

It was a corollary, from the same large substratum in his nature, that Lamb had no sense of the rhythmical in prose composition. Rhythmus, or pomp of cadence, or sonorous ascent of clauses, in the structure of sentences, were effects of art as much thrown away upon him as the voice of the charmer upon the deaf adder. We ourselves, occupying the very station of polar opposition to that of Lamb, being as morbidly, perhaps, in the one excess as he in the other, naturally detected this omission in Lamb's nature at an early stage of our acquaintance...

Pomp, in our apprehension, was an idea of two categories; the pompous might be spurious, but it might also be genuine. It is well to love the simple - we love it; nor is there any opposition at all between that and the very glory of pomp. But, as we once put the case to Lamb, if, as a musician, as the leader of a mighty orchestra, you had this theme offered to you - "Belshazzar the king gave a great feast to a thousand of his lords" - or this, "And on a certain day, Marcus Cicero stood up, and in a set speech rendered solemn thanks to Caius Caesar for Quintus Ligarius pardoned, and for Marcus Marcellus restored" - surely no man would deny that, in such a case, simplicity, though in a passive sense not lawfully absent, must stand aside as totally insufficient for the positive part. Simplicity might guide, even here, but could not furnish the power; a rudder it might be, but not an oar or a sail.

This Lamb was ready to allow; as an intellectual quiddity, he recognised pomp in the character of a privileged thing; he was obliged to do so; for take away from great ceremonial festivals, such as the solemn rendering of thanks, the celebration of national anniversaries, the commemoration of public benefactors, &c., the element of pomp, and you take away their very means of life; but, whilst allowing a place for it in the rubric of the logician, it is certain that, sensuously, Lamb would not have sympathised with it, nor have felt its justification in any concrete instance.

What made this passage so apocalyptic for me, fifty years ago, was the revelation that there was a kind of prose - the prose of pomp - which could achieve effects which I had, until that moment, assumed to be peculiar to poetry and verse. I realised in that moment that prose too could be imaginative, musical, or - to use a word which I did not then possess - "impassioned" - the word that De Quincey himself applied to some of his own most characteristic prose. And ever since, in one way or another, at one time or another, I have tried to describe and understand how this kind of prose achieves its effect. It has been a long job. And it is far from finished even now.

This tardiness of understanding has been due, not only to mere stupidity, but also to the fact that the problem was far beyond my own individual abilities. It has turned out that it required general advances in knowledge. During this past half-century, a new science has emerged, that of linguistics, and a new technology has been developed, that of the microphone and its ancillaries. It is upon these two general advances that my present understanding of prose is based. Their simultaneity is indeed no accident. Linguistics differs from the older tradition of philology in nothing more clearly than this: that it takes its starting-point in the spoken, rather than the written word. And the microphone differs from all earlier ways of recording and transmitting language in that it performs these vital functions directly, through speech, not indirectly, through writing. The new science and the new technology both belong to the same phase in "the march

of mind", to use a phrase of Lamb's day, and they have powerfully reinforced one another.

But as usually happens with such advances, they have not only positive effects, in the enlargement of knowledge, but also negative ones, in the destruction of old prejudices and assumptions long accepted without question, often without conscious adherence, still less with deliberate choice. My own old assumptions and habits of thought were instilled by my whole education, in the last generation before the cinema, the talkie, the wireless, and television. For us, entertainment, imaginative satisfaction, education in its broadest sense, rested upon books and reading only. We were bookish - probably the last generation to be bookish to that extent. And one of the marks it left on us - on me at least - was an exaggerated and over-exclusive concern for written language. This was no doubt reinforced by the large part played by Latin and Greek - both "dead" languages, in my formal education. That I have been made aware of this, I owe to modern linguistics. That I am in a fair way to overcome this long-standing prejudice, I owe above all to the microphone. There is a well-known saying, that the pen is mightier than the sword. It needs to be completed by the *a fortiori* statement that the microphone is mightier than the pen. For the microphone records and transmits so much more than the printed page. Its actual performance brings the printed word to life - and so much more than the word: the intonation, the pauses, the variations in emphasis. These are, indeed, not wholly absent from the written word, in the sense that indications of them are always necessary, above all in the punctuation. But they are present in rather the same sense that indications of tempo, phrasing and dynamics are marked on a musical score. Something needs to be added to bring the score to life, to full musical life. And, as we shall see, something must be added to the written word to realise its full force.

In the case of music, what is added is the sound of the human voice and of various instruments. The addition - the relation between the score and the actual performance is relatively simple, or so it seems to me, perhaps because I am not expert in music. In the case of language, however, the relation between the written and spoken forms is much more difficult to define simply. If there is any one word which can serve so complex a purpose, it is the word *primary*. Speech, actual utterance, is primary, and writing or printing is secondary.

This is obviously so if the word is taken historically. Every known language has existed in a spoken form, whether or not it has been represented in some kind of writing. Literally thousands of languages have never, or only very recently, been reduced to any written form. The same relationship no less obviously governs the development of the individual. Every child learns to speak long before it learns to read and write, and the problems of this process are precisely those of finding the relation between what has been learnt for many years naturally, as if instinctively, and the arbitrary symbols by which it is represented on paper.

But speech is primary in a still more basic way. Not only does writing derive from it, historically, educationally, but the written word must pass back into some form of speech if it is to re-enter, so to speak, the human brain. In this respect, at least, the analogy with music is probably close. A musician reading a score does not find, I believe, that its "musical meaning" passes directly into his brain, in the form of staves and notes. He is compelled to translate it back into the sounds from which the score was derived. He may do this carefully and consciously, constructing an inner

performance - possibly humming a phrase here and there; or he may do it with great speed and with the skill born of long practice which approximates to instinct. But he cannot avoid doing it in one way or another. Similarly, the written words on a page cannot pass, as such, and directly, into the brain of their reader. They must be translated back into the primary form of speech, from which they were derived, whether slowly and audibly, or rapidly and unconsciously. If I make no other point clear, this is the one which above all I must drive home - for everything I have to say depends upon it. It is therefore a point which I cannot ask you to take on trust. Some evidence is certainly needed, and the first piece of it is from a letter which Lamb wrote to Wordsworth:

I return you condolence for your decaying sight; not for anything there is to see in the country, but for the miss of the pleasure of reading a London newspaper. The poets are as well to listen to, anything high may, nay must, be read out; you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor; but the light paragraphs must be glid over by the proper eye; mouthing mumbles their gossamery substance. (22 Jan. 1830)

The informality, the almost cursory slightness of these comments enhances their evidential value. Lamb was not constructing a theory about speech and writing. He was reporting a quick glimpse of incidental introspection, based on his own experience. And the first comment I make is that his experience was wide, for the habit of his circle included much of the first kind of reading which he describes - "reading out", or "aloud" as we more often say now. There are several references in his own letters to this practice.¹ It was, moreover, the custom of his circle. Wordsworth and Coleridge read, or recited from memory, some of their poems to Hazlitt, who left a memorable comment on their deliveries. Wordsworth read aloud the completed *Prelude* to Coleridge, soon after his return from Malta. Keats read one of his odes to Wordsworth - who called it a "pretty piece of paganism".

About this first kind of reading - reading out, or aloud - there is no special linguistic problem for us at the moment. There is, however, an historical aside, which needs to be made here. It was not merely that Lamb and his friends cultivated the habit of reading aloud much more than had their predecessors a generation before; it was also that the spoken word played a much greater part in their habits of composition. In this, as in so many other ways, Wordsworth was their natural leader, for he had felt earlier and more clearly the need to make this spoken, rather than the written language the basis of imaginative writing. There are few more crucial passages, for the understanding of this revolution in literature, than that passage in *The Prelude* in which he describes himself and a schoolmate in the early morning

and for the better part
Of two delightful hours we stroll'd along
By the still borders of the misty lake,
Repeating favorite verses with one voice. (*Prelude* V.585)

The full significance of this custom can only be realised if we add De Quincey's comment that these "favorite verses" were from Goldsmith and Gray. For these two, like most of their contemporaries, were essentially "bookish" writers. Both of them, at any rate in some of their poems, first wrote them in prose, and then versified them. They were put into speech, not composed

¹To Coleridge, 26 August, 1800 and 9 October, 1800. To Manning, 16 October, 1800. To Godwin, 14 December, 1800. To Manning, early in November, 1802.

on the lips. Later, this quality in them became apparent to Wordsworth, and crystallised out in his *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, and above all in its appendix on *Poetic Diction*. His most famous phrase, "a selection of the language really spoken by men", placed the centre of the renovation of poetry in a return to speech, a rejection of the formulae of writing, once alive, but now ossified by repetition. He himself composed mainly in speech. *Tintern Abbey*, a longish poem, and in blank verse, without the mnemonic aid of rhyme or stanza, was composed in three or four days on a walking tour, and not a word of it was written down until they came to Bristol. Then it was all written, without change, from the copy in his head - on his lips. Later, he dictated much of *The Prelude* to his wife and sister, composing it as he walked in Easedale, and repeating to them what he had composed. I wish, indeed, to remind you that what we call the "Romantic movement", whatever else it may have been, was based on a return to the spoken word, as against the written. And I will also remind you here of the part played by conversation in the circle of Lamb - the conversation of Coleridge, of Hazlitt, of Lamb himself. Hardly less, perhaps, were they influenced by their habit of vast correspondence. For a letter to a friend is not very far removed from conversation, and as George L. Barnett has shown, in the best book so far written on Lamb's style, not seldom he used the material of his own letters as the basis of Essays. They were, almost as much as his conversation, preliminary exercises, rough drafts. And their natural intimacy of tone carried over into the Essays as one of their main literary qualities.

But that was an historical aside, and now I want to go back to the second and third kinds of reading described by Lamb in the letter to Wordsworth. The first way of reading, aloud, may well come within the scope of the word primary, for in the development of reading as a skill it long ante-dated reading without audible external utterance. Our own word "reading" carries the meaning "reading silently", unless we add - as Lamb did, some adverb to indicate audible reading. For the ancients, on the other hand, the verbs for reading meant reading aloud, unless some adverb was added to indicate silent reading - in Latin, for example, *tacite*. There seems no doubt that in antiquity the ability to read silently was very rare, and as late as the eighth century AD it was counted as a singular mark of saintliness in Ambrose, Bishop of Milan that he was able "legere tacite". Children today usually read aloud in the first place, even when they are reading "to themselves". The ability to read without audible sound usually comes later, in individuals as it did in the history of the race. At first sight, it would seem to be secondary, a development of the primary way of reading. But if that is so, we must suppose that even silent reading is accompanied by some residual inner voice, however unconsciously. Otherwise, we should expect to encounter a further stage of language-learning as the reader passed on to silent reading, and grappled with the problem of interpreting the words on a page directly, without the mediation of any sound, however vestigial. No such stage of learning has ever been reported, and it is much more natural to suppose that it does not exist.

This, then - and forgive me if I am anxious to make my main points stand out - is the special aspect of my main argument about speech which concerns me most here: speech is primary, written language is secondary, and even in reading silently, to ourselves, the processes of speech are essential as mediators between the symbols on the page and the response in our brain. Truncated, speeded, unconscious, soundless they may be: but they are there. You already have a little evidence of this, from the most persuasive source

- Charles Lamb, at any rate so far as his second type of reading is concerned - "you read it to yourself with an imaginary auditor". The description is, however, not entirely clear. And no wonder, for he is moving in an inner world very difficult to describe clearly. The act of "reading to oneself" is familiar enough: very familiar to me in childhood, when someone had been reading to me, grown tired of it, their duty done, and handed the book to me with the advice "Now, read it to yourself." We all know the action involved, but what of Lamb's "imaginary auditor"? Is it himself, or someone else, imagined to be there - his sister, for example? Or does he mean that there is enough "inner voice" to create the impression that an audience might be listening? It is only with his third kind of reading, that appropriate to a newspaper, that he can perceive no voice of any kind - no "mouthing" at all, because the stuff is too thin to stand any slower and steadier attention. He talks of this third kind of reading as if it were quite different from the second, and as if the distinction lay in the absence of that inner voice which remained in the second. And here I think he was wrong. This inner voice, when we read at speed, may become imperceptible, but it does so by what I would call an intensification of those characteristics which distinguish it from the more careful mode of silent reading. It is not something completely new. And further evidence of this is forthcoming from another letter of Lamb's, to his friend Barton, written when he had a terrible cold. He complains of this remarkable effect:

I can hardly read a book, for I miss that small soft voice which the idea of articulated words raises (almost imperceptibly to you) in a silent reader. I seem too deaf to see what I read. (16 May, 1826)

Again the evidential value is the greater because Lamb was saying something so incidental, so uncommitted to the exposition of any theory, so much the immediate product of introspection. Just what he means by "idea" I do not know: - a word liable to surprising meanings when used by a Deputy-Grecian who was also a friend of Coleridge; the context suggests that here it has more to do with "image" or "visible sign" than with "thought" or "mental conception". I believe, in fact, that Lamb is trying to say exactly what I have been trying to say: - that the printed word is mediated, for the understanding, by a "small soft voice", almost imperceptibly at work. And the final comment about being too deaf to see print, is in his happiest manner of compressed and enlightening paradox.

I have already suggested that the recovery of the spoken word was at the heart of the new movement in literature. And now I would add that it operated most typically through the renewed force of this inner voice. For this is the voice of a man, not only at his reading, but also at his meditations, in reverie by his fireside, or walking in the country: - or, most of all, moulding and clarifying his meditations so that they gather force and imaginative shape. This was Wordsworth's basic process of composition - "emotion recollected in tranquillity", by the medium of the inner voice. He himself describes this process in some remarkable lines from Book I of *The Prelude*. The poem opens with a burst of joyful extemporisation, all in the present tense - as a direct expression of present feeling. For some fifty lines Wordsworth looks forward to a new life in the country, writing poetry. Then he suddenly pauses, and addresses Coleridge in a different mood, and a different tense:

Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to make
A present joy the matter of my Song,
Pour out, that day, my soul in measure'd strains

Even in the very words which I have here
 Recorded: to the open fields I told
 A prophecy: poetic numbers came
 Spontaneously, and cloth'd in priestly robe
 My spirit, thus singled out, as it might seem,
 For holy services: great hopes were mine;
 My own voice cheer'd me, and, far more, the mind's
 Internal echo of the imperfect sound;
 To both I listen'd, drawing from them both
 A cheerful confidence in things to come.

Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, I.46-58

You will readily see that Wordsworth and Lamb have gone a good long way side by side in their recognition of the inner voice. But here too, as so often elsewhere, Wordsworth went a little further. He reached the recognition, not made again until at least a century later, that the function of this inner voice is in a sense superior to that of the outward, the audible voice. It is the "internal echo" of an "imperfect sound", and its function is to plan utterance, to monitor it as it proceeds, correct it if need be. He had reached, in fact - and he was almost certainly the first to do so - the realisation that this inner voice is the very heart of speech, of reading, whether aloud or silently, and of that kind of poetry which is based, not on public declamation but on internal reverie. When I speak, I must of necessity be my own most intent listener. For I must choose how to begin my sentences, and even at their beginning must have some plan for them, some feeling for how they are to end; and as I go on with them, I must remember what has been uttered, to make sure that the ending will complete the beginning, according to the rules that govern my language. If I find myself going astray in mid-sentence, I must either vary the plan a little, making an unseen correction, or I must openly alter what is being said. Most of what is known about the planning and scanning activity of this inner voice has been discovered indirectly, for the thing itself is open only to the risky explorations of introspection - above all risky in this sphere, where we are trying to observe the very processes of thought and expression. But what has been suggested by introspection can sometimes be confirmed, if indirectly, by objective experiment. One of the classical experiments of linguistics - or of psycholinguistics - is to arrange for a speaker's voice to be played back to him, while he is speaking. If the interval between the utterance and its echo is relatively short, say one tenth of a second, the speaker can continue, though with some slight inconvenience. But if the interval is lengthened to one fifth of a second, the result is to create serious confusion in the utterance. The speaker feels himself compelled to wait for the playback before he can go on, and the whole complex process of utterance is in disarray. The assumption is - and I believe it to be broadly right - that the playback voice cuts out, preempts, as it were, the inner voice which is normally concerned with planning and monitoring utterance.

Let me remind you of the points I have tried to make so far. First, speech is the primary, the full form of language, the printed word secondary. Next, that in reading the printed word we are compelled to use a kind of inner speech as an intermediary between the printed symbols and the brain. Next, that this inner voice is essential both to speaking and to reading - even to reading silently, "to ourselves". And I have gone some way to suggest that one of the central characteristics of the Romantic writers was their tendency to rely less upon outward speech, declamation, the "pomp of prose"

in De Quincey's description, and much more upon the inner voice, the intimate and informal voice of reverie and meditation. If a fair amount of all this can be granted, as probable, if not certain or yet complete, it is clear that our reading of literature in general must depend pretty directly upon the quality of the inner voice with which we choose to bring it to life inside our heads. And before I apply this view to Lamb's style, I have just one more point to make about the varying qualities of this inner voice.

There is often more truth than we suppose in common sayings, in commonplace phrases. The one I have in mind now is "raising or lowering the voice." They describe, most obviously, those variations in the volume of utterance which lie within the compass of human speech. And these variations normally depend upon the distance between the speaker and the listener. This distance, in turn, depends upon the relationship between them. Modern psychology, and until recently with special emphasis that branch of it which studies the behaviour of animals, has found that the distance between the participants is crucial to the relationship between them. The robin has its territory - that area in which it will attack intruders, instead of fleeing from them. So has the lion: the lion-tamer exercises his curious art by juggling within that narrow band lying between the distance at which his lions will attack him, and that distance at which they will slink away. And in this respect, we are animals ourselves. We too have our territories, our distances which both determine and reflect our relationships. Consider a young man and a young woman who have never met, on opposite sides of the room at a party. They are introduced, and have their first exploratory conversation a yard or so apart. As a result, they meet again on opposite sides of a small table, with soft lighting, and they continue their conversation only a foot or two apart. Later again, they are side by side on a sofa, and now only inches separate the lips from the ears. At each stage of this little romance, the distance between them, physically and psychologically, is reflected in the volume of their voices. At the party, their voices were raised, lowered a little perhaps when they came face to face. At dinner, they are lowered still further, and on the sofa they have sunk to little more than a whisper: - later, indeed, they may sink finally to whispers. These are the natural, the habitual adjustments which our voices make to suit our distances and our relationships. A young woman would think ill of a young man beside her on a sofa if he were to bellow in her ear "You have very beautiful eyes", and she might well retreat to a distance at which this volume of voice was more acceptable.

Now considered acoustically, the variation in the volume of the human voice in relation to the distance between the speaker and the listener is more abrupt than one might think: - until one has thought about it. The sound of the voice is a kind of energy, in the form of waves generated by the vocal organs and carried by the air. And like any other form of energy, it spreads outwards from its source in a cone. That is to say, the same amount of energy, as it moves away from the lips, must cover an area which grows rapidly larger, and at any one point it varies inversely with the distance from the source of the sound, but as the square of the distance. That is to say, it dissipates itself, and so falls off, much more quickly than one might suppose - squares of numbers soon become formidable. We can, within limits, "raise" the volume of the voice to carry to a considerable distance, but the effort needed to do this is also considerable, and it makes us partly conscious of itself. We are aware of the extra effort. This, in itself, reinforces the feeling of distance from the listener, intensifies the sense of remoteness, of lack of intimacy which always goes with distance.

But more than this is involved. The extra energy needed to make the voice carry, to "throw" it, as actors say, is gained by tightening the tension of the vocal cords, and changing the positions of mouth and lips. And the effect of these adjustments is not only to "raise" its volume. Its fundamental pitch also rises, and changes take place in its harmonics and overtones. Conversely, when the voice is "lowered", its pitch falls, and its upper harmonics are curtailed. In this fashion our voices reflect our sense of distance in our relationships, our "territories", and not only reflect them. They help to determine, or at least to reinforce them. There is a powerful feedback effect here. A man who is angry will tend to "raise" his voice; and the raising of his voice, the adoption of this new position for his muscles and nerves, will make him still more angry - will confirm his mood. A lowered voice, the voice of affection and intimacy, will influence the mood of the speaker in the opposite sense.

And this is why I attach such importance to the microphone and its auxiliaries. For the first time in human history, we can, by purely technical means, deal separately with volume of voice and mood. We can "raise" our voice, but keep the volume low; or we can drop the voice almost to a whisper, and reproduce it at any volume we choose. So far, the only performers to exploit this possibility have been "pop" singers. What I want to suggest is that it has much wider - not to say better - uses.

This new range of choice in quality and quantity of voice offers us, I believe, a new and useful tool in literary analysis. We can now define with new precision the quality of voice implied in any piece of prose or verse, in terms of the distance between the voice suitable to reading it and the microphone which determines its volume. We could, indeed, by standardising the sensitivity of the microphone and its ancillary apparatus (a relatively simple task) use this distance as a numerical description of the kind of voice needed rather as the tempo of music can be precisely indicated by a metronome marking. It would be enough, generally, to use such terms as "close mike", "distant mike", and "normal mike" - about fifteen inches. Modern writers, especially of verse, would do well to use these terms now, indicating clearly what kind of reading they had intended.

But what of our older writers, who left no such indications, who had never heard of microphones? Is it a kind of inverted anachronism even to think of reading them in terms like these? I believe not. For everything I have been saying about the human voice and its varying volumes and tones was as true in their time as it is now. Noise they knew very well, though not at the volumes we know today. What they did not know was how to measure noise, as we can, quite objectively, with electrical apparatus and in units such as bells and decibels. Their voices were raised or lowered as ours are. Only the ability to measure and describe them in terms of mike-distance lay outside their experience, still ahead of them. Neither did they know anything of vitamins: but lack of vitamins affected their health just as it does our own. It is our knowledge of the universe that changes, not the universe itself.

What we must do, then, since we cannot put a microphone in front of Wordsworth or Lamb, is to piece together all the information we can get about the kind of sound in which they wrote, and in which, therefore, they should be read - even when we are reading them to ourselves, silently, with our private and inward voice. And we don't do too badly. Wordsworth, for example, according to Hazlitt, recited with an "equable, sustained and internal tone", whereas Coleridge was "full, animated, and varied." And

whenever Wordsworth himself spoke of his own creative voice he used words such as "mutter", "murmer", "inly mutter". There is no doubt that we can get on the right track about his characteristic mike-distance. But with Lamb what have we? Rather less, but still something. We have his own comment in that short autobiography in William Upcott's papers:

... stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism or a poor quibble than in set and edifying speeches.

Glance again at that record of a discussion between De Quincey and Lamb about the different kinds of prose, and it is clear that Lamb's failure to appreciate the prose of pomp and circumstance arose directly from his temper of mind and feeling. Ceremonies and set declamations were not for him. He says it very clearly in a letter to Southey:

When I can't sleep o'nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't like the business; I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Anything awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries.

Lamb, letter to Southey, 9 August, 1815

A few years later, he wrote in the same sense, partly in the same words (thus did his essays often echo his earlier letters) about the wedding of Emma Isola:

I do not know what business I have to be present in solemn places. I cannot divest me of an unseasonable disposition to levity upon the most awful occasions. I was never cut out for a public functionary. Ceremony and I have long shaken hands.

Lamb, *The Wedding*

Just as Lamb's temper was incapable of ceremony, so his voice, his style, was useless for set declamations. For him, the natural voice and tone were those of inward and private reading or reverie: - in that letter to Southey, he does not jump inconsequently from one subject to another. His method of sending himself to sleep, by conducting an imagined inward conversation, was what he held firmly and always by the hand. His little self-portrait is faithful and coherent.

Information of this kind, then, gives us at least a point of departure. But having done what we can with direct evidence, we must range more widely in our search for indications of the mike-distance appropriate to our older writers. We must, above all, use our general sense of the fitness of things, for what the classical rhetoricians used to call "decorum", and what modern linguistics sometimes calls "register". By this is meant a choice of word and syntax to suit the occasion, the subject, the speaker and the audience. It would, for example, be patently "indecorous" to render that sentence of De Quincey's about Cicero with a close-mike distance, making it intimate and informal in tone. The context, the subject, the rhetorical reputation of the speaker all imply a long distance from mouth to microphone, the tone of ceremonial declamation.

Having used what sense of decorum we may happen to have, we pass on to more definite, if less obtrusive, indications in the text itself of the manner in which it should be read. Among them is the use of tenses. Broadly speaking, the present tense implies direct address to a listener, and speaking still more broadly, it is the characteristic tense of pomp and declamation, rather than of intimate conversation or reverie. Here is an example from the declamatory and descriptive verse of the age before Lamb, from Thomson's *The Seasons*:

Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come;
 And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
 While music wakes around, veiled in a shower
 Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.
 O Hartford, fitted or to shine in courts
 With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
 With innocence and meditation joined
 In soft assemblage, listen to my song
 Which thy own season paints - when nature all
 Is blooming, and benevolent, like thee.
 And see where surly Winter passes off
 Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
 His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill...

Thomson, *The Seasons*, *Spring*.

By way of contrast between Thomson's use of the present tense here, let us take a passage from Cowper's *The Task*, which shows very clearly how this narrative present tense can turn into the past tense typical of reminiscence - of "emotion recollected in tranquillity", the dominant mood and tone of the new poetry. I remind you of it the more willingly because of Lamb's fine phrase, in a letter to Coleridge, about the "divine chit-chat of Cowper":

Just when our drawing rooms begin to blaze
 With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
 From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
 Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
 Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,
 My pleasures too begin. But me, perhaps,
 The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
 With faint illumination, that uplifts
 The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits
 Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.
 Not undelightful is an hour to me
 So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom
 Suits well the thoughtful, or unthinking mind,
 The mind contemplative, with some new theme
 Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.
 Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers
 That never felt a stupor, know no pause,
 Nor need one; I am conscious and confess,
 Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
 Me oft has Fancy, ludicrous and wild,
 Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
 Trees, churches, and strange visages, expressed
 In the red cinders, while with poring eye
 I gazed, myself creating what I saw.

Cowper, *The Task*, IV, 267-290

It is an example of a kind of writing which often straddles a poetic revolution. The opening lines are typical of the declamatory descriptive style of the eighteenth century, but they merge into the more private and intimate mood of the parlour twilight, and this in turn leads into the new, the essentially "Romantic" personal reverie of the last four lines - and they are in the past tense.

I am not, of course, being foolish enough to say that the past tense always indicates intimate reverie. It is the characteristic tense of narrative too, of boys on burning decks and such like. Usually, when it is associated with the third person of nouns and pronouns, it serves its narrative purpose. It may serve the same purpose with the stance of the first person. One may narrate something of one's own past that is objective, or objectively treated. But when the first person occurs in literature together with the past tense, it often leads into the mood, tone, and characteristic mike-distance of memory and reverie. It is also - and here I take another glance at the historical side of my theme - the characteristic mike-distance of Romantic verse and prose, for in both the dominant mood was that of reverie and memory. Indeed the Romantic exploration of the human personality was based upon a deeper realisation of the role of memory in the formation of a human being. It is expressed in Wordsworth's profound paradox, "The Child is father to the Man"; and at greater length in *The Prelude*:

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
like harmony in music -

And it grows from all our memories, especially those of childhood and youth. There is no need to tell you how much of Lamb's best prose deals with the same basic theme, and draws its charm and power from the tranquil recollection of his own earlier life. But I would like to remind you here of a passage from De Quincey which describes the significance of this formation quite as clearly as anything in Wordsworth - or in Freud a century later. It bears, not only on the substance of what they had discovered, the Romantic writers, but in style it happens to be a fine example of all those qualities which De Quincey associated with the musical development of prose, with "pomp of cadence, or sonorous ascent of clauses". It is from an essay which he called *The Palimpsest of the Brain*, and he begins by explaining, as he rather coyly remarks for the benefit of his fair readers, what a palimpsest may be. It is a very ancient parchment, originally used for - as he imagines in this case - a Greek tragedy; but since parchment was an expensive luxury, some medieval monk erased the Greek, which he could neither understand nor value, and wrote in its place a religious legend; and this in turn went out of fashion, to be washed and rubbed clean, so that someone else could thriftily write on the same parchment a romance about knights and ladies. This is the basis of his magnificent simile for the role of memory in human lives:

Yes, reader, countless are the mysterious handwritings of grief or joy which have inscribed themselves successively upon the palimpsest of your brain; and, like the annual leaves of aboriginal forests, or the undissolving snows on the Himalaya, or light falling upon light, the endless strata have covered up each other in forgetfulness. But by the hour of death, but by fever, but by the searchings of opium, all these can revive in strength. They are not dead, but sleeping. In the illustration imagined by myself, from the case of some individual palimpsest, the Grecian tragedy had seemed to be displaced, but was *not* displaced, by the monkish legend; and the monkish legend had

seemed to be displaced, but was *not* displaced by the knightly romance. In some potent convulsion of the system, all wheels back into its earliest elementary stage. The bewildering romance, light tarnished with darkness, the semi-fabulous legend, truth celestial mixed with human falsehoods, these fade even of themselves, as life advances. The romance has perished that the young man adored; the legend has gone that deluded the boy; but the deep, deep tragedies of infancy, as when the child's hands were unlinked for ever from his mother's neck, or his lips for ever from his sister's kisses, these remain lurking below all, and these lurk to the last. Alchemy there is none of passion or disease that can scorch away these immortal impresses.

De Quincey, *The Palimpsest of the Brain*.

This is indeed a kind of prose which lay outside Lamb's range: - no wonder they disagreed when they discussed together the nature of prose. This has a texture fairly to be compared with music, and elaborate music at that. The central simile is worked out in three different, but cumulative versions, very like the variations on a musical theme, and it operates over a much longer span than Lamb could easily command, at any rate with the same complexity of structure.

As I leave it, I will use it to introduce the last of my linguistic and grammatical comments. Those of us who are by education and habit bookish, tend to think of grammar in terms of the written word, even of words arranged in tables to display their grammatical behaviour. What we have to do now is to adjust our preconceptions to the notion that much of grammar, like language itself, is only fully apparent in the spoken language, and in particular that the rise and fall of the voice, the intonation, conveys essential information about the structure of our sentences. There is a pervasive tendency, in the English sentence, for the voice to rise up to the main verb, and then to fall away, slowly at first, then more sharply to its end, which is marked by a final drop in tone. There is, of course, an infinite variety in actual sentences, as there is in individual voices and modes of pronouncing words. But it is one of the more than seven wonders of human language that this infinite variety can co-exist with relatively few basic patterns, recognisable even through a mass of variations in detail. The last sentence of that passage from De Quincey will serve to illustrate this common pattern of intonation in the sentence. The main verb, "is", has been placed very early, and slightly emphasised by the change from a more usual word-order, which has brought the main subject, "Alchemy", to the beginning. Everything that follows, then, naturally falls into the lower tone. It is a dying, and a long-dying cadence, of singular beauty - and of course intensely appropriate to the subject itself: - it is a cadence, by the way, often and very beautifully used by Sir Thomas Browne two centuries earlier, and by Henry James a century later.

A less common, but remarkable version of a "falling cadence" is that used in speaking (or reading) parentheses. The practical problem here is that of detaching the parenthesis, in intonation, from the rise and fall of the main sentence around it. It is usually solved by keeping the voice a little lower, and a little monotonous. An even more marked lowering and monotony often occurs when the parenthetical phrase is not inserted within the main sentence, but added at the end, in the manner of an afterthought. It is very clearly seen in sentences of this type:

"They haven't ripened properly this summer," he said, taking at least three unsuccessful, but greedy bites at a small cherry.

These special cadences are not directly marked on the page, but they are indeed part of our language, and a writer who knows his job will use them in that inward voice with which he composes - even more certainly if he composes aloud - and they will impose themselves on a competent and careful reader, so that the intonation of the reader's head matches that of the writer. Lamb was fond of parentheses - they suited his jets of thought and feeling. And at his best, he uses them to enforce long falling cadences on the inner voice, as here - it must be one of the longest parentheses in English:

I am ill at dates, but I think it is now better than five-and-twenty years ago, that walking in the gardens of Gray's Inn - /they were then far finer than they are now - the accursed Verulam Buildings had not encroached upon all the east side of them, cutting out delicate green crankles, and shouldering away one or two of the stately alcoves of the terrace - the survivor stands gaping and relationless as if it remembered its brother - they are still the best gardens of any of the Inns of Court, my beloved Temple not forgotten - have the gravest character; their aspect being altogether reverend and law-breathing - Bacon has left the impress of his foot upon their gravel walks/ - taking my afternoon solace on a summer day upon the aforesaid terrace, a comely sad personage came towards me, whom, from his grave air and deportment, I judged to be one of the old Benchers of the Inn.

Lamb, *On Some of the Old Actors.*

This is, in its own way, "exquisite prose", and the parenthetic tone is finely used to keep the voice down to the range of intimate reverie. To control the intonation in such ways is nearly the whole art of prose - and it makes prose much more difficult and interesting to write than verse, where the poet can use metre for the same purpose more reliably. Where there is too little of his control of tone, prose can fall into incoherence, if not worse, as I believe it does in this passage, which illustrates vividly De Quincey's comment on Lamb's use of short units of utterance:

A Poor Relation is - the most irrelevant thing in nature. A piece of impertinent correspondency. An odious approximation. A haunting conscience. A preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noon-tide of your prosperity. An unwelcome remembrancer. A perpetually recurring mortification. A drain on your purse. A more intolerable dun upon your pride. A drawback upon success. A rebuke to your rising. A stain in your blood. A blot on your scutcheon. A rent in your garment. A death's head at your banquet. A gathocles' pot. A Mordecai in your gate. A Lazarus at your door. A lion in your path. A frog in your chamber. A fly in your ointment. A mole in your eye. A triumph to your enemy. An apology to your friends. The one thing not needful. The hail in harvest. The ounce of sour in a pound of sweet. - The bore *par excellence*.

Lamb, *Poor Relations*

It would take a resourceful actor to make much of this: - and the resourceful variations of tone in his rendering would be his own, for there is little or nothing in the text to determine them. Had Lamb written very often like this, we should not, I think, have been meeting here today. Fortunately for us - and for himself - he indulged only occasionally in his kind of dramatic script-writing.

Although De Quincey was partly right in observing that Lamb's prose works

with shortish phrases and sentences, he is largely wrong in suggesting that these short units could not be made to serve in larger ones. No doubt Lamb's mode of joining them was simpler than De Quincey's. The structure is less complex. There is rarely a "sonorous ascent of clauses"; more often a gentle falling cadence, natural to his own inner voice, and faithfully enforced on the reader by the methods I have been trying to describe. It is the very cadence which suits best of all that mood of inward reverie which was at the heart of the Romantic revolution in literature, and which links Lamb's prose so closely with Wordsworth's verse. It is typically, and magnificently deployed in this passage from *Dream Children*. The main verb is quickly despatched at the third word, to be picked up at the end with the phrase "I had more pleasure...", while all that intervenes - and it is a long sentence - is a series of parantheses and afterthoughts, liked first by the repetition of "how", then falling away into a coda of present participles:

Then I *told how* good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them: *how* I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oak panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out - sometimes in the spacious old fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me - *and how* the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then - and because I had more pleasure in *strolling* about among the melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and *picking* up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at - or in *lying* about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me - or *basking* in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself *ripening* too along with the oranges and limes in that grateful warmth - or in *watching* the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sultry pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings, - I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children.

Lamb, *Dream Children*.

So much for Lamb's inability to work with long sentences. As for the rest, my summary can be brief. First, I have tried to show that in this mood of reverie, of memory, or "emotion recollected in tranquillity", Lamb is centrally one of the Romantics. Secondly, his style is not characterised by archaisms, such as his use of the "-eth" ending of verbs (the only mannerism of his which I find irritating), still less by occasional "difficult" words from Sir Thomas Browne. It is based solidly, so far as its intonations and main structure go, on the English of his own day, on the "language really spoken by men." Thirdly, these beautifully controlled intonations are exactly those of his own inner voice, and of his inner mood and temper of mind.

Lastly, may I hope to have suggested to you how serious readers of reflective literature may find the microphone a friend indeed, above all for the study of that inward voice which is so large a part of our own inward lives - our

most real lives. Language is indeed useful for communication with others. But I deeply believe that it is still more crucial for the sake of communion, of what we say within and to ourselves. What a man says to himself, silently, within his own head, can make him - or can at least help to make him - good or bad, happy or sad, sane, or even mad. There is a well-known French saying "Le style, c'est l'homme meme." It is as obviously true as the English statement that the man is father of the child. But just as Wordsworth turned this round into the much more profound proverb, "The child is father to the man", so the French - of Buffon's making - can be turned into the realisation that "L'homme, c'est le style." By our use of language, we do much to make, to mould what we are. And the microphone can help us to study this vital process.

EPITAPH FOR GEORGE DYER

P M Zall

If the essence of an immortal comic hero is a compound of humor, irony, and pathos, George Dyer should live forever. From his shrine in Elia's pantheon he still sheds his grace across the years - reaching for his hat but picking up the coal scuttle, sparkling in conversation with the bust of Diana in mistake for Anna Letitia Barbauld, striding directly out the Lambs' door into the New River. Dyerana still unfit for print could add much more - how, confronting a two-hole loo for the first time, he assumes the holes are meant to accommodate one's legs and sits accordingly. What true Elian cannot but laugh in memory of George Dyer?

To know George Dyer, the man, is to feel the pathos in those tales. His picking up the coal scuttle, his converse with Diana, his walk into the river were all owing to near-blindness from a lifetime's poring over dim print and faded manuscripts in dark archives where he pursued survival through hack-scholarship. Impoverished in pocket - "He would give away his last guinea" (HCR), driven to compulsive benevolence, lashed by self-doubt, he was more to be pitied than laughed at. Until 1801, when Lamb's plastic imagination began to shape the comical legend, the real George Dyer was seldom smiled upon, least of all by Fortune.

This is all the more ironic because from boyhood he was eminently blessed with benevolent friends. Son of a humble but worthy watchman of Wapping, he had been sent to Christ's Hospital at seven by a pair of benevolent Baptist neighbor ladies. At fourteen, he stood a grecian, befriended by Anthony Askew, the school's physician, whose hobby of collecting Greek manuscripts made his library a bank "on which (said Dyer) the most eminent critics, in Greek literature, at home and abroad, were very proud to draw." Given the run of that library, Dyer mixed freely with the literati there, among them another benefactor, the great Shakespearean scholar Richard Farmer, who lived with Askew while preaching at Whitehall.

Like his host, Farmer conscientiously practiced benevolence. He is on record that he would rather do without an epitaph, "He was a great preacher," if he could have one saying, "He was a kind man." When Dyer entered Emmanuel College in 1774, his fees were covered only partly by Christ Hospital funds. The balance came from some "nameless benefactor," most likely Farmer, who followed him to Emmanuel next year as Master of the College.

In his student years, Dyer knit friendships with two outspoken leaders of Dissent, his classmate Gilbert Wakefield and a fellow of Jesus College, William Frend. Because of his own dissenting mind, he would not go on for

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his MA which would have led to the clergy, but instead - after taking the BA in 1778 - taught for a year at Dr Grimwood's academy in Dedham. Encouraged to remain, Dyer declined. He had taught for that year only to provide an annuity for his worthy father of Wapping, and now returned to Cambridge to further his education.

There he served as tutor to the twelve children of the Baptist minister Robert Robinson, "not simply as tutor to his family (he said) but with the view of profiting by his doctrine and learned conversation." Robinson was pre-eminent for his doctrine of benevolence and practising what he preached:

I feel three pounds gained honestly by the sale of a fat bullock produce more fire in my spirit than all the pretty but poor tassels and spangles can give me. With three pounds I can set fire to ten cold hearts, frozen with infirmity, widowhood, poverty, and fear.

His preaching at the Stoneyard Baptist Chapel would draw 200 from the University alone, and his fame was international. But Robinson's large family kept him close to home, farming 200 acres at Chesterton, dealing in corn and coals, and operating the local ferry.

Still, domestic distractions did not deter Robinson from preaching twice, sometimes thrice, every Sunday, lecturing Sunday evenings and some weekdays, "not only in the evening but at six in the morning," adjusting his schedule to the occupational needs of his congregation. Religiously he would visit the cottagers, smoking his pipe in the chimney corner, discoursing with equal authority on faith, crops, or politics. At least once a month he would travel to outlying villages for public discourses in homes, barns, orchards, paddocks, wherever the faithful could flock.

In 1786 he dictated sixteen of these discourses for publication, "a sort of poor man's broom to sweep his almshouse." As *Village Discourses*, delivered in barnyard-rough rhetoric, they were perfectly suited to the understandings of "the lowest ranks of society." Reprinted at least four times before his death in 1790, they represented for Dyer the essence of Robinson's Christianity. Concluding his biography, he summed up the pattern of this contemporary Christian hero by way of epitaph:

An amiable, a benevolent, a generous, a learned man, a true philanthropist...an invariable friend to liberty.

After Robinson's death, Dyer remained in Cambridge for two years, teaching in the village school at Swavesey while preparing his mentor's works for posthumous publication - the *History of Baptism* (1790) and *Ecclesiastical Researches* (1792). Study under Robinson led also to a book of his own, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles* published by Joseph Johnson in 1792, a discursive work of 439 pages showing that religious and political restrictions were inconsistent with natural rights, free inquiry, the Constitution, and Christian doctrine. The topic was particularly timely in 1792 when Cambridge authorities - including Dr Farmer - were persecuting William Frend as a symbol of campus Dissent. As a Dissenter himself, the pupil and friend of leading Dissenters, Dyer's residence in Cambridge grew precarious.

The French Revolution had excited him - "I experienced energies and exertions by no means congenial to my settled habits of retirement." Now the persecution of Frend mobilized his energies as if in answer to the call of the American Jacobin Joel Barlow: "It is the duty of humanity, to save our fellow-creatures from falling into snares, even those that are spread

for them by government." Forsaking his rural retreat, he entrenched at Clifford's Inn, where he would remain for the duration of his life, subsisting on proceeds from reviewing or writing on demand, but also publishing books of his own designed to keep his fellow-creatures from falling into snares, especially those set by government.

Heralding his arrival, he published a thin volume of *Poems* dedicated to Friend and containing an "Ode on Peace" celebrating the other Cambridge reformers past and present, along with a complementary "Ode on Liberty" celebrating the radical reformers of London, like Richard Price and Tom Paine, whose ranks he had now joined. Then the next year, 1793, he published *Complaints of the Poor*, exposing political snares that the state set for the poor. Taking his lead from Robinson's *Discourses*, he wrote in plain style suited to the poorer classes ("as they will be the principal persons in my eye"), and massed statistics and interviews as well as his beloved books to show how "the common people" were kept enthralled because the government kept them in ignorance and thus in apathetic submission. He proposed one solution in free, universal education that would bring rich and poor into the same classroom together and, by means of this integration, harmonize their hearts - "The principle which equalizes man dignifies and exalts him."

In 1795 he advanced additional solution in a sequel, *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence*, now writing in a style more suited to middle and upper classes. He urged them to try various vents for benevolent feelings - establishing workhouses, charity schools, Sunday schools, and relief societies. In one chapter, he called for subscribing money to help leaders of reform societies - Thomas Hardy, Horne Tooke, John Thelwall - then on trial for treason. With due circumspection, considering the trials were still in progress, he based his appeal not on politics but on the inconvenience and loss suffered by the defendants as private persons.

In 1796, after those defendants had been gloriously acquitted by a popular jury, Dyer put circumspection behind him and expounded his own political views in his *Memoirs of Robinson*. Returning to the plain style as a badge of democracy, he explained that he was imitating Robinson's *Village Discourses* where the "language of equality" was most appropriate to a "testimony to liberty." In the biography itself he showed that Robinson's views and thus his own were like those of Tom Paine's in seeing government as "an evil that the wickedness of mankind renders necessary," but differed from Paine's in believing that benevolence could correct the inequalities and imperfections inherent in the social state.

In 1797, Dyer carried on in the pattern of his master with another volume of verse, *The Poet's Fate*, a dialogue about how difficult it was to write poetry in an age of party faction. Patent propaganda, the poem celebrated once again the leaders in radical politics and religion, but this time included allusions to young writers rising in their ranks. When he could not squeeze their names into a line of verse, he would generously mention them in explanatory footnotes - succumbing to what Coleridge called DYERHOEA EXPLANATORIA - "a disease not quite so bad to the Patient as Water on the Brain, but more troublesome to his Friends."

An especially unfortunate instance of this disease erupts in a footnote to these lines, as the "Poet" asks his friend "X" how one can survive in such trying times and "X" advises learning to starve:

When hungry, smoke your pipe, or say your prayers:
Or plough, in learned pride, the Atlantic main,
Join PANTISOCRACY'S* harmonious train...

The footnote to the last line bears repeating at full length:

A few years ago some young men of Oxford and Cambridge formed the design of going to America, in order to realise a *pantisocracy*; they intended to devote themselves to literature and agriculture; to accumulate no property, but to have a common stock. Of this number were two very ingenious modern poets, ROBERT SOUTHEY, the author of an epic poem, entitled Joan of Arc, and other poems; and S T COLERIDGE, author of a volume of poems. These two young poets are equally distinguished for their ardent love of liberty; the former more remarkable for his powers of description, and for exciting the softer feelings; the latter for a rich and powerful imagination. In connection with these names, I cannot forbear mentioning those of three young men, who have given early proofs, that they can strike the true chords of poesy; W WORDSWORTH, author of Descriptive Sketches in Verse, taken during a Pedestrian Tour in the Italian, Grison, Swiss and Savoyard Alps; a poem that proves the writer to possess uncommon skill in descriptive poetry; C LLOYD, author of a volume of very elegant sonnets; and CHARLES LAMB, author of some tender sonnets in COLERIDGE'S Poems, of a fine poem in CHARLES LLOYD'S Poems, and of sonnets in an excellent publication, entitled the Monthly Magazine (pp 26-28).

Apologising to Southey, Dyer explained, "I could not bring in Wordsworth, and Lloyd, and Lamb but I put them in a note." "That man," said Southey, "is all benevolence."

But this benevolence, calculated to do good, did immeasurable harm. In concluding its final issue (9 July 1798), the *Anti-Jacobin's* "New Morality" seized upon Dyer's note for one of its most devastating quatrains -

And ye five other wandering Bards, that move
In sweet accord of harmony and love,
Colerdige and Southey, Lloyd and Lambe and Co.
Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux! -

unjustly endowing Lamb and Lloyd with political notoriety that dogged their days.

In 1799 Dyer, though impoverished, issued *An Address...on Libels* at his own expense, "Printed for the Author." (The Huntington Library copy includes a handwritten interpolation, "and sold by him," as though Dyer was trying to shield anyone else from prosecution for selling a libellous book.) The preface claims that though the book had been written over two years, its "suspicions" had been proven by the trials for seditious libel recently decided against his old friend Gilbert Wakefield and his old publisher Joseph Johnson. Wakefield, found guilty of libelling the Bishop of Llandaff, and Johnson, found guilty of selling that libel, both now languished in prison. "The business is over," said Dyer, "and the circumstances I pass in silence, lest I be thought to arraign a court of justice, while I am to interest the friend to humanity" (p. v).

In describing the circumstances of the case that he uses to illustrate his general principles, Dyer acknowledges its similarity to Wakefield's case, but insists, "The principles, on which I shall proceed, will be of a general character, and look beyond the present moment." In passing, he

confesses that "retired students" like Wakefield (and himself) "are apt to form opinions that the world reckons extravagant; and an extravagant opinion *sometimes* (I am no advocate for all extravagancies) only means an opinion not fully comprehended" (p. 20). After expressing the hope that some day men will recognize tyrants as tyrannical, unjust judges as unjust, and perfidious priests as perfidious, he concludes with another disclaimer: "I am not here speaking concerning any character in England - my allusions are not directed to any particular quarter: - they are general observations and to be illustrated by the varieties of human character" (p.119).

In 1800 midst an obituary of the poet William Mason, he erupted, "The cause of reform is the cause of human improvement and will work its own way, whatever becomes of timid poets and short-sighted politicians," yet when he issued his collected *Poems*, it became quite clear that his own fight for freedom was now tempered with timidity. The lines on Pantisocracy that had appeared in *The Poet's Fate* two years earlier were revised to read:

Or plough, in conscious pride, the Atlantic main,
And hail adventurous, Columbia's* plain...

The original footnote was replaced by a historical note:

*The first persons that went to England to settle in America, were the Puritans, who afterwards split into different sects, all disaffected to the established religion of their own country, or persecuted for their opposition to it. (p.213)

The whole of *The Poet's Fate* was now cleansed of allusions to contemporary politics. Allusions to younger friends of freedom were now mere references to their poetry. A note to the line "Paint the domestic grief, or social bliss" says, "Characteristic of a volume of poems, the joint production of Coleridge, Lloyd and Lamb" (p. 294). A note to the line "Wake, to simpler theme, the lyric lay" simply names *Lyrical Ballads*. Dyer's revisions thus covered his friends as well as himself.

Explaining some of his revisions, the preface said that "the principles of freedom are too sacred, to be surrendered for trifles; too noble, to be exchanged for song"; they required "nobler strains" (p.xxxviii). But Dyer also revised his early political odes, deleting contemporary references while retaining allusions to historical heroes, Milton, Locke, James Harrington, Algernon Sidney. This was more than merely keeping allusions up to date. It was sounding retreat. Dyer made no secret of his timidity, blaming it on an old cast of mind rather than fear of reprisals: "Of early habits of indolence, the effects of which I still feel powerfully, my pursuits and manners are such, as rather belong to a solitary bookworm" (p. xxxii).

With the *Poems* still at the printer's, Dyer suddenly realized the preface contained a statement that might have been misleading - "The public must not be misled!" At an expense he could not afford, he stopped the presses. When the volume eventually appeared in 1802, the revised preface omitted only one statement that could have misled anyone:

A sufficient degree of generosity is found in the world to encourage a useful pursuit...the violence of party cannot controul it.

The fate of Friend, Wakefield, Johnson and others had shown otherwise. Henceforth Dyer would follow his own pursuits wrapped in the harmless minutiae of hack scholarship for the rest of his life.

"If I had to write his epitaph," mused "Barry Cornwall" in 1864, "I should say that he was neither much respected nor at all hated; too good to dislike, too inactive to excite great affection; and that he was as simple as the daisy, which we think we admire, and daily tread under foot" (*Memoir of Lamb*, p.71). Yet his legendary benevolence remained boundless, even to generously submitting to the jokes of Lamb and his friends.

That he was conscious of being a butt is abundantly clear, even before the oblique complaint about his sharp portrait in "Oxford in Vacation" - "You possess so *much wit*, and *that person* so many infirmities, it seemed to be calculated to do what you never intended to do." Thus Dyer aet 75. But even thirty years earlier, he had written a stanza accepting his role as Falstaff to Lamb's Hal:

As the Lambs doctored him for malnutrition, Charles played amanuensis, copying out verses for Dyer's *Poems*, including this stanza from "Democritus Junior; or, the Laughing Philosopher" -

Thus, Falstaff-like, I'll live and die,
Laugh long as I can see;
And when Death's busy hand shall close my eye,
This bag of jokes I leave the doctor's fee:
Then, Doctor, when I'm dead, laugh thou, and think of me.

Overstepping his bounds as amanuensis, Lamb crossed it out as (he told Rickman), "An abortive Stanza; very precious - & very false."* But when the poem appeared in print, Dyer had restored those lines - a very epitaph of his own.

*Reproduced from Huntington Library manuscript RS 1250 by gracious permission of the Librarian.

THE MARY LAMB PORTRAIT

On view at the Ernest G Crowsley Memorial Lecture, Saturday October 6, was a portrait of Mary Lamb. Members might be interested to know how this came into our possession. Attributed to F S Cary, son of Lamb's friend H F (Dante) Cary, it was part of a valuable gift presented by a member of the Society, Mrs B Oldfield of Cambridge, in 1951. Her father, George Wherry, published in 1925, the year of Lamb's Superannuation Centenary, a slim volume *Cambridge and Charles Lamb*. It described the Charles Lamb Dinners held in that city from 1909 to 1914, inspired by Charles Sayle. The Charles Lamb Society's Bulletin No. 101, gives a full account of the extent of the gift which included "a series of water colours of Haunts of Charles Lamb by Paul Braddon, a file of correspondence relating to the Dinners, programmes and other mementoes, and the portrait of Mary Lamb."

This was painted in 1829, and resembles the double portrait of Charles and Mary, painted by the same artist, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

In responding to the thanks given by Mr Walter Farrow for so splendid a gift, Mrs Oldfield ended her speech with these words:-

Thoughts of and words written by Charles Lamb were never far away to cheer him /Mr Wherry/ at the midnight hour. The Lamb Dinners were a great joy to him, and it is with the greatest pleasure that I leave his Collection to the tender care of the Society.

The portrait was part of the Exhibition "Charles Lamb in Edmonton and Enfield" arranged by the Enfield Libraries Committee in 1972, and at that time was obviously in sore need of restoration. Thanks to a bequest from Mrs N Lewis, this work is now almost complete, and Mrs Oldfield will be pleased to know that the portrait is being skilfully restored by Mr Arthur Phelps. Arrangements will be made for it to be examined by experts of the National Portrait Gallery and compared closely with their Cary portrait.

Members will find much to interest them in Mr Wherry's little book, for it includes articles by E V Lucas, Sir Edmund Gosse, and an account by Mr Wherry of George Dyer and William Frend. Facing the illustration of the Mary Lamb portrait in the book, is a statement by Mr Lionel Cust "I remember your portrait of Mary Lamb very well. It seems to agree quite well with the double portrait of Mary & Charles Lamb which I got for the National Portrait Gallery, which is certainly by F S Cary. I do not think that anyone else could have painted Mary Lamb at that age, as they lived secluded, with occasional visits to the Cary's."

F S Reeves

OBITUARY

It is with regret that we record the deaths of Mrs D W Thomas and Mr R Jones. Both have been members for many years, and Mr and Mrs E C Thomas were faithful in their attendances at the meetings until Mrs Thomas's illness prevented her travelling into London.

Mr R Jones will be remembered chiefly by the members of the Dramatic Group, for he always came to the Dramatic Group Birthday Celebrations, with his daughter Gwen, and was most appreciative of all the items presented.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Mr E C Thomas, and Miss Gwen Jones for the sad loss they have sustained.

CONGRATULATIONS

On September 12, 1973, Mr H G Smith celebrated his 90th birthday. We send him our best wishes and hope that his health will improve so that we shall see him at the Luncheon. His presence at the meetings is sadly missed.

RESIGNATION OF THE CHAIRMAN

It is with great regret that we announce that Sidney Hall has found it necessary, for health and personal reasons, to give up the Chairmanship of the Society.

Appointed to follow the late Arthur Bishop in 1970 Sidney was faced with the almost immediate task of holding the Society together following the deaths first of Mr Bishop, then of Ernest Crowsley, our guiding light for so many years. For the period of his chairmanship his cheerfulness and urbanity in the face of the rocks and shoals we have had to navigate have shown us that all things are possible, given patience and goodwill. In this task he has been greatly helped by his wife, Hilda, and we are glad to know that we shall be able to retain the services of both as members of the Council.

At a Council meeting on 3 November Dr D G Wilson was unanimously appointed Chairman: let us offer him our sincerest good wishes for a successful term of office, including as it undoubtedly will the bicentenary year.

COLERIDGE'S 'RELIGIOUS' LETTER

It will be remembered that in writing to acquaint Coleridge with the family tragedy Lamb said "Write - as religious a letter as possible...". Coleridge did so, and the generally received text is printed on pages 142-3 of the first volume of Earl Leslie Griggs' fine edition of Coleridge's letters. It has not been possible to find the letter itself, however, and this text has been handed down from Gillman's *Life of Coleridge* through Ernest Hartley Coleridge's two volume edition of the Letters published in 1895.

It is of particular interest therefore that a transcript of this letter appeared for sale at Sotheby's on 9 October 1973. It is said to be in an early nineteenth-century hand and to differ in several respects from the received version: "I charge you Lamb..." in place of "I charge you, my dearest friend": in two places the word "brother" is used instead of "friend"; and the hope is expressed that Lamb's father is "all senseless of the calamity" in place of the received version's "almost senseless of the calamity". The transcript was among papers owned by the Fox family of Falmouth who had many literary interests and connections and of which Caroline Fox the diarist was a member. It was with this family that John Sterling, who had been a young disciple of Coleridge at Highgate, made friends during two winter stays at Falmouth in 1840 and 1841, and it is tempting to surmise that he may have been the source of the transcript.

It was purchased by Mr Alan Thomas, the London bookseller, for £40.

BOOK REVIEW

Robert Southey: A Tour in Scotland in 1819 (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1971. *Limited to 500 copies*)

In 1819, Thomas Telford, the great engineer, and Robert Southey, the poet laureate, undertook a six-weeks tour of Scotland, accompanied by several friends. Telford was then actively engaged on numerous civil engineering works of road making and harbour construction in Scotland. Southey kept a diary of their journeying which came ultimately into the possession of the Institution of Civil Engineers - Telford was their first President - and was published in 1929. The present volume is a facsimile of the text of that edition, and very interesting reading it makes.

The diary inevitably invites comparison with Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, written 46 years earlier. Like Johnson, Southey was a keen observer and possessed of a dry humour. He was not afraid to comment on the less attractive features of the country and its hostilities, but was ready to praise the "quiet, thoughtful, contented, religious people, susceptible of improvement, and willing to be improved". The government was encouraging the building of roads and harbours and the route followed was largely governed by Telford's wish to oversee his assistants and workmen.

Starting from Edinburgh, the coach party travelled to the Trossachs, which Southey compared to his own Borrowdale, and then circuitously by Lochearnhead and the Tay valley to Perth and along the coast to Aberdeen. Johnson was sarcastic about the lack of trees in Scotland, but Southey found things much improved in this respect. He seems to have found bookshops in nearly every town they stayed in and, as book collecting was a major passion, the booksellers profited by his visit.

Between Aberdeen and Inverness, he heard of a former head of the Grant family, in dispute as to the antiquity of his clan with another Highland gentleman, who generously conceded precedence by reference to Genesis ch.6, verse 4, which he amended very slightly to read "There were Grants upon the earth in those days". The travellers went as far west as Kyle of Lochalsh before turning south down the Caledonian Canal, then nearing completion, through Ballachulish and Glencoe and on to Glasgow. Here Southey saw a grave being dug and fitted with an iron cover, strongly bolted. "When there is no longer an apprehension of danger "from the resurrection-men, the cover is unlocked and the frame drawn out", for use elsewhere.

They visited Robert Owen and his model cotton mills at Lanark, where Southey was especially pleased with what would today be called a play school for the young children of the workers. "They made a glorious noise, worth all the concerts of New Lanark, and London to boot". Parting company with Telford near the border, Southey travelled back to Keswick, having written a diary that can be thoroughly recommended to the reader as a lively picture of the Highlands as they were in the years that followed Waterloo.

T R B

BOOKS RECEIVED

John E Jordan (ed.): De Quincey As a Critic
 Peter F Morgan (ed.): The Letters of Thomas Hood

GIFTS FOR THE LIBRARY

From Mr Alex Sjogran: En Drinkares Bekannelser (Confessions of a Drunkard)
 From Mrs H Lonsdale: Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare (*London: Little Blue Book Co., n.d.*)
 From Mrs Winifred Courtney: Leigh Hunt's "A Jar of Honey From Mount Hybla" (*London: Smith Elder, 1848; the first edition*)

BOOKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY MEMBERS

Berta Lawrence: Somerset Legends (*David & Charles £3.25*)
 Vera Watson: The British Museum

Kenneth R Jones: More about Watford

Mr Jones has kindly offered to send a complimentary copy to any member of the C L S who writes to him at Craigau, 89 Woodland Drive, Watford, Herts - postage would probably be 4p in the UK.

Clarendon Press announce among their forthcoming books one by our President, Dr Ian Jack. It will be on "Browning's Major Poetry": "Dr Jack is concerned with Browning's conception of the nature of a poem, and the brilliant variety of his technique; he considers the significance of the early long poems before concentrating on the great dramatic poems of Browning's maturity."