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THE COMING OF AGE OF THE MAN OF FEELING: SENTIMENT IN LAMB AND DICKENS
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A lecture given to the Society on 2 March 1985.

When I began to think of a topic for this afternoon's lecture, I found myself returning to a comment made by Geoffrey Tillotson in his edition of *Essays of Elia*. There he wrote: 'To wish to read the great novelists with full knowledge is to need to read the *Essays of Elia*'. (1) He was referring, of course, to the 'great novelists' of the mid-nineteenth century, to Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot and Charles Dickens. Very little space intervenes between the end of Lamb's career and the beginning of Dickens's: only a year after Lamb's death in 1834 the first volume-length series of *Sketches by Boz* was published. Both Lamb and Dickens were shaped as artists by the strictures of journalism and the periodical essay, and both were explorers and celebrants of London. There are sufficient references in Dickens's letters to suggest that he knew Lamb's writings well and Talfourd's two-volume 1837 edition of the correspondence. Certain of the Elian essays are quoted from memory and with affection: 'New Year's Eve', 'The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple', 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers', 'Captain Jackson'. Writing in 1841 to D.M. Moir, a contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, Dickens remarks on the similarities between Moir's prose style and Lamb's, and he concludes, 'I feel ... that you love [him] as well as I do'. (2) It seems to me that Lamb handed on to Dickens, refashioned, the sentimental tradition of the eighteenth century. In my exploration of this topic I shall range over Lamb's essays but will concentrate on one of Dickens's novels, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, written in 1840-41.

We are men of secluded habits with something of a cloud upon our early fortunes, whose enthusiasm nevertheless has not cooled with age, whose spirit of romance is not yet quenched, who are content to ramble through the world in a pleasant dream, rather than ever awaken again to its harsh realities. We are alchemists who would extract the essence of perpetual youth from dust and ashes, tempt coy Truth in many light and airy forms from the bottom of her well, and discover one crumb of comfort or one grain of good in the commonest and least regarded matter that passes through our crucible. Spirits of past times, creatures of imagination, and people of to-day, are alike the objects of our seeking, and, unlike the objects of search with most philosophers, we can ensure their coming at our command.

Not a self-portrait of Elia, nor of his begetter Charles Lamb; nor yet a portrait of Charles Dickens, but Master Humphrey's description of the select society who meet together one night each week for conversation and story-telling under the tutelage of the old grandfather clock, Master Humphrey's Clock. (3) At ten o'clock precisely the clock strikes for their assembly, and on the second stroke of two they go their separate ways. *Master Humphrey's Clock* is both the title of the weekly miscellany which provides a framework for the two novels *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*, and, literally, it is an incubator which in time hatches out the mind's inventions. The clock's presence is richly suggestive. Oddly, the clock not only marks time passing but time *past*. The 'piles of dusty papers' secreted in its 'old dark closet', beneath the swinging pendulum, represent the stored imagination as a time-machine with the power to 'beguile time from the heart of time itself' (*OCS*, p.678), to divert attention from its passing, and to cheat the hours and minutes of their tyranny by suggesting, as they do, the possibility of turning back the clock during those precisely demarked two hours either side of midnight. Master Humphrey's first selection from the clock, for example, transports the reader to the sixteenth century. Marking the 'dream-whiles' of the imagination, to adapt an Elian phrase, (4) Master Humphrey's Clock is not that 'dead thing ... with its ponderous embowelments of lead and brass', the clock reviled in Elia's essay 'The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple', but a friend, 'a quaint old thing in a huge oaken case curiously and richly carved' (*OCS*, p.676). It has been Master Humphrey's companion since he was a boy. Chiming in unison with his recollective imagination, it measures that same 'heart-language' as the sundial, the 'primitive' time-piece of the world's and Elia's childhood. The sundial and the fountain in Lincoln's Inn, which spouted water from four marble cherubs when Elia 'was no bigger than they were figured', are equally memorials to childhood, the 'grotesque' 'virgin fancies' of the spouting marble boys emblematic of the fantasticality of the child's imagination celebrated in the essay's pages (*LW*, II.83-4). Elia asks, 'Is the world all grown up? Is childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the wisest and the best some of the child's heart left, to respond to its earliest enchantments?' (ii.84-5) 'We are alchemists', replies Master Humphrey, 'who would extract the essence of perpetual youth from dust and ashes' (*OCS*, p.678). A crippled recluse, his life shadowed by an early sorrow, bookish, with an antiquary's pleasure in exploring the by-ways of the past, in inhabiting dream-worlds and childhood states, refuges from the world of external circumstance: such is Elia, and such is Master Humphrey.

Both Elia and Master Humphrey have their roots in the polite journalism of the early eighteenth century, in the sentimental essays of Addison, Steele and Goldsmith, (5) which promote self-portraiture and the sense of an audience in terms of the enactment of certain moral values, the establishment of a community of feeling. Summing up the first number of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, Thackeray observed the 'very pleasing impression' left by the narrator, 'a noble tender-hearted creature, who sympathizes with all the human race'. (6) A confidential observer, a go-between in two worlds, Master Humphrey, like Elia before him, points to the moral continuity between the inner world of fiction, which he inhabits, and the outer world of the reader, which he shares equally by virtue of his studious inclination. The strategy is characteristic of the sentimental mode as it developed in the late eighteenth-century novel, the novels of Sterne and Mackenzie, for example, where the critical moment comes in the discovered complicity of inner and outer reality. Narrative focus is dual: the life-story of a central hero ('a child in the drama of the world', as Mackenzie describes Harley (7)) is intersected at intervals by the personal stories of a series of unfortunates who not only easily outdo the hero in the severity of their distress but ultimately displace his emotional growth from his own adventures to their more affective experiences. This displacement is crucial: a spectator of life's excesses, the sentimental hero, the generic Man of Feeling, becomes privy to an emotional drama not his own, and by the device of the inner fiction (those distressing interpolations to which he is auditor are tellingly styled 'tales', 'histories', and 'narratives') he is levelled in his sympathetic response with the reader.

We can detect a similar displacement in the Elian persona. As a portrait of Lamb, Elia is a mixture of the confessional and the personally evasive. Essays as various as 'Dream Children', 'Old China', 'The Superannuated Man', and 'Confessions of a Drunkard' test the potential of fiction to transform painful areas of experience and restore the individual to health. As a direct descendant of the Man of Feeling, however, Elia both contains and exposes the complexities of full moral being in terms of the sentimental heroism of reading. In 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading', he confides, 'I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.' (LW, II.172) Elia's bibliophilia, his love-affair with the written work ('my midnight darlings, my Folios!' (II.30)) is, like Master Humphrey's, a responsible extravagance, a pleasure he shares with the reader he so continually addresses, and in addressing creates after his own image. In the Elian essay 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis', the life of the beggar, the familiar object for sentiment in the eighteenth-century mode, is metamorphosed into a literary artefact. Lamenting their obsolescence, Elia records how 'in their picturesque attire [Beggars were once] as ornamental as the Signs of old London. They were the standing morals, emblems, mementos, dial-mottos, the spital sermons, the books for children' displayed daily in the city streets. The beggars themselves are subsumed beneath the metaphoric organization; epiphenomenal, they are reduced to secondary agency within a sensibility whose primary focus is the written word, as the long Latin extract from Lamb's favourite Vincent Bourne emphasizes. 'Reader peruse it', directs the sentimental essayist; 'and say, if customary sights, which could call up such gentle poetry as this, were of a nature to do more harm or good to the moral sense of the passengers through the daily thoroughfares of a vast and busy metropolis'. (LW, II.116-17)

I would wish to argue that Lamb's reordering of the principles of feeling within an exuberant textuality provides a vital link between the old and new novels of sentiment, between Mackenzie's literariness in *The Man of Feeling* and Dickens's fictive self-consciousness in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Elia's tactics for 'reading' life derive initially from that fellowship of writer and reader created in the pages of *The Spectator* and *The Bee*; but he also looks forward to that more fully characterized communion between serial-novelist and reader which is paramount in the mid-Victorian ethics of fiction.

Dickens set a high value on the educative power of fictionally embodied feeling as a means of displacing and so rehabilitating experience for the community of readers. In a letter to John Forster, he considers the ending of *The Old Curiosity Shop* with the death of Little Nell as justified by the note of thanks he received from a reader who had himself lost a young daughter: 'I resolved to try and do something which might be read by people about whom Death had been, - with a softened feeling, and with consolation. I was moved, therefore, to have poor Bradbury's note yesterday, and was glad to think he felt as I would have had him'. (DL, II.188) Subsequently, in his *Life of Dickens*, Forster recorded that *The Old Curiosity Shop* was the novel which, 'more than any other of his works', made 'the bond between [Dickens] and his readers one of personal attachment'. (8)

Such education in feeling is not, moreover, a restrictive force for realism in the novel; but, as the Elian persona is capable of adopting a variety of affective strategies, so in *The Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens presents a complete rhetoric of sentiment within a narrative whose structuring principle is contrastive. Master Humphrey's initial allegorical conception of the solitary child amid the huddled grotesques of the junk shop, 'the only pure, fresh, youthful object' among its 'heaps of fantastic things' (OCS, Ch.1), is only the first in what will become a series of mutually critical emblems. If Little Nell is the Woman of Feeling, one of the few women of feeling in the tradition, then Quilp is the agent of anti-sentiment, opposing her dream of pastoral calm with an anarchic primitivism of slime and chaos. Against them both stands the comically buoyant Dick Swiveller. The inhabitant of his own alternative realm of sentiment, he parodies the vulnerability of the Man of Feeling. ('Everything in our lives, whether of good or evil, affects us most by contrast', explains the narrator in Chapter 53). Little Nell's progress to the grave is hastened less by the machinations of a complex plot (the plot, in fact, turns out to be peripheral) as by the affecting tales of others' distress. The tomb-stones which she finds 'a curious kind of pleasure' (Ch.17) in reading, the moral sentences copied 'in good round text' (Ch.24) by the dying scholar, and the 'history' (Ch. 32) of the poor pupil-teacher and her sister are so many figurations of what her friend the schoolmaster describes as her own unchronicled heroism (Ch.46). But if, like Mackenzie's hero, Nell's reading of others' misfortunes reinforces her own life-script, Dick Swiveller's miscellaneous repertoire of sentimental scraps is transformative in its powers; and, paradoxical in the tradition, it is revivifying in its effects. On receiving the news that his beloved Sophy Wackles has thrown him over and succumbed to the charms of one Cheggs, a market-gardener, Dick takes to playing the flute, 'a good, sound, dismal occupation, not only in unison with his own sad thoughts, but [absolute credential of sentimentalism, as the Scottish moralist Adam Smith would testify] calculated to awaken

a fellow-feeling in the bosoms of his neighbours'. The air he plays is 'Away with melancholy', and the feeling engendered by his baleful notes has the effect of keeping the neighbourhood awake for half the night, until, sentiment exhausted, Dick shuts up his music-book, extinguishes the candle, and 'finding himself greatly lightened and relieved in his mind', falls promptly asleep (Ch.58).

A good case can be made for regarding Swiveller as Dickens's most Lamb-like creation. It is Dick's nature, as Lamb observed it was the actor Elliston's, always to be acting. 'What if it is the nature of some men to be highly artificial? The fault is least reprehensible in *players*', argues Elia (*LW*, II.169). Swiveller's habitual posturing, his sentimental 'attitudes', provide a release for those processes which imprison Nell; for, like that other Elian portrait he so closely resembles, Captain Jackson, he is 'not to be *contained*', but overflows 'all bounds by the force of a magnificent self-delusion' (II.192). A comic victim of circumstance, Jackson refuses to be straitened by the material world; rather, he inhabits language, transmuting reality by the power of words. He breathes new life into dead clichés and assembles metaphors in much the same way as others assemble possessions. Captain Jackson dines on epithets and proverbs. 'Wine we had none', remarks Elia of one such literary feast; 'but the sensation of wine was there ... All the forms of good liquor were there, with none of the effects wanting ... You got flustered, without knowing whence; tipsy upon words; and reeled under the potency of his unperforming Bacchanalian encouragements'. (II.190-1) Reality is not repressed; rather, it is outshone by an exuberance which argues an excess of life. 'To make it seem *more* real and pleasant, I shall call you the Marchioness', says Swiveller to the small servant with whom he plays cribbage in the damp cellar (*OCS*, Ch.57). And he continues in Jacksonian vein at the close of their evening's entertainment:

'Marchioness ... I shall ask your ladyship's permission to put the board in my pocket, and to retire from the presence when I have finished this tankard; merely observing, Marchioness, that since life like a river is flowing, I care not how fast it rolls on, ma'am, on, while such purl on the bank still is growing, and such eyes light the waves as they run. Marchioness, your health. You will excuse my wearing my hat, but the palace is damp, and the marble floor is - if I may be allowed the expression - sloppy.' (Ch.58)

Within the portrait that is Dick Swiveller, as within Captain Jackson, there is a sentimental tale to be told, of cruel poverty and dire misfortune. But they are not the men to tell it straight. The slender means of external reality are refracted through their bizarrely distorting imaginations and reassembled into the most resilient shapes. Dick's career is a comic refrain to Nell's tragic lament. Orphaned, cast out on the mercy of an exploitative world, brought back from the grave by the Marchioness he created, Dick survives to prosper, to deal 'many hundred thousand' hands of cribbage through life with the Marchioness (Ch.73), 'ever playing', as Elia would wish to be with Bridget (*LW*, II.37). Dick takes his leave in the novel's final chapter 'as a literary gentleman of eccentric habits, and a most prodigious talent in quotation'. Themselves fantastic linguistic flowerings, both Jackson and Swiveller in their earnest word-games offer

insights into their authors' comparable philosophies of play - philosophies by which they combat the potentially chaotic encroachments of reality. Lamb's irresistible proclivity towards the absurd image - 'an elephant in a coach-office gravely coming to have his trunk booked; - a mermaid over a fish-kettle cooking her own tail' (*LW*, I.349) - argues an imagination attuned like Swiveller's (and like Dickens's in the novel's overall scheme) to the sustained transformations of allegory. To the question 'you haven't seen a silver pencil-case this morning, have you?' Swiveller rejoins, 'I saw one - a stout pencil-case of respectable appearance - but as he was in company with an elderly penknife and a young toothpick, with whom he was in earnest conversation, I felt a delicacy in speaking to him'. (*OCS*, Ch.58) Such absurdities attest to the same creative response to the slippage of reality that we find later in the Victorian fantasists Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll.

More apposite for the sentimental argument, however, is the evidence afforded for a philosophy of play by Lamb's comparable well-documented foolery and Dickens's notorious clowning. Criticizing the French critic Henri Taine for his failure to appreciate English humour, Forster drew attention to that peculiarly Dickensian strain which consists in a 'rare insight into sympathies between the nature of things and their attributes or opposites'. (9) This feeling for the insecure and dichotomous quality of existence, essential trait of the punning mind, and the concomitant uneasy perception of the closeness of tragedy to comedy, of laughter to tears, are qualities Dickens shared with Lamb. Writing in 1829 to his friend Crabb Robinson, then suffering from rheumatism, Lamb had this to say: 'I deny that Nature meant us to sympathise with agonies. Those face-contortions, retortions, distortions, have the merriness of antics. Nature meant them for farce'. (10) A comparable self-mockery surrounds his own worst nightmares, of drunkenness and insanity. Conversely, Dickens's infatuation with the newly-wed Queen Victoria is the occasion for injecting a joke with the most abandoned despair. He writes to Daniel Maclise of the agony he suffers in passing pubs called the Queen's Arms: 'what visions of Albert in the Queen's arms calling for what he liked and having it. The thought is madness'. (11) Both authors familiarly inhabit an imaginative world whose logic it is to yoke together the most disjunctive phenomena, keeping consequence at bay, Swiveller-like, by an earnest playful twinning of death-dealing pathos and comic regeneration. Zanier than Sterne's satiric scrutiny of sensibility, the combination inaugurates a new mode of feeling. Where in the earlier tradition the relative insignificance of the Man of Feeling's personal distress had sited the affective centre of the narrative in his virtuous response to others' sufferings, in the new tradition interest is switched to the complexity and contradictoriness of the impulses that constitute that response.

I have argued so far for Lamb's place in a sentimental tradition which is predominantly novelistic; and yet his impatience with the strictures of the novel-form is well-attested. 'Narrative teazes me', objects Elia in 'Mackery End'. 'I have little concern in the progress of events ... The fluctuations of fortune in fiction - and almost in real life - have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me'. (*LW*, II.75) And this observation chimes with Dickens's later criticism of Lamb when he considers the discrepancies in their 'readings' of that influential 'narrative' picture Hogarth's 'Gin Lane'. Appreciative though Lamb was of Hogarth's

talents, he did not adequately consider the urgency of the social message within his documentary London prints. Gin Lane, argues Dickens, is a precise location, in the infamous parish of St. Giles, Bloomsbury; its problems were as insistent in Lamb's time as in Hogarth's, and of course, as in Dickens's. (12) The essay 'On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century' anticipates a settled aversion to what will become a hallmark of Victorian fiction when Elia complains of the modern vogue for realism in the theatre. 'What is *there* transacting, by no modification is made to affect us in any other manner than the same events or characters would do in our relationships of life. We carry our fire-side concerns to the theatre with us'. (LW. II.142) (Compare, for example, Dickens's statement on his fiction, 'We aspire to live in the Household affections, and to be numbered among the Household thoughts, of our readers'.(13)) But if the material circumstantiality and narrative connectedness of the novel oppressed Lamb, its conception of character did not. If, as F.R. Leavis observed, we see in the pages of the eighteenth-century journals 'the drama turning into the novel', (14) then the insight is correspondingly true of Lamb's journalistic characterizations.

As early as *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, in 1808, Lamb acknowledged a preference for the human dimension in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. His taste lay not with the abstractions and stylized artifice of the masque or the pastoral, nor with the bare bones of the revenge plot, the relentless chain of consequence which one action sets in motion. Rather, he 'reads' drama with the novelist's eye and alert interest in manners, motives and psychological states. Seventeenth-century plays are probed with the historian's appetite for the past truths of human behaviour:

My leading design has been, to illustrate what may be called the moral sense of our ancestors. To show in what manner they felt, when they placed themselves by the power of imagination in trying situations ... what sort of loves and enmities theirs were; how their griefs were tempered, and their full-swoln joys abated ... (LW, IV.xii)

Later, the 'Preface, by a Friend of the late Elia' underlines what is there called the novelist's skill (though it might equally have been labelled dramatic) exhibited in those character-sketches in which Elia, like the Elizabethan playwright, twines 'with his own identity the griefs and affections of another - making himself many, or reducing many unto himself'. (LW, II.151) Within the Elian persona the encounter with external reality is internalized as a drama of contending emotional and psychological states. That Lamb is Elia is as true as that from Elia Lamb banished aspects of his gravest self. Rather, it is truer to say that through Elia Lamb articulates a rhetoric of feeling whose base is both idiosyncratic and representative, autobiographic and multi-biographic. By the novelistic licence of his surrogate authority, Elia literally embodies the external world, incorporating its diversity into a single emotional frame which is himself.

The most significant difference between the sentimentalists of the late eighteenth century and Lamb and Dickens is that Lamb and Dickens are city-sentimentalists to whom the benevolent, humanizing idyll of rural simplicity found in Goldsmith and Mackenzie is anathema. The traditional opposition of city evil and country innocence remains in their work, but

it is newly expressed: country stagnation as distinct from city life. Lamb's provocative declaration to Wordsworth neatly demonstrates the moral reformulation. 'A garden', says Lamb, 'was the primitive prison till man with promethean felicity and boldness luckily sinn'd himself out of it'. (LL, III.242) Characteristically, the country scenes in *The Old Curiosity Shop* portray a series of decaying Goldsmithian deserted villages. I have noted how in the earlier tradition the Man of Feeling grows in experience through a contrived complicity of inner and outer reality: moving *through* his journey (he is generally conceived of as a traveller), he is moved *by* those exemplars of emotion he meets along the way, and is consequently moved *from* his own griefs into a compassionate relation to theirs. In turn, the active and passive moods of the sentimental grammar instruct the reader in his or her movement through the text to respond to each display of emotion both as an occasion for sympathy and as a literary re-routing of personal emotions. This exchange between inner and outer states becomes in the city-sentimentalist the unmaking and remaking of the self which is the precondition of literary creation and which is, moreover, a direct response by the traveller to that tendency perceived in the city noise and disorder to breakdown and reformulation. (15) The experience of the city is the experience of the crowd, and it is in the imaginative processing of the crowd that the multi-biographic nature of Lamb's art is best understood.

Examples of the catalytic agency of the city-crowd are legion in the letters and the essays. To Manning he writes of London: 'All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal, - a mind that loves to be at home in crowds'. (LL, I.251) To Lloyd, in similar vein:

Let them talk of lakes and mountains and romantic dales - all that fantastic stuff; give me a ramble by night, in the winter nights in London ... I have lent out my heart with usury to such scenes from my childhood up, and have cried with fulness of joy at the multitudinous scenes of Life in the crowded streets of ever dear London. (LL, I.244)

'lent out my heart with usury' - the phrase is found elsewhere in the letters and is redolent of the sentimental education: the heart, lent out to the heartless and uncompassionated city scenes, is returned with 'exorbitant interest' (as the *OED* defines 'usury'), with an excess of heart, to the lender. Adam Ferguson and David Hume, the Scottish moralists who provided the intellectual fuel for the sentimental movement in the eighteenth century, placed a comparable emphasis on man's gregarious nature: not in his individuality but in his identity with the group is he to be understood. Such sympathy is the result of psychological tendency rather than virtue. Ferguson writes in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767): 'both the earliest and latest accounts collected from every quarter of the earth, represent mankind as assembled in troops and companies ... [This fact] must be admitted as the foundation of our reasoning relative to man'. And Hume argues: 'Man, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit'. (16)

Elsewhere, in his early persona 'the Londoner', adopted in 1802 for an abortive series in the *Morning Post*, Lamb introduced himself as having been born and having passed most of his life 'in a crowd' (LW, I.39). Again to

Manning, he catalogues the pleasures to be had in London:

Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers ... lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silversmiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches ... inns of court, with their learned air ... old bookstalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London with-the-many-sins. (LL, I.223-4)

Those opening plurals - 'Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens' - call to mind a much later scene, Joyce's city impressions in *Ulysses*: 'Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too: other coming on, passing on. Houses, lines of houses, streets, miles of pavements, piled up bricks, stones'. (17) For both authors, the serial quality of city experience is at once a fact of the endless reduplication of life and architecture which is the city, and at the same time a recognition of the reconstitution of the external world in the perceptions of the city-traveller as he passes and repasses. As Raymond Williams has noted, 'the most evident inhabitants of cities are buildings'. (18) Only gradually do places give way to people, while the erosion of singleness implied in Lamb's 'Covent Gardens' prepares us for the dissolution of human individuality, Lamb's included, in the crowd: 'authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers ... Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall'. The juxtaposition of human and architectural elements in the city-scape presents Lamb with the ready-assembled materials of his street-art. The crowd has its own internal poetics, an implied relation of the non-related, of objects to people, of rich to poor, of innocent to sinful. The city is itself a series of character-sketches, an endlessly reforming narrative of imaginative virtuosity and allegorical alignment into which the observer is helplessly interwoven. In the normal confusion which is the crowd, 'authors in the street with spectacles' rub shoulders with 'ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying ... beautiful Quakers of Pentonville'. 'Often, when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home', writes 'the Londoner',

Have I rushed out into [London's] crowded Strand, and fed my humour, till tears have wetted my cheek for unutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the scenes of a shifting pantomime. (LW, I.39-40)

The self-styled 'Londoner' is both the non-individuated voice of the crowd, one among the many, and the single sentient being moved by its 'moving picture', one out of the many. Tearfully eloquent, he performs *and* watches the pantomime. Such characteristic interchanges constitute Lamb's multi-biographical intimacies.

There is a direct link to be drawn between Lamb's confession to Wordsworth of the sympathetic pleasure he takes in even the seamier aspects of London life ('The wonder of these sights impells me into night-walks about her

crowded streets' (LL, I.241)) and Dickens's admissions of the torment he found it to write without the stimulus of London's night-streets. From Switzerland he complains to Forster in August and September 1846 of his 'extraordinary difficulty ... in getting on FAST' with *Dombey and Son*, then only in its second instalment:

I suppose this is partly the effect of two years' ease, and partly of the absence of streets and numbers of figures. I can't express how much I want these. It seems as if they supplied something to my brain, which it cannot bear, when busy, to lose. For a week or a fortnight I can write prodigiously in a retired place (as at Broadstairs), and a day in London sets me up again and starts me. But the toil and labour of writing, day after day, without that magic lantern, is IMMENSE!! ... My figures seem disposed to stagnate without crowds about them ... The absence of any accessible streets continues to worry me, now that I have so much to do, in a most singular manner. It is quite a little mental phenomenon. I should not walk in them in the day time, if they were here, I dare say: but at night I want them beyond description. I don't seem able to get rid of my spectres unless I can lose them in crowds. (DL, IV.612-13 and 622)

Earlier, in March of the same year, Dickens had described to the Countess of Blessington how he wandered the night-streets as the germ of a novel created itself in his head (DL, IV.510-11); and we might compare with this Master Humphrey's announcement in the opening chapter of *The Old Curiosity Shop*:

Night is generally my time for walking ... because it affords me greater opportunity of speculating on the characters and occupations of those who fill the streets ... a glimpse of passing faces caught by the light of a street lamp or a shop window is often better for my purpose than their full revelation in the daylight, and, if I must add the truth, night is kinder in this respect than day, which too often destroys an airbuilt castle at the moment of its completion, without the smallest ceremony or remorse ... An adventure which I am about to relate ... arose out of one of these rambles ...

Master Humphrey's night-walks involve him in the same moral and material dislocations and comminglings as those which form Lamb's experience of the crowd. His physical restlessness, his own slow pacing through the streets, is echoed in his night imagination by the footsteps which haunt the 'restless dreams' of the fevered invalid in St Martin's Court, echoed by the relentless 'passing and repassing' of the crowds on London's bridges, with their thoughts of suicide, and, as the night wears on to dawn, echoed by the faltering paces of the Covent Garden prostitutes. Forced on by the crowding thoughts of his death-dealing imagination, Master Humphrey is no detached observer of what Ruskin was later to call 'the mere trampling pressure and electric friction of town life'. (19) Master Humphrey is the personality of the crowd. We are never allowed in this the novel's first chapter to forget that the London crowds and the thoughts which crowd upon the mind of the narrator are simultaneously present, the one a necessity for the other's possession. Conceived in a crowd with the first incongruous

glimpse of Little Nell, the narrative progresses from crowd to crowd. Master Humphrey tells how Nell, 'accommodating her pace to mine', leads him from the London streets into the jumble and confusion of the antique shop, a collection so bizarre it 'might have been designed in dreams'. Later, alone again, the thronged streets give place in his imagination to the curiosity-dealer's wares, 'crowding upon my mind, in connection with the child, and gathering round her ... in a kind of allegory' (*OCS*, Ch.1). From the crowded streets to the crowded shop, to the fairground freaks and the crowded race-course, to Mrs Jarley's identity-changing waxworks, to the industrial landscape of nightmare, famine and riot, and on to the busy medieval grotesqueries of her final resting-place, Nell journeys in crowds. These are not the set-piece crowds of eighteenth-century observers, of John Gay, Steele or Dr Johnson; rather, they continue through the narrative those dream-like distortions, the hallucinatory confusions of inner and outer, which characterized Master Humphrey's initial restless experience of the city. Punch and Judy, the waxworks, the dwarfs and stilt-walkers outdo the lonely Nell in their life-likeness and surround her progress with the kind of sustained allegory which Lamb noted as the single most telling feature in Hogarth's popular prints of London scenes. Of 'Gin Lane', Lamb observed, 'There is more of imagination in it - that power which draws all things to one, - which makes things animate and inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects and their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect'. (*LW*, 1.73) Including in himself both the kaleidoscopic diversity and the isolation which alike constitute the experience of the crowd, the artist - Dickens, Lamb or Hogarth - is compelled towards an art which is emblematic in its comprehensiveness, dreamlike in its atomized inscrutability.

Of his night-wanderings Dickens had written to the Countess of Blessington:

Vague thoughts of a new book are rife within me just now; and I go wandering about at night into the strangest places, according to my usual propensity at such a time - seeking rest, and finding none.

His reference is to the 'unclean spirit' mentioned by St Matthew and St Luke: 'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none'. (*Matt.*, xii.43) In Book 15 of *City of God*, Augustine presented an archetypal version of the opposition which underlies city-sentimentalism when he wrote:

Now Cain was the first son born to those two parents of mankind, and he belonged to the city of man; the later son, Abel, belonged to the City of God ... When those two cities started on their course through the succession of birth and death, the first to be born was a citizen of this world ... Scripture tells us that Cain founded a city, whereas Abel, as a pilgrim, did not found one. For the City of the saints is up above ...

Lamb's 'London with-the-many-sins', his defiant preference of town over Country - 'A garden was the primitive prison till man with promethean felicity and boldness luckily sinned himself out of it' - the inevitable citiness of Elia's dreams, admitted to in 'Witches and other Night Fears', all label him a follower of Cain. Master Humphrey, too, is of this tribe.

Celestial pilgrims, Nell and her grandfather turn their backs upon the City of Destruction, but Master Humphrey remains.

Heart of London, there is a moral in thy every stroke! as I look on thy indomitable working, which neither death, nor press of life, nor grief, nor gladness out of doors will influence one jot, I seem to hear a voice within thee which sinks into my heart, bidding me, as I elbow my way among the crowd, have some thought for the meanest wretch that passes, and, being a man, to turn away with scorn and pride from none that bear the human shape.

So, in Chapter 6 of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, does he introduce his next narrative, *Barnaby Rudge*, a tale of city violence.

The relations of inner and outer states undergo one further permutation in the Man of Feeling's growth to maturity. One often noted feature of city experience is the sense of self-duplication, of identity in difference, which constitutes the traveller's perception of the self as other, or as double, familiar and yet dangerously unknown, to be met with in the shifting scenes of the crowd. Edgar Allan Poe's powerful short story 'The Man of the Crowd', published like *The Old Curiosity Shop* in 1840, and Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1856-7), with their lurid visions of urban decay, explore that hallucination of the self as guilty double which is the human equivalent of city fragmentation. Earlier the Elian essay 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers' (which, incidentally, Dickens was surely addressing in 'The First of May' in *Sketches by Boz*) records a surprising childhood experience of doubleness in the young Elia's recollected moment of identity with an unpredictable and adventurous black other self, the small sweep:

When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operations! to see a chit no bigger than one's-self enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni* - to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades! to shudder with the idea that 'now, surely, he must be lost for ever!' - to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered day-light - and then (O fulness of delight) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel! (LW II.109)

Lamb's much discussed confession to Coleridge of the damned relation in which he and his sister stand to society after her murder of their mother takes the form of a self-assimilation to the city-tribe of Cain: (20)

Mary will get better again; but her constantly being liable to such relapses is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner *marked*. (LL, I.188)

Subsequently he writes to Manning: 'Mary's disorder ... had made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London'. (I.190) The 'mysterious pleasure' which the child Elia finds in pursuing

'in imagination' the 'innocent blackness' of his early double through 'dark stifling caverns', the entrance to the underworld, becomes for the stigmatized adult the thrill of recognized identity with a damned other, a shadow pursued in a city crowd. Pensilis, one in a series of early grotesque personae Lamb adopted in his essays for *The Reflector*, has been hanged and cut down still alive. Though innocent of any crime, 'that fatal mark' of the gallows rope is permanently burned into his neck, and it is to London that he turns to hide his shame, 'the place where', as he observes, 'stigmatised innocence had the best chance of hiding her disgrace in a crowd'. (*LW*, I.56-7) In 'The Last Peach', written in 1825 for the *London Magazine*, Lamb enters the neurotic imagination of one 'Suspensurus' ('about to be hanged') who is self-assured that his sympathetic identification with a convicted forger will soon lead him to some corresponding or worse crime. Behind the essay lies a letter of December 1824 to Bernard Barton in which Lamb outlines his reaction to the death-sentence passed on the real-life forger Fauntleroy:

I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the Law at one time of their life made as sure of never being hanged as I in my presumption am too ready to do myself. What are we better than they? Do we come into the world with different necks? ... I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something) but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, fingering &c. No one that is so framed, I maintain it, but should tremble. (*LL*, II.447)

The letter, like the essay, is the product of obsessed ill-health. (There is plenty of evidence from this period of Lamb's physical and nervous debility.) In this the final stage of the city-sentimentalist, sympathy is experienced not as the prompting to virtue of Mackenzie's Harley, that 'child in the drama of the world', but, as Suspensurus defines it, as a 'painful heart-malady' (*LW*, I.285), as illness. In his own words 'a mis-shapen, deformed, old man' (*OCS*, p.675), Master Humphrey, too, is 'in a manner marked', his night-imaginings most attuned to the sick man's hallucinations and the suicide's despair. Notably when he withdraws from the narrative in Chapter 3, it is to be replaced by Daniel Quilp, a more exaggerated and sinister deformity. The author of so many of Nell's sufferings, Quilp functions as Master Humphrey's outcast other, as demonic a double as Hyde is to Jekyll. Symptomatically a state in which inner and outer realities merge and exchange characteristics, illness is the peculiar condition of the Man of Feeling in the city, an answering echo to the city's own internal malady of poverty, crime and guilt.

In his article 'City Matters: City Minds', Philip Fisher draws on the arguments of the psychologist Le Bon to explain his categorization of the structures of city perception for the nineteenth and twentieth-century author. Central to Le Bon's theory are the condition of the crowd and the concept of violence, the belief that only by an act of violence does experience enter the urban mind. Fisher writes: 'Le Bon suggests the more permanently subversive idea that the need for experience to arrive violently in the mind is a characteristic of the urban mind ...' Novelists, Dickens and Dostoevski, poets, Baudelaire and Eliot, present the city through the crowded consciousness of a solitary observer. 'This atom of

a crowd, forever walking, rapid and compressed as a self-formula, is as Le Bon described him, appealed to through images, susceptible only to experience that is theatricalized. Experience irrupts into him and he must stylize himself to irrupt into the consciousness of others'. (21) A strong case could be made for counting Lamb among such city minds, just as a strong case could be made, through Lamb, for grounding such city perception in the earlier sentimental mode of the eighteenth century. Lamb's digressive essays ('When I am not walking, I am reading'), 'my poor ramblings', as he called them, emerge as multi-biographical irruptions from a mind which is, like Dickens's or Dostoevski's or Joyce's, the 'scene of a crowd'. Brief, eccentric character-sketches, they theatricalize the fragmentary experience of the shifting crowd as an intimate confessional drama, a contagious juxtaposition of whimsical and serious, innocent and guilty, joyful and melancholy. In moving from brief sketch to novel, Dickens transformed Lamb's random serial experience of the city-scape into a multi-generic narrative, alternating comedy with tragedy, melodrama with social commentary, mystery with satire, death with wedding-bells, in a sequence of mutually critical irruptions. In each case, style is a feeling response to the instability of the crowd; in each case, it is a further variation on the notorious instability of the eighteenth-century sentimental ethic.

NOTES

1. *Essays of Elia* ed. Geoffrey Tillotson (London, 1962), p.X.
2. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. Madeline House, Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford, 1965-), II.440. (Subsequent references to the letters, abbreviated as *DL*, will be cited by volume and page of this edition in the text).
3. *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. Malcolm Andrews and Angus Easson (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.678. (Subsequent references to the novel, abbreviated as *OCS*, are to this edition and will be cited in the text by chapter or, in the case of Master Humphrey's framing narrative, by page).
4. 'On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century', *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas (7 vols., London, 1903-5), II.142. (Subsequent references to the works, abbreviated as *LW*, will be cited by volume and page of this edition in the text).
5. See, for example, Dickens's original conception for *Master Humphrey's Clock* as a miscellaneous paper, *DL*, I.563-5.
6. *Letters and Private Papers of W.M. Thackeray*, ed. Gordon N. Ray (4 vols., Cambridge Mass., and London, 1945-6), I.438.
7. Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, ed. Brian Vickers (London, 1967), p.17.
8. John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (2 vols., London, 1969), I.117.
9. *Ibid.*, II.264.
10. *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas (3 vols., London 1935), III.215. (Subsequent references to the letters, abbreviated as *LL*, will be cited by volume and page of this edition in the text).

11. Quoted from a letter of March 1840 in Michael Slater, *Dickens and Women* (London, 1983), p.122.
12. See Dickens's comments in Forster, *Life*, II,42.
13. From 'A Preliminary Word', Dickens's editorial manifesto in the first issue of *Household Words*, 30 March 1850.
14. F.R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.11.
15. For a general exploration of the fragmentation and reformulation of experience as reflected in urban art, see Philip Fisher, 'City Matters: City Minds', *The Worlds of Victorian Fiction*, ed. Jerome H. Buckley (Cambridge Mass., and London, 1975), pp.371-89.
16. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Edinburgh, 1767), pp.24 and 28; and David Hume, *Essays*, ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose (London, 1882), I.113.
17. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Harmondsworth, 1971), p.164.
18. Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (St. Albans, 1974), p.30.
19. 'Fiction, Fair and Foul', *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London 1908), XXXIV.269.
20. See, for example, Jane Aaron, ' "We Are in a Manner Marked": Images of Damnation in Charles Lamb's Writings', *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, n.s. XXXIII (January, 1981), 1-10; and Gerald Monsman, 'Charles Lamb's Art of Autobiography', *English Literary History*, L (1983), 541-57. So far as I know, the connections I make between Lamb's sense of personal damnation and his city-sentimentalism are new.
21. Philip Fisher, 'City Matters: City Minds', p.387.

WORDSWORTH, HAYDON AND BEAUMONT: A CHANGE IN THE ROLE OF ARTISTIC PATRONAGE

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The friendship between William Wordsworth and Sir George Howland Beaumont is well known to literary scholars. The quarrel between Sir George and the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon is equally well known to art historians. The interrelationship between the three men has received less attention, less in fact than it deserves, for such a study answers many questions concerning Beaumont as a patron and clarifies the role of the patron during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Beaumont is a pivotal figure in the history of the arts at this period, but a great confusion exists as to how his contributions should be evaluated. Ian Fleming-Williams, in the introduction to the 1973 exhibition catalogue for the Leicester City Art Gallery, *Sir George Beaumont: Artist and Patron*, states:

Although, outside professional circles, few men in our history have devoted themselves more wholeheartedly to the Arts, yet for some reason, posterity has been singularly inconsistent in its

interpretation of the role he played in the lives of those with whom he associated. On the one hand, generally in literary biography, he is presented as a kind, understanding, patient and selflessly generous patron and friend, with tastes far in advance of those most commonly held by his contemporaries; on the other, especially in the fields of art history and of journalism, he is most frequently characterised as a reactionary patrician, an arrogant and bigoted opponent of advance in any form who, by means of his elevated position in society, sought to retard that natural pattern of progress to which all right-minded painters were dedicated. (3)

Part of the reason for the criticism of Beaumont's patronage, and patronage in general during this time, lies in a confusion as to what the function of a patron should be. Traditionally, patronage was the duty of the aristocracy and consisted chiefly of important commissions and of financial support for a few chosen artists. However, as the centre of wealth shifted from the aristocracy to the merchant, important changes occurred in the practice of patronage. Born in 1753, Beaumont's lifetime coincides with and clearly illustrates this period of change. Like many of his class, he found himself in possession of the knowledge necessary to be an effective patron, but not the means. His income came principally from the coal mines near his estate, Coleorton, but a series of circumstances caused his inheritance to be more modest than most of his contemporaries realized. Nevertheless, he built an art collection which was admirable, if not large, and influenced a far larger number of artists, poets and actors than any other patron of his day. He accomplished this by redefining the role of the patron. Although it is seldom acknowledged, there is abundant evidence that the major thrust of his patronage consisted of educating, recognizing, and encouraging artists and was pursued consciously but informally on the basis of a friendship.

To begin with, his wide acquaintance with men and women involved in the arts, in politics, and in science made it possible for him to provide rich associations for the artists. Their work gained depth because they were in touch with a wide spectrum of current thought. Beaumont's contemporary, Alan Cunningham, was aware of the advantages this gave to the artist, and used John Jackson as a case in point:

If there are few men equal in merit to Jackson, it must be confessed that patrons such as Sir George Beaumont are still more rare. In the house of his distinguished friend ... [Jackson] met almost all the men of the age remarkable for taste or genius. Jackson could not fail to profit by such company; the defects of his education were here made up without exception ...
(Cunningham 6: 275-76)

Beaumont's recognition and encouragement of contemporary English artists is another aspect of his unique patronage. Most patrons at this time felt it safer to invest in the works of European masters. Eric George takes particular note of this in his biography of the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon:

With the death of Sir George Beaumont in 1827 there passed away one of the last of the old type. Yet he, with the Duke of Bedford ... and Lord Egremont, had been conspicuous among the aristocratic sort of patron for his encouragement of living artists. (229)

The problem was compounded when the art market was suddenly flooded with works by old masters at bargain prices. This forced living artists to compete for patronage with artists of the past. Trevor Fawcett in *The Rise of English Provincial Art*, remarks that:

It is Sir George Beaumont ... an amateur artist himself, who reflects something of the enlightened patron's genuine dilemma. Now he buys a contemporary work, now a Claude, a Rembrandt, or a Canaletto. In the early years of the century he is patronizing John Jackson, and then Wilkie, Haydon, and others, and further demonstrating his support for modern art by arranging a room at Coleorton to be hung with English Paintings. (71)

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of his patronage was his status as an amateur artist of serious intent and his consistent interest in the arts -- not only the visual arts but also literature and drama. With an apparent disregard for class distinctions, he sought to establish genuine, working friendships with artists. Although democratic ideas were being discussed in England, rank and title were still of great importance. Yet, there is ample evidence that Beaumont was modest and unassuming, welcomed exchanges of ideas, and accepted constructive criticism. Perhaps the most celebrated example is Beaumont's friendship with John Constable. The relationship began as one between an older, established patron and a very young but hopeful artist. However, in the latter part of Beaumont's life it had developed into a warm exchange of ideas to the point that Constable was advising the older man and assisting him in the layout of his paintings. (Constable 2: 325) William Knight, in the introduction to *Memorials of Coleorton*, clearly described the situation as he witnessed it:

The relationship in which Sir George Beaumont stood to poets and artists of his day was a remarkable one, not without its parallel in literary history ... himself an artist and an art collector -- ~~he~~ had the happiness of attaching many friends to himself by disinterested ties, and of thereby multiplying his own pleasures, and adding to his culture. He always thought that he received more than he gave, in the interchange of friendship. He certainly had the gift of calling out whatever was best in his friends. (Introduction xi)

Not all of Beaumont's contemporaries understood his unusual style of patronage, however, and this placed him in the centre of a controversy which continues to this day. His desire for friendly exchanges with other artists were sometimes interpreted as interference from an overbearing patron. His knowledge of art was so superior to that of other patrons that excessive importance was often attached to his opinions. As a member of the nobility, young artists expected him to support them with commissions and, when he did not meet their expectations, he was accused of being parsimonious. His involvement with the Royal Academy and the

British Institution was motivated by a sincere desire to further English art, but it was often seen as an attempt to stifle it. Clearly, an assessment of Beaumont is difficult, yet his influence on artists makes an understanding of his patronage crucial to a more honest evaluation of Romanticism in England.

Although there is an abundance of primary sources available, no thorough, documented study of Beaumont is available at this time and this has led to many errors and misconceptions. In the biographies of his contemporaries, Sir George is usually represented as either a villain or a hero, depending on which sources are quoted. Histories of literature and art and even articles dealing directly with Beaumont highlight his failures and successes, but fail to explore the reasons attending them. The most recent study of Beaumont, a biography published in 1966 by Margaret Greaves, is short, not annotated, and fails to deal in depth with the controversial nature of his patronage. Mrs Felicity Owen and Dr David Brown are currently working on a full biography and it is hoped that it will clarify many misunderstandings about Beaumont.

Beaumont's wide-ranging influence demands a search of equal scope and a careful evaluation of the sources. Margaret Greaves pinpoints the problem in *Regency Patron: Sir George Beaumont*:

Actors, statesmen, poets, peers, artists, scientists, all formed a part of the Beaumonts' circle. What better ground could there be for the exchange of ideas and the fame of new talents?... The letters and journals of those who knew Sir George reveal him in a room of slightly distorting mirrors, each of which alters the impressions given by others; the distortions are as fascinating as the likenesses, each of them revealing the writer as much as the subject. (71)

To date, these altered impressions of Beaumont have been studies in isolation, a method that has caused great confusion.

The significance of a comparative study of Beaumont's patronage can be seen by looking at the records of Benjamin Robert Haydon and William Wordsworth, for they are excellent examples of the 'distorting mirrors' spoken of by Greaves. Wordsworth's writings reflect a positive view of Sir George, while Haydon's papers are for the most part negative. Beaumont met both men at approximately the same time and, therefore, the records deal with the same period in the patron's life. Because Wordsworth and Haydon also had a long association, their writings provide an interesting study into the lives of the three men--patron, poet and painter.

The history of how they met and the circumstances of their association must be considered with particular attention to chronology. Many misconceptions have been promulgated because events have been studied out of sequence and out of context. Sir George and Wordsworth first started corresponding in 1803, after the Beaumonts gave the poet a gift of land. (Moorman 1:586-7) Wordsworth, who had experienced difficulties with the aristocracy over an inheritance and had sacrificed a great deal in order to remain independent, was uneasy with this gift from a Baronet. Sir George and Lady Beaumont gradually won his friendship through their sincere interests in the

tragedies and fortunes of the poet's family, their kindnesses to Coleridge, and their enthusiasm for Wordsworth's and Coleridge's poetry.

One of their earliest recorded meetings was April of 1806 when Wordsworth was a guest of the Beaumonts at Grosvenor Square in London and it was in November of the same year when the Beaumonts first called at Haydon's studio. Haydon was even more uncomfortable around the aristocracy than Wordsworth. He wrote that this 'first visit from a man of rank and repute elevated me a good deal', and consistently mentioned the dangers of 'being puffed up' in the company of Sir George. When he and Wilkie were later invited to dinner in the Beaumonts' home, he nervously promised himself, 'I will keep behind Wilkie; at any rate I am a match for him, and I will *not* drink Lady Beaumont's health in porter'. (Haydon, 39-40)

Consistent with Beaumont's style of patronage, both men were immediately included in his circle of friends, encouraged and praised. It is important to remember that in 1806, Beaumont was fifty-three and a recognized patron of the arts, while Wordsworth at thirty-six had already published the *Lyrical Ballads*. Haydon was twenty and the least established in his profession, the most insecure, and consequently the most defensive of his position.

In 1809 Beaumont commissioned a painting from Haydon; the subject was to be a scene from *Macbeth*. Many of Beaumont's commissions were given in recognition of potential talent, as encouragement and to give the artist experience. It was beneficial to the artist's reputation to have a painting hanging in one of Sir George's houses. Through circumstances which cannot be clearly established in favour of either Beaumont or Haydon, the two men disagreed over the size of the figures. Sir George, apparently preferred a small canvas, but would have accepted life-size figures. Haydon produced figures a little less than life-size, which bothered Sir George's sense of proportion. The canvas was enormous and, when it is realized that Haydon had only completed two other paintings before beginning *Macbeth* and was still very much a beginner, it is easy to understand Beaumont's misgivings.

On the other hand, Haydon had a very strong distrust of the aristocracy and imagined himself to be the champion for young artists against the tyranny of the nobles. Sir George Beaumont's membership in this class and his position of influence in artistic circles made him suspect in Haydon's view. The painter became impervious to any requests or suggestions from Beaumont and stubbornly finished his painting according to his own vision. When Sir George refused to buy the finished painting but offered to give the artist £100 for his trouble, Haydon angrily refused the offer. For years afterwards, Haydon claimed that his life of poverty and indebtedness was due to what he termed Sir George's 'capricious' handling of this commission. (George, 44) This early confrontation affects every subsequent comment the painter makes about the patron and even Haydon's compliments are never given without an accompanying sting. As late as 1826 he wrote in his journal:

Lawrence and Sir George Beaumont are the two most perfect gentlemen I ever saw. Both naturally irritable and waspish, but both controlling every feeling which is incompatible with breeding. (Haydon 329)

Haydon's interpretation of Beaumont is always tempered by the experiences of the commission for *Macbeth*, a fact seldom acknowledged by art historians. In fact many seem to fasten on these comments with glee, assuming that they accurately illustrate the evils of the patronage system.

During the year of 1811, at the height of the quarrel between Beaumont and Haydon, Wordsworth dedicated four poems to Sir George reflecting an entirely different experience. As early as 1808 in his poem titled 'In the Grounds of Coleorton, The Seat of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., Leicestershire' he revealed the nature of their friendship. He called painting the 'silent art' and wrote:

One wooed the silent Art with studious pains:
 These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains;
 Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
 By interchange of knowledge and delight. (428)

An 'interchange of knowledge and delight' is an appropriate description of their long association. Perhaps it was Wordsworth's maturity, or maybe what Sir George termed his 'terrific democratic notions' (Haydon 85) which made him capable of placing himself on equal intellectual grounds with Beaumont. Wordsworth also understood and even encouraged friendly disagreement. In a letter written to Beaumont in February of 1806, he gave his opinions on Nelson and Pitt and then wrote:

... I am aware it is not unlikely you may differ greatly from me in these points. But I like in some things to differ with a Friend, and that he should *know* I differ from him; it seems to make a more healthy friendship, to act as a relief to those notions and feelings which we have in common and to give them a grace and spirit which they could not otherwise express. (MY 2:6) Wordsworth's italics

Of course, the disagreement was not over Wordsworth's poetry, which would undoubtedly have been a different matter. Although he was often the recipient of Beaumont's generosity, it is not likely that Wordsworth would consider Sir George to be his patron in the traditional sense and he certainly did not expect financial assistance from Beaumont as Haydon did. However, he often acknowledged his indebtedness to Beaumont for his friendship and its contribution to his aesthetic development. He also recognized the benefits his reputation gained by having his poetry read by Beaumont to a circle of influential friends. In contrast, even though Beaumont reconciled his disagreement with Haydon in 1814 (when he encouraged the British Institution to give the painter 100 guineas 'as a mark of admiration' for his work *The Judgement of Solomon*) and the two men gradually established an uneasy truce, the early quarrel between them blocked any possibility of a healthy interchange of ideas. The different attitudes of the two artists toward Sir George must always be evaluated with the knowledge that the system of patronage was undergoing change and each of the three men perceived the role of a patron differently.

At this time, Haydon was working on the painting of *Christ's Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem* and records: 'Sir George Beaumont called, and sat with me as I painted the sleeve of the centurion. He had the greatest

delight'. (186) This simple entry indicates the way Beaumont tried to foster an easy, personal relationship with Haydon, but the painting of *Macbeth* was still a sensitive issue:

Sir George Beaumont and I had now made up our differences. He called, and said he must have a picture, and advanced me 50 guineas. I said I hoped he would not wish for anything less than life ^{size}. He replied certainly not, and at a price not to exceed 200 guineas. Sir George's heart was always tender, but he was capricious. (190)

It is amazing that Sir George would enter into such agreement again, but he must have recognized a potential in Haydon's work and was willing to risk another commission.

It is also in keeping with Beaumont's kind of patronage that he would see to it that Wordsworth and Haydon met. He felt it was important that artists in one discipline became thoroughly acquainted with current trends in other fields. Early in their acquaintance, Beaumont had presented Wordsworth with a copy of Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses* and since then had seen to it that the poet had access to some of the better private collections. He had also introduced him to a number of artists.

Although Haydon's biographer, Eric George, believed that Wordsworth and Haydon may have met as early as 1813 (55) all evidence seems to support a date some time after the reconciliation between Beaumont and Haydon. The earliest record of Wordsworth in Haydon's papers is dated well after the reconciliation between Beaumont and Haydon, in April 1815, when Haydon recorded his feelings for the poet almost too enthusiastically:

He is a great being, and will hereafter be ranked as one who has a portion of the spirit of the mighty ones ... His purity of heart, his kindness, his soundness of principle, his information, his knowledge, and the intense and eager feelings with which he pours forth all he knows, affect, interest and enchant one. I do not know any one I would be so inclined to worship as a purified being. (Haydon 184-5)

In December of 1815, Wordsworth sent three sonnets to Haydon, which the painter records in full in his biography, commenting:

Now, reader, was this not glorious? And you, young student, when you are pressed down by want in the midst of a great work, remember what followed Haydon's perseverance. The freedom of his native town, the visit of Canova, and the sonnet of Wordsworth -- and if that do ^{not} cheer you up, and make you go on, you are past all hope. (204)

In 1818 Haydon painted Wordsworth's portrait into the adoring crowd of his *Christ's Entry* and presented the poet with a sensitive chalk study he had made. (Jones 185) He also resolved any problems which might arise from the second commission from Beaumont:

Sir George now came to town. I called, and as I foresaw I should have a great deal of trouble with his new commission, I, as

delicately as I could, alluded to the former picture of 'Macbeth', showed him the irreparable injuries I had suffered, and concluded by saying, 'My dear Sir George, you have my interest at heart. Take the "Macbeth" for two hundred guineas'. He asked time to reflect, and, on 20 May 1816, I received his letter accepting my offer. (213)

In effect, Haydon was victorious in the battle over *Macbeth*, even though the price of two hundred guineas was less than he earlier hoped to receive. Eventually, Beaumont had to purchase the painting a second time, after he loaned it to Haydon for an exhibit and the sheriff seized it for the painter's unpaid debts. Until the end of his life, Beaumont supported Haydon with money and friendship; Haydon consistently accepted the former and was suspicious of the latter.

Eric George states that Wordsworth was Haydon's 'life-long friend', implying that there was never a break in their friendship. (124) This is not true. Beginning about 1821 the painter became as adamant in his criticism of the poet as once he had been excessive in his praises. This is generally attributed to the events of a party given at Haydon's studio in 1817 involving Keats, Lamb, Monkhouse, Wordsworth and a stamp collector, who was Wordsworth's employer. (Haydon 231) It was a curious incident in which the stamp collector, probably trying to be sociable, made some unfortunate comments on poetry. To Wordsworth's mortification, Lamb mocked the collector and had to be forcibly removed to another room. Both Keats and Lamb felt Wordsworth was too servile toward his employer and became disillusioned with their former hero. Haydon chided Wordsworth mildly over the incident, (Pope 2:174) but the chalk study and the portrait in *Christ's Entry* are both dated after this time and indicate that, although Haydon's fervour for the poet may have been dampened at this time, he had not yet seriously lost faith in him. The real reason for his harsh criticisms is more likely to have been the result of Wordsworth's refusal to loan money to Haydon.

Haydon borrowed from everyone and was perpetually in debt -- going to debtor's prison several times. Late in April of 1820, Wordsworth refused Haydon's request for a loan on the grounds of their friendship saying 'I could not be easy were you to repay the money to your own inconvenience and I could not at the same time spare it without embarrassment'. (MY 2:593) There is an hiatus of at least ten years in the friendship between Wordsworth and Haydon dating from this event. Interestingly, at about the same time, Haydon recorded: 'As I was in bitter anxiety how to provide the means of opening the exhibition, Sir George, who with his usual goodness of heart, had anticipated this chance, without any application on my part, sent me a cheque for £30'. (240) No dates are given on these entries, so it is difficult to know whether Sir George really 'anticipated' Haydon's needs, or if he had learned of them through Wordsworth. Whatever the case may be, Haydon's anger with Wordsworth surfaces at about this date. He began to compare Wordsworth unfavorably to other poets. In 1821 he compared him to Sir Walter Scott:

Scott enters a room and sits at table with the coolness and self-possession of conscious fame; Wordsworth with a mortified elevation of head, as if fearful he was not estimated as he

deserved. Scott is always cool and very amusing. Wordsworth often egotistical and over-whelming. Scott can afford to talk of trifles ... Wordsworth must always be eloquent and profound ... Scott seems to wish to appear less than he really is, while Wordsworth struggles to be thought, at the moment, greater than he is suspected to be. This is natural. Scott's disposition is the effect of success operating on a genial temperament, while Wordsworth's evidently arises from the effect of unjust ridicule wounding an intense self-esteem. (Haydon, 256-7)

And in 1824 Wordsworth was compared to Thomas Moore:

Moore is a delightful, gay, voluptuous, refined, natural creature; infinitely more unaffected than Wordsworth ... [Moore] never talking of his own works, from intense consciousness that everybody else did; while Wordsworth is always talking of his own productions, from apprehension that they are not enough matter of conversation. (Haydon 294)

These two quotations are often used as sure evidence of Wordsworth's egotism, but the attending circumstances are seldom mentioned. Haydon's writings are highly biased and it is always unwise to accept them without examining them in context.

A recently published letter from Haydon to Mary Russell Mitford dated 12 February 1824, substantiates the thesis that Wordsworth's refusal of the loan is the basis of Haydon's anger. It was prompted by an article in the *New Monthly* in which Hazlitt mocked Wordsworth's refusal of a loan to Haydon four years earlier. This indicates that Haydon had circulated the letter among his friends, for Mitford easily recognized the allusion to Wordsworth in Hazlitt's article and wrote to Haydon saying:

I found in the *New Monthly*, in one of Mr. Hazlitt's delightful Table Talks the terrible story of Mr. Wordsworth's letter to you which spoils his poetry to me; for there was about his poetry something personal. We clung to him as to Cowper; and now -- it will not bear talking of. (Jones, 187)

Haydon's reply is a bitter attack on Wordsworth for an assortment of petty complaints including the fact that the poet burned too many candles and didn't pay the proper attention to Haydon's wife. Underlying all of this is a criticism of Wordsworth's behaviour around Beaumont which he perceived to be obsequious:

When [Wordsworth] is in the presence of Sir George Beaumont you can have no idea of the nasty flattery of aristocracy & the 're absoluto' with which he entertains the company -- 'The liberty of the press, Sir, must be restrained' said he once in my presence -- and in the presence of those to whom he knew such sentiment would be grateful ... if you invite him to come and see you he must first look over his invitations, consult his wife, talk to his wife's sister and arrange it so that it does [n't] interfere with Sir George ... (Jones 188)

The letter from Haydon to Mitford was not published until 1975. Its

appearance makes it easier to explain Haydon's sudden criticism of Wordsworth and gives meaning to this entry in Haydon's diary for March 3, 1824: 'Wordsworth called and said, "Well, Haydon, you found the world too strong". "Stop, Sir, the battle is not over"; and down we sat and had a regular set-to'. (Haydon 293)

The renewal of friendship between Wordsworth and Haydon didn't come until 1831, which was four years after the death of Beaumont. Haydon recorded it:

Wordsworth called after an absence of several years. I was glad to see him. He spoke of my 'Napoleon' with his usual straightforward intensity of diction. We shook hands heartily. He spoke of 'Napoleon' so highly that I wrote and asked him to give me a sonnet. If he would or could, he'd make the fortune of the picture. (397)

After some hesitation, Wordsworth wrote a sonnet for Haydon's painting and, whether the sonnet had anything to do with it or not, the painting did meet with success.

The complete title of the painting was *Napoleon Musing at St. Helena*, but it is another painting of a great man musing, *Wordsworth Musing Upon Helvellyn*, which is considered to be Haydon's masterpiece. The painting was completed in 1842 and evidently Mary Russell Mitford had overcome her disappointment in Wordsworth by this time, for she was excited enough with the subject to request that Haydon send the portrait to her friend Elizabeth Barrett (later Browning). Barrett's admiration of the work took the form of a sonnet, which concludes:

A vision free
And noble, Haydon, hath thine art released.
No portrait this with academic air,
This is the poet and his poetry. (Haydon 563)

Eric George apparently agreed with the sentiments of the sonnet because he wrote:

As has already been stressed, Haydon was not a gifted portrait painter, and he only came within measurable distance of the grandest thing once ... This was in his portrait of *Wordsworth on Helvellyn* in the National Portrait Gallery. It is an impressive work and, to judge by other portraits of Wordsworth, an excellent likeness. But it is more than that, it is a portrait of the poet's inner as well as of his outer personality, of his poetic character; and it should satisfy lovers of his poetry as a worthy representation of its author. (164)

Wordsworth wrote to Haydon that he thought the portrait 'the best likeness, that is, the most characteristic, that has been done of me'. (Haydon 605) Such accomplishments in portraiture are achieved only when artist and sitter are in accord, and Haydon's journals indicate that this was so.

In 1846 Haydon included the portrait in an ill-fated exhibition at the Egyptian Hall. Haydon hoped the exhibit would re-establish his reputation,

but P.T. Barnum was exhibiting Tom Thumb in the same building and the crowds ignored Haydon's work in favour of Barnum's spectacle. Within six months, Haydon had committed suicide and the association between the three men ended.

The attitudes of both men toward Beaumont are aptly summarized in their reactions to Sir George's death in 1827. It took three years before Wordsworth was finally able to produce a poem in memory of Sir George. (Moorman 1, 431-2) He wrote an elegy responding to Beaumont's request that there be no long eulogy on his tomb. It attempts to fill the void caused by the lack of any lasting memorial to the great man. Among other things, Wordsworth praised Sir George because he:

...shunned so modestly the light of praise,
His graceful manner, and the temperate ray
Of that arch fancy which would round him play,
Brightening a converse never known to swerve
From courtesy and delicate reserve;
That sense, the bland philosophy of life,
Which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife;

He praised Beaumont's interest in poetry and painting:

Intensely studied with a painter's eye,
A poet's heart; and, for congenial view,
Portrayed with happiest pencil, not untrue
To common recognitions while the line
Flowed in a course of sympathy divine; --

Wordsworth effectively evoked the memory of gatherings which regularly occurred at the Beaumonts' home:

Oh! severed, too abruptly, from delights
That all the seasons shared with equal rights; --
Rapt in the grace of undismantled age,
From soul-felt music, and the treasured page
Lit by that evening lamp which loved to shed
Its mellow lustre round thy honoured head;
While Friends beheld thee give with eye, voice, mien,
More than theatric force to Shakespear's scene; --
(Wordsworth 456-7)

In contrast to Wordsworth's three year delay Haydon wrote the following in his journal on the day he learned of Beaumont's death:

Sir George was an extraordinary man, one of the old school formed by Sir Joshua -- a link between the artist and the nobleman, elevating the one by an intimacy which did not depress the other ... Painting was his great delight. He talked of nothing else, and would willingly have done nothing else. His ambition was to connect himself with the Art of the country, and he has done it for ever. For though Angerstein's pictures were a great temptation, yet without Sir George Beaumont's offer of his own collection, it is a question if they would have been purchased... His great defect was

a want of moral courage; what his taste dictated to be right he would shrink from asserting if it shocked the prejudices of others or put himself to a moment's inconvenience. With great benevolence he appeared, therefore, often mean; with exquisite taste he seemed often to judge wrong; and with a great wish to do good he often did a great deal of harm. He seemed to think that to bring forth unacknowledged talent from obscurity was more meritorious than to support it when acknowledged. The favourite of this year was forgotten the next. His loss, with all his faults, will not easily be supplied. He founded the National Gallery. Let him be crowned. Peace to him. (338)

The 'slightly distorting mirrors' of Haydon and Wordsworth are never more evident than in these two eulogies. Haydon wrote that Beaumont's 'great defect was a want of moral courage' and that he would 'shrink from asserting [his taste] if it shocked the prejudices of others or put him to a moment's inconvenience'. Wordsworth wrote of Beaumont's 'courtesy and delicate reserve; / that sense, the bland philosophy of life, / which checked discussion ere it warmed to strife ...' It should be clear that these two evaluations of Beaumont are, as Greaves has suggested, as much a revelation of the personality of the authors as they are of Beaumont himself.

Haydon lists several of Beaumont's virtues, including his link with both the noble and the artistic class. It must be remembered that, from the beginning of his career, Haydon had been suspicious of noble patronage and this had been the real crux of his serious disagreement with Beaumont. By the time of Beaumont's death, he had experienced even worse dealings with other patrons and could respect Beaumont's artistic interests and his sympathy to the problems of a painter. (George 173-4) Haydon also acknowledged the recognition Beaumont had in the artistic community for his knowledge of Sir Joshua Reynolds' methods.

However, he also implied that Beaumont's founding of the National Gallery was his only real contribution to English art. Besides the accusation that Beaumont was in 'want of moral courage', he claimed he made poor judgements in art and did great harm to English artists. His reference to Beaumont's link with Reynolds and the 'old school' is as negative as it is positive, because it implies an unwillingness on Sir George's part to accept new ideas. The final accusation, and perhaps the most damning for a patron, was that Beaumont was capricious in his attention to young artists.

It should be clear by now that at least part of the reason for the present inconsistent interpretation of Beaumont's role is due to the reports of Haydon and Wordsworth. The most serious accusation against Beaumont in literary histories is that he caused a change in Wordsworth's politics. Even when Sir George is spoken of only in passing, he is honoured. This statement by Kenneth Curry in his book on Robert Southey is typical:

[Southey's] career, whatever hardships it entailed, had however, its compensations. He achieved a position which enabled him to know some of the best and wisest men of his day -- not only such literary men as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott and Landor. -- but such men as Sir George Beaumont, a patron of the arts ... (178)

Contrast this attitude to the following from a doctoral dissertation written in 1976 by Josephine M. Gear for New York University entitled *Masters or Servants?* The dissertation is an evaluation of patronage in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and uses the patronage of David Wilkie by Beaumont as its principal example. Gear's general attitude toward Beaumont and patronage is reflected in the following:

An authority, such as Sir George regarded himself, has more respect for his own opinions than he does for those of his listeners. This never decreases his enthusiasm for giving advice, indeed, his sense of superiority is increased by the pleasure of informing another. And that pleasure is further enhanced if his listener acts well upon the information he is given. (271)

This description is not compatible with the records left by Beaumont's contemporaries, nor with Wilkie's own writings, but it strongly reflects the writings of Haydon.

The thesis of Gear's paper is that patronage at this period was highly restricting on artists and she uses Beaumont to prove her point. Most of her argument is based on Haydon but she supports it with excerpts from other contemporaries quoted out of context. She contradicts herself often and makes many errors in chronology. The weaknesses are quite obvious even without going outside the dissertation itself. That these errors go unquestioned by the graduate committee of a noted university is indicative of the deeply engrained opinion many art historians have of Sir George. Because this is a dissertation examining patronage at the turn of the nineteenth century, important misconceptions about the Romantic period are perpetuated.

On September 17, 1827 Haydon made a journal entry which is even more meaningful today than it was when he wrote it:

I took my child Frank today to see *Macbeth* at Sir George's, Grosvenor Square. As we wandered through the deserted gallery and drawing-rooms I thought, here have assembled more men of real genius, and more pretenders to it, than in any other room perhaps in Europe ... on seeing the silent rooms, half-lighted and half-dusty, with the furniture covered, I was exceedingly affected with a sort of sympathy at the mortality of us all. Poor Sir George. The genius of the place was gone to his audit, and if we meet hereafter, as I hope we may, purged of our weaknesses, we shall find we have qualities for the enjoyment of the other, which worldly passion obscured and dulled. (349)

Poor Sir George indeed. Had Haydon recognized how valuable his association with Beaumont could have been, had he caught the vision of what Beaumont was trying to do, he might not have contributed so significantly to the conflicting views historians have of Beaumont.

Instead, Haydon's misconceptions of Beaumont and of patronage have been carried faithfully into our day. In general, art patronage is still defined in purely financial terms when it should be recognized that, at

its most basic level, patronage is encouragement and support of the arts in any form possible. In the twentieth century, both the financial backing of a program such as Masterpiece Theater by a large corporation and the volunteer work given by individuals to a dance company are valid forms of patronage. Galleries become patrons when they hang the works of artists, for they are endorsing the work and exposing it to the public. Those who insist on defining patronage in strictly financial terms cannot help but misread and misunderstand its role in the history of art. Sir George Beaumont's broader application of the term must be recognized before we are really able to understand him or the patronage during his day.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

William Hazlitt: *Liber Amoris* Reprinted 1985 by Chatto & Windus - The Hogarth Press. £3.95.

It is not recorded anywhere, so far as I know, what Charles Lamb thought of William Hazlitt's notorious love-affair with Sarah Walker, either the affair itself or the book in which Hazlitt offered his confessions about the episode, *Liber Amoris*, or the *New Pygmalion*. Maybe those thoughts were unprintable or unutterable, or maybe he wished to say nothing which might add to the mortification of his friend.

No one is likely to believe that his verdict would have been censorious, even moralistic in tone. His boundless imaginative sympathy would have forbidden any such an offence. We may recall in this connection his comment on some of the New Testament parables: 'I had more yearnings towards that simple architect, that built his house upon the sand, than I entertained for his more cautious neighbour; I grudged at the hard censure pronounced upon the quiet soul that kept his talent; and - prizing their simplicity beyond the more provident, and, to my apprehension, somewhat *unfeminine* wariness of their competitors - I felt a kindliness, that almost amounted to a *tendre*, for those five thoughtless virgins'. This was the kind of charity, more Lamblike than Christian maybe, which Hazlitt needed in his agony.

Let us recite the facts briefly and bluntly. Hazlitt had been unhappily married for a dozen years to another Sarah, Sarah Stoddard, a close friend of Charles and Mary as it happens: they may almost be said to have arranged the match. However, Charles's uncontrolled ribaldry at that ceremony has also been recorded; he was nearly turned out of the church. He probably believed that his good friend Hazlitt, whom he knew better than anyone else, was unfit to be married to anybody. But the consolation was that Sarah Stoddard always looked as if she could look after herself, and so she could and always did. Hazlitt was a hopeless romantic in all affairs of the heart, even if he could always weave a strong strand of realism into his politics whenever they threatened to be torn romantically off the leash. In literature, Hazlitt's most enduring loves were with the men of flesh and blood, sinew and strength, the real realists: Montaigne, Shakespeare, Swift, Defoe. But in his own or other peoples' love stories, he had other heroes and heroines. He read and re-read and shed tears over the moments of supreme tension in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*. And, in these moods, he could be freshly incarnated as Don Quixote: 'We hunt the wind, we worship a statue, cry aloud to the desert'.

Hazlitt was forty-four when he was smitten; she was nineteen or thereabouts,

the landlady's daughter at No. 9 Southampton Buildings, just about a stone's throw from the present *Daily Mirror* office in Holborn. When she made her first appearance or rather when, with a 'waving air she goes along the corridor' his life was transformed; he became 'the very fool of love'. During their year-and-a-half affair, she made some occasional mild responses to his clumsy, zealous, over-possessive propositions, and then drew back. He did not know whether she was offering similar or more forthcoming favours to other customers; he was passionate to find out. The theme - was the woman he adored a slut or an angel? - was a good one, and fit for Flaubert or at least the Goncourt Brothers. Hazlitt told his story somewhat ahead of these masters and without their sure touch and experience, and in a land where the public mood, morals and manners amalgamated together, had still not quite assimilated Rousseau. Hazlitt indeed was one of the very first to fold the new Rousseau doctrines to his bosom, not only his flaming red-hot revolutionary politics but his no less revolutionary idea of love-making.

We should note here perhaps the one field where Hazlitt did not seek any innovation or - most rare in his case - detect an innovation on the way. His age was also the age of Mary Wolstonecraft, and he had the good luck to meet her at the house of his friend Godwin and later to see her lovely portrait hanging on Godwin's wall. He made a few comments on her beauty, but none whatsoever on her writings. It is not known whether he ever read her *Rights of Woman* to set beside Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* which he had read and admired both for its style and its doctrine.

Hazlitt's ideal of womanhood, I suspect, was Rossini's Rosina whose liberation took the form of enabling her to twist men round her little finger, without them having the foggiest notion what she was up to, and no bad choice either; who in his senses ever could resist her? Anyhow, Hazlitt was a most eloquent Rossini Enthusiast. However, in real life, for Hazlitt, Rosina was transformed into Sarah Walker, and she almost destroyed him with her wiles, her titillations, her prevarications and her treacheries. (Let it not be forgotten, by the way, however, that no one has ever told Sarah's side of the story; what a find that would be!) Yet despite the absence of the slightest touch of feminism in his make-up, Hazlitt was not a male chauvinist; more like a male pacifist indeed, and his debasement before the idol of his own creation came near to encompassing his ruin, then and thereafter.

He could not keep quiet on the subject, stopping to tell everybody about his bewitchment in every tavern from Chancery Lane to Covent Garden. He unloosed a gushing flood upon her fawn-like head and upon his few especial long-suffering friends. Then he turned aside from most other labours to compile and publish anonymously the *New Pygmalion, Liber Amoris*. One of his letters to Sarah - and perhaps even the most presentable - fell into the scurrilous hands of a Tory journal, *John Bull*, and was reproduced, with much sneering and snivelling, to damn him and his politics to eternity. Some of his eminent ex-friends - like Coleridge, for example - to their immortal dishonour, used the occasion to resuscitate an old unproved and unprovable charge that the young Hazlitt had been the villain in some terrible seduction scene (some have even called it 'rape', without a tincture of evidence) twenty years before. He was soon having to publish anonymously also his *Spirit of the Age* essays - some of the greatest in

the English language - for fear of inviting too swift an association with 'the impotent sensualist', the lascivious author of *Liber Amoris*.

However, these public exposures are not quite as riveting as the private ones. Some of those who had known him well were outraged, genuinely outraged. Crabb Robinson, for example, on June 23: 'Finished early Hazlitt's disgusting *New Pygmalion*. One can tolerate the passion of a St. Preux or a Werter as it is set off by the eloquence of Rousseau or Goethe but such a story as this is nauseous and revolting. It ought to exclude the author from all decent society. He has been exposed in John Bull, and I think he will feel the effects of the exposure of himself in being slighted by many who tolerated him before'. A few weeks later Benjamin Robert Haydon offered his first comment in his diary or correspondence; every spice to hand was used as by a master. He reported to Miss Mitford: 'He (Hazlitt) came to town for a night or two, and passed nearly the whole of each in watching Sally's (Sarah's) door!' This was still four months after the day of publication.

However these comments, public and private, add a special force to an oblique reference which Charles Lamb did make. He had been quarrelling or half-quarrelling with Hazlitt on some other matter, but in a 'Letter to Southey' published in the *London Magazine*, he went out of his way to seek a reconciliation. Robert Southey had sought to rebuke Lamb generally for the company he kept, especially Hazlitt but Lamb would have none of it. His encomium on Hazlitt became justly famous. 'But - protesting against much that he has written, and some things which he chooses to do; judging him by his conversation which I enjoyed so long, and relished so deeply, or by his books, *in those places where no clouding passion intervenes* - I should belie my own conscience, if I said less than that I think W.H. to be, in his natural state, one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing. So far from being ashamed of that intimacy which was betwixt us, it is my boast that I was able for so many years to have preserved it entire; and I think I shall go to my grave without finding, or expecting to find, such another companion'.

Reading those words, Hazlitt said to himself: 'I think I must be friends with Lamb again'. And so they became, until his dying day. The friendship between Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt is one of the truest treasures of English literature, and I do not think it is far-fetched to underline how it was re-shaped, re-soldered by Lamb's sympathy provoked by the *Liber Amoris* affair and all its permutations.

But now let me return to the public treatment of Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris*, culminating a little later in two events of this past year, 1985, - the publication of a new edition and a spectacular sale at Sothebys.

Robert Louis Stevenson was so shocked by this little volume that he gave up the idea of writing Hazlitt's life. Augustine Birrell, who did write about him and whose biography was otherwise intelligently sympathetic, wished to consign the offending volume to 'the realms of things unspeakable, fit only for the midden'. Even the most learned and authoritative of modern biographers, Herschel Baker, turns aside in horror from Hazlitt in love, and even Professor R.L. Brett, a most eminent Coleridgean, invokes *Liber Amoris* to justify some of the old libels on

Hazlitt's youthful sex-life. How Coleridge and Wordsworth would have rubbed their pious hands at the thought. And yet in modern times too Hazlitt has been better enabled to speak for himself. In the excellent Penguin *Selected Writings* (published in 1970 and edited by Ronald Blythe), *Liber Amoris* is printed in full but also printed where it ought to be, alongside his other writings, and Ronald Blythe also gives proper recognition to two others before him who have helped rescue the book from the midden.

It was indeed only as late as 1948 - well over a hundred years after that 'sweet apparition', or, if you wish, that 'slimy, marble varnished fiend' had turned her glance so fatally upon him - that any commentator appreciated to the full the nature of Hazlitt's delirium. Charles Morgan wrote in that year an entirely new kind of introduction to the despised volume in which he invoked the case-knowledge of modern psychology, partly to explain Hazlitt but, even more remarkably, to reveal how much of modern discoveries in this field Hazlitt had anticipated. Morgan also made a most discriminating comparison between Hazlitt and Stendhal, Hazlitt's contemporary whom he resembled in so many aspects, although most notably not in philandering bravado or technique. Just at the moment when Hazlitt was making obeisance before the statue he had erected, Stendhal was writing his own book of love, *De L'Amour*, in which the Hazlittian trauma, disease, madness, idyll, is immortally diagnosed.

Soon afterwards the two men met in Paris. Stendhal gave his book to Hazlitt who must have read it on his journey onwards towards the two mistresses they shared, Rome and Venice. I have often wondered: how Hazlitt's hair must have stood on end as he turned over those burning pages; how he must have marvelled at this French sympathiser who understood his predicament with Sarah so much better than his own countrymen; (and how he must have concealed the volume from his new sedate wife who was making part of the journey with him).

'She is dead to me, but what she once was to me can never die'. That was Hazlitt's own epitaph on the affair, but perhaps Stendhal and Montaigne even helped finally to soothe his passion. And as Morgan shows, there was one sense in which he carried the investigation further even than these two acknowledged mentors; he 'shows' - in the words of Morgan - 'because he is a supreme realist and is unafraid to give himself away, that the crystallising lover is by no means the blind fool that he is traditionally supposed to be. He thus deprives himself of the only romantic defence with which an aloof and self-righteous world might be disposed contemptuously to cover him. The lover, Hazlitt says in effect, is not even a dupe; he is worse, he is a half-dupe, and yet persists'. Hazlitt made himself, again in Morgan's memorable conclusion, 'the sane, unsparring analyst of his own madness'. And yet Stendhal conducted the analysis afresh, and with an even greater clinical precision, and with a sense of humour too (and even with an invocation of the name of Montaigne, sacred to Hazlitt certainly), to recall sexual fiascos as remarkable as his own. Hazlitt surely must have been gratified to be assured, after such painful torture and on such high combined authority, that he was not so abnormal a creature after all.

But the subject, as I have indicated, has been brought right up to date. A little more than a year ago Marilyn Butler contributed to *The Yearbook*

of *English Studies* an elaborate discussion of the book - the most elaborate since Charles Morgan's - under the provocative title 'Satire and the Images of Self in the Romantic Period: The Long Tradition of Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris*'. I say 'provocative' for what Marilyn Butler is suggesting is that what Hazlitt was doing was not, unconsciously almost, releasing an obsession but deliberately producing a work of art. At one stage in the argument, she even puts the question: 'But is the hero of the *Liber Amoris* Hazlitt? Is he an emanation of Hazlitt's persona as a writer, being subjected to criticism and mockery? Is he a yet more detached figure, a composite of other characters in life and in books?' Her argument is dazzling, if not convincing: it should be read in its entirety. And she can partially sustain her case with the claim that Hazlitt's book is 'the most self-conscious, the most continuously literary of love affairs'. It is indeed; but that was Hazlitt. His literary and political allusions would have poured from him whatever he was writing.

However, modern readers have the chance to read the book for themselves. The new paperback edition, published by the Hogarth Press at £3.95 reproduces the most complete text available and includes an excellent introduction by Michael Neve who takes account of what has been written before, including that of 'his great European double Stendhal' but includes also some perceptive hints drawn from some other Hazlittian friends or heroes. Hazlitt was a friend of Keats and he had read and re-read *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. And he worshipped Napoleon - 'Napoleon'; writes Michael Neve, in a way no one has insisted before, 'stalks the pages of *Liber Amoris*, both as love object, and as a handsome sexual rival'.

A publisher's note at the end of this volume indicates that Part I of *Liber Amoris*, containing the first seven scenes or conversations in the book, was started at Stamford when he was on the way to Scotland, to secure his divorce. 'The small calf-bound notebook which contains the original manuscript', continues the note, 'was only recently discovered and sold at Sothebys'.

Originally, the catalogue indicated that the notebook might be sold for between £7,000 or £15,000. In fact it went for £20,000, and there was every indication that the bidding might have gone much higher still. I went along to Sotheby's the day before the auction, and held the little volume in my hand. I read considerable chunks of it. I could compare the handwriting with some Hazlitt manuscripts in my possession.

It was impossible to doubt that the book was the real thing, the one he started at Stamford when he was en route from Southampton Buildings to Scotland. He told his correspondent, Peter George Patmore in mid-March, 'I have begun a book of our conversations (I mean mine and the Statue's) which I call *Liber Amoris*...' On March 30 he wrote again that it was finished, and 'It is very nice reading'.

The writer in the notebook looks as if he had written without any need or temptation to stop and without requiring any subsequent alterations. But that I fear doesn't prove anything either way: the flood which poured forth might be due to his obsession or his artistry or both together.

Michael Foot

THE TAYLOR LAMB COLLECTION

The collection of Lamb manuscripts and printed books formed by the late Robert Taylor has come to the Princeton University Library to join the Scribner collection presented four decades ago. Accounts of the Scribner books and of the manuscripts, which included autograph letters to Maria Fryer about Emma Isola, appeared in the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*; these issues were sent by the writer to the Charles Lamb Society Library.

The Taylor collection is described in the winter issue of the *Chronicle*, from which, with permission, this brief account is drawn. Among the thirty-one manuscripts are autograph letters not in the Marrs or Lucas editions. One to Taylor and Hessey in 1821 revises a passage in 'Imperfect Sympathies'; another in 1822 proposes 'Elia's Ghost' as a signature to 'Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age'. There is a signed manuscript poem of thirty-three lines beginning 'Sweet is thy sunny hair/ O Nymph divinely fair, ...' The words 'My Anna' in the third three-line stanza suggest that the poem was written to Ann Simmons, 'Anna' of the sonnets and 'Alice' of the essays, with 'bright yellow Y_____shire hair'. There are also autograph poems that seem to have been torn from Lamb's commonplace book: 'Thoughts on Several Eminent Composers', 'Song to Miss S.A. Hunter', 'Had I but gold to my desire ...', as well as transcriptions of Marvel's 'The Nymph Complaining' and of 'Sir Patrick Spence'. An autograph manuscript of 'My First Play' with Lamb's revisions and deletions and signed 'Elia' is in the Taylor collection, as is an autograph manuscript of 'On an infant dying as soon as born', with Thomas Hood's name on the envelope; the latter manuscript varies in a number of places from the version printed by Lucas. There is also a notebook with passages from Greek tragedy translated into English in Thomas Love Peacock's hand and extracts from Lamb in the hand of Mary Shelley.

Among the printed books are presentation copies of *John Woodvil* (1802) and of *Elia* (1823, first issue of the first edition), inscribed to Joseph Munden; Lamb's own copy of *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* (1808) with holograph additions and internal revisions; *Confessions of a Drunkard* (1814) bound with Mary Lamb's 'On Needlework' extracted from the *British Lady's Magazine*, Southey's *Wat Tyler*, *Rochester's Poems* (1709), *Poems by Anne, Countess of Winchelsea* (1714), and - most notably - Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue* of 1809 with Blake's corrections and Lamb's directions to the binder. All the contents of the volume were presumably from Lamb's library.

Finally, there are two playbills in the remarkable Taylor collection. The first announces for December 10, 1806, 'a new Farce, in Two Acts, called Mr. H--, the Prologue to be spoken by Mr. Elliston'. The second, probably drawn up by Lamb himself, reads in part: 'Theatre Royal, English Opera House, Strand. Particularly Private. This present Friday April 26th, 1822 will be presented a Farce, called Mr. H--. (N.B. This piece was damned at Drury Lane Theatre). A prologue will be spoken by Mrs. Edwin ... No money returned (because none will be taken)'.

Jeremiah S. Finch

Princeton, N.J.

NOTES

A LINK WITH CHARLES LLOYD

In March, Roy Pitches, antiquarian bookseller, 7 Keswick Close, Dunstable, Beds., wrote to us: 'At auction recently I took up a box of books described as "Poetry - a good lot". One of the books in this "good lot" turned out to be two plays, *The Mountaineers* by George Colman 2nd Edn. London 1795 and the other *The Minister* a translation from the German of Schiller by M.G. Lewis (the author of *The Monk*) London 1797. As the plays were by two different publishers one can only assume that they were, at some time, bound in ½ calf to suit their owner. I then noticed that the name on the flyleaf was "Charles Lloyd 6th March 1800". ...The second play *The Minister* also has a signature on the title page and this is an elegant script - copper-plate - "Sophia Pemberton 1798".'

Mr. Pitches asked various questions about the Lamb/Lloyd/Sophia Pemberton connection which (with the help of *Companion to Charles Lamb!*) I was able to answer.

In a later letter, Mr. Pitches writes about a book *Some Other Odd Volumes*, which described a dining/literary club founded at the turn of the century. 'Ye sette in London' was founded by Bernard Quaritch, and others followed in Chelmsford, Nottingham and Hong Kong. The Nottingham Sette produced *Story of a Little Book*, Lamb's 'Prince Dorus' (1896) written by Mr. J. Potter Briscoe, and *The Tale of Prince Dorus* (1897). Mr. Pitches would be interested to hear from members who may have one or other of these books.

M.R.H.

WILLIAM HONE

James A Hone writes from 27 Hurdle Fence Drive, Avon, Connecticut, U.S.A. 06001:

'I am currently doing some research on the radical publisher, William Hone, who was a friend of Charles Lamb's for many years. While the published letters of Lamb provide considerable insight into the nature of their friendship, I was wondering if a member of your Society might be something of an expert on this particular connection of Lamb's. If so, I would be most appreciative if that person could be in touch with me'.

Would any Hone experts care to write to Mr. J.A. Hone direct?

ALL SAINTS PARISH CHURCH, EDMONTON

We congratulate All Saints Church on its 850th Anniversary; celebrations began on Saturday 5th April with a Service of Praise and Thanksgiving, with the Bishop of London as preacher. Our member, Mr. Donald Potter, represented the Charles Lamb Society.

The Secretary has a copy of the full programme of Anniversary events which continue until November.

SPRING GROVE (EVENING) TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD

Madeline Huxstep spoke to about 50 members of this very active branch on 14th April on 'Charles Lamb'. We are grateful for a donation of £10 for the repair of books in the library.

WINIFRED GREEN

Mrs. Goodhew, 36 Myddleton Road, Ware, Herts.SG12 9AL would be interested in any information about Winifred Green who illustrated Lamb's *Poetry for Children* (1898), Vol.8 of Macdonald's edition of Lamb (1903) and *Mrs. Leicester's School*.

COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

A section on Lamb was again held at the Annual Meeting and Conference of the U.S. College English Association, this year in Philadelphia, on April 12th 1986. Under the title 'Focusing on Lamb' papers were given by John I. Ades, Winifred Courtney, Benjamin Franklin Fischer IV and Joe E. Riehl, with Gerald Monsman as 'respondent'. We congratulate Professor Riehl on his success in arranging for this section both last year and this and we are delighted to hear that there is to be a Lamb section next year in Charleston, S.C. at which Professor Ades has agreed to take the chair. Proposals for papers should be sent to him at English Department, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Room 3206 Peck Building, Edwardsville, Illinois 62026 -1001.

APRIL BULLETIN

We apologize to members who received April Bulletins wrongly bound up. The spread containing pages 162, 163 and 192, 193 was stapled up back to front. We very much regret this mistake and hope members were able to rectify it.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Mary Ward Centre on 10 May 1986. The Annual Report and Accounts were passed and Officers and Council re-elected. Miss Gadbury retired from the post of Registrar and Mrs. Wickham was appointed in her place. Warm thanks were expressed to Miss Gadbury for her long service.

After thirty-nine years as Membership Secretary, Miss Florence Reeves has asked to be relieved of the task and the Society is fortunate in having a worthy successor in Mrs. Audrey Moore, who will work with Miss Reeves for a transitional period. It is impossible to express what the Society owes to Miss Reeves and we are relieved that she will continue to be a member of the Council. As a mark of gratitude and respect, our Chairman Dr. Wilson, on our behalf, asked Miss Reeves to become a Vice-President of the Society, which she gracefully accepted.

A Special General Meeting was announced, to take place on 4 October for the proposed adoption of Trust Deed and revision of Society's Rules. This will be the first meeting of the new season.

We were particularly happy to have with us on 10 May Professor David Erdman, over here from New York, and to hear from him of the newly formed Blake Society.