THE CHARLES LAMB BULLETIN

The Journal of the Charles Lamb Society

NEW SERIES NO. 64 *October 1988*

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EDITORIAL

Sometime early in 1977 Basil Savage, who had initiated and built up the New Series of *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, took me out to lunch. Quite soon, without preliminary, he said, 'Mary, I want you to take over as Editor of the *Bulletin*'. In a state of severe shock, I stammered out, 'No, I couldn't possibly'. Not only did I feel wholly inadequate for the task of keeping up the high standard he had set but I was also, at that time, in the process of winding up my remaining duties as Head of the English Department at St. Gabriel's College of Education and being assimilated into my new niche at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. I just did not see how I was to find the time.

However, after I had been wined and dined, I discovered to my amazement that I had said I would do it - for a year, to give Basil a respite. Now, nearly twelve years later, it is my turn to hand over the job from January 1989 and how fortunate we are in having such an admirably qualified successor as Bill Ruddick of Manchester University. He has long been an active and popular member of the Society. His own articles and reviews on literary subjects have been widely published, and he has been closely associated with *The Critical Quarterly*. Moreover, he is willing to take on this unpaid and often thankless task.

Not, however, unrewarding. So many distinguished scholars have shown so much generosity and kindness that my job has been made a rich and fulfilling one. I should like to thank them all and to ask them to continue to support our new Editor, in the same way. For a short time I shall remain as Joint Editor, to assist him in the transition, before handing over completely to him. May I also say a big 'thank you' to all the officers and members of

the Society who have shown me the true 'Elian spirit of friendliness' in the most practical and helpful of ways during my Editorship.

Mary R. Wedd

REMEMBERING ÉMILE LEGOUIS

Nicholas Roe

University of St. Andrews

A Lecture given to the Society on 7 November, 1987

1: Legouis and Romantics Criticism in the 1980s

I'll begin with a few words from the late American critic Paul de Man. In the Preface to his last collection of essays, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, de Man admits to a tremor of misgiving about his own deconstructive critical method:

> The apparent coherence *within* each essay is not matched by a corresponding coherence *between* them. Laid out ... in a roughly chronological sequence, they do not evolve in a manner that easily allows for dialectical progression or, ultimately, for historical totalization. Rather, it seems that they always start again from scratch and that their conclusions fail to add up to anything. If some secret principle of summation is at work here, I do not feel qualified to articulate it and, as far as the general question of romanticism is concerned, I must leave the task of its historical definition to others.

Having confessed his inability to offer critical and historical 'coherence' - or 'totalization' - in his essays, de Man continues: 'I have myself taken refuge in more theoretical inquiries into the problems of figural language'. (1) De Man's preoccupation with rhetorical and figural language was, of course, only one aspect of the deconstructive criticism associated with Yale University during the 1960s and 1970s. The a-historical, or anti-historical methods of deconstruction may arguably be traced back through American New Criticism of the 1940s, to the close reading techniques pioneered by I.A. Richards and William Empson in the 1920s and 1930s. Ideally, close reading excludes historical and contextual factors from literary criticism; it offers an immaculate engagement with the text that is deliberately self-enclosing. In this respect it comes as no surprise that de Man's essays should not 'coalesce', as he puts it, into a dialectic with each other or with what he describes as 'the general question of romanticism'.

One solution to this dilemma, I suppose, is to follow de Man's route into 'more theoretical inquiries'. This, however, would merely prolong the impasse in literary criticism that is focused in the confrontation between structuralist or post-structuralist studies, and more socially and historically engaged criticisms. In his study of American criticism in the 1960s and 1970s, *After the New Criticism* Frank Lentricchia summarises the present state of literary criticism as a 'crisis ... generated ... by, on the one hand, a continuing urge to essentialize literary discourse by making it a unique kind of language - a vast, enclosed textual and semantic preserve - and, on the other hand, by an urge to make literary language "relevant" by locating it in larger contexts of discourse and history'. (2)

Paul de Man also describes this 'crisis', while admitting his own inability to manage a reconciliation; 'I must leave the task of ... historical definition to others', he writes,

> Not that I believe that such a historical enterprise, in the case of romanticism, is doomed from the start: one is all too easily tempted to rationalize personal shortcoming as theoretical impossibility and, especially among younger scholars, there is ample evidence that the historical study of romanticism is being successfully pursued. But it certainly has become a far from easy task. One feels at times envious of those who can continue to do literary history as if nothing had happened in the sphere of theory, but one cannot help but feel somewhat suspicious of their optimism. (3)

The 'historical study of romanticism' has of course never been in danger of eclipse by recent theoretical approaches. Nevertheless, de Man identifies the contemporary challenge to romantics scholars as the reconciliation of literary theory (in the broadest sense) with literature in context, the integration of literary history with hitherto exclusively textual or linguistic criticisms. As Karl Kroeber says at the conclusion of his recent survey of Wordsworth criticism, 'the trend of Wordsworthian studies ... is toward absorption of new methodologies into an increasingly detailed and precise historical criticism'. (4) For Wordsworth scholars, historical criticism in the twentieth century begins with the work of Émile Legouis, who died fifty years ago in October 1937. Although he belongs to an age before the critical *agon* of modern literary studies, Legouis is the first modern critic of Wordsworth and any consideration of the importance of historical study to contemporary Wordsworth scholarship must take its bearings from him.

II. The Relevance of *The Early Life of William Wordsworth*

Émile Legouis was born on 31 October 1861 at Honfleur, a town at the mouth of the River Seine. He studied at the Lycée Louis le Grand in Paris, where he was taught by Professor Alexandre Beljame, and subsequently at the University of Caen. In 1881 and 1882 he visited London and Leamington, and then returned to continue his studies at the Sorbonne once again under the supervision of Beljame. Between 1885 and 1904 he taught at the University of Lyon, where in 1896 he completed and published his doctoral thesis 'La Jeunnesse de William Wordsworth'. Legouis returned to Paris and the Sorbonne in 1904, where he succeeded his teacher Alexandre Beljame as professor. He remained there until his retirement in 1932.

Legouis is perhaps best remembered now for two works; the *History of English Literature*, which he wrote in collaboration with Louis Cazamian, and *The Early Life of William Wordsworth* which was first translated into English in 1897 and subsequently republished in 1921. The *History of English Literature* remains a valuable guide and introduction to the subject. *The Early Life of William Wordsworth* was an epoch in Wordsworth criticism, in that it was the first substantial critical biography of the poet to appear after Wordsworth's death in 1850. To appreciate this, one needs to make a brief retrospective of the intervening years.

Christopher Wordsworth's two-volume *Memoirs* of his uncle tactfully suppressed much of his early life, including his experiences in France, his relationship with Annette Vallon, and his intellectual development through Godwinism to become the emergent poet of 1797-8. Another early

biographer, F.W.H. Myers took his material directly from the *Memoirs* and reproduced its shortcomings. William Knight's three volume *Life of William Wordsworth* appeared in 1889, and it brought together for the first time a mass of unpublished material: letters, Dorothy's *Journals*, and Wordsworth's *Home at Grasmere*. Knight deliberately refrained from offering any commentary of his own, and was content that his *Life* should serve as a 'quarry' of facts upon which 'future critics may work'. This is fine so far as it goes, but Knight was frequently inaccurate in matters of transcription and dating so that subsequent critics - including Legouis - were indebted to Knight for Wordsworthian facts leavened with a variety of errors. In every other respect, however, Legouis' *Early Life of Wordsworth* represents a break with these Victorian critics and biographers, and the beginning of twentieth-century Wordsworth scholarship.

Unlike his predecessors, Legouis set out to trace Wordsworth's development as a poet through a critical study of *The Prelude* and other early poems, and with particular attention to the formative years of the poet's life that had hitherto been ignored or deliberately obscured. It is, perhaps, difficult now to appreciate how unusual this approach to Wordsworth was at the time. Before the appearance of Legouis' book, *The Prelude* had been relatively neglected. The poem had not been published during Wordsworth's own lifetime and when it did appear in July 1850 it was overshadowed by the popularity of *In Memoriam*, which had been published on 1 June; by November, when Tennyson was offered the Laureateship, *In Memoriam* had sold some 5,000 copies, *The Prelude* fewer than 2,000. (5) Matthew Arnold pointed out in the Preface to his anthology of Wordsworth's poems that Tennyson had drawn 'the poetry-reading public, and the new generations' away from Wordsworth. (6) Arnold's own selection was made from Wordsworth's shorter poems, and omitted *The Prelude* except for four brief extracts. As Ernest de Selincourt said, 'Legouis was the first to realise the paramount importance of *The Prelude*, to view his subject in the true perspective, and to throw the emphasis where it should be thrown'. (7) *The Early Life of Wordsworth* was a precedent for de Selincourt's own parallel 1805 and 1850 texts of *The Prelude* as published in 1926, which in turn have formed the basis for subsequent editions and studies of the poem down to the recent Norton Critical Edition of 1979 which presented the original Two-Part poem of 1799 alongside the expanded later versions of 1805 and 1850. Looking back, then, Legouis can be seen to have established the profile of Wordsworth studies up to the present day; the publication of the 1799 *Prelude* and the manuscript versions of Wordsworth's earliest poems in the Cornell Wordsworth Series all reflect his originating emphasis upon the formative years of Wordsworth's life. Furthermore, the involvement of biography and history with literary criticism is at the centre of contemporary critical debate, so that the continuing relevance of Legouis' book is assured.

The Early Life of William Wordsworth is structured rather like *The Prelude*. It begins in spring 1798 with Wordsworth's hopes that *The Recluse* would present a philosophic counterpoise to pessimism after the failure of the French Revolution. The intersection of revolutionary politics and romantic poetry was a recurrent concern in Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age* and more specifically in his essay 'My First Acquaintance with Poets'. But so far as I am aware, Legouis was the first to trace the links between political disappointment and the genesis of *The Recluse* and, behind that,

The Prelude. Again, this is territory that is so familiar nowadays that it is worth stressing Legouis' formative role in establishing this context for the poetry.

The British response to the Revolution had been divided since the publication of Burke's *Reflections* in November 1790; war, the Terror, and repression in Britain had followed until by the winter of 1797-1798 an impasse had been reached. As France threatened military expansion in Europe, the friends of liberty and their opponents in Britain found what Legouis terms 'a mutual and silent acquiescence in pessimism'. William Pitt's government and its supporters were alarmed at the prospect of a French invasion, and their fears were compounded by the anxiety that the invader might 'find a thousand English hands outstretched in welcome, acclamation, and support'. On the other hand the friends of liberty, who as Legouis rightly says had forgiven even 'the bloodiestdays of the Terror' and hitherto would have welcomed a French intervention in Britain, were now dismayed by the 'overwhelming intelligence' of French aggression in Switzerland, 'the first refuge of liberty'. 'Nowhere in Europe', Legouis says, 'was there a corner left in which it was possible to prolong that dream of regeneration and of happiness on earth, which for eight years had been so fearlessly pursued in face of the most cruel disillusion'. (8)

In the late 1960s Legouis' account of this critical period was followed-up by E.P. Thompson in his essay 'Disenchantment or Default?'. Thompson argued that Wordsworth's creativity in the spring of 1798 emerged from the vortex of the French Revolution. 'The creative impulse', he says, 'came out of the heart of this conflict':

> There is a tension between a boundless aspiration - for liberty, reason, *égalité*, perfectibility - and a peculiarly harsh and unregenerate reality. So long as that tension persists, the creative impulse can be felt. But once the tension slackens, the creative impulse fails also. (9)

For Thompson Wordsworth's revolutionary experience and his poetry are continuous. His argument has not, I think, been challenged by those who would present Wordsworth's creativity after 1798 as a function of political reaction to become, in Marilyn Butler's words, 'the poet of counter-revolution'. In her book *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries*, Butler argues that from 1796 onwards Wordsworth's poetry celebrates 'the Burkean conservative ideology', and that *The Borderers* reveals this incipient conservatism in Marmaduke's lament for Idonea, who (as Butler quotes) was

> made an Orphan
> By one who would have died a thousand times,
> To shield her from a moment's harm.

Butler shows that this is an echo of Burke's description of Marie-Antoinette in the *Reflections*, and she is right to present *The Borderers* as 'a stylized account of the French Revolution'. Her political argument collapses, though, because it is based upon a quotation from the play as published by Wordsworth in 1842. The echo from Burke is absent in the earliest surviving text of *The Borderers*; it represents a later revision, and is not evidence

of Wordsworth's 'conservative ideology' in 1796. (10) E.P. Thompson's account of Wordsworth in 1797-8 is persuasive because he avoids reducing the complex interaction of politics and poetry to inaccurate and unhelpful clichés about 'counter-revolution' and 'conservatism'. Furthermore, Butler's mistaken reading of *The Borderers* underlines the need for precision in relating poetic text to historical moment; the measure of any theoretic claim about Wordsworth's poetry of this period is Mark Reed's *Chronology of the Early Years*, or an appropriate volume in the Cornell Wordsworth Series.

Émile Legouis wrote without any of these modern scholarly guides, he is sometimes inaccurate on letter dating, for instance, although in most cases this can be attributed to his use of William Knight's flawed texts. Most striking, given these problems and the material available, is Legouis' ability to assess the evidence available to him and arrive at a persuasive interpretation. An immediate case in point is his account of the relation of *The Recluse* scheme to the genesis of *The Prelude:*

> The outlines of [Wordsworth's] poem on nature, man, and society were so vast that they eluded his grasp. Was he really capable of giving form to the matter of his conception? Had he not too presumptuous a confidence in his powers?... To answer these questions he would have to trace the path his mind had followed from its earliest beginnings, and thus it was that he came to compose *The Prelude*. (p.11)

Wordsworth's doubts about his abilities as poet of *The Recluse* gave issue to the introspective and memorial poetry that began to flow during the winter of 1798-1799, while Wordswroth and Dorothy were isolated at Goslar in Germany. This poetry forms the earliest drafts of *The Prelude*, and it shows Wordsworth returning upon his own past to justify his election as poet of *The Recluse*.

Wordsworth's preoccupation with his childhood at this moment in 1798-1799 is the starting point for Legouis' *Early Life* and it explains his decision to make *The Prelude* the focus of his book. His critical method is empirical and determinist in relating poetry to history, and these are of course qualities that have been challenged by the more sceptical criticisms of recent years. But given the vexed frontier between literary theory and history in the work of de Man or as defined by Frank Lentricchia, and the misrepresentation of textual history in Marilyn Butler's account of *The Borderers* and Wordsworth's politics, a future programme for literary history might well benefit by incorporating modern literary scholarship (in Wordsworth's case the work of Mark Reed and the Cornell editors) with the simpler (I am not saying simplistic) outlines of Legouis' study. Johathan Arac outlines just such a programme in his recent study *Critical Genealogies:*

> Only precise attention to the place of poetry in society - the opportunities offered for voice, script, and instruction, by whom, to whom, and for what purposes - will allow the nuance, detail, and differentiation that make a history and set proper limits to a theory. (11)

The justification for this new historical initiative in contemporary criticism appears by rephrasing Paul de Man's statement quoted at the beginning of this essay: 'One feels at times envious of those who can

continue to do literary theory as if nothing had happened in the field of textual and literary history'. The place of theory in contemporary literary studies can be assigned only by a prior consideration of the location of poetry in society; and that, as many have never forgotten, requires a persistent application of basic textual and historical research. The case of Charles Lamb as presented in *The Early Life of William Wordsworth* is a good example.

III: Charles Lamb in *The Early Life of William Wordsworth*

The Early Life of William Wordsworth is divided into four parts, each of which corresponds to a substantial section of the 1850 *Prelude*. The first, 'Childhood, Youth and Education' treats Wordsworth's life up until the end of his time at Cambridge in 1791 (1850 *Prelude* Books One to Six). The second explores Wordsworth's experiences in France, 1791-1792, his enthusiasm for the Revolution, and Godwin's bearing upon Wordsworth's 'moral crisis' (1850 *Prelude* Books Nine to Eleven). 'The Stages of Recovery' comprise the third part of the *Early Life*, which includes Wordsworth's relationship with Dorothy and Coleridge at Racedown and Alfoxden, and the final part - 'Harmony Restored' - presents Wordsworth's achieved identity as a poet in 1798 (1850 *Prelude* Books 12 to 14). So the shape of the whole book is circular, like that of *The Prelude*, and concludes at the threshold of *The Recluse* which Legouis had discussed in his introduction.

At the start of *The Early Life*, Legouis had outlined the external political and social factors that influenced Wordsworth's earliest idea of *The Recluse*, and how this in turn gave place to *The Prelude*. Having followed Wordsworth's development over the first twenty-eight years of his life, using *The Prelude* and other sources for material, in the closing pages of his book Legouis is able to define the inner resources that Wordsworth set against the political and social crisis of spring 1798. By way of contrast, he shows how the experience of defeat affected some of the other individuals who visited Wordsworth and Coleridge at Alfoxden during 1797-8. Among them were Tom Poole, who of course lived in Stowey; George Burnett, one-time collaborator in Pantisocracy; Charles Lloyd, who for a time had lived with the Coleridge household at Stowey as Coleridge's pupil; John Thelwall, political activist and lecturer now projecting a future career as a poet; and Charles Lamb, who visited Coleridge and Wordsworth at Stowey between 7 and 14 July 1797 just at the moment when Wordsworth and Dorothy were arranging to take Alfoxden House. This is what Legouis has to say about Lamb, on the occasion of this visit:

> At that time Charles Lamb, naturally so witty and sprightly, so full of charming mockery, was also among the dismal ones. When he met Wordsworth under Coleridge's roof, in July 1797, ten months had not elapsed since his sister had stabbed her mother in a fit of madness. With quiet heroism the young man had at once sacrificed his own prospects in life, stifled a dawning love, and decided to assume the sole responsibility for his sister by taking her under his own charge. He had himself "tasted all the grandeur and wildness of fancy" in an asylum, and may possibly have feared that he might again be visited by the malady. His naturally free and joyous spirit had yielded to the weight of his affliction, and had temporarily taken refuge in serious religious thoughts. He had seen the hand of God in the blow

> which had fallen upon him, and had felt a sudden shame for his lawless life and the bad company he kept in London. In addition to the admiration he had felt for Coleridge ever since they were school-fellows together at Christ's Hospital, he now felt a need for the exalting influence of a friendship which raised him above his customary companions. Thus it was not the true Lamb that Wordsworth saw at this time, nor was it exactly the moral coxcomb whom Lamb himself ridiculed when shortly afterwards, he recovered from his attack of puritanism; it was rather a silent and sentimental youth, the "gentle-hearted Charles" of whom Coleridge wrote during this visit. Lamb was now under a cloud; for the time he had lost his originality and his pungent wit, and thus seemed to the poets a mere pale reflexion of themselves. In the young clerk of the East India Company, who wrote doleful verses in the leisure he enjoyed between office hours, or, actually, even at his office-desk, they thought they detected a soul who was the younger sister of their own, and had "pined and hungered after Nature, ... in the great city pent". Lamb made no effort to undeceive them, being similarly deceived himself. He listened thoughtfully to Wordsworth's pastoral poems. It was not long, however, before he recovered his natural disposition. Though he continued his life of self-devotion, it was with a smiling face, with a jest on his lips, and with roguish ways which averted compassion. No less quickly, too, he shook off the countrified characteristics which Coleridge had attributed to him. Maliciously, yet not without sincerity, he upheld the worship of London against the religion of nature, sympathy for swarming humanity against the passion for solitude.
>
> This half-playful, half-serious reaction seems also to have been provoked by a secret jealousy. Lamb had come to Stowey to see Coleridge, and was pained to find the first place, and so large a place, in his friend's life taken by a new-comer. It irritated him to see Coleridge forever on his knees before Wordsworth, and urging all his own admirers to form a prostrate rank of faithful ones with himself at their head. It was long, consequently, before Lamb arrived at a sound appreciation of Wordsworth, and longer still before he learned to like him. Incited by Lloyd's treacherous insinuations, he revenged himself by secretly laughing at the solemnity of the prescribed cult, and at the profound faith in himself of the divinity to whom its altars were erected. It was only very gradually, and with difficulty, that he came to recognise Wordsworth's genius and to pardon his eccentricities; nor did he ever entirely forego the solace of mocking at them (pp. 361-2)

I don't want to be distracted by some quirks of style and vocabulary here; they can all be attributed to problems of translating from Legouis' original French text. This short passage is most striking for the effective economy with which Legouis brings a variety of detail to present an image of Charles Lamb at Stowey in July 1797. It draws upon Lamb's immediate past, and it also has far-reaching implications for his later relation to Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Legouis is surely right to emphasise the lasting effect of 'the terrible calamities' of 22 September 1796 when Mary Lamb had 'been the death of her own mother'. Most impressive, though, is his sensitivity to the stages of

Lamb's grief as decisive resolution immediately after the event gave place to melancholy and religious introspection. If one turns to Lamb's letters of the time this profile appears clearly: 'God be praised, Coleridge,' Lamb wrote on 3 October,

> I have never once been otherwise than collected, & calm; even on the dreadful day & in the midst of the terrible scene I preserved a tranquillity, which bystanders may have construed into indifference, a tranquillity not of despair; is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? (12)

Jonathan Wordsworth has recently shown that Lamb's unitarianism can be dated before the events of 22 September, and that in the months immediately following he was 're-re-reading Priestly', while corresponding with Coleridge about necessitarianism, Hartley, Priestley, and *Religious Musings*. (13) Priestley's optimistic doctrine of philosophical necessity undoubtedly sustained Lamb in the immediate aftermath of his mother's violent death, but as Jonathan Wordsworth rightly says in the longer term it must have become ever more difficult for Lamb to sustain the principle of necessarianism when 'in practice it cannot have been easy to see murder, suffering, insanity, within one's own family as divine instruments for good' (*Marrs*, i.43) Coleridge relished the speculative aspect of his own belief in *Religious Musings* and the *Eolian Harp*, but Lamb's unitarianism required the immediate emotional sustenance of kindred humanity: 'Oh, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings!' he advised Coleridge on 14 November 1796,

> and let no man think himself released from the kind 'charities' of relationship: these shall give him peace at the last; these are the best foundation for every species of benevolence. I rejoice to hear, by certain channels, that you, my friend, are reconciled with all your relations. 'Tis the most kindly and natural species of love, and we have all the associated train of early feelings to secure its strength and perpetuity. (p.64)

The intellectual aspect of Lamb's unitarianism was evidently influenced by his reading of Priestley and his correspondence with Coleridge. But his dependence upon 'the kind "charities" of relationship' more closely resembles George Dyer's position in his *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence*. *Religious Musings* offered the prospect of a 'blest future' as the reward for present patience amid adversity: 'Rest awhile, /Children of Wretchedness!'. But in Dyer's *Dissertation* Lamb could find a more humane consolation, a compassionate understanding of his own predicament:

> True benevolence is desirous of advancing human beings to all the innocent comforts of which their nature is capable, and of mitigating those distresses, to which by their own frailties, or the injustice of others, they are exposed - Ignorance, slavery, imprisonment, sickness, disappointment, and old age, have their distinct claims, and form a separate interest in a good man's heart. (14)

Lamb was impressed by Coleridge's intellectual capacity, and attracted by Priestley's accounts of the philosophical bases of unitarianism. But after the tragedy of September 1796 Dyer offered a more immediate comfort at a time when Lamb was obliged to care for an elderly and ailing father, a

sister whom he believed to be 'perpetually on the brink of madness', and simultaneously fulfil his commitments at the East India House. In the longer term it is Dyer, rather than Coleridge or Priestley, who provides the most accurate measure of Lamb's unitarianism and of the sensibility that would emerge in the *Essays of Elia.*

In every respect, therefore, Legouis is right when he claims that Lamb was subdued when he visited Coleridge and Wordsworth at Stowey in July 1797. Lamb himself wrote to Coleridge afterwards apologising for his reserve. 'I could not talk much, while I was with you', he says, 'but my silence was not sullenness, nor I hope from any bad motive; but, in truth, disuse has made me awkward at it' (*Marrs*, i. 117). What 'bad motive' could Lamb have had in mind, even as he banished the possibility? It seems quite likely that Legouis is right to imply Lamb's 'jealousy' of Coleridge's attention to Wordsworth, and that this rendered him the more susceptible to the 'treacherous insinuations' of Charles Lloyd which led to the rift between Lamb and Coleridge in May 1798. A further consequence of Lamb's visit to Stowey was his enhanced estimate of the politica lecturer John Thelwall. On 5 February 1797 Lamb had written encouraging Coleridge to make use of the East India Company for the cover of his postage expenses: 'The India Co is better adapted to answer the cost than the generality of my friend's correspondents - such poor & honest dogs as John Thelwall particularly' (*Marrs*, i. 96). When Lamb left Stowey the following July, John Thelwall was expected at any moment: 'I was looking out for John Thelwall all the way from Bridgewater', Lamb told Coleridge,' and had I met him, I think it would have moved almost me to tears' (*Marrs*, i. 117). Conversation with Coleridge is one likely reason for Lamb's revision of Thelwall from 'poor & honest dog' to a figure for compassionate identification. But Lamb's comments also raise the question of the political aspect of his unitarianism, and his relation to the dissenters and political reformists among whom he appears in James Gillray's marvellous satirical cartoon 'New Morality' which was published in the *Anti-Jacobin* on 9 July 1798. *

IV: Lamb, Coleridge, and the Iconography of 'New Morality'

It has long been recognised that the toad and frog which appear in Gillray's cartoon represent Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb, whose *Blank Verse* had been published in May 1798. Burton Pollin has traced the literary background of Lamb's presence in 'New Morality', arguing that his poetic collaborations with Coleridge and Lloyd between 1796 and 1798 meant that he was also associated with their politics. There is not space here to recapitulate Pollin's evidence, but merely to question his 'inference' that Lamb had been a Godwinian. (15) This is based on Lloyd's footnote in *Blank Verse* which mentions that 'the authors ... are both believers in the doctrine of philosophical necessity, and in the final happiness of mankind'. Lamb's letters of the period, however, always treat necessarianism in a religious context that derives from his reading of Priestley:

> I rejoyce in being, speculatively, a necessarian. - Would to God, I were habitually a practical one ... I have just been reading, Priestly on Philosophical necessity, in the thought that I enjoy a kind of Communion, a kind of friendship even, with the great & good. (*Marrs*, i. 89; 9 Jan. 1797)

* See page 287

Godwin and Priestley shared common ground in the 'doctrine of necessity', but it is certain that Lamb's 'kindly' necessarianism reflected the Christianity of Priestley's and Dyer's philosophy rather than the atheism of *Political Justice*. 'I wish I could get more of Priestley's works', he tells Coleridge on 2 January 1797 (*Marrs*, i.84): there is no evidence in the letters of his impatience to read Godwin. But if literary associations are one explanation for Lamb's presence in 'New Morality' that also enable one to define his relation to Godwin, two further points remain to be clarified. The first concerns the broader company Lamb keeps in the cartoon; the second is to explain the peculiar iconography of Gillray's satire and the poem 'New Morality' that accompanied it in the *Anti-Jacobin*.

Besides Charles Lloyd, Lamb appears in a mixed company of liberals, radicals, dissenters, poets and politicians, that includes Fox, Thelwall, the Duke of Bedford, Priestley, Southey, Coleridge, Paine, Helen Maria Williams, Holcroft, Godwin - no doubt others are recognisable too. Gillray's target was evidently not any single particular group or sect, but the heterodoxy of the friends of liberty taken as a whole. Hence the radical theorists of the day - Godwin, Priestley, Paine - appear alongside political activists like Thelwall, parliamentarians such as Fox, and poets such as Coleridge, Southey, Lamb, and Lloyd. (16) In the cartoon and the poem all of them are represented as paying homage to 'the High Priest of the THEOPHILANTHROPES' La Reveillère Lepaux, who was a leader of the Directory and also of the Theophilanthropists:

> 'C.....dge and S..th.y, L...d and L..b and Co.
> Tune all your mystic harps to praise LEPAUX!' (17)

Well, what had Lamb and Lloyd to do with Lepaux? A footnote to the poem in the *Anti-Jacobin* describes the Theophilanthropists as the 'men without a God', and in this sense - as Winifred Courtney says - Lepaux was 'a convenient cord on which to hang the English Jacobins' who were attacked as atheists throughout the 1790s. (18) Gillray portrays Lepaux as the type of the 'philosophic atheist', a semitic hunchback preaching 'soft seductions ... refinements nice ... and easy vice' to the assembled company. Theophilanthropy was, in fact, a deist belief; a rational, natural religion that is as far from atheism as it is from pantheism. The grotesque anthropomorphism of Gillray's cartoon is at once a pointed satire upon this 'natural religion', that also caters for the popular prejudices of the day which equated the friends of liberty with atheism, vice, and brute sensuality. One can make intellectual sense of the iconography of 'New Morality' as 'creeping creatures, venomous and low' installing their high priest, but why were these individuals depicted as these particular animals?

Winifred Courtney has already explored how Burke's quarrel with the Duke of Bedford bears upon the depiction of the latter as leviathan with a hook in his nose. But given the literary source for this particular feature of Gillray's satire in Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord*, perhaps one should look elsewhere for comparable sources of other images in the cartoon. Why, for instance, are Southey and Coleridge represented as asses respectively braying Sapphics and Dactylics? Southey explained that Gillray had 'not ... libelled [his] likeness, because he did not know it, so he clapped an ass's head on my shoulders'. (19) An obvious reason, however, is Coleridge's unfortunate poem *To a Young Ass* - 'I hail thee *Brother* - spite of the fool's scorn' - which was published in the *Morning*

Chronicle on 30 December 1794. The crocodile in a corset represents Tom Paine, who had prepared for his career as international revolutionary with a spell as a ladies' stay-maker. Holcroft, who had been acquitted of treason in 1794, is the mechanical dwarf in irons composing a 'Letter from an Acquitted Felon'. But if these images each have a precise allusive significance, why is Godwin portrayed as a jackal and Helen Williams as a snake? A possible answer, I think, can be found in *Religious Musings* and, specifically, in the passage that Coleridge had previously published in the second issue of *The Watchman* as 'The Present State of Society'.

Coleridge's poem begins with an allegory of society as a 'sun-scorch'd waste'.

> where, at night,
> Fast by each precious fountain on green herbs
> The LION couches; or HYAENA dips
> Deep in the lucid stream his bloody jaws;
> Or SERPENT plants his vast moon-glittering bulk,
> Caught in whose monstrous twine BEHEMOTH yells,
> His bones loud-crashing. (20)

Lamb objected to the 'Gigantic hyperbole by which [Coleridge] describe[s] the Evils of existing Society' in this passage: 'Snakes Lions hyenas & behemoths is carrying your resentment beyond bounds' (*Marrs*, i. 10). Gillray's grotesque is the iconographic representation of Coleridge's 'Gigantic hyperbole' in *Religious Musings*; the cartoon features identical images in at least two instances - hyaena and snake - while the Duke of Bedford/Leviathan corresponds to Coleridge's 'behemoth'. Beyond these similarities, which may be coincidental, there is one unmistakeable allusion to *Religious Musings* in the *Anti-Jacobin* poem. In *Religious Musings* Coleridge had numbered Milton, Newton and Hartley among his 'elect' and then paused to hail his contemporary hero:

> Lo! Priestley there, patriot, and saint, and sage ...

The *Anti-Jacobin* poem lists a contrary 'jacobinical' elect:

> See Louvet, patriot, pamphleteer, and sage,
> Tempering with amorous fire his virtuous rage.
> Form'd for all tasks, his various talents see,-
> The luscious novel, the severe decree.

The echo here reduces Coleridge's elect while establishing Priestley, who stands at the centre of Gillray's cartoon, as the key to understanding the *Anti-Jacobin's* satire as an ironic reply to *Religious Musings*. Where Coleridge had followed Priestley in promising a 'blest future' untainted by 'Statesmen blood-stained and priests idolatrous', the *Anti-Jacobin* presents an image of 'The *New Philosophy* of modern times' in which Coleridge and his hero stand with a monstrous rabble paying homage to an idolatrous priest. Gillray could not have known of Lamb's veneration for Priestley, whom he confessed to 'sin in almost adoring', but by placing him next to Priestley in the guise of toad or frog his satire unwittingly hit the mark. Moreover, by numbering Lamb among the 'men without a God' the *Anti-Jacobin* provides a context in which to read Lamb's poem *Living Without God in the World* as

a response to its satirical attack. It also vindicates Legouis' point that Lamb had been preoccupied with 'serious religious thought', and that religion - not Godwinism - is the foundation of his political identity.

V: 'Living Without God'; Nuance, Detail, Differentiation

The earliest mention of *Living Without God in the World* comes in Lamb's letter to Southey, 28 November 1798, where he mentions that he has 'no objection to [Southey] printing "Mystery of God" ' - Lamb's working title for the poem - in Cottle's forthcoming *Annual Anthology* (*Marrs*, i. 150). Internal evidence suggests that the poem was composed at some time after Lamb's visit to Stowey early in July 1797 and probably as an immediate response to the cartoon and poem in the *Anti-Jacobin* of 9 July 1798. It may be as well to look at the poem again as a reminder:

Mystery of God! thou brave and beauteous world,
Made fair with light and shade and stars and flowers,
Made fearful and august with woods and rocks,
Jagg'd precipice, black mountain, sea in storms,
Sun, over all, that no co-rival owns, 5
But thro' Heaven's pavement rides as in despite
Or mockery of the littleness of man!
I see a mighty arm, by man unseen,
Resistless, not to be controul'd, that guides,
In solitude of unshared energies, 10
All these thy ceaseless miracles, O world!
Arm of the world, I view thee, and I muse
On man, who, trusting in his mortal strength,
Leans on a shadowy staff, a staff of dreams.
We consecrate our total hopes and fears 15
To idols, flesh and blood, our love (heaven's due)
Our praise and admiration; praise bestowed
By man on man, and acts of worship done
To a kindred nature, certes do reflect
Some portion of the glory and rays oblique 20
Upon the politic worshipper, - so man
Extracts a pride from his humility.
Some braver spirits of the modern stamp
Affect a Godhead nearer: these talk loud
Of mind, and independent intellect, 25
Of energies omnipotent in man,
And man of his own fate artificer;
Yea of his own life lord, and of the days
Of his abode on earth, when time shall be,
That life immortal shall become an art, 30
Or Death, by chymic practices deceived,
Forego the scent, which for six thousand years
Like a good hound he has followed, or at length
More manners learning, and a decent sense
And reverence of a philosophic world, 35
Relent, and leave to prey on carcasses.

But these are fancies of a few: the rest,
Atheists, or Deists only in the name,
By word or deed deny a God. They eat
Their daily bread, and draw the breath of heaven 40

Without or thought or thanks; heaven's roof to them
Is but a painted ceiling hung with lamps,
No more, that lights them to their purposes.
They wander 'loose about', they nothing see,
Themselves except, and creatures like themselves, 45
Short-liv'd, short-sighted, impotent to save.
So on their dissolute spirits, soon or late,
Destruction cometh 'like an armed man',
Or like a dream of murder in the night,
Withering their mortal faculties, and breaking 50
The bones of all their pride. (22)

On 6 August 1800 Lamb told Coleridge of his eagerness 'to read W.'s tragedy, of which [he had] heard so much and seen so little - only what [he] saw at Stowey' (*Marrs*, i.220). Lamb's glimpse of *The Borderers* at Stowey was nevertheless sufficient for him to recollect Rivers' justification of 'independent intellect', which Wordsworth later associated specifically with Godwin when he used the phrase again in *Prelude* Book Ten (1.829). In the play Rivers tells Mortimer

You have taught mankind to seek the measure of justice
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but by the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of moralists and saints and lawgivers.
You have obeyed the only law that wisdom
Can ever recognize: the immediate law
Flashed from the light of circumstances
Upon an independent intellect.
Henceforth new prospects ought to open on you,
Your faculties should grow with the occasion.
(Early Version 1797-9, III,v.24-35) (23)

Lamb's allusion to *The Borderers* in *Living Without God* establishes July 1797 as the earliest date of the poem's composition. It also indentifies Lamb's 'braver spirits of the modern stamp' (1.23) as converts to Godwin's rational philosophy, which had no doubt formed a topic of conversation when Lamb visited Coleridge and Wordsworth at Stowey. However, there is more going on in Lamb's poem than a critique of Godwin's atheism and intellectual arrogance.

The opening lines draw upon the philosophic materialism of Priestley, and probably also recall *Religious Musings* in which Coleridge had offered a comparable vision of God as 'Nature's essence, mind, and energy!'. But in the passage immediately following Lamb turns - not at first to the Godwinians - but to the secular reformists whose politics were based upon the rights of man and the 'kindred nature' of humanity. In *The Rights of Man* Paine had used the American Revolution to prove that regenerated mankind 'sees his species, not with the inhuman idea of a natural enemy, but as kindred; and the example shows to the artificial world, that man must go back to Nature for information' (24). Lamb replies in his poem that without god the 'kindred nature' of human beings is vanity '- so man / Extracts a pride from his humility', and it is at this point that I believe Lamb makes an explicit

reply to the cartoon and poem in the *Anti-Jacobin.* 'We consecrate our total hopes and fears / To idols' (ll.15-16), Lamb writes, effectively glossing Gillray's image of the massed friends of liberty installing their 'high priest' Lepaux. Godwinians of 'independent intellect', atheists, and 'Deists only in the name' unite together to 'deny a God'. Again, Lamb follows Gillray in identifying deism - and by implication the Theophilanthropists - with atheism; by altering the poem's title from 'Mystery of God' to *Living Without God in the World*, Lamb takes his cue from the footnote in the *Anti-Jacobin* that had identified deists as 'the men without a God'. Ironically, while Lamb's most explicit criticism is pointed at Godwin's 'braver spirits', his poem elsewhere reflects the misrepresentations of the *Anti-Jacobin* satire by way of emphasising the need for religion.

The closing lines of the poem prophesy imminent destruction, coming like the 'armed man' of *Proverbs* 24:34, but they probably also recall Coleridge's attack upon 'th'imbrothell'd atheist' in *Religious Musings:*

> disherited of soul,
> No common centre Man, no common sire
> Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,
> Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
> Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams
> Feeling himself, his own low self the whole ...

Lamb's second overt allusion in the closing lines of his poem - ' "loose about" ' - takes one to *Samson Agonistes* and

> the common rout,
> That wandering loose about
> Grow up and perish, as the summer fly,
> Heads without name no more remembered ... (ll. 674-677)

By invoking the Bible and Milton, Lamb offers his own comment upon the perils of atheism, and the poem concludes with an oblique reference to the horrors of his own recent experience:

> a dream of murder in the night,
> Withering ... mortal faculties, and breaking
> The bones of ... pride.

Living Without God in the World therefore returns to the devastating events of September 1796 as the immediate cause of Lamb's need to believe, and it is in this connection (not the political or literary context) that the *Anti-Jacobin* satire would have affected him most deeply. While the poem recollects his reading of Wordsworth's *Borderers* in July 1797, it is most likely that it can be dated one year later in the weeks following the appearance of 'New Morality'. Lamb's poem offers no religious or philosophical speculation, and its opening lines lack the intellectual play of *Religious Musings.* His comment on atheism, deism, and 'the men without a God' in 'New Morality' ultimately rests upon Lamb's religion as 'a personal dedication' - so Jonathan Wordsworth expresses it - 'that did not have to move with the times' (p.37)

The title of this essay is *Remembering Émile Legouis*, and in the last few pages his name has not cropped up at all. What I have tried to do in this

essay is to offer a reading of one of Lamb's poems that draws upon some of Legouis' comments in his *Early Life of William Wordsworth*, but in the hope of showing how 'precise attention to the place of poetry in society' gives voice to the nuance and detail of a particular text. It was for this reason that I started with a brief consideration of some difficulties in contemporary literary criticism, particularly the place of history in literary studies. Although some of my comments may have laboured the obvious, an awareness of problems of literary theory, critical technique, and the use of history does sharpen one's awareness of new possibilities offered by a reconciliation of theory with more traditional historically based criticism. This essay has, admittedly, not been particularly innovative in critical technique. But it has looked backward to the formative work of Émile Legouis by way of taking critical bearings now for the future. Legouis' recognition of Wordsworth's return upon his own past in 1798 was the starting point for his study of *The Prelude* in *The Early Life*. To remember Émile Legouis on the fiftieth anniversary of his death is to pay tribute to a great Wordsworthian, whose work has proved indispensible up to now and is sure to do so for many years to come.

[A new issue of the 1921 edition of Legouis' *Early Life of William Wordsworth*, introduced and indexed by Nicholas Roe, was published by Libris in July 1988]

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2. Frank Lentricchia, *After the New Criticism* (Cambridge, 1980), xiii.
3. *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, viii-ix.
4. *The English Romantic Poets. A Review of Research and Criticism*, ed. Frank Jordan (4th edn., New York, 1985), 339.
5. Robert Bernard Martin, *Tennyson. The Unquiet Heart* (Oxford, 1980),353.
6. *Poems of Wordsworth*, ed. Matthew Arnold (London, 1879), vi.
7. Ernest de Selincourt, 'Émile Legouis and Wordsworth', in 'Hommage à Émile Legouis', *Études Anglaises* (1938), 259.
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9. E.P. Thompson, 'Disenchantment or Default? A Lay Sermon', in *Power and Consciousness*, ed. C.C.O'Brien and W.D. Vanech (New York and London, 1969), 152.
10. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries* (Oxford, 1981), 64-5.
11. Jonathan Arac, *Critical Genealogies. Historical Situations for Postmodern Literary Studies* (New York, 1987), 21-2.
12. *The Letters of Charles and Mary Anne Lamb*, ed. Edwin W. Marrs Jr. (3 vols. Ithaca and London, 1975-8), i.47. Future page references to this volume of the letters appear in the text.
13. Jonathan Wordsworth, 'Lamb and Coleridge as One-Goddites', *The Charles Lamb Bulletin* (April, 1987), 37-47. Future page references to this essay appear in the text.
14. George Dyer, *A Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* (London, 1795), 21.

15. 'Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd as Jacobins and Anti-Jacobins', *Studies in Romanticism* 12 (Winter 1973), 633-647.

16. Cf. Southey's comment: 'What I think the worst part of the anti-Jacobin abuse, is the lumping together men of such opposite principles; this was stupid'. See *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, ed. C.C. Southey (6 vols.,London, 1849-50), i. 345. Cited in future as *Life and Correspondence*.

17. *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin* (6th edn., London, 1828), 235.

18. *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, 234. See also Winifred Courtney, *Young Charles Lamb, 1775-1802* (London, 1982), 192. For the misrepresentation of friends of liberty as atheists see *The Life of John Thelwall by his Widow* (London, 1837), 147: 'Nothing was more common, at that time, than to charge every active member belonging to political Societies with atheism'.

19. See *Life and Correspondence*, i. 347.

20. *The Watchman*, ed. L. Patton, Bollingen Collected Coleridge (Princeton, 1970), 64.

21. *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, 231.

22. Quoted from the text in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E.V. Lucas (7 vols., London, 1903-5), v. 17-18.

23. William Wordsworth, *The Borderers*, ed. Robert Osborn, Cornell Wordsworth Series (Ithaca and London, 1982), 210.

24. Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man, Part Two*, ed. H. Collins (Harmondsworth, 1969), 182.

COLERIDGE'S MARINER IN THE PERILOUS LAND

Jeanie Watson

Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas

In his book *Fairy Tales and After: From Snow White to E.B. White*, Roger Sale briefly catalogues a number of stories that he believes are or are not fairy tales: 'Everyone seems instinctively agreed on what the term (fairy tale) includes and excludes, even though fairy tales blend easily into related kinds, like myths, legends, romances, realistic folk fables, and cautionary tales. "Cinderella", "Sinbad the Sailor", and "Hansel and Gretel" are fairy tales, while the stories of King Arthur, Pandora, Patient Griselda, and the Ancient Mariner are not'. (1) About the last of these, Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, I want to disagree with Professor Sale. Indeed, I think that the *Rime* conveys precisely the nature of the realm of Faërie and, more importantly, that the power which Faërie embodies is at the heart of the unwavering appeal the *Rime* has exercised on readers since its publication in *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. (2) Coleridge himself equates the *Rime* with the *Arabian Nights'* story as a work of the 'pure imagination' (3) and, as such, with a group of 'gilt-cover little books' he devoured as a child: 'Tom Hickathrift, Jack the Giant-Killer, &c, &c, &c, &c.' (4) The *Rime's* strength and universality of appeal is, in fact, matched by hardly anything other than traditional fairy tales.

I wish to structure my argument in terms of the definitions and categories set forth by J.R.R. Tolkien in his well-known essay 'On Fairy-Stories'.(5) Although there are many fine discussions of fairy tales, including Professor Sale's own, (6) Professor Tolkien's seems the most appropriate to use in dealing with Coleridge, since the concerns and the language of the two are quite similar. Both are interested in the writer's creation of an imaginative world, and both assert that the world created is a mode of showing forth Reality. Paradoxically, however, it is Faërie which is more real than that which we usually term the 'real world'. That what Coleridge creates in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a world of Faërie is evidenced, first by the conditions, incidents, and details of the poem itself as these elements relate to Tolkien's description of Faërie, and, second, by the similarity between Coleridge's theory of the creative imagination and Tolkien's theory of the sub-creation of a Secondary World of Faërie. In Tolkien's terms, Coleridge, in writing *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, functions as a sub-creator, making a Secondary World of Faërie. It is the potency of this Secondary World that operates so powerfully on the reader's suspension of disbelief to effect entrance to the Other Time of Reality.

Fairy Tales 'are not in normal English usage stories *about* fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being'. Further, 'most good fairy-stories are about the *adventures* of men in the Perilous Realm or upon its shadowy marches' (Tolkien, 9). A fairy-story, then, whatever its purpose or genre or mode, is a story that occurs in--or partakes of, is about--the Perilous Realm of Faërie, a place dangerous but full of wonder. This way of defining 'fairy-tale' opens the possibility that stories other than the traditional tales, of Perrault or Grimm for example, may legitimately be classified as fairy tales. At an initial stage, if one substitutes 'spirits' for the 'fairies' of Tolkien's definition--as seems fair, given the religious mode of Coleridge's poem--it is easy to see that the poem is about the Mariner's adventure in the realm in which these spirits have their being. Naming the province of fairy tale, Tolkien says that fairy tales have three faces: 'the Mystical towards the Supernatural; the Magical towards Nature; and the Mirror of scorn and pity toward man. The essential face of Faërie is the middle one, the Magical. But the degree in which the others appear (if at all) is variable and may be decided by the individual story-teller. The Magical, the fairy-story, may be used as a *Mirour de l'Omme*; and it may (but not so easily) be made a vehicle of Mystery'. (26) In the case of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the most difficult of the variables is achieved: the fairy tale becomes the vehicle of Mystery, and the Mariner ventures into the realm in which spirits have their being.

That the precise purpose of the *Rime* is to serve as a vehicle of Mystery is made explicit immediately through the poem's epigraph:

> I readily believe that there are more invisible than visible Natures in the universe. But who will explain for us the family of all these beings, and the ranks and relations and distinguishing features and functions of each? What do they do? What places do they inhabit? The human mind has always sought the knowledge of these things, but never attained it. Meanwhile I do not deny that it is helpful sometimes to contemplate in the mind, as on a tablet, the image of a greater and better world, lest the intellect, habituated to the petty things of daily life, narrow itself and sink wholly into trivial thoughts. But at the same time we must be watchful for the

> truth and keep a sense of proportion, so that we may distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night. (7)

Embarking on a journey of this sort is dangerous indeed--for the Mariner and for the reader of the poem:

> Faërie is a perilous land, and in it are pitfalls for the unwary and dungeons for the overbold . . . .The realm of fairy-story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds are found there; shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow as sharp as swords. In that realm a man may, perhaps, count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very richness and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveller who would report them. And while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gates should be shut and the key be lost(Tolkien, 3).

Faërie is the place where 'extremes meet', a place of joy and sorrow, both 'as sharp as swords'. Faërie is 'wide and deep and high'; its expanse limitless; its seas shoreless; its stars uncounted. Such a place is rich and wonderful--and an 'ever-present peril'. The Mariner moves away from the safety of the harbour, kirk, and lighthouse; he encounters the world of Spirit:

> Like one, that on a lonesome road
> Doth walk in fear and dread,
> And having once turned round walks on,
> And turns no more his head;
> Because he knows, a frightful fiend
> Doth close behind him tread. (446-451)

The Mariner, on his return, is intensely grateful that the gates have not been shut nor the keys lost:

> Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
> The light-house top I see?
> Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
> Is this mine own countree?
> We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
> And I with sobs did pray--
> O let me be awake, my God!
> Or let me sleep alway. (464-471)

The Mariner has journeyed the seas of the world where 'strange things ... befell' (Argument); he has seen a 'wondrous' place with ice 'as green as emerald' (52, 54); he has been becalmed on seas that seem truly shoreless; he has been 'a soul in agony' (235); and with love he has watched the 'rich attire' (278) of the water-snakes: 'no tongue/Their beauty might declare' (282-83). The Mariner counts himself fortunate to have wandered in the Perilous Realm, but he would not willingly sail through the gate again.

The Faërie/Spirit World is, then, a place which we as humans often speculate about and wish to have knowledge of--even though the knowledge is perilously gained--but it is an Other World seldom encountered:

'Naturally so; for if elves are true, and really exist independently of our tales about them, then this also is certainly true: elves are not primarily concerned with us, nor we with them. Our fates are sundered, and our paths seldom meet. Even upon the borders of Faërie we encounter them only at some chance crossing of the ways' (Tolkien, 9-10). In the case of the *Rime*, however, fairy tale is used as a vehicle of Mystery, and the whole point of the adventure is an encounter with Mystery. Therefore, once the Mariner's ship crosses the border of Faërie, the agents of that realm act to insure the chance crossing of the ways:

> And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
> Was tyrannous and strong:
> He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
> And chased us south along. (41-44)

Having been blown south, almost by a divine breath of spirit, the men find themselves in a 'wondrous cold' (52) place of mist and snow and ice, alone until 'At length did cross an Albatross' (63). The two worlds meet as the mariners hail the bird 'in God's name' as 'a Christian soul' (65-66).

Although the realm of Faërie is an Other World of the imagination, it is also a world that is very real, and real in two senses. The ultimate sense of its Reality is an abstract or metaphysical one or--as both Coleridge and Tolkien would have it, a spiritual one. But fairy tales are also very real in a quite familiar and concrete sort of way: '*Faërie* contains many things besides elves and fays, and beside dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted' (Tolkien, 9). Fairy tales, in their concrete details, contain the very essence of the physical real world. The significance of the concrete, however, encompasses both the thing in itself and the individual physical thing as a representative of that which is fundamental and permanent: 'And actually fairy-stories deal largely, or (the better ones) mainly, with simple or fundamental things, untouched by Fantasy, but these simplicities are made all the more luminous by their setting . . . . It was in fairy-stories that I first divined the potency of the words, and the wonder of the things, such as stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine" (Tolkien, 59). Stripped of their surrounding context, the elements of 'water and stone, wine and bread', and even we ourselves, 'mortal men', stand stark. And, in turn, the starkness itself confers significance, weight, and mystery so that each of the physical beings assumes a sacramental or--to use Coleridge's term--'symbolic' existence. 'A Symbol', says Coleridge, 'is characterized . . . by the translucence of the Eternal through and in the Temporal. It always partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that Unity, of which it is the representative'. Drawing the inference implied in this definition, Coleridge continues by saying 'the great book of [God's] servant Nature' is a 'revelation of God', since 'in its obvious sense and literal interpretation it declares the being and attributes of the Almighty Father, none but the *fool in heart* has ever dared gainsay. But it has been the music of gentle and pious minds in all ages, it is the *poetry* of all human nature, to read it likewise in a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world'. (8)

The Mariner's journey is to a symbolic Other World in which the elements of the physical real world are both very concretely present and symbolically Real.

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide wide sea, (232-33)

the Mariner is aware only of essentials: the 'bloody sun', the 'star-dogged Moon', the 'water, water everywhere' (112, 212, 119), and the albatross hung round his neck. The things of nature are seen to assume supernatural significance. They are themselves, and yet they are more than themselves; they 'partake of the Reality which [they] render intelligible'. They are seen to be most-Real. And this itself is a perilous Mystery.

Reality, the Mystery we also call Faërie, is impossible to define other than symbolically. To define is to limit, and limitation is antithetical to Faërie: 'The definition of a fairy-story . . . [depends] upon the nature of *Faërie*: the Perilous Realm itself, and the air that blows in that country. I will not attempt to define that, nor to describe it directly. It cannot be done. Faërie cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible . . . . A "fairy-story" is one which touches on or uses Faërie, whatever its own purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy' (Tolkien, 10). Fairy tales are a way of conveying Faërie and, as such, they are necessarily symbolic. Symbolic apprehension is an act of the imagination, a moment of encounter with Faërie. Fairy-stories 'open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe'(Tolkien, 32).

It is in Tolkien's theory of language and sub-creation that the realm of Faërie is best explained:

> The incarnate mind, the tongue, and the tale are in our world coeval . . . . The mind that thought of *light*, *heavy*, *grey*, *yellow*, *still*, *swift*, also conceived of magic that would make heavy things light and able to fly, turn grey lead into yellow gold, and the still rock into a swift water. If it could do the one, it could do the other; it inevitably did both. When we can take green from grass, blue from heaven, and red from blood, we have already an enchanter's power--upon one plane; and the desire to wield that power in the world external to our minds awakes. It does not follow that we shall use that power well upon any plane. We may put a deadly green upon a man's face and produce a horror; we may make the rare and terrible blue moon to shine; or we may cause woods to spring with silver leaves and rams to wear fleeces of gold, and put hot fire into the belly of the cold worm. But in such 'fantasy', as it is called, new form is made; Faërie begins; Man becomes a sub-creator (Tolkien, 21-22).

For Faërie to begin is an act of the imagination. 'An essential power of Faërie is thus the power of making immediately effective by the will the visions of "fantasy"'(Tolkien, 22). A comparison with Coleridge's description of the work of the poetic genius is instructive here:

> He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power

> first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, countroul (*laxis effertur habenis*) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more that usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement. (9)

Faërie is an act of the imagination, an on-going state of the reconciliation of opposites; and by the will, out of faerie comes form, the fairy tale. 'Man', in Tolkien's words, 'becomes a sub-creator'. The imagination, says Coleridge, is the 'representation in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM' (*BL*, I, 202), and, similarly, Tolkien argues: 'Fantasy remains a human right: we make in our measure and in our derivative mode, because we are made: and not only made, but made in the image and likeness of a Maker' (55). In other words, the making of the tale is a symbolic act because the maker of the tale has been made in the image of the Creator.

Coleridge's symbolic fairy tale world embodies this idea. The Maker creates, to use Tolkien's term, a Primary World. The teller of the fairy tale is a creation of the Maker who, in turn, becomes a sub-creator, creating a Secondary World. (10) The Secondary World of the fairy tale has a 'peculiar mood and power' because it partakes of Faërie and gives Faërie a form. A state of mind in which this power is operative occurs when 'the story-teller proves a successful "sub-creator". He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is "true": it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside' (37). The Mariner, driven by the STORM-BLAST, enters the world of Faërie, and we, vicarious voyagers, go with him. The power of the Secondary World that Coleridge creates is evidenced by our startled irritation at the intrusion of the Wedding-Guest's comments. In effect, he re-imposes momentarily the Primary World, but it is an imposition that the listener rejects.

The strength of the rejection, I think, lies in the fact that the story of the Mariner is a story that is true, that is, it is derived from what both Tolkien and Coleridge call Reality. Coleridge explains in the *Biographia* that in writing his poems for *Lyrical Ballads*, it was his intention that 'my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith' (*BL*, II, 6). The Secondary World of the *Rime* partakes of the power of Faërie, and the reader suspends disbelief to enter for a time the Real world of Spirit. It is the poem's ability to provide for us as readers an encounter with Faërie or Spirit that is at the heart of its continued appeal. We, like the Wedding-Guest, 'cannot choose but hear', nor do we wish to, for the poem allows us to exist for a moment

in the Other Time of Faërie.

NOTES

1. Roger Sale, *Fairy Tales and After: From Snow White to E.B. White* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 23.

2. See Charles Lamb's claim that he was 'totally possessed with it for many days' and his disagreement with Wordsworth's criticism in *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, Ed. E.V. Lucas (London, 1935), 30 January 1801. Selections from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* quoted in this essay will be taken from *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912).

3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Table Talk*, Ed. W.G.T. Shedd. vol 6 of *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1884), 31 May 1830.

4. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956-71), 1:179.

5. J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965).

6. See, for example, Max Luthi, *Once upon a Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales* (New York: Frederick Unger, 1970); and Ione and Peter Opie, *The Classic Fairy Tales* (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974).

7. Adapted by Coleridge from Thomas Burnet, *Archaelogiae philosophical.* Translation from *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Ed. M.H. Abrams, et. al, vol 2, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979).

8. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual*, in *Lay Sermons*, Ed. R.J. White, vol 6 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Ed. Kathleen Coburn, Bollingen Series LXXV (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 30, 70. Hereafter cited as *SM*.

9. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Ed. J. Shawcross, 2 vols (Oxford, 1907), II: 12. Hereafter cited as *BL*.

10. Tolkien's distinction between the Primary and Secondary Worlds is in many ways related, though not precisely analogous to Coleridge's distinction between the Primary and Secondary Imagination.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Fortunate Blue-coat Boy by an Orphanotrophian With an Introduction and additional notes by Reginald Watters. The Christ's Hospital Papers III. 1987. £6. Obtainable from The CountingHouse, Christ's Hospital, Horsham, RH13 7YP.

Here is a treat for all Elians! When we have read 'We had classics of our own', with what curiosity have we wished for a sight of one of them! Now,

thanks to Christ's Hospital and its Curator and Archivist Nicholas Plumley, we have a beautifully produced and appropriately illustrated version of *The Fortunate Blue-coat Boy*. It is edited by Reginald Watters, who was Head of English at the school for eighteen years and latterly Librarian, before taking up his present post at Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan, to which University we owe gratitude for 'a substantial grant towards the cost of publication'. Mr. Watters has been a faithful friend of our Society for many years and members will recall his speech as guest-of-honour at one of our Birthday Luncheons. As we might expect of him, he has provided an excellent introduction in which he wears his undoubted learning lightly while using it to put the story in its context, not only of the school but of English society in the period of writing (c. 1770) and in that in which the book is set, the early eighteenth century, and of relevant literary models. He has also provided useful notes which, to the relief of many readers to-day, include translations of Latin tags, with which the author could assume his schoolboy readers would be familiar. Alas that Mr. Baker's 'core curriculum' is unlikely to restore such cultural riches, either of 'insolent Greece or haughty Rome' or even of our own literary heritage!

The tale itself is a kind of masculine Cinderella story, the hero 'when he has grown into a handsome senior boy', as Mr. Watters puts it, 'is spotted by a rich young widow on a visit to the school', who marries him and 'translates him into the life of a gentleman'. This, in the terms of the genre, is entirely satisfactory to the reader! But the real interest to us to-day lies in the picture of contemporary life both in the school, in which real 'figures known to have existed' there in the 1720s appear, and in the wider world of London. It is interesting, in view of subsequent Wordsworthian attitudes, that despite its being 'aguish' the country - in this case Kent, as later with Dickens - is idealized as opposed to the much more realistic picture of the City, which, unlike Wordsworth but like Lamb, the author knew as his natural habitat. His identity is not known but he signs himself 'Orphanotrophian', which his own Notes - as opposed to the Editor's - tell us means 'One brought up in an hospital, or orphan-house, from the Greek Orphanos, and Trophèe, nourishment or sustenance'. So, like his hero and like Coleridge at a later time, he must have been admitted to the school on the death of his father. Incidentally, his note on Grecians and Under-Grecians states that these are 'the two forms, or classes, who learn Greek', as Leigh Hunt still reports in his *Autobiography*, where theDeputy Grecians were expected to be competent in Homer and Demosthenes (so they surely must have been learning for some time before this), while the Grecians 'were deep in Sophocles and Euripides'. So whence came the curious recent suggestion that Lamb had no Greek?

The school slang is freely and lovingly used and carefully annotated by the author. Of 'Crug' he says, 'This word the learned Grecians of the house would willingly derive from the Greek; but I rather think it no more than a corruption of the English word Crust' and he explains that 'Those who are educated in the house are frequently called by each other after they are out, when they chance to meet, *Brother Crugs*'. Hence the dedication in the Address.

Sly references are made to the physical conditions in the school. When Ben, the hero, buys his first smart suit to replace his uniform, the school Steward, Mr. Henchman, advises him 'as he had been used to thick cloathing' to wear a flannel 'under waistcoat to prevent his taking cold'. (Did we hear that the girls newly admitted to Horsham requested that they should

wear the same coats as the boys, because they were so comfortably warm?) There are several hints at the short commons, later immortalized by Coleridge, who said that 'excepting on Wednesdays, I never had a belly-ful'. On more than one occasion the author pulls up short in describing delectable meals out of consideration for his readers 'lest I might make some of them hungry'. When Mr. Henchman assures his pupil that beatings were given 'purely out of love','Ben said nothing, though he thought he had had his full share of this latter love'. At the Steward offering his help - which he did later give, most kindly - Ben accepted it 'knowing by experience, that Mr. Henchman was a man strictly observant of his promises, as he had received weighty demonstrations thereof'. In the equivocal moral climate of the story as a whole, Ben's relationship with the Steward and the author's love of his old school, warts and all, shine through.

From beginning to end the price of everything and the exact money transactions made, legitimate or shady alike, are recorded without distinction in the most matter-of-fact way. Unscrupulous self -interest is the assumed norm but with some small genuflexion towards what Camus called 'limiting the damage'. The same dead-pan bowing to authority and the way things are, but in the literary sphere, juxtaposes august precedent with deflating reality to the great enhancement of the entertainment. For example, the book opens with the obligation of biographers to provide 'parentage, birth and education of the hero they are about to celebrate'. One is reminded of the beginnings of *Robinson Crusoe* or *Gulliver's Travels*, whose circumstantial detail deceived some readers into thinking their heroes real people. It is usual to provide a long and often illustrious pedigree, implies Orphanotrophian, but unfortunately he cannot trace his hero's ancestry back any further than his grandfather, who was a barber-surgeon. So he assures the reader that 'he was descended from a long race of citizens; though *(Heu! tempus edax rerum)'* nobody remembers who they were. In the early stages of their acquaintance, though still a schoolboy, 'Ben, who was not quite so ignorant or continent, I know not which, as Joseph Andrews, made bold to give the lady's hand a gentle squeeze'; and when she writes him a love-note, she is compared to 'Medea in Ovid', 'Dicere quae puduit, scribere jussit amor'! In just such ludicrous contexts come references to Othello, Aurora and Phoebus, Cerberus and Aeneas's golden bough, and other literary gems. When he runs out of steam at the end of the book, the author inserts a chapter about an innkeeper 'The History of Captain Sack', like the interpolated stories in Fielding, which includes an account of a Yorkshire school foreshadowing Dotheboys Hall. Then, a little later, a character recites a parody of a Horace epistle. But as Reginald Watters points out, these apparently irrelevant excursions do relate to the main theme and are entertaining in their own right.

Underlying the book as a whole, uncomplex though it seems, is an ironic stance which may have unconsciously influenced Lamb in his formative years, as well as providing him with innocent fun. Every Elian should read it - for both reasons.

Mary Wedd

David Bromwich, ed.: *Romantic Critical Essays*

Cambridge English Prose Texts, Cambridge University Press, 1988 Hardback £25: $34.50 Paperback £8.95: $12.95

Romantic Critical Essays is a special kind of anthology. Like other volumes in the Cambridge English Prose Texts series, it presents particularly interesting selections of non-fiction prose, many of which are no longer found in suitable editions. As the editor, David Bromwich, explains, the purpose of the twenty-one essays in this volume is to offer not a general history of Romantic prose but 'to represent a few authors vividly' (p.viii). Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Hunt, Lamb, DeQuincey, Peacock, and Shelley are included. There is no Coleridge, and here we note the special character of this anthology. Unlike the aesthetically recondite works of Coleridge and others, these essays discuss critical issues debated by the general, literate reading public of the early nineteenth century.

Professor Bromwich's term 'vivid' is an excellent characterization and emphasizes the appeal of this volume to post-modern readers, especially to the friends of Charles Lamb. Perennial literary questions are confronted with wit and a personal, journalistic verve. These essays have all the vitality of a sophisticated twentieth-century literary review.

Romantic Critical Essays is a smoothly coherent text. Its general introduction outlines the history of English Romanticism, highlighting each important critic-essayist. Here Coleridge, other major essayists, and other major critical texts not included in this volume are considered. A succinct but rich biographical-critical essay prefaces each essayist in this text with explanatory notes given in the rear. The numerous quotations in the various texts are identified and, when necessary, translated in the footnotes.

Professor Bromwich establishes a strong unity among these essays through their common focus on major concerns of Romantic criticism, especially the relationship of text to reader. He describes the new reading public of the early nineteenth century as 'the reader whom Wordsworth and Hazlitt will occasionally speak of as another self'. These are sensitive readers, 'persons for whom writing can be a sort of ideal property' (p.20). We become a part of that readership. We are caught by the seasoned eloquence of these essays, their perduring power as great texts to mean far more and to interest a far broader readership than they were originally intended to serve. 'Words are nothing but the sum (never realizable) of all uses and the readings they serve' (p.15). Here Professor Bromwich enlarges the thesis argued so well by John R. Nabholtzin *'My Reader My Fellow-Labourer': A Study of English Romantic Prose*. (See Mary Wedd's review, *The Charles Lamb Bulletin*, January 1988). The rhetorical appeal of these essays is dramatically personal. Theory and history are invoked, but Romantic critics work from specific texts and automatically engage us as readers in the discovery and application of critical truths which, like poetry itself, must be proven upon our pulses. We necessarily become active critic-readers ourselves.

The volume begins with Wordsworth, not the famous Preface, but the challenging 'Essay Supplementary'. Here Wordsworth defends the principle that any original artist must create in his reading public the taste by which he as a new artist is to be appreciated. Wordsworth wins his readers by a

rhetoric of compassion. He sympathetically delineates the psychological struggles of his readers to enlarge their sensibilities in order to appreciate a new artist speaking in a new voice.

The selections from Charles Lamb, 'On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, Considered with Reference to their Fitness for Stage Representation', 'On the Acting of Munden', 'On the Artificial Comedy of the last Century', also focus on the alert reader. Wordsworth appeals to the reader's sensibilities; Lamb steels his reader's will and enfranchises him anew with critical authority. Lamb argues the superiority of the reader of drama over the actor in plays. Lamb is a major spokesman in this volume as witnessed in his famous lines, 'The truth is, the Characters of Shakespeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity . . . that . . . we think not so much of the crimes' of Macbeth or Richard or Iago as of their 'ambition . . . aspiring spirit . . . intellectual activity' (p. 65). In the world of *The Tempest*, Lamb says, 'Spirits and fairies cannot be represented, they cannot even be painted, -- they can only be believed' (p.69).

Hazlitt is just as direct. Here Professor Bromwich, author of *Hazlitt, the Mind of a Critic*, 1983, works with particular authority. His nine Hazlitt selections enhance this volume's emphasis on reader autonomy and the dynamic power of language. Included are such favorites as 'On Gusto', 'On the Periodical Essayists', and 'Mr. Coleridge'. Hazlitt's ability to sweep the reader into his critical enterprise is characteristically expressed in this passage from 'On Gusto': 'Whenever we look at the hands of Correggio's women or of Raphael's, we always wish to touch them' (p.97).

The last essays in this volume are ideally balanced against each other, Peacock's "The Four Ages of Poetry" and Shelley's "A Defense of Poetry". We live in the latter days of Peacock's last age and we bristle at his indictment of poetry. Shelley's response has a bracing, contemporary resonance, 'The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when . . . the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the . . . power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unwieldy for that which animates it' (p. 238).

Professor Bromwich has provided an excellent text, thoroughly edited and completed with a selective but annotated bibliography. He has also given us a lively book. He clearly knows current critical theory and skillfully relates the Romantic critics to the most interesting literary questions today. Thus they speak to us as familiar friends exuberantly sharing their critical methods and ideals; thus they enable us to become 'fellow labourers' in the fine art of critical reading. From them we gain a richer vision of the past and a sharper eye for judging the literature of our time.

Richard W. Clancey

John Carroll University

Dorothy Wordsworth & Romanticism. By Susan M. Levin. Rutgers University Press, 1987, 258 pages, cloth. For enquiries as to availability in U.K., Rutgers University Press, 109 Church Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901, U.S.

Dorothy Wordsworth, says Levin (in this study which is one of the Douglass Series on Women's Lives and the Meaning of Gender) 'needs to be seen as . . . a woman passionately concerned with putting words together'. Accordingly Levin proposes to work not with 'Dorothy Wordsworth but Dorothy Wordsworth's writing'.

Dorothy, at first glance, might seem a particularly rewarding subject for feminist critical scrutiny, as proposed by Levin, but interestingly (though not altogether surprisingly) she in fact confounds this investigatory method of 'focusing on the textual strategies she [Dorothy] adopts' and 'the determining factors of her narrative voice'. Levin firmly maintains that the critical questions which Dorothy's 'literary output raises can be generalized to issues involving women's writing and twentieth-century criticism' but, that said, Dorothy's writing bafflingly proves to be 'distinct from institutionalized literary categories. Her texts frequently do not conform to canonical notions of literature, often seeming weirdly idiosyncratic . . . Working in awareness of the great Western myths of masculine power, of authority and fulfillment - helping, in fact, to create one such myth - she presents an alternative to them. It is not what we are accustomed to reading'. Whereat the reader feels tempted to exclaim 'Good on Dorothy!'

It is extremely doubtful, of course, that Dorothy was consciously aware that masculine power was *a myth*; masculine authority was certainly not a myth for women of that era, it was very real. It didn't matter if you knew, in your heart, that William in many respects was a weak vessel, needing to be pampered and waited on and never interrupted or argued with, simply if but to keep him in a tolerable humour; the fact remained that he was the Master, as 'we females' of the household (albeit perhaps playfully) called him. William was the Bard. He was engaged upon a Great Work - he never completed it, but nonetheless it was looming there, like cloud over Helvellyn. Dorothy would never write a Great Work that would be 'of benefit to mankind'. Even though, for much of the time, she managed and ran the household, she could never be head of it. She never saw herself as helping to create a myth; nor did she, she played an essential part in helping William to attain full stature as a tremendous poet - it was, and is, no myth that he became one of the greatest poets in the English language. The myth which Dorothy endeavoured to create was that William, his wife and children could not exist without her.

It is significant of Dorothy Wordsworth's writing, suggests Levin, that though she displayed in her writings a certain 'rage' at the limitations imposed on the life of the woman artist, she also recognised the glory of that life. 'Rage' certainly came into Dorothy's life in her later years, but I would suggest her writing expresses resentment of, and impatience at the restrictions placed upon her by her domestic chores and responsibilities, rather than 'rage'. Yet Dorothy seems to have voluntarily thrust herself into this life that was a welter of household management, cooking, and, as Sara *fille* puts it (looking back on childhood stays at Allan Bank) taking 'a great part with the children'. It was contemplated, we know, that Dorothy might live on at Dove Cottage alone when William and Mary moved with their young family to Allan Bank; one would suppose that this would have suited Dorothy admirably: the opportunity to live alone and write, free of time-consuming domestic involvement! But this idea was dropped; she moved to Allan Bank, and once there had to do *everything*, because William was never expected to do anything, and dear Mary's state of health prevented

her from doing anything, and the same with Sara Hutchinson - and so Dorothy worked herself to the bone, determined that all others were, in the domestic field, either 'sad fiddle-faddlers' who couldn't cope, or delicate plants unable to stand up to the strain of full exposure to smuts, smoke, workmen, servants, the cow, mice, children, visitors, Coleridge, the Coleridge boys . . . never any end to it. No time to write. No time to sit. Give me my pail of soap-suds. Oh the glory of being an overworked, overtaxed, overneeded female! Why do women, too often, make slaves of themselves?

Most Wordsworthians have loved, still love, to think of Dorothy as completely fulfilled in her role of self-neglectful service: one of those 'sweet women' (to paraphrase Colette Clark) who find happiness in dedicating their lives to others. Dorothy's final years raise many questions: one being to what extent did her dreadful illness of strange, intermittent bouts of madness result from a near lifetime of (concealed) seething frustration? Certainly she made the last decade and a half of William and Mary's homelife nigh intolerable; they suffered like saints and showed Dorothy every love and kindness, but Mary at least was puzzled by the way in which Dorothy could slip in and out of madness. Frank and appalling accounts of Dorothy's condition and behaviour were sent by Mary to close friends, including Mrs. Coleridge, who passed on some of the details to her friend Miss Trevenen, whom she knew cared about Dorothy. As most of these letters were destroyed (after De Quincey, Mrs. Coleridge trusted nobody) we shall never know the full extent of Mary Wordsworth's disclosures to Mrs. Coleridge and her daughter Sara (now regarded by the Wordsworths as virtual members of the family circle). Dora stayed with them frequently in London; how much did she confide to them of 'poor Aunty's' strange case? The younger Sara, always clear-visioned, seems to have suspected Dorothy of a certain wilful self-indulgence in disruptive paddywhacks, like a naughty child. Little is actually put into words, but the indication is there. Levin herself is interesting on this aspect of Dorothy's illness. The female raging at herself, as much as at others?

This said, Dorothy's final years were disaster and tragedy for her, as well as those close to her, particularly so as the years preceding her collapse into demented invalidism had been triumphant ones for her; travelling, writing, meeting people, being 'the very genius of Popularity' as Maria Jane Jewsbury wrote of Dorothy to Dora.

We must be indebted to Levin for this book, which scrupulously attempts to follow its avowed intention of approaching Dorothy through her writings and not by direct inspection of herself and the events of her life; the method followed usually by biographers. Indeed Levin has always firmly rejected any suggestion that she might be working on a biography of Dorothy Wordsworth. And in a way this book is distinctly not biography, but yet at the same time it most triumphantly becomes one of the frankest, most penetrative and sensitive portrayals of Dorothy yet published. Utterly spurning the notion that an author may be severed from her writing, that writing may be considered as distinct from its author, and vice versa, Dorothy springs out of Levin's pages with all the energy with which, in youth, she bounded after waterfalls. Here she is before us, with her wonderful gifts, her hang-ups, her frustrations, and finally her devastating prostration and dementia.

Issues which straight biographers have ignored, overlooked, or perhaps sedulously avoided are thoughtfully and sympathetically inspected. The field of her work, published and unpublished, is meticulously covered. The approach is strictly scholarly. Above all Wordsworthians should be indebted to Levin for the appendix containing Dorothy's collected poems, and the chapter dealing with these poems. These, with one or two exceptions, few readers, if any, will have met before. To what extent was Dorothy frustrated and inhibited as a poet, to what degree was her power as a poet stunted, by the proximity of her brother? It is diffiuclt to judge from the poems which she has left us; their imagery and handling is beautiful, but they are all (or so it seems to me) pastiches of, or at their best variations upon, William's poems. His voice echoes throughout them. Without William would this prose-writer of true genius have attempted to write poetry at all? I wonder. I think she would not have considered it necessary to attempt poetry. Her life experience with William had convinced her that poetry is a greater form of expression than prose. It is a common fallacy which reading of the prose of Dorothy Wordsworth and De Quincey alone should expose. It was almost impossible that Dorothy should have lived with William Wordsworth without coming to believe that Poetry was the word of God.

Molly Lefebure

OBITUARY

DONALD POTTER, who died earlier this year, will be sadly missed by his friends in the Society. He joined the Society in 1962 and we shall always be grateful for his vigilance in defending Enfield's literary heritage in Gentleman's Row and Chaseside with their association with Charles Lamb. Those who attended the wreath-laying at All Saint's Church, Edmonton on 29th December 1984 (to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Lamb's death) will long remember his reading of a selection of Lamb's writings on Enfield and Edmonton. Other members (and former pupils of Christ's Hospital) enjoyed his contribution to the after-lunch speeches at a Birthday Celebration. I especially recall arriving at his home in Gentleman's Row after a long day exploring Lamb's Hertfordshire with Jim and Carolyn Misenheimer to relax over tea and conversation. It was all so beguiling that night fell and we never actually had time to visit the Lambs' grave a short distance away! We owe it to Donald's memory to play our part in preserving our literary heritage wherever it is threatened.

Madeline Huxstep

FIFTY YEARS AGO (continued)

CLS Bulletin No. 33 (Fourth Year) With Two Supplements September 1938

(E.V. Lucas, who died on 26 June 1938, was *not* a member of the Charles Lamb Society. A full obituary appeared in the 'Times' for 27th June 1938. Lucas had for some years paid for the upkeep of Charles Lamb's grave at Edmonton and) he desired that on his death the opportunity of taking over this matter should be given first to his friend Herman Finck ..... and secondly to Charles W. Berry. ... Should neither of them undertake the task he directed his executor to make necessary arrangements to keep the grave in order at a cost of not more than 30s. per annum.

(From a member in South Africa who had written to the Hon. Treasurer:) Will you give my kind remembrances to Mr. Rich, and tell him that though I am such a poor correspondent, he need not be.

CLS Bulletin No. 34 (Fourth Year) With Three Supplements October 1938

Members should receive with this issue... "History of the Charles Lamb Society". A pamphlet of 4 pages intended primarily for issue to enquirers.

SOCIETY NOTES AND NEWS FROM MEMBERS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7 May 1988

The Annual Report and Accounts were passed, the Chairman, Dr. Wilson, congratulating the Hon. Secretary on the interesting lecture programme and expressing particular thanks to the retiring Treasurer, Mr. Wallace, and to the *Bulletin* Editor, Mrs. Wedd. The new Treasurer, Mr. Powell, thanked the Hon. Auditor, Miss Hartley, who was asked to continue for 1988.

The Membership Secretary, Mrs. Moore, reported that numbers had remained the same over the year, losses and gains cancelling each other out. It was agreed that Mrs. Wedd would work over a transitional period with Mr. Bill Ruddick, who would then take over as Editor of the *Bulletin*. They would act as Joint Editors from January 1989.

Mr. Savage reported on the progress of cataloguing and repairing books in the Society's Library and further discussion would follow at the next Council Meeting.

The meeting enthusiastically endorsed the invitation to Professor James B. Misenheimer, Jnr. to become a Vice-President of the Society. Officers and Council were then re-elected.

Progress towards gaining charitable status for the Society was discussed and 14 January 1989 was reserved as a date for a Special General Meeting to pass the necessary resolutions.

The Hon. General Secretary, Mrs.Huxstep, reported on the 1988/9 Programme and on the Alliance of Literary Societies Seminar at Birmingham, which was attended by four C.L.S. representatives, and detailed in the July Bulletin.

SUMMER OUTING

Several members of the Charles Lamb Society spent a very enjoyable Sunday afternoon, June 26 1988, at the Tradescant Trust Museum of Garden History, St. Mary's at Lambeth. St. Mary's has been the Parish Church of Lambeth for 900 years and this is the fifth on the site. This Church was deconsecrated in 1972 and closed, but in 1979 the Tradescant Trust was formed to establish a Museum of Garden History to save it from demolition.

The two John Tradescants, father and son, gardeners successively to the

first Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Buckingham and Charles I, brought back from their travels in Europe and America many of the flowers we take for granted in our gardens to-day. The two Johns collected all things strange and rare which ultimately formed the basis of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, where much of it may still be seen in the Founders Room. Part of the Churchyard has been designed as a replica of a 17th Century garden containing plants grown by the Tradescants and other plants of the period. The Museum is of immense historical and educational interest and anyone not able to be with us on that Sunday should make it a 'Must' in their diaries. The music, peace and tranquility in the Church and the roses and herbs on a damp and humid afternoon threw up a heavenly aroma.

I almost forgot to mention the excellent cup of tea - and our little group of Elians chatting in this lovely atmosphere is something I shall not easily forget.

Nora L. Wickham

SOUTHEY'S 'APOSTASY'

Professor Michael Bauman, who is Associate Professor of Theology and Culture at Hillsdale College, Michigan, has sent us a copy of his article on 'Southey's "Apostasy": Its Origin and Early Content'. Our readers who have a particular interest in Southey will find this in *The Evangelical Journal* 6 (1988) 13-26. 'Because the article was published in a journal that lies outside their usual track', Professor Bauman says, our members might not be aware of it.

FROM MR. CLAUDE A. PRANCE

Mr. Prance tells us that his book *E.V. Lucas and His Books* is due out from Locust Hill Press this autumn and we are sure members will look forward eagerly to it. We hope to review it as soon as copies are available.

GODDARDS, WIDFORD

Mr. Hill-Smith wrote to us in July that he has decided to sell the house and kindly sent us the brochure. The Agent's particulars state: 'The renowned essayist Charles Lamb (1775 - 1834) was a regular visitor to the house and the village of Widford, as the guest of Jane and Elizabeth Norris, who were at the time running Goddards as a "young gentlewomen's Academy". At the Academy young ladies were boarded and instructed in English, History and Geography, Writing, Arithmetic and Needlework for the sum of £30 per year. Each lady was requested to bring a silver table spoon and six towels.'

Elians will be aware of Lamb's involvement with the Norris family, especially after Randal Norris' death '.. the last to call me Charley'.

Older members will recall a memorable day out in Lamb's Hertfordshire including a visit to Goddards and gardens ablaze with columbine.

We are sorry that Goddards will be passing into other hands - we hope equally interested in preserving this unspoilt village that Lamb knew so well. Would that we could be the fortunate owners but the asking price of £425,000 is alas! beyond our means.

M.R.H.

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due again on 1 January 1989. These remain unchanged as follows.

U.K. Members	Singles	£8
	Doubles	£12
	Institutions	£12
Overseas	Individuals	$14
	Institutions	$21

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