625-34; 700-704). At other points Janus Weathercock reminds the editor that the latter agreed that Janus "should be allowed to be as profound or as flighty, as serious or as comical" as he pleased (I, 285); and at a later point Weathercock complains that the magazine has left him behind (V, 468). In his swan song, "Janus Weatherbound: or the Weathercock Steadfast for Lack of Oil," Janus protests at cuts in his pieces by the editor (VII, 45), and perhaps the "lack of oil" that kept Weathercock steadfast was tardy payment for his pieces. Wainewright also posed as the Editor, to puff himself as Egomet Bonmot (I, 657). Sometimes, however, the "Editor" did intervene, a custom established by Scott and continued by Hood after the former's death.[17] Usually we see the Editor playing straight-man to Wainewright's funny-man, the former taking the tack of dry, understated verisimilitude, the latter the tack of outrageous invention. It all served to advertise the magazine, and to constantly disrupt the form.

The form Wainewright characteristically followed was a kind of framed digression, the frame being either one of place or of a journey. Controlling it all was the persona's personality itself, a personality founded on the very principles of digression and interruption. "If you publishers find Janus doing mischief," Wainewright warned in the third number of the *London*,

> they must act the part of Jupiter, launch a thunderbolt at his head by the two-penny post, (you know his address), and tumble him from his car! In the mean time, it is his intention to gallop on, in his own wild, but, he flatters himself, smart cavalier-like fashion. (*LM*, I, 285)

One of Wainewright's finest essays is "Much Ado About Nothing," an Egomet Bonmot piece. It is a clever satire on magazine "puffing," for which Henry Colburn of the *New Monthly* was notorious, and against which John Scott vigorously campaigned. Wainewright begins the piece in the guise of the Editor writing about Egomet Bonmot, or more properly he masquerades as Bonmot masquerading as the Editor The opening section of the essay deserves to be quoted in full, because it is an acute analysis of Wainewright's method, the method of many *Londoners*, and the practice common to the *London*'s periodical rivals.

> It is not known in what a variety of shapes he has been figuring away through our pages. Everything by fits, and nothing long, he changes about - not with the phases of the moon, but the minutes on the clock; - and one revolving hour shall find him critic, fiddler, poet, and buffoon. *He cannot last long*. We are something like adepts in diagnostics, and repeat that he cannot last long. The *material* must wear out with the friction of such violent changes. Who can be wise, frolicsome, temperate, furious, tragical, comical, helterskelter - one thing down another thing come on, - in a moment, without damage? No man! And yet such is Bonmot; - though he certainly does afford *one* specimen of inimitability, in that perfectly semper-identical display of idiosyncratic *egotism* which runs through and leavens all his varieties. (*LM*, I, 657)

"Much Ado About Nothing" is a collection of fragments and digressions by and about Egomet Bonmot, "A Century of Good Things" such as "THOUGHTS. - On our treatment of BURNS, contrasted with the mode pursued by the *Scandinavians* with regard to their SKALDS..." At the end, Bonmot drops his mask as editor and confesses his charade. He points out the article has had "the requisite *beginning, middle,* and *end*," and to prove his case he directs the reader back to the first sentence:

> my sole object, from first to last, having been to lay open the most approved method of treating that NOBLE SCIENCE, described by the two syllables which stand at the very thresh-hold of this article (pray look back; you will find them there), making up the same word which has been echoing throughout, and with which I shall now very consistently conclude, namely - PUFFING! (*LM*, I, 660)

The farce is complete. Bonmot has (as he claimed) dutifully obeyed the classic Ciceronian tripartite structure, but he has also massacred it. Wainewright, as Cornelius van Vinkbooms, later complained bitterly about beginnings and endings, preferring always the unstructured middle (*LM*, IV, 66). By following the established essay form and enshrining it on one level, and nonchalantly violating it on other levels, by appearing as the Editor, Bonmot, and other personae, and admitting such impostures, Wainewright has called attention to the essay itself, to the magazine, and to the role of personae in duping, informing and amusing the reader.

Wainewright, wrote Tim Chilcott, "by gathering much of his material from the *London* circle itself, by addressing it in his articles,...acted as a synthesizing force for the magazine as a whole."18

Between Wainewright and Scott fell the field in which the other *Londoners* crafted their essays: Wainewright's fantastical characters and Scott's affable but forthright voice defined the formalistic extremes of the *London Magazine* essays. At one end is Wainewright's way of dealing with his readers: conning them, flattering them, promising them an ordered, unified reading experience and giving them an anarchic presentation of personality. At the other end is Scott's approach to his readers: usually honest, open, intellectually ethical, delivering a reasoned, logical, though not philosophically cramped essay. To turn back to the *radix* of "essay," Wainewright gives us the untidy experiment of a dilettante (or someone posing as such), Scott the organized efforts of a professional journalist.

Unfortunately there is not space here to examine how Lamb incorporated Scott's realistic, plain-dealing voice and Wainewright's fantastic, egotistic voice into his Elian persona, nor how Lamb managed to amalgamate, in some senses, Scott's ideal reader and Wainewright's ideal reader. Clues to how he managed to balance the two are scattered throughout the *London Magazine*. In his short piece, "Elia to his Correspondents," for example, Elia replies to a skeptic who has unearthed a factual discrepancy in "Old Benchers of the Inner Temple." Elia retorts that he "hath not so fixed his nativity (like a rusty vane) to one dull spot, but that, if he seeth occasion, or the argument shall demand it, he will be born again, in future papers, in whatever place, and at whatever period, shall seem good unto him" (*LM*, IV, 465-66). We recall that the postscript to "Old Benchers" was similarly concerned with answering an accusation of factual inaccuracy. In fact, Elia was always teasing his readers with "facts" about himself, and he consistently left his readers wondering if the data about Elia's life, and even Elia himself, were real or pure fantasy. In some ways the persona of Elia played Scott's voice off against Wainewright's.

Thomas De Quincey, writing a draft advertisement for the *London*'s publisher, John Taylor, said the publishing firm intended to avoid control of the magazine by any one individual because such domination can destroy free thinking "by cramping and distorting the natural movements of energetic thinkers."19 At least in the early issues, especially those during John Scott's tenure, we can see a diversity of approaches and personalities with no single figure overshadowing the *London*'s pages. There are many paths taken in the early *London Magazine*. But we may be able at least to say that those paths are bounded by the high road of "lofty thoughts and lofty conduct," the rational and veracious voice of John Scott and the Lion's Head, and by the crooked track of "Janus's Jumble," the fantastic and imaginative voice of T G Wainewright.

NOTES

1 "Charles Lamb:The Antithetical Manner and the Two Planes," *Studies in English Literature* 3 (1963), 517.

2 "The Tables Turned," ll. 26-27; *The Prelude* (1850), XIV: 192. On the foundation of Romantic theories of the imagination in eighteenth-century psychology, see M H Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Norton, 1958), 156-83.

3 For sound discussions of De Quincey's divisions of literature, see

S K Proctor's *Thomas De Quincey's Theory of Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1943), 107ff., and John E Jordan's *Thomas De Quincey, Literary Critic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 30-42.

4 National Library of Scotland MSS 1706, f. 106, 189, and 5-7.

5 *Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E V Lucas (London: Dent, 1935), II, 323. See also II, 385, 394-95.

6 *Complete Works*, ed. P P Howe (London: Dent & Sons, 1930-34,) 16.232.

7 Cited in J C Reid, *Thomas Hood* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p.41.

8 *London Magazine*, vol.I, p.vii. All future references to the magazine will be cited by volume and page in the text. On the *London Magazine*, see Josephine Bauer, *The London Magazine, 1820-29* (Copenhagen: Rosenhilde, 1952); Tim Chilcott, *A Publisher and His Circle* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 129-60; Elmer L Brooks, "Studies in the *London Magazine*," PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1954; Claude A Prance and Frank P Riga, *Index to the London Magazine* (New York: Garland, 1978), xi-xxix; Walter Graham, *English Literary Periodicals* (New York: Nelson, 1930); Prance, "The *London Magazine*," *Charles Lamb Society Bulletin* (May, 1951), 3-5; T Rowland Hughes, "The *London Magazine*," PhD dissertation, Jesus College, Oxford, 1931. See also the appropriate volume of the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*.

9 On Scott, see: Bauer, *The London Magazine*; Bauer, "John Scott's Weekly *Champion* 1813-1817," PhD dissertation, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1954; T R Hughes, "John Scott: Editor, Author and Critic," *London Mercury* 21 (April, 1930), 518-28; D A Low, "A Biographical and Critical Study of John Scott, 1784-1821," PhD dissertation, Cambridge University, 1967; Alan L Strout, "John Scott and Maga," *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 August 1936, p.697; Jacob Zeitlin, "The Editor of the *London Magazine*," *JEGP* 20 (1921), 328-354.

10 National Library of Scotland MS 1706, f.189. Letter, undated, probably December, 1819.

11 *Drakard's Paper*, 10 January 1813, p.6.

12 See Bauer's 1953 thesis on Scott's earlier political beliefs.

13 An excellent introduction to Dandyism is T A J Burdett's *The Rise and Fall of a Regency Dandy* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1981), which details the successes and mischances of Scrope Davies, his circle, and Regency Dandyism as a whole. On Wainewright, see *Essays and Criticisms*, ed. W Carew Hazlitt (London: Reeves & Turner, 1880), esp. pp. ix-lxxxi; and Jonathan Curling, *Janus Weathercock: The Life of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, 1794-1847* (London: Nelson, 1938).

14 See also *LM*, I, 23.

15 See *LM*, IV, 658-59, and Bauer, *The London Magazine*, 168ff.

16 *LM*, III, 420.

17 See *LM*, V, 469. Curling records that Proctor thought Scott accepted Wainewright's pieces as comic relief to his (and his friends') "serious" articles, and Curling traces the antagonistic relationship between Scott

and Wainewright. See pp.111-137.

18 Chilcott, p.149.

19 From an unpublished MS in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, cited by Chilcott, p.142.

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LE VOYAGE DE MONSIEUR CHARLES AGNEAU

Charles Branchini

Charles Lamb, and his sister Mary, were tolerably frequent travellers, but had for many years confined themselves exclusively to their own country. They were acquainted with the Lake District, the University towns of Oxford and Cambridge, Bristol and Salisbury, Margate and the Isle of Wight and divers other places, but until quite late in their lives they had never attempted a trip to foreign parts, although such a venture had been mooted as long ago as 1802. However, a decision was made and preparations undertaken for a visit to France in the summer of the year 1822, and there are cogent explanations for the long delay in carrying out the project.

Firstly, we must always remember the state of Europe at the time. Except for a brief interval during the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, when travelling abroad was resumed, Europe had been continuously in turmoil, as Napoleon's armies held nations in thrall from Moscow to the coast of Portugal. However, all hostilities had ceased by June 1815 when defeat at Waterloo had resulted in the 'Corsican Ogre', now risen to be Napoleon, Empereur des Français, being deposited on the Island of Saint Helena. A further seven years elapsed before Charles and his sister determined to try their luck holidaying on the Continent.

If we feel a little inclined to think that a degree of prevarication is evident we should always bear in mind the general conditions prevailing at the time and particularly the personal circumstances of the Lambs themselves. It is true that the worst hardships of travel by road had somewhat ameliorated since the end of the previous century, when Horace Walpole commented 'Never go to Sussex if you love good roads', and two gentlemen named respectively Telford and McAdam, whose names are recalled even to-day, had done much valuable work. In particular, the Lambs were heading for Brighton, then just emerging from the obscurity of being a small Sussex fishing village called Brighthelmstone and preparing to become a social centre for the Prince Regent, the Corinthians, and the 'jet-set' of the time. Even so, a coach trip could well be something of an ordeal, including being frozen in winter and baked in summer, not to mention being enclosed in a stuffy wooden box with ill-smelling strangers.

But, for better or for worse, the die was cast and the first mention we have of their departure from home comes, appropriately enough, from Henry Crabb Robinson, of whom it has been said that 'he read everything, good or bad, that fell in his way and met everyone of note in the world of letters', which, if we consult his diary, we can believe without difficulty. He was one of the Lambs' most regular callers and he writes in his diary for June 17th, 1822 'To call on the Lambs and take leave, they setting out for France next morning. I gave Miss Lamb a letter for Miss Williams, to whom I sent a copy of "Mrs. Leicester's School". The Lambs have a Frenchman as their companion, and Miss Lamb's nurse, in case she should be ill. Lamb was in high spirits; his sister rather nervous. Her courage in going is great'.

Mary's nurse, Sarah James, appears to have been a particularly felicitous choice, as she remained a life-long friend. The courier, apparently named Guichy, was essential to act as interpreter, as Charles's knowledge of French was rudimentary. It is even said that, wishing to order an egg, he told the waiter to bring 'eau-de-vie', and was so pleased with the result that he asked for a repeat. This could rightfully be called a 'Freudian' error.

It appears that one of the motives for the visit was to assist Emma Isola in her studies and it was written many years later that Mary 'with her indefatigable perseverance overcame the difficulty and brought to their joint assistance the complete conjugation of the verbs, affirmatively, negatively, interrogatively and negatively-interrogatively', which, if true, represented an impressive performance in view of the brevity of the visit.

The journey, like Gaul, was divided into three parts, firstly stage-coach, then steam packet, followed by diligence, and there are no grounds for thinking that it was anything but relatively uneventful. Stage-coaches, under good conditions and with frequent changes of horses, often moved with surprising celerity and, by that period, and especially in daylight, mounted gentlemen were not likely to appear to request your wealth at a pistol's end. And so the party reached Brighton for their first glimpse of the sea.

Charles's reaction to the sea is given us quite clearly in his essay on the Old Margate Hoy, where he says 'I cannot stand all day on the naked beach, watching the capricious hues of the sea, shifting like the colours of a dying mullet...While I gaze upon the sea I want to be on it, over it, across it' and in this case his wish was granted. Earlier in the same essay Charles Lamb asks rhetorically 'Can I forget thee, thou old Margate Hoy, with thy weather-beaten, sun-burnt captain, and his rough accommodations - ill exchanged for the foppery and freshwater niceness of the modern steam-packet?'. But delightful as the old Margate Hoy may well have been for a modest trip round the lighthouse, the steampacket had everything in its favour for a straight journey across the Channel.

Presumably the crossing was smooth enough, it was, after all, in mid-June, and soon the shadow of the coast of France would appear on the horizon, and it is perhaps a suitable moment to review briefly the state of the country they were approaching. It was, at least, at peace, after almost two decades of war, but such was the destitution of political ideas after Waterloo, that no better solution could be found to replace the Emperor Napoleon than to restore the Bourbons, whose extravagance and callous lack of any sense of responsibility had succeeded in bringing about the French Revolution. The unhappy, and relatively harmless, Louis XVI and his Queen, had paid the penalty for the sins of their ancestors, and all trace had been lost of his son, the Dauphin, so it was his brother who reigned as Louis XVIII, and the period is known as 'La Restauration'. It was, in fact, the France that provides the background for Dumas' *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* and for Balzac's *La Comedie Humaine*. The clock had been put back, but not right back. The Government was repressive, but not tyrannical, and in France, as in England, a period of great expansion was approaching.

The party proceeded to Amiens, some sixty miles further on their road, travelling in a diligence. The town to-day has a population of about 100,000 persons and is probably recalled by most of us as a convenient halting-place for our first or last night in France. At that time it might well have been a pleasant market town of perhaps a quarter of the present population, but to-day it is a straggling unattractive semi-industrialised city which has had the misfortune of lying in the path of no less than three invasions, 1870, 1914 and 1940. There can be little there to-day on which the eyes of our travellers might have rested, except the magnificent French Gothic cathedral built in the 13th century and awarded no less than three stars in the Michelin Guide. But the town is memorable in this story for the fact that it was there that the blow fell that had been expected all along. It is not unknown even to-day for people to be afflicted with 'travel angst' and no less a person than Tom Moore, the poet, after meeting the Lambs subsequently, speaks of Mary as 'the lady who went mad in a diligence on the way to Paris'. But this unfortunate event had been foreseen and preparations made. Poor Mary could not proceed and so was left in lodgings under the care of the admirable Sarah James. However, there is, one is glad to say, a relatively happy ending to the story and Mary comes back on to the scene later.

So Charles and the courier embark on the seventy odd miles that separate them from their goal, but make first for Versailles, where resided the Lambs' main contact with France and indeed the chief instigator of the whole adventure, James Kenney, who is described as a dramatist, although it appears that most of his work is lost or forgotten. Versailles, now a part of the Parisian urban sprawl, would at that time have been an entirely separate town of modest dimensions, but renowned then as now for the magnificent palace, the extravagance of which played so large a part in provoking the French Revolution.

About a year later Mary Shelley, after a visit, writes to Leigh Hunt a relevant and informative letter, saying 'I was pleased to see the Kenneys, especially Kenney, since he is, dear Hunt, in your circle, and I asked him accordingly a number of questions. They have an immense family and a little house quite full - and in the midst of a horde of uninteresting things, one graceful and amiable creature, Louise Holcroft, the oldest of the Holcrofts' girls by Mrs. Kenney. She is now, I suppose, about 2 and 20.' and she continues a little further on to throw more light on the Lambs' experiences by adding 'Two years ago the Lambs made an excursion to France. When at Amiens poor Miss Lamb was taken ill in her usual way and L. was in despair. He met, however, with some acquaintances, who got Miss L. into proper hands, and L. came on to Versailles and stayed with the Kenneys. Going on very well, if the French wine had not been too good for him.' which leads us to the conclusion that perhaps Charles Lamb, as was occasionally his wont, may perhaps have over-indulged himself.

Quite soon, however, Charles Lamb and his French-speaking companion are on the road again with Paris as their objective. He tells us little about the latter, except that he was 'blind to all distractions of life, except those of sex', and they must have made an oddly-assorted couple, Charles hunting for books and M. Guichy pursuing other interests.

As can well be imagined, at that time, when London itself had a toll-gate at Hyde Park Corner and beyond was country, the Paris of that time was similarly restricted in size, and had still many aspects of a medieval city. Baron Haussmann's 'urban improvements' under the Second Empire lay more than three decades ahead and the 'Fortifications', which formed for many years the boundary of the twenty 'arrondissements' and which now provide

Paris with a splendid motorway, had not yet been dreamt up. Montmartre, like the villages of Highgate and Hampstead, was completely rural and given over to agriculture, vineyards and windmills. The coming of the railways and the construction of the mainline stations, still a good number of years away, give us a clear conception of the extent of the city in Lamb's day.

There is, however, much even to-day still remaining, that Charles would have seen. Foremost are the churches, and pre-eminently Notre-Dame, rearing its imposing bulk on the Ile de la Cité, together with 'La Sainte Chapelle' and the 'Conciergerie'. The church of St Gervais stood behind the medieval Hôtel de Ville, burnt down during the Commune and subsequently re-built and the magnificent St Eustache looked down on the market which was not yet the famous 'Halles', only recently demolished, nor must we overlook St Germain l'Auxerrois, from whose tower the bells rang to initiate the massacre of St Bartholomew. All these, and many others, that we can see to-day Lamb himself could have visited, as well as the splendid colonnade by Bernini at the eastern end of the Louvre. But the Louvre itself, although on its present site, awaited further constructions during the last century. The principal difference to-day perhaps is the disappearance of the magnificent Tuileries Palace at the western end, which was one more victim of the 'Semaine Sanglante'.

Charles Lamb, and presumably M. Guichy, sought accommodation at the 'Hôtel de l'Europe', which, according to E V Lucas, writing in 1905, was still in existence at that date. It was in the Rue de Valois, which flanks one side of the Palais-Royal, but although there is still an hotel in this street there has obviously been much rebuilding and it is a modern establishment bearing a different name.

However, it is interesting to note that the 'Palais Royal' has not greatly changed since that time and can be seen to-day much as it was in Lamb's time. Built about a half-century previously, it was at that time a scene of great activity, famous for its gaming hells and there is an anecdote that Marshal Blücher after Waterloo was so heavily fleeced that subsequently the mere mention of the name caused him to burst into a storm of rage. It was here that Charlotte Corday purchased the knife with which to stab Marat and at the Café Foy Camille Desmoulins handed out chestnut leaves as cockades to the crowd that later stormed the Bastille. The sanguinary events of the French Revolution would, of course, be vivid recollections of Charles Lamb's youth.

Near the Palais Royal, and built at about the same time, is the Théâtre Français and in charge of the company there was the famous actor, much admired by the Emperor Napoleon, François Talma, and he now enters on the scene in the most interesting encounter that Lamb enjoyed during his visit. We do not know exactly how the well-known essayist and the celebrated classical actor became acquainted but Lamb gives an account of their meeting in a letter to Barron Field written subsequently. 'I had Talma to supper with me', he writes. 'He has picked up, as I believe, an authentic portrait of Shakspere. He paid a broker about £40 English for it. It is painted on the one half of a pair of bellows, - a lovely picture, corresponding with the folio head.' and further on 'The countenance smiling, sweet, and intellectual beyond measure, even as he was immeasurable. It may be a forgery', and I need hardly say that this was the case. Certainly Lamb was highly suspicious as to the age of the wood on which it is painted and asked reasonably 'Would such a painter and forger have taken £40 for a thing, if authentic, worth £4000?'

Talma was then acting in a play by the name of 'Regulus' and asked for Lamb's opinion on his performance, which, in view of Talma's great reputation, is surely some indication of the high esteem in which Lamb was held. Lamb merely smiled, at which Talma replied 'I was not very happy to-night. You must see me in "Scylla"', Lamb's comment to this was 'Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim'. This appropriate Latin tag evidently brought the interview to a close, happily on a friendly note. 'Ah, you are a rogue; you are a great rogue' Talma observed, as they shook hands and parted.

It has been suggested that, as Lamb knew virtually no French, they were constrained to converse in Latin, but that could hardly have been the case, as Talma, rather surprisingly, had been largely educated in England, where his father had worked for a time as a dentist.

Charles's list of acquaintances in Paris is by no means extensive, but included a friendly and helpful American, John Howard Payne, who must surely be granted a modest niche in the Temple of Fame by virtue of the fact that he was the author of 'Home, Sweet Home'. A somewhat less likely candidate is perhaps a gentleman described by E V Lucas as 'John Poole, the dramatist (whose farce, "Paul Pry", it seems more than probable, grew from Lamb's Essay "Tom Pry")' and he adds simply 'seems also to have met Lamb in Paris'.

The complete absence of any reference by so subjective a writer as Lamb to his visit to Paris in any subsequent essay confirms the view that generally it failed to make any deep impression on him, and we have Miss Sarah James, the nurse and friend, writing subsequently: 'In Paris, Lamb led his own independent life - disappearing sometimes all day, having lived mostly on the river quays on the Odeon side of the Seine, rummaging the book-stalls and print-shops, returning late at night to the hotel, and skating up the waxed stairs to bed, thoroughly satisfied with his day's work'. While Elia hunted for books and prints, presumably the sex-orientated courier Guichy spent his time on other forms of research. Lamb does not attempt to enlighten us as to this aspect of the visit.

I feel it unlikely that any member of the Charles Lamb Society, membership of which would almost certainly pre-suppose a love of old books, would have visited Paris without inspecting the stalls of the 'bouquinistes', ranged on the parapet beside the river and contributing to the attraction of what must surely be the loveliest riverscape in Europe, if not in the world.

The 'bouquinistes' are still to-day very much a part of the Parisian riverscene and recently a gentleman by the name of Frederic Duport, when officially receiving a body enjoying the somewhat grandiloquent title of 'La Chambre Syndicale des Bouquinistes' remarked, appropriately enough for the occasion, 'On ne concoit pas Paris sans ces bouquinistes'. Evidently, in characteristic gallic fashion, what is described as 'un buffet copieux' was provided and 'Medailles d'argent' were distributed.

The 'bouquinistes' have a very long history and by Jan. 1942 the total had reached 235, but by 1950 the number had dropped slightly to 228. Curiously enough, in Oct. 1822, almost immediately after Lamb's departure, the Chief of Police clamped down on the type of books on display, threatening to withdraw the licence of any vendor displaying books liable 'to corrupt morals or public opinion'. The purpose would almost certainly be motivated by political reasons rather than 'outrage aux moeurs'. We must always remember that the 'French Revolution' was a mere generation away and the Bourbons were not renowned for liberal thinking or for their respect for citizens' rights.

Lamb may well have missed solid, if slightly unimaginative, English cooking, for he makes little reference to the famous French gastronomy. The deepest impression, in fact, appears to have been made by eating frogs, to which delicacy he refers in letters both to John Clare and Barron Field. To the former he writes 'Since I saw you I have been in France, and have eaten frogs. The nicest little rabbity things you ever tasted...Make Mrs. Clare pick off the hindquarters, boil them plain with parsley and butter. The fore quarters are not so good. She may let them hop off by themselves', and to the latter he describes them as 'the nicest little delicate things - rabbity-flavoured. Imagine a Lilliputian rabbit' and adds that to cook them as he suggests 'would have been the decision of Apicius.' Although it is thought, with some justification, that Paris did not really make a deep impression on Lamb, the letter goes on immediately with a general comment which is worth quoting. It is as follows: 'Paris is a glorious picturesque old city. London looks mean and new to it, as the town of Washington would, seen after *it*. But they have no St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. The Seine, so much despised by Cockneys, is exactly the size to run thro' a magnificent street; palaces a mile long on one side, lofty Edinbro' stone (O the glorious antiques!): houses on the other'. He is referring to the Louvre and the Left Bank, but one cannot help wondering if he noticed that magnificent gothic pile, Notre-Dame de Paris.

Thus concluded M. Charles Agneau's visit to Lutèce, leaving only the journey home, which proved uneventful, but we are entitled to add a few lines about Mlle Marie Agneau and to be able to say that finally all went well with her. Her mental illness being cyclical, she recovered in due course with rest and care and proceeded on her way with Sarah James. Although they reached the hotel after Lamb had left, the ubiquitous Henry Crabb Robinson soon appears to act as guide, philosopher and friend, as does the American gentleman who wrote 'Home, Sweet Home'. She seems, in fact, to have shown more enterprise than her brother, without failing to give due attention to the book-stalls and print-shops he had recommended. She visited the Kenneys and made a particularly favourable impression on Kenney himself, who described her as a 'faultless creature - possessing every virtue under heaven.' This fulsome praise is matched in somewhat curious terms by Lamb in a subsequent letter to Mrs Kenney's daughter, Sophie, whom he calls 'his dear wife' and speaks of 'the few short days of connubial bliss which I passed with you among the pears and apricots of Versailles' as being 'some of the happiest of my life'. Mary is more restrained and mentions 'the dear long dreary boulevards', a rather curious description.

But all is well that ends well and the holiday of the brother and sister came to a happy and somewhat humorous conclusion. Crabb Robinson had ordered a French tailored waistcoat for himself and had asked Mary to bring it back in her luggage. At Brighton, however, the customs officials were not prepared to credit Mary's explanation and relieved her of the article in question by confiscation. Her brother, apparently, with no doubt a touch of 'schadenfreud', was greatly amused.

Based on a talk given to the Society on 5 March 1983

FOOTNOTE

Among the books given to the Society's Library by Mrs Hine (after Reginald

Hine's untimely death) were some volumes believed to be from Charles Lamb's Library. (Along with the rest of the CLS Library, these are now housed at the Guildhall Library.) They included: *The Royal French Grammar 1720* and *An appendix to the description of Paris 1820*. - Mme Domier. Was this latter book CL's 'vade mecum' when he visited Paris in 1822?

BOOK REVIEWS

Patrick O'Leary: *Regency Editor. Life of John Scott*. Aberdeen University Press 1983. pp.x.188. Illustrated. £14.

It will be remembered that Mr O'Leary, a member of the Charles Lamb Society, contributed to the April issue of the Bulletin an interesting article on Alexander Dick Scott, brother of the subject of this new book.

John Scott, who was a notable literary figure in the early nineteenth century, has attracted a number of writers who have produced partial studies of this handsome and energetic man. While himself a writer of several interesting books and an excellent journalist, it is mainly by his association with others that he is best known today. He stands out as an editor who brought out the best in his contributors, a number of whom gave to the pages of his magazines works of genius which became famous, outstanding among them being the writings of Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt. Yet perhaps Scott's name occurs most frequently to modern readers for his quarrel with Byron and for the dramatic manner of his death in a duel at Chalk Farm with a representative of J G Lockhart of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

Now the studies which have appeared earlier as auxiliary to some well known writer or magazine are replaced by a full length biography devoted to John Scott and his times. Patrick O'Leary has been fortunate and skilful in bringing together material from many sources and has produced both a readable and a scholarly work. There has long been a need for such a book.

John Scott was born in Aberdeen in 1784 and the first chapter brings together much information on his ancestors, his immediate family and early schooldays. Although Scott's father carried on the business of upholsterer he had literary friends who may well have influenced his son in his career. Scott spent some years at Aberdeen Grammar School where he had Byron for a schoolfellow although he was the elder by three years. He subsequently gained a scholarship to Marischal College and after leaving there entered the Royal Bank of Scotland in Glasgow. As Mr O'Leary shows clearly he was not happy in his employment either in the Bank or later as a clerk in the War Office in London and he left Whitehall for Fleet Street.

A detailed account is given of Scott's activities: how journalism seemed to offer more to a young man anxious to make his way in the world, and who had lately fallen in love with the attractive Caroline Colnaghi, the daughter of a successful print seller and picture dealer, and how Scott became editor of *The Statesman*, a radical newspaper. In the process we learn something of the newspaper world and the politics of the early nineteenth century. Perhaps the editorship of such a paper was not such an important post as it seems to modern readers, for as Mr O'Leary remarks, papers were small, items were short, mostly unsigned and

> An evening paper, such as John Scott's *Statesman*, copied whole columns of material from the morning papers.

This tendency persisted and in 1823 we find *The Manchester Iris* copying Charles Lamb's essays from *The London Magazine*, almost certainly without permission.

From the editorship of *The Statesman* we are shown how Scott moved to that of *The Censor* and then to *Drakard's Stamford News* which was to lead to greater things, but also to bring him into conflict with the law, or perhaps more accurately with the politicians. In his paper he campaigned for electoral reform, abolition of slavery, Catholic emancipation and the reform of other abuses including flogging in the army, as Mr O'Leary tells us succinctly. By 1813 Scott was again in London as editor and owner of *Drakard's Paper* and in this chapter in the book we have an excellent picture of the paper which, under Scott's guidance, later became *The Champion*, a name to remember in the newspaper history of the period.

Although, as Mr O'Leary states, Charles Lamb may have met Scott as early as 1805 he does not seem to have sent him contributions until "On the Melancholy of Tailors" appeared in *The Champion* in 1814 and some unidentified items probably followed. Other of Lamb's friends also contributing to the magazine included Thomas Barnes, B R Haydon, William Hazlitt, J H Reynolds and T N Talfourd.

In 1814 Scott went to France to gather material for a book for Longmans and for a time Hazlitt filled his position on *The Champion*. Mr O'Leary gives us much information on the period and on Scott's book and the one which followed it, *Paris Revisited*. He has much to say on the quarrel with Byron, started by the printing in *The Champion* of Byron's poems on his domestic affairs accompanied by a scornful attack on Byron. The breach was not healed until Byron and Scott met in Italy some years later.

The year 1819 must have had a disappointing start for Scott for he heard that the attractive post with the East India Company suggested to him by Sir John Mackintosh had been filled before his letter of acceptance arrived from Italy. It is probable that the position was that given to Thomas Love Peacock, but as Mr O'Leary points out: if things had been otherwise "Peacock might have written more novels, and John would not have scaled the literary peak which now rose before him" and he took up "a bigger challenge, the editorship of *The London Magazine*."

John Scott had known Robert Baldwin of the firm of Baldwin, Cradock & Joy for some years and in 1818 had contributed to their *British Review*. Now Baldwin was seeking an editor for a new journal and although no doubt others were considered, Scott received the appointment. Mr O'Leary gives us an excellent account of the establishment of this famous magazine and we see how Scott demonstrated his editorial genius by securing a number of contributors whose work was of very high standard. Although the story has been told before there is in Mr O'Leary's book a great deal of information on the contributors, existing in manuscript letters and in books, but often lacking from earlier versions, and now brought together to form a new and extended picture of the first eighteen months of this important journal. These were the months which saw Scott draw from such contributors as Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt the start of some of their best work. The first of Lamb's Elia essays appeared in the magazine in August 1820 and he contributed every month afterwards until the end of 1823, although by then the journal was edited by John Taylor. William Hazlitt contributed from the first number.

Unfortunately Scott was not able to continue his good work for long and the quarrel between *Blackwood's Magazine* and Scott as editor of the *London* came to a head in February 1821 with its well known tragic consequences. Mr O'Leary gives us the preliminary events starting in 1820 which led up to this catastrophe and although the steps culminating in the duel are complicated and it is by no means clear as to who were the guilty parties, he does much to free our minds of some of the confusing suppositions. There seems little doubt that the seconds were largely to blame for the mishandling of the actual duel. For the conduct of the editors of *Blackwood's* in the publication of scurrillities concerning contemporary authors there seems no excuse, and this was the reason for Scott's violent criticism of them. Mr O'Leary concludes that "the reckless way Blackwood, Lockhart and Wilson conducted *Maga* was fated to end in bloodshed. It would have happened sooner if their victims had not been, in the main, distant poets or peaceful philosophers." He adds that although Scott's attack on Lockhart was merited, it was also intemperate and in part ill-founded.

Mr O'Leary examines Scott's critical assessments of his contemporaries and concludes that those of Wordsworth, Byron, Keats and Shelley, taken in the round, were more perceptive than those by other critics of the time and "superior to most written since." He also has much to say about Scott's political writings and crusading articles, but feels that he was at his best when describing what had passed before his eyes, a true journalist.

This book has added considerably to our knowledge of a man of great talent and has brought together much of the background of his life and times. Since it deals extensively with the years during which Charles Lamb started to write his best known essays it will appeal to all interested in his work. Scott writing in the *London* described Lamb as "the pride of our Magazine."

The book has a short chronological outline of Scott's life and an extensive, although selected, bibliography. This lists his works, gives manuscript sources for his letters, doctoral theses and books and periodicals classified as to subject. The bibliography indicates that Mr O'Leary's researches have been widespread. There is an index which shows there are twenty-five pages with references to Charles Lamb and there are numerous references to such of Lamb's friends as Coleridge, Haydon, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Patmore and Wordsworth.

Claude A Prance

John Beer: *William Blake 1757-1827*. Writers and Their Works Series: Profile Books Ltd, Windsor. 52 pp. £1.50

'Stubborn and self-assertive he might be,' writes John Beer of Blake, 'but he was still serving the cause of human freedom'; and it is the poet of political and spiritual liberty who is championed in this elegant and learned introduction. Dr Beer reminds us that the eighteenth century was an age not only of 'well-proportioned buildings in the midst of highly-cultivated landscapes' but also of fearful poverty, draconian laws and a philosophical and religious climate deeply discouraging to imagination and experiment. With immense creative gifts and considerable courage, Blake worked against the grain of his age to produce art and poetry of startling originality, which have a continuing power to revitalise the imaginative world of the reader or spectator.

Dr Beer skilfully sets Blake in his historical context, with brief, informative glances at Locke, Rousseau and other thinkers to whose impact Blake responded. He demonstrates, with some striking quotations, how close contemporary theologians and hymnographers could come to presenting God as the vindictive, unapproachable lawgiver Blake caricatures as Urizen and Nobodaddy, and gives a useful sketch of the political circumstances that shaped the 'prophetic' poetry of *The French Revlolution*, *America* and *Europe*. One might quarrel, though, with Dr Beer's acceptance of the assertion (made by Blake's first biographer, Gilchrist) that in September 1792 Blake 'tore off' the revolutionary cockade from his hat and 'abruptly' lost his enthusiasm for the French Revolution. His fiercely antimonarchist poem on La Fayette cannot have been composed before late October 1792, and there is no clear evidence that he ever really turned against the Revolution.

Inevitably, in a short introduction aimed at the general reader, the lyrical poems and political prophecies are given more attention than the major epics. The treatment of these shorter works is lively and helpful, controversial enough to stimulate interest without veering into eccentricity - a frequent danger for Blake critics. *The Four Zoas, Milton* and *Jerusalem* are not neglected, and enough is quoted from the texts to whet the reader's appetite; though Dr Beer, acknowledging the absence of 'a single, coherent narrative' in these poems, still perhaps does not go far enough in stressing Blake's abandonment of chronological sequence as an ordering principle. In *Milton*, for example, all the complex 'events' of the eighteen-hundred-line poem may be envisaged as taking place 'Within a moment, a pulsation of the artery'. The poem becomes, not harder but easier to read once we cease to look for a linear 'story'.

To present a balanced account of such a protean artist as Blake in a mere fifty pages is a hard task. John Beer has performed it admirably. His pamphlet is clearly the distillation of much learning and long reflection, and will surely achieve the two aims of a short critical introduction: to inform and encourage the reader new to Blake, whilst sending older hands back to the text with refreshed enthusiasm and new insights to explore.

Grevel Lindop, University of Manchester

From Mr D E Wickham: CHARLES LAMB AND HIS GUINEA-PIGS

One of my indulgences last Christmas was a copy of Mark Girouard's book *The Return to Camelot*. During the first run through, I stopped short at Plate 24, 'Charles Lamb's coat of arms, as drawn by himself in 1839'. The photographic acknowledgement did not help but the index gave numerous references to Lamb, Charles (Charlie).

The fractured atmosphere of Christmas Morning does not encourage careful study but I persevered. Dr Girouard noted that Charles Lamb was generally known as Charlie, which was new to me, though Randal Norris was the last to call him Charley, and that his father had written an epic in twelve cantos, 'The Dragon Knight'. I did not remember that among the slight verses at the back of Lucas' *Life*. Charles Lamb 'seems to have had the same kind of ardent and lovable nuttiness as Kenelm Digby'. Fair enough, but perhaps not put quite as one would hope. 'Lamb ended up an atheist, a socialist and a vegetarian.' Now where could that have come from?

Dr Girouard then records that, when a boy, Charles Lamb decided that his three guinea-pigs were to be turned into heroes of chivalry. He transformed them into noblemen, constructed elaborate coats of arms for them, and made them heroes or villains of an epic romance of the kingdom of Winnipeg.

I was beginning to feel just a trifle uneasy but the information flooded on. 'The History of Winnipeg' extended to eight leather-bound volumes, the fantasy increased along with the number of guinea-pigs, and here were reproductions of several guinea-pig drawings by Charles Lamb.

The unease grew worse. With thoughts of William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne, coming to mind, I suddenly saw a reference to the Camelot of battlemented hutches built by the estate carpenter at Beauport.

This was too much. I must re-read the entire reference with un-festive attention. At once all became clear. Charles Lamb, generally known as Charlie, nutty, socialist, and vegetarian, was the son of a Sussex baronet and the younger half-brother of the equally strange Archibald Montgomerie, 13th Earl of Eglinton, perpetrator of the Eglinton Tournament of 1839.

There was, of course, one obvious clue that I had missed at the very start. As noted in the first paragraph above, this Charles Lamb drew his coat of arms in 1839. Our Charles Lamb died in 1834. I expect you all noticed that!

ELIAN NOTES AND QUERIES

Answers and further questions are sought for this new section of the Bulletin which is not a quiz but intended to be a place of last resort for finding answers to questions after the usual sources have failed.

All communications to the Editor, please.

1 Has any serious modern work been done on Mary Lamb's insanity? The symptoms are described in detail, for example, in Mrs Gilchrist's biography of her. (DEW)

2 The essay 'Mackery End, in Hertfordshire': can someone explain the (Biblical?) reference 'I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy'. (DEW)

3 In *Charles Lamb and his Contemporaries*, 1932, Edmund Blunden says (p.206) 'It was worth Macaulay's while nevertheless to turn his guns on one of Elia's dexterous fabrics'. Which one and where? (DEW)

4 I have a note that Dorothy Parker wrote something - a book? an article? a poem? - based on the lives of Charles and Mary Lamb entitled 'The Coast of Illyria'. Can anyone confirm this and give details? The title does not appear in the Bodleian Library General Catalogue nor in the Complete Dorothy Parker nor in the recent Penguin reprint. (DEW)

NOTES

ANNIVERSARIES

Charles Lamb died at Edmonton on 27th December 1834. The Charles Lamb Society was founded in 1935. Our 1984/5 Season will therefore be a great opportunity both to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Lamb's death, and to celebrate our own Golden Jubilee. We already have as speakers Professor Craik of Durham University to give the Crowsley Lecture on "Lamb's Tales" and Professor Misenheimer (whom we welcome as a member) in December 1984.

Outline plans have already been discussed with the Assistant Librarian at the Guildhall Library of the City of London for a Lamb Exhibition to run, probably for about eight weeks, from late December 1984. The CLS Library can furnish some material but lacks *primary* material - autograph letters, first editions, association copies of books etc. The Guildhall's own collection has a wealth of pictures, maps, etc. of Lamb's London.

Lamb's nomadic life meant that few items which can confidently be ascribed to his ownership survive. We are now appealing to Elians world-wide to offer for this major exhibition any material which will help to celebrate Lamb's life and times. We should like to have some idea what is likely to be forthcoming by *31st December 1983* so should be grateful if offers could be made, initially to the General Secretary (1a Royston Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6LT - 01-940 3837) by that date.

Other events cannot wholly be left to the Officers and Council, although they will be doing their best! *All* members can play a part in focussing interest in Lamb during 1984/5...

e.g. - Ask your local Library to put out a leaflet of books by or about Lamb and his circle.

- Approach your local Literary Society to include a speaker about Lamb in their 1984/5 programme.

VICE PRESIDENTS

We are delighted that both Claude A Prance and Dr Roy Park have accepted the invitation extended to them by the Annual Meeting to become Vice-Presidents of the Society.

COUNCIL

We welcome as members of the Council Miss Helen Stutfield, Mr Bill Ruddick and Mr David Wickham. We also send our good wishes to Mrs Hall who has gone to join her family in New Zealand and thank her for her long service as a member of the Council.

HONORARY LIBRARIAN

We are sorry to learn that Mr Godfrey Thompson, the Director of Libraries and Art Galleries at the Guildhall Library, is resigning that position on 31st August 1983 and must therefore also resign as our Honorary Librarian. We are deeply indebted to Mr Thompson and his staff for the excellent care of the books in the CLS Library; we extend to him our good wishes for the future.

VISITORS FROM USA

Robert Durden. It was delightful to meet Robert (from San Francisco) when he was over here in May. During four weeks he managed to see twenty-two plays, one ballet and one concert plus several tours.

Max Peterson - a member from Hartford, Indiana, planned to visit places associated with Lamb during his stay here in September, as well as a stop-over at Alfoxden, Wordsworth's one-time home and now a hotel.