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'Let us stimulate the Elian Spirit of friendliness and humour.'

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BABY LANGUAGE AND REVOLUTION: THE EARLY POETRY OF CHARLES LLOYD AND CHARLES LAMB

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In May 1798 Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb published a joint volume of their poems entitled *Blank Verse*. The reviewer in *The British Critic* patronised it as 'indicative of talents progressively improving' but concluded rather sternly: 'we must, nevertheless, advise them to read more and publish less'[1]. *The Monthly Magazine* was not even patronising: 'the childish sorrows of Mr CHARLES LLOYD and Mr CHARLES LAMB, in their volume of 'Blank Verse' are truly ludicrous'[2]. But it was the *Anti-Jacobin Review* which found something dangerous in such childishness and in doing so helped me to a title for this lecture. Reviewing Lloyd's novel *Edmund Oliver* in August that year it declared:

> This Mr. Charles Lloyd we conceive to be one of the twin-bards who unite their impotent efforts to propagate their principles, which are alike marked by folly and by wickedness, in a kind of baby language which they are pleased to term *blank-verse*[3].

How could a volume of 'baby language' be considered part of a Jacobin plot? – for that is how the book was seen by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. On 1 August the magazine featured Gillray's cartoon *New Morality*, that fine example of graphic paranoia, and amongst the radical rabble worshipping the High Priest of French Atheism (figures who include Paine, Godwin, Holcroft, Thelwall, Fox and those ringleaders of poetic disaffection Coleridge and Southey) are a toad and a frog squatting side by side in front of their little volume of *Blank Verse*.

Whether the response was wry amusement, as with Godwin's words at his first meeting with Lamb: 'Pray Mr. Lamb, are you toad or frog?'[4] or the genuine puzzlement of Southey's remark 'I know not what poor Lamb has done to be croaking there,'[5] it is clear that the two young poets were seen as threatening to the Establishment, a fact confirmed in the following month's issue with *The Anarchists: An Ode* which linked Lamb and Lloyd with Coleridge and Southey as the offspring of Anarchy:

> See! faithful to their mighty dam,
> C---DGE, S-TH-Y, L--D, and L--BE,
> In splay-foot madrigals of love,
> Soft moaning like the widow'd dove,
> Pour, side by side, their sympathetic notes;
> Of equal rights, and civic feasts,
> And tyrant Kings, and knavish priests,
> Swift through the land the tuneful mischief floats.[6]

In what way could moaning 'madrigals of love' be thought dangerous? And how could a volume of largely personal elegiac and descriptive verse be 'tuneful mischief'? Is it really little more than paranoia on the *Anti-Jacobin's* part?

It is possible, as Burton Pollin[7] has done, to look for an *explicit* answer in the volume itself, in the fact that Lloyd dedicated his section of the book to Southey (with all the guilt-by-association that implies) and in the book's opening poem ('To ******, written in Worcestershire, July 1797') in which Lloyd celebrates the aborted Pantisocracy scheme and adds a provocative footnote explaining that he and Lamb are 'both believers in the doctrine of philosophical necessity,'[8] a Priestleian phrase which would set the red light flashing in the *Anti-Jacobin*'s editorial office: 'are they *one of us*?' I agree that any half-favourable allusions to Southey, Priestley or Mary Wollstonecraft[9] would be more than enough to upset the *Anti-Jacobin*, and yet overt declarations are quite untypical of the volume as a whole, and especially of Lamb's contributions. The poems are personal, delicate and sad; they probe human relationships, discover refuges from disillusionment and hurt feelings, and invoke intellectual and emotional sanctuaries.

In this lecture I want to approach the poetic radicalism of the 1790s less through its explicit declarations and allusions than through the nature of the poetic voice itself and the *implicit* radicalism that could be seen in it. I therefore intend to look beyond overt statement at the issue of style in the poetry of Lloyd and Lamb, at the power they invest in certain repeated images, the tone and manner of the voices that are heard; and in exploring their poetic language I want to suggest that it was the nature of their sensibility and the images they found to express it that made them dangerous voices. In so doing I shall limit myself to the poems Lloyd and Lamb wrote up to the summer of 1798 when the *Anti-Jacobin Review* took such interest in them.

Other scholars have recently done important work in investigating the political, biographical, philosophical and religious contexts for the literature of the 1790s. Nicholas

Roe's *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (1988) has opened up so much interesting material for the two great poets of this decade; Jonathan Wordsworth, in his 1986 Ernest Crowsley Lecture, and Nicholas Roe again, have charted Lamb's religious ideas; and Winifred Courtney has offered guidance through the precarious paths of friendship trodden by Lamb during this period.[10] My more specifically textual focus will I hope supplement their discussions and perhaps suggest ways in which radical and conservative possibilities can be in play within the same text.

In examining the nature of Lloyd and Lamb's early poetic radicalism I found myself becoming increasingly puzzled by the extent to which Lloyd's early poetry has been overshadowed by the work of his better-known friends.[11] He strikes me as having produced some of the most interesting poetry of the decade. Lamb's verse gains in depth to the extent that it relates to his, and the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge finds fresh nuances when read in the context of Lloyd's development as a poet. A related aim of this lecture is therefore to assert the significance of Lloyd's poetic voice.

Last, but not least, I am conscious that there is a wider issue involved here and it proves to be an ironic one. I shall go on to argue that the language the *Anti-Jacobin* saw as dangerous in fact contains within itself the germ of conservatism, nostalgia and retreat. Much has been said about the 'apostasy' of those who were radical poets in the early 90s but conservative voices in different ways and degrees ten years later. In this lecture I feel I am looking at two sides of a single poetic coin, to the extent that I think we need a concept that is less clear-cut and dramatic than 'apostasy' (with its implied recantation of principle) so as to convey some sense of how a conservative position might grow from the same root-system that nourished the earlier radicalism. I choose my image with care because I find the paradox inherent in the *organic* nature of a certain kind of radical sensibility. To speak of 'apostasy' in my view does not take into account the almost uncanny way in which a poetry of organic radicalism mirrors a poetry of organic conservatism. This becomes especially clear in the case of Lloyd and Lamb.

In his brilliantly polemical essay 'Disenchantment or Default? A Lay Sermon'[12] E.P. Thompson gives Charles Lloyd short shrift as an 'apostate' to the radical cause whose prose *Letter to the Anti-Jacobin Reviewers* and poem *Lines Suggested by the Fast*, both of 1799, show him 'with true apostate gusto...denounc[ing] democratic sympathies scarcely a year old.' Thompson overlooks the fact that Lloyd's 'democratic sympathies' had been made clear *four* years earlier in his earliest book, *Poems on Various Subjects*. This rare volume (published at Carlisle in 1795) has not had the attention it deserves, and so I want to make it the starting-point for charting Lloyd's development from this youthful work, through his *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer* (Bristol, 1796) to the 1798 *Blank Verse* volume shared with Lamb, and I want to convey a sense of the way his radical voice grows out of the poetic context. The key issue here is the organic nature of his sensibility, and this is where the notion of 'baby language' is significant. - Baby language: the first hesitant utterances of a consciousness that will, under the right tutelage, grow strong and powerful as one true to its origins owing no debt to the structure of society with its languages of law, class, property. Systems of power might be challenged by the rapt attentiveness of a child, particularly one that has been translated to a removed dwelling by a figure who nurtures it and guides its prattlings.

Coleridge takes this role for his own baby at the magical close of 'The Nightingale', celebrating his son's natural responsiveness:

My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen!
(91-6)

The baby is already the teacher.

But we need to look further back for the poetic origins of such baby language, the context out of which Lloyd's earliest volume grows – to the poetry of sensibility represented by Thomas Gray and the Warton brothers[13] in the 1740s. The Wartons especially, writing in their late teens, felt they were discovering a new poetic language in opposition to the 'School of Pope', and they repeatedly signal this idea by discovering and celebrating remote or hidden places where fresh sounds can be heard: caves, sheltered nooks or bowers, hidden springs, moss-covered chantries, overgrown abbey-ruins – sacred places that are filled with whispers, echoes or gentle music. It is to such places that babies are taken by their foster-parents, imaging the way these poets feel the need to find a new voice by articulating feelings imbued with nature.

I give just two examples; my first is from Thomas Warton's *The Pleasures of Melancholy* (1747) in which the baby undergoing a poetic fostering is the figure of 'Contemplation'

whom, as tradition tells,
Once in his evening walk a Druid found,
Far in a hollow glade of Mona's woods;
And piteous bore with hospitable hand
To the close shelter of his oaken bow'r.
There soon the sage admiring mark'd the dawn
Of solemn musing in your pensive thought;
For when a smiling babe, you lov'd to lie
Oft deeply list'ning to the rapid roar
Of wood-hung Meinai, stream of Druids old.[14]

Here the rapt baby catches the poetic sounds, responsive and smiling as it learns the language of nature.

Thomas Warton's 'Contemplation' is a close relative of the foster-child in his brother Joseph's poem *The Enthusiast; or the Lover of Nature* (1744), the infant Shakespeare

Whom on the winding Avon's willow'd banks
Fair Fancy found, and bore the smiling babe
To a close cavern: (still the shepherds shew
The sacred place, whence with religious awe
They hear, returning from the field at eve,
Strange whisp'rings of sweet music through the air)
Here, as with honey gather'd from the rock,
She fed the little prattler, and with songs
Oft sooth'd his wond'ring ears, with deep delight
On her soft lap he sat, and caught the sounds.[15]

To get some sense of how the *Anti-Jacobin* might react to such an image we have only to turn to the issue of 9 July 1798, which featured a poem attacking the radical movement and all its allies. Significant among them is the gentle, shrinking figure of 'Sensibility':

> Sweet SENSIBILITY, that dwells enshrin'd
> In the fine foldings of the feeling mind -
> ...Sweet Child of sickly fancy - Her of yore
> From her lov'd *France* ROUSSEAU to exile bore;
> And while midst lakes and mountains wild he ran
> Full of himself, and shunn'd the haunts of Man,
> Taught her o'er each lone vale and Alpine steep
> To lisp the stories of his wrongs[16]

The Wartonian myth of baby language has been re-written for 1798. The baby has got into the wrong hands. It has been kidnapped and fed *French* ideas. Poor Sensibility is delicate and ostensibly harmless ('the warm sigh / Dwells on her lips - the tear-drop gems her eye') but she is a democrat goddess. Her baby language is a lisp of injustice and wrong, and her foster-parent is Rousseau.

That Lloyd and Lamb were in the poet's mind is evident from the poem's climax two hundred lines later:

> C--GE and S-TH-Y, L--D, and L--BE and Co.
> Tune all your mystic harps to praise LEPAUX!

the lines Gillray would memorably illustrate in *New Morality* in the succeeding issue.

Turning to the opening 'Dedicatory Sonnet: *Ad Amicos*' in Lloyd's 1795 volume, we can see that it invokes the fostering power of his small band of friends. In an image of the foster-parent awakening an inner sensibility, his friends gently cultivate his secret powers:

> How would the soul unsatisfied, and cold,
> Pine all unconscious of its secret powers,
> Those powers did fostering Friendship ne'er unfold,
> Nor ward with fond attempt each storm that lowers.
> To You then, of the firm, tho' little band
> Of those I love! - who sweetly have endear'd
> Some moments far too fleeting, and have fann'd
> The trembling flame of virtue, who have rear'd
> That *secret worth* that heeds nor blame nor praise -
> To You I consecrate these random lays.[17]

Lloyd is consciously placing his friends in the fostering role, and by this precarious organic process an *inner* value, rather than one imposed by the world outside, is nurtured into poetic expression.

Lloyd's dedicatory lines declare from the outset the authenticity of a voice that expresses this germination, and in his 'Ode to Simplicity' it is given the language with which to express itself. The setting is of course a removed dwelling-place away from the claims of the world:

Methinks thou lov'st to dwell
In some sequester'd cell
Where pure domestic bliss for ever smiles;
Thou bid'st sensation shine
In tears of joy divine,
And inborn virtue every hour beguiles...

Thou prompt'st the trembling tongue
Where feeling oft has hung,
Whence accents slow to *thee* alone confin'd;
Thou giv'st the tell-tale face
A free and forceful grace,
And wak'st the untaught intercourse of mind.

Thou lov'st the infant's smile
Unknown to lurking guile,
Its inoffensive joys, and gambols gay;
Thou lov'st the brow of youth
Irradiate with truth,
And giv'st life's early path one cloudless day.[18]

'Inborn virtue' is nothing unless it can be given utterance, and here we glimpse the key role of Simplicity in the poetry of both Lloyd and Lamb. The tongue trembles as true feeling is voiced for the first time, but though it begins slow and hesitant, Simplicity becomes the warrant for a more effective and confident communication, a 'free and forceful grace'. The smiling baby grows into the adolescent whose brow is 'irradiate with truth' working from within. It was certainly not paranoia to see the babe's dwelling as a radical 'cell' of disaffection fostering 'inborn virtue' through a language of secret communication, as nurturing something that owed no allegiance to outward forms and structures and could become a growing force for change.

Indeed it is out of this imaginative landscape that come the truly radical voices of Lloyd's volume – the speakers of the songs. These are the strong and direct utterances 'irradiate with truth' made possible by Lloyd's Simplicity.

The song 'Ha! why is that tear in thine eye Gentle Maid?' is particularly interesting in being modelled on the popular contemporary ballad 'Gaffer Gray!' by Thomas Holcroft. Holcroft, who had been arraigned for treason but eventually acquitted, published his defence against the charge in 1795, the year of Lloyd's volume, and so Lloyd's footnote to this poem pointing out its indebtedness was a direct radical statement in itself. Holcroft's song was set to music by 'Mr Pitman' and it would later be praised by Hazlitt.[19] Lloyd has designed his own ballad to be sung to the same tune and it even shares the refrain of 'Well-a-day!' Where Holcroft's Gaffer finds no help from the priest, squire or lawyer':

The lawyer lives under the hill,
Gaffer Gray;
Warmly fenc'd both in back and in front.
'He will fasten his locks,
And Will threaten the stocks,
Should he ever more find me in want
Well-a-day!'

Lloyd's 'gentle maid' is offered a parallel series of figures who all fail her:

To the Doctor then hastily go
Gentle maid!
And tell him that Harry is worse.--
'The Doctor won't cure
'When a patient is poor,
'For he heeds not the *Man* but his *purse*.'
Well-a-day![20]

One of the most interesting of Lloyd's 1795 songs is uncompromising in its condemnation of 'titled oppressors', those who are at war with Nature:

I own that I'm poor and devoted to shame,
The outcast and scorn of the earth,
For my kindred no titled oppressors I claim
Whose vices are charter'd by birth.
Yet while with the feelings of Nature at war
They bend to proud Custom the knee,
Tho' I'm mean and unnotic'd, I'm happier by far -
As the gales of the mountain I'm free.

I heedlessly rove o'er the heath-cover'd hill
And the mild blowing breezes inhale,
I listlessly stray near the devious rill
As it winds to the far distant vale.
As long as wild Nature can give me delight
I reck not the Lordling's decree,
The joy that *She* wakens I claim as my right
While as gales of the mountain I'm free....[21]

These gales are the Rights of Nature (the title of John Thelwall's radical pamphlet of 1796). They are also the direct, immediate versions of the mountain winds evoked by Wordsworth at the close of *Tintern Abbey* - 'let the misty mountain winds be free / To blow against thee.' Like much of Wordsworth's poem, echoes of Revolution make themselves heard in the Wye Valley in quieter and more personal tones.

In the song 'Rosamund Gray' (from which Lamb must have taken the title of his novel) Lloyd sets the trappings of the social system against the processes of nature:

A woman when blest with the trappings of wealth,
Is chang'd to an *Angel* at once,
Omnipotent affluence may bargain for health,
'Twill give sense to the Blockhead or Dunce.
Here is *One* who's without it, is sunk to a slave,
Tho' Infirmity's impotent prey,
And *Nature's simplicity* sinks to the grave,
Unnotic'd in Rosamund Gray.[22]

Sensibility leading to indignation is Lloyd's chief weapon in this castigation of social power-structures: Rosamund sinks to death unnoticed, dropping 'the big tear of dejection alone' while 'simple Misfortune' sighs over her grave. The language of sensibility here is explicitly a radical one, using sentimental human tragedy as a weapon against the state.

Such a scenario was always inherent in the sentimental novel, which pitted its hero (Harley or Primrose) against the cruel 'World', but it is in a simple ballad like *Rosamund Gray* that we can see Sensibility coming into its own as an instrument of disaffection. To teach the unlettered its language of song was like allowing a baby to be fostered by Rousseau.

In Lloyd's 1795 volume we have seen voices of 'Nature's simplicity' growing out of a landscape of sensibility and it has I hope become clear that the *Anti-Jacobin* had recognised how such simple sentiments, fostered by disaffected spirits, could constitute a challenge to the *status quo*.

But there is another side to this poetic language, and one that I think has far-reaching implications not merely for the development of Charles Lloyd but for any radicalism that sees revolution in terms of fostering an inner truth and virtue: the special removed dwelling-place that might nurture those infant voices could easily become a place set apart as a refuge from struggle. E.P. Thompson has spoken of the democrats in 1797 'being driven into small and personal survival groups'[23] and indeed the imagery that offered a remote cell as the location where a child of nature learned the language of freedom could offer that same dwelling, almost in terms of an emotional timeshare, as a place of refuge where virtue nurtured its own offspring and left the world raging at a distance.

These possibilities for what I would call a 'sentimental *recoil*' (I choose that word rather than apostasy)[24] are glimpsed in one of the most interesting poems in Lloyd's 1795 volume, 'Sonnet IV. *Written at Church-Hop, Isle of Portland*':

> On the grey rock with tumbling fragments rude,
> The conscious castle, proud in ruin, frowns,
> While far beneath as rolls the welt'ring flood,
> Each feebler sound its deep-ton'd murmur drowns.
> From this steep crag, where Terrour leagu'd with Power
> Invasion's troubled tempest would defy,
> Dimly is seen the distant cliff to tower,
> Or the faint ocean mingling with the sky.
> Amid the tangles of the briared dell,
> A high arch'd abbey's shrub-twin'd fragments show,
> Where many a sinking stone forgets to tell
> To Fame's deaf ear, the dust that lies below.
> Rude scene! 'till thou'rt no more, shall Wildness claim
> "A local habitation, and a name."[25]

There are two competing landscapes here. One is the old entrenched structure of the castle, beginning to fragment but outfacing the enemy that threatens invasion from across the water - an embattled edifice that is not English Liberty confronting French Terror but itself represents 'Terrour leagu'd with Power' challenged by a relentless natural force. However, in line 9 the poem shifts to an alternative ancient, inland location, a concealed holy spot that will be a dwelling-place long after the rude fragments of the castle are no more. The final line quoting Theseus' speech on the power of imagination may hint at how that hidden scene can promise regeneration, but Lloyd's elegiac echo of Thomas Gray's place of 'dumb Forgetfulness' makes it a double-edged idea.

Anticipating as it does the opening eight lines of *Tintern Abbey*, Lloyd's sonnet gestures towards Wordsworthian interconnectedness ('the faint ocean mingling with the sky' is echoed in Wordsworth's 'connect / The landscape with the quiet of the sky') but his juxtaposition of cliffs and abbey sets them as alternatives, as defiant engagement *versus* virtuous retreat. Wordsworth allows the landscape itself (projected at the end onto Dorothy's mind) to be the sacred dwelling-place of the poem and so does not need any symbolic abbey-ruins. Nevertheless, Lloyd's sonnet of two landscapes offers an intriguing gloss on Wordsworth's poem and suggests that the possibilities of radical regeneration from such a forgotten dwelling-place are at best problematic.

I have already spoken of radical and conservative implications coexisting in one organic language of fostering/nurturing/growing, and so it should come as less of a shock to read at this point another poem in Lloyd's 1795 volume which invokes a dwelling-place:

Address to a Cottage.

Hail, sacred scene of simple joy!
The little rustic cottage hail!
Such as I oft have chanc'd to spy
In far off solitary vale.

I know thee by thy whiten'd wall,
Thy lowly roof of warmest thatch,
Thy shadowy arm, thy casement small,
Thy humble door and simple latch...

Hail rustic cot! thy nameless roof
Each social virtue oft has known,
"Of Faith and Love the matchless proof",
Thy little tenement has shewn.

A happy Husband's calm retreat -
For fate has given a partner dear;
A happy Father's tranquil seat -
For beauteous babes are smiling there...[26]

The cottage is still a remote place of virtue but is no longer a cell where a baby learns a new language. Instead the focus shifts in the final stanza to the father-husband who in this warm and maternal place recaptures his own infancy. In this way an image alive with possibility recoils into one of reassurance. A cell of new growth folds round into a parental 'calm retreat', into possession and containment. 'Social virtue' shrinks to a contented affirmation of family roles disengaged from the wider world. In my earlier phrase it 'nurtures its own offspring'.

I think Coleridge perceived this when he wrote to Wordsworth in the summer of 1799 about those who 'in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*' (a comment echoed in Wordsworth's 1805 *Prelude:* 'selfishness, disguised in gentle names / Of peace and quiet and domestic love').[27]

It was domestic attachment of a distinct kind that gave rise to Lloyd's second volume of verse published the following year. *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer* (Bristol, 1796)

commemorates the death of his grandmother but at a deeper level it is a longing for lost infancy. The poems swing from the agonized immediacy of her death-bed where the separation of death momentarily hints at a separation of birth ('I heard her sigh / "'Tis too, too much!" 'Twas Love's last agony! / I tore me from Her!') to the enactment of that one day in the week when as a schoolboy he escaped to her home and 'maternal friendship's sheltering arms'.[28] In the striking 'Lines Written on a FRIDAY' his nostalgia for the weekly escape to her dwelling is projected in terms of a baby attempting the first hesitant lispings of human language:

> ...the hour was come,
> The hour of Joy! Faint-heard the rumbling wheels
> Proclaim the kind conveyance sent by her,
> The watchful Friend, to bear the feeble ones:
> Perchance some babe that still in helplessness
> Clings to its Mother's breast, or one that left
> But now its Nurses lap, another yet
> That scarcely lisps its benefactress' name,
> Yet calls itself in pride of infancy,
> Woman or Man! Ah, enviable state![29]

It is not so much the final exclamation as his use of the word *state* (rather than, say, *moment*) which closes off possibilities for the baby's lisping. Revolutionary potential is raised (the 'feeble ones' are waiting for the hour of their release) only to be defused by the speaker's personal longing for the *state* of infancy. The pattern is repeated a few lines later:

> ...athwart the lawn we rush'd,
> Mounted the steps, burst swiftly thro' each door
> In vain our course impeding, and at last
> Threw our fond arms around the much-lov'd form
> That smil'd our welcome.

Burke's famous description of the mob bursting into the Queen's bedchamber (that defining moment of revolutionary terror) is here reclaimed for innocence and love. It is symptomatic that within this sanctuary, as if to symbolise the organic nature of his own growing identity, Lloyd made himself a secret garden and transplanted to that spot each week a flower ('he oft would gaze / With big-swoln heart, exulting at the thought / That he might call the spot belov'd *his own*!'). The special place is also a spot of time set apart from the everyday and deserving of sanctification - "Twere not misnam'd if call'd a little Sabbath!", he concludes.

The concept of the 'sabbath' was an important one for Lloyd, not just as a temporal idea but as a space located at the centre of his personality ('the long sabbath of my centred soul'[30] as he later called it). When Samuel Taylor Coleridge entered Lloyd's life in 1796 he did so as the embodiment of this centre, as someone who could satisfy deep-rooted needs in Lloyd's personality:

> My *Coleridge*! take the wanderer to thy breast,
> The youth who loves thee, and who faint would rest
> (Oft rack'd by hopes that frensy and expire)
> In the long sabbath of subdued desire![31]

For an annual payment of £80 Coleridge would allow Lloyd to live with him and would be his teacher and mentor, and it is clear that at the beginning Coleridge appreciated the role that was required of him:

> Charles Lloyd wins upon me hourly --his heart is uncommonly pure, his affections delicate, & his benevolence enlivened, but not sicklied, by sensibility. --He is assuredly a man of great Genius; but it must be in tete-a-tete with one whom he loves & esteems, that his colloquial powers open.[32]

The organic opening out of Lloyd's powers in response to a 'fostering Friendship' is one that we saw celebrated in the dedicatory sonnet to his 1795 volume, and Coleridge offered Lloyd that intimate emotional centre from which his powers could grow. The establishing of such personal emotional ties as the first link in the chain of benevolence is, as Nicola Trott has convincingly shown,[33] a feature of the anti-Godwin arguments being developed at this time by Coleridge and his circle. She has shown how Godwin's theoretical disinterested benevolism could be countered by an emphasis on the immediate domestic affections. For my own purposes I would extend this to what I see as their faith in the organic metaphor of germination and growth, and particularly that of the development of the infant into maturity. One passage from Coleridge's 1795 *Lectures* (quoted by Trott, p.217) is especially apposite: 'in virtue and in knowledge we must be infants and be nourished with milk in order that we may be men and eat strong meat'.[34] To stress the growth of the literally 'seminal' elements of goodness and love within the human personality, and thus to value the nurturing of the infant voice, offered a vital corrective to the Godwinian theoretical framework – however impressive such a theory was, it still emphasised inorganic structure rather than organic growth, social arrangement rather than deep emotional affinities.

The irony underlying the intense friendship subsisting between Coleridge, Lamb and Lloyd at this time is the precariousness of the fine lines of communication between their personalities. What one admiring critic of Lamb's poetry called that 'little knot of pure and delightful sympathies'[35] could be vulnerable because of its inherent delicacy and fineness. Certainly, to subject the baby's simple language to ironic mockery would risk destroying those sympathies and everything connected with them. And yet Coleridge at this time was keenly aware of being trapped by baby language in its various forms. When Coleridge wrote in October 1796, 'I have ... snapped my squeaking baby-trumpet of sedition, and have hung up its fragments in the chamber of Penitences', it was to Lloyd's father that he did so,[36] and he offered in the same letter a moving account of the simple nurturing he was determined to give his own babies ('I will leave them therefore hearts that desire little, heads that know how little is to be desired, and hands and arms accustomed to earn that little'). To snap in two his 'squeaking baby-trumpet' is at one level a sign of disillusionment (or impatience?) with his own radical voice as a poet, but at another it conveys his sense of being implicated, along with Lloyd and Lamb, in an infantile collusion of sentimental feelings. Yet breaking his toy, as Coleridge perhaps realised, could be seen as a childish tantrum in itself (and one he was to repeat in 1798).[37]

In turning to Coleridge for his 'fostering Friendship', therefore, it is clear that Lloyd was running a risk. 'Painfully sensitive in all that related to the affections',[38] he was investing the core of his emotional and artistic being in the kinetic and impulsive personality of Coleridge. It had damaging consequences, not only for himself but for the friend whose emotional and artistic sensitivities were uncannily close to his own.

Charles Lamb did not meet Lloyd until January 1797, but they were already linked artistically: Lamb's poem 'The Grandam' had been printed at the end of Lloyd's *Priscilla Farmer* volume (Lamb remarked: 'I can but notice the odd coincidence of two young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers').[39] The immediate warmth of their friendship was strengthened by a deeper bond: their shared sense of a lost domain of infancy, in each case associated with memories of a special place and its female presence – whether Priscilla Farmer's house or Ann Simmons's cottage. Lamb's extraordinary, and rather disturbing, sonnet 'We were two pretty babes' (written in 1795) is best understood in the context I have already tried to establish for Lloyd's early poetry, especially the role taken here by utter simplicity of language. Here it registers a lost integrity:

> We were two pretty babes; the youngest She,
> The youngest, and the loveliest far, I ween,
> And Innocence her name. The time has been,
> We two did love each other's company.
> Time was, we two had wept t'have been apart,
> But when with show of seeming good beguil'd,
> I left the garb and manners of a child,
> And my first love for man's society,
> Defiling with the world my virgin heart,
> My lov'd companion dropt a tear and fled,
> Hiding in deepest shades her awful head.
> Beloved, who shall tell me, where thou art?
> In what delicious Eden to be found?
> That I may seek thee, the wide world around.[40]

Lamb's baby language in this sonnet is effective to the degree that it invites sophisticated mockery. The raw simplicity of statement leaves itself vulnerable to us as we read: it gives us no ironic or imaginative escape, seemingly inviting either acceptance or rejection, and our awareness of its unabashed directness of feeling increases (for good or ill) our sensitivity to its voice. We can recall here Lloyd's invocation of 'Simplicity' and how he charted in that ode the gradual growth of confident speech from shy and hesitant lispings. Lamb's poem represents an early stage of that process, yet its very consistency can be interpreted as a quiet determination. All its awkwardnesses are somehow in the same key: the moments of rhythmic plodding, the verbal repetitions, the stylistic nostalgia ('I ween', 'Time was'), even the embarrassingly emphatic adjectives ('awful', 'delicious') – and all these are subsumed into a baffled search for the lost friend.

For all the weaknesses of this poem (it is not Lamb at his best) it exemplifies for my purposes the crucial link between simplicity of language and truthful directness – that sense of a voice speaking from an inner cell, however hesitant or embarrassing. As early as October 1796 Lamb tackled Coleridge on this issue. What Lamb diagnosed in Coleridge was the very lack of this core, this organic centre from which his experiences should grow. To Lamb, Coleridge's free spirit was without that cell of integrity:

> I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans of life, veering about from this hope to the other, & settling no where. Is it an untoward fatality (speaking humanly) that does this for you?, a stubborn irresistible concurrence of events? or lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune only to lay them down again, & your fortunes are an ignis fatuus that has been conducting you, in thought, from Lancaster Court, Strand, to somewhere near Matlock, then jumping across to Dr. Somebody's whose sons' tutor you

> were likely to be, & would to God, the dancing demon *may* conduct you at last in peace & comfort to the 'life & labors of a cottager'.[41]

Lamb may have been 'speaking humanly' but his diagnosis of the Coleridgean tarantella was a sharp one, written out of an awareness that Coleridge lacked that rootedness. And the same message lies behind Lamb's exhortation a month later:

> Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge, or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness; for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart, and carries into daylight its own modest buds and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression.[42]

Lamb urges simplicity not as a stylistic virtue but as an expressive integrity, an organic growth from the centre, a spring welling up from the heart. Such simplicity, as we have seen, is a key issue in the poetic language of Lamb and Lloyd, and it was this that Coleridge rounded on in November 1797 when without warning he published his three 'Nehemiah Higginbottom' sonnets.[43] The second of these went beyond mere parody to the very heart of the matter:

> O! I do love thee, meek *Simplicity*!
> For of thy lays the lulling simpleness
> Goes to my heart, and soothes each small distress,
> Distress tho' small, yet haply great to me!
> 'Tis true, on lady Fortune's gentler pad
> I amble on; yet, tho' I know not why,
> *So* sad I am! – but should a friend and I
> Grow cool and *miff*, O! I am *very* sad!
> And then with sonnets and with sympathy
> My dreamy bosom's mystic woes I pall;
> Now of my false friend plaining plaintively,
> Now raving at mankind in general;
> But whether sad or fierce, 'tis simple all,
> All very simple, meek SIMPLICITY!

How deadly the thrust is for both Lamb and Lloyd – but for Lamb's poetry especially, because its simplicity (as in 'We were two pretty babes') has already been so pared down and laid bare that there is nowhere to hide, no irony or imaginative agility in the writing to evade Coleridge's point. The cruelty of this tactic should not be underplayed. Coleridge peels the skin away with relish as his own baby language mimics the simple awkward statements. The surest touch is perhaps the way he exploits the interconnection between simplicity and friendship – the core of the experience from which his two friends wrote.

Yet, not many weeks afterwards it was from this same core that Lamb spoke his most powerful words as a poet. What is more, the circumstances of their composition locate their origins in a very special place. He told Marmaduke Thompson:[44]

> I spent an evening about a week ago with Lloyd. White, and a miscellaneous company was there. Lloyd had been playing on a pianoforte till my feelings were wrought too high not to require Vent. I left em suddenly & rushed into ye Temple, where I was born, you know – & in ye state of mind that followed [I composed these] stanzas...

Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?
I had a mother, but she died, and left me,
Died prematurely in a day of horrors –
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful schooldays –
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces...
[*Blank Verse*, 1798, p.89]

This, in the most intense sense, is Lamb's baby language at its finest: 'I left em suddenly & rushed into ye Temple, where I was born, you know...' Beyond the documentary anecdote is a richly symbolic act. These direct and unelaborated words are voiced from the most special place of all, the spot where his own life germinated.

We recall how the narrator of Lamb's novel *Rosamund Gray*, published later in 1798, makes an almost identical flight. As the tragic events of the book draw to a close he returns to the very bedroom he occupied as a child. The only piece of furniture left in the house is a harpsichord, and as he plays an old tune 'past associations revived with the music... I rushed out of the room to give vent to my feelings'. He wanders back to his favourite wood, where a change begins to come over him:

> all was as I had left it.../...I prayed, that I might be restored to that *State of Innocence*, in which I had wandered in those shades.
>
> Methought, my request was heard – for it seemed, as though the stains of manhood were passing from me, and I were relapsing into the purity and simplicity of childhood. I was content to have been moulded into a perfect child. I stood still, as in a trance.[45]

Here we reach the final recoil of the organic metaphor I set up at the beginning of this lecture: to locate the source of the private voice can be to establish the originary rights of man or of nature, but it can also leave the ills of society as a vaguely threatening presence and retreat from them into the virtuous domestic circle or the purity of the embryonic self. Lamb's poem 'To Charles Lloyd' which opens his section of *Blank Verse* places the special location of his friendship with Lloyd against the outer 'world impure':

A stranger, and alone, I past those scenes
We past so late together; and my heart
Felt something like desertion, when I look'd
Around me, and the well-known voice of friend
Was absent, and the cordial look was there
No more to smile on me, I thought on Lloyd;
All he had been to me. And now I go
Again to mingle with a world impure,
With men who make a mock of holy things,
Mistaken, and of man's best hope think scorn.
The world does much to warp the heart of man...[46]

At one level this characterizes the friends' joint volume and sets it up for satirical review by the world outside – the world that scorns 'man's best hope', warps the individual's natural feelings and mocks what is sacred. But the work of friendship outfaces the anticipated mockery with personal and heart-felt experience – what Keats will later call 'the holiness of the Heart's affections'.[47] The very vulnerability of the private *locus* of

value ensures its virtue: the world's mockery merely confirms the integrity of its inner cell of feeling. From one angle, therefore, Lamb's is a defiant poem, while from another it is one of resignation. This paradox, which entangles radical and conservative possibilities, suggests how the *Anti-Jacobin* could all too easily fulfil the role predicted for it by pouring scorn on the volume's 'baby language' while also being afraid of how that baby might develop.

As in that other more famous volume published in 1798, Lamb and Lloyd's *Blank Verse* has two different voices. If Lamb speaks with a painful and awkward directness that can sometimes shape itself to the simplicity of Wordsworth's ballads:

> One parent yet is left – a wretched thing,
> A sad survivor of his buried wife,
> A palsy-smitten, childish, old, old man,
> A semblance most forlorn of what he was,
> A merry cheerful man. A merrier man,
> A man more apt to frame matter for mirth...[48]

Lloyd's poems in the volume are closer to the tentative interior explorations of 'Tintern Abbey'. His 'The Dead Friend' (written in August 1797) must surely have been running through Wordsworth's head in July 1798 while he walked from the Wye to Bristol (here the italics are mine):

> all these live o'er again,
> And fill the lonely hour with such strange *shades*
> *Of past existence*, that I seem to greet
> My former self, and be again that child
> Whom thou didst love so well, who knew so well
> The value of that love! ... Every *form*
> *Of beauty,* every loftier thought, and all
> The unshap'd energies which I may win
> To bright perfection's aim; these visitants
> Alone, that sanctuary of my inmost soul
> Shall pierce, where thou dost dwell.
> And when mankind
> Deem hardly of my doings, *I will turn*
> *To thee, best friend*! ...[49]

Lloyd has found his way towards those Wordsworthian 'gleams / Of past existence' (*T.A.* 149–50) offered by his former self. The internal 'forms of beauty' (*T.A.* 24) remain with him, associated with the friend to whom his spirit turns. Resisting a mere nostalgic relapse into the state of infancy, Lloyd has won something of future potential in 'the unshap'd energies which I may win / To bright perfection's aim' and beneath it all is a presence that *dwells* in the *sanctuary* of his *inmost soul* – Lloyd's terms asserting the regenerative possibilities of the secret cell from which all experience grows. It is an embryonic pattern well expressed in his poem 'Burton, August 1797' in terms of

> a being
> Mysterious, incorporeal, infinite,
> ...[a] shapeless embryo, whose future powers
> Slumber in nothingness to the unpurg'd eye[50]

As we have seen, the baby language of Lamb and Lloyd's early poetry speaks in various ways from this organic centre and the *Anti-Jacobin* understood its revolutionary potential. But *Blank Verse* turns its castigations of the wicked world into an inner drama that is finally more committed to evolution than revolution. It may be the poetry of disaffection, but it is so (as in these powerful lines from Lloyd's 'Written at Burton in Hampshire, August 1797') in personal, not political terms:

> 'Twere better far
> Not to be known or knowing, than to dwell
> With the hard bustlers of this wicked world!
> Whom shall I trust? for I have trusted many,
> And they have been most false! 'Tis true there are
> Who in the free convivial scene will ape,
> With most deceitful seeming, the full soul
> Of holiest virtue; and will sigh, or smile,
> As they her delicate vicissitudes
> Had keenly witness'd: but the ready mimic
> Plant in his *proper station*, and the *thing*
> (Though late so exquisitely organiz'd)
> Will stand the *statue of obduracy*,
> And scatter back, with strange inaptitude,
> Love's unadmissible radiance. Oh my God!
> Why is the fleshly heart so petrified?
> Why all its avenues clos'd, and the high swell
> Of infinite perfection disciplin'd
> To base manoeuverings, to the unnatural guilt
> Of intellectual murder? ...[51]

Postcript

William Blake's revolutionary baby is Orc – burning, tormented and enchained. This babe is not nurtured by a loving family or fostered in a dwelling-place of virtue but is the offspring of antagonistic parents and is rejected by them. For Blake, Revolution cannot be won from the enclosed world of innocence and love but comes instead from reaction and counter-reaction in the world of experience – not from organic growth but from the clash of contraries.

The poets in the 1790s who believed that individual integrity and virtue could be taught a language, and that from virtuous dwelling-places would come voices to challenge evil and injustice, found themselves facing a paradox: the baby beginning to speak has revolutionary potentialities – it is an irreducible element of natural feeling, a fresh start, and under benevolent fostering it can find an inner voice that offers an alternative to established power structures – but in face of disillusionment and despair this voice can offer instead a memorialized emotional sanctuary (as I think it did for Lamb and at times for Lloyd). The child can indeed be 'father of the man' in Wordsworth's double-edged phrase. Perhaps the ambivalence of baby language as an instrument of revolution is an irony inherent in organicism itself.

NOTES

1. *The British Critic,* xi (June 1798), p.678.

2. *The Monthly Magazine,* 15 July 1798 (supplement), p.507.

3. *Anti-Jacobin Review,* August 1798, p.178. The sentence is slightly misquoted by Lloyd in his *Letter to the Anti-Jacobin Reviewers* (Birmingham, 1799), pp. 31-2, suggesting that he knew it by heart.

4. Southey's report, quoted by Winifred F. Courtney, *Young Charles Lamb, 1775-1802* (New York and London, 1983), p.265.

5. Southey - Wynn, 15 August 1798 (C.C. Southey, *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey,* 2nd ed., 6 vols, 1850, i, 345).

6. *Anti-Jacobin Review,* September 1798, p.366.

7. Burton R. Pollin, 'Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd as Jacobins and Anti-Jacobins', *Studies in Romanticism,* xii (1973), 633-47.

8. *Blank Verse,* p.11. On Lloyd's Priestleian footnote Pollin remarks: 'Here is fully matured, raging perfectibility, a la *Political Justice,* not to be missed by the sharp-scented Anti-Jacobin ferrets, who certainly could not divine that one Charles was speaking more for himself than for the other' (p.637). But see note 33 below.

9. *Blank Verse* contains (pp. 64-72) Lloyd's 'Lines to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin'. In a prefatory note Lloyd offers 'this imperfect tribute to the memory of a woman, whose undeserved sufferings have excited my warmest esteem.' But he adds, 'I avow a complete dissent from Mrs. Godwin with regard to almost all her moral speculations.'

10. See Jonathan Wordsworth, 'Lamb and Coleridge as One-Goddites', *Charles Lamb Bulletin,* 58 (Apr.1987), 37-47; Nicholas Roe, 'The Politics of "New Morality": Lamb, Coleridge, Wordsworth', in 'Remembering Emile Legouis', *Charles Lamb Bulletin,* 64 (Oct. 1988), 254-70; Winifred F. Courtney, *Young Charles Lamb, 1775-1802* (New York and London, 1983). Roe effectively shows the degree to which Lamb's poem 'Living Without God in the World' was both a response to his inclusion in *New Morality* and an ironic counter to Godwin. I am grateful to Dr Roe for letting me see an extended version of that essay, which will form part of his forthcoming book, *The Politics of Nature.*

11. A notable exception to the general neglect of Lloyd's poetry is Lucy Newlyn's revealing analysis of the poem 'London' from *Blank Verse.* See 'Lamb, Lloyd, London: A Perspective on Book Seven of *The Prelude*', *Charles Lamb Bulletin,* 47-8 (July-Oct. 1984), 169-87.

12. In *Power and Consciousness,* ed. C.C. O'Brien and W.D. Vanech (London and New York, 1969), pp. 149-81. See especially p.163.

13. The Wartons were influential as poet-critics in the 1740s and 1750s. Joseph Warton (1722-1800) Second Master and later Headmaster of Winchester College, wrote his

blank-verse poem *The Enthusiast* in 1740 and attached an innovatory preface to his *Odes* (1746); his later *Essay on Pope* (1756) demoted Pope to the second rank of poets. His brother Thomas Warton (1728–90) fellow of Trinity College Oxford and Professor of Poetry (1756–66) wrote *The Pleasures of Melancholy* at the age of 17; his *Observations on the Faerie Queene* (1754) helped to legitimize the native Spenserian tradition of poetry.

14. *The Pleasures of Melancholy*, lines 306–15, in *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Warton, B.D.*, ed. Richard Mant, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1802) i, 95.

15. *The Enthusiast*, lines 170–9, in *Biographical Memoirs of the Late Revd. Joseph Warton, D.D.*, ed. John Wooll (London, 1806), p. 120.

16. 'From mental mists', lines 119–130: *Anti-Jacobin* no. 36 (Mon. 9 July).

17. 1795 *Poems*, p.3.

18. *Ibid.*, pp.23–4.

19. 'Gaffar–Gray!' originally appeared in vol. III chap.8 of Holcroft's *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor* (1794) (ed. Seamus Deane, London, 1973, pp. 225–6). Hazlitt wrote: 'The song of Gaffar Gray ... is distinguished by the same fulness of feeling, and the same simple, forcible, and perfect expression of it. There is nothing wanting, and nothing superfluous'. *(Memoirs of the Late Thomas Holcroft*, 1816), Book IV chap.2.

20. 1795 *Poems*, p.39.

21. *ibid.*, p.45.

22. *ibid.*, p.37.

23. 'Disenchantment or Default ...', p.162.

24. The word 'recoil' is effectively used by Thompson in his reference to 'the moment of tension – of Jacobin affirmation and recoil' in Wordsworth's poetry (*ibid.*, p.155).

25. 1795 *Poems*, p.10.

26. *Ibid.*, pp.47–8.

27. Coleridge–Wordsworth, c. 10 Sept. 1799 (Griggs, i, 527); 1805 *Prelude*, ii, 453–4.

28. 'Sonnet X', *Priscilla Farmer*, p.16 (Coleridge printed it in his *Sonnets from Various Authors* (1796), p.12); 'Sonnet I', *Priscilla Farmer*, p.7.

29. *Priscilla Farmer*, p.19.

30. 'Written the 12th of February 1797', *Blank Verse*, p.52.

31. The concluding lines of Lloyd's 'Lines Addressed to S.T. Coleridge', included by Coleridge in his *Poems* (1797), p.181. The final line makes an ironical reappearance in Lloyd's *Edmund Oliver*, when Edmund (the Coleridge figure) quotes it: 'When I contemplate my own mind, I can perceive three distinct stages in its process towards amelioration; I have plunged in all the depth of sensuality, I have rioted in all the wildness of youthful passion and imagination, and I have lately felt, I trust, something of that calm peace which hallows "the long sabbath of subdued desires"' (ii, 167).

32. Coleridge - Thomas Poole, 24 Sept. 1796 (Griggs, i, 236-7).

33. Nicola Trott, 'The Coleridge Circle and the "Answer to Godwin"', *Review of English Studies,* xli (1990), 212-29.

34. *Collected Coleridge,* i, *Lectures 1795 on Politics and Religion,* ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann (Princeton, 1971), p.164.

35. Thomas Noon Talfourd reviewing Lamb's *Works* (1818) in *The Champion,* 16 May 1819 (p.313).

36. Coleridge - Charles Lloyd Sr., 15 Oct. 1796 (Griggs, i, 240). But by 4 Dec. he was writing to discourage Lloyd's return ('I must add that Charles Lloyd must *furnish* his own bedroom': Griggs, i, 264). I am grateful to Molly Lefebure for prompting me towards this discussion of Coleridge's 'baby-trumpet'.

37. He repeats the remark writing to George Coleridge, c. 10 March 1798 (Griggs, i, 397).

38. Sara Coleridge's recollection of a remark of her mother's, quoted in E.V. Lucas, *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds* (London, 1898), p.19.

39. Lamb - Coleridge, 9 Dec. 1796 (Marrs, i, 74).

40. Lamb sent this sonnet to Coleridge on 31 May 1796 (Marrs, i, 8). It was published in *The Monthly Magazine*, July 1796 (p.491) and Coleridge included it in his *Sonnets from Various Authors* (1796), p.7, with his own note on line 11: 'Innocence, which while we possess it, is playful, as a babe, becomes AWFUL when it has departed from us. --This is the sentiment of the line, a fine sentiment and nobly expressed'.

41. Lamb - Coleridge, 17 Oct. 1796 (Marrs, i, 51-2).

42. Lamb - Coleridge, 8 Nov. 1796 (Marrs, i, 60-1).

43. *The Monthly Magazine*, Nov. 1797, p.374. See Lucy Newlyn, 'Parodic Allusion: Coleridge and the "Nehemiah Higginbottom" Sonnets, 1797', in *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, 56 (Oct. 1986), 255-9 ('Lamb is an appropriate target because it was of course he who, during the months of his closest friendship with Coleridge, had again and again asserted the need for simplicity in poetry').

44. Lamb - Thompson, [Jan. 1798] (Marrs, i, 124).

45. *Rosamund Gray* (1798), pp.112-3.

46. *Blank Verse*, p.75. An earlier version of the poem, entitled 'To a Friend', had appeared in *The Monthly Magazine*, Oct. 1797, p.288.

47. Keats – Benjamin Bailey, 22 Nov. 1817.

48. 'Written on the Day of my Aunt's Funeral', lines 24–9 (*Blank Verse*, pp. 78–9).

49. *Blank Verse*, pp. 20–1.

50. From 'Burton, August 1797', *Blank Verse*, p.25.

51. *Blank Verse*, pp. 14–15.

The text of the Ernest Crowsley Memorial Lecture, delivered to the Society on Saturday 1st December 1990.

THE PRIMARY IMAGINATION

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Coleridge's definition of the primary imagination in chapter 13 of *Biographia Literaria* has elicited voluminous critical comment, even considering that it serves as the culmination of the work's first volume. Although familiar, it is useful to consider the lines carefully yet again:

> The IMAGINATION then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead.[1]

In 1907 in a note to chapter 13 of his Oxford Edition, Shawcross gave impetus to what would become the dominant critical perspective. He observed that the secondary appeared to be a heightened degree of the imaginative power, with the primary the organ of common perception. Thomas McFarland expanded this perspective in 1972 with an influential essay identifying J.N. Tetens as the source of Coleridge's three-part division.[2] In 1983 James Engell, editor of the first volume of *Biographia* in the *Collected Coleridge* Edition, greatly extended this critical direction by focusing on the psychological and aesthetic dimensions suggested by Coleridge's remarks.[3] While he acknowledges Coleridge's concern with what the poet might have called the religious principle within man,[4] he does not adequately assess Coleridge's view of its relation to the imaginative power.

A 1985 essay by Jonathan Wordsworth[5] moved in a direction similar to that taken by W Jackson Bate in his 1950 commentary.[6] Wordsworth argues that Coleridge intends the primary to be the preeminent level of imagination, and that its reach may extend to the metaphysical. This paper also argues that the primary is indeed the highest level of the imaginative power, with a range potentially beyond the artistic. This argument will be supported by various writings of Coleridge, nearly all of which are from c. 1812–1819 when *Biographia* was likely to have been most in his thoughts.

Too frequently, the five sentences cited above from chapter 13 are considered in isolation when they should be regarded in connection with the whole of both chapters 12 and 13. As he begins chapter 12, Coleridge indicates that what will follow will be complex. By refusing to fashionably dismiss Plato's *Timaeus* (which he claims to be rereading) as no more than jargon, he forewarns us of the slippery nature of his forthcoming exposition.

> Plato continued to be reviled in the Empiricist climate of the time and his writings (like Coleridge's) are frequently criticized for being unintelligible. Nonetheless, Coleridge acknowledges his wisdom, here his creation myth, and suggests to us that understanding is achieved only through great intellectual rigor.

The figure of the air sylph near the beginning of the chapter, illustrates Coleridge's complex interest – it rapidly introduces a sense of the numinous, a sense that will become central in developing his context for discussing the imagination. He notes that, while yet a chrysalis, [the sylph] has an instinct to leave room in its involucrum or outer–covering or antennae yet to come (*BL (CC)* 1:242). He maintains that those who can interpret and understand this symbol, who feel in their own spirits the same instincts as those which impel the chrysalis, bear witness to the organs that are framed and developed for the world of spirit:

> They and they only can acquire the philosophic imagination, the sacred power of self–intuition, who within themselves can interpret and understand the [sylph as a] symbol.... (*BL (CC)* 1:241–2)

Coleridge is seeking to demonstrate the viability of believing in the organs of the spirit and, concomitantly, in a kind of experience that cannot be apprehended through the organs of the sense.

He then discusses the need in philosophy for a postulate, a primary intuition not empirically or phenomenally demonstrable, that will serve as the practical ground upon which all subsequent logical evidence will have its foundation (*BL (CC)* 1:250). He claims that this ground exists in the 'heaven–descended KNOW THYSELF'. He goes on to assert that 'philosophy is neither a science of the reason or understanding only, nor merely a science of morals, but the science of BEING altogether ...' (*BL (CC)* 1:252). It is likely that here he uses 'Being' with reference to the grand problems of metaphysics, Being and Becoming, the meaning of human existence, and man's powers of knowledge about that Being.

Coleridge's 'KNOW–THYSELF' aphorism was among the maxims of the Seven Sages inscribed on the Temple of Apollo. It was from here that the Priestess Pythia uttered inspired, cryptic replies that were interpreted in hexameter by *vatic* priests. The Oracle was approached primarily regarding questions of religion, in particular, questions concerning man's reconciliation with God.[7] The significance of this as it relates to

Coleridge's allusion is, again, his concern to amplify the relation of the numinous to the power of the imagination.

In Thesis IX and near the conclusion of chapter 12, the 'KNOW THYSELF' reappears in explicitly Christian contexts, as it does once more in *Biographia* in Coleridge's footnote to the work's concluding chapter. In this note, anticipating criticism of his metaphysics, he insists that he is expressing

> the object and thereby the contents of this science [metaphysics]. Know thyself: and so shalt thou know God, as far as it is permitted to a creature, and in God all things. -- (*BL (CC)* 2:240)

Throughout the remainder of chapter 12, Coleridge discusses the antithesis that is the ground of all knowledge, the coincidence of an object with a subject (*BL (CC)* 1:252). He offers ten theses, the results of which he will apply in deducing 'the imagination, and with it the principles of production and genial criticism in the fine arts' (*BL (CC)* 1:264).

Through the first three theses he concludes that truth is correlative or related reciprocally to being - that all truth is either related through an intermediate or immediate and most importantly, that a self-grounded truth, one which is its own predicate, must serve as the foundation upon which to conclude any cycle of equal truth. Similarly, in *Anima Poetae*, Coleridge crafts the following conceit on the relation of Science to Philosophy, or knowing to being:

> I have read of two rivers passing through the same lake, yet all the way preserving their streams visibly distinct .... In a far finer distinction, yet in a subtler union, such, for the contemplative mind, are the streams of knowing and being. The lake is formed by the two streams in man and nature as it exists in and for man; and up this lake the philosopher sails on the junction-line of the constituent streams....[8]

In discussing Coleridge's attempts to unify the objective and subjective poles of philosophy, Engell cites this passage in *The Creative Imagination* as a figurative illustration of the operations of the perceptual process through what he calls the all-connecting nerve of imagination'.[9] In its entirety, the above passage from *Anima Poetae* illuminates much more fully the context of Coleridge's first three theses and the source of the unity Coleridge hopes to articulate. Again, it is the philosopher, as Coleridge's passage continues in full, who is:

> ...still pushing upward and sounding as he goes, towards the common fountain-head of both, the mysterious source whose being is knowledge, whose knowledge is being - the adorable I AM IN THAT I AM.[10]

Only in the Eternal I AM of Exodus 3.14, in one who is his own predicate, does Coleridge find his Absolute Truth. Cited in full, this passage is a figurative representation of Theses I and II of chapter 12. Coleridge's I AM, in its Biblical source, concerns a God who employs Moses as an interpreter for His people, much like the Delphic priests of the 'KNOW THYSELF' allusion. This further develops Coleridge's sense of the Godhead as universal agent or final cause.

Engell's quotation from *Anima Poetae* is, however, 'truncated'. Specifically, it is both incomplete and improperly punctuated as he cites it in *The Creative Imagination.* Anomalies similar to the above also appear when comparing his notes 20 and 40 from

chapter 21 of his study with original texts. The above quotation from *Anima Poetae* is at note 9 to his chapter 21. The effect of these imperfect citations is to strengthen his discussion of the imagination as a perceptual faculty, while obscuring its relation to the numinous and metaphysical.

Indeed, in Coleridge's note to Thesis VII of *Biographia* chapter 12, he asserts that the conditional finite I, each of us, inhere, or 'live, and move, and have our being', in the Absolute I AM. (*BL (CC)* 1:277, Coleridge's note). This is consistent with his claim that one can know all things in God, as permitted (*BL (CC)* 1:240, Coleridge's note). While this inherence of the particular in the Absolute suggests the pantheistic, it also embraces the Christian doctrines of immanence and transcendence that can be united through the *Logos*. The tension between viewing Being in terms of its overall commonality and tendency to pantheism, and the idea of a Theistic God from whom the world is distinct, yet dependent upon, is a continual tension in Coleridge's thought.[11] He seeks to frame a metaphysics in which the individual, human consciousness and will remain discriminate, yet participates in a flow of Being that is also universal and eternal.

The famous 'One Life within us and abroad' lines of 'The Eolian Harp', added only when the 1815 *Sybilline Leaves* Edition was published in 1817, reveal coleridge's enduring concern to comprehend and articulate this union of Being and Knowing. Thesis IX of *Biographia* chapter 12 again identifies 'the mysterious source' that is Ultimate Unity:

> In other words, philosophy would pass into religion, and religion become inclusive of philosophy. We begin with the I KNOW MYSELF, in order to end with the absolute I AM. We proceed from the SELF, in order to lose and find all self in GOD. (*BL (CC)* 1:283)

Chapter 13 is opened by three epigraphs that partake of ideas from the preceding chapter. Their relation is characteristic of what Thomas McFarland has so aptly termed the exceptionally reticulative pattern of Coleridge's thought.[12] Of *Biographia's* 24 chapters, only chapter 13 is set off by epigraphs - this seems intended to highlight its significance. The first is from *Paradise Lost* Book V. It establishes a framework for the group, a hierarchical scheme of spiritual perfectibility. The principle informing this scheme is that of entelechy or monism, a notion that became a mainstay in the thought of Renaissance Christian Theologians and the Cambridge Neo-Platonists who sought to counteract systematically the mechanistic writings of Hobbes. The principle is essentially that of one infinite spirit that informs all Being.

Milton's specific context is the Renaissance Chain of Being, in particular, the hierarchy of Heaven and its relation to Earth. He incorporates the monistic principle through his plant metaphor as matter moves towards a full transformation to spirit,

> by gradual scale sublimed,
> To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
> To intellectual ....[13]

As Raphael, Milton's 'Winged Hierarch', says in the lines just following those cited in Coleridge's epigraph, there is a substantial connection between Matter and Spirit. 'One first matter all, differing but in degree, of kind the same' (*PL* V:472,490). The moral context underpinning this progressive principle is Christian, organic and anti-mechanistic for Coleridge as well as Milton. The relationship of these images, and their placement at the opening of *Biographia* chapter 13, suggests that the progressive 'scale of Being' involves, at least figuratively, Coleridge's conception of the imagination. Near the end of

chapter 12, he had explicitly affirmed 'that true metaphysics are nothing else but true divinity ...' (*BL (CC)* 1:291).

His second epigraph is from Leibniz, whose Principle of Continuity and conception of the monad are variations of monism. Like the third epigraph from Synesius which venerates 'the hidden order of intellectual things', his citation from Leibniz affirms Coleridge's belief in some principle that connects all Being, the material with the spiritual world (*BL (CC)* 1:296 n2). This 'hidden ordering' echoes the world of spirit expressed through Coleridge's air sylph conceit of chapter 12. Engell rather curiously regards this Synesius epigraph as no more than a literary genuflexion by Coleridge – he thinks Coleridge may worry that he may be seen to have pushed his discussion of the imagination too far (*CI* 363).

Much of the discussion of Coleridge's specific language at this point in *Biographia* revolves around the figurative complexity of his sentence defining the primary imagination. That it appears to suffer by contrast with the significance he seems to attribute to the secondary imagination only increases the puzzling nature of the distinction. In his Essay XIV of the 1818 Edition of *The Friend*,[14] concerning the sense of mystery achieved through language, Coleridge acknowledges that there are ideas which are rendered necessarily indefinite by their very sublimity. These ideas he lists as 'Being, Form, Life, the Reason, the Law of Conscience, Freedom, Immortality, God!' (*FR (CC)* 1:106 and n3). To appreciate Coleridge's concession to this aspect of the obscure or indefinite, it is important to note that except for these ideas, he is arguing for 'clear, distinct, and adequate conceptions concerning all things that are the possible objects of clear conception ...' (*FR (CC)* 1:106).

What then presents itself is the seemingly indefinite diction of:

> the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.

Coleridge's language describing the secondary imagination is, by contrast, crisp, clear and objective. If he intended to describe the faculty of perception when discussing the primary imagination, why use diction that is so imagistically charged and clearly evocative of the numinous? In Engell's *Creative Imagination*, the primary imagination is a faculty that merely serves as the foundation for the superior secondary level which, despite its potency, does not extend beyond the realm of the artistic.[15]

In Coleridge's diction the term 'primary' can refer to either the most primitive in a temporal sequence, or the first order in a series, especially a causal series. As the 'prime Agent' of all human perception, the primary imagination sounds potent indeed. In common usage, 'agent' denotes that which produces an effect, a force that acts or exerts power, as distinguished from that which only displays instrumentality (*OED*). Here, as if Coleridge himself does not use the word elsewhere, Engell cites lines from Wordsworth's 1805 *Prelude* as the best illustration of Coleridge's sense of the word 'agent'. The emphasis on 'agent' in Wordsworth's lines from *Prelude* Book II is on the infant babe's mind as it works 'but in alliance' with whatever it beholds. While Wordsworth regards the babe's mind as a reflection of that of God (in philosophical language it would be denominated constitutive), he nonetheless describes a different metaphysical relationship than Coleridge expresses when defining the primary imagination.

In discussing agency in the philosophical vernacular, Flew and Vesey in their recent monograph *Agency and Necessity* consider the concept of agent causation. They describe agency as a force or being not moved by other than itself.[16] In effect, the meaning of

agency is opposite to its common, contemporary sense, and to that suggested above by Engell's citation from Wordsworth. Examples of Coleridge's use of the sense discussed by Vesey can be found throughout Coleridge's writings.[17] Vesey notes that Plato's *Timaeus* is the work from which the concept of agency emerges.[18] Recall that it was the *Timaeus* that Coleridge claimed to have been 're-perusing' before beginning chapter 12 of *Biographia*. In the *Timaeus*, the world is created through the polarity of Ideas and Material Substance. As Lovejoy notes, the *Timaeus* is also the ultimate source of the idea of the hierarchical Scale of Being.[19]

For Plato, the Mind that creates the world is the mind of the godhead. For Coleridge at this time, the *Nous* and the *Logos* represent the identical principle of agent causation.[20] It is also significant that in Exodus 3, the Hebraic Jehovah's actions are agent causative. As The Lord declares himself to be the 'I AM', Moses serves as his instrument to advise the Jews of their forthcoming deliverance from Egypt.

The precise wording describing the primary imagination is, again, that it is 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception...' Note that the primary imagination is not itself 'human perception', but the living power that produces an effect in, and on, the individual perceptive faculty. The second clause, 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM', evokes numinous associations that cannot be fully expressed in words. Consider though, that 'the eternal act of creation' has already occurred in the infinite I AM, and is repeated in, rather than by, the finite mind. A full explication should consider whatever power or principle affects the repetition.

Those who argue from the perspective shared by Richards and Engell maintain that the volitional aspect present in the secondary imagination's operation highlights its superior potency. The following lines, from *Biographia* chapter 7 consider 'the mind's self-experience in the act of thinking', and are central to this view:

> There are evidently two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without an intermediate faculty, which is at once both active and passive. (In philosophical language, we must denominate this intermediate faculty in all its degrees and determinations, the IMAGINATION. But in common language, and especially on the subject of poetry, we appropriate the name to a superior degree of the faculty, joined to a superior voluntary controul over it.)
>
> (*BL (CC)* 1:124–5)

Many critics argue that the 'superior voluntary controul' indicated in these parenthetical sentences supports their view that the secondary imagination, as described in chapter 13, is preeminent inasmuch as, there, it is the secondary level that is said to co-exist with the conscious will. However, it seems equally likely that what Coleridge intends in the quotation from chapter 7 is to observe how the *name* 'imagination' is applied in discourse, especially in philosophical and poetic contexts (emphasis added). The parenthetical remarks may actually be one of Coleridge's frequent instances of desynonymization.

These remarks may also relate to the organs of spirit that can become the philosophical imagination, that sacred power of self-intuition only acquired by those who understand the symbol of the air sylph. Knowing thyself is not limited to an aspect of perception, it also embraces man's recognition of his significance within the Chain of Being. It is only in knowing himself that he will understand his unique power imaginatively to slip the bonds of material Being and move himself by his own will. Whether Coleridge's remarks in chapter 7 are intended to comment on appropriate diction or a particular application of the

imagination, he does not seem concerned with describing the imaginative power or with differentiating between its levels. This he will undertake in chapters 12 and 13.

Those adhering to the critical view that the secondary imagination is the superior level, seem to hold that, for Coleridge, the individual free will is the exclusive reservoir of creativity. While this interpretation greatly enhances the power of the self, Coleridge's view of the individual will does not celebrate its absolute autonomy. In 1816 he asks his readers to ask themselves:

> Am I at one with God, and is my will concentric with that holy power, which is the constitutive will and the supreme reason of the universe?[21]

This expression of concentricity is akin to Coleridge's 'law of Bicentrality' and 'tendency to Individuation'.[22] Briefly if simplistically put, the former relates to a being or unity that is the centre of its own system, while concurrently having another centre outside itself which it shares with all other parts of that larger system. Individuation is an aspect of Coleridge's idea of organicism, as it expresses itself through what he calls 'the great scale of ascent and expansion'.[23]

Considered at the ontological and teleological levels, these principles result in a logical paradox. On one hand is an idea of an immanent godhead capable of a unity that connects the universe in an organic system. On the other, is Coleridge's need for a God that permits man to exercise free will sufficient to allow for personal, moral responsibility.[24] The only philosophy, or theology, that transcends this paradox is that of the Trinitarian Christian. In the 'Tri-Unity', God the Father is the Providential force demanding the exercise of free will and delivering Justice. The Son, as a constituent being of the terrestrial world, is the force operating *ab intra*. The Holy Ghost is a dynamic principle embracing both The Father and The Son, a conception ideally representative of Coleridge's organicism. Epistemologically, as noted above, no coalescence of subject and object is possible without an ultimate ground in which Being and Knowing inhere. This too is only possible in the godhead, the I AM that is at once immanent and transcendent.

At least as early as 1794, Coleridge understood that much of the value of human existence flows from man's appreciation of the capaciousness of his soul and its relation to the world of spirit. He had firmly rejected the materialist doctrines of the eighteenth century because he appreciated man's need to feel himself a part of a teleologically unified system with a vital sense of the Infinite; a universe ordered by a *concerned* deity. Such needs may be mused upon, as he would reflect in 1829, and as he had in the 1818 *Friend*, through

> *Ideas* which may indeed by suggested and awakened, but cannot, like the images of sense and the conceptions of the understanding, be adequately *expressed* by words.[25]

He had also recognized for many years that the sense of the numinous which binds man to the spiritual world had been philosophically severed by the excessive rationalism of the scientists and Deists. He knew too that if a balanced view of the organic whole that is All Being was to be restored, the spiritual life of Nature would have to be reborn, imaginatively.

I suggest that Coleridge regarded imaginative vision and faith as correlative or mutually interdependent. Underlying the volitional act of the secondary, artistic imagination is a more profound act of faith in the creative principle of the *Logos*, the immanent and transcendent presence of the Infinite, within both man and the world. I believe this is both

a richer and more accurate conception of what Coleridge meant by the primary imagination. Without an act of faith in what Coleridge calls the 'PRODUCTIVE LOGOS [both] human and divine' (*BL (CC)*) 1:136), there can be no genuinely secondary imaginative act, inasmuch as there is then no legitimate organic unity to be apprehended and artistically represented. For Coleridge, the *Logos* of Philo and St. John, to which he alludes in *Biographia* chapter 12 and *The Philosophical Lectures*, is the divine agent in creation. In *Biographia* it expresses analogously the creative power of the incarnation and is the vital intermediary between God and man.[26]

Coleridge believed that 'the communicative intelligence both human and divine', could connect the visible and invisible worlds, the Divine Order of Nature (*BL (CC)* 1:136 n2). The language he uses to describe the primary imagination is, in fact, acutely accurate as it represents the numinous sense of the imagination's relation to the infinite. The mystery that is the analogy between material and spiritual Being, and the possibility of the perfection of the human spirit, organically permeate Coleridge's entire thought concerning the imagination. To fail to acknowledge its informing effect is to fail to appreciate the full reticulum of that thought.

NOTES

1. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria (Collected Coleridge)*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols., (Princeton, 1983) 1:304 (hereafter cited in text as *BL (CC)*: vol: page. Subsequent references to other volumes in the *Collected Coleridge* Edition will be indicated by *(CC)*).

2. Thomas McFarland, 'The Origin and Significance of Coleridge's Theory of Secondary Imagination', *New Perspectives on Coleridge and Wordsworth* ed. Geoffrey Hartman (New York, 1972) 195–246. Rpt. in *Originality and Imagination* (Baltimore, 1985) 90–119.

3. James Engell, *The Creative Imagination ...* (Cambridge, MA, 1981) esp. 328–66. In *BL (CC)* 1:304 n4, Engell cites this and McFarland's essay cited above as the primary studies of Coleridge's distinction between the primary and secondary imagination (hereafter cited in text as *CI*).

4. In *BL (CC)* 1:1xxiii Engell aserts that Coleridge 'tried to find an anchorage for his philosophy in the bottomless sea of faith'. However, he does not investigate the means or principle through which Coleridge might achieve such a grounding.

5. Jonathan Wordsworth, '"The infinite I AM": Coleridge and the Ascent of Being'. *Wordsworth Circle* 16.2 (1985) 74–84. Rpt. in *Coleridge's Imagination*, eds. Richard Gravil, Lucy Newlyn and Nicholas Roe (Cambridge, 1985) 22–52.

6. Walter Jackson Bate, 'Coleridge on the Function of Art', *Perspectives of Criticism*, ed. Harry Levin (Cambridge, MA, 1950) 125–59.

7. 'Delphic Oracle', *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 1984 ed.

8. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Anima Poetae*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (1895) 261–2.

9. Engell, *Creative Imagination* 338.

10. Coleridge, *Anima Poetae* 262.

11. Compare lines 26–33 of 'The Eolian Harp' with *Lay Sermons*, (*CC*), ed. R.J. White (Princeton, 1972), App. C, p.83, (hereafter *LS*) as one example of Coleridge's continuing attempt to articulate a principle of metaphysical unity that is not pantheistic.

12. Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford, 1969) 49.

13. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, (Harlow, Essex 1971) V:483–5 (hereafter cited in text as *PL*: Book: line).

14. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend* (*CC*), ed. Barbara E. Rooke (Princeton, 1969), 2 vols., 1:100–6 (hereafter cited in text as *FR (CC)* vol: page).

15. This seems a continuation of I.A. Richards' assertion that 'the Primary Imagination is normal perception that produces ... the world of motor-buses, beef-steaks, and acquaintances ... our everyday lives' *Coleridge on Imagination* (London, 1934) 58.

16. Anthony Flew, Godfrey Vesey, *Agency and Necessity* (Oxford, 1987) 11.

17. See, for example, *LS (CC)* 16 on 'divine agency', *Marginalia (CC)*, ed. George Whalley, 2 vols. to date, (Princeton, 1980–) 1:557.2 on the 'supreme Agent' in Behmen's System, *LS* 31 where 'in the Bible every agent appears and acts as a self-subsisting individual: each has a life of its own, and yet all are one life'. Other examples include Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* (1825) 68 (hereafter *AR*) and *BL (CC)* 1:117, 1:120. The same sense is also present in both Coleridge's poetical and dramatic works.

18. Flew, Vesey 7, 9.

19. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* ... (Cambridge, MA, 1942) 50–1, 54.

20. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Philosophical Lectures* ..., ed. Kathleeen Coburn (1949) 175.

21. Coleridge, *LS (CC)* 55; see also Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Letters*, ed. E.L. Griggs, 6 vols., (Oxford, 1956–71) 4:1151 and *AR* 40–2. These display the continuity of this view.

22. Bicentrality principle from ms. C, p. 108 as cited in *Coleridge as Philosopher*, John H. Muirhead (1930) 121–7. Individuation from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Theory of Life', *Miscellanies, Aesthetic and Literary*, ed. T. Ashe (1885) 355–7, 383–94.

23. Coleridge, 'Theory of Life' 390.

24. Cf. note 11 above.

25. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of Church and State (CC)*, ed. John Colmer (Princeton, 1976) 165 and n3. For a sense of the consistency of this view, see *CL* 1:112 (20 March 1796), *CL* 2:529 (5 December 1803) in connection with Shawcross' 1907 edition 1:xxxv n1 and *LS (CC)* 104–5 (1816).

26 *BL (CC)* 1:263; Coleridge, *Philosophical Lectures* 175. For a broad discussion of 'agency' in this context, see Peder Borgen, 'God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel', *Religions in Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden, Neth., 1968) 137-48. Rpt. in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. John Ashton, (London, 1986) 67-78.

HAZLITT AND THE GAME OF FIVES (Continued)

Readers of our 1990 *Bulletins* will have been hoping that our two splendid adversaries, Drs. Jones and Wilson would have further volleys to fire off. Their letters were written independently, though some weeks apart.

From Dr Stanley Jones

Dear Editor

May I add some further pieces of evidence to my recent letter on the above problem (our Chairman has certainly put the bat among the pigeons, as Lamb would not have hesitated to say)? I had the feeling that Hazlitt had somewhere asserted that he would rather be the best racket-player than the best prose-writer of the age, but could not say so without locating the assertion and quoting chapter and verse. I now find that its elusiveness is owing to Hazlitt's having evidently thought better of this sally when it came to including it in his published work: it is to be found in the original version of 'On the Qualifications Necessary to Success in Life', as it appeared in the *London Magazine* in June 1820, but is dropped from the essay as reprinted in *The Plain Speaker* (1826) (*London Magazine*, Vol. 1,, No. VI, 653 note; the page reference is not given in Howe, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, xii.409).

In searching for it I found another highly relevant place where Hazlitt says that rackets was his favourite game (viii.283). But this does not mean that he did not play fives as well (like John Davies). No one can possibly doubt that he did, who has read the page of 'The Indian Jugglers' beginning 'But the game of fives is what no one despises who has ever played at it' (viii.87). These are not the words of a spectator. And yet when Howe quotes this page in his biography, immediately after describing the fighting *Letter to William Gifford*, he prefaces it with the remark 'When Hazlitt has a sword in one hand we generally find him with a racket in the other' (*Life* (1922), p.275).

There are other uncertainties. In the fine letter from Thomas Pittman to Hazlitt inviting him down to play at Canterbury (*Life*, p.327) Pittman does not give the name of the game, but he calls himself a 'Racket-Player', and then says they are to play 'in a Fives Court'. Finally, Cavanagh, 'the famous hand fives-player', is provokingly described in the Index to the *Complete Works* as a 'rackets-player' (and in the Index to the *Life*, as a 'fives player').

Yours sincerely

Stanley Jones
Glasgow, 14 December 1990

From Dr. D G Wilson

Dear Editor

I will attempt to reply to Stanley Jones' magnificent (if flawed) article with a brief exposition of my admiration for his cunning (gamesmanship?); nevertheless, even with my 'miniature learning', I can still see yawning gaps in his defences.

1) (line 13) why does a ball 'dropped close to the wall' exclude tennis? We are, after all, talking of 'real' tennis played in a built-up court.

2) (line 15) 'hand fives-player' may be pleonastic but is excellent description, and did Hazlitt fill 20 volumes with prose by rigorously eschewing redundant pleonasm (sorry!)? And surely John Cavanagh could, and did, play all the games popular at that time?

3) (lines 28-33) this quotation from Cassell's ".. Sports and Pastimes" seems to support my reservations. A bat is a bat is a bat - not a racquet. At Aldenham School bat-fives was certainly played this century - possibly a less difficult version (for the less flexible player?). The 'potty-bat' doubled as an instrument of punishment!

4) (lines 35-47) Dr Jones has surely proved that several distinct games existed - fives, racquets, tennis. I do not think that he has necessarily proved that only the right game was played in any given court - I suggest that two players found a court, got up a game with or without bat or racquet, regardless of the dimensions of their court, and agreed on some rules, wavering and orally-transmitted they certainly were, as Dr Jones shrewdly notes. So perhaps we are merely serving up semantic volleys - I call only games played with the hand 'fives'; he has a broader church.

5) In an effort to spread sweetness and light, could I suggest a possible explanation for Dr Jones' final puzzle? (lines 48-57) This is that Cavanagh did indeed use his 'clenched fist' whilst white-washing the stranger, but did not use his knuckles or backs of his fingers to strike the ball, he simply used the 'heel' of his hand/palm. That is, he reduced the effective area of his striking hand, and thus handicapped himself in an unobtrusive and tactful way.

Now for that challenge; it is indeed true that some little period of time has passed since I last played fives - or squash - or lawn tennis even, but I am prepared to begin negotiations to fix a match (your good offices, Mr Editor, would mightily oblige). I note that Dr Jones has mentioned a few trivial pre-conditions - I hire the court, I find a ball (generous that, they vary so vitally), he gets a day off from that arthritis so conveniently remembered! Who determines that handicap? Why not a racquet? In what sense am I required to be quick?

Yes, by Jove, I accept, I insist merely upon one minor condition. We shall play underwater fives, to music - adagio.

Yours sincerely

D. G. Wilson, Cambridge
January 3rd 1991

Hopefully the battle, generating far more light than heat (unlike most), is not yet concluded. Dr Jones speaks of a further contribution already.

It is, incidentally, good to hear that Stanley Jones's *Hazlitt, A Life : from Winterslow to Frith Street* will be appearing in paperback in the 'Oxford Lives' series on 3rd October.

CHARLES LAMB'S ADOPTED DAUGHTER: EMMA ISOLA MOXON

In December last we were delighted to welcome a great-great-grandson of Emma Isola and Edward Moxon as a member of the Society, Mr John Edward Moxon has kindly sent us an obituary from the *Illustrated London News* of February 1891 which is of great interest. It is, unfortunately, set out in the minute print favoured by Victorian journals (what wonderful eyesight our ancestors seem to have had!) and would reproduce badly, so in spite of incorporating a woodcut making the late Mrs Moxon look remarkably like her near-contemporary Queen Victoria, though with an expression marked by an engaging pensiveness rather than full-scale regal gloom, it seems better to offer our readers a transcript rather than a facsimile of the original.

CHARLES LAMB'S ADOPTED DAUGHTER

One of the few remaining links that united the present with the literary past of the earlier years of our century has been severed by the death of the widow of the "poets' publisher" Edward Moxon, which occurred at Brighton on Feb. 2. Mrs Moxon had attained the ripe age of eighty-two years, and was the Emma Isola, the "nut-brown maid", the "girl of gold", the adopted daughter of Charles and Mary Lamb, of whom the gentle-hearted author of the "Essays of Elia" speaks with such warm affection in various of his charming letters. Writing to his friend Proctor (Barry Cornwall) in January 1829, Lamb says, incidentally: "I have another favour to beg, which is the beggarliest of beggings - a few lines of verse for a lady's album (six will be enough). M. Burney will tell you who she is I want 'em for. A girl of gold. Six lines - make 'em eight - signed Barry C --. They need not be very good, as I chiefly want 'em as a foil to mine. But I shall be seriously obliged by any refuse scrap. We are in the last ages of the world, when St. Paul prophesied that women should be 'headstrong' lovers of their own wills, having albums." It was for Miss Isola that Lamb wanted the lines.

Emma Isola was Italian by extraction. In the latter years of the last century there lived at Cambridge, as a Professor of Languages, an Italian gentleman, Agostino Isola, who had been compelled to leave Milan, it was said, because a prohibited English book had been found on his table. Gray, the poet, William Pitt, and, nearly at the end of his life, Wordsworth were numbered among Agostino Isola's pupils. His son, Charles Isola, took a degree at Emmanuel College, and was afterwards chosen one of the "Esquire bedells" of the University: a shy, retiring man, described as "ready to undertake any duty that did not include dining with a large party". Mr Charles Isola's daughter Emma was born in 1809. She was early left an orphan, and as a child attracted the notice and won the regard of Lamb, who, with his sister, sometimes made a holiday visit to Cambridge, and saw the little girl at his friend Mr Ayrton's, at whose house he played many an evening rubber. Both Charles and Mary Lamb took a great fancy to the child, who for a series of years became accustomed to pass her holidays with them, and was afterwards domiciled in their house almost as a daughter. She used to accompany Lamb in his rambles about Enfield, and he taught her Latin. She was afterwards for a time in the family of a clergyman and his wife as governess. Writing to Bernard Barton, Lamb excuses himself for having "condescended

to acrostics" by explaining that they were written "at the request of the lady where our Emma is, to whom I paid a visit in April to bring home Emma for a change of air after a severe illness, in which she has been treated like a daughter by the good parson and his family".

At Lamb's Miss Isola made the acquaintance of Mr Edward Moxon. "He is the young poet of Christmas", writes Lamb to Barton, "whom the author of the "Pleasures of Memory" has set up in the bookvending business with a volunteered loan of £500. Such munificence is rare to an almost stranger, but Rogers, I am told, has done many good-natured things of this kind".

To Mr Moxon Miss Isola was married on July 30, 1833. For some years the publishing business flourished, and the work of various poets - Rogers and Tennyson among the number - were issued by the house. But misfortunes came at last, and the house became involved in difficulties in the midst of which Mr Moxon died. The result of the complications was, however, better than might have been expected. Messrs. Ward and Lock came forward, with an offer to pay all the creditors to the estate fifteen shillings in the pound. They fought, in the law-courts, the battle of the family against the manager, who set up extensive claims to copyrights, &c., and, taking over the property, paid to Mrs Moxon a large sum, and, moreover, agreed to pay that lady an annuity of £250, and a further sum to the family on her death. This was in 1877, and for fourteen years the deceased lady enjoyed the provision thus made for her. How great a position she occupied in the affections and home thoughts of Elia and his sister is abundantly testified in the correspondence of the immortal "Carolus Agnus", by whom her husband also was regarded as a dear and valued friend.

Mrs Moxon leaves one son, Mr Arthur Moxon, and five daughters. She was buried on Feb. 5 in the Brighton Cemetary.

[Obviously this is an informed and sympathetic obituary by someone who knew Lamb's writings well. Does any reader know its author? My own guess would be Canon Ainger.
W.R.]

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Coleridge Connection: Essays for Thomas McFarland, edited by Richard Gravil and Molly Lefebure (London, Macmillan, 1990) xiv, 1-356. £45.00

The 'connection' in the title of these essays is Coleridge the ideas-factory (to use a horrendously non-organic phrase): the instigator of a new community of ideas in England grounded on preoccupations that go deeper than the 'German idea', however much their working out was to be the fruit of transmission and revision which took Coleridge outside his inherited horizons. The dedicatee of the book, Thomas McFarland, is himself the connecting link between an impressively coherent range of essays - it should not just be a conscientious reviewer who reads this book from cover to cover. The editors have marshalled a comprehensive review of the synapses of the Coleridgean intellectual universe both pointed and probing, about successors (American in particular) as much as about sources and contemporaries. They succeed in demonstrating that such connections *are* Coleridge; as such this book may serve as a timely companion to Richard Holmes' ongoing biographical project as it demonstrates implicitly to what extent his mind operated from within a nexus of friendships and antipathies constantly fuelling the growing points (rather painful tips at times) of his career. Through it all, whether as success or failure, Coleridge

is here seen to have persisted as an *examplar*: not of a set of attitudes or even principles so much as the animator of a community of thinking, a pantisocracy within which the life of thought is glimpsed as a providence.

Thomas McFarland will be known to *Lamb Bulletin* readers through his sympathetic account of the Elian predicament as itself an active Romantic site in his recent *Romantic Cruxes*. Professor McFarland has been a frequent visitor to Britain, as regulars at the Wordsworth Conference, and more recently the Coleridge Conference, will know to their benefit. From his lips I first encountered a drawled reference to 'aporia' in the early seventies and he it was who first signalled to me what is of interest in the rather neglected figure of Karl Jaspers. A McFarland lecture is itself a microcosm of the world of connection celebrated here, and may swerve at any moment from German Naturphilosophie to Neoplatonism and so on to Phenomenology via a French nineteen century aesthetician or a seventeenth century divine. Through all this voyaging there is no place for the dry catalogue or the coy echo; more often there is a sensitive evocation of breadth as both turmoil and resonance, a sense that context is a product of feeling as well as situation. McFarland is not a close reader of texts in the main; it is not his habit to linger over a particular passage in terms of foreground when the energy of its horizon is still to be sought; his speculative gift is expansive rather than intricate and by and large this is what the bulk of the essays brought together here reflect. Coleridge as subject remains the poet throughout, but the poetry is not made the matter of intimate illumination; poetry is not here, as Paul Hamilton worries in his essay, a narrowing force. Rather it is the matter of connection which is at root imaginative or nothing.

Richard Gravil's opening essay in general orientation has it in mind to upstage any reviewer with astute summaries of the matter of connection not just gnomic but in which condensation serves for penetration. And Gravil ponders anew Carlyle's jibe that Coleridge's tragedy was religion – in all other respects he might have been anyone's equal. I am less happy in following Gravil where he sees Coleridge's missed vocation as the laying down of a basis for a post-Christian spirituality. Gravil rightly insists that Coleridge's obsessional goal was apologetic or nothing. But Coleridge also certainly possessed a seeing dread, and for him a post-dogmatic contemplative ripeness too narrowly involved a permanent suspension of the will in what was likely to end at decadence or impotence. For him imaginative development was a resistance to the scarcity of ground rather than a playful weaving of it. Coleridge was perhaps possessed of an advance dread of how such scarcity was likely to mutate towards the predatory absences of our own culture, where a dogmatic empiricism turns puritanical in an absolute privileging of the political sphere. The essence of Coleridge's career was the craving for a renewal of metaphysical weight as part of the lodgement of a truly humane life, and not least, he would have realised the energy of connectibility required such weight, both to work and to be at work.

The essays kick off with three devoted to examining Coleridge's early Jacobin milieu in terms of his ambivalent debt to that foundational turmoil. Coleridge's modifying and moderating contribution to the revolutionary ethos was to site it as a (predominantly non-urban) Pantisocracy, and Pantisocracy is rightly placed at the entrance to any subsequent intellectual voyaging. The essays presented by Ian Wylie, Paul Hamilton and Nicholas Roe are erected on ground already staked out by Kelvin Everest and Nigel Leask, and by the authors themselves in previous studies. Wylie recalls Coleridge's debt to the 'Lunaticks' (Priestley, Darwin, Franklin) and sets the wild undergraduate scheme for a Pantisocratic settlement in the context of the Lunar Society's own election of North America as the natural base for the sort of social liberty they extolled. Priestley actually did settle in America of course, not far from Coleridge's projected site.

Wylie signals one of the preoccupations of this collection as a whole - Coleridge's awareness of America and its increasingly independent awareness of him. Paul Hamilton's strongly argued piece follows the Coleridge/Godwin relation into its later phases, beginning with Godwin's suspicion of any institutional particularity contrasted with Coleridge's instinct to assimilate 'an older radicalism' that requires no break with its religious origin. Hamilton argues for Coleridge's social philosophy turning conservative at a fairly early stage, the public sphere increasingly become an effort of ideal *recovery*, as against the more presuppositionless social constructions of Godwinian discourse. What fired Coleridge perhaps was the *constitutibility* of the energy of change rather than any pure social permutatory play as such, a change *for* origin, an openness to attachment not finally inhibited by suspicion. The register of change is crucial to any social argument and need not assume the radical assumption of change as pure detachability. Hamilton offers his own severe materialist reading which follows both figures into the later stages of their careers in which the social basis for change is seen to harden into a romantic ideology of eternal progress, the ideal trans-form.

Whereas Godwin's *St. Leon* at least remains more hygienic as overt allegory that can still present its own fictionality and therefore lead readers into salutary recognition of their own historical situatedness in the act of reading, Coleridgean symbolism mystifies in a horizon of complex unity such socially exemplary demarcations. He overorganises, it would appear, the mechanics of liberation, blocking the gateway to those 'broader discourses' (presumably including criticism) which poetry conceived as the mysterious can only serve to narrow. Hamilton highlights the liabilities of Coleridge's idealism when seen from an equally precocious interest, but ignores the extent to which Coleridge regarded himself as a polar materialist open to an infinite in part constituted by the material. Coleridge's idealism, often seen as politically effete, may have glimpsed how social configurations as the *interest* of improvement themselves oppress unless refreshed in terms of what actively recedes from them, that lightening moment of reflective or "soft" culture which poetry (not without cost) articulates.

Nicholas Roe's piece on Coleridge and Thelwall is another of his fundamental minings for historical illumination which stop short of historicist purism. There is no doubt Coleridge was strongly attracted to Thelwall and was at pains to cultivate him, only to repudiate such a confluence of interests when he came to dictate his *Biographia*. Roe sets out to recover this whole episode as an informing narrative whose horizons broach on our own rather than deploying a retroactive set of ideological counters. He shows us how Coleridge's and Wordsworth's attempts to settle for some sort of limited Pantisocracy in the West Country in effect shut Thelwall out when he desperately needed the support of a pastoral relocation. Ironically, as Kelvin Everest noticed some years ago, it was Coleridge's need to remain in touch with a small local community which distanced him from cosmopolitan radicals like Thelwall who were otherwise ready enough to live at peace with their neighbours if given a chance to do so.

The next three essays focus on Coleridge's speaking to and through his associates, together with their subsequent struggle to appropriate, or partly deflect, that voice. Molly Lefebure begins with a friendship less problematic and perhaps more parallel than many of STC's in her account of Humphry Davy (and it was an earlier essay of hers on the same subject which prompted the present collection). Both men had a spectrum of interests encapsulating the romantic ideal of uniting poetry and (natural) philosophy - Southey was to dub Davy a 'metapothecary', a Heath-Robinsonish term Coleridge was as eager to apply to himself. Lefebure's most illuminating insight is to show how Davy, the self-educated, was nonetheless the (perhaps only) ideal Coleridge pupil' that ever existed, as the programme of reading he had proposed to himself at 17 bears striking resemblance to the

curriculum STC drew up for the eight young men who never materialised. Coleridge celebrated in Davy his own stressful concern to integrate knowledge with the sublime, and Davy, though less painfully than Coleridge, came to record the negative effects on the imagination of too much analysis. Lefebure shows how many of STC's notebook images arise out of conversation with Davy, and if Coleridge sensed Davy had an acute sympathy for his own genius it was as much because he regarded Davy as a special being, accorded an unusual equality of respect as someone to be defended against all detractors. Grevel Lindop is drawn to an altogether more problematic chemistry of relation, showing how for Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey Coleridge was nothing less at times than a 'type of the creative mind, or the Imagination' itself. They wished - or feared - at moments of their life to *be* him. Lindop charts how the three coped with the exigence of their idealisation that both stimulated and threatened to suffocate their own embodiments of the self as genius. Lindop is especially acute in his account of Hazlitt's projection of the Coleridge figure in his account of his first meeting with STC written twenty-five years after the event; the younger man even ventroloquises a sermon text given out by Coleridge that can't be found in the Bible: 'And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE'. Lindop believes that in the effort to inflate his first vision of STC Hazlitt conflated a number of Biblical passages. I think Coleridge may probably have quoted Matthew 14.26 (a passage not included by Lindop in his note) but Lindop makes an arguable case for John 6.15 based on the known context of Coleridge's sermon and because the sublime phrase 'himself alone' occurs there. This important essay concludes with the insight that De Quincey's 'discovery' of STC's plagiarisms was a way of distancing himself from too strong an original now revealed as a weak copy rather than a creative imitation - the very pole De Quincey intended to appropriate for himself. Tim Fulford leads us on an interesting foray into the reconstruction of the fragmented Coleridgean oeuvre by younger contemporaries: J.H. Green, he maintains, was to offer the only public completion of STC's theory of primary and secondary imagination by translating it into aesthetic terms. Fulford urges, less convincingly, that this 'completion' is worthy of investigation by modern criticism, but this is to over-estimate the extent to which modern critics are still interested in the resolution of Coleridge's system as against the suggestive traces of its fragments. Perhaps, given the dedicatee of these essays, this is the right place to make the claim, though I would surmise that for McFarland the systematicity of Coleridge's work is already fully present and open to exposition rather than lying in need of a reconstruction interventionist at least in part.

The connection of connections is surely the German one and the three prominent papers devoted to it occupy the midpoint of this collection. Here the question of the status of Coleridge's originality cannot be evaded, but it is rightly subject to the hermeneutic delay of considering the nature of any originality, one likely to be characterised by the need for transmission. It is as fascinating to be given a guide to what Coleridge resisted in the Germans as to be provided with an estimate of the acceleration his own thinking experienced when excited by such massive stimulus. James Engell, who needs no introduction in this field, launches us at once into the *second* most vital connection, the American one, by bluntly asserting that without Coleridge's assimilation of the Germans there would not have been the no less distinctive assimilation of him by what we now know as American Transcendentalism.

The German example reinforced STC's insistence on the crucial role of a first postulate: 'all reasoning commences with a *Postulate*, ie an *act*'. Such an act is for Coleridge both pre-philosophical (as understood by modern phenomenology) but also act as a willing recognition, the active imagination. His 'argumentum in circulo' by which he expanded connectedness beyond logical caveats we now know as the hermeneutic circle. Engell shows how cautious Coleridge came to be in handling Schelling's idea of polarity, haunted

by the risk of a return to Spinozism, God simply the opposite pole from Nature. It was this encounter, surely, which was to fire his return to Trinitarianism, where the divine persons are a *prior* polarity (the third Person the relation itself) which then goes on to fund the relation between the divine and the natural. However, the idea of a chain of polarities can also be found in Schelling.

Eleanor Schaffer provides the kind of richly informed speculation we have come to expect of her. She, like Hamilton earlier, is concerned with the Hermeneutics of reading, but whereas his was a process which cuts into the class-aligned configurations of power, hers is closer to the idealist project of a 'transhistorical community' in which the imperatives of history can be suspended, not by the timeless privilege of a great author but by a dialogue of styles neither immaterial from the point of view of text nor punctual to the narrowness of historical ordering. In highlighting Coleridge's dialogue with Schleiermacher Schaffer also forecasts the subsequent American meshing of them both. Her own essay agreeably and alertly continues the colloquy of past and present minds, opening out connections now known to us through recently published journals and notebooks that flesh out a past context but which have become readable only in the company of a Bakhtinian present.

Part Four of the book takes us into the heart of the American connection. Anthony Harding reveals an Emerson who is Coleridge's 'most original avatar', and shows how Ralph Waldo came to STC as Coleridge had in his own time come to the Germans – both *knowing* in advance what they wanted before embarking on their reading. Harding usefully points to the bifurcation that Coleridge's influence was to undergo in America; some saw him as a staunch inspirational defence against the Higher Criticism while others (Emerson among them) hailed in his work a more romantic and individualist exegesis. Thought itself goes and lives where it will. Emerson had work to do with Coleridge, whose gift he took to be a denial of origins, an apostasy that was the modern virtue, its very condition. This sumptuous release has not held; STC was already trying to counter it with his polar emphasis on the Trinity where ground was donation *amid* relationality: the rest has become not history but historicism. Harding's resourceful essay finally returns us to Schaffer's hermeneutic perspective, the exchange between author as reader and reader as author, an exchange which instigates what he calls, after McFarland, the criticism paradox: strong interpretation needs both passionate identification which grants critical purchase, and an energy to distance the object in order to open out a critical space. Jonathan Bate concludes this all too brief section with a fresh consideration of Edgar Allan Poe's plagiarisms from Coleridge, the Greater Plagiariser. This is set in a context not just of literary detective work but of a provacative rethinking of the nature of literary influence: if an original can be stolen and incorporated it is because it was already a thief itself. Bate's provocation is deft and humane, his sole horizon is not scandal or the sublime of over-interpretation but a deeper view into the texture of Poe's *MS Found in a Bottle*. Here the question of influence is enough to open up the very constitution of its 'original', *The Ancient Mariner*. My only quibble is that Bate, like Harding, appetizingly refers us to essays by McFarland but leaves us without precise citations, a situation not remedied by consulting the general bibliography at the end of the collection. The reader will have to grope his own way towards these unretrieved originals.

The final section of *The Coleridge Connection* convinces that it is the religious connection that is still the most tenacious and controversial one. STC would not have doubted it. H.W. Piper sets out to show how Unitarianism holds the key to Coleridge's formation up until 1805 and reminds us of the significance of the Unitarian understanding of a spiritual materialism that was always to qualify and enrich STC's ultimate idealism. He makes an ingenious case for a 'negative Unitarianism' as being the mentality or springboard from

which Coleridge was able to take off into German higher criticism. It was Naturphilosophie that finally chastened him back, by way of reaction, to Trinitarianism, but Piper is surely justified in claiming that only an early radical habit of mind, one used to combining the inspirational chapel sermon with the speculative symbology of *The Ancient Mariner*, could have launched STC on his theological voyage. Or launched him upon a final reconciliation with his theological roots, Robert Barth would say, and does so in an essay that sees little more than a marginal role for Coleridge's brilliantly vagrant Unitarian phase. Barth is good on Coleridge's deployment of what he names (after John Coulson) a fiduciary use of language, a language freed from eighteenth-century mechanism but allowed to be feelingly reflective of what can only then be amenable to articulation. No doubt the Coleridge of the 1790's would have seen this as all too decorous and shaded, but his very audacity before the noon-day sun of prophetic revelation was to expose him to creaturely vulnerability as the basis of a more accommodated but indwelling spirituality. STC's recovery of tradition did not mystify into organic exclusiveness, Barth tells us, for though for Coleridge a national church was the centre of an embodied spirit it was not the *sole* embodiment but rather a shelter for other communions arising from what is shareable in an assembled community.

The editors can have had little hesitation in deciding which essay should conclude their collection, and John Beer rightly takes that place with an extended account of characteristic sweep and precision. We are brought very close to the latter-day Coleridge through some fascinating records of long-forgotten American encounters with Highgate's sage, here republished for the first time. Here we can gauge how Coleridge's theological bearings are constantly taking account of the cultural and religious life going on about him as Beer explores simultaneously the bizarre record of Edward Irving whose experiments with speaking in tongues were to talk him out of preferment. In England, Beer shows, STC was regarded as a spent force, not much more than a lumbering curiosity, an inconsequential experimenter who had crazed the fabric of his (undoubted) genius, while for sundry Americans, though they regretted his quaint attachment to a host of decaying Europeanisms, he was essentially *their* contemporary, one who shared with them the same agenda for appropriating and internalising the vistas of a dynamic age.

The very span of the Coleridge 'connection' almost of itself seems to belie any idealising tendency these essays might be thought to have. The contributors, in tracing the many inlets and outbreaks of a Coleridge encountering and encountered are also responding to McFarland's own influential sense of the intimate but unscandalous connection between the global intention and fractured rhetoric of Coleridge's oeuvre. The matter of connection does not simply go Coleridge's way but equally is too flexible and willowy to shut down a body of work amid a tracery of deterministic subversions. Connection opens up the flaws in the work as well as bridging them: the fault-lines are surpassed but not closed up. Most of the essays here follow this bridging outward: there is little turning of STC's thought against itself. There might have been occasions: in an essay not so far mentioned Frederick Burwick pursues Coleridge through the grounds of his discrimination (which draws on Schelling) between 'copy' and 'imitation'. How does this harness with the famouse 'primary' and 'secondary' differentiation of the imagination which Tim Fulford shows was in dire need of further conceptual work in the generation following Coleridge's, and which Richard Gravil accuses of being (referring to the primary imagination in particular) 'barely soluble in the terms Coleridge gives us'? Is the primary imagination as 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation' as much copy as imitation? Could only such a subconscious copying of creation serve as ground for the more selective poetic of the secondary imagination? Are there more connections here than might be salutary? Such (by now rather familiar) micro-deconstructions do not take us very far, however, in estimating Coleridge's work where the dynamic fleetness of his fragmentary completions

split off among a myriad of differences that are never empty. The dedicatee of this collection, Thomas McFarland, has taught us to acknowledge and esteem the *conditions* of Coleridge's opus. What is unfinishable is open not to an horizon of receding difference so much as to the no less copious attendances of connection: we can see that the gaps in Coleridge's ideas are yet his being among them.

Peter Larkin

Warwick University

SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTES FROM MEMBERS

SUBTLE SHIFTS

Readers may have noticed a slight change on the 'Contents' page in the present issue. After the contents and before David Fairer's article, the statement 'Let us stimulate the Elian spirit of friendliness and humour' is incorporated. This is at our Honorary Treasurer's suggestion, to replace the almost-identical sentence which used to feature on the back cover in pre-charitable-status days. The Charity Commissioners have been all reasonableness over essential points, but the idea of cheerfulness was one which rather stuck in their crops; it suggested pleasure and jollity, and perhaps food and drink, and generally having a nice time, and all the things that Charles Lamb enjoyed, and we do ourselves (only we pay for them ourselves, just as Charles and Mary Lamb and their friends did) and it seems to have raised dark, and from our standpoint, almost *un*charitable suspicions in the Charitable Commissioners' minds that we might be aiming to behave like those Governors of the Workhouse in *Oliver Twist* who gorged themselves monthly at the expense of those who should have been benefiting from the funds which they controlled. We are, of course, a blameless organisation, but in order that we may also be seen to be such, the change described above has been made. In reality, of course, our meetings will be just as quietly friendly and our modest tea drinkings as decorous as of yore.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our first AGM since we achieved our new status as a charitable company will take place at the Mary Ward Centre on Saturday 11 May. As usual there will be much of interest to discuss and plans for the future to be given an airing. The Annual Accounts and Annual Reports are being circulated with this *Bulletin*.

ABSENT FRIENDS! Oh the weather on Saturday 9th February...such storms, such freezings: happy those who managed to make their way to the banquet, and woeful the feelings of those such as the Editor of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin* who remained lamenting and shivering at home.

Fortunately a letter from Madeline Huxstep has been found to contain the following missive addressed to our own dear author by those who were present on the day.

CHARLES LAMB'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION LUNCHEON
9th February 1991

Our dear Charles Lamb,

Why have a birthday in February? Three mild winters had lulled us into a false sense of security. Thirty intrepid souls braved the snow and ice to celebrate the eve of your 216th birthday at the Royal College of General Practitioners' gracious premises in Princes Gate, Kensington. Alas! twenty more who had hoped to come were marooned in various parts of the country.

Our President, Professor John Beer, was there, and also our Guests of Honour, Carolyn and James Misenheimer from Indiana, USA (rather perplexed about the fuss about the weather). Grecians from Christ's Hospital (Victoria Chapman, Sarah Johnson, William Shallcross and Samuel Willcocks) came and the familiar Graces were said before and after meat.

After an excellent and convivial meal (featuring Lamb chops) Jim Misenheimer proposed the Toast 'The Immortal Memory of Charles Lamb' recalling his personal long-standing love of you and your works. Our other traditional Toast 'To absent members and guests' was omitted (although they were much in our thoughts) - as the President observed 'probably because the toast proposer was himself absent'.

After David Wickham had thanked the President, the company adjourned to the Drawing Room for a talk by Carolyn Misenheimer on 'Charles Lamb and Robert Southey: Longevity of Friendship and Its Disruption of Ideals'. Those who sadly could not be with us will be able to enjoy this when it is published in the Bulletin.

Carolyn began 'Friendship is a rare and precious gift which requires careful nuturing on the part of both parties to sustain it over a long period of time'.

We sign ourselves, affectionately,

Your friends of the Charles Lamb Society

A FORTHCOMING BOOK ON THE LAMBS

A recent letter from Jane Aaron (now in the English Department of the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth) contained a welcome copy of advance publicity for her forthcoming book on Charles and Mary Lamb:

A DOUBLE SINGLENESS: GENDER AND THE WRITINGS OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1991

In 1796, when Mary Lamb, in a sudden attack of violent frenzy, killed her mother, her brother Charles pledged himself to be responsible for her care, thus sparing her from threatened incarceration in Bedlam. For the next thirty-eight years they lived, and wrote, together. Informed by feminist and psychoanalytic literary theory, this book argues that the Lambs' ideological inheritance as the children of servants, their work experience as

clerk and needlewoman respectively, and the role madness and matricide played in both their lives, resulted in writings which were at variance with the spirit of their age. In particular, the intensity of their sibling bond is seen, in Charles Lamb's case, as resulting in texts stylistically and thematically opposed to the masculinist stance currently considered characteristic of many Romantic writers. As such, the book provides an entirely new perspective on the Lambs and their writings.

Jane Aaron says that her book should be appearing at the end of June or beginning of July. A review will be published in the *Bulletin* in due course.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY remain as follows:

Personal:	U.K.	(single)	£8.00
		(double)	£12.00
	Overseas		US$14.00
Corporate:	U.K.		£12.00
	Overseas		US$21.00

Cheques should be made payable to the Charles Lamb Society and sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Nicholas Powell, 30 Camberwell Grove, London SE5 8RE. Existing subscriptions should be renewed in January.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE HON. TREASURER

With the January *Bulletin* I circulated a notice requesting individual (non-library) members of the Society to pay their annual subscriptions and to sign the form guaranteeing payment of £1 at a future date if required, and I explained than by signing this form members would be joining the new charitable company which now constitutes the Society. I emphasised that the £1 was not required at present and that I expected it never to be required.

Many members have returned the forms as requested. Those who have not yet done so should please send them to me as soon as possible.

Some members seem to have overlooked the request for their forms to be accompanied by the usual annual subscription. Perhaps my emphasising that the £1 was not required may have been misunderstood, but I hope it is clear that subscriptions are to be paid in the usual way. As they were due on 1st January, I shall be grateful if any member who has not yet paid his or her subscription will now do so. The amounts are shown above.